



General Assembly

Fiftieth session

First Committee

28th Meeting

Monday, 20 November 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Erdenuchuluun (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 (continued)

Action on draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: At this meeting the Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolutions in cluster 11, namely draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, and the amendment to it which was orally proposed this morning by the representative of Colombia and which I understand is being distributed to all delegations, and draft resolutions A/C.1/50/L.20/Rev.1 and A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1.

Before the Committee proceeds to take a decision on draft resolutions in cluster 11, I shall call on those representatives who wish to make statements other than in explanation of their positions or votes on draft resolutions in that cluster.

Mr. Alvarez (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Uruguay wishes to make a brief statement on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7. My delegation fully supports the text of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 and wishes to comment on the fourth preambular paragraph. Here we note that there has been no explicit consideration of the phenomenon of "mercenaryism", which is clearly different from "terrorism". The concept is covered in global and regional texts and it is this delegation's view that to "terrorist groups, drug traffickers or underground organizations" we should also add "mercenary organizations".

Recent events in Africa, in particular in the Comoros, have drawn the attention of the General Assembly to the real impact of this sorry phenomenon. We should like the sponsors of this text to consider this point at the next session.

Mr. Ledogar (United States of America): I regret that I must ask that the name of the United States be withdrawn from the list of co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 so that my delegation may maintain its flexibility in the event that the amendment proposed orally this morning, or any other amendment of that kind, should be adopted.

The United States places great importance on the issue of small arms. Accordingly, we support the purpose and goals of this draft resolution as we indicated by our co-sponsorship of it. We expected that the rest of the First Committee shared this same sentiment. We had therefore thought that this draft resolution would enjoy consensus. Now however, primarily because of the actions of one or two delegations, we are forced to witness a number of States which, probably, like my own, will withdraw co-sponsorship and change their votes, thereby weakening the impact of what we were trying to accomplish on the subject of small arms. Surely the sponsors of these amendments know this in advance. They know that proposing such additions will have a destructive result.

In the view of my delegation this is extremely unfortunate just as it is avoidable. The amendments forced upon us have practically no relevance to the matter at hand. My delegation has to point out that the text of the amendment proposed by Colombia was taken directly from a document adopted by a human rights Conference, not a

disarmament forum. It is not appropriate or applicable here. This is a self-serving addition that focuses on regional issues that would be more appropriately addressed elsewhere.

While the United States continues to support the main thrust of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 it will have to reconsider its vote on the entire draft resolution depending upon the action that is taken on amendments.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I wish to make some brief remarks on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7. The Pakistan delegation fully appreciates and shares the concern of the delegation of Japan, which is the principal sponsor of this draft resolution, with regard to the instability created in various regions of the world because of the accumulation of armaments, including small arms. My country has suffered at first hand because of such actions.

We believe, however, that any approach to the control of armaments must be such that it does not exacerbate instability and conflict, but on the contrary promotes stability and peace.

We have several questions with regard to the approach that is reflected in draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 because it seeks to focus attention exclusively on certain types of arms and therefore may exclude others which could be equally destabilizing in their impact but which are not contained in the as yet undefined category of small arms and light weapons.

It was our feeling that the best way to approach the issue would have been to invite the views of Member States of the United Nations on the problems which are addressed in draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, namely the actual situations of instability in various parts of the world. It is only on the basis of the views of Member States that we in the United Nations could have identified the principal causes of instability, the principal consequences of the accumulation of arms, and the ways and means of addressing these problems.

As the draft resolution stands we would be entrusting the actions to be taken by the international community to an as yet unknown panel group of experts. We have seen the work of several expert groups in the recent past and I must confess that we have a sense that various groups of experts, at times, project views that are tilted towards preconceived notions of arms control and peace and security of certain groups of States at the cost of the security of the smaller and more vulnerable countries of the world.

In particular, it is our concern that such an approach should not prejudice the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, that it should not prejudice the inherent right of States to security and self-defence, and that it should not prejudice the right of peoples and of States to oppose and eject foreign occupation from their territories.

We hope therefore that the compromise formulation for an additional preambular paragraph which was suggested by the Colombian delegation will receive the widest possible support in the Committee.

Sir Michael Weston (United Kingdom): My delegation has asked to speak to make a statement on the draft resolution on small arms, the text of which is contained in document A/C.1/50/L.7, as well as an explanation of vote on the amendment proposed by the representative of Colombia.

