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Chairman:

Mr. MROZIEWICZ

(Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker on the list for this morning's meeting is the Observer of Switzerland, on whom I now call.

Mr. CHENAUX-REPOND (Switzerland) (interpretation from French): The past year has witnessed unexpected but very welcome progress in the field of disarmament.

The agreement reached in the strategic arms limitation talks (START) and the unilateral cuts recently announced by the United States and the Soviet Union should help to facilitate extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995. With the further accessions and intentions to accede announced by France and China, that important Treaty has now become nearly universal. We are convinced that the few States that have not yet become parties to it will take these developments into account.

However, that positive development is somewhat tarnished by other, less-happy events that have recalled the difficulties involved in the proliferation of atomic, biological and chemical weapons. We are thinking in particular of the alarming discoveries of flagrant violations by Iraq of the non-proliferation Treaty and the safeguards agreement concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA safeguards system, as applied by the Agency until now only to installations duly declared as coming under the safeguards agreement, has been called into question. It is up to the Agency and to its member States to draw the necessary conclusions and strengthen the existing system.

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

The inspections carried out by the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, to which Switzerland is contributing experts, have provided valuable information in this connection.

The primary responsibility for monitoring exports of military matériel and products used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction is incumbent upon States.

On 24 September of this year Mr. Roland Dumas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, stated in the Assembly that his country intended henceforth to respect full-scope safeguards with regard to all exports connected with nuclear power.

On the following day Mr. Douglas Hurd, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, announced from the same rostrum that his Government also intended to implement a policy of full-scope safeguards.

My country took note of both statements with great satisfaction. In its turn, on 23 October, it decided to implement the same policy of full-scope monitoring of nuclear exports to non-nuclear-weapon countries. Such exports would henceforth be authorized if all the nuclear installations and activities of the recipient countries were subject to the peaceful-use safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

But such a policy of full-scope safeguards cannot make its full contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons unless it is adopted by all supplier countries. Thus, we call on the few supplier countries that have not yet done so to take the necessary decisions in this regard.

In the field of export controls, the Swiss Government is preparing new regulations that will enable us more effectively to control the export of dual-use technology and equipment that can be used for peaceful purposes as well as for the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. With those regulations, Switzerland will be able fully to apply a control regime to missile technology.

The Gulf war has shown - if that were necessary - the consequences of the over-armament of a State. The report by the Group of Governmental Experts on the Ways and Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms is very much to the point and contains conclusions and recommendations of great interest. We welcome the fact that a Swiss expert consultant contributed to the preparation of that study. Among the recommendations of the group of experts, the establishment of a universal, non-discriminatory United Nations register of transfers of conventional arms would, we think, be particularly useful for achieving greater transparency in this area.

In line with the interest we have always shown in the codification and development of humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts, Switzerland has been constantly concerned about weapons that can cause excessive suffering. In that connection, we are taking part in efforts by various States in the field of anti-personnel laser weapons intended to blind the adversary, and in

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

the field of so-called new weapons in general. The Swiss delegation is pleased to note that this item will be on the agenda of the forthcoming General Conference of the International Committee of the Red Cross to be held in Budapest at the end of November.

In that same context of weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious, my delegation wants also to recall that it recently informed States parties to the Geneva Conventions that they are entitled to make use of the technical facilities of the weapons-testing centre of the Federal Military Department at Thoune to test their small-calibre weapons or munitions.

My country actively supports the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. An agreement on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons seems for the first time to be within reach. We particularly welcome the recent initiative by the President of the United States on the destruction of chemical-weapons stockpiles. The possibility of opening all capable chemical-industry facilities to international inspections would fill a major gap in the verification system. We hope it will be possible quickly to resolve outstanding problems, inter alia in the area of verification.

Another important task of the Conference on Disarmament is the conclusion of an agreement on the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. Because of its composition, the Conference on Disarmament seems to us to be at present the sole multilateral body qualified to negotiate on that subject. We therefore hope a negotiating mandate will be given its Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear tests. In the meantime, the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, in which Switzerland plays an active role, should continue its work.

