



FIRST COMMITTEE
18th meeting
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at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: I welcome members to this annual observance of Disarmament Week. Ten years ago, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the international community unanimously decided that the day of the founding of the United Nations would begin a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament. So, we are today, for the tenth time, holding this special meeting.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to welcome to the Committee His Excellency Mr. Dragoslav Pejic, Vice-President of the General Assembly at its current session.

I also have the distinct honour and pleasure of welcoming the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. The Secretary-General has long been a courageous advocate of the strategies for peace that can build enduring collective security throughout the world. He has played a critical role in the alleviation of regional conflicts, one that has contributed so significantly to the new positive atmosphere in international relations.

The timely award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces reflects the universal awareness of the recognition of the crucial role the United Nations plays in promoting peace, security and disarmament. As the Secretary-General himself noted just a few days ago,

"This is a time of pride for the United Nations. We have witnessed a vindication of the concept of multilateralism."

The world is truly at a turning-point - in East-West relations, in the alleviation of regional conflicts, in the recovery of confidence in the United Nations itself - and our work should reflect this improved atmosphere in a positive

(The Chairman)

way. We should strive with more confidence than ever before to build the conditions for peace through more pragmatic and realistic approaches to disarmament.

The First Committee must show its determination to seek possibilities for the settlement of major issues in a number of areas such as the need for radical reductions in nuclear weapons, conventional-force reductions, a chemical weapons convention, the protection of the non-proliferation régime, limitation of testing, verification and compliance.

(The Chairman)

Result-oriented resolutions and decisions and a better use of the disarmament machinery cannot but improve the potential for United Nations accomplishments. In short, we have a responsibility to speak, to a greater degree than ever before, with one voice through consensus resolutions.

The tenth anniversary of Disarmament Week also provides us with an opportune moment for some deeper reflection on the nature of peace.

It is not likely that disarmament will come about because there are too many weapons. It is not likely that economic and social development will be accomplished because there is starvation. Stronger motivations are required to build the conditions for peace.

It seems to me that the development of this motivation will come from a greater recognition of what the "common ground" of our planet means. This past decade, especially, has revealed the physical, security, economic and social connections that increasingly affect modern life. We now say that the world is an "interdependent" place. That is, in fact, a very pragmatic analysis of the world. The power of nuclear weapons has made us all vulnerable to annihilation, so - logically - we must co-operate to reduce that threat. Economic systems, commodity prices, resource development in one part of the world are now critically affected by policies in other parts of the world.

In short, science and technology have made evident the integral relationships that dominate the components of modern life. The commonality of life everywhere is thus revealed. The earth is one place - subdivided, to be sure, into different nations, cultures and ideologies, yet increasingly seen to be perilously fragile or marvellously productive in ways that no one nation or society can control. The road map to survival is now clear: political, ideological or economic domination of one group by another must give way to a new range of cultural and societal

(The Chairman)

values to protect the common good of people who stand on "common ground".

Pragmatism forces co-operation.

That does not mean that the new path to collective security will be easily traversed. We all know the obstacles created by conflicting national positions. There is still too much mistrust. There is not yet enough reconciliation. Fears are still intermingled with hopes. Our vision does not yet sufficiently transcend national boundaries. We need to become more convinced that global strategies are essential to saving the planet.

None the less, it is undeniable that we have entered upon that new path. We ought to put our full energy into doing everything possible in order to enter the twenty-first century, now only 134 months away, with more hope, security and development for all. Meeting that challenge will lift up our work to give new hope to a world in change.

I now have the pleasure of calling on the Vice-President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Dragoslav Pejic, to address the First Committee.

Mr. PEJIC (Vice-President of the General Assembly): Permit me first of all, Sir, to convey to you and to the other members of the Committee the profound regret of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Dante Caputo, who is unable, for reasons beyond his control, to attend this important meeting of the First Committee in the traditional observance of Disarmament Week. He therefore asked me to speak on this solemn occasion. At the same time, let me assure you that I feel particularly happy and honoured to be able to address the Committee in my capacity as Vice-President of the General Assembly.

