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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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14 October 1985

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: As members will recall, because of ongoing consultations, the First Committee was unable to elect the second Vice-Chairman at its previous meeting. This morning the Committee will first proceed to elect the Vice-Chairman and then, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the Committee will embark on a general debate on all disarmament items.

Mr. ELBE (Federal Republic of Germany): Sir, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend to you my delegation's congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We feel sure that, under your able guidance, based on broad experience and proved diplomatic skill, this Committee will make considerable headway in dealing with the important tasks entrusted to it. My delegation will certainly not fail to give you its full co-operation.

Today it is a privilege and an honour for me to nominate Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni of Zaire as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the fortieth session of the General Assembly.

Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni is a prominent member of his country's diplomatic corps. A professional diplomat, with a Master's degree in political sciences and a graduate diploma in international relations, he has been acquainted with the United Nations as his country's representative since 1967. He served as his country's Ambassador to the Netherlands from 1971 to 1972, as Ambassador to Ethiopia from 1972 to 1975, as Permanent Representative in Geneva from 1980 to 1983 and as Ambassador in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Singapore from 1983 to 1985. He took up his present post in New York in March 1985. He also served as Zaire's Minister of Civil Service from 1976 to 1980.

(Mr. Elbe, Federal Republic of
Germany)

Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni has a prominent professional record in the field of disarmament. From 1980 to 1983 he represented his country at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. He also led the delegation of Zaire at the second special session of the General Assembly on Disarmament. Recently, for Zaire's term, he presided over the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva during the month of June.

In view of his distinguished professional record in general and his intimate knowledge of the problems before this Committee in particular, I propose that Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni be elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at this anniversary session, the fortieth session of the General Assembly, by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for nominating Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni of Zaire for the post of Vice-Chairman. I also thank him for his kind remarks addressed to me.

There being no other nominations, I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Mr. Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni (Zaire) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to express to Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, my warmest congratulations on the distinction that has been conferred upon him and to assure him of my full co-operation as we undertake to discharge the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

Mr. ADEITO NZENGEYA BAGBENI (Zaire) (interpretation from French):

Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time I have taken the floor in the First Committee at this session, I wish to express to you, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, my cordial congratulations on your unanimous election to preside over the Committee. Having in the past had a number of opportunities to co-operate with you both at and away from United Nations Headquarters, I have no doubt that, under your enlightened leadership and in view of your great wisdom and competence, the First Committee will make satisfactory progress in its work.

I wish also to offer my sincere thanks to the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for his kind words concerning me and for having been so good as to nominate my delegation for the post of second Vice-Chairman of this Committee. To all delegations that have expressed their confidence in my country, through my modest person, I wish to state my gratitude. I wish also to assure them that I shall do my utmost to carry out the duties of second Vice-Chairman of this important Committee, which they have just entrusted to me.

General and complete disarmament under effective international control is still the long-term objective that all delegations seek to achieve in their efforts. In view of the very precise but very heavy agenda of the Committee, the adoption of disarmament measures by the Committee is highly desirable in order to guarantee the right of all States to undiminished security. My delegation will work towards these goals in the Committee, and we are happy to be working side by side with you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee, whom we would also like to congratulate on their election.

AGENDA ITEMS 48 TO 69 AND 145

GENERAL DEBATE

The CHAIRMAN: As we begin our substantive work, I should like to share with delegations some personal reflections on the present international situation in the area of our concern, namely, disarmament and international security.

Let us be frank: in the sense that the word is generally used, there has been no disarmament. Like a mirage promising water and shade in the desert, it has moved away from us as we have tried to approach it.

The General Assembly has adopted hundreds of resolutions on one aspect of disarmament or another; there have been proposals and counter-proposals in abundance; there have been countless statements, declarations and appeals. All have been to little avail. Although there have been arms control measures and certain limitations on their use, with the notable exception of the biological weapons Convention there has been no real disarmament. Instead there has been a litany of accusations, rationalizations of positions and/or strategic doctrines, and mutual apportionment of blame.

Doubtless we shall hear more during this session, and on each occasion we shall be wasting the opportunity that we have, as representatives of our respective nations in this world body, to find ways of moving forward. After 40 years of no real progress in disarmament, how much more time do we have?

It is my conviction that in the matter of disarmament we may be at a crossroads of crucial importance.

Down one road lies deepening anxiety, unabated tension and heightened insecurity. The threat of mutual annihilation will loom ever larger, propelled by an unceasing accumulation and qualitative refinement of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. Arms expenditures will consume an

(The Chairman)

ever-greater proportion of our resources. Advances in technology will continue to outrun the ponderous pace of political negotiation and may yet undermine the viability of existing restraints and agreements. The focus on outer space, no matter how well-intentioned, will introduce new and destabilizing elements into the escalating arms race.

These factors combine to produce a situation of glaring perversity. In the first place, the huge amounts of scarce global resources spent on weapons stand sharply at odds with a world in which millions of people are still suffering from hunger, disease and economic deprivation. Worse still, even without being used in conflict, such weapons can have deadly effects, for the material and intellectual resources diverted towards their acquisition and continuous development may well doom the lot of the poor, the oppressed and the under-privileged on our planet in their struggle for basic survival. Such a diversion thus impedes our ability to redress economic inequities and social injustices without which lasting peace can never be obtained.

