

# General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

*Official Records*

FIRST COMMITTEE

20th meeting

held on

Monday, 28 October 1991

at 3 p.m.

New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

**Chairman:**

**Mr. MROZIEWICZ**

**(Poland)**

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**Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.1/46/PV.20  
12 November 1991**

91-61589 6888V (E)

**ENGLISH**

**Best Copy Available**

32p.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the United Kingdom, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Experts on the Study on Ways and Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms, will introduce the study.

Mr. McDONALD (United Kingdom): I feel very privileged to be here today to present to the First Committee the report of the Secretary-General on ways and means of improving transparency in arms transfers (A/46/301). Before I do so, however, I hope I will be allowed to make two tributes.

First, I must draw attention to the fact that the first two meetings of the Group of Experts were chaired by Ambassador Plaja from Italy. He is, sadly, no longer with us, but it was he who laid the foundations for this report. Without his wise, patient and courteous guidance, we would, I am sure, not have been able to arrive at this agreed report.

The second tribute I must make, with your indulgence, Sir, is to the members of the Study Group themselves. They came from many countries with many different backgrounds and skills. They had two things in common. The first was an overpowering belief that the subject of arms transfers was one of vital importance and one which the world community should now seize the opportunity to tackle. The other feature which we all shared in the Group - and one which I know it shares with the First Committee - was an ability to get along together, to work together, to understand each other's viewpoint, to find compromises and finally - not always easily but finally - to arrive at a unanimously agreed report with agreed recommendations.

(Mr. McDonald, United Kingdom)

In preparing the report, and particularly at its last session earlier this year, the group of experts was very aware that the outbreak of war in the Gulf not only had demonstrated the tragic consequences which can flow from irresponsible arms build-ups but had also sensitized the world to the issue. We believed - we still believe - that if ever there was a time for action in this field, that time is now. Our report therefore was written to be a positive document calling for urgent action.

As the report makes clear, we did not see transparency in arms transfers as a complete panacea. Nor we did see it in one form only. Transparency and openness in arms transfers was, we believed, an initial and important step towards building confidence between nations and lowering suspicion and tension. There is an important place for openness in this field within countries. And the report exhorts countries to practice, if I may borrow a phrase, glasnost in this area. There are also important initiatives to be taken regionally.

We were very aware of and of course welcomed the very important agreements in arms control which have recently been achieved. The group of experts saw these as pointing the way to other regional agreements covering transparency or control in arms matters. In saying this, however, the group was not suggesting one common formula or recipe. Every region, every time will have its own mix, its own formula, its own circumstances.

Finally, the group of experts believed that the time had come for some action to be taken globally to promote transparency in arms transfers. The report therefore recommends the introduction of a United Nations arms-transfer register without delay, covering both supplier and recipient: a universal and non-discriminatory register which would promote confidence among all the

(Mr. McDonald, United Kingdom)

countries of the world and which would indicate authoritatively any sign of an unwarranted or irresponsible arms build-up. The report does not spell out exactly how this register should be constructed. It does, however, strongly recommend that it should be set up in a form which would allow its early implementation with the widest possible participation.

The report is explicit in its belief that some will find that the register as proposed does not go far enough. We understood and appreciated that viewpoint. It was our belief, however, that we had to start somewhere and that the time was propitious to start now. Even the longest journey must start with one short step. We wrote and agreed on our report in the hope that it might indeed be just such a step, and in the right direction.

Finally, our report deals with the subject of the illicit arms trade. This subject is different in kind from the rest of our remit. The illicit arms trade is by its nature covert and not susceptible, therefore, to transparency. In its effect on human beings, however, and on society it is no less important than the more normal arms trade. The group of experts was only too aware of the devastation and human misery, the exploitation and the corrupt manipulation of power which are often the results of the illicit arms trade. In our report we have therefore in the strongest language drawn attention to these dangers. There are welcome signs that internationally there is a growing cooperation of effort to cut back this cancer. We noted the increasing cooperation between customs and enforcement authorities of many nations. This is surely the right way to go. Our report recommends strong national procedures to outlaw this illicit trade. We have also highlighted the need to promote the training and retraining of customs officers. There is much to be done. As our report indicates, we hope that the United Nations

(Mr. McDonald, United Kingdom)

itself may find ways of assisting this ongoing improvement in the effectiveness of controls so that the evil of the arms trade can be squeezed out of existence.

Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): The position of Ukraine on the main problems of disarmament was explained in the statement of Leonid Kravchuk, President of the Parliament of Ukraine, at the 14th plenary meeting, held on 30 September 1991, and further detailed on 14 October in the statement made in this Committee by Anatoly Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

However, in the light of recent events in Ukraine - which have been the topic of some sensationalist comment in the media and of hasty remarks by certain foreign officials - and in the light of additional questions raised by delegations, we need to provide fuller information about the position of Ukraine on conventional-arms reductions and nuclear disarmament in its territory.

Immediately following the August coup in the USSR, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a decree on military units in Ukraine. Under that decree, all armed-forces units stationed in Ukraine will be subject to the authority of the Ukrainian Parliament. The main purpose of the decree was to prevent the use of the armed forces against the people and the State sovereignty of Ukraine. During the coup, such attempts were indeed made.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

The next step to ensure sovereignty and independence was the decision of Parliament to create Ukraine's own armed forces. Draft laws on matters relating to defence arrangements were considered last week. Parliament decided that the Ukrainian armed forces to be created were designed to protect its independence and territorial integrity and that Ukraine's defensive capability would be maintained at the level of sufficiency for protection against aggression.

The law concerning defence establishes that Ukraine does not recognize war as a means of settling international problems; that it does not possess weapons of mass destruction; that it has no territorial claims against any other State and does not view any people as an enemy; that it will never be the first to start military operations against any country if it does not itself become the victim of aggression and that its armed forces will not be used to settle the internal affairs of other States.

With regard to the creation of the armed forces of Ukraine, it should be borne in mind that what is involved is not the creation of additional units but, on the contrary, the gradual reduction of the former Soviet Union's forces stationed in Ukraine's territory to a fraction of their number and their replacement with smaller national armed forces, totalling about 400,000 in all branches. As Ukraine's Defence Minister Morozov observed in this connection, the way to give Ukraine, a nation of 52 million, its own armed forces is to make a substantial reduction in the organs of military administration and in troop strength. That reduction, amounting to hundreds of thousands of persons, is linked to the solution of complex social, political and economic problems. For that reason, the whole intensive process of reduction to 400,000 will take several years, lasting until 1994-1995.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

The fact that the decisions adopted by Ukraine specifically involve demilitarisation and disarmament is eloquently demonstrated by the fact that whereas previously at least 15 per cent of the gross national product was devoted to military needs, Parliament has decided from now on to devote less than 3 per cent of the national budget to the armed forces of Ukraine.

Another aspect of the problem concerns nuclear forces. The ways to settle the matter of the nuclear forces situated in the territory of Ukraine were determined in Parliament's statement on the denuclearized status of Ukraine, adopted on 24 October of this year. Confirming Ukraine's intention to adhere to non-nuclear principles and its desire to help strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, Parliament declared the following:

"First, the presence of the nuclear weapons of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the territory of Ukraine is temporary.

"Secondly, those weapons are now under the control of the appropriate structures of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Ukraine insists on its right to monitor the non-use of the nuclear weapons deployed in its territory.

"Thirdly, Ukraine will pursue a policy aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons and components of their deployment situated in the territory of the Ukrainian State. It intends to do this in the shortest time possible, taking account of legal, technical, financial, organisational and other possibilities and the proper maintenance of ecological safety. A wide programme for the conversion of the defence industry, reorienting part of the military-industrial capability towards meeting the needs of economic and social development, will be launched in Ukraine.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

"Fourthly, Ukraine, as one of the successors of the former Union Soviet Socialist Republics, will abide by the provisions of the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States in so far as the nuclear weapons situated in its territory are concerned. Ukraine is ready to start negotiations with the Republic of Belarus, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, with the participation of the appropriate structures of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on the elimination of strategic nuclear weapons covered by that Treaty.

"Fifthly, Ukraine will take steps aimed at the elimination of all other nuclear weapons situated in its territory, and to that end it is ready, if need be, to participate in negotiations with all interested parties, using inter alia existing multilateral mechanisms in the field of disarmament.

