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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 11 November 1974, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. SIDDIQ (Vice-Chairman)	(Afghanistan)
later:	Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Chairman)	(Argentina)
Rapporteur:	Mr. COSTA LOBO	(Portugal)

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- Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament /28/ (continued)
- Urgent need for cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests and conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive test ban: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmanent /29/ (continued) /...

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DECLARATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE IN SOUTH ASIA (A/9706)

Mr. AMERASINGHE (Sri Lanka): In the absence of Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas, the representative of Argentina, Chairman of this Committee, I would request you, Sir, to convey to him our warmest congratulations on his election as Chairman of the First Committee and our best wishes for success in his efforts to bring our work to a successful conclusion. No testimonial of mine is required to add lustre to his record as a diplomat of conspicuous ability.

I did not expect to be called upon to speak at this morning's meeting. I shall not attempt to speak generally on the question of disarmament but shall confine myself to the item in which my delegation is principally interested -- namely, the Indian Ocean peace-zone concept and the action that has been taken during the past year in regard to the Declaration and its implementation.

By way of introduction, I should like briefly to trace the history of the Indian Ocean peace-zone concept. In seeking the inscription of this item on the agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, we stated that -- and I must be forgiven for quoting from my own letter to the Secretary-General of 1 October 1971 -- recent developments had shown a noticeable trend in the development of international law and practice towards the principle that areas not assimilated into national jurisdiction constituted an international domain that should be subject to international regulation and international responsibility. We cited as cases in point the Agreements on outer space and Antarctica, and stated that the principle had been further elaborated in the United Nations Declaration on Principles Governing the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor, and the Subsoil Thereof, beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction, which recognized the area of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction as the common heritage of mankind. We said that in seeking the inscription on the agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

of the item on the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, the purpose of the Government of Ceylon -- as Sri Lanka was then called -- was to secure United Nations approval of an international domain subject to international regulation and international responsibility covering the entire high seas of the Indian Ocean. We said that the existing circumstances in the Indian Ocean, as distinct from those of other oceans of the world, were specially conducive to the application of that policy to the area, as the presence of the military and naval forces of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean had not yet assumed significant proportions. It is quite different today. We said that none of the great or medium-sized Powers were contiguous States. Happily, their geographical position has not changed; the major maritime nations are geographically remote from the Indian Ocean area, and the economic interests of the great Powers are not involved in the area to any appreciable degree. We added that the countries of the Indian Ocean needed conditions of peace and tranquillity in which to transform and modernize their economies and societies, and that it was therefore imperative to the success of those efforts that the Indian Ocean should be preserved as an area of peace. We considered immediate action necessary to arrest and reverse the trend that had lately become manifest, which, if allowed to continue unchecked, could render the progressive militarization of the Indian Ocean unavoidable.

On that occasion we stated that the main features of Ceylon's proposals were that the entire high-seas area of the Indian Ocean should be declared a peace zone to be used for peaceful purposes, and that that would entail the exclusion of armaments, defensive or offensive, and military installations of the major Powers in the prescribed area, adding that warships and ships carrying warlike equipment would exercise the right of transit but might not stop other than for emergency reasons of a mechanical, technical or humanitarian nature. The use of the sea-bed area by submarines, except for reasons of a mechanical, technical or humanitarian nature, was to be prohibited. We added, in passing, that there would be a prohibition of naval manoeuvres, naval intelligence operations and weapon tests in the area. As regards naval manoeuvres and naval intelligence operations, we had in mind the major Powers.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

The next stage was the adoption of the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI)). Once again, to refresh the memories of those present, I should like to state that, when we took that step, we had already consulted others. There was the Declaration of the Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Lusaka in 1970. Earlier, there had been the Cairo Declaration of the non-aligned summit, and later the item was discussed at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in Singapore.

The Declaration expresses the Assembly's conviction concerning

"the desirability of ensuring the maintenance of such conditions in the Indian Ocean area by means other than military alliances, as such alliances entail financial and other obligations that call for the diversion of the limited resources of the States of the area from the more compelling and productive task of economic and social reconstruction and could further involve them in the rivalries of power blocs in a manner prejudicial to their independence and freedom of action, thereby increasing international tensions".

The Declaration expresses concern

"at recent developments that portend the extension of the arms race into the Indian Ocean area, thereby posing a serious threat to the maintenance of such conditions" -- that is, peace and tranquillity -- "in the area."

It adds that

"the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean would contribute towards arresting such developments, relaxing international tensions and strengthening international peace and security."

We want others outside the Indian Ocean to respect those feelings and fears of ours and enable us to achieve our purpose.*

*The Chairman took the Chair.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

We went on to state that the establishment of a zone of peace in an extensive geographical area in one region could have a beneficial influence on the establishment of permanent universal peace based on equal rights and justice for all, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Those who believe in the gradual approach to disarmament should not cavil at this proposition.

Therefore we solemnly declared the Indian Ocean, within limits to be determined, together with the air space above and the ocean floor subjacent thereto, to be designated for all time as a zone of peace, and called upon the great Powers, in conformity with the Declaration, to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral States of the Indian Ocean with a view to halting the further escalation of their military presence in the Indian Ocean and eliminating from the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations and logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of great Power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of great Power rivalry.

