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Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 48 to 69 and 145 (continued)

STATEMENTS ON SPECIFIC DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS AND CONTINUATION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): I wish to speak on behalf of the Ten States members of the European Community, Portugal and Spain to address agenda item 63, chemical and bacteriological weapons.

For the Ten, Portugal and Spain, the early conclusion of a convention to outlaw chemical weapons for all time remains one of the top priorities in the field of disarmament in the near term. With deep concern we witness again, as we did in 1984, the use of chemical weapons in the war between Iraq and Iran. The evidence collected by the Secretary-General's investigative team thus far reminds us of the atrocious nature of those weapons and the human suffering that goes with it.

The Ten, as well as Portugal and Spain, condemn the use of all chemical weapons. We strongly urge all parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol scrupulously to honour their obligations under the Protocol and to observe the generally-recognized principles and rules of international law applicable to armed conflicts. As a demonstration of their abhorrence of the use of those weapons, the Ten States members of the European Community, Portugal and Spain, for their part, have taken measures together with other countries to control the export of certain compounds that could be abused for the production of chemical weapons. They will continue to give attention to the problem of imposing export controls on the transfer of such compounds.

The deep concern of the Ten, Portugal and Spain regarding the use of such weapons, has resulted in a shared perception on their part that certain interim measures are required to give effect to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the norms of

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

customary international law prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. With this in mind, we welcome especially the work done so far by the Secretary-General on procedures for achieving a rapid and effective investigation in cases where chemical weapons are alleged to have been used. The Secretary-General's report (A/39/488) is, in our opinion, an extremely useful instrument for establishing the facts in cases of the alleged use of chemical weapons.

The Ten, Portugal and Spain wish to emphasize the conclusion of an adequately verifiable chemical weapons convention banning all chemical weapons world-wide, remains the only sure way of eliminating those weapons for all time, and we will continue our active support for and contribution to that goal. The urgency of the need to conclude a convention is reinforced by concern about their possible further proliferation and use, by the existence of large stockpiles of those weapons and preparations of their use, and by uncertainty regarding future developments in that field.

The Ten, Portugal and Spain are of the opinion that over the last few years a substantial amount of work has been done in the chemical weapons negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Much common ground has, in our view, already been reached. This leaves us with a feeling of cautious optimism about the prospects for successful negotiations the next year.

The Ten, Portugal and Spain recognize the difficulties which remain to be overcome before a draft convention can be finalized. States members of the European Community participating in the work of the Conference, however, will not hesitate to take their share in the discussion of those areas where consensus has so far failed to appear or discussions have hardly taken place, inter alia on a sound and adequate mechanism for the verification of the non-production of chemical compounds that could be used for the production of chemical weapons and the declaration and destruction of chemical weapons stocks and chemical weapons production facilities.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

The Ten, Portugal and Spain welcome the forthcoming meeting of President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev this month. A more relaxed atmosphere and reduced tensions in the East-West climate could not only have a positive bearing on the cause of disarmament in general but could also precipitate a more propitious outlook for a chemical weapons convention.

Finally, the Ten, Portugal and Spain hope that next year negotiations on a chemical weapons treaty will be intensified. They wish to see the Conference on Disarmament so order its work programme, that inter alia, by increasing the time during the year that the Conference on Disarmament devotes to the subject, the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention can be achieved at the earliest possible date.

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): I will speak on agenda item 69 entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". There is a competitive relationship between the arms race and development. The world can either continue the arms race or move towards balanced social and economic development. It cannot do both. Food, clean water, health, a life in peace - these are fundamental human needs which hundreds of millions of people all over the world are denied.

At the same time, enormous resources are being wasted on an ever-escalating arms race. With only a fraction of those resources, the international community would be able effectively to combat hunger and disease, to remedy lack of shelter and want of education. The relationship between growing armaments, on the one hand, and lack of development on the other, is a reality felt not only in developing countries, but also in many industrialized nations.

The huge consumption of material, and of technical and human resources, for potentially destructive purposes stands in sombre contrast to the want and poverty

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in which two thirds of the world's population live. It may in itself also be a source of international tension. A peaceful and stable world requires a narrowing of the gap between developed and developing countries. We must, therefore, achieve both disarmament and development.

The economic and social consequences of the arms race are incompatible with the implementation of an international order based on justice, equity and co-operation.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Arms spending breeds inflation and encroaches on resources available for productive investment. It generates less employment than corresponding investments for civilian purposes. It has adverse effects on world trade. Clearly, disarmament would benefit the economic prospects of all countries.

The enormous resources devoted to military projects have not given us more security. On the contrary, the world is buying less and less security at an ever-increasing price.