"Sixthly, Ukraine will take appropriate steps to ensure the physical safety of all nuclear weapons situated in its territory until the complete elimination of those weapons is achieved.

"Seventhly, Ukraine intends to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State and to conclude with the International Atomic Energy Agency an appropriate agreement on guarantees."

That statement by Parliament was made after a comprehensive study of the question, and it has won understanding and support. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, a prominent United States public figure, speaking of nuclear-weapon problems during his recent press conference at the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine, said that the kind of approach which underlies the



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statement of the Parliament of Ukraine concerning the non-nuclear status of Ukraine can satisfy the international community.

In conclusion, I should like to stress again on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine that the maintenance of Ukraine's military potential at a level of defensive sufficiency, the reduction and the subsequent total elimination of nuclear weapons and Ukraine's entry into the international process of the treaty-based reduction and limitation of armaments in the region of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as a full-fledged participant and partner, have been and continue to be priority goals of the Parliament and Government of Ukraine, with a view to guaranteeing national security.

Mr. KIM Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): First of all, Sir, I should like to express, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, our warm congratulations to you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am sure that with your rich experience and outstanding ability the First Committee will conclude its work successfully. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their elections.

Today, as all delegations have mentioned, the world is undergoing radical changes and entering upon a new phase of its development. At this remarkable time the urgent issue involved in the establishment of a new international order and the achievement of stable peace and security in conformity with the demands and aspirations of the peoples of the world is that of realizing disarmament.

We think that disarmament should be realized on a general and complete basis and at the earliest possible date.

The priority issue in the field of disarmament is nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons are the most abhorrent threat to world peace and to the peace of every country and nation. Since the appearance of nuclear weapons on our globe the world has not known peace for a single day. It is outrageous that on the eve of the twenty-first century the world should still be hostage to nuclear weapons.

The United States and the Soviet Union must take the lead in nuclear disarmament. In this regard we welcome the announcement by President Bush on 27 September that tactical nuclear weapons will be removed from Asia and Europe. The Soviet Union has also put forward positive proposals in response to the United States initiative. These steps represent a big step forward in achieving nuclear disarmament and a positive start in building a peaceful, new

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world. However, this is just a first and partial step when viewed in the context of the goal of general and complete disarmament.

At present, a complete nuclear-test ban is one of the urgent items on the nuclear-disarmament agenda. Raising our voices against nuclear armament and nuclear proliferation here while nuclear testing continues is anachronistic and contradictory. The continuation of nuclear testing cannot be construed otherwise than as opposition to nuclear disarmament, intended as it is to replace old nuclear weapons with qualitatively improved ones to achieve domination over other countries by means of a nuclear monopoly.

The continued pursuit of nuclear testing will create nothing but confusion and mistrust in the nuclear disarmament arena. The United Nations has been discussing this issue for over 30 years and has adopted some 70 resolutions on the cessation of nuclear-test explosions, but those resolutions are still far from implementation. In the context of the new international order, nuclear weapons can no longer be accepted. We welcome the unilateral Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing. We urge the conclusion of a complete and comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

Another important requirement for world nuclear disarmament is the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world and their continuous expansion. The international community should support and encourage proposals to create nuclear-weapon-free zones on the national, subregional and regional levels. In particular, nuclear-weapon States should guarantee such zones through legally binding commitments.

The completion and conclusion of the draft convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons will represent an important step towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The Democratic People's Republic of

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Korea, which once suffered from the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, welcomes the progress made in negotiating the provisions of the draft convention and hopes that it will be completed and concluded at the earliest possible date.