The Declaration further stated that the General Assembly:

"Calls upon the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, in pursuit of the objective of establishing a system of universal collective security without military alliances and strengthening international security through regional and other co-operation, to enter into consultations with a view to the implementation of this Declaration and such action as may be necessary to ensure that:

(a) Warships and military aircraft may not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of any littoral or hinterland State of the Indian Ocean in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

However, the Declaration recognizes the right to free and unimpeded use of the zone by the vessels of all nations, subject to the preceding provisions and to the norms and principles of international law, and added that appropriate arrangements should be made to give effect to any international agreement that might ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

At that stage the only action we took was to request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session on the progress that had been made with regard to the implementation of the Declaration. The Secretary-General's report was a skimpy one, because he had received replies from only four Governments: those of Bahrain, Madagascar, the Philippines and Yemen.

The next stage was the adoption of resolution 2992 (XXVII), in which the General Assembly called upon the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to support the concept that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace. As far as the permanent members of the Security Council were concerned, with one single exception, the appeal fell on deaf ears. The ears continue to be deaf.

The resolution stated:

> "Decides to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, consisting of no more than fifteen members, to study the implications of the proposal, with special reference to the practical measures that may be taken in furtherance of the objectives of General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), having due regard to the security interests of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean and the interests of any other State consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session".

The first report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean is contained in document A/9029. With regard to this report, I should like to draw attention to the working paper prepared by the delegation of Sri Lanka, in which we dealt with the principal aspects of our concept which had to be more carefully examined in order to promote its implementation. We stated:

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

"The peace zone Declaration contemplates the establishment within the Indian Ocean area of a zone of peace free of nuclear weapons in which conditions of peace and tranquillity would be ensured by the exclusion of great Power rivalries... The Declaration was also intended to serve as a contribution to the relaxation of general international tensions and the strengthening of international peace and security, as well as to ensuring conditions of security within the region which would render redundant and superfluous the need for military alliances with outside Powers and the maintenance of military bases and appurtenant establishments and facilities." (A/9029, annex I, para. 4)

We indicated that it would be necessary first of all to decide on which States would qualify to be considered littoral and hinterland States for purposes of the proposal. That requirement is still very much in the forefront of our thinking, and it is a gap that has to be filled. We did set out in that working paper a list of what we considered were, geographically speaking, the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, but we also added:

"If any State that has a part of its seaboard on the Indian Ocean has been omitted from the list, it is because its primary concern has been deemed to be with regard to the Atlantic seaboard. It would be necessary, however, to keep even such a State informed of the deliberations in the Ad Hoc Committee. A suitable procedure for this purpose could be determined at the appropriate stage." (ibid., para. 5)

One other essential requirement for the purpose of the realization of this concept we considered to be the renunciation of the use of force. We stated:

"The creation of a peace zone in a region must presuppose the renunciation by States of that region of the threat or use of force against any other State in that region and the affirmation of their resolve to settle their disputes with one another by peaceful means and without resort to force, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations." (ibid., para. 6)

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

We went on to add that the main danger in regard to the arms race in the Indian Ocean region, or anywhere else, related to the presence of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and we suggested that those littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean which had not yet done so should, as an earnest of their good faith and good intentions, consider acceding to or ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof -- the sea-bed arms control treaty. To that we would also add the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

In that working paper we referred to the need for defining the limits of the peace zone as requiring early attention -- that again is something that is repeated in the report that I shall be introducing in this Committee -- and said that we regarded the definition as falling within two aspects, territorial and geographical.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

I should like now to draw attention to certain further observations that we made, which I hope I can trace, in a statement made by me to an informal meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. This is of some topical interest, but I hope my reference to it will not be misconstrued or exploited in a manner contrary to our intentions. We said on that occasion, as I have just indicated earlier, that denuclearization or the prevention of nuclearization would logically form the first step in a gradual approach to the realization of our objective. We said that countries of the region, namely, the littoral and hinterland States as well as countries outside the region but militarily active in the region, would have to assume certain commitments if any stable agreement were to be reached. And we added that so far as the countries of the region were concerned, it would be reasonable to call upon them as an earnest of their good faith to commit themselves to a policy of denuclearization which would entail the permanent renunciation by them of a nuclear-weapon option and the assumption of an obligation to deny the use of their territories, their territorial waters and their air space for the deployment of nuclear weapons belonging to other States. On the part of the nuclear-weapon Powers, we consider that their contribution should take the form of the assumption of an obligation not to deploy nuclear weapons in the peace zone area. These two requirements we considered were interrelated but not necessarily dependent upon each other. The first was more difficult than the second. It would be necessary, therefore, to concentrate our efforts initially on securing from the nuclear-weapon Powers the commitment that we seek of them as their contribution towards the attainment of our objectives.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

We added that not all the nuclear threshold countries in the Indian Ocean region seemed ready or willing to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty and that, if a new nuclear-weapon Power were to emerge in the Indian Ocean region, the denuclearization and also the demilitarization of the area would be seriously jeopardized. I feel that it is time that the States in our region stopped looking over each other's shoulders to see who was going to act first. Any action taken by them would be a good example which others would do well to emulate.

