



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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- General debate on all disarmament items

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 52 to 69, 139, 141 and 145 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. AL-SHAKAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): In accordance with your request, Sir, I shall abide by rule 110 of the rules of procedure and not express congratulations to you and to the officers of the Committee.

It is fortunate that this year the Committee starts its debate on the agenda items relating to arms control, disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security in a positive and propitious atmosphere. This international political climate is encouraging and strengthens our hope that our discussion at this session will be characterized by positive and constructive dialogue with a view to reaching solutions and ways and means of promoting international peace and security.

This year the international arena in particular has witnessed an easing of tension between the United States of America and the Soviet Union which culminated in a great achievement, in the field of disarmament, namely, the actual elimination, last summer of the most advanced nuclear missiles in the Soviet Union and the United States. We hope that this achievement will be a step towards the total destruction of lethal weapons so that we may be able to live in a world free of the means of annihilation.

Thanks to the tangible improvement in international relations we can now see possibilities for reaching just, lasting and comprehensive solutions to regional conflicts. There is a definite enhancement of the role of the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, as envisaged by its Charter. This is in keeping with the new tendency in the international arena and the efforts and good offices of the Secretary-General to preserve and strengthen such tendency. For this we are truly thankful and hope that the strengthening of the United Nations

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

role will be further reflected in dealing with all outstanding international issues that have a direct bearing on international peace and security, at the top of which are the question of Palestine, the situation in the Middle East, and the situation on southern Africa.

The positive outcome of the series of summit meetings between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan indicates that the relationship between the two super-Powers has become more stable and that they have now progressed beyond the stage of confrontation and suspicion and have embarked on the road of understanding, rapprochement and the building of bridges of trust and co-operation.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

While we welcome these developments and the positive changes that have taken place in the international arena, we must stress the need for such changes and developments to be reflected in the upholding of the interests and rights of other peoples and States.

The system of collective security and maintenance of international peace and security embodied in the Charter, is based, in the first instance, on the concerted efforts of the Governments and peoples of all States, side by side with the consolidation of the role allocated to the multilateral institutions within the framework of the United Nations system. In this respect, my delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General, as contained in his annual report on the work of the Organization:

"Multilateralism has proved itself far more capable of inspiring confidence and achieving results than any of its alternatives. Millions around the world have had a gratifying demonstration of the potential of the Organization and the validity of the hopes they place in it." (A/43/1, p. 2)

The task of "saving future generations from the scourge of war" was the main concern of those who formulated the Charter in San Francisco. Hence, it has become the main task with which the United Nations has been charged, from its inception to this date. The attention attached to this noble task has deepened and grown since the time of signing the Charter. That is why, it has taken the highest priority over all other issues.

Thus, the United Nations has continued to be the unique international forum for dialogue and co-operation in pursuit of this lofty goal. The Organization's activities in the field of disarmament and arms control have continued to grow and multiply in keeping with the pace of change in the world and the race against time, to such an extent that these two activities have become the two most important concerns of the Organization. This has arisen from the awareness that the main

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responsibility for disarmament is not that of the major Powers alone, but is rather the common responsibility of all States, without exception.

The feverish arms race in our world has risen to a level that is unprecedented in the history of mankind. Annual military expenditures exceed \$1.2 trillion, almost the sum total of all the debts of the developing countries and roughly 7 per cent of the world's total gross national product. The outcome has been a spiralling arms race that poses a very grave threat indeed to mankind's survival and civilization. There can be no justification whatever for such an astronomical expenditure on arms while the overwhelming majority of human beings are deprived of the most basic of necessities: things like food, drinking water and health care.

Hence, we maintain that the obsession with security through arms and yet more arms is an ever-receding unrealizable dream that cannot possibly be made to come true other than through a collective form of security based on mutual trust and strict adherence to the Charter in shaping and maintaining relations between States. In our view, this can only be achieved by Member countries honouring the commitment that every State has taken upon itself under the Charter - especially with regard to its relations with other States - and its posture in the international arena especially with regard to the achievement of the goals of disarmament and development. There is no way of doing this other than by adopting a comprehensive programme of disarmament, that would provide for mechanisms to reinforce the efficacy of multilateral disarmament and the United Nations role therein.

Bahrain, as a non-aligned State, has pursued a clear policy based on its principled commitment and profound belief that arms control and complete and general disarmament, are the only means of maintaining international peace and security, as envisaged by the Charter.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

Bahrain believes that a world war fought with nuclear weapons can lead to nothing but the destruction of humanity and the civilization that man has striven after over thousands of years. Therefore, Bahrain, joined the other non-aligned and peace-loving countries, in calling for concerted efforts by the international community to achieve the goals of controlling nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament, especially in the nuclear field. This, to us, is the embodiment of the principle of international peace and security, and the means of preventing a nuclear war, that is sure to destroy all life on Earth.

In pursuance of this policy, the Government of Bahrain took a number of concrete steps and adopted resolutions to accede to a number of international treaties and conventions in the field of disarmament and arms control.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

That was stated clearly by the Foreign Minister of the State of Bahrain, Mr. Al-Khalifa, in the general debate on 5 October:

"Consistent with the principle of the maintenance of international peace and security enshrined in the Charter, and with our conviction that it is imperative to create a less-heavily armed and more secure world, I take pleasure in announcing from this rostrum today that the Government of the State of Bahrain has decided to accede to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare and to the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and their Destruction." (A/43/PV.18, pp. 29-30)

At present, my Government is taking constitutional and legal steps to complete the documents for the accession of Bahrain to the Treaty, Protocol and Convention I have mentioned.

Proceeding from its established policy and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, Bahrain has supported the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and has called for the translation into practice of that Declaration by the holding of the Conference on the Indian Ocean repeatedly called for by the General Assembly, especially in its resolution 42/43.

Bahrain has also supported the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world, especially in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America, proceeding from its profound conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones would create a climate of trust and promote security in the world.

We cannot but direct the attention of the international community to the grave dangers implicit in the arms race in the Middle East, especially the acquisition by

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Israel of a nuclear arsenal, and its development of that arsenal into a deterrent and a means of destruction that endows it with military superiority in the area. Israel has persistently refused to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or subject all its nuclear installations to the international safeguards régime as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 487 (1981), which was adopted following the treacherous Israeli aggression in June 1981 against the Tammuz nuclear reactor, which was dedicated to peaceful purposes.

The Middle East region has now entered yet another phase of high-tech armament with the launching by Israel of a spy satellite into outer space. The acquisition by Israel of the technology of spy satellites and the ability to launch them into space give Israel a pronounced edge over the defensive capabilities of all the Arab States. It is now able to monitor the movement of the Arab forces and photograph sensitive military installations of the Arab States.

The arms race has been aggravated further by Israel's acquisition and production of long-range land-to-land missiles. The great commotion created by Israel regarding the acquisition by certain Arab countries of a number of missiles, is only to hide the fact that it was Israel that introduced missiles into the Middle East.

Israel possesses Jericho I and Jericho II missiles. The latter was designed as a vehicle to carry nuclear warheads, with a range of 1,500 kilometres. According to the confessions of the nuclear technician, Mordechai Vanunu, who was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment in Israel because he unmasked some of Israel's nuclear secrets, Israel has the capability of producing seven atomic bombs annually and, at present, has a stockpile of ready-to-use 100 nuclear warheads. Israel can deliver those bombs by using its American-made warplanes, such as the F-4, or the Israeli Kafir plane or the Jericho II.