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

In conclusion, I want to draw attention to the fact that last March Switzerland, which participates actively in the work of the Conference on Disarmament as an observer and which is the host country of that body, put forward its candidacy for full membership of the Conference. We hope that candidacy will be accepted.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the Secretary of the Section for Relations with States of the Holy See, His Excellency Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran.

Archbishop TAURAN (Holy See) (interpretation from French): First, Sir, I want to express my pleasure at your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee; I congratulate you warmly. The fact that you are of the Polish nation calls to mind the crucial role your country has of late been playing in Europe. Poland and the Poles were among the first to undertake the pilgrimage to freedom that is enabling a whole continent gradually to become a place where the rights of peoples are not merely enshrined in constitutional or international texts but are becoming concrete reality.

In reflecting on this epic of freedom, I think too of the lesson we can learn from it: it is possible to change the face of a society, making it more human, more democratic, more worthy of mankind, without striking a single blow. Armed conflict and war can never be the way to solve social or political problems. That naturally brings us to the subject before this Committee, whose agenda is largely devoted to disarmament.

Since last year's session, the world has witnessed devastating conflicts. I refer particularly to the Gulf war and the war now tearing Yugoslavia apart.

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

The first reaction of each of us, I think, is sadness: sadness at having to admit that human beings still do not know how to benefit from the lessons of history. After the tragedies of the Second World War, colonial wars, and crises in the Middle and Far East, one would think that national leaders would have finally understood what Pope John-Paul II said on 12 January this year: "Peace obtained by arms only lays the ground for new violence".

We are all aware of the unfortunate human and political problems that persist in the Middle East, problems the coming Madrid conference on peace in the Middle East should help to resolve through dialogue and negotiation.

We continue - with anguish - to witness the new front that has opened in Europe: the bleeding wound that is the civil war now lacerating Yugoslavia.

The process promoted by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), initiated in 1972, gained the consensus of 38 countries on the 1975 Final Act, which included a set of principles that have inspired the way in which relations have developed among European nations. Those principles are expressed in the commitment no longer to use war to settle disputes. Today, as I speak, we are seeing that great achievement in international conduct flouted by European peoples whom geography and history have made neighbours.

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

Disarmament, therefore, is by no means a purely academic question; it is a necessity on which depends the survival of our world. The experience of these last months is sufficient to demonstrate the futility and the cruelty of war in itself. The Holy See, for its part, has spoken and continues to speak the same language to all, and that is that war, with the destructive means provided by modern technology, will never resolve with any finality the problems between peoples. The fact that now military action is not limited to the belligerent alone but soon becomes regional and even world wide; the destructive capacity of existing armaments capable of wiping out the infrastructures of a whole country and of depriving the civilian populations of the resources essential to their survival; and the ecological consequences, are all elements which need to be considered before embarking on what might well be called an irresponsible exploit. In any case it is absolutely necessary to exhaust all the peaceful means which international law places at the disposal of all to find solutions worthy of mankind before unleashing any kind of war. And it is necessary always to judge in all conscience whether the evils to be created are proportional to the objectives for which a decision to fight was made in the first place.

Thus for years the community of nations has placed its trust in nuclear deterrence. The use of this particularly destructive weapon has been so dreaded that no one has dared to use it. But in this case we speak of a desperate solution; the absence of war is not peace.

Today the new international climate tends to promote dialogue and mutual confidence and thus to persist in the policy of nuclear deterrence becomes more and more contestable. The recent disarmament treaties, moreover, rightl

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

strive to reduce nuclear deterrence to the lowest level and to develop confidence-building.

I should like to repeat here what was said by Pope John Paul II who, in his most recent encyclical Centesimus Annus affirmed;

"No, never again war, which destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, thus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution of the very problems which provoked the war. Just as the time has finally come when in individual States a system of private vendetta and reprisal has given way to the rule of law, so too a similar step forward is now urgently needed in the international community."