The importance of disarmament in order to bring about development was highlighted in the Delhi Declaration, which stressed that

"it is urgently necessary to transfer precious resources currently wasted in military expenditure to social and economic development." (A/40/114, p. 4)
The Declaration furthermore said:

"It is imperative to find a remedy to the existing situation where hundreds of billions of dollars, amounting to approximately one and a half million per minute, are spent annually on weapons. This stands in dramatic contrast to the poverty, and in some cases misery, in which two-thirds of the world population lives." (p. 5)

Sweden attaches great importance to the question of the relationship between disarmament and development, and has taken several initiatives in the General Assembly on the subject. In this context I wish in particular to refer to the United Nations study entitled "The Relationship between Disarmament and Development", which was proposed by Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and carried out between 1978 and 1981 by a Group of Governmental Experts, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Inga Thorsson. The main conclusion of the study was that an effective relationship between disarmament and development can and must be established.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

My Government therefore welcomes the fact that the question of the relationship between disarmament and development will remain on the agenda of the United Nations. From the very outset Sweden expressed its keen interest in the proposal, originally presented by France, to convene a United Nations conference on the issue. Such a conference should have a broad political character, and allow for a comprehensive and penetrating assessment of the impact of military expenditure on the world economic situation and on development. It should also prepare further action at the international and national levels.

An international conference under the auspices of the United Nations could greatly facilitate a global, integrated view of disarmament and development. Such a conference could also create a better understanding of the need to allocate more resources to official development assistance and promote specific steps in that direction. Sweden is planning to take an active part in the conference.

We trust that the United Nations study on the relationship between disarmament and development will serve as an important input in the United Nations conference. We also see the convening of the conference as, inter alia, a follow-up of the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 37/84 and 38/71 A.

In 1982 the General Assembly recommended Member States to follow up the United Nations expert study on the relationship between disarmament and development with studies in their own countries. At the same time, they were urged to make known, both to their own populations and to the United Nations, details of the consumption of resources for military purposes. Each country was also urged to report to the United Nations how it was preparing and planning for a conversion of resources from military to civilian use.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The Swedish Government commissioned a study of the possibilities for Sweden, as part of an assumed future international disarmament process, both to reduce its defence spending and to convert military resources to constructive civilian use. The first report on the study was submitted to the Swedish Government in August 1984. An English version, entitled "In Pursuit of Disarmament: Conversion from Military to Civil Production in Sweden", containing the descriptive and analytical parts of the report, was transmitted to the United Nations and its Members last year. A second part of the study has now been finalized, and I am pleased to announce today that that second report will be distributed to all Members of the United Nations later in the current session.

The study describes the various aspects of Sweden's security and defence policy as well as the Swedish arms industry. It explains why Sweden - because of its policy of neutrality - maintains a comparatively large defence-industrial sector. The study provides examples of how, in the event of international disarmament, resources could be reallocated for other domestic purposes as well as for development co-operation with developing countries. It explains why preparations for such a conversion of resources must start well in advance of a disarmament process.

According to the report, it would be possible to reduce Sweden's defence expenditure if the military blocs started to reduce their armed forces and armaments in Europe, particularly offensive weapons and weapons systems. The report concludes that, since the defence sector absorbs only a small percentage of Sweden's economic resources, the effects on the economy as a whole would be manageable. However, such a reduction would create economic and social difficulties in communities which are dependent on defence industries and installations for their local economy. In order to avert such difficulties, plans

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would have to be worked out and steps taken to reduce this dependency by expanding the civil sector.

Although effective international disarmament may still be a remote possibility, the report concludes that it would be essential to start preparing for defence industry conversion today, because it takes time to design and develop competitive products, and those working in the defence industry should not have to view disarmament as a threat to their future and their means of livelihood.

According to both the United Nations report and the Swedish study, it would be desirable to establish a link between disarmament and development by reallocating resources from the military sector to meeting the needs of economic and social development, not least in developing countries. Such resources should be additional to present allocations or commitments for development purposes. A transfer of additional resources would contribute to development efforts in all parts of the world as well as to the attainment of a more just distribution of the world's resources.

To summarize, the arms race and development are in a competitive relationship, both in terms of resources and as regards attitudes and perceptions. The arms race is incompatible with an international order based on justice, equity and co-operation. It must be stopped.

We are confronted with a fateful choice. We can either continue the arms race or achieve a more stable and balanced social and economic development. We cannot do both.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): In today's statement the Byelorussian delegation wishes to say something about the problem of prohibiting chemical weapons and the situation in that regard.

Questions connected with the prohibition of chemical weapons have been the focus of increasing attention on the part of the international community. That can clearly be seen in the current discussion in the Committee. The growing concern of the overwhelming majority of Member States over the threat posed by chemical weapons is very well founded.

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In terms of their devastating effects, these weapons are weapons of mass destruction, and a further characteristic of chemical weapons is the fact that their principal potential victims are civilians. According to expert estimates, losses among the civilian population would be 20 to 30 times greater than those among the armed forces, whose members would be trained in the proper action to take when such substances are in use and would be provided with protective equipment.

When we assess the importance and urgency of banning chemical weapons, we should take into account the principal difference between chemical weapons and other types of weapons: toxic substances act on the most basic, the most subtle processes of the body, processes which constitute the very essence of life. As to the consequences of these effects, moreover, I would cite the example of the botulism toxin, whose effect is 10 million times greater than that of the mustard gas used in 1914 on the battlefields of the First World War. We must not banish that horrifying statistic from our minds.

