



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 51 TO 69, 139, 141 AND 145 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. RAKOTONIAINA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Now that the general debate on all disarmament items is drawing to a close in our Committee, my delegation, in speaking now, does not expect to be able to contribute anything further to what has already been covered so clearly and in such detail by a large number of delegations.

At this stage, we would note that, to judge by the statements made in the General Assembly and in the First Committee, speakers have been unanimous in acknowledging that international relations have improved and that we must take advantage of this breath of fresh air in order to make solid progress in the field of disarmament.

The signing by the United States of America and the Soviet Union of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the current dialogue between the two super-Powers concerning the reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons by 50 per cent as well as the prospects for the settlement of a number of trouble-spots around the world are clear signs of unprecedented and encouraging progress, which makes it possible to view the future with somewhat more optimism and also to restore the confidence of our peoples in the role and effectiveness of the United Nations.

We should like to consider this combination of happy circumstances as the outcome of an act of recognition and of a lofty political vision transcending narrow national interests and seeking to foster mutual confidence and establish world stability upon a much more solid foundation than that of military force. We welcome this development and we hope that wisdom and perseverance on all sides can

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give rise to a series of even more daring initiatives to promote the security and well-being of mankind.

However, the unanimity to which my delegation has referred is less apparent as regards multilateral disarmament activities. Some members have felt disappointed at the way in which the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament concluded. It is well known that at that session the Assembly was unable to reach agreement on a final document. Others feel, however, that the session did make it possible to consider the items on the agenda in greater depth and to establish points of convergence. It is clear that everybody has his own way of viewing and assessing things.

The fact remains that the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has continued to run into the same stumbling-blocks that it had faced over the years. It would appear that there have been positive developments only with respect to the question of chemical weapons, a matter concerning which further political momentum is now required.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that a very important step has been taken in the field of disarmament towards bilateral understanding. This is the first time in history that we have witnessed genuine disarmament involving the elimination of an entire category of weapons from the arsenals of States. On the other hand, despite patient and commendable efforts, multilateral negotiations continue in a state of semi-stalemate.

The satisfaction or the euphoria that we may be feeling following the lessening of international tension and the hopes to which it may give rise should not lead us to ignore the nuclear danger, which will continue to threaten the survival of mankind until nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated. The views of experts around the world continue to remind us that the weapons in the arsenals

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of the two super-Powers are sufficient to destroy the world several times over. Therefore, even if nuclear weapons in States are reduced in a drastic fashion or cut back by 50 per cent, as announced in the case of the strategic weapons of the two super-Powers, would our society feel any more secure? There can be no illusion about this, because the answer to the question does not lend itself to simple arithmetical calculations, given the fact that there is no semi-security where nuclear weapons are concerned. The situation is all the more disturbing because the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons continues apace; indeed, it is threatening to spread to outer space.

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After decades of laborious attempts, we have no doubt made some progress in preparing the way for multilateral disarmament, but we must recognize without complacency that the progress made and the unduly slow rate at which the various stages have been reached is far from meeting the expectations of our peoples or their real security needs. We acknowledge that disarmament is by no means an easy undertaking and that it has become all the more complex now that nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons - not to mention the arms race in outer space - all require urgent and simultaneous solutions.

My delegation would like now to express its views on a number of specific agenda items. In so doing, we would hasten to make it clear that our selective approach in no way reflects any lack of concern about the other items - far from it. But in all objectivity it must be recognized that it is not possible to consider everything within such a limited space of time. Moreover, after the many statements made over so many years, on the same subjects, we would inevitably fall into tiresome repetition were we to do so.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to state that as far as chemical weapons are concerned, it fully subscribes to any proposal aimed at achieving the objectives of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, to which my country is a party, with a view to banning and ultimately eliminating chemical weapons from the arsenals of all States. While welcoming the plan to hold a conference on the subject in Paris next January, my delegation ventures to hope that the deliberations will provide the necessary political momentum to accelerate and complete the current multilateral negotiations.

Much has been said with regard to the vital need to halt nuclear tests. We, for our part, consider that in the last analysis the halting of such tests is an essential step if we are to curb and halt the arms race. In this respect, we welcome the proposal announced by the Soviet Union to decree an unlimited

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moratorium, or a moratorium or an agreed period, on this question. The proposal deserves consideration in the clear interests of the security of all. For our part, we have always argued that efforts to prevent the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons should go hand in hand with efforts to stop nuclear tests. In the same vein, my delegation, which has always reaffirmed its support in principle for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, will continue to call for the denuclearization of Africa. We are aware of the fact that South Africa's very sophisticated nuclear activities are not likely to facilitate our work. Members of the international community, particularly countries which have made a more or less direct contribution to South Africa's nuclear capability, are duty bound to assist African countries to achieve their objective. In this regard, we feel that the Security Council should without delay take the necessary measures as recommended by the Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries at their meeting held in Harare in 1986. This recommendation was renewed by the ministers of foreign affairs of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Nicosia last September.

In the same context, we would urge that implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace be considered without further delay. The prospects of settling the issues that had previously been invoked as obstacles to the holding of the Colombo Conference should now make it possible to make firm commitments to hold the Conference and set the date for it. In this respect, we would join the urgent appeals made in this Committee again this year by a large number of delegations.

The detestable cases that have come to light recently of the dumping of nuclear and industrial waste on the territory of developing countries are undermining the steady and costly efforts that are being made by the international community to protect the environment and are threatening the security of entire

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populations. Appropriate steps should be taken at the national and international levels to ban such practices.