That is why the Holy See considers the efforts for disarmament to be a priority for the leaders of nations. And so the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and the Soviet Union in July last is a cause for rejoicing. The Holy See has also taken note of the recent decision of the two major nuclear Powers to eliminate short-range nuclear weapons. These are gestures for which humanity can be grateful. We hope that soon agreement will be reached on a convention for the universal, global and verifiable prohibition of chemical weapons.

The reduction of conventional forces in Europe, agreed in the Treaty signed in Paris on 19 November 1990, and the adoption of confidence- and security-building measures which bind the participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) are equally significant steps which it would be desirable to extend to other regions of the world. The Europeans have, in effect, made innovations in this matter

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

thanks to three techniques: first, effective measures of verification and restraint; secondly, a progressive reduction of armaments; and, thirdly, policies of cooperation and confidence. These procedures should serve as an example because essentially the modern conception of security consists in prevention rather than cure.

Since at the end of this year of 1991 we are aware of the risks inherent in over-armament we should underline certain major dangers which should be remedied without delay, and I shall refer to two of them. First, while we speak about disarmament, nevertheless the modernisation of nuclear and other arms continues, and all this is frequently at the expense of the well-being of peoples. The second danger is that the arms trade is flourishing and we have heard that \$1.5 million are spent every minute in the world for the purchase of military matériel.

The Holy See has always hoped that favourable conditions would be created for the conversion of ever greater parts of military budgets to finance developmental and environmental policies. Concrete initiatives, moreover, could be taken in this field. For example, it has been suggested that a register be set up to record the transfer of armaments or the sale of arms.

Basically, the point here is to ascertain whether the resolution of international conflicts will continue to be done by the force of arms.

The United Nations, for 46 years, has striven with perseverance - as stated in Article 1 of its Charter:

"to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

Homage must be paid to this noble aim of the United Nations and, even more, the United Nations must be given the means to enable it to be ever more capable of helping to find peaceful solutions to conflicts and to counteract the military ambitions that still threaten the international community.

The Catholic Church wishes to repeat here, with all the strength of its conviction and of its centuries-old experience in the service of peace, that war is not inevitable. Justice, solidarity, respect for one's neighbour, respect for the opinions of others and the free and legitimate choices of peoples are the foundations on which human coexistence rests. That is why disarmament is not possible while human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are not respected and promoted by all Governments.

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

That is why disarmament efforts would be illusory if they were not accompanied by the actual elimination of instances of injustice and by respect for the just aspirations of peoples to freedom, to self-determination, to a homeland and to life with dignity. It is to these great tasks - which, in my opinion, are the honour of the human person and of societies - that everyone's energies should be resolutely dedicated, instead of being mobilised for future wars.

The challenge of peace confronts the entire international community, and the historic circumstances of today should enable us to meet that challenge.

May the discussions conducted in this Committee and the careful attention of experts provide reflections and guidelines which will enable societies and their leaders to place their trust less and less in armaments and to devote themselves more and more to the advent of an authentic community of nations.

Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you sincerely on your election to your high and responsible post. I take particular pleasure in doing so, because you are the representative of a neighbouring country with which we are developing close and friendly relations and with which we have been on the very best of terms over the centuries. I wish you and all the officers of the First Committee success in the performance of the Committee's tasks.

I believe I can safely say that among the States Members of the United Nations at the present time there has come about a consensus with regard to the appraisal of the present phase of world development, which is characterised by a shift away from confrontation towards cooperation and by a desire on the part of States to set up a new international order based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Such an appraisal is

(Mr. Kraychanka, Belarus)

confirmed by the major practical steps taken in the spheres of international security and disarmament, the settlement of regional conflicts and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in world affairs. These steps are being taken at the multilateral and bilateral levels or at the initiative of individual States.

Many participants in our discussions in this Committee have emphasized the significance of these measures, among them the Soviet-American Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the recent initiatives of the Presidents of the Soviet Union and the United States in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). In these circumstances, the notion that the arms race is being supplanted to a certain extent by an accelerating process of disarmament appears to be valid.