The United Nations has long been discussing the question of arms transfer, and many delegations have expressed their views on an arms-transfer registry. We consider the arms-transfer registry to be a praiseworthy proposal in the context of disarmament and security. At the same time, however, there are doubts as to whether it would contribute substantially to disarmament and security. Who will determine the defence requirements of each nation - a question that lies entirely within the individual nation's sovereignty - and how can the level of defence capability and requirements be compared between or among States? Will such a registry not rather give rise to mistrust and explicit arms competition among States? Will it not be advantageous only to developed, arms-supplying countries and disastrous for the developing recipient countries? Arms transfer and the arms trade have so far been used in international relations as a means to derive economic benefits for the seller countries and, more important, as a way to impose political bargains and exert political pressure on other nations. Will the registry therefore mean an end to such political bargainings and pressure? We are of the opinion that an arms register must include the development and production of new weapons and the locations, types and quantity of nuclear weapons deployed in other countries. We believe that when those questions are addressed fairly the proposed registry system will contribute to general disarmament and security and to the establishment of a new international order.

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The aftermath of the cold war has been keenly felt on the Korean peninsula. Although the international situation has experienced a trend towards détente and regional disputes are moving towards solution, the confrontation between the north and the south of Korea and the unstable environment of a cease-fire continue unabated. Armed forces a million strong stand opposed to each other along the Military Demarcation Line.

If we are to guarantee a durable peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world in keeping with the trend in the present international situation, it is imperative to remove the tension and confrontation on the Korean peninsula and establish peace there.

Only when disarmament has been achieved on the Korean peninsula will it be possible to create the conditions for peaceful reunification.

We believe that the adoption of a non-aggression declaration between the north and the south will serve as a starting-point for disarmament in Korea. A non-aggression declaration will initiate a decisive phase in replacing the unstable cease-fire system with a system of durable peace and contribute to easing confrontation. It will also be a starting-point for building confidence between the north and the south.

We propose that the north and the south should suspend all joint military exercises with foreign forces and other large-scale military exercises, turn the Demilitarized Zone along the Military Demarcation Line into a zone of peace to be used for peaceful purposes and take security measures to prevent any accidental conflict that could lead to escalation. We are demanding that the north and the south should phase down their armed forces to less than

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100,000 each within a period of three or four years and that the foreign troops stationed in south Korea should complete their withdrawal when the armed forces of the north and the south are reduced to less than 100,000 each.

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Republic of Korea)

We are also proposing that the North and the South should dissolve all civilian military organizations and civilian forces, stop the introduction of new military technology and equipment and the development of armaments, and carry on the verification of arms reduction through on-site inspection. However, these proposals of ours remain unilateral efforts and have not yet received a positive response.

We hope that the North and the South will make and implement a joint commitment soon with regard to disarmament. It is also a matter of consideration that, since the north and the south gained membership of the United Nations, the United Nations Command in South Korea should be dissolved, United Nations forces withdrawn, and the Armistice Agreement replaced by a peace agreement that will, in our view, be a significant contribution to peace and disarmament in Korea.

The most important and urgent move towards achieving peace in Korea is to turn it into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In the southern part of the peninsula, there are 1,000 nuclear weapons deployed, and "Team Spirit" - a United States-South Korea joint military exercise simulating nuclear war - is conducted every year. Since the Korean nation is constantly exposed to a nuclear threat, we have strongly demanded that nuclear weapons in South Korea be removed and that the Korean peninsula be converted into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Our Government long ago put forward proposals for turning the peninsula into a nuclear-weapon-free zone of peace, and as recently as July this year made a new proposal that the North and the South agree and jointly declare the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean peninsula. The United States, the Soviet Union and China, the nuclear-weapon States

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neighbouring on the Korean peninsula, should legally guarantee the nuclear-weapon-free status of the peninsula if the peninsula is declared such. The non-nuclear-weapon States in Asia should support the conversion of the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and respect its nuclear-weapon-free status. We believe that this proposal will help remove the nuclear threat on the peninsulars and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation system.

The purpose of our accession to the non-proliferation Treaty was to remove nuclear weapons from South Korea and to totally eliminate the nuclear threat on the peninsula. This purpose and demand of ours have become clearer now that it has been confirmed that there are nuclear weapons in South Korea.

We do not oppose nuclear inspection. However, since the nuclear issue in Korea is directly related to the fate and sovereignty of the Korean nation, we cannot accept unilateral inspection. Even if we should allow unilateral inspection in the northern part of the peninsula, it would not help in any way the removal of nuclear weapons from the South or the denuclearisation of the whole peninsula. That is why we are requesting simultaneous inspections, if any, in both the North and the South.