Japan, the original sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 conducted intensive and open consultations, which led to a clear text requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a report on small arms with the assistance of a panel of experts, nominated on the basis of equitable geographical representation. The original text of A/C.1/50/L.7 set out clear parameters for the report and avoided language known to be unacceptable to many delegations. We commend the Japanese delegation for these efforts.

My delegation decided to co-sponsor this important initiative in the neglected field of conventional disarmament as a first step in response to the Secretary-General's words stressing the urgent need for

“practical disarmament in the context of the conflicts the United Nations is actually dealing with and of the weapons, most of them light weapons, that are actually killing people in the hundreds of thousands”. (A/50/60, para. 60)

We therefore greatly regretted the fact that the co-sponsors of the amendment in document A/C.1/50/L.58 set out to politicize the draft resolution and shift the focus away from this issue of utmost importance to both developed and developing countries, that is, how to deal with the excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional small arms. In the view of my delegation, draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.58 was not an attempt to forge a compromise since it was submitted in full knowledge of the fact that it was unacceptable to the co-sponsors. The language in A/C.1/50/L.58, in A/C.1/50/L.58/Rev.1 and in the oral

amendment submitted this morning by Colombia, while we have all accepted it in another context, is in the view of my delegation totally inappropriate language for a draft resolution on disarmament.

My delegation will, therefore, abstain on the proposed amendment and if it is nevertheless adopted, withdraw our co-sponsorship of the draft resolution as amended. In fact we would have preferred to vote against the amendment but our enthusiasm for document A/C.1/50/L.7 is greater than our dislike of the amendment. We will, as I say, abstain on the amendment and vote in favour of the draft resolution as a whole even if the amendment is adopted.

We remain firm supporters of initiatives aimed at addressing conventional weapons disarmament in multilateral forums, and we look forward to the results of the United Nations study which will result from this draft resolution. But we will not support language designed to hold back rather than to promote such initiatives.

Some delegations have submitted a number of amendments to draft resolutions this year designed to score political points rather than to promote practical disarmament and international security measures. We regret this development. We believe that if the First Committee is to maintain its relevance to global efforts to achieve an effective and balanced disarmament agenda, then delegations will need to work together to build a genuine consensus across a range of issues.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): I am speaking actually on a point of order although I did not want to break the flow of statements.

This morning my delegation received a paper from the Secretariat marked A/C.1/50/L.7/Rev.1 and dated 17 November 1995. I understand that delegations are at present discussing document A/C.1/50/L.7, dated 8 November 1995. My question is, should I send this document to my Government as part of the official documentation of the First Committee or should I throw it in the wastepaper basket as some of my colleagues have suggested?

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to answer that question.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): I should point out that since certain documents were discussed earlier, the Documents Control Section might have prepared such a document for distribution, but it was certainly embargoed and was not distributed officially. How it fell

into the hands of one or two delegations I do not know. That document, however, does not officially exist.

The Chairman: I hope that answer satisfies the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation has already had the opportunity to emphasize that the problem raised by the Secretary-General concerning micro-disarmament is of a global nature and warrants careful attention since the illegal use of arms continues to result in new victims in different regions of the world.

In this connection we were ready in principle to support the holding of a United Nations conference on the role of the Organization in strengthening cooperation by States to end illegal trading in these kinds of arms. However, we feel that the amendment proposed by Colombia changes the balance of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 and we regret that this sentence, which could quite adequately have been placed in the context of the World Conference on Human Rights, is indirectly included in the draft resolution on small arms in the context of consideration in the First Committee under issues of disarmament. For this reason we will abstain on the amendment which, as I said, unnecessarily alters the balance and politicizes draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7. We will be forced to abstain on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 as a whole if the amendment is adopted.

The Chairman: Does any other delegation wish to speak at this stage? There seems to be none.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): Singapore supports draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, on "Small arms". The illicit transfer of small arms poses no less a danger to regional and international security than other kinds of weapons which have attracted the attention of the Committee. We commend Japan for taking this important initiative.

Nevertheless, precisely because we consider this to be a key resolution of the greatest importance, we feel obliged to draw attention to certain weaknesses in it. Although my delegation is in entire agreement with the intent of this draft resolution, we are not entirely comfortable with the modalities that the draft resolution prescribes to deal with the problem.

