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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

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

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka): An interesting irony presented itself when the United States-Soviet summit meeting in Moscow coincided with the convening in New York of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The summit meeting, involving the leaders of the two most powerful States in the world, represented yet another peak in a series of developments that have been held up as an indication of the success that could crown the pursuit of the process known as "the bilateral approach". The third special session devoted to disarmament, involving as it did all the States Members of the United Nations, embodied the "other" process, that of the multilateral approach.

The third special session devoted to disarmament rightly applauded the achievements of the new positive relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, a multilateral paean, one might say, celebrating a bilateral triumph. The United States-Soviet Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, as a dramatic manifestation of the new relationship, was enthusiastically welcomed as the first real, tangible measure of disarmament, as distinct from mere arms control or arms limitation. Moreover, agreements had been reached by the two leaders for the early conclusion, by their respective States, of a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic offensive arms, as well as for step-by-step negotiations with a view to the ultimate ending of testing.

A few remained skeptical and even apprehensive that the success attending the bilateral approach could lead the major Powers to neglect of the United Nations

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framework and to a further erosion of multilateral approaches. Nevertheless, the predominant feeling generated was one of optimism, and it was hoped that, given the vastly improved and encouraging climate, the third special session devoted to disarmament could itself indeed bring forth further positive conclusions. In effect, the international community, like Oliver Twist, dared to ask for more.

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

However, our bowl of expectation was not filled, and the third special session devoted to disarmament could not ladle out clear achievements in the form of agreed consensus conclusions. This does not mean, however, that the broad, global process that the third special session devoted to disarmament advocated and embodied in itself is to be written off. If time ran out before a consensus could be finally reached and documented, it must only mean that the effort must be continued.

The factors coming together at the third special session devoted to disarmament were highly complex and, although the sense of those hectic weeks is not recorded in any agreed language, valuable insights were offered both into the entire array of disarmament issues and into the factors that help as well as hinder the pursuit of a genuine sense of international peace and security that would content all States. Momentous, bewildering developments that are still unfolding came into focus at the third special session devoted to disarmament. At the very least, the session was a sobering experience. It forced attention on the imperative of international co-operation and revealed the unrealized potential offered by the United Nations for such co-operation. It also had to contend seriously with deeply-ingrained national perceptions of security and, I might add, insecurity that defined the perimeters of such co-operation.

Our consideration of this year's agenda is bound, in a sense, to be conditioned by circumstances and factors not dissimilar to those in operation during the third special session. Nevertheless, the Committee can hardly trudge along the ruts of routine and some changes, in both approach and substance, are inevitable.

New approaches to our work have been suggested. In terms of procedures and working methods, we are in your capable hands, Sir, and my delegation will fully co-operate with you and your Bureau in this task. We have already seen the careful advance consultations and preparations you have undertaken and the quietly

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efficient manner in which you have guided our work. It augurs well to have you in the Chair. This is a sincere comment, and I hope I am not violating Rule 110.

The rationalization of the Committee's work and procedures should make possible a more sensible and economical utilization of the resources, including time, that are available to it. Such an exercise will prove useful should it help to provide a more functional and efficient working environment in which we can address matters of substance without hindrance.

As regards United Nations machinery, my delegation welcomes much of the tentative understandings reached during the third special session devoted to disarmament, inter alia, on the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, the First Committee, the Secretariat's Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean as well as such bodies as the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). We would have liked a stronger role for the Secretary-General. We would have favoured a more definite assurance of financial support for UNIDIR, and we would like to have seen an expansion of the Fellowship Programme on Disarmament.

The understandings reached in Working Group III of the third special session devoted to disarmament were part of a package which, unfortunately, could not be neatly wrapped up before we finished our work. It would not be very simple, therefore, bodily to lift the conclusions of Working Group III for automatic adoption here. However, I am confident that the tentative conclusions reached had sufficient support by themselves to stand the test of independent scrutiny in the First Committee and to be confirmed again for further action.

Matters of substance will, of course, prove much more difficult.