This is the tenth time since 1978 that we have had occasion to observe Disarmament Week. We are doing so in a propitious climate, since it seems that humanity may well have reached a turning-point in this most heavily armed of all ages. Never before has the nuclear age witnessed an agreement to eliminate an

(Mr. Pejic, Vice-President of
the General Assembly)

entire class of weapons systems. Seldom have disarmament negotiations prompted so many expectations as they do today. Even more than before, there is a ground swell of public concern for disarmament reaching across national boundaries and geographical frontiers. The world is becoming interconnected in more ways than ever before. No nation can any longer control its destiny in an international ethos where hazards in the oceans, outer space and the atmosphere must be forestalled in order to sustain life on Earth.

This is not the time to be complacent, however. It is the time to continue breaking the vicious circle of the accumulation of arms, insecurity, mutual fear and military rivalry. It is the time to replace the pursuit of unilateral security by seeking undiminished security for all. It is the time for devising ways of promoting security that do not use up valuable and irreplaceable resources. It is the time to perceive security as being challenged by both military and non-military threats - a perception which clearly lies beyond the means of any one country or even any group of countries to overcome. It is the time to transform the inevitability of interdependence into a promise of universal co-operation.

As the institutional embodiment of such co-operation, the United Nations carries a heavy responsibility. It is and must remain the centre-piece of internationalism, wherein bilateralism, regionalism and multilateralism can be complementary and mutually supportive in promoting the primary purpose of the United Nations: the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security. That this Organization has the potential and capacity to attain that objective is evidenced by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

There can be no long-term security, no enduring peace in a world where warfare is a permanent feature of life. The wide-ranging nature of modern warfare has put

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the General Assembly)

entire populations in jeopardy, disrupted food supplies, uprooted industrial infrastructures, imperilled ecosystems and forced many to flee in search of mere survival. The phenomenal death toll in these conflicts has claimed more than five times as many civilians as combatants. Immunity from the insecurity of recurrent conflicts and the right to live in peace are minimum entitlements which must be held as sacrosanct by the international Organization founded to save humanity from the scourge of war. The resolution of conflicts and conflict situations must become an integral part of the process of seeking security at lower levels of armaments and armed forces.

(Mr. Pejic, Vice-President
of the General Assembly)

I cannot emphasize too strongly the need for continued efforts to maintain the present course. Our main achievement so far is the creation of a significantly improved political climate - one that holds promise for further progress. But we must take care; all too easily the course could be reversed towards renewed mistrust and acrimony. However powerful the present feelings of hope and optimism, if we are unable to strengthen the foundation of the recent progress in disarmament efforts we may lose the present momentum, and what should have been a turning-point for the better might turn out to be just a temporary relief.

First of all, we must recognize the complementarity of the bilateral and multilateral disarmament efforts. The relationship between these two processes should be one characterized by mutual reinforcement, not by suspicion and rivalry.

We must also duly appreciate the different, but equally significant, roles of the deliberative disarmament bodies and the single multilateral negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament. By its very nature, general and complete disarmament as a universal objective is attainable only with the participation of all countries.

If I may be permitted to add a comment in my personal capacity as the representative of a non-aligned country, I would like to point out that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, from its inception in Belgrade in 1961, has placed disarmament at the forefront of its efforts, firmly believing that it offers the best way of strengthening international peace and security. We are therefore particularly pleased with the process that is taking place today. Yet I must add that, however welcome and noteworthy, this process cannot escape the fact that it is taking place in the shadow of worrisome, even alarming, international economic problems. International stability is inconceivable without economic progress and development, particularly of developing countries.

(Mr. Pejić, Vice-President
of the General Assembly)

Disarmament is never an easy task just waiting to be achieved. Even the most dedicated and carefully prepared attempts may not always reach the desired goals, as was the case at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, as often happens in life, a failure may sow the seeds of progress. I believe that during that session a narrowing of differences took place and that there emerged a more realistic approach to disarmament, which, although not reflected in an agreed concluding document, will significantly facilitate the solution of some of the current disarmament issues. This is an opportunity that the international community must not fail to grasp.

The United Nations is an indispensable tool in the work for disarmament, and its role in that endeavour should be constantly supported and strengthened. It is no accident that Disarmament Week and United Nations Day are celebrated together. Disarmament Week provides the opportunity for us all to rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of disarmament at progressively lower levels of armament and armed forces, which itself has, as its objective, the achievement of international peace and security.

In the world of today, as well as in the world of tomorrow, prestige will not be based on the force of arms, but rather - and increasingly so - on the readiness to meet the rightful expectations and needs of the entire international community.