We welcome the speed with which international organizations have responded to the concerns of African countries and made world public opinion aware of this matter. It is to be hoped that official circles known for their interest in and commitment to the cause of safeguarding and protecting the environment will react positively to resolution CM/RES.1153 (XLVIII) which the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted at its session held at Addis Ababa in May 1988.

As I announced at the outset, my delegation will confine itself to a number of specific matters. To a certain extent, the concerns which we have voiced and reiterated today might appear to relate only to a limited number of geographical areas, that is, the third world in general and Africa more specifically, but, members of the Committee will agree that inasmuch as security is indivisible, the environment has no frontiers, and our nations are interdependent, the aspirations to peace and security cannot be different from one hemisphere to the other.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): First, I should like to note with satisfaction that this year the First Committee is carrying out its work in an extremely favourable atmosphere. The businesslike and non-confrontational nature of the discussions offers good opportunities for reaching generally acceptable solutions. We regard this as a reflection of the positive changes in the international situation, which is characterized by a trend towards the intensification and expansion of the multilateral political dialogue. This dialogue has already made it possible to ward off the threat of war through the joint efforts of States to implement the potential of the new political thinking. It is now important to consolidate those

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favourable changes and, first and foremost, to give the unfolding disarmament process a continuous and progressive character.

I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that at the recent meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty which took place in Budapest, readiness was expressed to engage in dialogue with all States' political and social forces, in the interests of the strengthening of peace, and of disarmament - first and foremost nuclear disarmament; the establishment of broad and mutually profitable co-operation on a basis of equality; respect for independence and sovereignty; non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, and all other universally recognized norms and principles of international law. Particular attention was devoted at the meeting to questions of strengthening peace and co-operation in Europe, based on the inviolability of borders and respect for existing territorial political realities.

At the meeting here this morning, the representative of the Hungarian People's Republic, Ambassador Esztergalyos, as a representative of the country in which the meeting took place, gave detailed information about it. The major significance of the recently concluded meeting is that it promoted a further intensification of co-ordination of the foreign policy activities of those States, and their joint efforts to strengthen the positive tendencies which have been noted in international relations and to ensure a genuine shift towards the consolidation of peace, the implementation of disarmament and the establishment of broad co-operation.

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To achieve the objective of increased security through disarmament, joint efforts of the entire international community are needed, as well as an internationalization of action and intensification of the work of all the instruments of multilateral diplomacy. Here a special role must be played by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, which is a unique multilateral forum for negotiations on a wide range of arms limitation and disarmament issues. States from all continents, with different social and economic systems, members of military and political alliances, non-aligned and neutral countries, all nuclear Powers, as well as non-nuclear States, participate on an equal basis in the work of the Conference.

The Conference fulfils all the conditions needed to translate the exchange of opinions into the elaboration of responsible decisions on its agenda items. The work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons demonstrates this clearly. During the last two or three years this negotiating area - the only one so far in the work of the Conference - has witnessed a genuine breakthrough towards drafting a convention on the general, complete and strictly verifiable ban on, and destruction of, chemical weapons and their production base. Definite progress was also made during the work of the Conference session in 1988. This was reflected in the agreement reached with regard to new provisions of the projected convention and in the fact that conditions were created for resolving a whole set of issues.

I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to note that this progress was, to a great extent, made possible by the highly skilled leadership of the Ad Hoc Committee by the representative of the People's Republic of Poland, Mr. B. Sujka. Great efforts were made to bring the position of the negotiators closer by the group co-ordinators, Mr. Cima of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Macedo of Mexico and Mr. Numata of Japan.

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Nevertheless, several problems standing in the way of concluding the convention remain outstanding or not fully resolved.

First of all, I should like to dwell on the problem of preventing the production of chemical weapons as part of the activities not banned by the convention. I refer to article VI. The elaboration of this article is a complicated matter, for objective reasons, since, in addition to excluding the production of chemical weapons, it is necessary to provide for conditions which would not obstruct or hamper activities in the field of chemistry which are not banned by the convention. In the course of the 1988 session, this problem was discussed thoroughly at the negotiations. This, in our view, creates fairly good preconditions for finding an early solution. Of course, this will require an effort on the part of all the negotiators and calls for a shared desire to reach agreement on article VI, particularly since this article bears directly on the interests of chemical weapon States and also on all States which have a developed chemical industry.

Another outstanding problem is that of ensuring the security of parties to the convention during the so-called transition period - that is, during the time allocated for the destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles and production facilities. It gives me the greatest satisfaction to note that at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly, the French President, Mr. Mitterrand, has stated that there has been an encouraging development in the position of his country regarding the renunciation of any possibilities of chemical weapons production as soon as the convention comes into force. It appears that the problem of ensuring the security of the parties to the convention during the transition period can be resolved on the basis of the approach which has been adopted by France: that is, immediately after the coming into the force of the

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convention, all chemical weapon production facilities should be closed down and their stockpiles subjected to international verification until they have been destroyed.

When we were still at an early stage of working out the convention to ban and destroy chemical weapons, a considerable number of sceptics asserted that it was impossible to resolve the verification problem in order to ensure a ban on chemical weapons. This is indeed a complex problem. However, I believe that it is no exaggeration to say that at present the problem has been largely resolved. What is the basis for that statement?

First of all, for the most part, agreement has been reached on provisions involving that aspect of the problem involving so-called systematic inspections - that is, inspection of declared activities, such as declared chemical weapons storage facilities, declared production facilities, etc.