All this makes it imperative for the international community to shoulder the urgent task of banning this type of weapon of mass destruction and of drafting and implementing measures effectively to prevent its spread.

A certain amount of progress has been achieved in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. We are beginning to make out the outlines of possible agreement on certain aspects of a future convention. This, undoubtedly, is to be welcomed.

But the plans of the United States to develop binary chemical weapons constitute a serious blow to those negotiations. Those plans are not merely an attempt to build up the chemical weapons arsenal arithmetically so to speak; they have direct, dangerous qualitative consequences for international security and for current negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

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Binary weapons are dangerous because they offer a real possibility, through the clandestine use of different combinations of weapon elements, of producing new types of toxic substances and even an "ethnic" weapon which, as members know, is designed to single out individual races or nationalities as targets. This would considerably complicate the organization of control, detection and protection. The development of the binary weapon makes the already difficult task of monitoring compliance with a chemical weapons prohibition régime even more difficult, as the production of the components of a chemical weapon does not inevitably call for special facilities which are, on the other hand, necessary for the production of traditional unitary chemical weapons. In view of their characteristics, the components of binary weapons can be manufactured at any number of commercial chemical plants, thus obviating the need to set up easily detectable special facilities.

Thus, owing to these special characteristics of the binary weapon, which make adequate verification difficult, a special set of procedures must be developed to ensure that clandestine manufacture of binary weapons does not take place in violation of a future convention. Unfortunately, those who in other situations are advocates of unlimited verification are silent in this particular case.

I should like to comment on certain assertions that were made when it was decided to earmark funds for the binary weapon and during the present debate. We are told that the build-up of the chemical arsenal has no aggressive objectives. Why, then, during the "Autumn Forge" manoeuvres held in September this year, did the United States and West German units and detachments carry out exercises involving the use of chemical weapons, including binary weapons? How do we reconcile that with recent assurances from the Under-Secretary of the United States Army, who said in so many words that "The United States should view chemical war as part of any conflict"?

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Proof that this was no accidental slip of the tongue is found in a statement made in August this year by the United States Secretary of Defense at a press conference on the question of binary weapons. He said that

"The United States would be in a position to supply this new type of weapon to countries which, in the event of war, would be able, in the shortest possible time, to make use of it".

This is echoed by the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), General Bernard Rogers:

"The United States must manufacture and deploy shells with nerve-paralyzing toxins for possible use by NATO forces in Europe".

He also called for agreement on procedures for making use of chemical weapons, "so that such weapons could be used in wartime".

Thus, while the international community is calling for work on a convention prohibiting chemical weapons, the high military officials I have just quoted are stressing the development of agreed procedures for their use and are even talking about deploying them on the territory of certain Western European and other States. The danger of that approach is staggeringly obvious.

Incidentally, it is interesting to contrast the proclaimed goal of the United States "strategic defence initiative" - to develop weapons which, it is claimed, will destroy rockets and not people - with the coming decision to develop a new generation of chemical weapons designed exclusively for the annihilation of human beings.

In this discussion certain delegations are trying to put forward arguments about continued Western "restraint" with regard to chemical weapons as compared with the "Soviet military threat". But let us look at things objectively. It is precisely the Soviet Union and other socialist countries which in 1972 submitted a

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proposal for the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the development, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stockpiles. The socialist countries, moreover, introduced the actual text of a draft convention on the subject. Had it not been for the Western side, which blocked the possibility of speedy progress in this matter, the world would now have been entirely free for over a decade from the threat posed by chemical weapons. That is the truth about who is and who is not prepared to banish chemical weapons.

Furthermore, as a party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, the Soviet Union proposed as early as 1928 a supplementary protocol under which all devices and equipment that could be used in chemical warfare, already issued to the armed forces, in storage, or being manufactured, would have been destroyed, and under which industrial enterprises engaged in the manufacture of chemical weapons would have immediately ceased production. As members know, the Geneva Protocol is 60 years old this year. Had the 1928 Soviet proposal been acted upon at the time, we should three years hence be marking the sixtieth anniversary of the destruction of chemical weapons, and there would be no need for the arduous, protracted negotiations now under way.

Let us compare and contrast a number of facts. The years of the Viet Nam war were marked by large-scale United States use of chemical weapons. In 1972, the Western side blocked implementation of a proposal by the socialist States that a convention banning chemical weapons be adopted. In 1980 the United States unilaterally broke off Soviet-United States talks on the prohibition of chemical weapons, talks which had been going on since 1976.

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Who was it in subsequent years that did not even permit the use of the word "negotiations" in the mandate of the Committee on Disarmament? We all know who that was. But multilateral negotiations began in any case, and, again, it was the Western side, above all the American side, which did everything possible to make the question of monitoring and verification difficult by advancing unfounded arguments. When at the Conference on Disarmament delegations managed to get down to the practical formulation of articles for a future convention banning chemical weapons, the United States decided to highlight means of manufacturing a new generation of chemical weapons which, as has already been pointed out, considerably complicated the problem of verification and stepped up the danger of proliferation of this very dangerous type of weapon.