Down the other road lies a ray of hope. In the past year there has been small but perceptible progress in some aspects of the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The recent review of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty unlike the second Review Conference at least adopted a Final Declaration. The historic moment at which our present session is taking place, the fortieth anniversary commemoration of the birth of the United Nations, provides a unique opportunity for world leaders to reaffirm their dedication to the ideals and objectives of the Charter. Virtually every Head of State or Government or Foreign Minister in his statement in plenary meeting expressed the hope that at this critical juncture the international community should be able to take the necessary steps to halt and reverse the arms race and begin the process of genuine disarmament.

(The Chairman)

The talks due to be held in Geneva on 19 and 20 November between the leaders of the two most powerful States will be an event of major importance. Whilst it would be wrong to encumber President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev with too great a burden of international expectation, it would be equally wrong for the rest of the world to pretend that we do not have high hopes for the success of that momentous meeting; for while world disarmament, peace and security are the concern of all nations, there is no denying that the nuclear-weapon States, and especially the two major Powers, must shoulder primary responsibility in the priority tasks facing mankind today, that of preventing nuclear war and bringing about nuclear disarmament. The year 1986 will be the International Year of Peace; what better time could there be to make a beginning of real progress towards that most profound aspiration of humanity?

This then is the setting for our work in the First Committee during the fortieth session. This Committee is not a negotiating body, but it is our duty to ensure that our deliberations in this, the most representative forum among the multilateral bodies engaged in the field of disarmament, proceed in an atmosphere of common responsibility, rationality and constructive purpose. In this we are fortunate to have the Final Document of the General Assembly's tenth special session which was adopted by consensus and which constitutes a meticulously and realistically conceived programme of work containing principles, priorities and the machinery for the disarmament process. Hence, instead of diluting this agreed framework, we should continue to make it our basic point of departure in our efforts to promote dialogue and negotiations, to provide guidance and facilitate progress towards resolving the outstanding issues. If we are able to achieve that in at least some aspects of our work, we shall have taken the first steps down the road of hope towards progress in disarmament.

I know that we are all together in this joint endeavour.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, for those of us who, like myself, have had the opportunity to appreciate not only your experience and knowledge of disarmament issues but also your skill and absolute impartiality in conducting the deliberations of an international organ such as the First Committee, it is a source of deep gratification that you have been chosen to preside over this Committee in the year in which we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. I am convinced that your work at the head of this Committee - which since 1978 has been dealing exclusively with disarmament questions and related international security issues - will be a considerable contribution to the commemoration of the anniversary to which I just referred. For the attainment of that objective, you can of course rely on the unreserved co-operation of the Mexican delegation.

We also congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur who, together with you, Mr. Chairman, are the officers of this Committee.

I also want to mention how pleased we are to see that once again we have here with us the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Lastly, may I reiterate once again today how much we appreciated the masterly way in which Ambassador Souza e Silva guided our work last year, thus enhancing the reputation of the members of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

This year we are commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the United Nations Charter which, as representatives know, took place in San Francisco on 26 June 1945 in a solemn ceremony in which I had the privilege of participating.

For someone unaware of the sequence of historic events it might seem extremely curious that a document which begins by emphasizing the determination of peoples "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" does not contain a single

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word about the only type of war that can endanger the survival of mankind - nuclear war.

The explanation is very simple, since it was not until a few weeks later that nuclear bombs previously unknown to mankind sowed death and desolation on a scale hitherto undreamed of when they exploded over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and turned nuclear disarmament into one of the most serious concerns of all peoples and Governments and one of the international problems most urgently requiring a solution.

Thus, the first resolution unanimously adopted by the General Assembly on 24 January 1946 - resolution 1 (I) - was designed to "... establish a Commission ... to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy" and that resolution itself requested the Commission urgently to make "specific proposals" aimed, inter alia, "for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons". Since then, dozens of resolutions have been adopted by the Assembly on the various aspects of the nuclear arms race and on nuclear disarmament. It might be said that that body, the one most highly representative of the international community, would like in this way to make up for the involuntary omission in the Charter in respect of those terrible instruments of mass destruction that nuclear weapons constitute.

Among the international documents that have been adopted thus far in 1985, I shall not hesitate to mention first the New Delhi Declaration, both because of its foresight and important contents and the high level of its sponsors who, as representatives know, were six Heads of State or Government of six countries - among whom it was the privilege of the President of Mexico to be numbered - from four different continents.

One of the paragraphs of that Declaration, signed on 28 January 1985 in the capitala of India, noted that:

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"Almost imperceptibly, over the last four decades, every nation and every human being has lost ultimate control over their own life and death..."

and that "a small group of men and machines in cities far away ... can decide our fate." (A/40/114, annex, p. 3)

Then the sponsors affirmed with particular emphasis:

"Two specific steps today require special attention: the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a comprehensive test ban treaty." (Ibid., p. 4)

Those two issues, most intelligently highlighted in the New Delhi Declaration, are the ones that I wish to consider in this statement, beginning with the one which, as in previous years, is entitled "Cessation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons". On this item it is fitting to recall here a few elements of particular significance, such as the following.