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The failure of the United Nations - and first and foremost of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency - to adopt and implement deterrent and effective measures to deter Israel and force it to comply with resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly regarding the placing of its nuclear installations under international safeguards régime and provision of sufficiently effective guarantees that Israel will not launch any attacks against peaceful nuclear reactors such as that in Iraq or any other country and the failure of the Security Council to adopt any measures to ensure Israel's compliance with its resolution 487 (1981) constitute serious threats to the very credibility of our Organization and obstruction to the sincere attempts on the part of the Arab States to turn the Middle East into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Here we must refer to the gravity of the burgeoning collaboration in the area of nuclear armaments between Israel and South Africa. Those two régimes are similar in approach and practice. They are both racist, aggressive, domineering and yearning after hegemony. They both resort to armed occupation. The close military collaboration which existed between them over the years is spiralling from one year to the other. It has come to embrace nuclear and strategic co-operation, which has been condemned more than once by the international community as a threat to the peoples and States of Africa and the Arab world. The acquisition by Israel and South Africa of nuclear weapons will obstruct not only the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and the Middle East, but will also impede the efforts aimed at reaching just solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Namibian question and the question of minority rule in South Africa.

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Moreover, the policies of these two racist régimes aim at undermining the peace and security of the Middle East and South Africa and at imposing hegemony on the two regions. The situation is further aggravated by the refusal of South Africa and Israel to place their nuclear facilities under international inspection and the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards.

The results of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was held last spring, were disappointing, despite the positive atmosphere in which it was held, and despite the concrete achievements that had been made, bilaterally, by the two super-Powers through the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty of 1987 - and the exchange of the ratification documents at the Moscow summit in 1988.

This had given rise to hopes, on an international level, that it would be possible to reach further agreements on the limitation of the nuclear as well as the conventional, arms race, at the regional and multilateral levels, and that an integrated programme of work that would give a new momentum to the disarmament process might be in the offing. This, it was hoped, would contribute to the achievement of the lofty goal embodied in disarmament for development. Unfortunately however, the third special session devoted to disarmament failed to rise to those expectations, notwithstanding the propitious atmosphere generated by the signing of the INF Treaty, and the possibility of overcoming the hurdles which have impeded the conclusion of a treaty to reduce by 50 per cent the strategic weapons of the United States and of the Soviet Union (START).

The inability of the General Assembly, at its third special session devoted to disarmament, to adopt by consensus a final document should not dissuade the international community from its efforts to ensure international peace and security. Nor should this inability weaken the international community's resolve

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to persist in its efforts to save future generations from an all-out, destructive war. It is vitally important to make concerted efforts, on the multilateral level in order to achieve nuclear as well as conventional disarmament, and to continue the international efforts to sensitise international public opinion to the importance of disarmament in all its aspects.

In parallel with this, there should be similar international efforts to bring about economic and social justice for all peoples of the world. We wish to stress, in this respect, the all important role of the United Nations in this vital area, it being the sole international forum in which all States are represented, regardless of differences between their ideological, political and social systems. It is through the United Nations that all countries can participate in the talks concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. It is through the Organization and its specialized agencies that verification could take place as regards compliance with the conventions concluded in the field of arms control and disarmament.

We live in an era characterized by the existence of the capability to destroy our planet in its entirety. This horrific capability is the preserve of the few. Hence, the acquisition of the capability to make peace and safeguard international security should be the major concern of the majority of the nations of our world. In the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, the international community defined its priorities in the field of disarmament. Right at the top was the need to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war. In this respect, the non-aligned countries declared, on more than one occasion, that the use of nuclear weapons not only constituted a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations but also a crime against humanity as a whole. Therefore my delegation maintains that it is incumbent upon us, at the

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threshold of the twenty-first century, to work together, as Governments and as peoples, to save humanity and build a better world for future generations, a world that would be free from lethal weapons, especially those of total destruction.

Count YORK von WARTENBURG (Federal Republic of Germany): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. For many years the United Nations has benefited from your extensive knowledge, your wide experience and your negotiating skill in the field of disarmament. We are therefore gratified to see you at the helm of the First Committee this year. I can assure you that you have the full and, unqualified support of my delegation.

The statement made today by the representative of Greece was made on behalf of the Twelve. As it thus reflects also the views of the Federal Republic of Germany, my own comments will serve not to modify but to complement that statement.

This year the debate in the First Committee is taking place in a favourable political climate. East-West relations have improved considerably in recent years, and this has had a strong impact, particularly on arms control and disarmament. The Treaty on the complete, global elimination of Soviet and United States land-based intermediate-range missiles, which entered into force on 1 July this year, is a major outcome of this development. It is at the same time a milestone in the history of arms control. Now, for the first time, a whole class of weapons is being eliminated, and this applies world wide.

Since 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 - entered into force, its implementation has been on schedule. The mutual inspections represent a significant contribution to confidence-building between East and West. It is important now to make use of the momentum thus generated. The INF Treaty must be followed by additional, far-reaching steps in conventional, nuclear and chemical disarmament.

(Count York von Wartenburg, Federal
Republic of Germany)

Permit me to state my Government's position on the different aspects of arms control.

Conventional stability in Europe is the military key to European security. An early commencement of negotiations on conventional-arms control is therefore of fundamental importance to the Europeans. Together with our allies, we shall submit proposals that, while complying with the requirements of our common security as an Alliance, will enable us to make use of the opportunities resulting from the present state of relations between East and West to pursue a co-operative-security policy in this field as well.

As a balanced and substantial result of the Vienna follow-up meeting, there is now the urgent task of concluding the ongoing mandate discussions and of launching the negotiations on conventional stability before the end of this year. The major objectives of those negotiations are the establishment of conventional stability in Europe at a lower level and the elimination of the capability for surprise attack or for the initiation of large-scale offensive action.

We seek equal ceilings below the strength of the weaker side, a principle that has now been accepted by the countries signatories of the Warsaw Pact. In view of the fact that the initial situation is characterized by large asymmetries, to the detriment of the West, the road to balance is through sharply asymmetrical reductions. That means, quite simply, that whoever has more must scrap more. It is gratifying to note that East and West now agree on this point as well.

Another important aspect of the forthcoming negotiations is the discussion of military doctrines and security concepts with a view to deriving from them criteria for the establishment of stability. Consequently, the elimination of an attack capability and the principle of defence sufficiency must be reflected in the strength, armament and deployment of the armed forces.

(Count York von Wartenburg, Federal
Republic of Germany)

Our experience with the confidence- and security-building measures agreed on in Stockholm encourage us to build up and expand those results in a second round of negotiations on the basis of the Madrid mandate. This embraces the improvement and stricter application of measures already agreed upon, as well as new confidence- and security-building measures.

In the light of experience gained in the course of the implementation of the results of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe it can be said that the transparency and predictability of military activities have been improved considerably. There is nothing out of the ordinary in East and West exercising their right to carry out inspections. Inspections have become a routine matter, and they are used by East and West as an instrument of confidence-building. This, we welcome. It also sets an example for other areas of arms control.

The 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive nuclear weapons which is currently a subject of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union must become a reality. A treaty on strategic arms reduction will be conducive to strategic stability and is thus in the security interests of European and all other States.

The United States and the Soviet Union should also agree on a solution with regard to defensive and space weapons that will take into account the security interests of both sides. In this connection we advocate continued adherence to the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems as one of the corner-stones of strategic stability. That Treaty should be respected as long as a different co-operative solution has not been agreed upon by the negotiating partners, that is, a solution that would likewise guarantee strategic stability.

(Count York von Wartenburg, Federal
Republic of Germany)

Land-based nuclear missiles with ranges under 500 kilometres not covered by the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - must also be included in the negotiations in order to remove the existing considerable imbalances in favour of the countries signatories to the Warsaw Pact.