The next stage was reached in resolution 2992 (XXVII), adopted at the twenty-seventh session, which appointed an Ad Hoc Committee of 15 members to study the implications of the proposal, with special reference to the practical measures that might be taken in furtherance of the objectives of General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI). Fifteen members were appointed for that Committee and I am happy to state that they included, in addition to littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, one nuclear Power, China, and one country that is a major maritime user but is not a littoral or hinterland State of the Indian Ocean, namely, Japan. We are grateful to them for their participation in the work of that Committee and the efforts they have made to further the realization of our objectives.

After the first report of the Ad Hoc Committee was presented, the General Assembly adopted resolution 3080 (XXVIII), the main feature of which was that it requested the Secretary-General to prepare a factual statement of the great Powers' military presence, in all its aspects, in the Indian Ocean, with special reference to their naval deployments, conceived in the context of great Power rivalry, and recommended that the statement should be based on available material and prepared with the assistance of qualified experts and competent bodies selected by the Secretary-General.

In response to this request, the Secretary-General engaged the services of three experts, Mr. Frank Barnaby of SIPRI, an institution that has a most enviable record in regard to disarmament matters, Admiral Shams Safavi of Iran, and Mr. K. Subrahmanyam of India. The first report prepared by this committee of experts and submitted to the Secretary-General was contained in document A/AC.159/1.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

As the Ad Hoc Committee's report to the Assembly at this session indicates, certain objections were raised to this factual statement, and on these representations the Secretary-General decided to have the bases of certain parts of the statement clarified and made arrangements for the statement to be reviewed by the experts with the assistance of a special consultant.

For my part, I must express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the action he took in deference to the representations made to him by several countries which considered that their position had been perhaps misrepresented in the original report. I must also express my own thanks to the three experts for the diligent attention they paid to the representations and for the revision of their report. Not every report of this type is likely to satisfy everybody in every respect. And as the report, document A/9629, indicates, there were some delegations that continued to have their reservations on certain aspects of it. These are mentioned in the report itself, so it is not necessary for me to dwell on them.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

But the point was made that the factual statement would have been more useful if it had not been limited to the great Powers' military presence, in the context of great Power rivalry. According to that point of ould have been preferable if there had been a complete and unqualified the great Powers' military presence in the Indian Ocean region. It is sufficient for me to state that the great Powers' military presence in the Indian Ocean is obviously a matter of competition, and whatever they do is conceived in the context of their mutual rivalry. If they were friends and not competing, they would not be there in that manner and would not daily be trying to improve the sophisticated nature of their armaments in that region.

Also, the view was taken that it was not merely the great Powers' military presence that should be considered, but also the question of military alliances. Now a military alliance need not take the form of a physical presence. I do not know whether it takes the form of a metaphysical or a spiritual -- perhaps it does -- but for our purposes I should think it was quite sufficient if we adhered to the text of our resolution and obtained a clear idea of the great Powers' military presence, conceived in the context of great Power rivalry.

One of the points stressed during our deliberations this year was that it is important to convene at as early a date as possible a conference of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. On this there has been a complete consensus.

Another point that was stressed was the need at this stage for the definition of certain terms. We were aware of the need for a definition when we first presented the draft declaration to this Committee, but we did not think that at that moment an attempt at a legal definition would have helped very much or was absolutely necessary. It might have kept agile legal minds busy for quite a long time, without, first of all, creating the political atmosphere necessary to be created in order to proceed with attempts to realize the concept. However, there was agreement that we should seek a clear definition of certain terms: first of all, the limits of the Indian in the context of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace;

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

secondly, the term "littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean"; and thirdly, the term "foreign military bases". It was here that the point was raised that it was not sufficient to define the term "foreign military bases", but that in seeking a definition we should also take into account the idea of foreign military alliances. I think I shall leave it to experts to decide how they are going to handle that thorny problem.

I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, which again were reached by consensus, and which appear in paragraph 35 of the report (A/9629). There are four recommendations.

First is the obvious one that:

"The Ad Hoc Committee should continue and intensify its efforts in accordance with its mandate, as stated in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 2992 (XXVII)."

Secondly, that:

"The Ad Hoc Committee should proceed with its consultations with the four permanent members of the Security Council which are not members of the Ad Hoc Committee, as envisaged in paragraph 31 of this report."

With regard to the second recommendation, I must once again reiterate my appeal to those four permanent members of the Security Council that what we expect of them is a clear statement of the problems that confront them in giving effect to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. We do not find it profitable to proceed with our deliberations on premises that are unjustified, untenable or unrealistic. We hope that the four permanent members will see their way to co-operating with us and to informing us of their problems so that we can more clearly envisage the possibilities of realizing this concept.

The third recommendation was that:

"The Ad Hoc Committee should give priority attention in 1975 to the definition of terms, as indicated in paragraph 34 of this report."