The nuclear threat, like death, levels all States. Yet, unlike death, a nuclear holocaust is not inevitable and can certainly be averted. The two major

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Powers have expressed their conviction that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. They have committed themselves to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Using other criteria - emphasizing more perhaps the moral principle than the pragmatic rationale - the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries over two decades ago advocated an approach which in effect renounces nuclear weapons as a means of ensuring security. The basic premise of the Movement - that the amassing of arms cannot promote enduring security - is implicitly acknowledged in the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) now being implemented. We do not underestimate the conceptual barriers that need to be overcome, given the doctrinal constraints within which security concerns have been considered so far. A beginning has been made, however, that needs our every encouragement. The Moscow Summit has set in motion a further series of positive initiatives that augur well.

More can be achieved, however, if the whole complex of nuclear issues is considered within a wider global framework than has so far been possible.

The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, although consisting of 40 Member States, is of a nature sufficiently representative to deal with these issues. Regrettably, however, it has not been possible for the Conference on Disarmament to exercise the negotiating mandate entrusted to it in respect of the vital nuclear items on its agenda. No progress has been made, for example, on the question of halting the testing of nuclear weapons.

The intent of the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty was eventually to terminate all tests rather than to regulate and thereby implicitly condone testing below a certain threshold. The call for universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which Sri Lanka strongly supports, will be that much more powerful, that much more attractive to non-parties if there can be

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wider participation in negotiating on nuclear issues, particularly in respect to testing. Sri Lanka will support all efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation Treaty régime and help in progress towards a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. We welcome the commencement of steps towards the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty. Sri Lanka has joined Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and Yugoslavia in requesting a conference of States parties to the 1963 Treaty to consider its conversion into a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a parallel measure to multilateral consideration of the issue in the Conference on Disarmament.

An example of the efficacy of the multilateral approach is clearly provided by the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament towards the conclusion of a treaty to ban the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Issues of great complexity with wide-ranging implications affecting State and even non-State interests are being negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, proving the capacity of that multilateral forum. This has in no way detracted from the considerable bilateral work the two major chemical-weapons possessors, who have announced important initiatives in that regard. A proposal has been made, with growing support, for an ad hoc political conference to take place in Paris early next year to impart a sense of urgency and give fresh impetus to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, and to solemnly confirm adherence to the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

It would be most appropriate for the First Committee this year to work for the adoption by consensus of a single unified resolution as an unequivocal international statement against the use of chemical weapons.

Had the Conference on Disarmament been able to exercise its negotiating mandate in respect to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, tangible progress on the issue would have been possible, as has been the case as far as

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chemical weapons are concerned. The common interest of all humanity in the exploration and development of outer space for peaceful purposes has long since been recognized and should be the basis on which the future of that environment must be secured. The accelerated progress in space technology, while opening up virtually unlimited horizons, should not be permitted to lead to a transformation of this last frontier into yet another environment for armed confrontation. While the existing legal régime applicable to outer space has served an undeniable function, the dramatic pace of technological developments has exposed certain dangers that were not perhaps earlier foreseen. The recognition that the régime cannot by itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space must lead us to consolidate and reinforce that régime through a concerted international effort.

With the support and encouragement of the non-aligned States in this Committee, Egypt and Sri Lanka have in the last few years presented a draft resolution aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space and at promoting the development of its reaches exclusively for peaceful purposes. Accordingly, my delegation will be submitting a draft to the Committee and, as in the past, we would be happy to consider suggestions from all delegations with a view to securing the broadest possible extent of acceptance, if not consensus.



(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

Another disarmament initiative of special concern to Sri Lanka in which consensus has been sought, and in this case achieved, is in respect of the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. The States of the Indian Ocean region met in 1979 and adopted seven principles of agreement for the implementation of the declaration. Among those principles are the non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the freedom of peaceful navigation. A decision was taken by consensus in 1979 to convene a conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to achieve the objectives of the declaration. Regrettably, the conference has had to be postponed repeatedly. A new target date not later than 1990 has now been accepted by consensus, and work on matters of substance, as well as procedure relating to the conference, is proceeding satisfactorily. As the report of the Ad Hoc Committee will be considered separately, I will not go into detail on that matter, but I felt that I should mention this exercise in consensus because we have now reached the important point of putting that consensus into action.

Notwithstanding the priority accorded to negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the grave dangers posed by the uninhibited escalation in the production, sophistication, acquisition and illegal transfer of conventional weapons need to be addressed. The transfer of arms to irregular groups threatening the security and stability of small non-aligned countries is a particular phenomenon that requires to be halted through global or regional measures.

