

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
13th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 23 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/45/PV.13
31 October 1990
ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. BEKOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In the general debate in the First Committee virtually all delegations have shown clearly that the problem of a complete and general nuclear-test ban is not merely urgent but demands immediate solution. The position of the Soviet Union on the question of a nuclear-test ban has already been expressed at the current session of the General Assembly in the statement of the Chairman of the Soviet delegation and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Mr. Shevardnadze, in the plenary meeting and that of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Petrovsky, in the First Committee. The essence of that position is perfectly clear: the USSR resolutely champions the complete banning of nuclear tests and is exerting every effort to ensure that that objective is achieved within the shortest possible time. The position of the USSR Government on this question is an expression of the insistent demands of the Soviet people. It is no accident that the nuclear-testing programme in our country has been reviewed and that since last October the Soviet nuclear ranges have been silent.

To attain its objective the Soviet Union is ready to utilize all available means and methods, including all the possibilities inherent in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the conference to be held in January 1991 for the amendment of the 1963 Moscow Treaty banning nuclear testing in three environments, and the Soviet-American bilateral talks on that subject. It is most important to ensure forward movement, with no stagnation or unjustified delays.

The problem of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon testing long ago became a problem of the survival of mankind. Its solution requires the joint efforts of the

(Mrs. Bekova, USSR)

entire international community, of parliamentarians, the public and, unquestionably, the United Nations. For me, as a member of the Government of the Kazakh SSR, on whose territory lies the Semipalatinsk nuclear-testing range, the issue has particular relevance and is fully appreciated. Kazakhstan, unfortunately, has had direct experience of what is involved. During the 40 years of testing at the Semipalatinsk range, nuclear devices a thousand times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima have been exploded. Furthermore, prior to 1963 many of those tests were carried out in the open. All this has done incalculable damage to the health of the people, to the environment and to the economy of the nearby territories. I express full solidarity with representatives of States who have spoken in the First Committee of the inhumane nature of nuclear testing and the real danger it poses to the health of people and the environment.

In recent years, together with the development in our country of the process of democratization and glasnost, there has emerged in Kazakhstan and throughout the country a strong popular movement in favour of the immediate halting of nuclear tests and the closing of nuclear ranges. Kazakhstan was the birthplace of the powerful movement known as Nevada-Semipalatinsk, whose activities have been widely recognized not only in our country but also abroad.

It is symbolic that the powerful voice of the world public in support of demands for the immediate halting of nuclear testing was sounded in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, at an international congress under the slogan "World electorate against nuclear weapons" held there last May. That congress was attended not only by eminent representatives of the peoples of many countries but also by military personnel, diplomats, doctors and nuclear physicists. Such forums not only give a marked impetus to efforts to ensure the cessation of nuclear testing but also make it possible to understand better the arguments of both the

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opponents and the advocates of nuclear testing, so that a consensus can be reached among all mankind. It was no accident that one result of the congress was a joint appeal by the participants to the leaders of the nuclear States to halt nuclear-weapon testing immediately.

Today, when the world community is entering the post-confrontational era, the cold war is fading into the past and the balance of terror is being replaced by a balance of co-operation and interaction, the task of ending nuclear testing assumes a global dimension encompassing all humanity. That is why on 9 October, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, in connection with the ratification of the Soviet-American Treaties on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear-Weapons Tests and on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, adopted an address to parliaments and the world public stressing that the USSR is ready to turn its moratorium on nuclear testing into a definite and final cessation of such tests if the Government of the United States, either unilaterally or on a basis of reciprocity, will end its own nuclear-testing programmes. Confirming its proposal regarding global nuclear disarmament, the USSR expressed its readiness to become a non-nuclear-weapon State if the other nuclear States will do the same. The address contains an appeal for the immediate ending of nuclear testing and for the holding of a parliamentary referendum to that end. We hope that the parliaments and public of all countries of the world will respond in the immediate future to this appeal by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and that this initiative of the Soviet legislators will be reflected in one of the resolutions on the ending of nuclear testing to be adopted at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Kazakhstan has already made its own choice in favour of the immediate cessation of nuclear testing and the closing of testing ranges. Specific steps in that direction are being taken by the President of the Kazakh SSR, Mr. Nazarbayev,

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the Supreme Soviet and the Government of the Republic. At its very first session, the new Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR adopted a decree supporting the people's demand for the immediate ending of nuclear-weapon testing in its territory. The declaration of the State sovereignty of the Kazakh SSR under discussion at the present time at the second session of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR includes an article banning the production, stockpiling and testing of nuclear weapons on the Republic's territory. The people of Kazakhstan are resolutely opposed to the transfer of the nuclear-weapon-test programme to the territory of any other Republic of the USSR.

On 19 October 1989 the last nuclear-weapon test at the Semipalatinsk range was carried out. We express our conviction that that date will signify an end to nuclear testing in the USSR. We call upon the other nuclear-weapon States to turn the dark page of history linked to nuclear-weapon testing.