I just referred to those terms in my statement.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

Finally, the fourth recommendation is that:

"Consideration should be given for the convening, as early as possible of a conference of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean as envisaged in paragraph 33 of this report".

In presenting this report formally to the Committee, I should also like to present, again formally, a draft resolution on which the Ad Hoc Committee was unanimous. The text of the draft resolution was adopted at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee held on 1 November. I should like to read out the text of this draft resolution in full. It reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, contained in resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, and recalling also General Assembly resolutions 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and 3080 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973,

"Firmly convinced that further and continuous efforts are required to fulfil the objectives of the Declaration, and thus to contribute to the strengthening of regional and international peace and security,

"Noting the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean,[1/]

"Further noting the factual statement of the great Powers' military presence in all its aspects, in the Indian Ocean, with special reference to their naval deployments, conceived in the context of great Power rivalry,[2/] prepared by the Secretary-General with the assistance of qualified experts pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3080 (XXVIII),

"Deeply concerned that the competetive expansion of the military presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean would constitute a serious intensification of the arms race, leading to an increase of tension in the area,

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 29 (A/9629 and Add.1).

2/ A/AC.159/Rev.1.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

"Considering that the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean requires

(a) The elimination of all manifestations of great Power military presence in the region conceived in the context of great Power rivalry,

(b) Co-operation among the regional States to ensure conditions of security within the region as envisaged in the Declaration,

"Further believing that for the realization of the objective of the Declaration it is necessary that the Great Powers enter into immediate consultations with the States concerned, with a view to adopting positive measures for the elimination of all foreign bases and of all manifestations of great Power military presence in the region conceived in the context of great Power rivalry,

"1. Urges the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to give tangible support to the establishment and preservation of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace;"

Here I should like to interject the observation that the appeal is made not merely to the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, but also to the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, because the primary obligation rests with them to give tangible support to the concept.

"2. Calls upon the great Powers to refrain from increasing and strengthening their military presence in the region of the Indian Ocean as an essential first step towards the relaxation of tension and the promotion of peace and security in the area;"

It might appear to everybody that it is only an optimist who would expect self-restraint on the part of the great Powers, but I hope that some day or other that optimism will be justified.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

"3. Endorses the recommendations for the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, as contained in paragraph 35 of the report of the Committee;

"4. Requests the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to enter, as soon as possible, into consultations with a view to convening a conference on the Indian Ocean;

"5. Invites all States, especially the great Powers, to co-operate in a practical manner with the Ad Hoc Committee in the discharge of its functions;

"6. Expresses its thanks to the Secretary-General for his efforts in the preparation of the factual statement of the great Powers' military presence in the Indian Ocean;

"7. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its work and consultations in accordance with its mandate and to report to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session;

"8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to render all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Committee."

And here I would add that the assistance we would expect from the Secretary-General would also apply to the convening of the conference of the littoral and hinterland States referred to in operative paragraph 4.

There were several moments during our discussions when we were divided by controversy, but it is a tribute to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee that they were able to subdue those differences of opinion and subordinate them to the greater interest of securing a unanimous draft resolution, and this draft resolution I now have the honour to present to the Committee and commend for its acceptance.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I am informed that Mr. Amerasinghe of Sri Lanka addressed very kind words to me at the beginning of his statement. I am sorry I was not present to hear him. I promise to read his statement in the verbatim record and I thank him most warmly, as though I had heard him myself.

Mr. FARTASH (Iran): Only a few days ago, in the course of introducing my Government's proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, the Head of the Iranian delegation elaborated in some detail the basic philosophy that underlies our thinking and our actions in the field of disarmament. Hence I shall confine my remarks today to an examination of some of the specific issues now being considered by this Committee.

My country has recognized the imperative necessity of preserving the Indian Ocean -- one of the great waterways of the world -- as a zone of peace. That international rivalries must be excluded from the Indian Ocean and that the security of the region must be bolstered and enhanced through co-operation among the countries of the region has provided the fundamental framework of our policies concerning this matter.

In consistency with this policy, my Government was a sponsor not only of the draft resolution that became General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), which declared that the Indian Ocean was designated for all time as a zone of peace, but also of the subsequent resolutions adopted in connexion with this item. Hence, our concern and our interest in this area is of long-standing duration, and this subject is of paramount importance to us.

Most recently my Government has called for wider economic ties and closer co-operation among littoral States of the Indian Ocean, so that in their unity of purpose the security of the region may be enhanced.

It is this deep concern for the maintenance of genuine peace in the region that has motivated my country, as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to lend its support and co-operation in furthering the work of that body.

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee (A/9629) reflects the viewpoints expressed by the member countries -- most of which are littoral States -- during the course of its long and arduous deliberations. Despite the wide range and diversity of opinions expressed on some issues of vital importance to the parties concerned, the report, nevertheless, is the result of a clarity of vision regarding their common interest in securing and perpetuating peaceful conditions in the region. It was this unity of purpose as far as the ultimate objective was concerned that led to the formulation of the recommendations of the Committee, among which are those dealing with the need for the definition of certain terms of reference and consideration of the question of convening a conference of the littoral and hinterland States.