We have neither the capability to engage in a nuclear arms race with other countries, nor any intention of developing nuclear weapons to destroy our own nation. Today, the policy of holding nuclear weapons is totally anachronistic. The United States expressed its willingness to withdraw its nuclear weapons from South Korea. If all nuclear weapons are pulled out, the safeguards agreement problem will be solved smoothly and a decisive phase opened for the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.



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Republic of Korea)

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a peace-loving State and the Korean people greatly treasure peace. Because our nation lives divided; because its two sides continue to confront each other; and because the unstable cease-fire environment persists in our land, the thirst of our people for peace is greater than that of any other people. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people will spare no effort to achieve a lasting peace in Korea and to contribute to safeguarding world peace, a common goal of mankind. I hope that all States Members of the United Nations will make a positive contribution to the attainment of peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh): At the outset, please allow me to convey our warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Through you I also express our congratulations to the members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident that with your rich experience, wide knowledge and diplomatic skills, you will guide the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would like to pay our sincere tribute to late Ambassador and Nobel Laureate Alfonso Garcia Robles, who passed away recently. His outstanding contribution to disarmament and to the work of the First Committee will be remembered by all of us.

We meet here against the backdrop of a dramatic change in the international scenario. The era of the cold war has receded into the past. The rapprochement of the super-Powers has given rise to cooperation instead of confrontation. Mutual understanding has propelled them into active interaction. A start has been made towards real disarmament, and a joint endeavour to find solutions to global problems.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

The encouraging developments of détente and cooperation among the major Powers of the world, coinciding with positive breakthroughs in many of the regional conflicts and the ushering in of democracy in many parts of the world, are demonstrations of the emergence of a new era of collective action and cooperation. Despite an increased momentum of understanding, conflict, tension and instability in many regions continue to pose a threat to world peace and security.

Eastern Europe has further undergone radical changes during the last year. The reunification of Germany and the recent events in the Soviet Union will have far-reaching political and economic consequences for the world. The end of the cold war has signalled the collapse in international relations of two competing power blocs.

New centres of economic and political power with new variables and alignments can emerge with yet uncertain consequences. The evolving scenario is not unmixing with danger for third world countries. A major anxiety is that it should not compromise the political and economic security interests of the developing countries either through regional hegemony or marginalisation. They face a situation of both promise and peril.

The super-Power détente has led to a significant reduction of nuclear conventional arsenals alike. We welcome this progress in arms control and disarmament. The signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by the United States and the Soviet Union last July marks a significant step by the two nations to reduce considerably their strategic nuclear arsenals. The signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is yet another step towards ensuring peace and security in Europe. The Amendment Conference on the partial test-ban Treaty held in New York last January was important

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because it was the first multilateral negotiating forum on a nuclear arms treaty where all countries participated to attain the objective of complete cessation of nuclear testing. In this regard, we support the initiative of the President of the Conference to reconvene it.

Bangladesh welcomes the recent historic initiative by President George Bush to undertake unilateral measures to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons as well as the reciprocal offer by President Gorbachev to seek an even deeper reduction of nuclear forces. They both deserve our sincere gratitude. These proposals, in our view, constitute a major breakthrough towards a nuclear-free and safer world for all of us.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

Let me recall the statement of the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, who said,

"... the Soviet and United States initiatives are providing a unique opportunity to modify the actual pattern of the arms race in fundamental ways - indeed, to turn it into its own opposite: a disarmament race."

(A/C.1/46/PV.12, p. 21)

Despite reductions under the Treaty, the super-Powers will continue to retain vast numbers of nuclear arsenals far in excess of any conceivable national-security requirements. The arms race continues with its terrifying statistics of wasteful costs. Over a trillion dollars are spent annually on the means of destruction. What could be achieved from reduced military expenditure can be illustrated by an example. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that to make significant progress in preventing child mortality and malnourishment for 50 million children only \$2.5 billion would be needed. Similarly, with the peace-making process under way, expenditure on peace-keeping operations amount to almost nothing compared to expenditure on armaments.