Mr. N'DIAYE (Mali) (interpretation from French): On behalf of my delegation, I should like first to congratulate you warmly, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation respects you for your personal qualities and talents and assures you of its total support in the discharge of your duties.

The multidimensional change in the contemporary world, which has affected the most solidly grounded certainties, shaken ideologies, brought about the downfall of dictatorships, awakened peoples and led to their democratic uprising, is the clearest sign of the passage from an old world dominated by the spirit of war and the desire for power to a new world, which I hope will be marked by a spirit of freedom, democracy and peace.

(Mr. N'Diaye, Mali)

One of the most decisive aspects of this change will doubtless be the remoulding of military doctrines and blocs. We are pleased to note that, despite some reluctance, there has been a gradual change from the doctrine of deterrence towards a doctrine of collective security. The disarmament negotiations between the two super-Powers and the encouraging results achieved - particularly the sizeable reductions in offensive strategic nuclear forces - augur well for constructive co-operation, which will guarantee peace and security for all the peoples of the world.

The positive side of the disarmament process must none the less not lead us to forget that there are still many obstacles in the way of general and complete disarmament. In fact, qualitative improvements in arms systems are continuing despite the cessation in quantitative increase. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and their dissemination throughout the world continue to be matters of deep concern. The question of the cessation of nuclear tests is still very controversial and those who have nuclear weapons for the most part reject the cessation of nuclear testing. Naval nuclear weapons escape the disarmament process. International arms transfers are not controlled and continue to ravage Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia. Non-nuclear-weapon States have no real guarantees against a possible nuclear war and, finally, the most important legal instruments in the disarmament sphere - such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons - have not been signed or, if they have been, some of the signatories do not comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards provided for in the Treaties themselves.

Mali, in its pursuit of world peace, has always advocated realistic action that would take account of the interests of all States. In this connection, we have signed and ratified all of the legal instruments banning nuclear tests and prohibiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. While we congratulate the Soviet

(Mr. N'Diaye, Mali)

Union and the United States for the progress achieved in the negotiations on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and their willingness to move progressively towards the complete cessation of nuclear tests, my delegation considers that, at the present level of the stockpiles of nuclear weapons, a total ban on tests is an absolute necessity. The degree of credibility of deterrence should be measured by the degree of confidence and transparency in international relations, rather than by the vicious circle of constant qualitative improvement. The idea of an amendment conference, to be held in New York in January 1991, to transform the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water into a treaty banning all nuclear testing should make it possible to achieve concrete implementation of the common desire for peace.

Here, I should like to welcome the decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban after a seven-year interruption in its work. In studying the problems related to the halting of nuclear tests and their impact on politics, the economy and the defence of States, that Committee will certainly make it possible to overcome any reluctance.

The non-proliferation Treaty is an essential instrument in the policy of disarmament. States that are not yet party to it must adhere to it so that the extension conference to be held in 1995 will ensure by a broad consensus that it will continue in force. The "threshold" States must also be covered by this Treaty even if they are only interested by the peaceful aspects of nuclear technology. But beforehand, the United Nations must work to narrow the gap that exists between the viewpoints of the major nuclear Powers, since - as has been indicated by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs - "global efforts for nuclear non-proliferation have been enmeshed in a dispute over a comprehensive test ban".

(Mr. N'Diaye, Mali)

We regret the inability of the most recent Conference on Disarmament to conclude a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Mali hopes that the mobilization of the political will of the various parties will achieve chemical disarmament in the interest of collective security.

These negotiations are of paramount importance for Africa, which is entirely unarmed in the face of chemical aggression and of a South Africa that possesses the technical means to manufacture nuclear weapons and is not yet covered by the non-proliferation Treaty.

Africa must remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Similarly, international transfers of conventional weapons remains a matter of constant concern for Africa because of successive political ravages and destabilization. There have been thousands of victims of the use of conventional weapons and massive destruction in Africa, Asia and Latin America while the high level of arms in some regions keeps them in a constant state of tension. In other words, arms transfers have become intolerable and must be dealt with within the framework of the negotiations on disarmament with a view to ensuring regulation of the production of conventional weapons and a limitation on their transfers. A system could be set up to publicize weapons sales and an international monitoring body could be set up under the aegis of the United Nations to ensure the transparency of transfers. But the limitation of transfers must go hand in hand with the implementation of a system to protect non-manufacturing States, which must use the means of arms transfers to guarantee their independence and sovereignty.

If we do not wish disarmament to be a "sonorous nothing", to paraphrase Metternich, it is of the utmost importance that we find ways and means of directing towards development a considerable part of the resources that will be released through disarmament measures. In this connection, negotiations must be undertaken

(Mr. N'Diaye, Mali)

to deal with restructuring, under-employment and reductions in salaries resulting from the breaking of military contacts with the weapons industries in the developed countries, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the creation of an international disarmament fund, which has long been called for by the countries of the South. Its funds should make it possible to relieve the international debt and launch lasting growth and sustained development.