My delegation has chosen to concentrate on just a few items on our agenda, partly because of our special interest in them, but more so because they all require approaches which would need to take into account the interests of all. Principles advocated by the group of non-aligned countries for over two decades are now being vindicated through their practical application. The important thing for humanity is that a start has indeed been made by the two most powerful States to

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conceive of and build security by means other than the amassing of arms. What flows from this is that viable security would need to take into account not merely military aspects but also economic, social and environmental compulsions. Negotiations on such matters of universal concern must ripple out to include all States.

I end my statement by paraphrasing in a few sentences what the head of my delegation, Foreign Minister Hameed of Sri Lanka, said last month at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. He said that the imperative for international co-operation applies to political and security issues, to economic and environmental issues and to social and humanitarian issues. Arguments and appeals based on justice, morality and compassion and on the injunctions of the United Nations Charter have been advanced but, unfortunately, have not always been heeded. If these need a further justification, he said, there is the pragmatic logic of necessity - the compulsion of mutual interest. We are all links in a chain of human and national interdependence. The prospect for human survival and development will only be as strong as the weakest link in that chain.

Mr. KARHILO (Finland): Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Finland welcomes your efforts towards the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. Both the more effective use of the limited time available and improvements in the organization of the substantive work, including the agenda itself, are necessary if we are to have a better chance of seeking common ground to work on, whenever possible. Consensus is basically an expression of political will and should therefore never become a victim of ineffective organization of work.

This year - as indeed already last year - the overall situation in the disarmament field is one of solid hope: solid in the sense that the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the

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Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - the first-ever agreement to provide for actual nuclear disarmament, has been duly ratified and its implementation is proceeding well; hope in the sense that the INF Treaty is but a beginning and should become the first step in a process leading to a lesser role for weapons, whether nuclear or conventional, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Of course, such a sanguine assessment of the overall situation is necessarily based on progress achieved in the bilateral United States-Soviet negotiations. Multilateral disarmament negotiations, which, after all, should be the principal focus of this Committee, have no comparable results to show. This should be our common concern.

Addressing the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Prime Minister of Finland spoke of a twin crisis that multilateral disarmament on a global scale appears to be undergoing. One is a crisis of confidence, and the other is a crisis of credibility. As he said, the two are not unrelated. There seems to be less confidence in multilateral negotiations as a means of addressing global security concerns through disarmament. And when there is less confidence less is achieved. And when less is achieved credibility suffers. A vicious circle has been created.

The third special session on disarmament was a serious effort to break out of that vicious circle. Unfortunately the expectations regarding the outcome did not materialize, and the session could not reach consensus on a comprehensive final document. We sincerely regret that, but do not want to judge the usefulness of the session on that ground. It has to be recognized that differences were narrowed on a number of important subjects in the course of the session. We welcome that. The deliberations of this Committee will show whether those elements of rapprochement can be translated into consensus language of a kind that constitutes progress.

(Mr. Karhilo, Finland)

We also recognize that the third special session provided an opportunity for States to raise, at a high political level, issues which they deem important and worthy of consideration in a global context.

Finland felt all along that the third special session should have paid particular attention to issues which have clearly grown in global importance since the first special session and on which the final document of that session is clearly inadequate. That is what the term "forward-looking" meant, and means, to us. We called for, and focused on, conventional disarmament, confidence-building measures, naval disarmament and the enhancement of the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

On naval armaments and disarmament, Finland, together with Indonesia and Sweden, presented a working paper outlining several examples of confidence-building measures in that area. We will continue to seek support for those suggestions within the United Nations context. This is why we are again co-sponsoring a resolution on this subject.

As regards the role of the United Nations in disarmament, we continue to believe that verification is one area where our Organization could usefully assist Member States. With this in mind we are co-sponsoring a verification resolution, the adoption of which by consensus would mean a significant step forward. As a first step, we would welcome an in-depth study of a verification role for the United Nations. In our view, such a study should, among other things, examine the idea of establishing a verification data base, to be compiled and managed by the Secretariat. As deliberations at the United Nations Disarmament Commission and at the third special session have shown, the data-base idea enjoys wide support among Member States.