There is no doubt that we must continue to give high priority to the implementation of further decisive measures to bring about nuclear disarmament, a process in which all nuclear Powers would be involved. We support this appeal and at the same time believe that each State can and should make its contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament.

Belarus seeks to make the fullest possible contribution to the solution of disarmament issues. Our Parliament has set itself the task of converting the Republic of Belarus into a nuclear-free zone and a neutral State.

On the way towards achieving that goal, which was proclaimed in Belarus's Declaration of State Sovereignty last year, we have put forward an initiative for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone consisting of Belarus, the three Baltic States, Ukraine, and other States wishing to be included in that zone.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

The events of the past year have proved the rightness of our judgement in taking our initiative. The time has now come to take the next step forward: to conduct substantive consultations with all interested parties on concrete measures for the establishment of such a zone and also on the procedures, methods and steps for casting it in a proper form under international law. We are prepared to be involved in that process.

Many delegates in the Committee have voiced concern as to what will be done with the nuclear weapons situated in the territory of individual Republics of the former Soviet Union. In this connection, I wish to state that the Republic of Belarus does not seek to possess nuclear weapons and is considering the possibility of acceding to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and of liquidating the nuclear weapons in its national territory. We would not want a relentless fate to draw us some day into an unforeseen situation, into the all-consuming blaze of a thermonuclear war, an Armageddon. The fate of nuclear capability in the territory of Belarus - its utilization, deployment and redeployment and of control over it - can and should be resolved only with the direct participation of the Republic of Belarus and not behind its back. This also applies to any other components of military capability in our territory. We see a direct connection between such concepts as sovereignty and the nuclear-weapon factor. The reality of establishing the former concept depends on the pace and specific forms of the elimination of the latter.

We fully understand, of course, the complexity and delicacy of the military and political problems involved here and the fact that the solution to these problems depends on the general European situation and the positions taken by other countries.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

That is why Belarus sees a need for appropriate channels to carry out the necessary international work to that end. On the basis of those considerations in particular, at the beginning of this year Belarus requested the Conference on Disarmament to admit it to membership in that important body. I hope that our request will be granted in due course.

Belarus is passing through a new phase in the establishment and development of its independence and its statehood. On 25 August of this year its Supreme Soviet gave constitutional status to the Declaration on State Sovereignty and adopted a decree on the Republic's political and economic independence. On 19 September it decided to rename the State "Republic of Belarus". At the beginning of October of this year the Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration on the principles of foreign policy, reaffirming Belarus's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and other fundamental instruments of international law.

The Republic of Belarus looks forward to support from the world community for its initiatives and expresses its readiness to establish mutually advantageous cooperation in all spheres with all interested States.

During this debate delegates have put forward many interesting and constructive ideas and proposals designed to ensure international security and disarmament. As we see it, the political realities of the post-confrontation period have created favourable conditions for positive consideration of those ideas with a view to stimulating multilateral dialogue on disarmament questions. It is essential to make the fullest possible use of this situation by concentrating on those aspects of disarmament in which multilateral efforts could bring significant practical results.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

The delegation of Belarus shares the view of those delegations that have advocated a complete ban on nuclear-weapon testing and the conclusion of an appropriate treaty. Lack of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is undoubtedly one of the most acutely felt omissions in the international community's movement towards disarmament, because the implementation of such a ban would make it possible to halt the qualitative upgrading of nuclear arms and to eliminate what might well be the most important incentive for nuclear competition. The cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests would also make a substantive contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Converting the 1963 Moscow Treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests in three environments into a comprehensive instrument is one of the most important ways to achieve the long-standing goal of a complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. The Republic of Belarus advocates the further study of such a course, together with continued efforts in other areas. We welcome the Soviet Union's decision to declare a one-year moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests, and at the same time we call upon the other nuclear Powers to follow that example, as that would certainly facilitate progress towards a complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. We feel that the Conference on Disarmament should also focus more actively on this matter.