My delegation encourages the studies on the conversion and adaptation of military industries into civilian industries currently being conducted by the United Nations. By taking development into account in the disarmament process, it would be possible to eliminate the causes of insecurity and poverty and to create the conditions for a lasting peace and harmonious evolution in the world.

For this, the role of the United Nations in multilateral disarmament monitoring must be reinforced in order that it may be able to meet new challenges.

The hope created by the new climate in co-operation must not be dimmed by a psychosis of insecurity and national selfishness that belong to an old world. Can the industrialized countries, after such daring and intellectual prowess in invention, be daunted by the greatest intellectual and moral challenge facing mankind - that is, movement from a spirit of war to a spirit of peace and fraternity? We venture to believe and hope that accelerated negotiations will make it possible to achieve the various conventions on disarmament so patiently awaited by the peoples of the world.

Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan): May I, at the outset, convey to you, Sir, our felicitations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Your vast knowledge and experience will play an important role in guiding the deliberations of our Committee, and I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to assure you of our full support and co-operation.

Significant and important developments are taking place in the world today. The cold war has virtually come to an end, and East-West rivalry is being replaced by a spirit of co-operation and understanding. There is renewed hope and expectation as the two major nuclear Powers continue their disarmament negotiations. The recent changes that have taken place in Europe augur well for an early conclusion of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process. Yet, against the backdrop of these major changes, which imbue a sense of hope for real peace and disarmament, we see the recrudescence of tensions as a result of regional problems that have remained unresolved over a long period.

An important dimension of the global-security environment lies in the danger posed to the security of smaller States by the militarization and aggressive postures of larger States, aimed at exercising regional domination and hegemony.

While a global response to disarmament is most commendable, a collective endeavour by countries at the regional level to promote disarmament and to enhance security at the lowest possible levels of armaments is an indispensable corollary of their advocacy of global disarmament. We believe that a regional approach would effectively promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and would strengthen the security of smaller countries, thus contributing to international peace and security. The global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other and can therefore be pursued simultaneously.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

We believe that the following steps should be taken to promote the regional approach to disarmament.

First, the United Nations should continue to lend its support to the evolution of confidence-building measures at the regional level. Initiatives by regional States in this field, as well as for disarmament, non-proliferation and security, should be encouraged and supported.

Secondly, outstanding differences and disputes between regional States should be resolved by peaceful means in order to promote the process of regional disarmament.

Thirdly, agreements should be concluded for mutual restraint in arms acquisitions, whether through international transfers or by way of indigenous production. Policies of interference, intervention, domination, coercion or the use or threat of the use of force in any form whatsoever should be renounced.

Fourthly, regional States should endeavour to establish a mutually acceptable military equilibrium between themselves. The measures to create a regional balance could include the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones; the renunciation of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, radiological weapons and certain types of advanced weapons; and agreed ceilings on armed forces, conventional weapons and military expenditure.

Fifthly, institutions and mechanisms should be created than can facilitate disarmament and security initiatives at the regional level.

Sixthly, once a degree of mutual confidence has been achieved, the regional States may evolve joint and co-ordinated positions regarding external threats to the region, including the presence of foreign forces in the vicinity.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

Finally, a fresh United Nations study should be conducted by the Secretary-General, with the help of a group of governmental experts, on the regional approach to disarmament, specifically analysing threats to the security of small States and suggesting remedial measures.

A treaty prohibiting all nuclear-test explosions by all countries, in all environments, for all time, is long overdue. The central importance of a nuclear-test-ban treaty for non-proliferation has been fully recognized. The conclusion of such a treaty must not be delayed any further. A test-ban treaty would make an effective contribution towards halting the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and preventing their proliferation.

Every possible benefit needs to be derived from the constructive and positive developments in the super-Powers' relationship in order to evolve an agreement banning all forms of nuclear-weapons testing for all time. It is vital that efforts that will lead ultimately to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and of their delivery systems be continued and accelerated. Given the necessary political will, problems of a technical nature would not pose insurmountable obstacles to the conclusion of disarmament agreements. Pakistan has lent its support to the initiative to convert the Partial Test Ban Treaty into a comprehensive test ban treaty, and we welcome the decision to convene the Amendment Conference. The response of the nuclear-weapon States would be a litmus test of their intentions.

Pakistan has reaffirmed time and again, at the highest level, its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. This commitment has been demonstrated repeatedly through initiatives, both at the global and at the regional levels, aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Our resolute support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the various parts of the world is well known. In the final document of the First Special Session on Disarmament the

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creation of such zones is recognized as an important interim disarmament measure pending general and complete disarmament, which remains the ultimate goal of all States. Pakistan's proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is designed to keep our region free of nuclear weapons and to promote the objectives of non-proliferation. Pakistan will submit this year, as it has done in previous years, a draft resolution on the subject along the lines of the resolution adopted at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. It is our hope that this draft resolution will get the same widespread support as similar resolutions have received in the past.