This is an item which has been on the agenda of the General Assembly in one form or another for more than a quarter of a century and all the technical, scientific, political and strategic aspects of the problem have been studied exhaustively. Therefore it has rightly been stated for over 10 years that the only thing needed for agreement to be reached is the political will.

On eight different occasions - the most recent of them in December of last year - the Assembly has issued "its most energetic condemnation of all nuclear-weapon tests".

In countless resolutions the Assembly has requested that "the utmost priority" be given to a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

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The three nuclear-weapon States that act as depositaries both of the partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty of 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, in the report that they submitted to the Committee on Disarmament on 30 July 1980, after four years of trilateral talks, affirmed inter alia that they

"... are mindful of the great value for all mankind that the prohibition of nuclear weapon test explosions in all environments will have, and they are conscious of the important responsibility placed upon them to find solutions to the remaining problems ... They are determined to exert their best efforts and necessary will and persistence to bring the negotiations to an early and successful conclusion ..." (CD/130, para. 25).

The three depositary States themselves, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, in the preamble and in article 1 (b) of the Moscow Treaty, to which I have just referred, contracted unequivocal and legally binding commitments in respect of "... the conclusion of a treaty resulting in the permanent banning of all nuclear tests explosions", a commitment which was expressly reaffirmed in paragraph 10 of the preamble of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The position of the representatives of one of the two States that possess the largest nuclear arsenals is that they now want to find only a long-term solution to this problem, alleging that their country did not feel obliged by commitments made prior to January 1981, when there was a change of Government as a result of elections, is untenable, in light of the basic principles of international law.

Even if this were not the case, it would be in open contradiction to General Assembly resolution 36/85, adopted on 9 December 1981. In other words, almost a year after the new Administration took office, a resolution was adopted by 140 votes in favour with no votes against, which requests:

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"... the Committee on Disarmament to take the necessary steps, including the establishment of a working group, to initiate substantive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a matter of the highest priority at the beginning of its session in 1982" (General Assembly resolution 36/85, para. 6)

There have been many occasions upon which convincing emphasis has been placed on the importance for progress in nuclear disarmament of a complete cessation of nuclear-weapons tests. As just one example out of the many that could be cited, suffice it to recall that among the conclusions of the report on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, prepared in 1980 by the Secretariat of the United Nations with the assistance of four expert consultants, we find the following:

"A main objective of all efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament has been to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race, to stop the production of nuclear weapons and to achieve their eventual elimination.

"In this connexion, a comprehensive test ban is regarded as the first and most urgent step towards a cessation of the nuclear-arms race, in particular, as regards its qualitative aspects.

"A comprehensive test ban could serve as an important measure of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, both vertical and horizontal.

"A comprehensive test ban would have a major arms limitation impact in that it would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the nuclear-weapon States parties to the treaty to develop new designs of nuclear weapons and would also place constraints on the modification of existing weapon designs.

"In the view of the parties to the non-proliferation Treaty, a comprehensive test ban would reinforce the Treaty by demonstrating the awareness of the major nuclear Powers of the legal obligation imposed under

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the Treaty to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date." (A/35/257, paras. 151, 152, 155, 156, 158)

The means of verification that already exist are sufficient to guarantee the implementation of a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban and the alleged absence of such means is, as has been stated with commendable sincerity by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/52 of last year, "... nothing but an excuse for further development and refinement of nuclear weapons". (General Assembly resolution 39/52, third preambular paragraph)

Among the many testimonies that could be adduced to confirm what I have just stated, we might recall just the two following: first, that of Kurt Waldheim, then Secretary-General of the United Nations; when he addressed the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, at its 1972 inaugural meeting, categorically stated:

"When one takes into account the existing means of verification by seismic and other methods, and the possibilities provided by international procedures of verification, such as consultation, inquiry, what has become to be know as 'verification by challenge' or 'inspection by invitation', it is difficult to understand further delay in achieving agreement on an underground test ban.

"In the light of all these considerations, I share the inescapable conclusion that the potential risks of continuing underground nuclear weapon tests would far outweigh any possible risks from ending such tests."

(CCD/PV.545, p. 9)

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This statement was made 13 years ago. Let us now consider a more recent comment by Mr. Olaf Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, a country which has achieved such extraordinary progress in the sphere of detecting nuclear tests that it is able to announce the carrying out of all such tests as soon as they take place sometimes even before the tests have been reported by the nuclear-weapon Power that has conducted them. Mr. Palme, in an inaugural address before the symposium organized by the Bellerive group, which took place in Geneva this year, made the following statement.

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"A treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapons tests would in itself constitute the most important measure to curb the qualitative nuclear arms race. It would be a good complement to bilateral negotiations as it would reduce the risk that any reductions in arsenals agreed upon in strategic talks might be offset by the development of new nuclear systems. The work accomplished in this sphere by experts from my country have convinced me, and convinced me long ago, that scientific and technical knowledge and skills already in existence make it possible adequately to verify a treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapons tests."