The participants in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament must now make a joint effort to attain without delay the goal on which all are agreed, namely, a global ban on chemical weapons. The achievement of that aim must include an agreement on an effective verification régime. All countries must know beyond doubt that any militarily relevant violation of a chemical-weapons ban would carry a high risk of discovery. The fact that those inhumane weapons have indeed been used, and very recently, stresses the urgent need for a global and comprehensive ban. Only such a ban will rid the whole world of chemical weapons for ever.

In recent months there has been less progress in the Geneva negotiations than we had hoped for following the considerable political momentum of the past year. All the same, with the latest rolling text the Conference has an excellent basis for its work, and one that is already well advanced. In order to settle the remaining - and in some instances difficult - details it is essential that the political will manifested by all be translated into substantive contributions to the text of the convention. We shall continue to play an active part in that process.

We welcome President Reagan's initiative for a conference of the signatories to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and France's willingness, as announced by President Mitterand, to act as host to such a conference in Paris. We are actively involved in efforts to strengthen all instruments designed to prevent the use and

(Count York von Wartenburg, Federal
Republic of Germany)

proliferation of chemical weapons even before a global ban is in place. However, beyond all those efforts, we must continue to pursue the true goal of a global ban with the utmost energy. The proposed conference cannot be a substitute for a global ban on chemical weapons, and on that point we are in complete agreement with the initiators and organizers of the conference.

My Government has long called for the earliest possible agreement on an effectively verifiable nuclear-test ban. Although a non-nuclear-weapon State, we are making practical contributions to the development of global, effective means of verification within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. In our view, step-by-step restrictions of nuclear tests leading to a comprehensive nuclear-test ban are the only realistic solution, whereas an all-or-nothing attitude has done nothing to resolve the test-ban issue.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force 20 years ago last July, has been a corner-stone of international stability and of efforts to safeguard peace. We will do all we can to ensure that that Treaty continues to serve - beyond 1995 - as an effective means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and as a basis for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We appeal to all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty, but we also strongly urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitment under article VI of the Treaty and to negotiate with regard to steps towards nuclear disarmament.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

At the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held this year, we took stock of the efforts being made in the various areas of disarmament and we tried to stake out common ground for the next steps to be taken. Regrettably, those efforts did not lead to a consensus. None the less, the important groundwork that was laid can and must be put to good use here in the First Committee. We feel that in doing so we should concentrate on those matters on which we have already achieved a large measure of agreement, and proceed from that basis here in the First Committee. Disarmament and arms control require persistent efforts if genuine progress is to be achieved.

We are witnessing a tangible improvement in East-West relations and a growing role for the United Nations. We very much welcome that trend. Let us also harness the growing importance of the United Nations to the task of disarmament and security by making the debate on a global scale a constructive addition to bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Those negotiations need to be accompanied by this world Organization's commentary; they need the impulse generated by debates in this world forum. Conversely, however, it is also important for the debate to take due account of the current negotiations. In his statement on behalf of the Twelve to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament, the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Genscher, referred to that interaction as an opportunity for "constructive parallelism".

The favourable trend I mentioned cannot and should not be confined to Europe. As we can see, it already augurs well for the settlement of regional conflicts and of problems related to military confrontations and to high levels of armaments in other regions of the world as well.

These comments on the various areas of arms control have one common denominator: the imperative of transparency. Allow me to illustrate this with the

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

example of military budgets - a subject which has been debated for years in this Committee, in the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations and at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. No progress will be possible in this area as long as only a handful of Member States reveal their data under the United Nations standardized reporting system and thereby help to provide the necessary transparency. The Federal Republic of Germany is one of the few countries to have made its statistics available from the very beginning. Transparency implies more data from more countries.

Or let us take the example of the ban on biological (bacteriological) weapons. If the relevant data were exchanged as provided for in the Final Declaration of the Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on biological weapons held in September 1986, it would give a clearer indication of the extent to which signatories are complying with the 1972 Convention. We take this obligation very seriously and have twice transmitted such information to the United Nations Secretariat. We appeal to those contracting States that have not yet done so to let the Secretariat have the information they have agreed to provide.

Transparency is a prerequisite for mutual confidence between States. Without such mutual confidence, efforts to achieve arms control and disarmament have no prospect of success. That is the reason why we regard confidence-building as the focal point of all endeavours in the various areas of arms control and disarmament. That is precisely why we have sought for many years here in the First Committee and in the Disarmament Commission to define guidelines to help interested countries take practical steps in the process of confidence-building. Those guidelines are now before us, thanks to the assistance and co-operation of many countries. We shall submit a draft resolution for their endorsement and application, and I ask for the support of all delegations in advance.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

At long last we can say that disarmament is no longer only a remote possibility: it is a process that is taking place now. It requires and deserves the support of all nations, and here in the United Nations as well. The First Committee plays a central role in this respect. This being so, the question of ensuring optimum procedures assumes greater importance. We began our debate on ways and means of increasing the efficiency of the Committee's work last year, and this matter will be occupying our attention again in the next few weeks. There are two points to bear in mind. One is that we want to strengthen the First Committee. The other is that we should strive to ensure that our debates and our resolutions are of more tangible benefit to the negotiations to which they relate.

In the next few weeks you will find the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany always ready to give, Mr. Chairman, you its support and to play an active part in the Committee's work.

Mr. STRESOV (Bulgaria): My delegation proceeds from the understanding that today's unprecedented conditions are conducive to a significant upgrading of international co-operation in the sphere of security and disarmament.

Recent developments in the international situation have underlined the growing role of the United Nations in reducing tensions and resolving conflicts. We are witnessing a positive tendency towards the replacement of confrontation by a substantive dialogue on the entire range of security and disarmament issues, characterized to a much lesser extent by the previous outbursts of ideological clashes.

In addressing the 80th conference of the Interparliamentary Union in Sofia, Todor Zhivkov, President of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, stated:

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

"The new realities require the decisive elaboration of an adequate concept of the contemporary world, a renunciation of obsolete perceptions, the adoption of principles on the basis of which we can and should view in a completely new way both the present problems of mankind and the prospects of global development".

In our view, the debate in the General Assembly during the present session indicates that the tender shoots of the new approach to the solution of complex international problems are gradually gaining strength.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

A concept of security based on the balance of interests and on non-violent solutions of the world's problems is an essential element of the new political thinking. That concept lies at the foundation of the proposals put forward by General Secretary Mikail Gorabachev starting with his declaration of 15 January 1986. Other important factors for the consolidation of the positive trends in international relations are the decisions and proposals of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the initiatives of the New Delhi Six.

The discussion at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament underlined the necessity of using the potential of the United Nations to develop a new concept of disarmament, one founded on the idea of today's interdependent world. Nuclear disarmament remains the primary goal and chief objective of the international community. The prevention of an arms race in outer space and, in particular, the banishment of weapons from that environment are supported by the overwhelming majority of Member States.

There is general agreement that the intensive dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States on arms limitation and disarmament is of particular importance for achieving substantial results in that field. The Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Missiles - the INF Treaty - is currently being implemented. That underlines its role as a major first step towards real disarmament, a step that has qualitatively new characteristics with regard to openness and verification.

The entire international community is undoubtedly interested in the continuation and broadening of Soviet-United States dialogue and, first and foremost, in the conclusion of an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic offensive weapons in strict compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty signed in 1972, and with a commitment not to withdraw from the Treaty for an agreed-upon period of time.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

At the same time, the United Nations should adopt multilateral measures complementing the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly with regard to nuclear disarmament, the banning of all nuclear-weapon tests, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Moreover, at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament a number of proposals were made dealing with the modalities for the participation of a large number of States in the solution of these cardinal issues. An understanding of the need for a multilateral approach to disarmament requires the firm commitment of the United Nations and its relevant bodies in that area.

The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria believes that at this session the Committee should focus its attention on reaching agreement on a realistic and mutually acceptable mechanism to internationalize efforts both on issues currently being negotiated and on new matters of disarmament.