In our endeavours to strengthen the non-proliferation régime in the region, as well as in our initiative for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, we have made other concrete proposals. Our agreement with India not to attack each other's nuclear facilities is a small, yet significant, confidence-building measure, which we hope will lead to other, similar steps in the future. It is our firm belief that the poor majority of South Asia, who represent one fifth of the human race, cannot afford to waste their limited and precious resources pursuing the luxury of a futile nuclear race. For this reason we shall continue to persevere in initiatives that would keep our region free from nuclear weapons, and shall remain ready to convert the existing unilateral declarations into treaty obligations. We remain ready to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty simultaneously with India; to accept International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on our nuclear programme simultaneously with India; to conclude a bilateral agreement with India for the mutual inspection of each other's nuclear facilities; to make a joint declaration with India renouncing nuclear weapons; and to enter into a bilateral or regional nuclear-test-ban agreement with India.

Pakistan is ready to accept any equitable and non-discriminatory agreement, with effective verification arrangements, that would commit the countries of the

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region, in a legally binding manner, not to acquire or produce nuclear weapons. Conscious of the important role that the United Nations has to play in the disarmament field, we have also proposed that, in order to explore the possibilities of such an agreement, a conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the regional and other interested States.

For a long time the non-nuclear-weapon States have sought assurances against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Pakistan has been in the forefront of this move, as we believe that the non-nuclear-weapon States that forgo the nuclear option are entitled, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, to demand from the nuclear-weapon States security assurances against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons against them.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

Progress on this issue has regrettably been stalled for some years, and we have not been able to move ahead after reaching a consensus on the common-formula approach. We are of the view that the deadlock could be broken if the concerned nuclear-weapon States were to review their policies and formulate revised positions so as to respond positively to the legitimate concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States. My delegation has been submitting a draft resolution on this subject every year. Last year our draft resolution received overwhelming support. We intend to submit a draft resolution this year as well and hope that it will receive unanimous support in the Committee and in the General Assembly.

The negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention in Geneva are at a delicate stage. While it has been found possible to arrive at an agreement on a number of issues, certain areas of disagreement still remain. These would naturally be the focus of further negotiations. In our view, what is required for an early conclusion of the convention is some flexibility and a greater political and practical will on the part of certain States. What is not needed is any side-tracking towards partial or interim or discriminatory measures or any retrogressive definition of the scope of the convention. These can only stall the negotiations and delay their conclusion. We are convinced that with a concerted and sustained effort by all the participants in the negotiations a final text for the convention can be realized in the near future.

The regional approach offers more realistic prospects for success in the field of conventional disarmament as well. The aim of the regional disarmament process should be to establish a mutually acceptable military equilibrium among the regional States that ensures equal security for each of them. Steps to develop and create a regional balance could include the renunciation of certain types of advanced weapons, agreed ceilings on armed forces, elimination of the capability to

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launch surprise attacks, and geographical restrictions on the deployment of armed forces.

The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament have provided an important platform for dialogue and an opportunity to identify areas of common approaches among the countries of the region and subregion.

Pakistan supports all efforts aimed at ensuring the equal and undiminished security of States at the lowest level of armaments and military expenditure. We also support efforts to ban the illegal transfer of arms and arms sales to drug barons and terrorist mercenaries. It must, however, be recognized that every country has the sovereign right to determine its own legitimate defence needs. The arms-exporting countries cannot assume this right as regards the arms-importing countries or non-weapon-producing countries. The question of arms transfers should therefore be considered within the over-all context of conventional arms control. We must bear in mind its other inseparable and integrally linked aspects, particularly the indigenous defence production capabilities of different States, as well as the legitimate security concerns of all.

Those aspects must be taken into account simultaneously and in an integrated manner. Many small and medium-sized States, lacking indigenous defence production capabilities have no choice but to rely upon the international transfer of arms to meet their essential security needs. In some cases they perceive threats to their security emanating from States with larger indigenous defence production capabilities. Obviously, the denial to such small and medium-sized States of the possibility of acquiring arms through international transfers would endanger their security and have a destabilizing effect on international peace and security. The international community must therefore guard against any attempts to isolate and highlight only one aspect of conventional arms control while ignoring these other important aspects.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

The new threat of militarization of outer space has added yet another dimension to the problems of the arms race on Earth. The danger of deployment of weapons based in space or directed against objects in space or on Earth cannot be overstressed.

The increasing possibilities for military uses of outer space as a result of scientific and technical advances lead to the inevitable conclusion that the existing legal régime imposing some restrictions on the military uses of outer space is not enough to prevent an arms race in outer space. It is important to strengthen the existing legal norms and to supplement them with new rules so that outer space is reserved only for peaceful purposes. In this context, greater transparency in the activities of the space Powers would serve as an important confidence-building measure.