The CHAIRMAN: It is now my pleasure to call upon the distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to address the Committee.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your very kind words.

The observance of Disarmament Week provides an occasion for all Member States to take stock of the current situation regarding arms limitation and disarmament. It invites fresh and serious reflection on the questions: What are the impediments to arresting and reversing the arms race, and how can those obstacles be overcome?

(The Secretary-General)

All through the 10 successive years during which Disarmament Week has been observed it has served as a disquieting reminder of the lack of progress in this most vital field. While disarmament negotiations at the multilateral level have remained stalled, nuclear and other arsenals have grown apace. The relentless advance of weapons technology has added to the quantity of armaments, vastly augmented their destructive quality, and posed the danger of the extension of the arms race to new areas. We have thus seen that disarmament is a field in which to stand still is, in effect, to go backward.

This year, however, we can observe Disarmament Week in a more hopeful frame of mind. I have previously commented on the conclusion and implementation of 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 and the opening of prospects for a reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. These have been important steps forward. By itself, of course, the Treaty affects only a small proportion of total nuclear weaponry. Its significance, however, lay in moving the question of arms reduction from the visionary to the practical realm. It showed that it is not impossible to breach the wall of mutual suspicion and fear which has stood in the way of arms limitation. It has also confirmed one of the basic propositions of the whole disarmament effort: that security can be sought and attained at progressively lower levels of armaments.

This breakthrough in one sphere has been accompanied by tangible progress in another. The United Nations has been successful in setting in train various processes and diplomatic activities for bringing peace to troubled regions of the world. A climate of conciliation, an earnest search for ways and means of resolving long-standing conflicts, has begun to affect the attitudes and

(The Secretary-General)

perceptions of the parties involved. Entrenched positions are slowly giving way to greater flexibility and open-mindedness in the pursuit of just and durable solutions.

All this is directly germane to our whole outlook on disarmament. With the restoration of a measure of international confidence, public expectations of positive results in disarmament negotiations have naturally increased. With the achievement of understanding at the bilateral level, parallel gains in disarmament at the multilateral level appear much more logical than they did before.

An historic opportunity has thus presented itself to us. Are we prepared to seize it? There is no guarantee against new set-backs or stagnation. Let us not forget that some promising developments in the field of disarmament in earlier decades were followed by long years of paralysis and stalemate. The conclusion of the partial test ban Treaty a quarter of a century ago and the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with its historic Final Document, are but two examples.

Nor can we dismiss from our minds the inconclusiveness of the third special session, held earlier this year. We cannot, therefore, underrate the difficulties of our task. We know how complex are the issues involved when one strand is almost inextricably entangled with another. But one thing is certain: given the requisite political will, the Gordian knot can be cut.

(The Secretary-General)

We can take as a fresh starting point the convergence of views or the narrowing of differences on a number of issues that was registered at the third special session or is otherwise noticeable. With a pragmatic approach and sustained determination, a strong impetus can be given to the gradual reduction of armaments, both nuclear and conventional. The current momentum towards peace needs to be maintained and carried forward. Let not the improvement in international relations which we witness at present become another passing phase. More than anything else, it is credible progress in disarmament which will make it certain that we are moving towards a new phase of international affairs, promising a better and safer world for all.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your words of inspiration and wisdom. We very much appreciate your taking time from your schedule to come here. We recognize that you have responsibilities that oblige you to leave the Committee at this time, but before you go I want formally on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf to express our deepest thanks to you for your participation in this important observance of Disarmament Week.

I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ambassador Wilbert Kumaliya Chagula, who will speak as Chairman of the Group of African States.

Mr. CHAGULA (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of the African States, I have the honour and pleasure to address the Committee on this year's observance of Disarmament Week. It is gratifying to note that this occasion, among other things, provides us with yet another opportunity to reflect on and underscore the role of the United Nations in its efforts to

"save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Today, more than ever, the international community is becoming increasingly aware of the potential threats to the survival of mankind. Nothing, however, poses

(Mr. Chagula, United Republic
of Tanzania)

a greater threat to the international community than the continuing arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race. Recent developments in the bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers have inspired heightened expectations of a breakthrough in nuclear disarmament and international security. 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 - INF Treaty - the first agreement ever which seeks to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons, was greatly welcomed and cherished by the entire international community. Regrettably, however, the Treaty covers only a small fraction of the total nuclear arsenals possessed by the two super-Powers. Humanity, thus, continues to live under the threatening shadow of a nuclear holocaust.