Each of the five consecutive resolutions adopted annually by the United Nations General Assembly as from December 1980 contained appeals to the three depositaries, to whom I have already referred, which are worded as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Calls upon the States depositaries of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by virtue of their special responsibilities under those two Treaties and as a provisional measure, to bring to a halt without delay all nuclear-test explosions, either through a trilaterally agreed moratorium or through three unilateral moratoria;"
(resolution 38/62, para. 7)

The last of the elements I am listing here is that, in the light of these appeals, we no doubt found a source of satisfaction in the announcement made on 29 July last by the Soviet Union in a statement which, inter alia, stated the following:

"In an effort to help end the dangerous competition in the build-up of nuclear arsenals and wishing to set a good example, the Soviet Union has

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decided that it will unilaterally discontinue all nuclear explosions, starting from 6 August 1985. We call on the Government of the United States to cease its nuclear explosions starting from the same date, which is observed throughout the world as the anniversary of the Hiroshima tragedy. Our moratorium is declared until 1 January 1986. It will, however, remain in effect beyond that date if the United States, for its part, refrains from setting off nuclear explosions." (A/40/522, p. 2)

It is highly likely that reasons such as the first eleven I have just mentioned - the twelfth came later - prompted the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, to affirm that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would be "the best proof of a genuine will to progress towards nuclear disarmament". This he said in his key address on disarmament on 12 December 1984, when he also stated the following:

"I appeal for renewed efforts towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. No multilateral agreement could have a greater effect in limiting subsequent improvements of nuclear weapons. A comprehensive test-ban treaty is the greatest proof of a genuine will to make progress in the direction of nuclear disarmament. Is it logical to develop new, increasingly lethal types of weapons, weapons that are increasingly complex from a technical standpoint, and increasingly difficult to verify? We are on the brink of leaving a decision on the future of mankind to automatic and fallible computer reactions. Talks on a comprehensive test ban have been left pending for too long now, and their value has been called into question. As with all negotiations on arms limitations, there will never, in the opinion of all the parties, be a perfect time to begin them. The time to resume those talks is now: there should be no further delay."

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We sincerely hope that, as a modest contribution to the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Charter and as a tangible proof of their will to fulfil the commitments assumed in 1963 and 1968, the two nuclear-weapon Powers that have thus far been reluctant to do so - in other words, the United States and the United Kingdom - will lend their support to the resolution which will undoubtedly be adopted once again by the Assembly, and that this year the immediate background material will be paragraph 12, section B of the section on article VI of the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, just held in Geneva, a paragraph in which the following is stated:

"The Conference ... deeply regretted that there has not yet been agreement on a global multilateral treaty permanently prohibiting nuclear tests by all States and in all areas, and asked the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to resume trilateral negotiations in 1985, and all nuclear-weapon States to participate, as a matter of top priority, in the urgent negotiation and conclusion of that treaty, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament."

That is a quote from the Final Declaration adopted by consensus at the recent Review Conference in Geneva.

The second point to which I should like to refer, as I stated at the beginning of my statement, is the prevention of the arms race in outer space. The reasons why this is being given preferential treatment are obvious and well known. It was not without reason that the Heads of State or Government of six countries - Argentina, Greece, India, Sweden, Tanzania and Mexico - that signed the New Delhi Declaration, to which I have already referred, stressed the following:

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"Outer space must be used for the benefit of mankind as a whole, not as a battle-ground of the future. We, therefore, call for the prohibition of the development, testing, production, deployment and use of all space weapons. An arms race in space would be enormously costly, and have grave destabilizing effects. It would also endanger a number of arms limitation and disarmament agreements." (A/40/114, p. 4)

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In this respect it should also be borne in mind that, in the joint declaration adopted as a result of the talks held in Geneva on 7 and 8 January this year between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and the Secretary of State of the United States, the subject-matter and the objectives of the negotiations under way between the two countries on nuclear weapons and space weapons were stipulated as follows:

"The parties agree that the subject of negotiations will be a set of questions related to space weapons and nuclear weapons - both strategic and intermediate range - in which all these questions in their interrelationship will be considered and resolved.

"The objective of the negotiations will be to prepare effective agreements aimed at preventing the arms race in space and at putting an end to that race on Earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear weapons and at strengthening strategic stability ...

"Both parties consider that the final objective of the negotiations as well as, in general, of all efforts to limit and reduce weapons should be the total elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere."

That is a quotation from the joint declaration adopted by the United States and the Soviet Union on the eve of the resumption of their bilateral negotiations.

It would be easy to present a long account of similar testimony, but I shall add just one more example. It is an example from the declaration adopted by the symposium which was held in New York - and not just in New York but in this very Headquarters of the United Nations - last April under the auspices of the Third-World Foundation for Economic and Social Studies and of the Parliamentarians for World Order, on the occasion of an award granted by the first of those institutions to the former Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Willy Brandt. The substantive paragraphs of that declaration, which was adopted by

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

the 29 participants in the symposium, including a number of former Heads of State or Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, as well as a number of Nobel Peace Laureates, can be described, in my view, as the most complete and substantive statement among others of comparable conciseness, issued to date on this issue. Those paragraphs read as follows:

"Outer space is 'the common heritage of mankind'. It is in the common interest that the exploration and use of outer space should be solely for peaceful purposes, that the arms race should not be extended to that environment and that it should not become a battleground of the future. Strategic defence initiatives relating to ballistic missile defence systems now under research and development and anti-satellite systems raise the serious possibility of the militarization of outer space and of a dangerous escalation of the nuclear-arms race. They also threaten the viability of various existing arms limitation agreements. They introduce an altogether new element which is dangerous and destabilizing and which might actually provoke the use of nuclear weapons by either side. Far from rendering nuclear weapons obsolete, it is more likely that they could lead to a redoubled arms race in both defensive and offensive weapons.