The use of space-based remote-sensing and surveillance techniques today offers a unique opportunity for disarmament agreements. This capability has remained the exclusive possession of a few technologically advanced States. We believe that these techniques should be made available to all countries on an equal and non-discriminatory basis through an appropriate international institution.

The escalation in the naval arms and armaments of some countries, both in quality and quantity, beyond the legitimate requirements of coastal defence, has caused smaller States to feel very insecure and threatened. The expansion and modernization of naval forces, combined with the increased sophistication of sea-based naval weapons systems, the deployment at sea of nuclear weapons, both strategic and tactical, and the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines into different regions of the world have given an alarming capability to the navies of a few States. Consequently, the security of small and medium-sized coastal States is now threatened from the sea on an unprecedented scale. The question of naval

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disarmament and the imposition of restrictions on the military uses of the high seas therefore deserve to be addressed urgently.

The relationship between disarmament and development has been clearly established and recognized by the United Nations. The recommendations adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on the relationship between disarmament and development have unfortunately not been implemented. It is a sad reflection on mankind that more money is spent on armaments each year while the developing countries continue to struggle with their international debt problems. How can we turn our eyes away from the plight of the majority of the world's population, which continues to exist at or below a basic subsistence level and suffers from hunger, disease and economic deprivation? It is towards these immediate problems that our energies and our efforts should be directed, and it is against this menace that our wars must be fought.*

Mr. RAKOTOZAFY (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): It is a pleasure for me to express to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Your unanimous election is a well-deserved tribute to your personal qualities and professional experience. We are convinced that under your guidance the work of the current session will reach a successful conclusion. We also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

The past year has been marked by developments of a scope one could not have imagined. The changes that have shaken the entire structure of the cold war have been felt throughout the world. New and promising trends in international relations have led us to feel a kind of euphoria and complacency.

* Mr. Morris (Australia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

The relaxation of East-West tensions, symbolized by the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, has not only made possible the emergence of a new order in Europe, but also released the countries of the third world from problems resulting from the previous antagonism between the two super-Powers. The settlement or easing of some regional conflicts, which began within the United Nations, has enhanced the credibility of the Organization as an institution guaranteeing international peace. The new spirit of common endeavour and co-operation between nations, and in particular between the major Powers, is becoming stronger every day. All of these elements strengthen our view that a new, hopeful international order is being slowly but surely put in place.

However, the détente between the super-Powers cannot by itself solve the conflicts in various parts of the world. Despite the considerable improvement in the international political climate, many situations of contention remain. The persistence of tensions and conflicts of interest and the widening differences between North and South show the fragility of international security.

The tragic events in the Gulf, resulting from the inadmissible invasion of the State of Kuwait by Iraq; the explosive situation in the Middle East; the current stalemate in finding a final settlement of the question of Afghanistan; the stagnation in the negotiating process regarding the Cambodia conflict; the complexity of the problems of Western Sahara and Cyprus; and the absence of a lasting solution to the Korean question; these are all destabilizing elements which nullify the beneficial impact of the positive changes in international relations.

Similarly, international stability can be imperilled by non-military threats, such as the widening of the gap between the developed and developing countries, the constant worsening of the economic and social situation in most developing countries and the steady deterioration of the environment. Settling these

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problems requires lasting and effective solutions within a very general framework based on a concerted, comprehensive approach.

The improved understanding between the two super-Powers makes it possible to glimpse opportunities for the control of weapons and for disarmament. For the first time in history some types of nuclear weapons have been destroyed. We welcomed the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, which is being implemented according to the agreed schedule. We are also encouraged by the fact that the strategic arms reduction Treaty is soon to be signed and by the commitment of the United States and the Soviet Union to continue negotiations on a considerable reduction of their strategic arsenals. We also welcome the bilateral agreement concluded last June on the non-production of chemical weapons and on the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles.

Those positive results in bilateral negotiations clearly demonstrate that effective, true disarmament is possible despite the complexity of the problems. This should give further encouragement to multilateral negotiations leading towards the speedy elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Unfortunately, the multilateral negotiations have not produced tangible and encouraging results, as can be seen in the failure of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The lack of consensus on a final document at the end of the Conference's work points to the gaps in the current non-proliferation régime, which has been unable to prevent either a qualitative race or a vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. In order to enhance the credibility of the non-proliferation Treaty, States Parties must re-evaluate their positions before the convening of the 1995 Conference on extending the Treaty.

(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

Ending nuclear tests remains one of the priorities of nuclear disarmament. Wide differences of view continue to block the negotiations on the question. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament's Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban will be re-established at the beginning of the 1991 session of the Conference. Moreover, we support the initiative of many States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to convene a conference in January 1991 to turn that Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The establishment and consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world is the corollary of a credible régime of nuclear non-proliferation. We welcome the conclusions adopted by the Disarmament Commission at its last session on the nuclear capability of South Africa. The concrete measures advocated by the Commission in paragraph 10 of its recommendations will contribute to attaining the objectives of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted in 1964 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity.