The stupendous expenditure on armaments is unjustified and unethical. Mere weapons cannot ensure security. Peace and security will continue to be threatened as long as poverty, hunger, squalour and despair continue to bedevil the lives of billions. In this regard, the statement of Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, is very pertinent. He said,

"The international community has to espouse a multidimensional approach to peace and security in which the military aspect will not

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dominate but will be considered in relation to other priorities such as development, welfare, environment and the protection of human rights."

(A/C.1/46/PV.4, p. 4)

Peace and security will not be achieved unless international cooperation is extended to deal with the threats that derive from failure in development, environmental degradation and a lack of meaningful progress in social and humanitarian issues. The wider concept of security must be realized by us all. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization has therefore rightly said:

"No system of collective security will remain viable unless workable solutions are sought to the problem of poverty and destitution, afflicting the greater part of the world." (A/46/1, p. 12)

Though the risk of nuclear war has receded over the past four decades, vast arsenals of nuclear weapons and stockpiles of fissile material by their very existence imperil the world. We therefore urge the nuclear-weapon States to take initiatives expeditiously towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, and we pray that they will do so. Bangladesh believes that there is a need to agree on a universal and non-discriminatory convention on the prohibition of the production, development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and fissionable materials.

We believe that a comprehensive test-ban treaty would be a crucial step towards preventing the emergence of a new generation of nuclear weapons. It is our considered view that cessation of all nuclear-weapons testing will lead to the achievement of our ultimate goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. We therefore attach the highest priority to the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In that regard, we welcome the

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announcement by President Gorbachev of a unilateral one-year moratorium on nuclear testing by the Soviet Union and we urge other nuclear-weapon States to follow suit with a view to achieving the complete cessation of nuclear testing at an early date.

Our constitutional commitment weds us to the concept of general and complete disarmament. For that reason, Bangladesh has rejected the nuclear alternative for itself. We have therefore acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We support all measures seeking to promote disarmament and to end the arms race, and the call for nuclear-free zones.

Universal adherence to the Treaty would consolidate the NPT régime. In that regard Bangladesh welcomes particularly the decision in principle by France and China to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty. Thus, all five nuclear-weapon States will soon be parties to the Treaty. We have always stressed the need for the NPT to be strengthened through commitments to positive and negative security assurances, standardized and tighter nuclear export regulations and more effective safeguards under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Durable peace can be established only through the elimination and destruction of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we welcome the progress in negotiations towards a chemical-weapons convention, which appear to have entered a crucial final phase. We hope agreement on the convention will be reached by next year. Bangladesh will certainly make every effort to contribute to its early conclusion.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

While we believe there should be adequate concentration on nuclear disarmament, which should have foremost priority, attention should also be focused on measures for the limitation and reduction of conventional arms. This must be pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. Today, conventional weapons are acquiring increasing sophistication through technological advances. As a result, they have attained devastating destructive power. We therefore feel and believe that maintenance of conventional capabilities in excess of the legitimate security needs of States can have destabilizing ramifications for regions and the world. There should be arms reductions in a balanced and equitable manner without affecting genuine security requirements. Thus, stability would be enhanced at lower military levels. Any acquisition of arms beyond perceived needs would heighten suspicion and encourage the arms race.

Bangladesh is deeply committed to the peaceful uses of the sea and its resources. We feel indiscriminate naval build-ups tend to spread apprehension. Therefore, my delegation would urge restraint in naval activities. That means that the criteria for legitimate naval-security needs should be carefully formulated.

Our abiding support for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace derives from our commitments to peaceful maritime activities. We shall continue our search for a stable Indian Ocean régime; the region should be neutral, demilitarized and denuclearized. Bangladesh believes that such a régime must be guaranteed through a collective security system so that upon the withdrawal of the great Powers their domination is not supplanted by any other form of domination that could destabilize the security of littoral and hinterland States. We hope that the

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean will take place in Colombo at an early date.

The United Nations has a large and expanded role to play in meeting the challenges of the new era of international disarmament efforts. In that context, may I add that Bangladesh will be eager to play a role in the expanded Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Such expansion, in our view, could be gradually achieved over a limited time-frame, while maintaining the balance of the Conference and thus enhancing its ability to function more effectively.

