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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Mr. AL-BATTASHI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to express to you, on behalf of my country, my congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I wish you success in your well-deserved post. There could be no better Chairman to succeed your predecessor.

Allow me at the outset to affirm my country's keen interest that our deliberations in the First Committee at this session should lead to recommendations and resolutions on the many issues of interest to us as an international community.

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

The General Assembly meets this year at a time of international détente following the end of the cold war between the two super-Powers. We welcome the positive signs of the prevalent climate of détente, which have shown that dialogue, negotiation and respect for the interests of others are the best way to live in a more secure and more peaceful world. The world regards as good signs the ratification in the United States and the Soviet Union of the agreement concluded between them to eliminate their intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear weapons in Europe and the intended reduction of their arsenals of strategic weapons. We commend the great and sincere efforts made by both the President of the United States and the President of the Soviet Union to curb the arms race and limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. However, the world looks forward to the complete elimination of all devastating weapons as it is not enough to reduce their number and prevent their proliferation.

Disarmament is not the concern of any single country; rather, it is a matter of interest to all nations and all peoples. Therefore, we must take earnest joint action to formulate a comprehensive disarmament programme, to adopt the policy of collective security and apply the principle of solving all international problems by peaceful means, without the threat of force.

While we support all the efforts aimed at halting all nuclear tests and explosions, we hope that those efforts will not become an end in themselves, but a step towards the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction. The world should be free of such weapons so that people may live in peace and security.

In order for us to realize humanity's aspiration after a world without nuclear weapons we must take concrete action, such as the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Therefore, the Sultanate of Oman supports all the proposals to that end, especially the proposal to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. Here we wish to draw the international

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

community's attention to the grave threat posed by Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and its increased nuclear capability, which threaten destruction and annihilation not only to the Middle East, but to the whole world, particularly since that country arrogantly refuses to place its nuclear installations to international control. Recognizing that that posture could lead to destruction and instability in the region, the Sultanate of Oman strongly supports the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard. We believe that the international community must intensify its efforts and seriously consider the need to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. All peace-loving States should take that need into account and deprive Israel of any help that may enable it to develop further its nuclear capabilities.

Ever since it became a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which is preparing for the United Nations Conference on the implementation of the General Assembly's Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the Sultanate of Oman has contributed in every way possible to ensure the success of the Committee's work so that the Conference may be convened at its scheduled time. However, most regrettably, certain States have not shown the necessary flexibility in their positions. This has resulted in difficulties that may obstruct the convening of the Conference, as scheduled, at Colombo, in 1991. The behaviour of those States could have been justified in the days of confrontation between the two super-Powers, but it can no longer be justified, now that the world is for the first time enjoying the fruits of the end of the cold war and the dawn of international détente. We are hopeful that those States will change their positions and show a true spirit of détente and show more enthusiasm for progress in preparing for the conference in 1991.

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

We also greatly welcome the proposed declaration by the States of South East Asia of their desire not to possess or acquire nuclear weapons. While welcoming the declaration, we call on the States of the area to intensify their efforts to take practical steps to implement the declaration. We urge those States that did not respond positively to the proposal to show flexibility and to co-operate with the efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South East Asia, so that the declaration may result in a binding legal agreement.

The Sultanate of Oman fully supports all the efforts to curb the practice of certain transnational corporations of dumping nuclear, toxic and radioactive wastes in the territories of developing countries, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and the South Pacific especially that those States are not responsible for producing the material that result in such wastes.

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

If such unethical practices persist, they will pose a threat to and have grave implications for the environment and all living beings in those States. We think the international community must deal resolutely with this problem. It should do all it can to contain the proliferation and dumping in all environments of toxic wastes of any kind. Those efforts should culminate in a comprehensive and binding legal agreement that addresses the issue in all its aspects.

The concept of international security in its broadest sense requires close attention to all vital environmental issues such as climatic change, toxic-waste disposal, and environmentally safe development. This is closely connected with the need to view outer space as the common heritage of all mankind.