It is also necessary to rationalize the work of forums dealing with problems of disarmament, in particular the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. Work at the forty-third session should be able to help bring about substantial progress in this respect.

A most telling example of a situation in which results lag behind the yearnings of the overwhelming majority of Member States is that of the banning of all nuclear-weapon tests. Bulgaria's position on this subject is well known. We stand for a general and complete prohibition of the testing of nuclear weapons and, as a stepping-stone towards that objective, the ratification of the 1974 and 1976 Soviet-United States Treaties. It is encouraging that as a result of the successful Soviet-United States experiments on on-site verification work in this regard is nearing completion. Another intermediate step would be the conclusion of an agreement on further reducing the yield and number of Soviet and United States nuclear explosions.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

We welcome the readiness of the USSR, expressed this morning by Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky, to declare immediately, on the basis of reciprocity with the United States, a moratorium on nuclear tests, and to make it of unlimited duration, or limited to a specified period of time.

The initiative of six States to convene an international conference to adopt a decision on converting the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water into a comprehensive test-ban treaty deserves serious consideration.

The prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons being negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament requires new and decisive action with a view to a speedier conclusion of a convention on this subject. A convention should embrace all States that have the potential to manufacture chemical weapons, should envisage strict verification measures against their development, and at the same time should not hinder the normal functioning of the chemical industry for peaceful purposes.

In order to achieve that goal, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has already stated that it is not developing chemical weapons and has no stocks of such weapons, either foreign or domestic, on its territory, and that its chemical industry produces no key precursors of chemical warfare agents.

Our delegation listened with interest to the proposals of President Ronald Reagan and President François Mitterand at the current session of the General Assembly, and is considering them in a positive manner.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria is in favour of all measures intended to uphold the authority of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, but continues to be of the view that the ultimate goal remains the prompt conclusion of a global convention to prohibit chemical weapons.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

A comprehensive solution is needed also to the problems of conventional disarmament. The proposal to set up a United Nations register of sales and deliveries of conventional weapons deserves further development. Joint efforts are called for also to prevent conventional weapons from becoming more sophisticated and to restrict their modernization.

We are on the eve of an important step: the initiation of new negotiations to strengthen stability and security in the whole of Europe at lower levels of armed forces and armaments of the conventional type. The proposals made last July by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member States go a long way towards alleviating the concern of certain countries about reductions in conventional weapons in Europe.

I should like to recall that in its desire to lower the level of military confrontation in Europe my country is continuing its efforts with a view to transforming the Balkans into a zone free from weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has given an impetus to the search for a mutually acceptable approach to verification in all its aspects under United Nations auspices.

Another issue requiring the concerted efforts of the international community is that of naval armaments and disarmament. Bulgaria is ready to co-operate with all interested delegations in the search for a solution to these problems. It is our intention to elaborate more fully on those aspects of disarmament at a later stage.

In conclusion, I should like to acknowledge the business-like and non-confrontational approach established at the current session of the General Assembly and to express the hope that our Committee will make a positive contribution to the solution of the outstanding disarmament issues.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives my delegation pleasure, Sir, to see you chairing the work of this important Committee. We wish the Committee every success in its deliberations.

A cursory look at recurrent events and developments in the world today, suffices to highlight the concern with which the peoples of the world view the dangers of armaments, especially nuclear armaments. It is a situation where man spares no effort in developing and acquiring such weapons, on the one hand, and in trying to rid himself of them, on the other. If this paradox makes any sense at all, it is first, that our points of view differ and, secondly, that international life is devoid of trust.

The concern shared by the peoples is historically justified, inasmuch as war was the principal cause of the death of millions of human beings. The estimates given by Bruce Russett in his book Trends in World Politics put the number of people killed in the wars that took place between 1820 and 1863 at about 2 million,

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

compared with 4.5 million killed in the wars between 1864 and 1907, 8.5 million in the First World War, and more than 81 million, including more than 65 million civilians, in the Second World War. Other statistics put the number of the victims of war since the Second World War at over 30 million, most of them civilians. If we keep in mind the heightened potential for destruction of advanced weaponry, it becomes abundantly clear that the future will be dim indeed, if we do not forestall the grave danger inherent in such a situation.

Since the 1950s the world has spent about \$5,000 billion on arms. It should be recalled in this respect, that the expenditure of the two super-Powers alone accounts for 67 per cent of that total. In other words, our world spends more than \$1 million a minute on arms at a time when the per capita income - of the lucky - in more than 30 poor countries does not exceed \$200 a year. The peoples of those least developed countries represent 27 per cent of the world's population.

One can draw a number of conclusions from such statistics. First, most of the countries of the world spend on their armed forces much more than they spend on health, social development and education for their citizens. Our world spends about \$16,000 a year on each soldier, while spending about \$230 on each student.

Secondly, statistics and discernable trends indicate that the developing countries follow in the steps of the developed industrial countries. In step with the burgeoning military expenditures of the industrial countries, the expenditures of the developing countries continue to soar, witness the fact that the share of the developing countries in the total of world military expenditures has risen from 15 per cent in 1967 to more than 25 per cent last year, as shown by the studies of the American Agency for Disarmament and Arms Control. This phenomenon, according to United Nations statistics, hinders the development process and even paralyses many countries, especially the least developed.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Thirdly, there is a close relationship between regional problems and arms, especially as those countries that follow policies of aggression and occupation and the creation of spheres of influence have forced the victims of those policies to resort to the acquisition of arms in order to defend their rights and their very existence. Hence, disarmament is also linked to the policies of those States which pursue policies of aggression. If disarmament is to become a reality, such State should discontinue those policies and concede the right of other States, especially the small ones, to live in peace.

For example, Israel's policy, which is based on expansion and aggression and the denial of the Palestinian peoples' rights, as determined by this Organization, has imposed on the Middle East a rabid arms race. Moreover, Israel, which has consistently rejected any form of international control over its nuclear facilities, has introduced nuclear weapons into the Middle East and contributed, together with the racist Government in South Africa, to their introduction into Africa in collaboration with South Africa. With such policies, Israel has opened the way to a new spiral of the arms race in the area.

I cannot but reaffirm here the importance my country attaches to the establishment of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Such zones should also be established in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia, since such weapons constitute a deadly threat, not only to those areas, but also to the world as a whole, especially as hotbeds of tension still persist in those areas, particularly in the Middle East. Our stand on this issue is completely in accord with the position the General Assembly has taken since the twenty-ninth session and that of the third special session devoted to disarmament, held in New York from 31 May to 25 June 1988. The debates at that special session confirmed the

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab
Emirates)

tripartite relationship between disarmament, international security and development. And yet, the session did not come to a fruitful or successful conclusion, despite the détente between the two super-Powers and the consensus of those who participated in it. That failure resulted, first, from lack of trust and, consequently, lack of political will on the part of some countries, as well as the different priority scales of certain international groupings.

Disarmament requires a climate of mutual trust. As a result of the tangible improvement in relations between the super-Powers and the progress made in regard to certain regional conflicts, a sense of trust has begun to find its way into the fabric of international relations.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

However, despite the important positive trends in international relations today, there still lingers a strong suspicion and mistrust. The most important, nay the decisive, way of contributing to the reduction of suspicion is to concentrate on the solution of all regional and international problems without exception, on the basis of the principles and resolutions of the United Nations. We live in an interdependent world, whose problems interact and affect one another and imbue all international relations. Thus it is not feasible to seek the security of some at the expense of the security of others. The prosperity of some cannot be built on the misery of others. We must work together for our own collective survival in a world of justice, stability and peace.