In recent years the problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other types of extremely dangerous weapons and of the technology for their production has become particularly serious. The growing technological and economic capabilities of States, combined with continuing or new focal points of regional conflict, and especially the aggressive efforts of certain States, such as were made in the Persian Gulf, call for careful and urgent attention

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

by the United Nations. A number of States have already made specific proposals. In particular, we regard as very timely the proposal by many countries to start preparatory work in 1993 for the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which could give the Treaty the legal status of an agreement of unlimited duration.

A ban on chemical weapons is also within the sphere of responsibility of the United Nations. Some progress has been made this year in the Conference on Disarmament in drawing up a convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. It is to be hoped that by mid-1992 full agreement can be reached on its text. As a sponsor of the draft resolution on the question, Belarus feels it is appropriate for the General Assembly to invite the Conference on Disarmament to complete its work on this question as soon as possible. The current relevance of banning chemical weapons is becoming increasingly clear. Belarus, in whose territory chemical weapons were used during the First World War in the Lake Naroch' region, with the loss of thousands of lives, is keenly interested in ensuring that such things never happen again anywhere.

There is cause for satisfaction about the work of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention banning bacteriological weapons, particularly with regard to solving the questions of control and greater openness and trust, which will doubtless promote successful work on strengthening the regime for the banning of those deadly weapons.

Reducing armed forces and conventional armaments is also an important issue. The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe is an unprecedented step in that regard. That Treaty, signed last year by 22 European States, together

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

with new approaches to cooperation within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, has given a completely new quality to relations between States and to the maintenance of security on the continent. Belarus, in whose territory there is an extremely high concentration of armed forces, is interested in the prompt implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and further progress in that area.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

We shall work for the early ratification of the Treaty.

In today's circumstances, we do not see any serious obstacles to the recognition of the new realities of the world by the participants in the Helsinki process. We see no reason why they should not proceed on the basis of participation by Belarus on an equal footing in their important efforts, which will determine the future of the continent in so many respects. A suitable opportunity to do so could be the meeting of the members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at the foreign-minister level, scheduled for January 1992.

At past sessions of the General Assembly, Belarus delegations strongly emphasized the need for a shift in a number of places, including the competent organs of the United Nations, towards the practical harmonisation of criteria and parameters relating to strictly defensive military doctrines and structures. For that reason we welcome the multilateral dialogue on those problems that has commenced within the framework of the United Nations and the preparation of a study of defensive concepts by a United Nations group of experts.

We again emphasize the idea, voiced by our delegation a year ago, that the subject of armaments and ecology is an extremely timely one, and we hope that the United Nations will study the possibility of agreement on steps to be taken in that field.

In its statement, the Belarus delegation has not sought to raise all the fundamental questions relating to disarmament. In our view, what is most needed now is to focus on the elaboration of practical steps in the disarmament field, to endeavour to involve all States in that process and to enhance the ways and means used by the United Nations in that extremely important field of activity.

Mr. GDAIA (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): It pleases my delegation to express our sincere congratulations to you upon your election as Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly. We also wish to express our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that with your wisdom and experience the meetings of this Committee will bear fruitful results.

This Committee has undoubtedly contributed and will continue to contribute indispensable, substantive efforts to promote international peace and security, particularly at this juncture. This international forum has an effective function for crystallizing common positions aimed at reaching reasoned, rational results that would have a positive effect on the creation of a peaceful international environment that should be conducive to the achievement of the noble objectives for which this international Organisation was created.

The world is entering upon a new stage in which the international order experiences important transformations, unequalled since the Second World War, in its foundations and directions. There is movement towards the creation of a new international order founded on the principles of the United Nations and international legality.

While the world was welcoming the dawn of this new era and as looking forward to the establishment of the element of equilibrium as the general norm of contemporary international relations with all the prospects that that entailed; while the world was looking forward to overcoming the obstacles and the tragedies of the past and was feeling optimistic at the threshold of this new era which would highlight the resolve of all the peoples of the world to solve their differences by peaceful means, renounce the use of force; and see

(Mr. Gdala, Saudi Arabia)

to achieve national and international goals through dialogue, understanding and constructive work, the Iraqi regime surprised the entire world by occupying the State of Kuwait. In doing this, it contravened all international instruments and diplomatic norms, threatened international and regional peace and security and caused a deep fissure in the heart of the Arab Nation, which was moving from disunion to unity, from divergence to convergence and towards a comprehensive emotional and intellectual rapprochement.