We earnestly appeal to all the countries which possess the scientific, technological and economic capability not to use outer space as an arena for conflict and not to extend the arms race to outer space and thus expose mankind to annihilation. To be sure, we applaud every scientific breakthrough by any developed country in exploring outer space provided it benefits mankind. We urge that outer space be made an arena of peaceful scientific experiments and exploration that would benefit science and lead to the prosperity of all mankind.

We are acutely concerned by Israel's activities in outer space, such as its launching of a spy satellite for spying on the military and defensive capabilities of Arab and African States. This leads to military imbalance in the region and opens wide the door to the arms race, thus posing a grave threat to international peace and security.

The question of maritime armament is problematical, but it deserves attention. In that connection, the Sultanate of Oman considers it imperative to take all necessary security- and confidence-building measures in order to reduce the threat posed by the possibility of naval confrontation and incidents at sea,

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

especially in the case of vessels carrying nuclear weapons. International efforts should be coupled with bilateral efforts in this respect. Negotiations should be held in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. There is also a need for security guarantees for non-military activities at sea, for coastal States, and for neutral-State shipping at times of conflict.

Any talk of disarmament should include conventional disarmament, which is inseparable from the whole if we want a more peaceful, secure world. Since the Second World War, the world has witnessed many devastating wars that have been fought with conventional weapons. Those wars have cost the world millions of lives, millions of grieving mothers, millions of widows, and millions of wounded and crippled victims. Great wealth was squandered on the acquisition of such weapons. We still see a feverish desire on the part of many States to hasten to acquire weapons and to squander stupendous sums on sophisticated military matériel, at a time when many suffer from starvation, drought and desertification. There must be concrete steps to end this unbridled race by reducing military budgets. The greatest responsibility in this area naturally rests with the major Powers.

In this regard, we wish to commend the efforts made in the framework of the Stockholm Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) aimed at reductions in conventional weapons.

Recently, since the emergence of international détente, events in many parts of the world have demonstrated that diplomacy and dialogue are the ideal means of settling international conflicts and disputes. Military force is sterile and has become an anachronistic approach that should be abandoned. We all aspire for the

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

abandonment of military force; this requires that all States abide scrupulously by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and by all United Nations resolutions. States should abandon the use or threat of the use of force in the settlement of international disputes. Dialogue and negotiations should be the sole means of settling such disputes. There must be no interference or intervention in the internal affairs of any State.

That would create the sense of security that is required for disarmament efforts to be concerted and effective. We look forward to the day when peace and harmony will prevail among all peoples, irrespective of country and region.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish at the outset to congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. The delegation of Egypt is convinced that with your enormous diplomatic experience you will successfully steer the Committee's work this year and enable us to achieve our desired goals. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

A perusal of this year's agenda of the First Committee reveals many items pertaining to international security and disarmament. We wish to highlight two of those items. First is the interrelationship between the current international developments, the new international political order and the items on the First Committee's agenda on issues of international security and disarmament. Secondly, we should consider the framework in which the First Committee can act in the light of such developments and any progress that can be achieved in the area of disarmament without the participation of the United Nations.

In the past, the challenge that faced the United Nations was to solve the difficult problem of dealing at one and the same time with the issues of international security and the elimination of their political and ideological causes in such a way as to make possible the achievement of real progress towards disarmament and the halting of the terrible arms race which hinders the attainment of the minimal level of co-operation and harmony that is needed to overcome political and ideological differences and the achievement of consensus on international security issues.

Today however, in the new, post-cold war era that has been described rightfully as the era of the establishment of a new international order, the world must shed yesterday's concepts of security which stemmed from the rivalry between the two super-Powers, the existence of two main military alliances and the belief

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

that security could be ensured through military might. The two super-Powers and the other nuclear Powers remain responsible for formulating a new concept of international security pursuant to the responsibilities mandated to them by the Charter. These are heavy responsibilities indeed, but they have to be shouldered. While we believe that the major Powers continue to bear these responsibilities, we in Egypt are convinced that other States will have to shoulder increasing responsibilities in the future.