Secondly, at the end of the summer session the Conference on Disarmament reached agreement on guidelines for conducting the so-called trial inspections at chemical industry plants. It is envisaged that States, including States not direct Parties to the negotiations, will conduct such trial inspections at their chemical industry plants, with each participant in the experiment designating one plant and then reporting the results. At a later stage, international experts will sum up these results and at those same plants trial inspections will be carried out, this time by international inspectors. The objective of these trial inspections is to test the effectiveness of the provisions which have already been elaborated in the negotiations and, if the need arises, on the basis of those trial inspections, to fine-tune these provisions. It would be highly desirable for a maximum number of States to take part in that experiment, including those which are not participants in the Conference on Disarmament.

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Thirdly, in principle agreement has also been reached on how to deal with the problem which for a long time has been a stumbling block: I refer here to challenge inspections. Agreement in principle has been reached that these inspections should be mandatory and expeditious. These inspections may be conducted at any point which gives rise to suspicion of a violation of the convention. They are designed to restrain potential offenders, to allow for the exposure of activities banned under the convention. It is true that no definitive solution has yet been obtained for that aspect of the challenge inspection problem which relates to confidentiality of the information obtained by inspectors and to preventing leaks of State, military or commercial secrets.

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A number of other questions which require further work in the negotiations still remain. It is necessary to conclude the preparation of definitions (Article 2) as well as provisions relating to assistance to States which may become victims of chemical attack, articles on co-operation in the peaceful development of chemistry, and the so-called final provisions of the draft convention.

Speeding up the elaboration of the convention would undoubtedly promote an atmosphere of greater confidence. This would be facilitated by an exchange of data on military chemical potentials which might take place before the signing of the convention. The first question which arises in that context - and which is a question of practical importance in the negotiations - is that of declaring the fact of possession of chemical weapons. So far, only two States, the Soviet Union and the United States, have made such declarations.

Clearly, it is also important to achieve clarity with regard to the size of stockpiles of chemical weapon States. So far only one State, the Soviet Union, has announced such data. Obtaining such information is important both for strengthening confidence and for the practical implementation of the convention.

We believe that the General Assembly can give further impetus to the negotiations on banning chemical weapons by calling on the Conference on Disarmament to intensify them and to conclude an early elaboration of the convention. We believe that it would be of significance to adopt such a resolution by consensus.

We are concerned by the fact of the use of chemical weapons, and by their vertical and horizontal proliferation.

The conclusion of a convention is the most radical and effective way of resolving the entire set of problems relating to chemical weapons, including their non-use and non-proliferation. At the same time it is evident that interim measures could also be important.

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The Soviet Union is in favour of strengthening the 1925 Geneva Protocol in every possible way. This is the basis for our stated positive attitude to the proposal to convene an international conference on the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We believe that such a conference would help speed up and conclude work on the convention to ban and destroy chemical weapons.

We approve of the results of the work of the group of consultants appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General who met for their first session last August to investigate cases of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, and we believe it is important for that group to conclude its work successfully.

The elaboration of a comprehensive and complete nuclear-test-ban treaty is another most important area in curbing the arms race. In a situation where the first steps are being taken in actual nuclear disarmament, the achievement of that goal is becoming even more urgent as a measure that will help accelerate the process of ridding the planet of nuclear weapons, erect a strong barrier to their qualitative improvement, and consolidate the non-proliferation régime.

Today, following many years of stagnation, some movement is visible in the banning of nuclear testing.

Progress is being made at the bilateral Soviet-United States full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing which should lead to the limitation and, ultimately, the complete cessation of nuclear testing. The successful joint verification experiment has opened the way to the ratification of the threshold Treaties of 1974 and 1976. The next step would be to limit further the yield and the number of tests.

Naturally, the bilateral efforts of the Soviet Union and the United States, no matter how important they may be, cannot provide a final solution to the problem of testing. Active participation by the entire international community is needed to

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ensure a comprehensive ban. For this reason, we believe it is imperative to begin practical multilateral talks at the Conference on Disarmament.

The Soviet Union is ready for a radical solution to the test ban problem. However, in view of the actual situation and the positions of other nuclear Powers, first of all of the United States, we do not object to resolving it on a stage-by-stage basis. We should perhaps begin by discussing in practical terms the establishment of an appropriate system to verify compliance with a future comprehensive agreement. Some progress was achieved in that area. In particular, the recent Soviet-United States experiments in Nevada and near Semipalatinsk demonstrated again that technical issues relating to verification can be resolved. The potential of multilateral verification is evident even now in the existence of global seismic monitoring and an international system to monitor radiation safety using space communications. Naturally, on-site inspections will also be used. All of these measures will help to make a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty completely verifiable.

At the end of the summer session of the Conference on Disarmament there were encouraging signs that it might be possible to break the procedural deadlock in establishing a working body on nuclear testing on the basis of a compromise draft mandate put forward by the delegation of Czechoslovakia (CD/863). We hope that by the beginning of the 1989 session the Conference will be able to set up an appropriate working body.

The Soviet Union considers that a special group of scientific experts should also be established to provide the Conference with substantiated and co-ordinated recommendations on the structure and functions of a system to verify compliance with a nuclear-weapon-test-ban agreement. We believe it is extremely important that the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly should reiterate its firm support for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

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Internationalized efforts are needed to resolve the whole complex of problems involved in nuclear disarmament and the prevention a nuclear war. Despite our satisfaction at the conclusion of the Soviet-United States INF Treaty and the importance of the projected Soviet-United States treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons in the context of compliance with the ABM Treaty, we must not forget that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and reliable guarantees of their non-re-emergence can be ensured only on a multilateral basis.