(Mr. Karhilo, Finland)

In an increasingly intertwined world, a sober and realistic multilateral approach to disarmament has become more and more important. The multilateral approach is necessary if we as the international community want to have an effective ban on chemical weapons, if we want to monitor in order to ensure that no nuclear tests are conducted anywhere, if we want to make progress in limiting and reducing conventional weapons, and if we want to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Concrete progress in the form of international agreements on any of those issues would be the best riposte to the claim that multilateralism in disarmament does not work. It is the only way to break out of the vicious circle of little confidence and few results.

In our view, a convention effectively banning all chemical weapons everywhere for all time is the most urgent item on the multilateral disarmament agenda.

Finland is deeply troubled over the recent use of chemical weapons in and around the war between Iran and Iraq. The reasons for our concern are clear: the use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of international law as defined in the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Repeated use of chemical weapons undermines the authority of the Protocol to the ultimate detriment of the security of all States. If belief in the military utility of these weapons were to gain ground, the proliferation of chemical weapons would be all the harder to prevent. But prevented it must be. We are convinced that chemical proliferation, just like nuclear proliferation, does not solve the security problems of any State. It only aggravates them.

Chemical proliferation is a grave threat to international security also in the light of the widening availability of missile technology. The spectre of long-range chemical warfare should be everyone's concern.

(Mr. Karhilo, Finland)

In our view, the best and certainly the most effective means of dealing with the menace of the recurrent use of chemical weapons and of their proliferation is rapidly to conclude the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention under way at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The objective of prohibiting these despicable weapons is endorsed by all States without exception. Numerous draft resolutions adopted by consensus in this Committee attest to that. The negotiations in Geneva are at an advanced stage. The objective is realizable. The urgency of the problem is manifest. This is the opportunity to show that multilateralism works.

Finland, although not a member of the Conference on Disarmament, has taken an active interest in the chemical weapons negotiations, and particularly in the complex verification requirements of the future convention. Our long-standing research effort into various verification methods aims at laying a solid, scientifically tested basis for the procedures required to ensure confidence in the convention. The results of our research are freely available to all those interested in them.

As I have already indicated, the rapid conclusion of a chemical weapons convention comes first in our priorities. At the same time, Finland is ready to participate in any complementary international effort to uphold the authority of the Geneva Protocol and to discourage the proliferation of chemical weapons. Therefore, Finland welcomes whole-heartedly the initiatives made at this session by the Presidents of the United States and France regarding the strengthening of the Geneva Protocol. It is our intention to give a positive reply to the invitation by the Government of France to attend an ad hoc conference in Paris next January.

(Mr. Karhilo, Finland)

Another basis for complementary action is resolution 42/37 C, adopted by consensus last year. That resolution provides a procedure for investigating reports of the possible use of chemical weapons. The importance of developing that procedure was widely recognized at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Recent events show that there is a particular need to develop it further so as to secure the full, and even automatic, co-operation of Member States with the Secretary-General in carrying out investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons.

The accumulation of conventional arms and forces constitutes a real threat to international peace. These weapons, which are subject to rapid technological development and whose destructive capacity is increasing at an accelerating pace, are actually being used in various parts of the world. The conventional-arms race must be addressed both globally and regionally. Europe offers new and promising prospects in that respect. In Europe, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, important results in the area of confidence-building and security-building measures have been achieved. The successful implementation of those measures would pave the way for negotiations to reduce conventional arms and forces in the region.

Nuclear disarmament is the primary responsibility of those who possess nuclear arms. Preventing nuclear war is the responsibility of all of us. All of us can and should contribute to preventing nuclear war by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Adhering to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the means for doing that.

In our view, the non-proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards régime are vital for international security. They need to be preserved, indeed strengthened. Measures to that end should be the focus of the

(Mr. Karhilo, Finland)

1990 review conference. A number of such measures were outlined in a memorandum which Finland together with the other Nordic countries presented to the third special session on disarmament. Those measures include acceptance by all non-nuclear-weapon States of full-scope IAEA safeguards as well as measures to assure the long-term supply of nuclear material, equipment and technology in a predictable manner with appropriate non-proliferation assurances. We urge that such measures be seriously considered.

The international non-proliferation régime would, in our view, be strengthened by the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. The technical obstacles to its verification have for all practical purposes been overcome. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community, is the appropriate forum for dealing with this issue. After all, the nuclear-test ban is the first item on the agenda of the Conference, and all five nuclear-weapon States are represented in the Conference.