It is extremely important that the nuclear Powers should pay heed to the thinking and positions of the non-nuclear-weapon States in the field of nuclear disarmament. There is no doubt that the honest and full discharge of the responsibilities of the nuclear Powers requires interaction with the positions of the non-nuclear-weapon States and response to their legitimate needs. It is also incumbent upon the international community to acknowledge that the other States, especially the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, have to respond to those changes by posing their own concepts of their future security needs and wrenching for themselves a greater and more effective role and a greater say in the international arena. That is a role those other States can have only when they become active in putting forward new thinking and new proposals. That is something we look forward to in the near future.

The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ended in Geneva a few weeks ago without a final declaration. We have listened here to various points of view and different assessments of what has happened in the Conference and its effect on the future of the Treaty. As we all know, this was not the first time that the Review Conference concluded without a final declaration. The Review Conference in 1980 also failed

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to issue a final declaration without any ill effect on the Treaty and its provisions. Egypt's delegation has no doubt that the ban on nuclear testing, which was the bone of contention that prevented the Conference from adopting a final declaration, is a highly significant question whose importance increases from one day to the next, as it has to do with the interpretation of basic provisions of the Treaty. Hence the need to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament should address this issue profoundly and earnestly and ensure the success of the Conference on the Partial Test-ban Treaty that is scheduled to meet here in New York, next January.

The great majority of States believe that the non-proliferation Treaty is the corner-stone of nuclear disarmament and a crucial instrument for the preservation and consolidation of international peace and security. The Treaty's effectiveness is inevitably affected by two factors: First, the extent of its success in being truly universal and, secondly, the extent of its contribution to the prevention of horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

There is no doubt that the decision by France and China to participate as observers in the Review Conference's work must be welcomed as a step towards the Treaty's universality. We hope that this will be followed by more concrete steps.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

In this respect, Egypt's delegation would like to reiterate the appeal to Israel and South Africa to accede as promptly as possible to the Treaty.

With regard to the non-proliferation régime, it is worth mentioning that the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty are entitled to voice a legitimate aspiration for credible security guarantees. In effect, Security Council resolution 255 (1968) implicitly recognizes the principle of giving such security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States. However, that resolution does not mention all the necessary detailed guarantees which are required by any State that may be exposed to the threat or the use of nuclear weapons, especially as two States, permanent members of the Security Council, refused to vote in favour of the resolution. On the other hand, the resolution did not add any new element to the system of collective security stipulated in the Charter, but limited itself to referring to the right of collective self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter. Notwithstanding the individual declarations issued by the five permanent members of the Council whereby they undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, those declarations, with the exception of that of China, cannot be regarded as unconditional guarantees.

We have to enlarge further our understanding and consideration of Security Council resolution 255 (1968) and consider whether or not that resolution, which was adopted before the coming into force of the Treaty, is adequate to meet the future requirements of non-nuclear-weapon States, especially as certain nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States have not yet acceded to the Treaty.

Egypt calls upon the Security Council to adopt a new resolution containing credible and dependable guarantees that go beyond the terms of Security Council resolution 255 (1968). We hope that the five permanent members of the Security

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

Council will take part in preparing and presenting such a resolution and that the five permanent members will commit themselves unconditionally therein to deter any threat or actual nuclear aggression and provide assistance to non-nuclear-weapon States should they be exposed to nuclear-weapon attack.

After the end of the Fourth Review Conference, Egypt sent messages to the five nuclear Powers wherein it referred to the conclusions that the Fourth Review Conference had been on the point of reaching with regard to safeguarding non-nuclear-weapon States from nuclear-weapon attacks. I once again seize this opportunity to call for responding to the consensus which prevailed in the Fourth Review Conference in this respect, and call for the adoption of another resolution to strengthen Security Council resolution 255 (1968) in the desired direction.