Mr. CAMARA (Guinea) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee is not alone a recognition of your outstanding qualities: it is also a well-deserved tribute to your country, Canada, whose democratic traditions and humanitarian commitments are recognized by all. Canada has always had close and friendly relations with Guinea.

While our work is still taking place today in the atmosphere of conciliation that has been evident in international relations, and is giving rise to legitimate hopes despite the fact there still remain some sensitive spots of instability, it is a fact that mankind has not warded off the evil genie of a perilous nuclear war.

Indeed, we have always, in all international forums, expressed our moral satisfaction at the significant progress made in bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations and we have stressed the imperative need to reverse the negative trend in the nuclear arms race.

The dialogue which has begun between the United States of America and the Soviet Union and which culminated in the signing, on 8 December 1987, of the Treaty

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Missiles - some of which were destroyed last August - is certainly an important step towards nuclear disarmament and our generation is today witnessing the birth of a world of mutual understanding.

But there are still many obstacles and misgivings to be overcome. There is a need for compromise. The two super-Powers, which have imbued their relationships with a spirit of peace and realism by admitting that a nuclear war cannot be won and must therefore never be fought, must further consolidate those new beginnings by speeding up the negotiations on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. My delegation shares the view that this stage should be followed by the establishment of a precise timetable for a step-by-step nuclear disengagement, to include all States that possess nuclear arsenals, since peace must be sought at the universal level on the basis of collective responsibility.

Such an agreement is essential since the quantitative and qualitative production of nuclear weapons, far from guaranteeing the peace and security of a nation, rather generates unnecessary tension and distrust. But the crux of the matter remains unresolved: that is, implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the tenth special session of the General Assembly in 1978.

Thus, given their limited scope and the small number of signatories, bilateral agreements must necessarily be coupled with other multilateral measures to render nuclear disarmament effective and universal. We must, first of all, adopt concrete measures with regard to the arms race, and then measures on the nuclear-weapon arms race. At the earliest possible time, a multilateral nuclear-weapon test-ban treaty should be concluded, despite the differences of opinion that exist as to its urgency and practical means of implementation.

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

That is the only way to prevent the production of new types of weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation, as stated in Stockholm in January 1988 by the Heads of State and Government of India, Argentina, Mexico, Sweden, Tanzania and Greece, all members of the Six-Nation Initiative.

In our view, it is not enough to carry out negotiations on a stage-by-stage basis. There is a need for flexibility, a need to accept and establish an institutional mechanism for world-wide monitoring and verification, as a means first ; for checking on the various treaties, in particular the 1974 Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests, the 1976 Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes and, above all, the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The appeal by the General Assembly to the Conference on Disarmament and to the main nuclear-weapon States continues to be topical. The first step should be for the General Assembly to undertake substantive work and the second, for nuclear States to adopt provisional verifiable measures. Results achieved are not yet satisfactory. It seems that consensus could not be achieved in Geneva.

My delegation attaches the highest importance to the prevention of nuclear war and to the non-use of nuclear weapons. In this context it deplores the fact that to this day, despite repeated appeals by the General Assembly, appropriate measures have not been envisaged to prevent the danger of nuclear winter. In principle, the negotiations should not stall since the Soviet and American leaders have undertaken a formal commitment not to use nuclear arsenals. The nuclear-weapon States, which bear a special responsibility, should agree on a convention in this field. We consider obsolete and dangerous any attempt to link the question of nuclear prevention to that of other armed conflicts. Peace movements and anti-nuclear groups, as well as non-governmental organizations, continue to give us warning.

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

Given the permanent effect of these weapons, a bad mood, a mere accident, a technical error or even human folly, to paraphrase President François Mitterand, could cast mankind into the abyss of annihilation.

In the gamut of binding obligations that must be undertaken, we can mention the arrangement of zones of peace and nuclear-free zones, on the basis of agreements freely entered into by the States of interested regions. Strict respect for such zones by nuclear-weapon States is necessary for the future of a nuclear-free world.

Arrangements of this kind exist in Africa, with the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the Denuclearization of Africa in July 1987; in Latin America with the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967; and in the South Pacific with the Treaty of Rarotonga of 1985.

Constructive proposals on the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, South-East Asia, the Balkans, the Far East, the Mediterranean and the Korean Peninsula also call for careful consideration.

In the case of Africa, preserving peace on the continent is a vital concern, in view of the fact that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the Pretoria racist régime constitutes a real threat to the security of neighbouring States and to the region, as well as to the world. All military collaboration with Pretoria, which maintains its opposition to United Nations decisions, increases the force differential, for which African peoples already pay dearly.

It is high time the arms merchants, who are blinded by their thirst for easy profits, realized that a change of mind is called for in this period of détente and thaw.

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

My delegation is also concerned over the recommendations contained in the Final Document of the first meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in July 1988, in implementation of the initiative taken by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/11 and 42/16, an initiative on the legal status of that region.

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

My country's support for these recommendations stems from its deeply felt desire to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, to ensure its economic, social and cultural development in the context of what we would like to see as egalitarian concerted action.

I should now like to refer to chemical and bacteriological weapons, those diabolical by-products of industry. According to the experts, some 20 States now possess those weapons or are able to produce them. While the Geneva Protocol of 1925 formally prohibits their use, they continue to be used, killing people after putting them through unbearable suffering.

Other actions are being taken to eliminate the temptation to use those weapons. Mutual inspections in the framework of transparency took place in 1987 to that end in the plants of the two super-Powers, and last August the Security Council adopted stringent measures regarding their use. While the principle of verification allows for a resolution of the problem, the verification of production to ensure that it is for civilian purposes has not yet become effective. However, we are hopeful that the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, which have already made some progress, will conclude with the rapid adoption of a convention.

In addition, we should envisage strict measures to ban the practice of dumping radioactive and toxic wastes in various States which are regarded as veritable dumps. These substances destroy our ecological system and human life. Their transportation is in flagrant violation of conventions on the environment and on navigation.

Another area of concern is that of preventing the arms race in outer space. Outer space is the common property of mankind and must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes in the interest of all countries, regardless of their degree of

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

development and in keeping with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 1967.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee - which my delegation proposes should be reconvened early in the 1989 session - and the spirit of paragraph 90 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, new measures to strengthen the effectiveness of the present international legal régime would be useful. In addition to negotiations under way between the two super-Powers, very interesting proposals have been made which deserve serious examination in Geneva.

We note with sadness that some countries are carrying out excessive armament programmes which are often too ambitious in scope, too costly in terms of the resources they absorb and ineffectual, all this at a time when in many parts of our planet millions are dying of famine and from epidemics. This is a tragic situation, given the progress of science and technology, which have given man prodigious capacities for overcoming natural and historical determinism.

Follow up by the international community of the peaceful uses of new technologies, for example, could help build a more prosperous human society. In this context, I wish to quote François Rabelais, a French writer of the fifteenth century, who said: "Science without a conscience does nothing but ruin the soul."

This leads us to consider the relationship between disarmament and development and to proceed to a drastic reduction in military budgets and to the allocation of resources thus released to civilian purposes, in keeping with the Final Document of the international Conference held in New York on that question from 24 August to 11 September 1987.

While it is true that the most serious menace results from the accumulation of nuclear weapons, we must agree that conventional weapons also play an important

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

role in restoring the balance of forces and correcting asymmetries. Their wanton development adds a new dimension to the armaments race and jeopardizes the security of States. After having caused destruction during the Second World War, such weapons continue to kill and maim in regional wars. The two military blocs must follow up their talks to arrive at security based on equitable and balanced measures of reduction of conventional arms and armed forces to the lowest possible levels.

In accordance with this approach, the talks taking place within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, give rise to optimism, since all the parties have realized their obligation to dispel the clouds of suspicion and to establish confidence and détente.