(Mr. Fartash, Iran)

The voice of reason also prevailed with respect to the draft resolution recommended by the Committee for adoption by the General Assembly at this session. As a result of unsparing efforts by all members of the Ad Hoc Committee and under the vigorous leadership of its Chairman, Mr. Amerasinghe, who just preceded me and so ably expounded his views on this subject, a draft resolution has emerged which, while moderate and balanced, is constructive and forward-looking.

Thus, while expressing our satisfaction with the draft resolution, we also that it will receive unanimous approval.

It is this same type of positive attitude towards the whole question of disarmament that determines our posture with respect to the world disarmament conference. We continue to believe that at the right time a world disarmament conference with universal participation and adequate preparation could result in notable gains in the field of disarmament.

Already a modest measure of progress has been achieved in the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference. We must now ponder on how best we can advance the idea without losing our sense either of realism or direction.

To act in precipitate fashion and without paying due attention to the practical realities surrounding the question of holding such a conference would only damage the prospects for a successful outcome. The complexity of the issues involved in this field demand that we adopt a careful and step-by-step approach. The concept of a world disarmament conference should be nourished carefully with a view to allowing it in due course to ripen and mature into reality. Any undue haste or pressure could only result in negative repercussions which would adversely affect the fragile progress achieved thus far.

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference must be looked upon in the light of this cautious approach. The final character of the document was influenced by the Committee's mandate, which required that it produce a document that had the unanimous approval of the members. And yet, by merely being successful in producing this report, the Ad Hoc Committee took a significant stride and laid down the cornerstone around which we may now proceed to build in a gradual manner.

(Mr. Fartash, Iran)

In this connexion, I wish to take this opportunity to say that the Working Group that drafted the report -- and particularly its Chairman, Mr. Elias of Spain -- deserves a great deal of credit for a job so ably accomplished.

Turning now to a review of developments in the field of disarmament, we find that, however haltingly at times, the process of détente has continued to move ahead.

It is to be hoped that, in addition to SALT II, the negotiations now under way in Vienna on mutual reduction of forces and armaments in Central Europe and on certain confidence-building measures in the military field at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, are merely prologues to more significant events.

(Mr. Fartash, Iran)

And fulfilment of the world's hopes continues to be denied also with regard to a comprehensive test ban treaty and a chemical weapons convention. Both those subjects have dominated the discussions in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) for a number of years, since the Committee was asked by the General Assembly to consider those two questions on a basis.

Reasoned and eloquent voices have been raised in this forum and elsewhere the immense dangers involved in the continued testing of nuclear nations fail to pay heed to what seems obvious to reasonable men everywhere -- that there will have to be a final reckoning some day and a dear price may have to be paid for this glaring example of human folly. the representative of Mexico pointed out during a recent debate in the CCD the average number of nuclear-weapon tests yearly -- in the decade since partial test ban treaty was concluded in 1963, was 60 per cent higher than the 1945 to 1963 annual average (CCD/PV.627, p. 23).

Time and again hopes for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban agreement have been dashed because of the lack of agreement on what constitutes an adequate system of verification. Various attempts have been made to overcome the impasse prevailing on that issue. These have included proposals regarding interim measures and confidence-building techniques. But success has so far eluded all the efforts exerted in that direction.

However, advances in seismological techniques, accompanied by satellite observation and measurement of vented radioactivity, have tended to dilute the persuasiveness of arguments in favour of on-site inspection. In any case, neither of the nuclear-weapon Powers can be said to have demonstrated the requisite political will to achieve final agreement on the question of stopping nuclear-weapons tests.

With regard to the problem of the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological means of warfare, one notes with satisfaction the fact that more than 100 States have signed the 1971 Convention on the Prohibition of bacteriological (Biological) Weapons. That is indeed a positive step. Nevertheless, our enthusiasm is tempered by the realization that the Convention has not yet come into force.

(Mr. Fartash, Iran)

We have followed closely the detailed and comprehensive discussions that place in the CCD on the question of chemical weapons. The various and working papers which have been submitted in the CCD, including sting initiative taken by the Japanese Government in submitting a ention regarding the prohibition of chemical weapons, have been the object of careful study by my Government. We are confident that in time forts will lead to the formulation of a text which will command the of the international community.

We note with satisfaction also that in a joint communiqué issued in Moscow on 3 July the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to consider a joint the CCD with respect to the conclusion, as a first step, of an convention dealing with the most dangerous and lethal means of re. We hope that such joint action will be forthcoming at the ble date so that the deadlock on this question may finally be

Any discussion regarding the cessation of the nuclear arms race must necessarily rivet our attention upon the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons. The lag in the implementation of some of the provisions of aty has indeed been disappointing. Equally disquieting is the fact that few of the so-called threshold Powers have become parties to the Treaty. As my Foreign Minister pointed out during the debate in the plenary Assembly, progress in this respect has not been "as thorough or wide-ranging as expected" (A/PV.2264, p. 36).