We are convinced that many aspects of a future test-ban treaty could be elaborated at the Conference on Disarmament, even in the absence of formal negotiations. There is no short cut to a test ban. Work is needed, especially on the critically important verification provisions. Here the Group of Scientific Experts, with active Finnish participation, plays an indispensable role in developing and testing the necessary technical procedures.



(Mr. Karhilo, Finland)

We note the fact that the stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing issues now under way between the Soviet Union and the United States are making significant progress. However, the multilateral approach to the issue of nuclear tests remains as valid and vital as before. But if the bilateral approach brings interim results, such as reductions in the number and yield of nuclear tests, we should all welcome them.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus far been addressed by three former Chairmen, and it is always a special pleasure for me to introduce one of my predecessors. Again such a moment has arrived, for I have the great pleasure of welcoming back to the Committee and calling on Ambassador Tom Vraalsen of Norway, who was the Committee's Chairman in 1983 and to whom all of us owe a special debt of gratitude, for it was under his chairmanship that the clustering system of voting used by the Committee was started.

Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your very kind words. It is indeed a privilege for me to address the First Committee under your chairmanship. I should like to extend to you my most sincere congratulations upon your election to the high office of Chairman. I know you very well, and I feel confident that with your experience and your diplomatic skill and wisdom you will be able to bring the challenging task ahead of us in the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. I would also express my hope that during your chairmanship we can take the rationalization of the Committee's work one step further. Nobody is better qualified than you to do just that.

I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

Norway had hoped that the recent positive developments in bilateral and regional disarmament and arms control forums would facilitate consensus on a substantive concluding document from the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Although that unfortunately was not the case, we should not overlook the fact that a thorough and constructive debate on the whole range of disarmament issues took place, narrowing differences of view on many important questions. In our opinion that should provide a good basis for further work on multilateral disarmament issues.

In the field of bilateral arms control, the momentum generated by the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - has continued and gives hope for drastic reductions in the field of strategic nuclear weapons as well. Although the last summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Moscow did not result in an agreement reducing strategic nuclear arsenals, considerable progress has, after all, been made. The major elements of a Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) agreement seem to be at hand. It is our hope that the process started by the INF Treaty will be pursued and that the negotiators will be able to overcome the remaining obstacles and reach agreement on a sustainable régime of mutual restraint and preservation of the anti-ballistic-missile Treaty signed in 1972. That Treaty is in our view one of the corner-stones of the bilateral efforts on arms control.

We must also ensure that the limitations agreed upon would not shift the military confrontation to new categories of weapons in other areas. My Government is therefore particularly pleased that the parties have agreed to negotiate limitations on nuclear-armed cruise missiles at sea.

The INF Treaty and the prospects of further significant reductions in nuclear

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arsenals underscore the current imbalance between East and West in the conventional field. The military situation in Europe has long been marked by distrust. It is therefore encouraging that the European States whose military forces bear most directly upon the security situation in Europe are drafting a mandate for new negotiations on conventional stability. The 23 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact have agreed that the objective of the new negotiations should be to eliminate the capability for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action. Conventional stability in Europe must be enhanced by removing asymmetries and reducing the most threatening categories of forces to the lowest possible level.

We are encouraged by the progress in the talks in Vienna on a mandate for new negotiations on conventional stability. The remaining issues in Vienna do not seem to be insurmountable. We are optimistic that new negotiations may soon be opened.

In a number of regions, world wide, conventional wars continue to cause tremendous human sufferings and devastation, while considerable and scarce economic resources are diverted from urgent development needs to military purposes. We believe that the European experience in developing confidence- and security-building measures and limitations on armed forces might well serve as an inspiration for similar measures in other parts of the world.

The third follow-up meeting with regard to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is being held in Vienna, is now approaching the end of its second year. Important progress has been made, which gives hope of an early agreement on a balanced concluding document.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

The neutral and non-aligned countries have made very important contributions to that end. The improved East-West situation and the reform policy in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European States also give hope for an early conclusion of that Vienna meeting. The optimistic tone of the meeting between the foreign ministers of the two super-Powers in Washington in late September gives renewed hope that glasnost and perestroika have also become part of the Vienna negotiations.

Throughout the Vienna review meeting we have been an ardent supporter and advocate of a balanced and substantial concluding document. The draft concluding document presented by the neutral and non-aligned countries seems to us to reflect the necessary balance between all major items on the agenda of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) fairly closely.