In operative paragraph 1 the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a report

“with the assistance of a panel group of qualified governmental experts to be nominated by him on the basis of equitable geographical representation”.

We note that these are to be governmental experts, that is, experts who will represent the views of the Governments concerned. They are not eminent specialists who will give objective individual opinions. They will represent the national positions of their countries.

On the other hand, in operative paragraph 2 the Secretary-General is also requested to seek

“the views and proposals of Member States”

and

“to make them available for consideration by the panel of governmental experts”.

The language of the draft resolution does not make it absolutely clear that the report of the panel of experts set up in accordance with operative paragraph 1 is required to incorporate the views and proposals sought in operative paragraph 2. The draft resolution does not say that the panel must, should or even ought to take into consideration these views. Operative paragraph 1 merely states, almost as an after-thought, that the report be prepared

“taking into account views and proposals of Member States and all other relevant information”.

That is too indefinite. The Secretary-General is only required to make the views of Member States available for the consideration of the panel. Presumably therefore, if the panel so chooses, it could well ignore such views and proposals entirely.

The effect is thus to create a rather invidious two-tier hierarchical system of consultations. On the one hand, there will be a privileged few specially designated “governmental experts”, whose views will inevitably be given disproportionate weight in the report. On the other hand, there will be the great mass of other ordinary Member States whose views may or may not be taken into consideration or may be disregarded entirely.

It is my delegation’s view that this procedure will undermine the political and moral authority of any report

prepared by such a panel of experts. That is all the more so since the draft resolution does not propose any specific criteria whereby the panel of experts referred to in operative paragraph 1 should be chosen except by the ritual formula of equitable geographical representation. This, as we all know, can and often has been interpreted in many different ways.

That is a serious weakness of the draft resolution before us. Although this is certainly not the intention of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, a two-tier system of consultations raises questions about the nature of the environment in which the panel of experts will operate. The process of consultation on such an important subject should not only be fair and equitable but, more important, should be transparently seen by all to be fair and equitable.

We had drawn the attention of some of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution to this consideration, suggesting that one possibility would be to make the panel of experts open to any Member State that expressed a desire to serve on it. Unfortunately, this suggestion did not find favour.

Two main arguments were advanced by several of the co-sponsors in favour of retaining the arrangements proposed in the draft resolution. My delegation did not find either argument entirely persuasive.

First, it was argued by some that there were precedents for such an arrangement. That may well be so. But this begs the real question whether the precedent is a desirable one. Appeal to precedent should not be undertaken blindly or as a substitute for the exercise of reasoned judgement. We should evaluate each issue on its own merits and decide on the most appropriate and desirable arrangement in each case.

Secondly, it was argued by some that it was necessary to have a restricted group of experts rather than an open-ended group because an open-ended group would find it more difficult to reach conclusions. That, again, may well be true, but again begs the more critical issue, namely, the need to give the greatest possible political and moral authority to a report on such an important subject.

An open-ended group could take more time and effort to come up with agreed conclusions. But its report would certainly enjoy a political authority among Member States that the report from a restricted panel would not. This will reduce the possibility of contention over the report when it is presented.

Unfortunately, as they stand, the arrangements proposed in the draft resolution make it easy and even legitimate for Member States to repudiate or ignore the report because they can justifiably claim that their views were not given adequate consideration.

Let me conclude by reiterating that, notwithstanding these concerns, my delegation has decided to support this draft resolution because of the importance of the issue with which it deals. We hope and expect that it will be accepted by the Committee. It is precisely because the draft resolution is so important that we have brought these concerns to the attention of the Committee. We hope that the Secretary-General will take them into consideration when implementing the draft resolution.

The Chairman: Does any other representative wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting? If there are none, the Committee will proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 and on an oral amendment proposed by the delegation of Colombia.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): As you, Sir, stated there is an oral amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, entitled "Small arms". The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Japan at the Committee's 16th meeting on 8 November 1995. It is sponsored by the following States: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Mali, Malta, Norway, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela.

The draft resolution has programme budget implications, which are contained in A/C.1/50/L.60.

The Committee will now proceed to vote on the oral amendment submitted by Colombia, a new fourth preambular paragraph to draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7. For the record it reads as follows:

"Reaffirming the right of self-determination of all peoples, in particular of peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and the importance of the effective realization of this

right, as enunciated, *inter alia*, in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights;"

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, China, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela

The oral amendment was adopted by 54 votes to none, with 88 abstentions.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Denmark on a point of order.