With the end of the cold war, the world is evaluating old security perceptions and doctrines. We are now in an era of understanding and cooperation. This is a historic opportunity that we must seize upon to make the world a safer place by reducing the arms race and thus reducing the colossal expenditures associated with it. The peace dividend to be derived from this should be devoted to the welfare of mankind, particularly to the growth of the economies of the developing world. Let us all give peace a chance. For its part, Bangladesh pledges its active support and cooperation to achieve that noble objective, which is the dream of us all.



Mr. ABDUL GHAFFAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish to extend the congratulations of the delegation of Bahrain to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election to their respective posts. I pledge the full cooperation of my delegation in the Committee's deliberations and wish you success in discharging the tasks entrusted to you.

International relations have witnessed important changes that followed upon one another over the past year and in the course of this year. One of the most prominent of those developments was the signing of the Charter of Paris for A New Europe by the leaders of 34 States of Europe and North America, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. That officially rang down the curtain on the cold-war era with all its tensions, international and regional polarisations and arms race. There can be no doubt that these developments have had a positive effect in the field of disarmament.

In November 1990, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was signed, and on 31 July 1991, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was concluded between the United States and the Soviet Union, in addition to the two initiatives of the United States and the Soviet Union on nuclear weapons in September and October 1991. We welcome both initiatives and hope that they will be followed by an integrated programme for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

These positive developments in international relations make it imperative for the international community to redouble its efforts to maintain international peace and security. In the unanimous opinion of authorities on

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

law and politics, there are three complementary approaches to achieve this. The first is the approach of settling disputes by peaceful means. The second is the setting up of a system of collective security in which all peace-loving States would participate in order to ensure its universality and viability. The third is disarmament. Both the processes of peace and security are organically linked to disarmament. Indeed, it is impossible to achieve peace or security at either the regional or international levels without genuine disarmament, and in particular nuclear, chemical and biological disarmament. Here the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction inevitably will be beneficial to the States of the region. We believe that we must rid the region of all nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

In his statement in the General Assembly, my country's Foreign Minister reaffirmed that conviction when he said:

"Today, we are even more resolved to achieve this goal [a zone free of weapons of mass destruction] because of our belief that international security is intrinsically linked to its regional constituents and our conviction that strengthening the security of the Middle East region by making it completely free of weapons of mass destruction will be a positive contribution to the maintenance of world peace."

(A/46/PV.18, p. 23)

Unquestionably, nuclear weapons continue to be an abiding concern in the Middle East, especially since there is every indication that Israel possesses approximately 300 nuclear bombs. We believe that the declaration of the nuclear-free zone in the Middle East should be based on renunciation by the

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States of the region of the acquisition of nuclear weapons, in addition to strict rules and regulations that would govern the use of radioactive materials by the States of the region.

Security is of paramount importance to all countries, whether great or small. The small countries are particularly concerned because they are especially vulnerable to outside threats and aggression. In his report on protection and security for small States, the Secretary-General, in commenting on the views of members of the Security Council, said in this connection:

"Because of their intrinsic characteristics, small States may need a special measure of attention and support. Member States clearly acknowledged that the international community had a vested interest in safeguarding the security of small States, since the international order could be undermined by their instability or loss of security."

(A/46/339, p. 2)

The United Nations can play a major role in this respect, through the Security Council, where the security needs of small States should be studied. Of course, the best security guarantee would be the mutual respect by all States for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the United Nations Charter and international law.

Bahrain, as a member of this international forum, looks forward to further achievements in the area of disarmament so that the world may live in safety and in peace. At the same time, we support the consolidation of collective security within the framework of the United Nations through the prohibition of the use of force or the threat of the use of force. Past experience has made it abundantly clear that without an adequate system of

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deterrence, without proper respect for the sovereignty of States, especially small States, the system of world security would be threatened. We hope that world security will be consolidated through the elimination of the sources of tension in the world especially at the regional level and the achievement of lasting solutions to intractable political, economic and social problems.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): Speaking for the first time in this Committee, I should like first to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that under your wise leadership the Committee will be able to accomplish its task successfully. Felicitations are also extended to the other officers of the Committee, whose dedication has contributed to the Committee's work.