One of the priorities of the international community is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Conference on Disarmament has accumulated a significant reserve of ideas and initiatives which could serve as the basis for negotiations on the subject. These include a Soviet proposal to set up an international system to monitor the non-deployment of any weapons in outer space, which provides for an international space inspectorate.

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

The Conference's Ad Hoc Committee has done a great deal of work over four years in studying the problems of preventing the arms race in outer space. The time has come to move from consideration of the issue to finding its practical solution.. The time has come for the Conference to begin acting in full compliance with its negotiating mandate, in particular since appropriate resolutions for doing so have been adopted by the General Assembly.

The Soviet Union has made a proposal regarding the establishment of an international co-operation centre for the peaceful exploration and use of outer space based on the Krasnoyarsk radar. Such a centre could later be included in the system of a world space organization whose establishment is being proposed by the Soviet Union.

In its statement of 27 October this year, the Soviet Government expressed readiness to discuss with the United States and other interested States at the expert level specific measures that would allow for the transformation of that radar station into such a centre.

Strict and unswerving compliance by all with existing international legal obligations is essential if the arms race in outer space is to be prevented. The Soviet Union supports a unanimous call by the General Assembly to begin without delay multilateral negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament to prevent an arms race in space, to comply with existing international treaties and agreements in that area and to see to it that outer space is used only for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind.

While continuing to search for new areas of agreement it is important at the same time to consolidate our accomplishments and to comply unswervingly with existing arms control agreements. An important role here must be played by the forthcoming conferences to review treaties elaborated in the past as a result of multilateral negotiations.

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First and foremost, this applies to the non-proliferation Treaty, whose twentieth anniversary we mark this year. We attach the greatest significance to the successful holding in 1990 of the Fourth Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty which should make a tangible contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation régime.

We also support the proposal for the holding in 1989 of a third conference to review the Treaty on the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear weapons on the seabed and the ocean floor.

The Soviet Union attaches great importance to the participation of all countries in confidence-building measures and the development of international co-operation within the framework of the Convention to ban bacteriological and toxin weapons. For our part, we are providing appropriate information. It would be important today to take steps to intensify the efforts of scientists and scientific organizations in the elaboration of recommendations for the third conference to review the Convention.

Mr. Chairman, at the beginning of my statement I noted the positive spirit of businesslike co-operation prevailing in the First Committee. I wish to assure you, Sir, that the Soviet delegation intends to continue to support your efforts to strengthen that favourable atmosphere and will co-operate most closely with other delegations in seeking maximum effectiveness in the work of the Committee.

U GYI (Burma): Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time I am speaking here I hope that I am not too late to offer my delegation's felicitations to you on your able guidance of the work of the First Committee. Your many years of experience in disarmament affairs and your commitment to its cause are having a positive effect at this session.

(U Gyi, Burma)

The highlight of this year's United Nations endeavours on disarmament was the convening of the special session of the General Assembly. The high-level representation at the special session demonstrated the concern and priority given by Governments to issues that affect the interests of all nations. High hopes were placed on the special session to give much-needed impetus to furthering the international community's efforts on disarmament which would appropriately reflect current developments and trends, and to reaffirm the validity of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The reality of the situation was that the special session was unable to reach a consensus on the Final Document. Despite that outcome, the deliberations of the special session can be recognized as having served a useful purpose in identifying common approaches on important issues as well as in underlining the differences in perceptions of others.

The special session also served to show that disarmament constitutes the crucial element in the attainment of international security and the importance of the United Nations as the universal forum for harmonizing global action for the achievement of these common ends. It also demonstrated that differences in approaches to disarmament issues, whether general or specific, reflect the differences in security perceptions of States.

Nuclear weapons pose serious problems with regard to reconciling the security interests of the nuclear-weapon States and those of the world at large, and when national policies predicate no effective constraints on the use of nuclear weapons they pose serious challenges to international security at large.

The causes of the arms race are varied and complex and they are as much political as military in nature. It may be an oversimplification to say, as is often said, that nations arm themselves because they mistrust each other and to overlook the creation of mistrust as a result of armaments. Such a subjective

(U Gyi, Burma)

approach gives grounds for the interpretation that the arms race is a consequence and not a contributory factor to tensions and conflicts that have prevailed around the world in the last 40 years.

However, it is a fact of our international life that the arms race adversely affects all aspects of international relations, hinders the practical implementation of the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter and creates obstacles to improving relations between States.

(U Gyi, Burma)

As a result of the efforts of nations and peoples, changes in the international climate are providing opportunities for accommodation and compromise and positive trends are now emerging in inter-State relations. Significant developments have been noticeable in the perceptions, attitudes and policies of States, which are now having favourable influences. The decision of the two super-Powers to conduct their relations through co-operation and dialogue is beginning to have tangible results, and this is noticeable also in the field of disarmament.

The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - constitutes the first nuclear disarmament measure and its significance can be seen beyond the military importance of the number of weapons that are being reduced as compared with the vast number of nuclear weapons still remaining in the arsenals of the two super-Powers, for perceptions of security are political also and the fact that nuclear disarmament has become a reality is bound to create mutual confidence, which in turn could have a positive effect on international security. The Treaty is important also as a means for paving the way to further substantial measures relating to strategic nuclear disarmament. Negotiations are now in process for reducing their strategic arsenals by 50 per cent.