In this connection, as we observe the week dedicated to disarmament, we should not allow our vigilance for general and complete disarmament to relax. It would be wrong to remain under the delusion that peace and security can be achieved through a strategic balance of nuclear weapons among the nuclear-weapon Powers. For security can be ensured not through strength of arms, but through respect for international law and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. If we did accept peaceful co-existence, what justification would there be for our pursuing a path towards our self-extinction?

While we are all gratified by the renewal of hope engendered by the bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers, we are dismayed by the continued erosion of the effective role of multilateralism in the disarmament effort. We were particularly disheartened by the sad ending of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Although the session was convened at a time when there was growing momentum towards peace and disarmament, and indeed

(Mr. Chagula, United Republic
of Tanzania)

against a background of positive developments in international relations in general, its result was an unexpected anticlimax and a crippling blow to the role of multilateralism in this area.

The sluggish and disappointing progress in the United Nations multilateral disarmament bodies on the major priority issues reflects yet another deliberate attempt by the major Powers to circumvent the role of this world body in the area of disarmament. We need not remind those Powers that, although the direct responsibility for the elimination of the threat of a nuclear war rests with them, all of us are indeed involved. Every nation, big or small, has not only the right but also the duty to make an active effort to prevent the ultimate disaster of a nuclear holocaust. We all inhabit one planet, and a global nuclear holocaust will wipe us all out - big and small nations alike. The international community cannot, therefore, remain a mere spectator when its survival is continually placed in jeopardy. That is what prompted India, Mexico, Greece, Argentina, Sweden and Tanzania to embark on their Six-Nation Peace Initiative as a contribution to the world's disarmament effort.

We consider regional approaches to disarmament to be important elements in the global effort for general and complete disarmament. In this regard, we recognise the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and regional centres for disarmament as being vital in the disarmament process. Therefore, we request the strengthening of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa situated in Lomé, Togo. In addition, we demand particularly the denuclearization of Africa. The Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Cairo in 1964, constitutes a firm commitment to prevent the introduction of nuclear weapons into

(Mr. Chagula, United Republic
of Tanzania)

Africa. It is in this connection that we are particularly concerned by the nuclear-weapon capability that the racist régime of South Africa has acquired, with the collusion and collaboration of certain countries. The acquisition of that nuclear capability by the Pretoria racist régime clearly undermines the objective of the African Declaration and indeed frustrates the efforts of African countries for disarmament, peace, security and development. At a time when the people of Africa are preoccupied with major issues of economic survival and decolonization, they do not wish to see their problems compounded by the introduction of nuclear weapons into Africa.

One of the objectives of Disarmament Week is to bring to the forefront those issues which have continued to preoccupy us all in the quest for peace, disarmament and international security. A well-informed public opinion constitutes a vital element in our disarmament efforts. African States remain committed to the World Disarmament Campaign and other United Nations initiatives aimed at sensitizing world public opinion to the problem of disarmament. In this regard, we consider it vital to bring to the attention of the world public the new threat facing the people in Africa and other developing countries.

(Mr. Chagula, United Republic
of Tanzania)

This is the question of the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in our countries. African territorial waters have been turned into a dumping ground for hazardous waste by some transnational corporations. These corporations have, regrettably, capitalized on the economic disadvantages of certain African countries by engaging in the illegal business of the clandestine dumping of hazardous wastes without due regard to the effects on human health and the environment arising from such toxic wastes. The problems associated with such dumping include the penetration into human tissues of toxic waste, either directly through radiation or through contact with contaminated materials. The long-term effects of such radiation are disquieting, particularly considering the fact that a large number of African countries are not technically equipped to detect, monitor and protect themselves from harmful ionizing radiation.

The international community should thus resolutely condemn such unscrupulous practices as a crime against humanity and call for an immediate end to the illegal transboundary shipments of hazardous wastes. That Africa should be targeted for the disposal of such wastes testifies to a lack of respect for the dignity of Africans and insensitivity to their plight. We hope that, at the very least, an overwhelming public outcry against, and collective condemnation of, such selfish and immoral practices will be mounted by the international community.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Kuwait, Mr. Al-Zawawi, who will address the Committee on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. AL-ZAWAWI (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, the apologies of my Ambassador, who has been unable to attend this meeting in person for reasons beyond his control. He has asked me to read his speech.