In that connexion it is our hope that the forthcoming conference to review ion-proliferation Treaty will provide the opportunity for a genuine and objective evaluation of its strength and weaknesses. Attention is bound to focus at that conference on, among other things, the degree of fulfilment of obligations undertaken under the terms of the Treaty. Every attempt should be made to assess how best all its provisions -- in particular, articles IV, V and VI -- might be implemented or what practicable and realistic might be introduced to make it more universally acceptable.

(Mr. Fartash, Iran)

I turn now to the Soviet proposal regarding "the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well-being and health". The question of possible meteorological and environmental warfare in the future has gained some prominence in recent years due to significant research being conducted with respect to manipulation of weather and climate with a view to alleviating the ravages of nature. Such attempts at environmental modification can, if uncontrolled, be mobilized for military purposes. It is imperative, in our opinion, to take proper measures before technology outstrips man's ability to impose the requisite control mechanisms in this field. We therefore believe that this proposal should form the subject of careful study in CCD. Appropriate recommendations, we hope, will subsequently emerge as a result of the discussions held in that forum.

With respect to the question of the prohibition or restriction of the use of napalm, and other incendiary weapons, we note the opportunity offered for a discussion of this matter by the recent diplomatic conference in Geneva on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts. Useful work towards enhancing our knowledge regarding this subject was also accomplished by the meeting of Government experts which was convened at Lucerne under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

My delegation notes with interest that as a result of last year's Soviet proposal for a reduction in arms expenditure and the application of part of these savings in providing assistance to developing nations, a most instructive report has been submitted by the experts appointed by the Secretary-General. The report gives evidence of careful and in-depth analysis of many complex issues involved in any attempt to implement this proposal.

The conclusions of the report bear out our earlier concern that whereas such proposals are worthy of careful attention by the international community, they nevertheless require the existence of a congenial environment without which no real measure of disarmament can prosper. Barring such requisite political conditions and in the absence of an effective mechanism to guarantee and safeguard peace and security, nations have no alternative but to look after their defence requirements.

(Mr. Fartash, Iran)

Finally, it only remains for me to express our sincere thanks to the co-Chairmen and to the members of CCD for agreeing to invite my country to become a member of the enlarged Committee, beginning 1 January 1975. I also wish to thank those members of this Committee who have graciously offered their felicitations to my Government in connexion with this matter. Should the General Assembly decide to endorse this decision, I can pledge now that Iran will shoulder its new responsibilities to the best of its ability, in the sure conviction that every effort in the cause of peace is an ennobling experience, rich with the promise of potential benefit to all men.

Mr. TANKOUA (United Republic of Cameroon) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time I have spoken in this Committee since the beginning of the session, I should like to associate myself with previous speakers, in extending to you the warm congratulations and the satisfaction of the Cameroon delegation upon your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. We are convinced that, with your intelligence and your habitual calm, your well-known di matic qualities and your experience of the problems we are discussing, the F Committee will honourably discharge its task. We should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee, particularly our Rapporteur, the representative of Portugal, a country whose historic bonds with Cameroon are well known, and we should like to express our proper appreciation of the new African policy of that country.

In the view of my delegation, the present state of affairs with regard to disarmament is in defiance of the most elementary common sense. From 1914 to 1918 -- to go back only as far as that -- the First World War inflicted upon mankind unprecedented atrocities, in the light of which both the victors and the vanquished, who had suffered more or less equally, believed that they should avoid a repetition of such a situation by a solemn undertaking in the League of Nations. Hardly 20 years later, for the same reasons, economic problems and dreams of supremacy, the same Powers dragged the world into the holocaust of 1939-1945. Aghast this time at the disastrous consequences of their miscalculations, those responsible considered that in order to eliminate for ever the possibility of a repetition of such sufferings,

(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

they should reject the idea of a mere League of Nations and create an organization -- and I quote the Charter here -- of:

"... the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small ..."

Then those former adversaries, confronted once again with the realities of war, chose the holy and peaceful spot on the west coast of the United States of America to embrace each other, wipe away each other's tears, bathe their wounds in the ocean and sign this new act of marriage, the Charter, in which they solemnly undertook:

"... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest ..."

Hardly 30 years have gone by since then, and now we are told that the world is once again on the brink of war, a war which will have no survivors.

We are told, indeed, that the level of armaments and the technology of armaments developed since 1945 is such that it needs only a madman, a miscalculation or an act of blackmail to hurl the whole world into the abyss; and that in spite of the praiseworthy efforts to achieve disarmament, particularly since the signing in 1968 of the non-proliferation Treaty:

"... the cost of a nuclear submarine rose by more than 700 per cent ... there was an increase of 400 per cent in the number of intercontinental missile nuclear warheads for firing from land bases, submarines or long-range bombers, and an increase of 50 per cent in military budgets" (CCD/444, p. 2)

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(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

My delegation has no reason or way to doubt the astounding statistics which have certainly come from the most authoritative sources; nor are we raising any questions about the intentions of those who originally compiled them, before Mexico and CCD had an opportunity to take cognizance of and report to us on them. However, we do raise the questions: Why were these arms manufactured? Why is the arms race still continuing? If it is an accident, why have those who find them so terrifying to the whole of mankind and who possess them not destroyed them or at least stopped increasing them?