It would be naive to suppose that such a sequence of events and the nature of the positions taken is a mere accident. All these facts form part of a strict logical chain which demonstrates that certain forces are stubbornly attempting to preserve the chemical weapon in their arsenals as one of their means of destruction.

I should like to comment also about the problem of verification. This question, as applied to the convention on the banning of chemical weapons, is undeniably not a simple one. However, it is perfectly susceptible to decision if we apply the necessary political will and take a sensible approach and not put forward incommensurate demands designed in advance to block the talks. In 1982 the Soviet Union, in continuation of its years of effort, put forward the fundamental provisions for a convention prohibiting the development, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction. This document took into account the view of many other States. The draft proposed by the USSR was given wide favourable response and created the opportunity in a short period of time to achieve mutually acceptable agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the establishment of necessary control over observance of such a prohibition. In

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subsequent years the USSR undertook a number of new important steps in order to ensure appropriate control and verification of the régime governing the prohibition of chemical weapons. In particular it agreed to systematic on site inspections for the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons, including the constant presence of international inspectors and monitoring of the permitted production at special facilities. With regard to other forms of activity subject to prohibition, it also permitted the use of international procedures, particularly on site verification on a voluntary basis. Other steps were taken to solve the problem of verification too.

However, the demands put forward by the American delegation clearly went beyond the framework of ensuring the necessary certainty in the observance of the convention that was being worked on. Furthermore, these were clearly discriminatory in nature. The agreed international approach to verification measures is enshrined in paragraphs 31, 91 and 92 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This agreed approach was that the forms and conditions of verification would depend on the goals, volume and character of the concrete agreement. It provided that the methods of procedures for verification should not be discriminatory in nature and not be linked to unjustified interference in the internal affairs of States or threaten their economic and social development. We must note that the points made by the American side diverge very widely from this approach, which was adopted in 1978 with its participation.

On the other hand, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR notes with satisfaction that in the discussion taking place in the First Committee right now a large number of States have stressed the need for a sensible balanced approach to questions of verification within the context of the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. In our view, the problem of verification can be resolved successfully on the basis of combining national means of verification with international procedures.

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Working on and concluding an international convention doing away with chemical weapons is undeniably the major goal in our struggle with the chemical weapon threat. Talks about implementation in all probability will still require a certain amount of time. However, as a result of the plans we have mentioned, the threat posed by chemical weapons has not disappeared and is becoming ever stronger. In the circumstances steps to limit and restrain this threat acquire special significance, and they could be undertaken before the conclusion of a convention on the subject. In particular, a perceptible positive effect would be yielded by the renunciation by all States of transferring chemical weapons to anyone or obtaining such weapons from anyone and also of deploying chemical weapons on the territories of other States. It would also be useful for all States to refrain from spurring on anyone in any way whatsoever to the development, manufacture, acquisition, stockpiling or use of chemical weapons.

An invaluable contribution to the strengthening of international security would be measures for preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons, something which the Soviet Union has supported. The urgent need for such measures has been noted by many representatives who have already spoken. Particular concern is caused by reports of the possible presence of military-chemical potential in the hands of the South African racist régime.

A promising point is the regional approach to the limitation of the chemical arms race. The Byelorussian SSR has consistently supported the putting into effect of such an approach; it has also supported the proposal for the creation in Europe of a chemical-weapon-free zone, something which has been put forward by the socialist countries. The idea of creating such a zone is being well received by widening circles in various parts of Europe. Recently both the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party of Germany supported the implementation of this idea. An important and timely initiative was taken by the

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Governments of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, appealing to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and proposing that negotiations be started on the creation of a chemical-weapon-free zone on the territories of these three States. This proposal was put forward and argued by the representatives of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the First Committee. The Soviet Union recently declared its readiness to respect and guarantee the status of such a zone and pointed out that the guarantee would enter into force if the United States for its part were to follow suit.

This zone would promote the prevention of the use of chemical weapons on the European continent, represent a substantial step towards the strengthening of trust among States and provide momentum for the conclusion of the convention on the elimination of chemical weapons.

It seems to us a good idea that the approach proposed by the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic should be extended to other parts of the world, for example, the Mediterranean and, subsequently, the African continent as a whole. Who could be against such measures by using the specious pretext of the alleged need for an exclusively global approach to the banning of chemical weapons? It is the same people that are blocking the Geneva negotiations on the comprehensive banning of such weapons. Thus their efforts are creating a vicious circle and the security of the peoples of the world is held captive. This circle must be broken and readiness must be shown to work for an effective agreement on the limitation and total elimination of chemical weapons. Then reserves of good will can be released and bold and responsible approaches taken by the States that have not yet evinced such good will. It is necessary that the decisions that must be taken at this session of the General Assembly promote the implementation of important and radical steps along this path. First of all, the

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General Assembly should call on all States to promote the acceleration of work on the convention banning chemical weapons and to refrain from any action that might make the negotiations more difficult, in particular the manufacture and deployment of binary and other new forms of chemical weapons. The Byelorussian delegation is ready actively to participate in the taking of such decisions.