(Mr. Al-Zawawi, Kuwait)

"It is a great honour for me to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Asian States on the occasion of Disarmament Week, which is at the same time an annual commemoration of the establishment of the United Nations. The Week aims at creating a climate that will foster progress in the disarmament process and strengthen world awareness of the dangers of the arms race.

"For the past few weeks, the media have given considerable exposure to news of international efforts to save three whales in Alaska from death under the ice sheet. Interest in the whale drama has been heightened by the recent involvement of a Soviet icebreaker in the endeavour. The whole thing highlights the prevalent international climate, especially in the area of super-Power relations. Such co-operation is cause for optimism with regard to the prospects of co-operation between the two super-Powers and its positive effect on the affairs of humanity. At the same time, one cannot help wondering whether humans are not more deserving of such co-operation, at least in the area of joint efforts to save them from the danger of nuclear extinction? Aren't people's aspirations after peace through disarmament, security and development worthy of such a rescue operation?

"The inter-relationship between those three components of peace has been a major concern of our Organisation's because, in the aggregate, they represent a basic prerequisite of world stability. The Asian States have also attached great importance to these three components, as they embody the objectives of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development."

The very first resolution adopted by the United Nations was on disarmament: i.e. on the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Al-Zawawi, Kuwait)

Today, more than ever, there is an urgent and increasing need to adopt effective disarmament measures. This need arises from economic, environmental, political and other factors, notably the very survival of mankind which is threatened by nuclear extinction. We, the members of the international community, have major roles to play in progressing toward disarmament: we have to educate world public opinion and heighten its awareness of what is at stake in the area of disarmament. In this respect, we laud the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies in educating numerous sectors of world public opinion and involving them in the issues of disarmament and the celebration of Disarmament Week.

"The States on behalf of which I speak, are effectively contributing to the task of educating public opinion concerning those issues. Hence, we request the United Nations and its agencies to intensify their efforts in this vital area. On the other hand, we must urge the two super-Powers to continue their positive dialogue. We should contribute to their bilateral negotiations which will strengthen the multilateral disarmament process on the nuclear and non-nuclear levels, internationally, regionally and sub-regionally. This will also prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space and consolidate the principle of multilateralism in solving disarmament problems as shown in the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. It is evident that every measure that strengthens international peace and security increases the United Nations efficacy in achieving its principal objectives.

"This places a special responsibility on the First Committee which deals with vital areas of disarmament and international security. We must take advantage of the present favourable international climate to reach agreements on disarmament which will work in favour of development, peace and security,

(Mr. Al-Zawawi, Kuwait)

especially now that international détente is having favourable effects on regional conflicts. For the United Nations and multilateral international and regional negotiating forums, this is an opportunity to make full use of their great potential and realize the noble purposes and principles of the Charter.

"Finally, we hope that the observance of this Week will not turn out to be a futile exercise but will contribute effectively to strengthening peace and security all over the world."

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ambassador Oudovenko, Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. CUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The 1988 week of action for disarmament provides an opportunity for us to note with satisfaction that this year it has taken place in a propitious international situation. New political thinking, an increasingly dominating feature in world affairs, has in recent months produced impressive results in the field of disarmament.

The entry into force of 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 was a history-making achievement. This breakthrough confirmed that a world free of nuclear weapons and of violence is a realistic rather than a Utopian proposition.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The Moscow summit meeting made substantial headway in formulating important agreements on disarmament problems. There are now real prospects for the early conclusion of a Soviet-United States treaty on the 50 per cent reduction and on the limitation of strategic offensive arms in the context of compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty as signed in 1972. Implementation of these agreements would vastly strengthen security in the world and give enormous impetus to the disarmament process. Progress has been made in the Soviet-United States talks on the limitation and subsequent cessation of nuclear testing.

We are pleased to note that the world community is nearing the formulation of a global convention on the comprehensive prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. The future convention would be a major landmark in the successful resolution of an extremely difficult disarmament problem through methods of multilateral diplomacy on the basis of a balance of the interests of States. Its conclusion should be expected in the very near future; that is feasible, provided that all participants in the talks manifest the political will to reach agreement. Prospects now exist for easing the dangerous confrontation in Europe and reducing conventional weapons on that continent. An international consensus is taking shape in the field of verification, and there has been substantial progress in promoting confidence and glasnost in the military sphere.