"These developments offer no substantial defence against strategic ballistic missiles and do not limit the effectiveness of other systems, such as bomber aircraft and cruise missiles. At today's levels of super-Power deployment - about 10,000 strategic warheads on each side - even a miraculous 95 per cent protection level would be insufficient to save either society from utter destruction in the event of general nuclear war. Any effort in research or testing will inevitably lead to a reciprocal effort by the other side, and so each side will move to more offensive systems - submarine-launched

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missiles, cruise missiles and advanced technology aircraft and missiles - in order to overwhelm or evade the defence.

"The collective weight of world scientific opinion rejects a 'star wars' programme as an exercise in futility. In an environment of tension and insecurity such a programme is a highly dangerous and wasteful investment in delusion. There is no technical salvation from the threat of nuclear war. Only political solutions leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons can avert the threat.

"All nations should therefore agree to ban all testing and deployment in outer space of any outer-space-based weapon for the destruction of objects on Earth, in the atmosphere or in outer space, and to ban also any ground-based weapon for the destruction of objects in outer space."

The importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space was also underscored at the Conference on Disarmament where, thanks to the flexibility and spirit of co-operation shown by the members of the Group of 21 and the Group of Socialist Countries, it was possible to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to deal with the issue under a provisional mandate, a mandate limited to 1985, since it does not correspond completely to what the Assembly has been requesting in its resolutions, the most recent of which, as we all recall, was adopted last year by 150 votes in favour, with none against. In paragraph 52 of the report of the negotiating body in Geneva, the position of the immense majority of its members is summarized in the following terms:

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"Many delegations emphasized that they had accepted the mandate because it expressly indicated that there would be an initial exploratory stage and that 'as an initial step in that stage', it would be necessary to consider 'through substantive and general study, questions related to the prevention of the arms race in outer space'. In their view, from the explicit reference contained in the last line of the mandate it was clear that the stage mentioned should come to an end at the same time as the 1985 session of the Ad Hoc Committee, and that next year's negotiations should begin with the aim of arriving at 'one or several agreements', as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as specifically laid down in resolution 39/59, adopted by 150 votes in favour and none against."

The Mexican delegation, which was among the very many delegations referred to in that paragraph of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, hopes that this will be the case, as was specifically stated at the 304th plenary meeting of the Conference, held on 29 March of this year.

I cannot conclude my statement without saying a few words about the recent establishment in the South Pacific of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone, which thus joins the one that was established thanks to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, opened to signature on 14 February 1967, in the historic neighbourhood of the Mexican capital which bears the Aztec name of Tlatelolco. This, together with the fact that the Mexican Government has the privilege of acting as the depositary of that Treaty, clearly explains why we were so pleased to hear the news that, on 6 August of this year at Rarotonga, Cook Islands, the international instrument entitled "South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty" was opened to signature and that it has already been signed by eight Heads of State, those of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Western Samoa and Tuvalu.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

We hope that the nuclear-weapon-free zone just created and the one established by the Tlatelolco Treaty 20 years ago will in the near future be joined by the three other zones of the same kind which year after year have been the subject of items on the General Assembly's agenda: those in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. The Nordic and Balkan countries are two other regions for which the possibility and appropriateness of a similar status have often been discussed. If those five projects were to become a reality and the nuclear-weapon-free zones contemplated joined the two existing ones, a gigantic step would have been taken towards the attainment of the ultimate objective set in the Final Document adopted by consensus in 1978 and unanimously and categorically reaffirmed in 1982 - that is, to achieve "a world entirely free of nuclear weapons" through the "process of establishing" in different parts of the world zones free of those terrible instruments of mass destruction.

Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I must begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your election to the high office of Chairman of this exceedingly important organ of the United Nations. The Soviet delegation is convinced of your great qualifications and objectivity. We have no doubt that under your leadership the First Committee will work meticulously and effectively.

The general debate has shown that the international community feels grave concern about the threat of nuclear war that is hanging over all nations. The idea has repeatedly been expressed that States should work together to avert that threat in the same way as 40 years ago the united nations were able to rise above their ideological and other differences, defeat the common enemy and enshrine in the United Nations Charter their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

As Mikhail S. Gorbachev has said, in present conditions Hamlet's famous question "to be or not to be" concerns no longer just one individual but the entire human race. It is assuming a global character and there can be only one answer to this question: mankind, civilization, must survive at all costs. But this can be achieved only by learning to live together, by mastering the difficult art of respecting one another's interests. This is what we refer to as the policy of peaceful coexistence.