Naturally, in the process of disarmament there are other aspects no less important than those I have mentioned in my statement, such as the establishment of confidence-building measures, the resolution of conflicts, verification of disarmament measures, the exchange of military data and on-site inspections. The end goal of this entire process is to realize general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In this task, Governments and peoples certainly must be heard.

Bilateral measures and multilateral negotiations are not mutually exclusive. They complement each other.

In this connection, the example of the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, held in New York from 31 May to 25 June 1988, which did not produce a final document despite the détente which had occurred in relations between the two super-Powers, underscores the complexity of the task to be carried out by the international community.

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

While that session developed new ideas and placed the debate at a higher level, the absence of agreement, in the preparation of a final document, on questions as basic as those of nuclear testing, naval disarmament and the arms race in outer space, points to the persistence of short-sightedness, which must be reconsidered.

In this connection, we would like to recall that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, whose doctrine stems from the will for peace, adopted a Final Communiqué and a programme of action at the ministerial special session on disarmament of the Co-ordinating Bureau, held in Havana, from 26 to 30 May 1988. These two documents support initiatives which make a useful contribution to the cause of disarmament and international security, in particular the programme of action of India on the creation of a nuclear-free and non-violent world order.

Disarmament is everybody's business and has various aspects. In this context, the negotiating authority of the Conference on Disarmament must be strengthened and the role of the United Nations must be increased. The Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral negotiating body which allows for a better perception of questions in this area. Without doubting its viability, we would wish it to operate more effectively at its next session.

While the Conference at present includes the five nuclear countries, and other military Powers as well as the neutral and non-aligned countries which form the Group of 21, it is sensitive to the relations between the two super-Powers. As far as the United Nations is concerned, we should renew our faith and commitment to its principles and values. The different agreements and treaties should be respected. In that way the central role of the United Nations in the process of disarmament and arms control will be made easier and multilateral negotiations more effective.

The results of the last special session devoted to disarmament, far from discouraging us, should, on the contrary, make us more keen in the pursuit of our

(Mr. Camara, Guinea)

common objectives. It is not easy to achieve consensus on such a thorny issue as disarmament.

The First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament could bridge the gap, since the international climate lends itself to such action.

In conclusion, I should like to say that disarmament, far from being an ideal, is a categorical imperative. Its realization entails revising our way of thinking and acting. In the nuclear era, the use of brute force throughout the world leads to disaster.

Disarmament, a noble objective, cannot be realized without the political will of States, without measures of verification and democratization in international relations.

What is at issue, above all, is the future of the world and peace, which is the primary factor for safeguarding what mankind values most, that is, life on Earth.

Mr. ADAM (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, I wish to congratulate you and the other officers of the Committee on your election.

We are meeting once more this year in an atmosphere of co-operation and special vitality, which comes as a welcome relief from the feelings of frustration that arose from the inability of the international community in the past to achieve progress on disarmament issues and on outstanding regional issues any one of which could lead to military conflict that might possibly escalate and directly jeopardize international peace and security.

The general debate in the General Assembly, in which a large number of Heads of State and Government, as well as Foreign Ministers, spoke, focused attention on the international community's special interest in, and the high priority it accorded to, issues of the unbridled and incessant qualitative and quantitative arms race and its direct and serious military, economic and social implications for mankind's security and indeed for the future of the planet.

During the general debate in the General Assembly, certain Heads of State or Government put forward important views on disarmament and the promotion of international peace and security. Some of them supported existing initiatives, among them the following: the convening of an international conference of all countries and signatories to the 1925 Protocol for the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, with a view to preventing the deterioration of that Protocol; more multilateral co-operation in stopping of proliferation of nuclear weapons; the creation of an international organization on outer space; the creation of a system of records under the auspices of the United Nations to focus on conventional weapon sales and transfers; the convening of the Security Council at the Foreign Minister level to consider this important issue; the monitoring of nuclear explosions throughout the world; the creation of an international system to control and

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

monitor nuclear explosions through the use of satellites; the establishment of a United Nations group of experts to evaluate and forecast in the field of modern technology; and the establishment of an international system for environmental security.

All those initiatives stemmed initially from a genuine sense of the danger to mankind of the proliferation of the nuclear arms race and its development day in and day out, as well as the development and production of other kinds of weapon that are excessively injurious and capable of destroying man and his environment.

All those initiatives have arisen in the propitious atmosphere that obtains as a result of the present understanding between the two super-Powers following their signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles and their statement of the goal of effecting a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic arms. These are commendable steps because they have placed the world for the first time on the right path to disarmament. We can say that the world has begun an arduous journey requiring patience, collective will and resolute action.

Before us is an agenda replete with important issues of which we are seized every year. I do not know whether it is fortunate or unfortunate that this session is being held immediately after the holding of the third special session devoted to disarmament, which was unable to reach a consensus final document. There are those who maintain that that session led to a convergence of different views, lessened the confrontational approach adopted by some, and reinforced the multilateral negotiations. Others say the international community has lost a golden opportunity to arrive at a specific disarmament programme, especially given the present international circumstances, as a result of the inflexibility of certain delegations.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

All of this is bound to cast a shadow over the work of the First Committee this year. But there can be no denying certain obvious facts of current international life, such as the improvement in the relationship between the two super-Powers and its effect on the course of world events; the improved situation as regards many acute regional conflicts and the first steps that have been taken to end some of them, except for the Middle East question, which poses the greatest danger to international peace and security; and the recovery by the United Nations of its usurped prestige because of its recent commendable efforts to take steps to resolve long-standing crises that have jeopardized international and regional peace and security. The awarding to the United Nations peace-keeping forces of this year's Nobel Peace Prize is ample testimony to the role the Organization can play in maintaining international peace and security.

Here it behoves me to refer to certain issues to which we attach special importance in the field of disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security, as follows.

Despite the beginning of the phased disarmament process by the two super-Powers, we think it necessary to inform the international community as now represented in multilateral bodies - foremost among them the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament - of the results of those efforts, because we believe that of necessity the disarmament process requires concerted efforts, both bilateral and multilateral.

By that we mean that adapting the negotiations of the two super-Powers in the framework of their strategies and national security is not enough. They should be expanded so as to have an international character and so as to free the smaller countries from polarization. There should be a specific programme for the process of nuclear disarmament, based on agreement on the immediate and complete cessation of all nuclear explosions in all environments, and hence the removal of all the

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

difficulties connected with concluding a comprehensive convention in this regard - instead of the present approach, which calls for the cessation of nuclear tests in phases. The non-nuclear States should not be victims of the use of, or threat of the use of, nuclear weapons against them. This includes racist régimes that have nuclear capability, such as those of South Africa and Israel. There should be respect for the desire of the non-nuclear States to create nuclear-weapon-free zones and denuclearized zones, such as Africa, as well as zones of peace, such as the Indian Ocean, as an effective means of stopping the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and helping to ease international tension. It is necessary to curb the proliferation of the nuclear arms race in all environments and spheres and also to conclude a mandatory comprehensive convention in this regard.

The burial of toxic and radioactive wastes through certain transnational corporations in the territories and on the coasts of certain developing countries, especially in Africa, is a matter that should be confronted with determination. This matter involves certain serious and immoral practices that jeopardize man and his environment. In this regard, we support all proposals aimed at controlling this practice. We wish to pay a tribute to the Organization of African Unity, which has been vigilant on this issue and attaches the greatest importance to it.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

We wish also to commend the recent general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which condemned this practice directly. We also espouse and support the programmes of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in this respect.

Conventional disarmament is one of the most important issues on which we should focus attention in order to remove the hotbeds of tension that perpetuate the circle of political, military and strategic polarization. There should be an international mechanism to control the illegal transfer of conventional weapons to the countries of the developing world. At the same time there should be a recognition of the right of a developing country to preserve its security with a minimum amount of arms.