The importance for non-nuclear-weapon States of credible guarantees was reflected also in the initiative by Nigeria, which aims at the signing of an international treaty wherein the depository nuclear-weapon-States would undertake not to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States. Egypt hopes that this Nigerian initiative will be successful.

I now refer to the convention on the complete prohibition of the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. The Conference on Disarmament considered this matter in Geneva at its two 1990 sessions. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Hyltenius, demonstrated competence and experience which are most commendable. However we must admit that 1990 has witnessed no real progress towards concluding the convention. There are still wide differences of opinion on many important issues. I shall not proceed to analyse the reasons for the failure of the 1989 Paris Conference, because the Conference on Disarmament may be the proper forum for such a review. However, I would wish to single out a few important aspects:

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

First, we must be very clear as to the nature and general orientation of the convention. There is international unanimity on the need to achieve a total ban, and not a régime that would prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons. We find that the proposals which have been put forward contain certain loopholes which may be interpreted as aiming at a non-proliferation régime and not at a total ban.

Secondly, there is a considerable difference between the production of chemical weapons and the production of nuclear weapons. Moreover, it is much more difficult to apply verification measures in the case of chemical weapons. For these reasons, universality of the convention has been a sine qua non, from the very beginning. The international community cannot tolerate a repetition of the situation with regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty which still lacks universality 20 years after its conclusion. Therefore, Egypt's delegation believes that the issue of universality should be given absolute priority henceforth and that all States must participate actively in the elaboration of the convention.

In this context, the delegation of Egypt supports the holding of a disarmament conference at the ministerial level to consider all pending issues and adopt all the political decisions required to complete the formulation of the convention next year.

Egypt has also proposed the holding of meetings in the final stages that would be open to participation by all States so that every State will be involved in the preparations and committed to abide by the obligations that will arise from the convention.

Thirdly, the main objective of disarmament agreements is security. In the case of chemical weapons, the new convention must contain precise clear provisions regarding security guarantees for States parties and credible effective sanctions

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

to be implemented by the new organization which will be set up or by the Security Council upon the recommendation of the said organization, according to the nature of the breach.

Clearly, any fundamental change in the concept of international security will entail, as of necessity, changes and developments in certain concepts of regional security. Therefore, it is important to mobilize efforts to address the many regional conflicts in various parts of the world, which have been attracting increasing attention recently, especially in areas of tension.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

In this respect, Egypt commends the recent progress achieved in Europe, especially in the light of Europe's continuing concern with neighbouring regions. The most outstanding example of this tendency is the initiative by Italy and Spain which calls for a conference on the security of the coastal States of the Mediterranean. The initiative has been welcomed by the co-ordinators of the non-aligned Mediterranean states, namely Yugoslavia, Egypt and Algeria.

Moreover, Egypt put forward a number of initiatives at the regional level. We continue to work towards the implementation of the declaration of Africa as a non-nuclear-weapon continent. This call was initiated by the African Summit which was held in Cairo over a quarter of a century ago.

Egypt has put forward concrete proposals on the Middle East region. We all know that arsenals in the Middle East have continued to mushroom due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iraq-Iran conflict and, most recently, the occupation and invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

Matters have been complicated further by Israel's refusal to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or to place its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards - despite the appeals of the General Assembly in the resolutions adopted annually by consensus, on the initiative of Egypt, to declare the Middle East a non-nuclear-weapon zone.

The Secretary-General has completed recently the study requested by the General Assembly two years ago. We hope that the study will be considered carefully by the parties concerned. In this respect, I wish to thank Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for their constructive efforts in this respect.