Mr. JESSEL (France) (interpretation from French): May I, first of all, express to you, Sir, my delegation's pleasure at seeing in the Chair the representative of a country with which France maintains the most friendly relations. Your authority, wisdom, patience and experience are guarantees that our work will be conducted to a happy conclusion in the best possible conditions. We congratulate you most warmly and express our sincere hope for the success of this delicate and important task devolving on you.

On 17 October last, the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Max van der Stoep, on behalf of the States members of the European Communities, made a statement which obviously explains the views that the French delegation shares with its partners. Today I should like to revert in more detail to some aspects of the problems we are dealing with here.

As was emphasized by a number of speakers in the course of this session, 40 years ago the end of the Second World War coincided with the advent of the nuclear era. It was clear from that moment that in the history of mankind this was an irreversible event and that the course of the disarmament undertaking was also irreversibly affected by it.

Peace through deterrence has thus far prevented East-West conflicts from assuming the form of confrontations involving directly the nuclear Powers, and the maintenance of the balance of forces, both nuclear and conventional, continues to be of fundamental importance, especially on the European continent. That armed peace is perhaps not the ideal solution, but at least it has prevented any conflict in that region of the world. What we can and should reasonably expect and hope for is to maintain that situation by endeavouring through negotiation to reduce armaments to the lowest possible level and in conditions which will allow for the necessary verifications. It is in this context that France welcomed the resumption

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at the beginning of this year of the Soviet-American negotiations on nuclear weapons and their extension to outer space.

As was recalled by the French Foreign Minister during his statement in the General Assembly on 26 September last, it is important that those negotiations contribute to the maintenance of strategic stability while enabling the two countries concerned to proceed to large reductions in their most destabilizing offensive weapons.

Indeed, what nuclear technology has, for better or worse, brought to our time will undoubtedly not be abolished for a long time to come by future technologies, even if they are defensive and make use of outer space. To give the impression that we shall be turning the page of the nuclear era in 10 or 20 years at the end of this rapid transition the content of which is ill defined may appear attractive, but it means arousing the hope that nuclear stockpiles will become useless and disappear in that short span of time and, as a result, the strategic rivalry between the two super-Powers will vanish. Is that truly realistic? We for our part do not think so. While we appreciate the efforts made by both sides to explore new defensive technologies, we do not subscribe to the view that nuclear weapons would suddenly and totally become powerless and obsolete. There is reason to believe that offensive means will disappear in the foreseeable future. But is such a hypothesis not dangerous in so far as it is based on the myth that security can be achieved through invulnerability?

Invulnerability - that is in fact an old dream, no doubt as old as humanity itself, a dream obviously born of the fragility of all human things. That dream has been personified by legend in famous heroes: among the ancient Greeks it was Achilles and among the ancient Germans it was Siegfried. And yet each of those invulnerable heroes had a weak spot, perhaps a very small one, but which for each

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of them proved fatal. Let us therefore not be more naïve than our forefathers by believing today that the progress of modern technology will enable us tomorrow to resuscitate the myth of invulnerability but this time endowing it with absolute values. This, too, is the lesson we can draw from the successive, episodes of the ever-continuing history of the struggle between the sword and the shield.

On the occasion of his recent visit to Paris, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, said to the members of the French Parliament that at present "... one of the obstacles preventing war and recourse to military force remains the fear of unacceptable punishment". Such a formula coincides with what we too believe, namely, that in East-West relations deterrence under the present conditions remains the very basis of international peace and security in the nuclear era.

But in that context real prospects for mastering weapons and for disarmament exist and were strongly strengthened by the resumption last March of the talks in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union. This is an especially important stage, because at present there is no other alternative to the reduction of the offensive nuclear systems of the two most heavily armed countries.

We are gratified to see that both sides have made proposals aimed at substantial cuts in their present stockpiles. The preparation of verifiable agreements will probably be a long-term undertaking, but we believe that there is already a common interest between the two parties for serious, businesslike negotiations. Those reductions in the stockpiles of the two great Powers constitute, on the other hand, a prior condition for any serious progress in the process of nuclear disarmament which subsequently might include third Powers.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

As far as my own country is concerned, two years ago the President of the Republic stated here, before the General Assembly, the conditions for France's participation in negotiations on the multilateral reduction of nuclear weapons. Those conditions cover, on the one hand, reduction of the stockpiles of the two super-Powers to such levels that the nature of the gap between their potentials may be considered to have changed and, on the other, the quantitative and qualitative limitation of defensive strategic systems and, finally, the significant progress in the reduction of conventional-weapon imbalances in Europe and the elimination of any chemical threat.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

It is within the context of such a process that France considers it necessary to reformulate the question of nuclear tests, which, we are all agreed, is an important problem, but that is precisely why we cannot be satisfied with mere words or half-measures. If a solution is to be found it must be verifiable and lasting and should not include discriminatory aspects inimical to any country.