The Soviet Union is convinced that everything possible must be done to achieve this goal. This is precisely the purpose of the new efforts undertaken by the Soviet Union, including such a major step as the introduction of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions, coupled with an appeal to the United States to follow this example. We have proposed to the United States that both sides should completely ban space-strike weapons and effect a truly radical 50 per cent reduction in their nuclear arms capable of reaching each other's territory. There is little need to say how much this would strengthen strategic stability and mutual trust.

The USSR has unilaterally suspended the deployment of its medium-range missiles in Europe. At present, in order to facilitate an agreement on an early mutual reduction of such systems, we consider it possible to conclude an agreement to this effect separately, with no direct link to the problem of space and nuclear arms. During the visit to France of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, a number of serious initiatives by the USSR were announced.

Combined with our previous actions, our latest proposals constitute a programme of constructive and realistic measures whose implementation would result in a change for the better in the explosive situation threatening peace. We expect the West to respond to our proposals by covering its part of the road.

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For objective reasons, ensuring non-militarization of space is now of key importance in reducing the nuclear threat. We heard with satisfaction the same notion expressed by the representative of Mexico, Mr. Garcia Robles, whose statement on various other aspects also deserves the highest commendation. Those who like to dictate their will to other countries and nations regard space as pivotal to their plans for upsetting the strategic equilibrium, an equilibrium which makes it possible for each side, even if it is subjected to a nuclear attack, to retain sufficient strategic capacity to strike an equally devastating blow at the aggressor, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind that starting a nuclear war is tantamount to suicide.

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Everyone understands that durable peace cannot be built merely on fear of retaliation. However, the question remains: where should one look for an alternative to fear or, speaking in military terms, deterrence? The Soviet Union believes that the way out is to stop the nuclear arms race and to bring military forces down to the lowest possible balanced level. Implementation of the programme that we have put forward would mean substantial progress towards the goal to which all nations aspire and which is so important for them, namely, prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons and completely ridding mankind of the threat of nuclear war. This task should be tackled immediately, before it is too late.

As noted in numerous decisions of the United Nations General Assembly, parity is a good prerequisite for first stopping the build-up of nuclear arms and then proceeding to their radical reduction. A realistic and responsible policy should be aimed at ensuring precisely such a solution and making use of the existing opportunities.

However, diametrically opposite goals are pursued by the "star wars" plan, the so-called strategic defense initiative of the United States. Its officially declared objective is to create a large-scale anti-missile defence. In conditions of nuclear-missile face-off, the very fact of declaring such an aim amounts to seeking a potential for resorting to a nuclear attack or blackmail with impunity; for it is obvious that if one side thought that it could deprive the other side of its ability appropriately to retaliate against the aggression, the aggressor might be tempted to launch or threaten to launch a first disarming nuclear strike.

It is not accidental that against the background of talk about the defensive nature of the "star wars" programme there is a continued build-up of the United States offensive potential. All its elements are being given a first-strike capability. Hence, the intention is to render unnecessary and obsolete the weapons

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of only one side, that is, the defensive potential of the USSR, rather than all nuclear weapons. It is relevant to recall a remark made in December 1983 by the United States Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, that if the USSR, rather than the United States, embarked upon the development of a large-scale ballistic missile defence, it "would be one of the most frightening prospects I could imagine". A White House document issued last January stated that, should this happen, the United States "would have no choices between surrender and suicide". Both those quotations are from page A14 of The New York Times of 8 March 1985. Presumably, this is precisely the situation in which the proponents of "star wars" would like to place the Soviet Union.

The so-called defensive "star wars" systems are nothing but space strike weapons. They would be intended for attacking not only missiles but also satellites. They would be targeted above all at surveillance satellites of the other side so as to "blind" its strategic retaliatory forces. They could also be used from space for striking land-based, air-based and sea-based targets, including missiles in their launch sites and command and control centres.

The appearance of space strike weapons, which would have automatic, global and practically instantaneous action, would open a qualitatively new stage in the arms race. Uncontrollable processes could be unleashed. The risk of nuclear war being started either deliberately or by accident would sharply increase. Such weapons would be capable of appearing over any region or State at any time and striking any target. It is clear that the aggressive circles, should they acquire a space "big stick", could develop an illusion of being permitted to do anything with impunity.

It is important to emphasize that what is involved here is an entirely new class of means of warfare. The existing surveillance and communication satellites are not weapons in the proper sense of the word. They cannot "shoot" or kill.

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Moreover, to a certain extent they even contribute to maintaining strategic stability, specifically by depriving the other side of an ability to launch a surprise attack. In this regard it is incorrect to assert that space has already been militarized. An arms race in space would be started if weapons intended for striking targets both in space and on Earth from space were to be placed in space, and if weapons designed for striking targets in space were to appear on Earth.

In this context, I should like to endorse the viewpoint expressed by the Foreign Minister of France, Mr. Dumas, to the effect that "the deployment of new types of anti-missile or anti-satellite weapons on earth or in space would lead to a new race, with its risk of destabilizing effects" (A/40/PV.10, page 66).

The need for preventing such an evolution has been emphasized in recent years by the United Nations General Assembly. One may recall the resolution on preventing an arms race in space which was endorsed last year by 150 States. As we all know, only one country did not support that decision. Its representatives state that they do not intend to abandon the strategic defence initiatives, while depicting the "star wars" plan as a research programme which does not yet mean the beginning of an arms race in space.