Now that almighty God has ensured the success of the efforts of the international community to stop aggression and abort the plots of treachery and evil, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, like the rest of the international community, reaffirms the need for a full implementation by Iraq of all Security Council resolutions in order to avoid a repetition of this international catastrophe.

The positive developments in relations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union and their movement towards the reduction of weapons of mass destructions are developments that tend to make one feel more secure. The world is happy to see those two States moving towards peace and cooperation instead of war and confrontation and dealing in the balance of interests rather than the balance of terror.

In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to salute the far-reaching initiative recently declared by President George Bush and the response of President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union concerning the reduction of nuclear weapons. These historic changes impel the entire world to reach for new horizons where resources may be channelled to international development.

(Mr. Gdala, Saudi Arabia)

Proceeding from Saudi Arabia's policy which stems from its love for peace, we have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have abided by its provisions and have always urged the international community to renounce chemical, bacteriological and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has repeatedly declared its absolute support for the initiatives aimed at creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the entire region of the Middle East. We have always affirmed that all States in the region, particularly those with nuclear capabilities, must join international efforts to ban nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in our region.

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudi Arabia)

Over the past decade and at the outset of this one, the Gulf, that vital region of the world, was ravaged by two wars. The first, the Iraq-Iran war, had consequences and caused damage that were felt beyond the borders of the two warring countries. The consequences of that war shook the very foundations on which the security and stability of the region were built. The second was the war brought on the region by the Iraqi regime through its occupation of the State of Kuwait and its threats against the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the States in the region.

In this context, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made every effort to spare the region those wars. It is no secret that my Government has a clear-cut policy in this respect, which reflects our strong belief in the need to spare the region any regional or international conflict. It is known both in the region and elsewhere that we have never been the source of aggression or threat of aggression against any other State. We reject the principle of the use of force in international relations.

The lesson of the Kuwait crisis is that the real threat to the security of the Gulf was regional and not international. In this context, all international instruments and all principles of international law must be respected: respect for the sovereignty and independence of every State not only spares the region the bane of tension, but also promotes confidence and fosters good-neighbourliness and good intentions. Sincerity in international relations increases the prospects of commercial, economic and political cooperation, after which the peoples of the region aspire in their search for the stability that would make possible the adoption of policies capable of safeguarding their interests and ensuring their safety and security.

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudi Arabia)

On that basis, and pursuant to our desire to promote security and stability in the region, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council have entered into arrangements with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic. These arrangements have taken shape in the form of the Damascus declaration as a general framework for promoting relations and coordination between these States, on all levels, in accordance with the principles of the League of Arab States and of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the development of positive relations between the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the efforts being made to improve those relations, will lead in the future to a new stage, a veritable quantum leap in the nature of relations between the States of the Gulf region. The fruits of cooperation and brotherliness will surely benefit the stability, security of the region and the well-being of its peoples.

As we stand at the threshold of a new era wherein the reduction of weapons assumes a high priority in relations between States, we hope that international economic issues will benefit from those tendencies. We hope that those tendencies will be reflected in an increased international contribution to development through the channelling to development of some of the enormous sums that used to be spent on armaments under the conditions of the cold war.

The concern of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with economic problems and the question of development stems from the fact that we ourselves are a developing country. Our own experience makes us well aware of the suffering of the majority of States in the world in attempting to realize the aspirations of

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudi Arabia)

their peoples for a better future. Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has tried always to use its resources to alleviate the developmental problems of friendly developing States, and has always made such assistance unconditional, in order to help those friendly nations to pursue their development efforts.

The security of nations will not be achieved through war and destruction. International solidarity, which is a must in our time, has to stem from good intentions. Solidarity cannot be achieved when States have hidden intentions which are more important to them than their declared policies. Security is the fruit of confidence, confidence stems from solidarity and solidarity is born of credibility; without these essential components, international peace and security cannot be ensured.