Mr. Bruun (Denmark): After the adoption of the amendment on which we have just voted, may I request you, Sir, to note that Denmark has decided to withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 as now amended.

The Chairman: That request has been noted. I call on the representative of Norway on a point of order.

Mr. Holter (Norway): I should also like you, Sir, to note that Norway, after the adoption of the amendment, has decided to withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7. I would appreciate having this fact recorded.

The Chairman: That will be done. I call on the representative of Portugal on a point of order.

Ms. Paiva (Portugal): Portugal regrets to inform the Committee that it will withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, entitled "Small arms", because it could not accept the oral amendment just adopted. Portugal still intends to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Iceland on a point of order.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): I wish to inform the Committee that Iceland has likewise decided to withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Finland on a point of order.

Ms. Liukkonen (Finland): I also regret to inform the Committee that we are obliged to withdraw our co-sponsorship. Nevertheless we still intend to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Belgium on a point of order.

Mr. Roland (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation also wishes to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 entitled "Small arms" and to say that Belgium, while unreservedly approving the objective of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 and its co-sponsors, felt compelled not to support the oral amendment presented by Colombia this morning and to withdraw our co-sponsorship following the inclusion of an amendment after the preambular section which we feel is not related to the draft resolution and which, moreover, is quoted out of context. We consider that

the matter dealt with in this preambular paragraph is linked more to the work of the Third Committee.

That is why Belgium, although it abstained in the vote on the amendment, will support the draft resolution. We deeply regret that the introduction of this amendment will prevent us from being co-sponsors of it as we had intended and as had been announced. We warmly thank the delegation of Japan for the efforts it made to reach a text that would be acceptable to all.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Malta on a point of order.

Ms. Darmanin (Malta): I should like to inform the Committee that whereas we will be voting in favour of the draft resolution as a whole I should like to withdraw our co-sponsorship.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Italy on a point of order.

Mr. Marrapodi (Italy): After the adoption of the oral amendment proposed by Colombia I wish to inform the Committee that the Italian delegation has also decided to withdraw its co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, entitled "Small arms". We intend however to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The Chairman: Does any other representative wish to speak? I see none. I understand that the statement made earlier by the United Kingdom was that if the preambular paragraph in the amendment was adopted then the United Kingdom would withdraw from co-sponsorship.

Sir Michael Weston (United Kingdom): Yes.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to continue the voting.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now vote on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 as a whole, as orally amended.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi,

Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates

Draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 as a whole, as orally amended was adopted by 134 votes to none, with 16 abstentions.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.20/Rev.1. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.20/Rev.1, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures" — the programme budget implications of which are contained in A/C.1/50/L.61 — was introduced by the representative of Congo in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central

Africa, at the Committee's 16th meeting on 8 November 1995. It is sponsored by the Congo, in its capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, and by Cape Verde.

The Chairman: The sponsors of this draft resolution have expressed their wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.20/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "Final text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty)", was introduced by the representative of South Africa, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the African Group of States, at the Committee's 16th meeting, on 8 November 1995. It is sponsored by South Africa, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the African Group of States, and by Marshall Islands.

The Chairman: The sponsors of this draft resolution have expressed their wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. Ledogar (United States): I am explaining the position of the United States on two draft resolutions.

First, the United States is pleased that it could join the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.20/Rev.1, on regional confidence-building measures in Africa. However, the United States wishes to note that the focus of the draft resolution, especially in operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, is not on disarmament but on peace operations, a term that could involve peace-keeping. The United States believes that the peace-keeping issue is not appropriate for the First Committee.

With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1, on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the United States is pleased to have joined the consensus on this draft resolution. United States' endorsement of the concept of such a treaty has been both constant and strong. In fact, the United States has offered its support consistently throughout the process leading to the completion of the Pelindaba Treaty.

United States' support for the Treaty also follows from our commitment to the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. That commitment, of course, calls for the establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as for the cooperation, respect and support of all nuclear-weapon States for the relevant protocols necessary to make such zones effective.

In regard to the latter, I would note that the United States continues to study the Protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty. Therefore, while we have just given concrete evidence of our support for the Treaty and for draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1, it remains a fact that our study of the issue has not been completed. For this reason the United States is unable at this time to commit itself to meeting the timetable envisaged in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution.