Someone taught me from a small ancient history book that the world, after having almost achieved wisdom, relapsed into ignorance. This childhood memory prompts me to wonder whether in the twentieth century we are not actually going through the same process and are doomed to repeat history. Because, how can we believe that man has wilfully and deliberately built up such stockpiles of arms that all it would take for our planet to be wiped off the map of the universe is a miscalculation or an accident? How can we believe that anyone who is aware of this danger to himself and as the builder ofthese stockpiles and this danger would not make up his mind to eliminate the danger?

When in 1960 my country acceded to the San Francisco Charter -- a document, incidentally, which was prepared without its participation or co-operation -- it was convinced that along with it all peoples, which had directly or indirectly suffered the unprecedented ills which the imagination of man or a group of men was ever able to impose on mankind, those peoples which twice in the period of 30 years had made monumental errors and sworn never to commit them again, should fulfil the momentous obligation to respect that document to which they had so freely subscribed. While the Charter is actually being infringed today by some of its authors Cameroon, for its part, continues to believe in it and to honour its commitments -- even if it is not perfect; even if it is both egalitarian (Chapter I, Article 2 (1)) and inegalitarian (Security Council right of veto).

(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

We have therefore always favoured general and complete disarmament, advocated the urgent need to stop nuclear and thermonuclear tests, the conclusion of a treaty totally banning those tests and transferring stockpiles of these weapons and the factories that produce them to peaceful purposes of economic and social development. Similarly, we have always supported efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear arms. We are in favour of the denuclearization of geographical zones, the reduction of military budgets and utilization of the funds thus saved for humanitarian purposes. We condemn napalm and all other chemical or bacteriological weapons.

That is the attitude of principle of my Government on the items under consideration and I should like now to make a few remarks on them.

As is known, in ratifying the non-proliferation Treaty, my country was, as it were, taking a leap in an expression of faith and thereby a positive step towards general and complete disarmament. But that option in no way signifies that we have excluded for ourselves any possibility of undertaking theoretical or laboratory research in the nuclear field or, possibly, exploiting peaceful technological applications which may evolve from this form of energy which we are told has such a promising future. Nor can there be any doubt that if, in the final analysis, it turns out to be true that that Treaty remains a discriminatory, fallacious, illusory and, above all, ineffective instrument -- as was stated here by a delegation -- Cameroon, following the example of many other countries, will of course have to revise its position accordingly. That is why we expect a great deal -- and somewhat impatiently -- from the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and find its efforts praiseworthy. We are also patiently awaiting the results of the Conference on the review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in 1975.

With regard to the denuclearization of zones, my delegation considers that that problem, like all other disarmament problems, should be studied carefully. The delimitation of zones should be precise so as to avoid corridors or non-denuclearized enclaves which could constitute, for the nuclear Powers not parties to the Treaty, firing grounds for the peripheral zones and which would be dangerous for those areas. We are thinking in particular of

(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

Territories which are subject to rival claims or are still colonized and where there are foreign bases and enclaves; and we are also thinking of the possibility of using the colonial, annexationist notion of "vacant and unowned land". Similarly, the protection of denuclearized zones adjacent to those which are not denuclearized should be given clear guarantees against the latter.

My delegation hopes that the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference will not lose sight of those important details of the problems of zones, and we shall support any initiatives to promote a serious study of the matter.

Specialists of our Organization have said that the United Republic of Cameroon is among the poorest countries of the world and those which have suffered most from the immediate consequences of the most recent energy crisis. We have also been victims of the Sahelian drought. In addition, we are very much alarmed at the fact that more than $250,000 million are now being swallowed up annually by various military programmes throughout the world while millions of men are perishing from hunger and natural disasters and when specialized international organizations foresee alarming prospects in the very near future.

In the circumstances, we hope that all delegations here will support the Soviet Union proposal on the reduction of military budgets and utilization of funds thus saved for humanitarian purposes, because, in our view, this would be one way, among others -- but a good one -- of discovering whether or not the intentions of the proposers are as insincere as some people claim. Similarly, we are sympathetic to the draft resolution on the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well-being and health (A/C.1/L.675).

Our position, as I have just explained it, is, we realize, a modest contribution to the difficult problems being discussed by the Committee; but it is a necessary and sufficient contribution to encourage concrete initiatives

(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

that we expect from the great Powers, which bear primary responsibility for bringing the world out of the psychosis of terror resulting from an international situation that was already more than alarming at the time -- 30 October 1974 -- of the consideration of the relationship between our Organization and South Africa, when the Security Council added a deteriorating element to the international situation.

If the First Committee -- the political committee of the United Nations -- treats lightly the matter of mankind's survival, the question will arise whether the twenty-ninth session will not in fact toll the knell of our Organization. The failure of the Organization would be all the more contradictory and regrettable because all delegations which have spoken in the general debate at this session have in fact laid stress on international co-operation based on interdependence, a complementarity which, as if by magic, other challenges -- the energy and food crises -- have revealed to us.