France has to date been conducting less than a tenth of the total of USSR and United States nuclear tests. Since 1974 it has not tested in the atmosphere. The precautions taken and the verifications and investigations made permit us to conclude that those tests are harmless, and we are ready, as the President of the Republic has recently reiterated, to give an opportunity to the countries concerned to verify that fact for themselves.

But France, through a unilateral renunciation of tests essential to its national security, could not subscribe to a systematic obsolescence of its forces while the two super-Powers continue to arm themselves to excess.

It is only in the context of a process of nuclear disarmament, the first stage of which, as I have just mentioned, would be reductions carried out by the two most heavily armed Powers, that we could conceive of, and give its true significance to, the limitation and eventual cessation of nuclear tests.

The discussion on the limitation of armaments obviously could not be limited to the problems of nuclear disarmament. The questions of outer space will again this year play an important part in our debate in keeping with the place they hold in public opinion in many of our countries.

In the context of the Conference on Disarmament in 1984 and again this year, France has explained its own positions on two aspects of the limitation of the military use of outer space, first, at the bilateral level, within the context of the Soviet-United States negotiations, and secondly, at the multilateral level.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

The preservation of this distinction we believe is important, even if it is obvious that progress in bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space questions would constitute the most favourable context in which multilateral agreements could be envisaged within the framework of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Soviet Union and the United States were the first military users of outer space. And yet they have not yet become the owners or exclusive legislators in the field of outer space. That is why we emphasize the need for the international community to maintain an active role so as to ensure that access to the various uses of outer space, both civilian and military, will not become the mere result of the possible evolution of new forms of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

It has in fact been recognized that certain military uses of outer space, when they make it possible to see, to communicate or to hear, are of a stabilizing nature. It is in this context that, as early as 1984, France proposed that the international community should set itself a twofold objective, to complement the results that could be obtained from the Soviet-United States bilateral negotiations. That twofold objective should be the following: first, to limit what can still be limited and, in particular, to guarantee the inviolability of the higher orbits; secondly, to consolidate and complete the existing legal régime, in particular with respect to the immunity of third-party satellites and the confidence measures that could be implemented for all space objects.

In this context we welcomed the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, which is the appropriate body for multilateral work in this field.

Finally, I also wish to recall that, among the proposals we put forward and which also relate to outer space, as the Committee may remember, there is our project for an international satellite monitoring agency which could provide the

(Mr. Jessel, France)

international community with a crucial element for the verification of disarmament agreements and for crisis management.

In the last 40 years, conventional wars have circumvented the zone covered by deterrence and especially the European continent. And yet they still exist and spread their train of suffering and misfortune to the rest of the world.

One of the most urgent tasks of the international community is to find solutions to the bloody conflicts that are being waged in all too many places.

I note, moreover, that in the statements made this year in the First Committee, this concern about conventional conflicts and the need to put an end to them has been expressed, sometimes very explicitly, by an increasing number of speakers. We understand and share those views. It is undoubtedly in the regional context that the problem can be dealt with more effectively. Incidentally, as far as we are concerned, it was our desire to curb and then to reduce the disquieting stockpiling of conventional weapons on the European continent that led us to formulate some years ago certain proposals which were favourably received by the countries concerned and which led to the Stockholm Conference, a conference which we hope will lead to encouraging results conducive to continuation of that process.

To this only too real scourge of conventional conflicts there has recently been added the spectre of a return to the use of chemical weapons.

My country unequivocally condemns any violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. As the French Foreign Minister recalled in his statement before the General Assembly, France will continue to support the efforts of the international community, and first and foremost those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a view to proceeding without delay to the impartial determination of the facts in cases of alleged use of such weapons.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

France will also participate in the negotiations pursued within the Conference on Disarmament with a view to the conclusion of a universal convention banning the manufacture of chemical weapons and assuring the destruction of existing stocks under international supervision. On the other hand, we do not think that formulas aimed at the formulation of a regional solution will contribute to such an objective. Rather than engaging on such false trails, we believe it would be better to devote more time, care and attention to the work that is under way in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament. On this point we associate ourselves with those who believe that that work can be carried out better and more intensively than has been the case so far.

Finally, I wish to confirm that, with regard to the course of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, my country is prepared to envisage appropriate measures to prevent a proliferation of chemical weapons which could only make the complete prohibition of such weapons now being sought in Geneva more difficult.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

The deterioration of international security conditions is also an obvious obstacle to development. To attempt to assess the relationship between the increase in expenditures on armaments and the main factors contributing to international economic disorder is a complex problem. Nevertheless, the international community as a whole should embark on a true political dialogue on this subject and jointly seek the course that could lead to the effective establishment of the relationship between disarmament and development. That was the purpose of the proposals submitted in 1983 to the General Assembly by the President of the French Republic. That should be the objective of the Conference which he said he was prepared to welcome in Paris. Resolution 39/160, adopted last year by consensus, established the principle of the Conference and made arrangements for its preparation. The work of the Preparatory Committee which met this summer resulted in recommendations that the General Assembly will be called upon to adopt, we hope, by consensus. The resolution which we, together with a large number of co-sponsors, will propose on the subject, should pave the way for the consideration of substantive questions to be discussed by the Conference in Paris next summer.