We have recently witnessed significant changes affecting international events, which in many ways have transformed our thinking about the achievement of a secure and peaceful world. Against the backdrop of the end of East-West tension and the changes within the Soviet Union, we are achieving a much desired world-wide consensus regarding many important issues, notably those concerning disarmament.

The start of the so-called new world order has perhaps helped to remove some of the outward signs of long-term pessimism. Elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, along with key initiatives to bring arms under control and the reduction of nuclear armaments have begun to preoccupy the Committee in its deliberations.

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All those initiatives are very convincing but none is more welcome or appreciated by all of us than the recent announcements by President Bush and President Gorbachev of their intention to cancel and eliminate tactical nuclear weapons and some of their nuclear programmes. Brunei Darussalam welcomes these historic developments, together with the good response from those countries with nuclear weapons. My delegation believes that the commitment shown by those concerned will set a precedent for more efforts to accelerate progress on all disarmament agenda items.

With the growing concern over arms control and disarmament, Brunei Darussalam is anticipating that priority will be given to those arms which, in our belief, will have the most disastrous effect, not only on human lives, but also on the eventual destruction of our planet. In this connection my delegation stresses the point with regard to the proliferation of nuclear weapons: we believe that the international community, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, should be equally disposed towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. However, our hope to see the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests will not have positive results for as long as the nuclear-Power States continue to conduct nuclear-weapon tests. We have always held the view that further testing and research will not only produce more sophisticated nuclear weapons but will also undermine all hopes for arms control and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It is also my country's wish not to see more nuclear weapons developed, and to achieve that wish it is only logical to ban nuclear testing on a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory scale. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1992 to pursue an appropriate mandate towards a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

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As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Brunei Darussalam is encouraged by recent developments and pleased to see that the non-proliferation Treaty has, slowly but surely, gained more ground. The intention of France, China and South Africa to become signatories to the Treaty does signify a positive development on this issue and is greatly welcomed by my country. In view of this development we urge those States, with or without nuclear-weapons capabilities, which have not acceded to the Treaty, to do so. This move by other non-party States will surely enable the international community to achieve what it seeks to accomplish, particularly progress towards the reduction of the risk of an outbreak of nuclear war and, consequently, the strengthening of peace and international security.

Brunei Darussalam is equally concerned about other problems which demand serious consideration. The threat of weapons of mass destruction will always prevail as long as constructive efforts for their elimination remain at a standstill. Like speakers before me, I should also like to repeat my country's calls for a speedy conclusion to the negotiations on an international convention on the prohibition of the use, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We are convinced that the expected conclusion of the convention will contribute to the total elimination of other categories of weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical weapons.

Like other Member States, Brunei Darussalam also attaches great importance to the issue of biological weapons and is of the view that the production of such weapons of mass destruction should be halted. Our firm commitment with regard to the issue was enhanced when my country earlier thi

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year acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. This decision is also in line with Brunei Darussalam's own biological weapons Act, which is aimed at prohibiting the development, production, acquisition and possession of certain biological agents and toxins and of biological weapons. At this juncture we would also like to applaud the parties concerned, whose work and contribution have led to the successful conclusion of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the biological weapons Convention held in Geneva recently. We hope that the decisions adopted will significantly contribute to the further strengthening of the Convention.

The maintenance of global peace and security is indeed of prime importance and remains essential to our survival. The cold war may be over but as past events have proved, it is the small, sovereign States that are most vulnerable to any act of aggression conducted by outside elements. It is undeniable that wide possession of arms and weapons of mass destruction through the unabated transfer of arms has indeed led to strong suspicion, hostilities and arms conflict. In this connection the United Nations study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms should be welcomed. We also hold the view that the discussion on the establishment of an international arms transfer register under the auspices of the United Nations, and its implementation, should be based on the basic principle of universality and non-discrimination.

The end of ideological rivalry between the super-Powers and the beginning of international cooperation should augur well for the new thinking on

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disarmament. We believe that, with the encouragement and total support of Member States, the United Nations could play an extensive role in key security and disarmament issues. In our effort to build a future that is peaceful to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we therefore reiterate our stand that the United Nations is the principal body on which we rely for the maintenance of peace and security.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.