The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament contributed to a deepening of dialogue. It demonstrated the world community's growing interest in achieving further practical results in the sphere of disarmament, and it increased the breadth of understanding on the vast majority of the problems discussed.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

But it would be wrong to overlook the fact that the arms race continues. There still exist enormous stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. The pace of disarmament talks is not as rapid as it should be. For that reason, greater importance is attached to the task of intensifying the world community's effort to make disarmament a steady, ongoing and increasingly deep process.

The United Nations has an invaluable role to play here. Internationalized disarmament efforts are, objectively, a necessity, since security through disarmament can be reached only through joint action and close co-operation among all nations.

The United Nations is called upon to play an irreplaceable role in identifying basic objectives leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world and in creating an appropriate political atmosphere characterized by confidence and mutual understanding, glasnost, openness and predictability in international affairs. The United Nations is growing into a forum for finding a balance of interests among States, pooling their efforts and co-ordinating the positions of all groups of nations.

We are pleased to note that recently some progress has been achieved in the information and education activities of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, including measures to mobilize world public opinion in support of disarmament. The World Disarmament Campaign and this annual Disarmament Week help bring the urgency of disarmament problems and the need to prevent a suicidal nuclear catastrophe to the attention of all the nations of the world.

That was confirmed by the forum of non-governmental organizations held during the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In fact, this amounted to a parallel session of the "general assembly of the world public", which demonstrated the growing energy of the world's peaceful forces and their concern for the future of human civilization.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

We are convinced that the information and education activities of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament should be pursued and strengthened. A central place in these global, regional and national activities should be given to objective, full and faithful coverage of bilateral and multilateral efforts to reduce strategic offensive weapons, to bar the arms race from outer space, to achieve a complete and comprehensive nuclear-test ban, to eliminate nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, to reduce conventional weapons and forces, to reduce military expenditures, and to resolve other important security and disarmament issues.

The information and education activities of United Nations Member States with respect to arms limitation and disarmament should contribute in every possible way to a general awareness of the risks inherent in all aspects of the arms race and to the dangers of war, particularly nuclear war. Those activities should help convince everyone in the world that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, that all war, whether nuclear or conventional, must be prevented, and that in war there can be no victor.

The establishment of a secure world calls for new thinking and innovative approaches to issues of war and peace, and requires the total elimination of nuclear weapons and renunciation of the concept of nuclear deterrence and the policy of the use or threat of use of force in international relations. World public opinion should be concentrated on the development of the disarmament process, the need to prevent the escalation of the arms race, the relationship between disarmament and development, and the need to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective control

In the countries of the Eastern European Group, numerous events related to Disarmament Week have confirmed the deep interest of the peoples of those countries in achieving practical results in the sphere of disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the representative of the Dominican Republic, Ambassador Homero Luis Hernandez Sanchez, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. HERNANDEZ SANCHEZ (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish):

It is a great honour for me to be addressing the First Committee as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group on the occasion of the observance of Disarmament Week, in keeping with the tradition established by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament.

The problem of the arms race affects every man and woman in the world. While responsibility for the arms race is nearly universal, it cannot be viewed as evenly distributed: More than half of the \$900 billion spent annually for military purposes is accounted for by the super-Powers. The industrialized countries, including the super-Powers, account for more than 80 per cent. It has been estimated that since 1945 more than 150 wars have been fought around the world, involving some 90 countries.

The amount of nuclear and conventional military capability already amassed defies rationality and seems to be beyond all logic and good sense.

(Mr. Hernandez Sanchez,
Dominican Republic)

All the industrialized countries together share the main responsibility for attaining a new international economic order inasmuch as they are the major beneficiaries of the present one, and this is unfair to the developing countries, based as it is on very unequal terms of trade and asymmetrical interdependencies between North and South. Because of its enormous injustice it constitutes a source of international discord and insecurity.

The developed countries must understand that development and security are two intimately related objectives for the international community. Just as there can be no real security based on fear, there can be no security with hunger, destitution, disease and illiteracy. Those countries must understand that a more just, balanced and symmetrical international economic order in international trade and financial relations is a prerequisite for security, which would render the arms race much less necessary throughout the world.