The French delegation is confident that their consideration will enable us to decide upon an approach acceptable to all. The establishment of the relationship between disarmament and development should serve the common interests of both the developed and the developing countries. It should reflect the interdependence of interests, the solidarity of all, help to promote general economic and social progress, and strengthen security.

Mr. MAHBOUB (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): First of all, Sir, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee. It is particularly gratifying to us that you represent a Moslem country which is dear to all of us, namely, Indonesia, with which my country and other Arab countries have close historical ties characterized by friendship and fruitful co-operation. We are confident that your wisdom and diplomatic skills, as well as personal qualities will ensure the success of this Committee's work.

We should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election to their posts and to say that the Iraqi delegation will co-operate fully in efforts to attain the noble objectives pursued by this Committee.

We should like to pay tribute to the wisdom and objectivity demonstrated by your predecessor, the Ambassador of Brazil, His Excellency Mr. Souza e Silva.

The United Nations has now turned 40. The Charter was inspired by noble goals, such as the desire to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, oppression and aggression, to join forces to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, and to ensure non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the right to self-determination, promotion of economic and social development as well as the protection and promotion of human rights.

This historic occasion calls for more than a celebration; rather, it requires a pause for reflection and assessment of the achievements and the failures of this Organization in terms of its purposes and goals. On the other hand, it calls for increasing efforts and a resolve on our part to strengthen the credibility of its resolutions, especially those of the Security Council, and to give this Organization a fresh impetus to ensure the successful fulfilment of its mandate and respect for the provisions of the Charter.

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

The Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was recently held in Geneva, reaffirmed the great importance of effective action to halt the spread of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race, to achieve complete and general disarmament, and to develop international co-operation in peaceful use of nuclear energy. My delegation would like to stress the need for a commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and endorses the adoption of a specific formula to that effect that could be incorporated in a legally binding international instrument. Iraq condemns the policy of discrimination regarding the transfer of technology under concepts outside the framework of the Treaty, such as the strengthening of restrictions on developing nations which are parties to the Treaty, and the continuation of aid to racist régimes which did not accept the provisions of that Treaty. The non-nuclear-weapon States which are parties to the Treaty are more eligible for technical assistance and should receive the benefits of the transfer of technology.

Israel's armed aggression against peaceful Iraqi nuclear installations on 7 June 1981 was a serious and unprecedented incident. That attack in fact constituted an act of aggression against the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and its supervision and safeguards responsibilities. It was also an attack against the NPT, the credibility of which will be undermined should that aggression go unpunished. Israel has so far failed to comply with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which called upon it urgently to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. That resolution also stated that Iraq was entitled to appropriate redress for the damage caused to its peaceful nuclear installation as a result of that Zionist aggression.

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

The Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons expressed deep concern over the Israeli military attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which was subject to the international safeguards system, and the nuclear-weapon capability of South Africa and the Zionist entity. Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and its co-operation with the other racist régime, that of South Africa, cause great concern to Iraq, especially as the two regions in question - the Middle East and Africa - are experiencing crises and disputes caused by the expansionist, aggressive policy pursued by the Pretoria and Tel Aviv régimes.

Iraq is convinced of the vital importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world, as that will contribute effectively to the prevention of vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. A prerequisite of the declaration of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone is the prevention of the Zionist threat and the elimination from the region of the nuclear weapons possessed by Israel. In that context, my delegation wishes to refer to the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research of 9 August 1985, which reaffirms Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. It states:

"there is no doubt that Israel has the technical capability to manufacture nuclear weapons and possesses the means of delivery of such weapons to targets in the area".

The report also states:

"The Group of Experts considers that the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel would be a seriously destabilizing factor in the already tense situation prevailing in the Middle East, in addition to being a serious danger to the cause of non-proliferation in general." (A/40/520, para. 3)

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

The General Assembly has repeatedly deplored and condemned the increasing collaboration between South Africa and Israel, especially in the military and nuclear fields. The main prerequisite for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the renunciation by the Zionist entity of the nuclear option, its accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the submission of all its nuclear installations to the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

If it is to be understood from the representative of the Zionist entity's statement yesterday that his Government is committed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a number of questions arise. One is why Israel has not signed the Treaty and why it does not subject its nuclear installations to IAEA safeguards. Because it has not done that, urgent action is needed to ensure that all States deny the Tel Aviv and Pretoria régimes access to nuclear technology and that the use of natural and enriched Namibian uranium ceases until Namibia attains independence.