In this respect we do not agree with those who maintain that the developing countries contribute to fanning the flames of the conventional arms race. It may be necessary to revitalize the existing mechanisms of disarmament, foremost of which at the United Nations are the Security Council and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, in order to fulfil their tasks and to enable the non-nuclear States to participate in the negotiations on disarmament in pursuance of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament.

Efforts should be made and the political will should be displayed to implement the programme of work formulated by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, including non-military threats faced by developing countries. Modern technology, which is considered one of the most conspicuous achievements of this age, could be a double-edged weapon if it is abused. Hence it should be directed towards development and progress rather than wishing towards stepping up the war machine and increased destruction day after day.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

In this respect we should pay tribute to the meeting organized by a group of leading scientists, the J. D. Bernal World Scientific Conference on Security and Disarmament which was held in New York from 27 to 30 May during the third special session devoted to disarmament and which recognized the clear link between disarmament on the one hand and security and social and economic justice on the other. Among the recommendations of that meeting was a call for all scientists to pledge not to use their knowledge for purposes that would be harmful to man and life. It is, so to speak, the conscience of a select group that has become aware of the dangerous implications for humanity of the abuse of modern science.

We attach special importance to safeguards and inspection, especially the role of the IAEA, as a necessary and mandatory procedure for all States and as an effective method to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their secret possession by certain countries, as indicated by some press reports recently.

The issue of supporting the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its comprehensiveness has become an imperative at present. The promotion of efforts to reinforce international security should be continued without ceasing. The recognition by all of the dangerousness of concentrating conventional and other forces in such an excessive manner in Western Europe and the successful result of the Stockholm Conference has greatly contributed to the acceptance of the principles of confidence-building in reinforcing disarmament. The implementation of the Stockholm document has given a better forecasting ability in the military field. The follow-up work in Vienna has been conducive to a continuation of these efforts, especially the negotiations concerning conventional disarmament in Europe between countries of the Warsaw Pact and the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

Stemming from the aforesaid, it is necessary to promote and reinforce co-operation in the Mediterranean among the non-aligned countries there on the one hand and the member countries of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. The Mediterranean has been important throughout history as a strategic and commercial sea lane with links to both east and west; hence there should be definitive solutions for the chronic problems affecting the area, the foremost of which is the Middle East issue, which is closely linked to the cause of the Palestinian people and Israeli practices in the Arab region.

Human conduct remains an important element and mover in the course of events in the world in all circumstances. Consequently, in order to rid humanity of the nuclear threat it is necessary to continue to address public opinion and to alert it to the real danger of resorting to nuclear arms as a deterrent.

We call for more regional centres for peace and disarmament and for efforts to deepen the concepts reinforced by the World Disarmament Campaign day after day. Recently we have witnessed the increasing activity of non-governmental organizations in strongly opposing the spiralling arms race. We must commend their meritorious efforts in this respect. We have also witnessed an increasing awareness on the part of public opinion of the genuine danger resulting from the arms race and its negative implications for the life of man in all respects. We must keep this constructive momentum going. Public opinion can achieve much. When political institutions fail it is due to the fact that they are governed by their desire to stress national security requirements above all else. In the world today - a world which is armed to the hilt and has enough weapons to destroy itself many times over - that desire has often proved counterproductive.

Mr. GBREHO (Ghana): Because of an unwritten rule in this Committee, which my delegation fully supports, I trust that you, Sir, will understand when my delegation limits its introductory remarks to a mere expression of the pleasure of the Ghana delegation at seeing you and other members of the Bureau in charge of the Committee's work for this session.

Since this is the first session of the Committee since the General Assembly's fifteenth special session I should like to begin the contribution of the Ghana delegation with a brief reference to the conclusions of that fifteenth special session.

International efforts are being made at all levels to transform international relations from being soured by conflict to constructive dialogue and from distrust to friendship. The change has come about because of the keen awareness of the tragic consequences of war for nations and peoples in the nuclear age. We are all aware that stored around the world and under the oceans are more than enough nuclear weapons to destroy life totally on our planet. We all want to see progress in disarmament and we all want Governments to act - in other words, we all want to live.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

The signing in June of the historic Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - between the Soviet Union and the United States not only represents a narrowing of the political gulf between the super-Powers but also offers hope against nuclear annihilation. It was that hope that fired the imagination of delegations that attended the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third devoted to disarmament, which was held almost simultaneously with the Moscow summit meetings. Indeed, the high level of representation at that session by Governments and non-governmental organisations was itself an expression of that hope. It was therefore disappointing that the fifteenth special session failed to adopt the set of proposals contained in the final draft document.

It was clear that due to narrow national interests, some delegations were not prepared to contribute to what was perceived as the general consensus. There was even an unjustifiable, if not surprising questioning from some quarters of the validity of the 1978 Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The numerous concessions made by the non-aligned and other neutral countries, in an effort to contribute general consensus, were never reciprocated. Perhaps the international political climate was not as propitious as had been projected. And yet, when the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was successfully held in 1982, it was against the background of intractable regional conflicts and East-West tension. In 1988, however, conditions were much more favourable, thus making that conference a potentially historical turning-point in relations between the two ideological blocs.

Despite the disappointment felt at the lack of success of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, it is the view of the Ghana delegation that the international community should not be discouraged. This Committee, in our view, should strive towards maintaining the momentum generated at

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

the first two special sessions. We should take advantage of the current waves of peace around the globe, the ongoing dialogue and understanding between the super-powers and the general return to a commitment to the United Nations or multilateralism to pursue the numerous proposals for peace and security on which consensus already exists. Those proposals, in our view, should now be formulated into General Assembly resolutions which will serve as guidelines for future action.

Proposals relating to improvement in the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission, as well as this Committee, could, for instance, be examined with the view to formulating a resolution which, in its implementation, can further strengthen the procedures prescribed in existing General Assembly resolutions on the rationalization of these important bodies.

The preliminary exchange of views last week on the methods of work in this Committee clearly shows that the issue of rationalization is still alive. Similarly, proposals for strengthening the role of the Secretary-General and for promoting greater disarmament activities in the Department of Disarmament Affairs, in the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the World Disarmament Campaign, by non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, also deserve support and follow-up action.

The issue of participation in the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament by observer Member States should equally engage our serious attention. There is a need, in our view, for a clear political directive by the General Assembly on this particular issue.

The United Nations fellowship and training programme instituted at the twelfth special session has made a significant contribution to the understanding of disarmament and related issues. In recent years, however, the programme has not only received lukewarm support from some delegations, and the number and duration of fellowships been reduced, but one delegation has also consistently voted against

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

the renewal of the programme. The proposal to return the programme to the level established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in our view, should be pursued assiduously by the Committee. In the light of all the possibilities to which I have referred, the ideas and proposals in the draft final document ought to be formulated into purposeful and action-oriented General Assembly resolutions. The Ghana delegation would be more than willing to co-operate with like-minded delegations in pursuit of this objective.

With regard to the issues on which fundamental differences exist, namely, a total nuclear-test ban, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, naval disarmament, nuclear-free zones, conventional arms, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and the relationship between disarmament and development, my delegation considers it necessary and worthwhile for negotiations to be resumed in the near future. While my delegation would support, in principle, the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament sometime in the future, we are of the view that the timing and preparations are of crucial importance. It would not be prudent to rush into the holding of another international conference unless such an initiative enjoyed the support of all, particularly the nuclear-weapon States. The efforts deployed in pursuit of nuclear disarmament can hardly afford another failure.