However, we reject the false argument advanced by some that resolution 2832 (XXVI), Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, is obsolete. The convening soon of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, to be held in Colombo, would enable the States of the region, the major Powers and other maritime users to identify measures to enhance confidence and security in the region and establish machinery to implement the objectives of the Declaration.

The optimism generated by the results of the 1989 Paris Conference on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons was somewhat lessened this year at the Conference on Disarmament. In the light of the threat posed to humanity by the proliferation of those weapons, we call for the rapid conclusion of the convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. In order to unblock the negotiations, we would

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support a proposal to convene a meeting of the Conference on Disarmament at ministerial level in 1991.

Conventional disarmament is also an important element in general and comprehensive disarmament. In order to facilitate the process of conventional disarmament, globally, regionally and subregionally, we must eliminate sources of tension and conflict. That would promote a reduction of military spending and of weapons purchases. The major Powers with the greatest and most sophisticated concentration of conventional weapons bear special responsibilities in this regard. Here we welcome the fact that agreements on a substantial reduction of conventional weapons in Europe are soon to be signed. But we hope that the countries of the South will not become dumps for the surplus weapons resulting from such agreements.

Moreover, the Secretary-General's proposal of an international register of arms transfers should be expanded to take into consideration the question of arms manufacture as well.

(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

Today the world is at a crossroads. We are approaching a new era which we hope will be better than the present one. For a small country such as Madagascar, the United Nations remains the ideal forum in which to express our position on questions of disarmament and international security. We are seeing new prospects for international co-operation, thanks in large part to the renewed trust in multilateralism and the recognition of the central role of the United Nations in international affairs. This process must be consolidated with a view to ensuring broader participation by all Member States in multilateral disarmament efforts.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Let me first of all convey to the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Rana, my congratulations on his election; I also congratulate you, Sir, on your election to a vice-chairmanship. I take this opportunity also to thank the members of the First Committee for the honour and trust they have displayed towards my country and me by electing me a Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

It is no overstatement to say that novelty - at times astounding and beyond all expectations and forecasts - has become a determining factor in world events. That has been especially vivid during the past year in this watershed period of world politics. The walls that divided peoples for many long years are coming down; the trenches of the cold war are disappearing; the fog of bias, mistrust and enmity is dissipating. Everything from security issues to ecology and health is undergoing a major transformation.

It is difficult from the contemporaneous perspective to judge the scale of these changes; that is the prerogative of history. But there is a strong feeling that these are years of so great a qualitative transformation that it can be compared only with a very few breakthroughs in human history.

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In the most sensitive and fundamental sphere, that of security, we are witnessing a change in the fundamental constant of the earlier period: the threatening military confrontation of two Powers - the United States and the USSR. Major mutual steps have led to the possibility - and the actual start - of reductions in nuclear and conventional arms. The processes now under way are prompting us to rethink and rebuild the whole post-war strategic system. Old equations - military, political, economic, East-West, North-South and South-South - are cracking, as we can see every day on news programmes. The world is taking on a new quality.

My delegation hopes that this new atmosphere will bear fruit also in the work of the First Committee, which, as the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Akashi, has said, is holding its first post-cold-war session.

But the positive processes in the world stand in stark contrast to sudden and sad relapses - as in the Middle East - to actions bearing all the signs of long-gone political times. From this we learn - or ought to learn - that the emergence of the new on the global level, while it may have a solid objective foundation, is a subtle and delicate process that can be consolidated only by vigilant, caring and nurturing attention from all members of the world community without exception.

Byelorussia does not - and frankly cannot - stay on the sidelines in the major changes sweeping countries and whole continents. We too are taking on a new quality. Last July, the freely and democratically elected Parliament of the Republic adopted a document of fundamental importance to Byelorussia: the Declaration of State Sovereignty. The provisions of that Declaration are radically transforming many aspects of our life. Specifically, they spell out new goals in the area of Byelorussia's foreign policy.

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The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Byelorussia, Mr. V. Kebich, described the foreign policy aspects of the Declaration in his statement to the General Assembly on 26 September. Still, it is necessary and proper in today's statement to speak in somewhat greater detail of the new elements of the Declaration that have a direct bearing on the First Committee's area of competence.

In particular, Byelorussia set the goal in its Declaration of State Sovereignty of turning its territory into a nuclear-free zone and the Republic into a neutral State. Those foreign policy provisions are new to us; they both reflect and result from the events in our country and the processes now under way in the world. A major determining factor was the growing anti-nuclear sentiment of Byelorussian public opinion in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster. A significant role was played also by the shifting perception of security problems on the global and regional levels as a result of long-term efforts by the United Nations.

We know that for a State like Byelorussia the transition to non-nuclear status is a complex problem because of the current European military, strategic and political situation, especially taking account of Byelorussia's geographical location.

Achieving our goals will have a bearing on the strategic interests of many sides and requires a responsible and prudent approach. The Byelorussian SSR intends fully to adopt such an approach and in taking steps to achieve those goals will be guided by the principle of not violating anyone's legitimate security interests or the stability of the region as a whole.