Egypt was one of the first countries to take up the question of the postures of the various States in the Middle East on disarmament. It drew attention to the

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need urgently to address the issue of stockpiling weapons of mass destruction in the region before it became too late. On 18 April 1990, President Mohammed Hosni Mubarek announced a new Egyptian initiative whereby the Middle East would be declared an area free from any weapon of mass destruction. The initiative called for the following: first, the prohibition without exception of weapons of mass destruction in the countries of the Middle East - secondly, the co-equal and concomitant commitment by all the States of the region to this prohibition; and, thirdly, the introduction of appropriate verification measures that would ensure full compliance by all the states of the region without exception with the prohibition.

The initiative enjoyed extensive support on various levels. Egypt is studying at present concrete measures of implementation which it will propose at the appropriate time. It is now in consultation with the countries of the region and other regions on the means of achieving the objectives of the initiative, so that the Middle East may be declared a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction under effective verification measures. As the obligations and measures arising there from should be observed by all on an equal footing, without discrimination, we hope that all States in the region will co-operate with us fully in this respect.

In conclusion, I wish to speak briefly of the future work of the First Committee. The time has come to discuss fully and objectively the question of security in a rapidly changing world. A comprehensive review of the role the First Committee should play will be in order because without such consideration the effectiveness of this Committee could be questioned. Egypt welcomes the consultations that are to be held on this matter. A successful outcome is very much required by the international community.

Mr. AGUILAR (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): As this is the first time that my delegation has participated in the general debate of the First Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. The delegation of Guatemala assures you of its co-operation in ensuring the successful performance of your important duties.

We wish also to thank the Secretariat for the reports submitted to the Committee.

General and complete disarmament has been one of the fundamental goals of the United Nations since its inception. The founding members of the Organization resolved in San Francisco

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Clearly, at that time it could not be foreseen that many thousands of human beings would die in wars that could not be defined as world wars. There have been more than 150 wars since 1945, costing the lives of 20 million persons, most of them civilians. Guatemala and the Central American subregion have not escaped this persisting scourge. While the conflicts have not been international in character, the region has been convulsed by fratricidal struggles and domestic armed conflicts, which have caused more poverty, desolation and bereavement. But successful efforts have certainly led to changes in social relations. Now there is a democratic opening in all countries. The desire for peace is unprecedented. The five countries have renewed their efforts to find joint solutions to joint problems. Peace, development and democracy are inseparable. We are engaged in the struggle to ensure respect for these three basic principles.

To be sure many of these wars have been movements to free territories from anachronistic colonial systems. Others have been caused by the despair of the

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

dispossessed majority as they try to improve their living standards and free themselves from the yoke of exploitation, poverty and injustice. Many of these situations were used by the major Powers, which, embroiled in a cold war, caused confrontation and unleashed ideological battles in the developing countries. The year 1989 has gone down in the annals of history, largely because of the drastic change that has taken place in the course of history. The cold war has ended. Peace was achieved in September 1990 when the super-Powers renounced their presence on German territory and on 3 October 1990, allowed the German people to unite, thus ending the Second World War.

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

This year the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the President of the Soviet Union for his efforts to promote peace and disarmament. We congratulate him on his endeavour and express our hope that general and complete disarmament, particularly with regard to weapons of mass destruction, will become a reality, thereby freeing people from the threat of total destruction and making it possible for them to invest their intellect, their human and financial resources in the progress of all mankind towards well-being and peace.

This historic relationship is necessary, in that it enables us to catch a glimpse of a world of peace, hope and renewed efforts for the full development of the human being, once freed from the uncertainty of the tense relations between the super-Powers who, in their eagerness to dominate the world, invested billions of dollars in the machinery of war and destruction. The economic and social aspects of human development were therefore of little importance. Interest was focused on destruction, not construction. Hatred, racism, oppression, discrimination, domination and neo-colonialism were fomented. The emphasis was laid on what divides us and on the advantages of force. Today mankind has the equivalent of 1 million bombs like those that were used at Hiroshima. At the same time 30 children in the developing world are dying every day from malnutrition, hunger or preventable illness - and every minute the world is spending \$1.7 million for military purposes.