The truth of the matter is that the absence of agreement on the outstanding issues was not due to any lack of skill in drafting, nor the lack of willingness to make concessions by the neutral countries, but rather due to the reluctance of some influential countries to exercise political will. Efforts of the Committee should therefore be directed to the narrowing of those differences which were responsible for blocking the adoption of a consensus document. To those delegations whose rigid positions and attitudes prevented what could otherwise have been a milestone

(Mr. Gbeno, Ghana)

in the United Nations disarmament efforts, we again address an appeal to reconsider their position. Perhaps one should also draw attention to paragraph 28 of the Final Document, which states that:

"All the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations. Consequently, all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament. All States have the right to participate in disarmament negotiations. They have the right to participate on an equal footing in those multilateral disarmament negotiations which have a direct bearing on their national security." (Para. 28, resolution S-10/2)

We may even add that all States therefore expect movement towards success.

Let me now turn to the agenda items before the Committee. The Ghana delegation continues to support and uphold the Final Document of the twelfth special session as the basic framework for disarmament. Its principles and priorities are as valid today as they were 10 years ago. The Ghana delegation therefore counsels against any move aimed at either modifying, watering down or replacing the document.

The nuclear-test-ban issue remains a major disarmament question. Ghana attaches great importance to the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. As we have repeated over the years, it is the practical way of de-escalating the nuclear-arms race. A test ban, in our view, must be comprehensive and should cover all environments, including the so-called peaceful tests and those conducted for "improving military technology" or "in the interests of the national economy", to be effective.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

We see a comprehensive test ban as the litmus test of national commitment to the objectives of general and complete disarmament. The stage-by-stage approach announced by the United States and the Soviet Union falls short, in our view, of clear and unambiguous commitment to general and complete nuclear disarmament. It is our view that the two nuclear Powers, which together possess enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons, should agree as soon as possible on a moratorium, to be followed by substantive negotiations for a comprehensive test ban. The submission of national data on nuclear explosions merely in order to demonstrate faithful compliance with the requirements of General Assembly resolution 41/59 N could not, in our view, be a substitute for a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Ghana welcomes the proposals for the convening of an international conference that would convert the 1963 partial test-ban treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We would appeal to all, particularly the depositary Governments, to demonstrate greater sincerity towards ending the nuclear arms race by supporting the proposals. To those opposing an amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty on the grounds of East-West security balances and the so-called theory of nuclear deterrence one can only say that such a theory seriously ignores the underlying mistrust and suspicion which have had the disturbing effect of turning Europe into perhaps the largest theatre of weapons concentration.

In our view conventional disarmament should receive no less attention than nuclear disarmament. It is gratifying to note that greater attention is being increasingly focused on this issue. We think this is a healthy development, given the enormous expenditure involved and the extensive use of conventional weapons in regional conflicts. There is always the distinct possibility that those conflicts will deteriorate into a nuclear encounter. Quite apart from the technological refinement of such weapons, the sale and international transfer of conventional weapons have become a disturbing phenomenon which should be urgently addressed by

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

the international community. The manner in which regional conflicts have been waged, especially in recent times, is testimony to these legitimate concerns. Efforts at reducing and limiting conventional weapons should focus on suppliers as well as on buyers. It is unacceptable that countries having the critical responsibility towards their people for development should have to expend the small resources at their disposal in stocking conventional weapons.

The Government of Ghana is committed to the peaceful use of outer space and is therefore opposed to the extension of any military competition or activity into outer space. Ghana's stand is consistent with United Nations resolutions which have reaffirmed that outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is a common heritage of mankind and thus must be preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes in the interest of all nations. In view of the ongoing developments with regard to space weaponry, this Committee should call for far-reaching measures that would halt the development of space weapons, particularly anti-satellite weapons, as well as a workable and effective verification system to ensure a ban on space weapons.

The Ghana delegation has consistently supported resolutions dealing with the establishment of nuclear-free zones in the various regions of the world. We do so because the establishment of nuclear-free zones has the potential of strengthening the non-proliferation régime as well as assuring us all safety from nuclear confrontation.

Two decades ago African heads of State, in their wisdom, declared the continent of Africa a nuclear-free zone. Although that declaration has been affirmed by the United Nations, its objectives have still not been realized in the region because of the nuclear-weapon ambitions of the apartheid régime of South Africa.

(Mr. Gbeh, Ghana)

At the Vienna Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held a few weeks ago an attempt by African delegations and their non-aligned colleagues to expel the representatives of the apartheid régime from membership of the IAEA was again thwarted by the friends of South Africa, supported, regrettably, by other countries which have traditionally professed friendship with and support for Africa. We would like to hope that those countries will now reconsider their positions on this important issue, with a view to prevailing upon the apartheid régime to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty. We also called upon all countries which had not yet done so to accede to the Treaty, and we do so again today. We can hardly emphasize more strongly that universal accession to the Treaty is vital for the attainment of global nuclear disarmament.

The conclusion of a convention banning chemical weapons was again a recurring theme in the general debate which ended last Thursday in the General Assembly. This reflects the increasing universal concern for the almost routine use, of late, of the banned weapon to settle domestic as well as external conflicts. We identify totally with that concern, on legal, moral and humanitarian grounds. Ghana supports the call for an international conference of the parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to discuss appropriate international measures that could stem the current unbridled and inhumane use of such weapons. We would also urge the Conference on Disarmament to redouble its efforts and to conclude a draft convention as early as possible.

We appeal to all to exercise the necessary political will to help resolve the outstanding sensitive and technical problems. In the meantime we call on the Security Council, especially the permanent members, to exercise all the power and influence at their disposal to ensure that no chemical weapons - none at all weapons - are resorted to in the prosecution of local or external conflicts.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

The issue of verification of compliance with disarmament agreements is an important part of the disarmament process. In spite of technological advances in the area of verification, mistrust and suspicion continue to hamper the disarmament process. Ghana therefore supports the Six-Nation Initiative of February last which calls for the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system under the United Nations. The practical benefits of such a system would, in our view, far outweigh the financial costs involved. We feel that this Committee should pursue the idea. We would like also to place on record our appreciation of the modest co-operation achieved by the super-Powers in this regard. Imperfect as the procedures are at present, we believe that verification constitutes an encouraging beginning which should be built upon.

Finally, Sir, it was gratifying to note, when you outlined the organization of the work of the Committee last week that the Committee will follow closely the practice established during the last two sessions in the judicious use of its time and resources. The Ghana delegation also appreciates the proposal that you will take up with the Friends of the Chairman the possibility of regrouping the agenda items allocated to this Committee and other suggestions aimed at further improving the working methods of the Committee.

I should like to propose that consideration be given in future to allocating a little more time to item 70, which deals with Antarctica. In our view, four meetings - which in reality means only two meetings for the debate on the items and two meetings for consideration of and decision-making on the relevant drafts - are grossly inadequate for this important agenda item. This arrangement plays into the

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

hands of those who would wish to deny delegations the opportunity of engaging in the fullest discussion of this important item. Every security and disarmament issue on the agenda of the United Nations is important. It is therefore the view of Ghana that delegations should be allowed a fairly balanced opportunity to engage in the discussion of all security and disarmament issues.

Disarmament is an issue that requires the undivided and serious attention of the international community, because it has, above all else, the potential to spell doom for us all. The views that my delegation has expressed today are but a few of those considerations that should assist in making disarmament a reality. Our views are by no means exhaustive and, if they differ from those of some of our interlocutors, that difference in itself merely testifies to how much work lies ahead in reaching the international consensus that alone would bring us to our objective of complete and total disarmament. In this daunting task, the Committee owes it to the international community to deliberate and act with resolve and good faith. My delegation stands ready to contribute to the fulfilment of this solemn responsibility of saving our world from untimely and senseless perdition.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind members that the list of speakers for this debate will closed at 6 p.m. today.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.