Mr. Martínez-Morcillo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Spanish delegation has joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. Our decision is consistent with the principles on which Spain's policy on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is based, for my Government is firmly convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely entered into by consensus by the member States of the region, enhances international peace and security. For this reason my delegation supports the process under way to denuclearize the African continent.

At the same time I wish to recall the decision taken by the Spanish Congress of Deputies on the non-nuclearization of Spain, which applies to the whole of its national territory. Furthermore, Spain is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has signed a full-scope safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). My country has thus undertaken a series of commitments and obligations in the area of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Having said this, I wish to state that the final text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, is being studied very carefully from the legal standpoint in my country, so my delegation's support for the consensus adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1 in no way prejudices the final decision that Spain will take on signing Protocol III of that Treaty.

Mr. Surie (India): A draft resolution as important as the one just adopted on small arms should, in our view, be based on extensive consultations and should enjoy consensus support. These criteria have not been met; hence my delegation was constrained to abstain on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7.

We believe that the consultations held on this draft resolution have been quite inadequate. Further, in operative paragraph 1, the draft resolution prejudices the issues involved, in several respects. We believe the views of Member States should be sought and analysed before proceeding in the matter. For this very reason the setting up of a panel of experts at this stage is, we believe, premature.

Mr. Jusuf (Indonesia): My delegation wishes to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7 entitled "Small arms". We believe that, considering the destabilizing and destructive consequences of small arms, while at the same time realizing the right of any State to self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the general thrust of the draft resolution deserves our support. We believe, however, that the matter of conventional arms transfers and the illegal acquisition of small arms are two distinct issues that should be treated separately. In the case of the draft resolution in question it would appear that they are perhaps unwittingly combined both in the preambular and operative paragraphs.

The question of illicit and covert arms trafficking has its own peculiar characteristics. By and large, its deleterious consequences are confined within national boundaries, although some have ramifications beyond.

The suffering of civilian populations and the devastating consequences can no longer be ignored. Equally disturbing is the potential of such arms to disrupt national stability and regional peace. Hence, there is a continuing need to take a collective look at this problem in order to focus on ways and means by which an international consensus can be reached.

My delegation is not so sure that the question of conventional arms transfers for legitimate national security

considerations should be dealt with on a par and in the same context as the draft resolution attempts to do; in other words, in our view the draft resolution should confine itself exclusively to the issue of the illicit transfer and acquisition of arms, and references to conventional armaments should be deleted.

Therefore, the request to the Secretary-General of the United Nations contained in operative paragraph 1, and the elements to be dealt with by the panel group of experts emphasized in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) of operative paragraph 1, cause my delegation considerable doubt. We believe that the group of governmental experts should be given a more restrictive mandate, in precise terms, namely, to examine the question either of illicit trade in conventional arms or of trade in conventional arms for legitimate purposes, and not for both.

It is for this reason that my delegation abstained on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7.

Mr. Richier (France) (*interpretation from French*): As a nuclear-weapon State, and in view of its participation in the Pelindaba Treaty, France joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1. We welcome the process that led to the Treaty establishing an African nuclear-weapon-free zone. The forthcoming signature and coming into force of the Pelindaba Treaty will be a significant contribution to international peace and security. We support the principle of regional denuclearization with the participation of all countries concerned, in so far as their strategic situation permits.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): Israel joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1 because it supports the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones directly negotiated and agreed upon by all regional States and including mutual verification regimes.

As far as the ninth preambular paragraph is concerned, my delegation's position is that each nuclear-weapon-free zone should be tailored to its regional characteristics and should fit the requirements of the participants in that specific zone.

Mr. Nasseri (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to express the position of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, entitled "Small arms". Though we supported the draft resolution, we are not clear on a number of issues: first, the real purpose behind this initiative; secondly, the basis upon which the panel of experts called for in operative paragraph 1 will work, particularly taking into account the

absence of concrete views of Member States on the issue of small arms; thirdly, the financial implications of the draft resolution at a time when the United Nations resources could usefully be allocated to priority issues of disarmament as envisaged in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We hope those States that are concerned about the financial implications of General Assembly resolutions treat similar non-aligned initiatives in the same manner as this draft resolution has been treated.

Mr. Martínez-Morcillo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the European Union I wish briefly to refer to the voting on the oral amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7. The following countries also associate themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The European Union and its associated States abstained in the voting on the oral amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, not because they had any objection to the content of the amendment but because they took the view that in this case it was not possible to make references which exceeded the context in which they were drafted.