We intend to move towards the attainment of our goals in a gradual, step-by-step way. We have already taken one of the first steps, and it has met with a positive international response: in August-September this year, for the first time Byelorussia took part, as an observer, in the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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The security of the Byelorussian SSR is directly linked to that of Europe as a whole, and we are of the view that the establishment of a nuclear-free zone on the Republic's territory must be an integral part of the process of improving the situation on the European continent and that this will be fully possible when the necessary conditions are met.

Today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Byelorussia, Mr. P. Kravchenko, is making a statement before the General Assembly in which he is proposing the eventual creation of a nuclear-free zone composed of Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the Baltic Republics; if they so desire, other neighbouring Central European countries could join as well. That initiative builds upon the initiative of the USSR to convert the Baltic Sea into a nuclear-free zone and upon the proposals made by some Central European States that zones of reduced military activity be established in their region.

No less complicated - or perhaps more so - is the problem of neutrality. Byelorussia is a sovereign State member of a militarily important federation of States, the USSR, which in turn is a member of a political and military alliance now under transformation, the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

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In this connection, in view of the military-political realities that still exist in the European and global contexts, Byelorussia considers that its acquisition of neutral status, a goal proclaimed in its Declaration, is a long-term goal. We believe in the real possibility of attaining it in the course of constructing a common European home, all-European structures and reliable security in a wider context, which will erode the need to preserve military-political alliances.

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is striving to bring about the changes I have mentioned, and is prepared to make an active contribution to all levels - multilateral, regional and bilateral - of the efforts to that end. The desire of the Byelorussian people for a lasting peace, a desire motivated by history, is now complemented by new factors.

We view with special satisfaction and interest in this connection the positive developments in the United States-Soviet strategic arms reduction talks and in the Vienna negotiations on reducing armed forces and armaments in Europe as well as on confidence- and security-building measures on our continent. There is every reason to believe that in the very near future we shall see a successful conclusion of the work of those forums. We expect that this important historical landmark will immediately be followed by a new stage of negotiations, on the further reduction of strategic offensive arms, on strategic stability, on the further reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe and on reductions in tactical nuclear weapons.

Although it is vitally interested in a radical reduction of troops and armaments in Europe, Byelorussia faces real new problems in accommodating in its territory a large number of the troops being withdrawn from Europe, in settling a huge number of demobilized personnel and in providing work for them. The task is

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made all the more difficult by the fact that areas fit for living in have been sharply reduced as a result of the Chernobyl tragedy. The population of the Republic feels some unease about the situation, and the Parliament is beginning serious consideration of the problem. Thus Byelorussia has already come face to face with a number of acute problems of conversion.

Our delegation wishes once again to stress, as it has done in previous years, that practical steps to bring about genuine disarmament will become more feasible and consistent - and, most important, irreversible - if States seriously cultivate the ideas of strictly defensive military doctrines and structures of armed forces, and if they widely apply in practice the principle of reasonable defence sufficiency. We do not underestimate, but, on the contrary, emphasize the role of practical steps, which pave the way for consistent disarmament.

In this connection, we welcome the fact that an international seminar on military defensive doctrines was held in Vienna early this year and that a meaningful discussion of the subject took place. There is already a serious need to start regular discussions on this matter. That is why our delegation has been emphasizing in the General Assembly for a number of years the need to start practical consideration, in United Nations organs and elsewhere, of the criteria and parameters for strictly defensive military doctrines and structures. Today we again propose that real moves in that direction be made and that for those purposes a United Nations study be carried out on defensive military concepts and structures of armed forces.

In speaking of defensive military concepts, we must mention the core issue, the key to many other military problems: the fact that it is time to transform the basis of the strategic equation, which is doctrines on the use of nuclear weapons. In the new circumstances, keeping open the possibility of the first use of nuclear

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weapons means dangerously delaying the emergence of a solid foundation for security. We are pleased that at a recent meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Council in London the first steps in the right direction were taken. We hope that they will be developed to correspond to the new foundation of security that is growing in Europe.

Sizeable reductions of armed forces on the European continent, followed by the rebuilding of the remaining forces in a way that will preclude their use for sudden, large-scale offensive action, and transforming strategic military doctrines will, we believe, provide the basis of conditions favourable to the realization of the goal of a non-nuclear, neutral status for the Byelorussian SSR.

Byelorussia naturally has a special interest in the carrying out of existing proposals to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions of Europe and the world. We believe that the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones deserves to become an item on the new agenda of the Disarmament Commission. We hope that that proposal will be seriously considered during the consultations on that matter.

For many years the United Nations has been looking for openings to play its central role in disarmament. The best potential for that is to be found where, in contrast to the bilateral sphere, there are unique opportunities for specifically multilateral, universal efforts. They concern, in particular, war-prevention measures and measures to bring about the non-proliferation of the most dangerous types of weapons, where the joint efforts of the widest possible circle of States are required.