All of us as States bear the responsibility of ensuring our future by avoiding the mistakes and pitfalls of the past. We must combine our efforts in order to guarantee a future of peace, security, understanding and mutual trust. Such a future will be achieved only through adherence to international instruments and to the principles and objectives of this international Organisation. It is in that way that we can achieve security and consolidate peace.

Mr. KONIK (Poland): As the Polish delegation indicated in its previous intervention earlier this week, we should now like to comment briefly on some of the problems addressed in this year's report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/46/27). The report is as voluminous as in the past, covering the results of the work of the Conference on Disarmament during 1991.

A close reading reveals that the negotiating process in Geneva has not been unaffected by the profound changes taking place on the international

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

scene. This is particularly true with regard to the negotiations on chemical weapons. The considerable progress achieved in the course of 1991 in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is reflected in its "Preliminary structure of a convention on chemical weapons" (A/46/27, pp. 61 ff.). My delegation welcomes this tangible indication of the advanced state of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

A new, fresh impetus has been given to the chemical weapons negotiations by President Bush's initiative, in particular by the United States commitment to destroy, unconditionally, all its stocks of chemical weapons within 10 years of the entry into force of the convention and to forswear the use of chemical weapons against any State for any reason, including retaliation.

My Government wholeheartedly welcomes this initiative. The momentum thus added to the negotiating process must not be lost; we believe that all possible efforts must be made to implement the standing mandate, as amended, of the Conference on Disarmament for the chemical weapons negotiations, in order to achieve, in the course of 1992, a final agreement on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction.

According to the report under consideration, important steps in this direction have already been made this year. I have in mind, first and foremost, the inclusion in the scope of the future convention of a provision on the total prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, the withdrawal of the 2 per cent security stockpile concept and the acceptance of a 10-year deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities.

The structure of the draft convention has been completed by the inclusion of articles X and XI.

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Their provisions concern, respectively, assistance in case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons, economic and technological development, measures to redress a situation and to ensure compliance, including sanctions, amendment procedure and the settlement of disputes. Besides, the progress on legal and institutional matters, including the highly complex issue of jurisdiction and control, clears the way to solving other problems in this area as well.

A major issue still unresolved concerns verification. Undoubtedly, the key to an effective verification system is an agreement on challenge inspections. We consider such an inspection concept to represent a new generation of verification measures. The concepts of openness and transparency in military matters have also gained in recent years an increasingly important place in disarmament efforts. Given the improved international atmosphere, especially the fact that the old rivalries and confrontation have yielded to cooperation, it should now be much easier to probe the ground for an intrusive verification than was conceivable just some years ago. It is not only in the interest of effective implementation of the Convention itself but also in the interest of effective verification of future disarmament agreements. The challenge inspection can meet the security concerns of States that in future become parties to the Convention on chemical weapons. We are not closing our eyes to such legitimate questions as how to prevent possible abuses and how to protect sensitive information unrelated to the Convention. In our opinion, the best way to solve these problems is to develop appropriate procedures that everyone could accept. Material accumulated over the many years of negotiation makes this task fully feasible. The time has come now to finalize the challenge inspection

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provisions and procedures. In the considered view of the Polish delegation, this is the most urgent task if we really mean to finalise the Convention by 1992.

Poland welcomes the progress made in verification procedures for the chemical industry. The extension of verification activities to cover "schedule 3 facilities" as well as the "capable facilities" increases our confidence that the chemical industry is not being used for purposes prohibited under the Convention. At the same time, we must find a proper selection mechanism in order to elaborate a cost-effective and fail-proof system, without compromising the deterrence factor so essential if verification is to be meaningful. Given the possibly great number of facilities to be covered by on-site inspections within the context of article VI, the only way out is to envisage a role for States parties in the selection process. Smooth and effective implementation of the Convention would help to alleviate current concerns over possible conflict-prone situations arising from the role of States parties in identification of facilities to be inspected. Apart from the aforementioned verification provisions, there are other issues which are yet to be settled, such as the composition, functions and decision-making powers of the executive council and the financing of the future organisation. These are important issues whose resolution in a manner acceptable to all parties concerned will be easier once the verification regime is agreed upon.