There should be complete clarity about this question. First of all, this programme cannot be regarded as research. It is sufficient to consider its scope to see that this is the first stage of a project aimed at developing space strike weapons. Seventy billion dollars will be spent on it over the next few years. At current prices this is more than four times the cost of the Manhattan Project, which led to the development of the atomic bomb, and more than twice the cost of the Apollo programme, which culminated in man's landing on the moon.

Even now the so-called research goes far beyond theoretical studies. Reports are continually coming in about the development and, in some cases, the testing, of

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prototypes of space strike weapons such as chemical and X-ray lasers, electromagnetic guns, interceptor missiles and anti-satellite systems. As recently as 13 September last the United States conducted a test of the anti-satellite (ASAT) complex, destroying an active satellite which had been used for scientific purposes. Thus the first victim, a peaceful space object, has already been sacrificed on the altar of "star wars".

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One cannot but note that the ASAT testing took place immediately following the Soviet Union's proposal at the United Nations on the peaceful exploration of outer space and while the Soviet Union's unilateral moratorium on placing anti-satellite weapons in space was in effect.

Assertions that the United States is "catching up" with the Soviet Union in developing anti-satellite weapons are intended for the uninformed. The United States was the first country to test such weapons back in 1959. In the early 1960s the United States deployed two land-based anti-satellite complexes on Kwajalein atoll and Johnston island. Thus at present it is already developing a second-generation anti-satellite system.

As for the Soviet Union, forced to take counter-measures, it began tests of anti-satellite systems much later. However, they were suspended after the introduction of the Soviet Union's unilateral moratorium in 1983. Our country is, of course, doing space research, including military-related space research, but it is aimed at improving space surveillance and communications systems and not at developing strike weapons or anti-ballistic missile systems banned, as is well known, by the 1972 anti-ballistic missile Treaty.

In the meantime every step to implement the "star wars" programme inevitably results in undermining the Soviet-United States strategic arms-limitation agreements, above all the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, which bans the development as well as the testing and deployment of space-based anti-ballistic missile components. The Treaty's overall objective is to prevent precisely what the "star wars" programme seeks to achieve, namely, the development of a large-scale anti-ballistic missile system.

"Star wars", however, undermines not only the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, but the entire process of strategic-arms limitation and reduction. In the words of the Treaty, its signatories consider:

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"that effective measures to limit anti-ballistic missile systems would be a substantial factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms and would lead to a decrease in the risk of outbreak of war involving nuclear weapons".

It is clear that the consequences of the development of a ballistic-missile defence would be quite the reverse.

This organic interrelationship exists objectively and is of an enduring nature. It will not disappear with the advent of new sophisticated space-weapon systems.

The development and deployment in space of strike weapons by one side will require that the other side restore the equilibrium that would thereby be upset. This will inevitably lead to a quantitative increase and qualitative upgrading of strategic nuclear weapons and will dash the hopes of humanity for their limitation and reduction. It is in effect being frankly admitted today that one of the reasons for the reluctance of the United States to conduct talks on the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests is that nuclear tests may become necessary to develop "star wars" systems.

With the militarization of outer space, an unconstrained arms race would spread in all directions. The pendulum of action and reaction would begin to swing with an ever-widening amplitude. The furnace of the arms race would devour additional colossal resources that otherwise could serve the cause of mankind's peaceful development. Those resources are indispensable, both for the progress of science and technology in space exploration and for the solution of other urgent problems facing the peoples. Militarization, like a painful, incurable disease, would spread to all areas of space activities. It would create insurmountable barriers to the development of international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of outer space.

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It is obvious that co-operation in space is unthinkable without a certain degree of trust and without a free exchange of scientific information and ideas. In conditions of a spiralling arms race, however, relations among the leading space Powers would be dominated by mistrust and fear, suspicion and secrecy. Scientists engaged in research would find themselves tightly enclosed in the armour of war.

While space weapons have not yet become a reality there is still time to prevent a new stage in the arms race and ensure for the people a peaceful outer space and confidence in their future. To achieve this goal, courageous and responsible political decisions are needed. This is now becoming a test of political maturity, of the level of humanism and the degree of civilization of society and its leaders.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burma, Mr. Hlaing, emphasized in his statement, "Nothing is more urgent [today] than to prevent the militarization of outer space". (A/40/PV.13, p. 97) The Assembly heard words of wisdom from President Sarney of Brazil, who said that:

"Celestial space has always been the purest image of peace. Let us preserve the infinite sky as a frontier that weapons must never violate". (A/40/PV.4, p. 12)

The Soviet Union agrees with such an approach, which is imbued with the realization of responsibility for the destinies of the world. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Eduard A. Shevardnadze, emphasized in his statement before the plenary meeting that:

"There should be no repetition of the mistake made four decades ago when States and the peoples of the world were unable to prevent the great intellectual achievement of the mid-twentieth century - the release of the energy of the atomic nucleus - from becoming a means of mass annihilation of human beings. This is a folly which should not be allowed to recur at the end

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of this century when mankind, having filled the first pages of its space history, is facing a choice: space will either help to improve the living conditions on our planet or it will become the source of a new and deadly danger". (A/40/PV.6, p. 77)