In this context, we again urge that practical efforts be begun to translate into reality the well-known proposals, including those of the Secretary-General, to establish a multilateral centre for the prevention of nuclear and military danger, and in the long run to establish a whole system of such centres, including regional

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ones. With the assistance of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Secretary-General could look into the practical steps needed to establish a centre, whose functioning would make it possible to achieve the transition from preventive diplomacy, and which should become the basic instrument for maintaining peace in a world free of wars and violence. The units of the Secretariat that are already dealing with conflict analysis and forecasting could be usefully involved in the work of the centre. The recent United Kingdom proposal to establish a centre for information and advice on regional disarmament also deserves to be studied. It seems that ideas underlying the proposals on the centres I have mentioned are quite close.

The special responsibility of the nuclear Powers for the prevention of war, together with nuclear disarmament, could be fulfilled through the conclusion of agreements between them on measures to decrease the danger of an outbreak of nuclear war.

The problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the technology for their production, is becoming more and more acute. The General Assembly must, without delay, give the most careful attention to the problem, because of the growing technological and economic capabilities of States, the existing and emerging hot-beds of regional tension and conflict and the urge to commit aggression, as is clearly shown by the situation in the Persian Gulf.

In the circumstances, a comprehensive approach to non-proliferation seems most promising. A consistent combination of such an approach with genuine disarmament measures would mean a real reduction in nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

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Naturally, the concept of non-proliferation is devoid of a single-dimension simplicity. Nevertheless, the course of events spells out the necessity to lay aside already formed stereotypes and, having in mind the real state of affairs, to discuss in the United Nations the possibility of creating an international mechanism to prevent the proliferation of dangerous modern weapons and the technology to produce them.

As we see it the establishment of zones free of certain types of weapons might be one way of ensuring non-proliferation, in practice, at certain geographical levels. In this light the Byelorussian SSR considers it useful and important to build on the initiative of Egypt concerning the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Of relevance to the limitation of nuclear weapons is the concept of ending the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes. Such a prohibition would constitute a short cut, a radical way of eliminating nuclear weapons. At the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly the Byelorussian SSR co-sponsored for the first time the draft resolution on this subject that had for some years been sponsored by the delegation of Canada. In our view it would be useful this year to include in the draft resolution, along with the appeal for the earliest elaboration of an international agreement on the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for weapon purposes, a call for the IAEA to consider the problem of the non-use for military purposes of nuclear explosives released in the course of disarmament. Many countries have repeatedly called for such a step.

The banning of nuclear explosions for testing purposes is a priority measure which would radically curtail the possibility of a nuclear-arms race and, in the longer run, the very existence of nuclear weapons. Byelorussia is convinced that it is necessary to explore all ways and means which could lead to the achievement

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of that goal. In this connection we pronounce ourselves in favour of the resumption of the United States-Soviet talks on the limitation of nuclear testing. We support the possible transformation of the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty into a comprehensive treaty, and, in welcoming the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban by the Conference on Disarmament, we express our hope that it will start work in 1991 without delay and with the participation of all nuclear Powers.

The prohibition of chemical weapons is also a unique responsibility and opportunity for the United Nations since this goal requires universal participation. We are satisfied to note that the change in the climate of United States-Soviet relations has made possible a solid bilateral contribution to the attainment of this common goal. I have in mind the recent USSR-United States agreement on the cessation of the production of chemical weapons and on the elimination of the bulk of their stockpiles. We hope that the work that will be done at the 1991 session of the Conference on Disarmament will make possible a decisive breakthrough towards the completion of the convention banning chemical weapons.

The whole territory of Byelorussia was recently declared a zone of national ecological disaster as a result of the Chernobyl catastrophe. Naturally, we are very sensitive to all aspects of environmental protection. In this light we deem it necessary that the subject of ecology and armaments, which previously has not really been considered at the United Nations, should find proper reflection in the work of the First Committee. It is clearly high time we started thinking about the possibility of restricting certain military activities that are most harmful to ecological security. Also necessary is an international impetus towards taking the opportunity provided by arms reduction and conversion to eliminate or reorient the ecologically most harmful military types of production or to equip them with

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adequate means of environmental protection, using means gained through disarmament. Clearly, thought should be given to United Nations studies on the subject of armaments and ecology.

In conclusion, I would note that, guided by the need to shorten the general debate to allow more time for work on the draft resolutions, our delegation has not spoken on a number of disarmament problems that are of interest to us. We would point out that the views and suggestions of the Byelorussian SSR on such questions as openness and objective information on military matters, conversion of military resources, regional disarmament, limitation of international arms supplies, confidence-building measures and some other matters are set out in a number of letters to the Secretary-General. Interested delegations will be able to acquaint themselves with those views in the documents of the General Assembly and the First Committee. We hope others will follow our example.

My delegation intends to make one more statement in the debate, on the question of the impact of science and technology on international security.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.