Issues relating to nuclear disarmament have been paramount on the United Nations agenda and multilateral deliberations have yielded an abundance of proposals and ideas, which give much insight into how the international community could effectively address these matters. It appears that no meaningful work on nuclear disarmament can be accomplished in the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum, until procedural hurdles relating to the three

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agenda items dealing with nuclear issues can be overcome. If the concerns of the international community are to be addressed in a comprehensive manner, it is imperative for the Conference on Disarmament to be allowed to commence work on these issues within an appropriate procedural format.

There is no reason to harbour doubts that the INF Treaty will be fully implemented in good faith by both parties. The concern that arises is that the objectives of that Treaty should not be negated by the continued build-up of arms in other areas of nuclear weaponry.

While it has been recognized that the most effective means of preventing a nuclear war is through nuclear disarmament, during the period leading towards the attainment of that goal the adoption of legal and political measures relating to nuclear weapons could also facilitate the process of strengthening international security and reducing the risks of a nuclear war.

The adoption of such measures becomes particularly significant when looked at from the perspectives of strengthening the existing principles of international law, prohibiting the use of certain kinds of weapons before their reduction and elimination are possible and, above all, enhancing global security through the rule of law.

In the past, proposals along those lines have been made in the United Nations and overwhelmingly endorsed by a majority of delegations. They relate to the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and to a convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons, which are but the extension of the principles of the non-use of force prescribed in the United Nations Charter.

There is now a broader dimension in the interpretation of international security that cannot only be defined in military terms but would also encompass the interrelationship of economic, social and political concepts. This broader

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interpretation of international security has a special bearing on the countries of the third world, a majority of which are at the developing stage.

Much has been said about the peace that has been maintained through reliance on nuclear weapons and their deterrent effect on wars of a global nature, which twice in this century have overwhelmed entire nations and peoples. However, the reality of the situation is that such notions of peace generally fail to take account of wars and conflicts of a regional character that have brought death and destruction to millions of people. At the same time, such doctrines take little account of the relevance of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, on which the hopes of mankind are placed.

Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction on the highest imaginable scale. However, research in arms technology has spawned conventional weapons with destructive capabilities that vie with weapons of mass destruction. The proposals for controlling the development of conventional-weapons technology also need serious consideration. The urgency of dealing with this issue can be seen in the light of the enormous toll in lives and sufferings brought about by conventional weapons in regional conflicts.

The Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held in August and September 1987, has given further importance to disarmament as an objective for the creation of conditions favourable to the economic and social well-being of peoples.

The colossal sums spent on armaments are hindering the prospects for development and equitable economic co-operation, as well as for finding solutions to other economic and social problems. Disarmament would also make it possible to narrow the gap between nations as regards social and economic disparities by helping to overcome conditions of underdevelopment and promoting more equitable international economic relations. Moreover, resources spent on the arms race

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could be released through disarmament for the solution of common global problems of this over-populated world, such as the protection of the Earth from environmental degradation, the securing of adequate food supplies and the finding of alternative sources of energy. There is therefore a compelling need to elaborate an action-oriented programme to further the consensus reached by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

The scenario on the banning of nuclear tests remains basically unchanged, although there have been variations in nuances and perceptions.

(U Gyi, Burma)

Consideration of the test-ban issue is required in the light of the bilateral negotiations that are being undertaken by the two super-Powers for ratification of the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and their expressed intention progressively to lower the threshold, with the ultimate objective of banning all nuclear tests. The international community is concerned at the indefinite keeping of the door ajar pending achievement of a comprehensive test ban, for thereby the technological momentum of the nuclear arms race is being maintained through continued nuclear testing.

Such a situation would run counter to the bilateral efforts that are being made towards the reduction of strategic nuclear arms. At the same time, concern should also be expressed with regard to the situation prevailing in the Conference on Disarmament, where difficulties are being encountered in efforts to initiate the process of negotiation on a comprehensive test ban.

The Six-Nation Initiative on multilateral verification under the United Nations system is most opportune and there has now emerged a consensus on the principles of verification. This was particularly noticeable in the progress in the work in the Disarmament Commission this year. International verification requires an organized forum that is intergovernmental and at the same time independent, and the United Nations fulfils these requirements. The Organization's participation in verification procedures under an established system could effectively contribute to confidence in disarmament agreements and to the assurance of compliance, and could create confidence among States, thereby enhancing its role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation therefore supports the initiatives that are being taken to call for a study by a group of experts under the authority of the Secretary-General.

(U Gyi, Burma)

We would be remiss if we did not mention the issue of chemical weapons. There have been further developments this year with regard to the drafting of a convention on the subject in the Conference on Disarmament, a fact which lends credibility to it as a negotiating body. From what we can read in the report of the Conference, the complex nature of chemical weapons creates obvious difficulties in the elaboration of verification procedures. A comprehensive banning of chemical weapons as a further measure to the Geneva Protocol is of crucial importance, for it constitutes the total banning of these weapons of mass destruction, which are indiscriminate and extremely inhumane in their effects. The opportunity should not be missed to reach an agreement before political will deteriorates as a result of the integration of new types of chemical weapons into the strategic arsenals of States.