Sir Michael Weston (United Kingdom): I wish to explain the United Kingdom's position on the draft resolution which the Committee has just adopted on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, the text of which is contained in A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1.

The United Kingdom was very glad to be able to join the consensus on this draft resolution. We have always supported the principle of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We believe that such zones, internationally recognized and freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, can enhance global and regional peace and security.

The decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last May highlighted the importance of the cooperation of the nuclear-weapon States for such zones to be fully effective. We endorse that view.

We have commended the Organization of African Unity for completing the work on the Pelindaba Treaty. We were grateful to be given the opportunity to contribute to that work during the drafting of the Treaty. We would also

like to commend Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo for his contribution to the successful outcome. We are now studying the text of the Protocols that we will be invited to sign. The Protocols raise certain points that we need to consider very carefully. We hope to be in a position to announce our decision with regard to the Protocols in the near future but until we have fully considered our position we cannot accept a timetable for signature as set out in the draft resolution.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I should like to explain the position of the Chinese Government concerning draft resolutions A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1 and A/C.1/50/L.7.

The Chinese delegation joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1, on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. China has always respected and supported the request of States concerned to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of voluntary consultation and voluntary agreement in accordance with their local conditions. We believe that nuclear-weapon States should respect requests for, and the idea of, nuclear-weapon-free status, and should respect the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones and also assume corresponding obligations.

On the basis of this position, China welcomes and supports the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty adopted by African States. We welcome and support this Treaty. Once it is opened for signature, China will actively consider signing the relevant Protocols of the Treaty at an early date.

The Chinese delegation did not participate in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, entitled "Small arms". In view of the concern expressed by the international community over the illegal transfer, excessive accumulation and extensive use in conflicts of small arms, we in principle agree that the Secretary-General should organize a panel group of experts to study the issue, but since the concept of small arms is completely new we need to study further its meaning and scope.

Mr. Yarka (Papua New Guinea): I wish to inform the Committee that my delegation is fully committed to the issue of the self-determination of all peoples. However, in this instance, with reference to the amendment proposed by the Ambassador of Colombia to draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.7, we abstained because we believe that this particular concern can easily be catered for appropriately by other relevant committees.

We supported the draft resolution as a whole because of our belief that the transfer of small arms should be contained. It is the use of small arms by elements of society that gives rise to national and regional instabilities. We therefore commend the adoption of this draft resolution.

The Chairman: Does any other representative wish to explain their vote or position? There seems to be none.

I call on the representative of South Africa to make a statement.

Mr. Markram (South Africa): I should like to make a general statement on draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1. Thank you for allowing me to speak to address the adoption without a vote of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "Final text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty)". The draft resolution was introduced to the First Committee by South Africa on 8 November 1995 on behalf of the members of the African Group of States.

It is particularly gratifying for my delegation to welcome the adoption by consensus of this draft resolution. We would like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the assistance that they provided to the group of experts who drafted this Treaty.

My delegation can, however, not hide its disappointment at the explanations of vote that have been made by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom. We take the point that they have not completed their review of the provisions of the Treaty, that this process is still ongoing, and that they can consequently not give the clear undertaking in operative paragraph 5 that they will sign the Protocols that concern them as soon as the Treaty becomes available for signature.

We also note however that the Treaty text has been in their possession since the end of May. The weapon States were also given the opportunity to comment on the Treaty at the Windhoek meeting of the Group of Experts in April 1994, and at the Johannesburg meeting in May 1995. It is certainly our hope that the process will at last have been completed by the end of February 1996, when it is expected that the signing ceremony will take place in Cairo.

It is with deep disappointment that we heard today that some of the nuclear-weapon States are as yet unable to make this commitment. Support for nuclear-weapon-free

zones was an integral part of the negotiations at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Our interpretation of support is signing. For us, actions speak louder than words. The Treaty should not be allowed to suffer the same fate as the Treaty of Rarotonga, which, 10 years after it was adopted, has yet to be signed by the United States, the United Kingdom and France.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make an announcement.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): There will be a meeting of the States of the Non-Aligned Movement in this Conference Room immediately following the adjournment of the First Committee.

In addition, there will also be a meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries tomorrow at 2.15 p.m. in Conference Room C.

The Chairman: The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.