We are much encouraged by the signature of the protocol concerning the exchange of instruments of ratification of 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. That will, for the first time, eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons and thus establish new standards for arms control.

None the less, we believe that the United Nations, a universal symbol of multilateralism, must play a leading role in achieving world security, as its own Charter prescribes.

Latin America is known and often cited for the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its two additional protocols, which have made our region the first inhabited region in the world voluntarily to renounce nuclearization, permitting only nuclear

(Mr. Hernandez Sanchez,
Dominican Republic)

development for peaceful purposes. For that reason, we have always supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We welcome the determination repeatedly expressed by the leaders of the super-Powers and the industrialized countries to reach international agreements prohibiting the use and abuse of chemical and biological weapons. However, we are convinced that so long as an agreement has not been reached as regards prohibition and condemnation of the production and sale of such weapons, this goal will be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group avails itself of the opportunity of the observance of Disarmament Week again to assess the work done by the United Nations - particularly the efforts of its Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar - for world peace.

To date, neither nuclear nor highly sophisticated conventional weapons have managed to prevent the more than 150 wars that have broken out since the Second World War.

The theory of predominance by one nation over another, the balance of terror, does not produce security, because fear is not security. Security means peace, and there will never be peace until we have once and for all eradicated the vestiges of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, racism and injustice.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Austria, Mr. Peter Hohenfellner, Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): I have the honour and pleasure of addressing the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States as we observe Disarmament Week.

Ten years ago the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament proclaimed the anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

as the first day of the annual Disarmament Week. The observance of Disarmament Week offers all of us the opportunity to reflect not only on the basic aspirations of mankind, which are freedom, justice and peace, but also on other relevant questions such as security.

When Ambassador Pugliese of Italy addressed the First Committee last year, he felt privileged to speak at a time when encouraging signs were emerging from the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of nuclear arms. Twelve months later, we are pleased to note that the improvement in East-West relations has produced significant results, creating favourable conditions for the achievement of further progress in arms control and disarmament issues and in strengthening peace and security.

A breakthrough was achieved in the area of reducing nuclear armaments on 1 June this year, when the United States and the Soviet Union exchanged instruments of ratification, bringing into force the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles and thus eliminating an entire category of nuclear arms for the first time in history.

Furthermore, the United States and the Soviet Union committed themselves to undertake a more difficult step, the conclusion and implementation of the strategic arms reduction treaty, which would provide for a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic offensive arms of the two sides.

The international community has also noted with satisfaction the agreement reached between the United States and the USSR on the notification of launches of intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Another significant event of the past 12 months was the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Although it was unable to agree on a concluding document, the session afforded a large number of Heads of State or

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Government, as well as ministers of foreign affairs, a valuable opportunity to explain their current basic ideas and strategies on peace and disarmament. Furthermore, the useful procedure followed at the special session, in which many delegations continued their intensive search for areas of convergence until the last moment, sharing their thoughts for future disarmament efforts, should not be underestimated. As appropriate, the proposals put forward during the third special session might be explored further, which could lead to new areas of agreement and consensus.

Another security-building effort is in its final stage now in Vienna, where members of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe are engaged in intensified negotiations to bring the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of the Helsinki process to a successful conclusion.

Mention should be made, finally, of the forthcoming Paris Conference, which will help strengthen the global prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. The convening of the Conference, which is due to take place in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989 and which has been welcomed by the Group of Western European and other States, should result in the solemn confirmation by all parties of their full adherence to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and it should also reaffirm the urgent character of the negotiations under way in Geneva with regard to a convention completely banning chemical weapons.

All the above-mentioned events have created a positive political climate that should be not only preserved but strengthened.

The observance of Disarmament Week, which is taking place in a particularly favourable atmosphere, should - more than ever in the past - present a useful opportunity for the promotion of disarmament goals. It should also bring to mind the important role the United Nations is playing in helping to restore peace in many areas of the world.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

The members of the Group of Western European and other States are ready to continue constructively to contribute their share towards further disarmament efforts, which should enhance confidence, strengthen security, and lead to lasting international peace.

It is with that spirit that we are taking part in the observance of Disarmament Week.

The CHAIRMAN: This brings to an end the observance of Disarmament Week.

The meeting rose at 11.50 p.m.