The Soviet Union proposes that the General Assembly should once again most strongly urge all States, in particular those which possess major space potential, immediately to reach agreement on effective measures aimed at preventing an arms race in space. This would create conditions for wide-ranging international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Until only recently, space was the realm of science-fiction writers, but it has now become a theatre of man's practical activities. Suffice it to say that, since the day when the Soviet Union launched its first artificial satellite, over 3,000 unmanned and manned vehicles have been placed in space by various countries. There remains not a single area of scientific inquiry whose achievements would not be used in space science and technology. Similarly, there is no science and, in general, no field of human activity which would not feel, directly or indirectly, the impact of space research. Further exploration of outer space would open to mankind truly boundless prospects, including possibilities of solving large-scale problems on Earth.

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The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Vayrynen said:

"Now that new technologies are making the economic utilization of space even more attractive ... the time has come to think about a more comprehensive approach to the use and management of this resource." (A/40/PV.6, p. 37)

The Soviet Union is proposing the implementation of a complex of specific measures that would help combine the concerted efforts of States in the peaceful use of space technology for the benefit of all countries. This is spelled out in detail in the document submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly which is entitled "Main directions and principles of international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of outer space in conditions of its non-militarization". (A/40/132)

Such co-operation, in the view of the Soviet Union, could be implemented in the ascendant, ranging from exchanges of scientific and technical information to pooling the efforts of States for the solution of large-scale problems of space exploration. Eventually, joint operation of orbital factories manufacturing new materials and industrial products in conditions of deep vacuum and weightlessness would also become a reality.

Even now it is possible to set in motion work both in fundamental space research and in space technology applications. The possibility of the development and utilization of space technology, including large international orbital scientific stations as well as manned spacecraft of various types, is well within reach.

To organize and implement the interaction of States, a world space agency, entrusted with important functions, could be established. It would give all States mutually beneficial and non-discriminatory access to the results of scientific and

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technological achievements, implement international space projects, help involve the developing countries in space activities, and promote utilization by those countries of the practical results of such activities. It goes without saying that no conditions infringing on their sovereignty would be imposed.

The organization could also assume the necessary function of verifying compliance with agreements which have been or will be concluded concerning the prevention of an arms race in space.

Naturally, the peaceful exploration of space should be based on the principles stemming from the United Nations Charter.

Along with all this, however, it is necessary to emphasize the indisputable and objective fact that qualitatively higher international co-operation in space can develop unimpeded only in conditions of its non-militarization. Such co-operation requires strict compliance with the treaties aimed at preventing an arms race in space. This constitutes an integral part of the Soviet proposal.

Today, when there are no strike weapons in space, such conditions exist. Therefore we propose that a representative international conference should be convened not later than in 1987 to consider in its entirety the question of international co-operation in the exploration of space and to agree on its main directions and principles.

The conditions necessary for such co-operation will continue to exist in the future if space remains free from weapons and if a ban is imposed on the development, including research, and the testing and deployment of space strike weapons.

We approach the issue from concrete and realistic positions. That is why we are saying frankly that the success of the conference would be facilitated by genuine movement towards the solution of the problem of preventing the spread of

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weapons into outer space. Thus, the task of convening the conference, as well as establishing an international space organization, should become an integral part of efforts to prevent the militarization of space. It is clear that the adoption by this session of a decision along the lines of the Soviet proposal would be a major contribution to accomplishing this task.

Naturally, such an important and positive step by the United Nations would help create a favourable climate for the work of the existing forums where space issues are being discussed. This concerns the bilateral Soviet-American negotiations in Geneva, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Soviet Union is in favour of energetically continuing all those efforts and striving for appropriate practical results. What we want is not to substitute one forum for another but to give an impulse to progress in all directions leading to the prevention of an arms race in space and to its peaceful utilization.

We are convinced that the proposals of the Soviet Union would contribute both to a better understanding among States and to the effective utilization of mankind's material and intellectual resources. A fresh impulse would be given to the development of science and technology. An important step would be made in using the achievements of space exploration for the benefit of the economic and social progress of the peoples. This would bring closer the solution of global problems, including the most urgent ones such as the elimination of hunger and disease and overcoming the economic backwardness of the developing countries.

Such an approach to space is certainly not directed against any State. It is important to emphasize its non-confrontational character. In substance, it is in harmony with the broadest interests of the whole of mankind and, indeed, of the

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whole planet. I wish to quote in this connection the words of the founder of the theory of space travel, Konstantin E. Tsiolkovsky, who said that in the development of space technology it was necessary "to set peaceful and noble goals for conquering the universe for the benefit of mankind".

The substance of the USSR proposal is that we should once and for all adopt a decision worthy of the people living in the space age - "star peace" instead of "star wars". This would be a major step towards relaxation of tension and implementation of the lofty goals of the United Nations aimed at the development of international co-operation, towards saving present and succeeding generations from the source of war.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the USSR for his kind words addressed to me and to the other officers of the Committee. Before I adjourn the meeting, I wish to remind members that the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament agenda items will be closed on Wednesday, 16 October, at 6 p.m. Therefore, I urge delegations kindly to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.