We are now living in a climate of cautious optimism. Radical transformations are taking place in international affairs, and concepts of the past that stood in the way of better understanding are now giving way to new ideas and thoughts which offer possibilities of breaking the impasse on many issues. In the affairs of States, particularly in this Organization, the route that must be traversed from the realm of thought to that of action is generally long and arduous. This is particularly true in matters concerning disarmament, touching as it does upon the vital security interests of States. We cannot by any stretch of the imagination say that the United Nations is like the tower of Babel, but many voices must be heard in many rooms, as the process of decision-making requires consensus by all and the expressed opinions of many.

Mr. COVARRUBIAS (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, it is a great pleasure for my delegation to see you presiding over the work of this Committee. We know how experienced and familiar you are with this subject, and this will lend efficiency and flexibility to the Committee's discussions.

We are beginning our work in a climate very different from that which prevailed during previous sessions. During our debate we have observed the existence of a climate of optimism in this Committee. We think that this is justified, given the recent successes and the promising results achieved in the negotiations carried out by the two super-Powers; in the agreement for the withdrawal of occupying troops from Afghanistan; in the conversations on Namibia and Kampuchea; as well as the gratifying honour conferred on the United Nations peace and security forces, which were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1988.

This is cause for satisfaction, since we can now show the international community valuable results which represent a real and direct contribution to the maintenance of international peace, security and justice.

However, we should not allow ourselves to be swept away by excessive optimism, since if we look at these successes carefully, we will see that they have little or nothing to do with multilateral activities or negotiations. Indeed, the recent third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament proved incapable of achieving or producing a final document. This gave rise to considerable frustration in broad sectors of the international community.

We think we should take advantage of this optimism, coming as it does at the end of a decade characterized by stalemate and, indeed, reversals in almost all areas of disarmament. This is perhaps a unique opportunity to begin the long-awaited rationalization of the work of the Committee, befitting the climate in which our activities are now taking place.

(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

We would re-emphasize the urgent need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, since the United Nations is the only forum and instrument in which each and every one of its Member States can participate. It is a body in which they have had a direct interest since the time that mankind was first exposed to the horror of an atomic confrontation and the possibility of the extermination of all mankind.

It is our desire and concern that the resurgence of bilateralism which we are so satisfied to note should be accompanied by new momentum in multilateral negotiations, which represent the total interest of members of the international community as a whole, without discrimination or odious exceptions.

I should now like to refer to a number of agenda items which are of particular concern to my country.

(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

First of all, as we have already said, the nuclear threat is given priority consideration in the field of disarmament, because of its very nature and the risks of total destruction that it entails.

The nuclear arms race has been affected over the years by the concept of strategic deterrence. It is our hope that there will be speedy developments in this area, since, as we all know, the need to preserve the capacity to exact reprisals is brandished as a valid argument for increasing the quality and the quantity of weapons. As a result, the most developed countries find themselves swept along in a frenzied competition, in both the qualitative and the quantitative sphere. My country openly supported the negotiations by the two major Powers that culminated in the signing in Washington in December last year of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. Similarly, we support the current negotiations designed to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. This new approach, an approach of international co-operation, should strengthen trust at the world and regional levels and foster practical steps towards the limitation of armaments, thereby reducing the risks of war and increasing international security.

With regard to disarmament, it is interesting that, in addition to the agreements obtained in the area of nuclear weapons, substantive bilateral negotiations are taking place between the major military Powers with respect to space weaponry and nuclear test explosions. Similarly, at the multilateral level, negotiations have been under way to reduce the differences between those Powers, thus gradually channelling the process towards some kind of agreement on an extensive chemical-weapons convention.

We firmly believe that everything that can be done between the two largest military alliances in the field of disarmament to achieve stability in conventional

(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

weapons at lower force levels and expand confidence- and security-building measures will serve as examples to be followed by the other countries.

The conventional arms race is also of deep concern to us. It particularly affects the nuclear-weapon countries, which are unable to use nuclear weapons because of their devastating consequences. That has led those countries to use technological progress to improve conventional weapons; they have developed a complete range of highly efficient but extremely costly armaments, which have a great impact on the pace, direction and cost of the current arms race.

There is no doubt that the major military Powers are the most involved in the arms race and, hence, the greatest technological advances in nuclear and conventional weaponry result from that competition. This spreads to the other developed countries first, and then to the less developed countries.

The possibilities of moving towards disarmament are negatively affected by the qualitative and quantitative competition in the arms race. When it comes to planning for future conflicts, the development of the most effective military technology, capable of overcoming the most sophisticated weapons or counter-measures, is of decisive importance. That means that military technology becomes obsolete at an unusual speed. For that reason, we feel that if real and practical progress is to be made in terms of disarmament, greater stress should be placed on concrete measures to curb the qualitative aspect of the arms race.

We believe it is indispensable to direct the major efforts towards stopping the qualitative arms race in conventional weapons. To that end, activities should be pursued within a framework that can ensure security for States, without disregarding the right of States to collective self-defence, a principle enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It would be illusory to hope that countries would reduce their armaments without the prior establishment of a climate of security and mutual trust - the sine qua non for any disarmament negotiations.

(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

In that connection, my country is convinced that the measures I have outlined, both in the nuclear and in the conventional disarmament spheres, can make a considerable, effective contribution to improving international relations and can become a significant complement to multilateral efforts aimed at achieving in due time the long-sought goal of general and complete disarmament.

We are convinced also that the United Nations must play an important role in that domain, since it is the tool that the international community deliberately created to deal with questions of international peace and security that could affect it.