The delegation of Poland is confident that, with the real political will to search actively for reasonable compromise solutions, the First Committee will be able at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to recommend

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a draft Convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction, for approval and signature by Members of the United Nations. This would be a crowning moment in a process started many years ago to get rid of chemical weapons. This year, in keeping with a long tradition, Canada and Poland will propose to the First Committee a draft resolution urging the Conference on Disarmament to exert itself so that the foregoing scenario can be carried through in 1992.

In order to be truly effective, the Convention on chemical weapons must be universally adhered to. The responsibility for achieving this goal rests not only with States participating in the negotiating process. That is why my delegation welcomes the declarations of intent of many States to become original signatories to the Convention. As is known, Poland has already made such a declaration. We would appeal to other States to make similar declarations.

We likewise welcome the statements concerning withdrawal of reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and we urge States which have not yet done so to withdraw such reservations at the latest by the date of entry into force of the Convention.

I have dwelt at some length on the question of a ban on chemical weapons. This does not mean, of course, that my delegation does not appreciate the significance of other items on the agenda of the Conference. Nuclear issues, particularly efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, are indeed of vital importance. As the Polish delegation observed in its first statement, the implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of

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Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the signature of the Treaty on strategic arms reductions and the recent initiative on nuclear arms by President Bush, reciprocated by the USSR, are signs of profound change in this field. We welcome this process and we are confident that it will substantially improve the climate also for the multilateral approach to nuclear disarmament issues. The Conference on Disarmament this year devoted substantial attention to different aspects of nuclear disarmament. It succeeded in its effort aimed at an early re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. The report under consideration signifies that the Conference is a useful forum for a dialogue to identify the best and most promising ways of dealing with that question. We appreciate in particular the valuable work performed by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, in which Poland has actively participated. In this connection, Poland believes that the unilateral moratorium on underground nuclear tests, announced recently by President Gorbachev, will add momentum to the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee. It would be desirable if the Soviet moratorium evoked a positive response on the part of other nuclear Powers as well.

The Polish delegation welcomes also the useful exchange of views at informal meetings at the Conference on Disarmament on the question of cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and on prevention of nuclear war. We consider that such a debate is invaluable, given the gradual evolution of perceptions of the role of nuclear weapons in preserving world stability and security.

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

We are pleased that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space started its work earlier than in the past and that it held worthwhile and substantive discussions. In particular, my delegation would like to place on record our appreciation of the work done on the terminological aspects related to prevention of an arms race in outer space, on anti-satellite verification and on confidence-building measures related to space activities. Much credit in this respect goes to the Friends of the Chairman. We feel that such an exercise provides an additional and welcome opportunity to seek areas of convergence of views. In our opinion, one of the aspects we should look at, besides confidence-building measures is that of possible cooperative measures in the use of outer space for disarmament verification.

We share the opinion contained in the concluding part of the Committee's report regarding the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. Consequently we support its recommendation that the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established at the beginning of the 1992 session.

Mr. PORTER (United States of America): I have just a few, very brief remarks to make. The United States statement delivered in the Committee on the fifteenth of this month contains a paragraph briefly describing the arms elimination and verification regime stipulated by Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), 707 (1991) and 715 (1991). Included in that paragraph was a sentence, which, owing to an unfortunate misprint in the prepared text, stated that the long-term monitoring programme under that regime is to prevent Iraq from rebuilding its conventional weapons. The reference to "conventional weapons" is, of course, incorrect and should be replaced by the words "weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities."

The United States delegation requests that this correction be reflected in the pertinent verbatim record of the Committee's proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to inform representatives that a technical error occurred during the printing process in connection with the membership list of the First Committee, as now contained in document A/C.1/46/8. Accordingly, a number of delegations are incorrectly reflected in the document. I have been informed by the Documents Control Unit of the Secretariat that a corrected version of the document will be available on Monday, 28 October.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.