It is regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has failed to conclude even one item on its agenda in time for the 1985 session, at which the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations is commemorated. Its failure to reach a consensus even on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban causes us considerable concern, especially as such a ban is a major goal of the United Nations in the disarmament field. The matter has been under consideration for over 25 years and the General Assembly has adopted more than 50 resolutions thereon.

With regard to the second item on the Conference's agenda, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", the plenary meetings were taken up by the mere delivery of statements, despite the fact that statistics show that nuclear-weapon States now possess over 50,000 nuclear warheads, which could destroy our planet many times over. The Conference failed to reach a consensus on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on this item, too.

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

It is a matter of vital concern to all the countries of the world that agreement be reached on ending the nuclear arms race and stopping the production of fissionable materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The Conference, as the only active multilateral negotiating forum, should carry out its task in that regard. We endorse the view that the initiation of bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States does not in any way diminish the need to conduct multilateral negotiations, as the two activities would take place in parallel and complement each other.

The Iraqi delegation very much welcomes the forthcoming summit meeting in Geneva between the leaders of the two super-Powers. We hope that the summit will be successful and achieve concrete results in connection with the complex subjects of nuclear weapons and the militarization of outer space, in order to save the world from the threat of the total annihilation of mankind. The world in general has an interest in the success of the summit, which we hope will contribute effectively and constructively to eliminating hotbeds of tension and areas of conflict in the world. We hope it will also lead to the creation of a political atmosphere with the maximum mutual trust.

There is no doubt that the greatest threat facing the world is that of annihilation by nuclear war. Apart from the blast, thermal energy and radiation, even a limited nuclear war would cause a nuclear winter, which would turn the whole Earth into a dark, frozen planet. In spite of that, the Conference on Disarmament did not succeed at this year's session in reaching a consensus on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the third item on its agenda, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters".

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

My delegation feels that the most pressing of the tasks we face today is to eliminate the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear war. We agree with the group of neutral and non-aligned countries in the Conference on Disarmament that there is no political or moral justification for the security and very survival of the world remaining hostage to the whims of the nuclear Powers.

We fully share their concern about the spread of the arms race to outer space, which would add to problems of disarmament, complicated enough as they are, and would increase the threat posed by the nuclear arms race. While Iraq welcomes the limited progress achieved on this item by the Conference on Disarmament this year - the Conference was able to establish an ad hoc committee on this item, under the chairmanship of the representative of Egypt, Mr. Saad Alfarargi - we hope that every effort will be made to ensure progress and concrete work to reverse the current trend towards the militarization of outer space. Technological advances will make such progress impossible unless measures are taken speedily.

Iraq welcomes also the limited progress on the question of chemical weapons by the Disarmament Commission. Iraq supports all efforts towards reaching a treaty on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We also support United Nations resolutions on banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons.

We believe that the results of attacks on nuclear installations, even if carried out with conventional weapons, are equivalent to those of a nuclear attack, since they release radiation and other dangerous substances harmful to the environment.

Iraq fully supports the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and we urge the denuclearization of that region, the removal from it of weapons of mass destruction, and its insulation from super-Power rivalries. We feel that the Colombo conference on the Indian Ocean should be convened as soon as possible

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

as a matter of urgency, in order to enhance the peace and security of the area. This should not be subject to resolving certain disagreements which are unrelated to the issue.

We are all aware of the major, dangerous consequences of the enormous military expenditures, and their growing effect on the economic and financial situation throughout the world, especially in developing countries. Expenditures on armament amount to \$1 trillion a year. Those resources would be much more usefully employed in combating hunger in many parts of the world and in addressing and alleviating the foreign debt problem of many countries. They would be allocated for economic and social development. Thus, Iraq welcomes the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and we particularly welcome the Conference itself, which is to be held at Paris in mid-1986, and wish it every success in achieving its goals.

If nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear war and related matters are of the highest priority, there is also pressing need to increase awareness of the grave consequences arising from the stockpiling of conventional weapons, particularly since statistics found in United Nations documents show that since the establishment of the Organization there have been over 150 armed conflicts, most of them in developing countries. Those wars, in which conventional weapons were used, resulted in the loss of between 16 and 25 million human lives, and in millions of refugees and disabled persons, quite apart from losses in the world's economic infrastructure.

(Mr. Mahboub, Iraq)

The United Nations, which was founded first and foremost to save mankind from the scourge of war, should enjoy greater credibility so that it can implement the provisions of the Charter and its resolutions, particularly unanimously adopted Security Council resolutions, aiming at the peaceful settlement of disputes and at the promotion of international security.

The strengthening of security is a basic reason why it is important to maintain international peace and security. In the Middle East, the Zionist threat and all aggressive and expansionist Zionist policies constitute the best example of why this is so.

I wish in conclusion to echo the words of the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization, issued on 4 September 1985:

"We face today a world of almost infinite promise which is also a world of potentially terminal danger. The choice between these alternatives is ours". (A/40/1, p. 2)

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.