Chile firmly supports all efforts to achieve disarmament and peace. We believe that in this regard the regional centres are an important factor for raising awareness of the need and the determination to attain for our peoples that precious goal of understanding, security and development.

The United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament resulted from the excellent initiative of and negotiations led by Nigeria, which were hailed by all the countries of the third world, not merely as a totally justified investment by the international community but also as a vital requirement to enable all Member States to take part on an equal footing in the consideration of disarmament matters.

While we firmly support the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, we cannot always take satisfaction in the results. For example, the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament was established with the specific aim of training officials in, and familiarizing them with, disarmament matters - and particularly officials from the developing countries. With the passage of time, this has become distorted and, at present, proportionately more fellows from developed countries than from the countries of our region are participating. We think that this situation must be quickly corrected, since it

(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

distorts the spirit and letter of the resolution that gave rise to the programme in 1978.

Finally, we express again our wholehearted support for the principles and purposes of the United Nations. The Organization's primary goal is to maintain international peace and security in order to ensure the progress and well-being of mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Jordan, who wishes to make a statement on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. OBEIDAT (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset, I wish to state that I am speaking in my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group.

The root of the problem is that Israel is an occupying State that has occupied Arab territories since 1967 and continued to deny the Palestinian people their legitimate rights. Israel refuses to be bound by United Nations resolutions and does not implement them. Accordingly, any Israeli claims which contradict the reality of this situation are refuted by the facts.

I repeat: Israel is an occupying State that uses every oppressive means at hand to repress the will of the Palestinian people. The most telling proof of this is its military oppression of the defenceless, unarmed Palestinian people in an attempt to crush their uprising.

(Mr. Obaidat, Jordan)

All Committee members are aware that Israeli soldiers break the bones of Arab youths in Palestine.

I do not want to go into statistics on Israel's build-up of weapons, but to address the situation prevailing now. I would observe that Israel, which claims to be innocent, is militarily the most powerful State in the region. Its leaders always state that Israel's arm is the strongest in the region. The Israelis strike whenever they want and wherever they want, as they struck at the peaceful Iraqi nuclear reactor. As responsible Israeli officials have stated, their reach extends to the extremities of the Arab Maghreb and of the Middle East region. They are developing their weaponry; proof of that is the missile they call Ariha. They also use illegal and prohibited weapons. They were the first to use napalm, which is internationally prohibited in the region. The Zionist entity also uses cluster bombs in Lebanon. Israel also has a record of developing nuclear weapons, and that started in 1958. It has its nuclear reactors and its stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Its nuclear piracy is well known to all, as is its theft of the technologies and instruments that support its nuclear capability. In this it was exposed by some of its agents who became dissidents.

It is well known to all that Israel has so far refused to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It still refuses to subject its nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Energy Atomic Agency. It still refuses to indicate clearly that it does not possess nuclear weapons or that it has not used them at all. On the contrary, it is seriously collaborating with the racist régime, which is similar to it, in South Africa. If Israel claims the contrary, why does it not adhere to international instruments relating to nuclear weapons? Israel, through its conduct, has brought the nuclear arms race into the area and thus threatened the peace, security and stability of the region as well as of Africa and the world as a whole.

(Mr. Obaidat, Jordan)

The path to peace and stability in the region is clear: it is through adhering to international instruments, responding to calls to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and allowing the Palestinian Arab people to exercise their legitimate rights.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no other speakers in the general debate, I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind speakers that the Committee will follow the procedure that I outlined at a previous meeting.

Mr. MOREL (France) (interpretation from French): This morning the representative of Fiji saw fit to criticize France with regard to the underground nuclear tests it is conducting on its territory in Polynesia. My delegation wishes to recall once again, without in the least engaging in polemics with a country with which France enjoys relations of friendship and co-operation, that such a charge is totally unsupported by scientific evidence and is simply contrary to the facts.

The French underground nuclear tests are detrimental neither to the interests of the States in the region nor to the health of the populations in the area, nor to the environment. Studies conducted on the spot by several national and international commissions have demonstrated this at ample length.

Mr. SAWA (Fiji): I wish to point out that if the representative of France found part of our statement unacceptable the least he could do is recognize the Treaty of Rarotonga, which has direct reference to the nuclear testing in the Pacific, and accede to and ratify it.

Mr. MOREL (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to say that, as far as the Treaty of Rarotonga is concerned, my country's position is well known, and I presented it at length in my statement on 20 October in the First Committee.

Mr. SAVUA (Fiji): I thank the representative of France for his comments. I wish to point out that, despite these comments, the points we have made in our statements are valid in the context of our region and very relevant.

Mr. MOHAMMAD (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): The representative of Jordan spoke on behalf of the Arab Group. We wish to add a few points to what he has said.

Through the casting of aspersions, the use of lying and deviousness, the representative of the Zionist entity has been trying to distract the attention of the international community from the fact that he represents an entity that stands out because of its policies of aggression, expansionism, acts of repression and terrorism, to which must be added denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arab people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State on its own soil.

(Mr. Mohammad, Iraq)

The Zionist entity has the longest record of violating international conventions, treaties and international law. This includes, inter alia, the repeated use of toxic gases and other prohibited weapons, such as phosphorous weapons and cluster bombs.

The gratification and joy evinced by the Zionist representative at the cessation of hostilities between Iraq and Iran is the acme of political hypocrisy. He does know, as the whole world knows, that weaponry supplied by Israel to one of the parties to the conflict had one aim: to prolong that war. He is also aware of the statements by Itzhak Rabin and others of the Zionist entity lamenting the cessation of hostilities and expressing deep disappointment and grave concern at the ending of that war.