As of 1987, \$900 billion were spent per year, and arms transfers to the developing world were estimated at \$30 billion per year. How much could be accomplished in developing countries with such sums of money - if not with all of it at least with half of it! According to reports of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs the United Nations could operate for two centuries with the budget that has been used for one year on war machinery.

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

Guatemala openly supports the efforts of the international community to achieve general and complete disarmament, particularly as regards weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical and bacteriological. It condemns their use and welcomes the fact that the super-Powers have agreed not to be the first to use them. We are deeply concerned about the production, stockpiling and use or threat of use of such weapons, particularly the use of chemical weapons anywhere in the world and most recently in the Persian Gulf, where they have been used.

Guatemala condemns the Iraqi invasion of Kuwaiti territory, which not only constitutes an act that flouts the principles and purposes of the United Nations but also imperils international peace and security. There can be no doubt that this constitutes a reversal of the efforts that have been made to achieve general and complete disarmament. In the course of the first half of this year the machinery used to prepare war had been prepared for investment in civilian development, but today it has been rediscovered that the business of war and destruction continues to be profitable.

We note with concern that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons ended without adopting a final declaration. In our view, it is imperative that there should be an agreement to prohibit the testing of nuclear weapons. Guatemala will continue to support any efforts towards prohibiting any kind of weapons of mass destruction.

Guatemala considers it important to continue efforts to achieve full transparency in international weapons transfers as the most effective way to maintain control and promote the limitation of such transfers. Transparency in transfers could certainly promote confidence-building measures. The secrecy that surrounds the transfer of weapons has made it possible for war to prevail over peace and harmony.

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

My delegation believes that we should investigate the transfer of arms to armed opposition groups, particularly in developing countries. Similarly, one should investigate the relationship between the production and illegal trafficking in drugs and the trade in conventional weapons as a means used to destabilize a number of developing countries and to endanger the incipient processes of democratization and peace.

Guatemala is a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We support the resolutions that were adopted in this Committee and we have co-sponsored them. It should however be emphasized that three countries in our own Latin American and Caribbean region have as yet not become parties to that Treaty. There is also one European country that still has possessions in our region that has not yet become a party to Additional Protocol I, which impairs this important regional peace initiative. It must be fully implemented throughout the whole region and we appeal to all countries to do so as soon as possible. Guatemala condemns the use of any territory in Latin America and the Caribbean region as an area for nuclear tests or any other kinds of tests. We support the declarations of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace wherever they may be established throughout the world.

I should like to refer now to efforts that have been made in the Central American region to obtain general and complete disarmament. Once the Esquipulas II Agreement was endorsed, the Central American Presidents decided to move towards peace and democracy and to encourage respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Central Americans. This was successful in several areas, particularly with regard to the democratization and the opening of societies to political pluralism. Countries where there have been internal conflicts have begun talks with the armed opposition groups through commissions for national reconciliation.

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

Latin American and Caribbean countries in particular and the international community in general have openly supported the peace process that began in 1986.

The United Nations took part in peace-keeping operations when it established the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA). The International Verification and Follow-up Commission has done groundwork, particularly in the dismantling of the Contras in Nicaragua, where for the first time in recent history it was possible to destroy weapons and war matériel, the vestiges of which are being used to manufacture prostheses for those who have been wounded in the war. We think this practice should be adopted throughout the region as well as elsewhere in the world. The super-Powers have used them in a commemorative work of art, which was donated to the United Nations. These are examples of the drastic change in priorities that must be made in order to bring about a real improvement in human life.

The negotiating processes have promoted the establishment of policies to enhance mutual trust and it has been possible in this way to reconvene the Security Commission in compliance with the appeal contained in Esquipulas II and the Antigua Declaration with a view to consolidating the process of peace and democracy. The Republic of Panama was invited to participate in those meetings as an observer.