The example of the Security Council with regard to the policy of apartheid of the South African Government has eloquently confirmed what other speakers have said before in this room: that in spite of the relevant provisions of the Charter, in spite of the many resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other relevant United Nations bodies, adopted for 29 years, the political will by States for true international peace and security is still lacking.

(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

But that will is indispensable if we want to elicit and identify the various factors neglect or oversight of which would be likely to deal a death-blow to our enterprise by hindering an objective search for solutions to this crucial problem of general and complete disarmament.

In the view of my delegation, the following are the four conditions which seem to be essential to that objective.

We should, in our view, eliminate all causes of the need for research into the development of ever-more deadly weapons and, in the final analysis, the production, acquisition, stockpiling and improvement of those weapons. In other words, we must put an end to the policy of supremacy and resolve all open or latent conflicts which are pockets of resistance to any disarmament policy.

We should decide upon the international authority appropriate to supervise the process and control disarmament -- that is, a disarmed world. Those Powers that are armed or possess the technology and arms factories should agree no longer to produce them, improve them or to allow them to be spread, or to use their stockpiles for military purposes. Rather, they should destroy them or convert them so that they may be used for praiseworthy purposes.

Countries other than those I have mentioned should in turn and in parallel fashion agree to refrain from acquiring armaments or undertaking any enterprise -- or research having military purposes.

In other words, if the first two conditions are fulfilled, the key to the problem would be in the hands of two groups of countries, which would have simultaneously to accept some conditional obligations.

Our analysis may seem simplistic and Utopian, but we firmly believe that whoever willed the creation of those arsenals can also will their destruction. It is only a matter of conscience and will.

The question of which of the two groups should begin is answered by the fact that all the developing countries and medium-sized Powers that have ratified the non-proliferation Treaty, have accepted the denuclearization of zones and the world disarmament conference, have condemned all nuclear tests but undertake none, have condemned napalm and all other chemical or bacteriological weapons, and so on, -- all those countries, I say,

(Mr. Tankou, Cameroon)

are already doing enough towards general and complete disarmament, even if the absence of the appropriate control authority has as yet made it impossible to check the truthfulness of their claims. Since the Charter of our Organization has entrusted the great Powers with special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security it would be natural to expect that a meaningful gesture in the direction of disarmament will be forthcoming from them. We should like to make it quite clear that we hope they will make that gesture, in the form of calling a halt to the production of those weapons and destroying or reconverting the stockpiles. Otherwise, they would seem to be telling the other countries to simply fold their arms and remain forever small under big-Power domination -- in other words, to remain at their mercy. That could be called macroslavery, and in any case no one could willingly accept it. It would certainly lead us into insurmountable difficulties.

Indeed, the non-proliferation Treaty and other measures of the kind would be respected by no one, not even by those who had signed the Treaty; it could be slighted with impunity, since, it being a matter of the maintenance of peace, it would fall within the competence of the Security Council and would obviously lead to a veto by a permanent member.

We also doubt whether those Treaties and Conventions can be as universal as some claim, because we wonder whether, for example, the people of Palestine, a nation whose territory is occupied, would agree to them. We have the same doubts concerning the black majorities of Rhodesia, South Africa, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique and all world communities that possess and might still need weapons to affirm their national identities and their fundamental rights under the Charter, but to which we are still obstinately closing our eyes. Even the racist minorities would never agree to those texts, because they too are frightened and for that reason armed to the teeth, allegedly by certain great Powers, which are in turn frightened that Pretoria will refuse to supply them with enriched uranium, plutonium, gold, diamonds and the primary commodities they badly need for their armaments industries.

(Mr. Tankoua, Cameroon)

In the circumstances, it will be understood that the world would indeed be on the brink of the abyss because the act of folly or blackmail of the kind mentioned this very year by the United States Secretary of State himself, in his statement to the General Assembly -- might be the act of a Palestinian, a South African, a Viet Namese or an unsuspected sympathizer having access to the secrets of the nuclear arms arsenals.

It is for all those reasons that my delegation very sincerely believes that in order to avoid the worst, the irreparable, the great Powers will soon be displaying the political will necessary to turn from the present state of precarious détente to true peace in a world where justice reigns. Lack of that will be fatal to mankind because in itself it would constitute an important element in acceleration of the arms race and would be an unnecessary risk which in our view no one should be called upon to take unless as a form of blackmail or an attempt to make people become mad enough to press the doomsday button.

My delegation reserves its right to speak again if necessary on details of various items of our agenda.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Cameroon for the very kind words he was good enough to address to me and to the other officers of the Committee.

We had in principle agreed that the Committee would adjourn so that members might attend the plenary meeting to hear the speech of His Excellency Dr. Bruno Kreisky, the Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria. I think we can do so now, provided the next three speakers on the list agree to that procedure. They are the representatives of Chile, Brazil and India. I see that, very courteously, they do not object. I shall therefore call upon them, in that order, at this afternoon's meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.