For a long time now Israel has been in possession of various types of missiles, including the medium-range Jericho. This has not perturbed anyone. Today, however, Israel and some of its friends are vehemently denouncing the success of other States in the area in stepping up their defensive capabilities by developing certain types of missiles. Why, may we ask? Does the Zionist entity want to go on practising unopposed its policy of intimidation, blackmail and hegemonism by being the sole possessor of such missiles? By what right does the Zionist entity deny to others what it is allowed to possess? The Zionist entity possesses the largest arsenal of weapons in the Middle East, including nuclear and chemical weapons. Consequently, it bears full responsibility for the arms race in the area.

We are not surprised by the statement made by the Zionist representative about Iraq and his unacceptable attempts to interfere in our internal affairs. We know very well, as others do, that the vociferous campaign against Iraq has been spewed and orchestrated by Zionism and the Zionist lobby. The campaign was then echoed by Teheran and certain Western capitals. All this strident declamation, however,

(Mr. Mohammad, Iraq)

bespeaks the deep frustration felt by all who joined in the uproar at the determined and valiant stand of the Iraqi people in defence of their soil, their culture and their achievements and their success in beating back and vanquishing aggression. The contrived Zionist orchestrated ruction against Iraq reminds us of the virulent media campaign waged by Zionism in preparation for its act of aggression against the peaceful Iraqi nuclear installations. Today they are preparing for a new act of aggression - but they must bear in mind that any hostile act against Iraq will not go unpunished.

Mr. AL-AHMED (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): Members have listened to the intervention of the representative of Israel concerning the acquisition by Saudi Arabia of certain defensive weapons. The representative of Israel should be the last one to speak on that subject. The history of the region is well known, as is the history of Israeli aggression against Arab countries. The end results of that aggression are there, for all to see.

Saudi Arabia would never have needed to acquire defensive weapons had it not been for the presence of certain elements that would be quick to threaten the security of others and commit aggression against them, once those others were seen as incapable of an appropriate response.

Israel, and all those who would commit acts of aggression against others, should know that their acquisition of weaponry for the purposes of aggression will only increase tension and instability in the region and threaten its security. The Zionist representative and the Israeli authorities would do well to take into account the fact that it was the Zionist entity that started the arms race in the region. All those who would commit acts of aggression should know that Saudi Arabia, though peaceful, is capable of defending itself against the evil of others.

Mr. ARNOUSS (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The head of the Arab Group, the representative of Jordan, has replied to what was said in the statement by Israel. The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to state that chemical, napalm and cluster bombs have been used against Arab countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic. The survivors still bear the effects of napalm bombs and are still suffering from their injuries. My country has made its position very clear with respect to chemical weapons. We should like to remind members that it was Syria that submitted a draft resolution in 1974 condemning the use of napalm, which was adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 3255 B (XXIX).

With respect to satellites and missiles, I would like to quote the 25 July issue of the Israeli newspaper Ma'areev. That Israeli paper stated that Israel was developing a satellite for the purpose of spying purposes from outer space, one which is unique for its time. The article went on to state that the purposes behind the launching of the satellite, as they were explained to the Israeli public, were not related to use by the media but were to be used uniquely for spying purposes, a satellite which could be launched at very short notice.

(Mr. Arnouss, Syrian Arab Republic)

As for the collaboration between Israel and South Africa, I need only mention that last week the Special Committee against Apartheid adopted a separate report on the relation between Tel Aviv and Pretoria. In its introductory paragraphs the report states that Israel's arms sales to South Africa range from 1.26 billion to 1.68 billion Rands. This much is clear from the report on the relationship between Israel and South Africa.

Mr. ZIPPORI (Israel): As I indicated in exercise of the right of reply yesterday, I find it very distasteful to have to take the time of the Committee to reply to vituperative attacks the language and content of which really do not belong in the United Nations but in other forums, which we can imagine.

It is a practice in the United Nations - and I think in this Committee - to refer to countries by their title. I represent the State called Israel. I am very proud to be a Zionist. It is one of the first and most advanced of the liberation movements. A Zionist entity does not exist. The State of Israel exists. I do not talk about an Arab entity. I do not talk about an entity of sheiks or anything else. I talk about the States of Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and I believe that they should also speak only about States and call countries by their proper names.

As to the accusations that were launched here against Israel, this is not the Committee, the time or the place to go into them. These subjects are discussed at length in other Committees of the Assembly, and I do not think we should waste our time on them.

Iraq's example of keeping treaties, however, is something which we should all keep in mind. Iraq was the only country in over 50 years which violated the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and used poison gas in war, and later - in spite of their denial

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

of the fact, it has been proved - used it against their own citizens to put down an uprising of the Kurdish citizens of Iraq.

As I said, these are not subjects to be discussed here. It is to be hoped that the Committee can continue discussing disarmament matters without getting into the problems of the Middle East or of the relations between the various countries in the Middle East, which are irrelevant to the disarmament problems in the area.

If the Arab countries are worried about Israel's armaments or intentions, all they have to do is accept Israel's invitation to sit down and negotiate. We have done that with one Arab country with results which are very, very clear and very satisfactory. We are perfectly willing to do the same with every Arab country in the region, with those who are our neighbors and those even farther away. However, that is a practical and positive step and not the kind of rhetoric we have been hearing in the Committee lately.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.