In July the following objectives were set: first, to ensure that the armed forces of the countries of the region would be defensive rather than offensive and used only to defend the sovereignty, the territory and the domestic order; secondly, to ensure that the armed forces in the countries of the area would maintain a reasonable balance or an equilibrium that would be proportionate and comprehensive in arms, matériel and personnel and in a way that would mean they would not be a threat to neighbouring countries; thirdly, to define a new model of

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

of security relations among Central American States, based on co-operation, co-ordination, communication and prevention; and fourthly, to obtain commitments with regard to the foreign military presence in the region.

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the Commission decided to define the factors that should be taken into consideration in setting military requirements; in establishing inventories of weapons and military personnel; in defining limitations or reductions as a result of comparative analyses; in setting limits that could be exceeded in dealing with domestic conflicts or subversive movements in the area; in reviewing and continuing negotiations on bases, installations, manoeuvres and foreign military advisers. It was considered necessary to establish machinery for monitoring and verification, and the Commission would also promote agreements leading to a climate of trust among the States of the region, thereby promoting good-neighbourliness, friendship, development and co-operation among them.

Moreover, I should like to emphasize that the region has requested co-operation from the United Nations as well as from the Organization of American States. We consider it imperative for the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs to continue participating in the meetings and, when possible, to provide technical and other assistance in this sensitive and praiseworthy task. This is the most important function of the United Nations if it truly is to pursue the principles and aims for which it was established. This effort to establish peace and security and promote friendship and co-operation among countries must be supported by the nations of the world.

The Security Commission met in San Salvador on 12 and 13 September, and also last week in Guatemala City. At the meetings in Guatemala at the technical level it was agreed to establish machinery for reporting military levels to the meetings scheduled to be held in Honduras in mid-November. Meetings would be held at intervals no greater than 60 days, and special meetings would be held when

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necessary. For this purpose, we have requested that the necessary technical assistance be made available from the United Nations through the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

In conclusion, I should like to state that the Member States must avail themselves of this time in history to strengthen mankind's spirit of peace. We must work to erase from the minds of men any desire to wage war. This will be possible only by means of renewed efforts to educate the people of the world about the benefits of living in peace and harmony; of support for human rights, freedom of expression and the exchange of ideas; and of the dissemination of information on the needs of mankind in the social and economic fields. The present social and economic situation in the developing world cannot continue. Peace is fragile from any point of view if the necessary conditions are not provided to ensure that human beings can meet their basic needs of food, education and health. The amount of absolute poverty is growing daily. This situation endangers all efforts to maintain peace and security and imperils established democratic institutions that are the only means of peacefully bringing about change to prepare us to meet the challenge of the year 2000.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Kheradi, who wishes to make an announcement.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to document A/C.1/45/6, containing the text of a letter dated 11 October 1990, which has been received from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. The letter refers, inter alia, to a request to the Main Committees of the General Assembly, including the First Committee, to communicate their views to

(Mr. Kheradi)

the Fifth Committee on the relevant programmes of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992 to 1997, as contained in document A/45/6, by 9 November 1990.

The CHAIRMAN: As members know, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under disarmament agenda items 45 to 66 and 155 is Tuesday, 30 October. As we are getting close to that date, it would be appreciated if delegations could kindly submit their draft resolutions to the Secretariat for processing as soon as possible. This is especially so in the context of draft resolutions containing programme budget implications. This will facilitate the work of the Committee and will give enough time for its members to conduct the necessary consultations on them and to make their comments, if they wish to do so, before the Committee proceeds to act upon them and to seek the necessary instructions from their respective Governments.

I wish also to draw the attention of members to the fact that a large number of representatives have inscribed their names to speak during the remaining days allocated to the general debate on disarmament items. Hence, in order to accommodate those delegations, as well as effectively to utilize the time and resources available to the Committee and avoid the unnecessary extension of meetings beyond the regular hours, it will be my intention to start the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp. I look forward to the assistance and co-operation of members in this regard.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.