A global, comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention on chemical weapons is a priority issue in Norwegian disarmament policy. Norway is committed to doing its utmost to contribute to the negotiations on a world-wide ban on those insidious weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. The rolling text of the chemical-weapons convention, which has been submitted to this session of the General Assembly, reflects the advanced stage of those negotiations. The convention is now within reach. Every effort should therefore be made to conclude the convention at the earliest possible date. However, there remain complicated problems, and they cannot be ignored.

1989 will be a crucial and decisive year for the negotiations on the chemical-weapons convention. Political impetus is therefore needed in order to accelerate the search for effective solutions, and we believe that this session of the General Assembly can help to make further headway. With that objective in mind, the Committee should strongly encourage the Conference on Disarmament to pursue its negotiations as a matter of urgency.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

The urgent need for a global, comprehensive ban has been dramatically underlined by the very sad reports on the recent use of chemical weapons. We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons, and we appeal to all States to remain committed to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. It is imperative that every possible effort be made to put an end to the use of those weapons of mass destruction, which are second only to nuclear weapons in their lethality.

We welcome the proposals made by the United States and France to hold an international conference on the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We are grateful that the French Government has decided to convene such a conference of States parties to that Protocol in Paris, from 7 to 11 January 1989, and that it has invited other interested States. The Geneva Protocol provides the foundation for the negotiations on a complete ban on chemical weapons. Such a conference in Paris should therefore also serve as another means of highlighting the urgency of a global convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons and of promoting the negotiations towards that end. Important as it is to reinforce the Geneva Protocol, our primary goal must be to finalize a global, comprehensive convention ridding the world of these abhorrent weapons.

For 7 years now, Norway, which is the candidate of the Western Group for membership in the Conference on Disarmament, has undertaken extensive research on the question of verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons. That research programme was initiated in connection with Norway's participation in the negotiations on the chemical-weapons convention, and thanks to the extensive nature of that research programme we also hope to be in a position to make substantial and specific contributions to an international conference on the Geneva Protocol.

In view of the increased threat of further proliferation of chemical weapons, Norway has imposed export restrictions on 13 agents that can be used to make

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chemical weapons. Non-proliferation efforts are, however, only temporary measures and partial solutions to a problem that can only be solved by means of a global, comprehensive convention.

A comprehensive nuclear-test ban is a priority and long-standing issue on the international disarmament agenda. Such a ban would provide an effective means of preventing further horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. In addition, it would enhance the ongoing efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Against that background the Conference on Disarmament should initiate substantive work on specific and interrelated issues connected with a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, issues such as scope, verification and compliance. Those are issues that, at any rate, need to be dealt with in detail prior to the conclusion of a test-ban treaty.

That would further represent an extension of the valuable work that is being carried out in the Group of Scientific Experts. The activities of that Group are related to the development of a global seismic network, which would play a central role in an international verification system for a comprehensive test ban. One of the Group's tasks is to undertake a large-scale international experiment on the exchange of seismic wave-form data. That experiment will provide valuable experience that can be used in the ongoing work on designing a modern, international, seismic-data exchange system based on the rapid exchange of large volumes of seismic data.

A global verification system must take advantage of rapid technological developments in seismic instrumentation, data communication and computer processing. An effective system of that kind would deter States from conducting clandestine nuclear tests and provide assurance that earthquakes are not misinterpreted as nuclear explosions.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

Norway will focus its continued research efforts on improving the capabilities for seismic verification using regional array stations. The establishment of the two modern regional arrays, NORESS and ARCESS, in southern and northern Norway respectively should be seen in this context. The results of the operation of those two arrays have demonstrated that regional arrays with densely deployed seismic sensors can match and even surpass the detection performance of traditional larger arrays. On this basis, Norway has proposed that the global seismic network should incorporate the establishment of regional arrays wherever possible.

Norway hopes that the United States and the Soviet Union, having completed the Joint Verification Experiment, will without delay complete their negotiations on the verification protocols to the threshold test-ban Treaties of 1974 and 1976, thus making possible the ratification of these two Treaties. That would represent a limited but positive step in the right direction. The development of the bilateral negotiations should also stimulate the multilateral process towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Twenty years ago, a very important multilateral nuclear-arms-control treaty was signed. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, of 1968, has contributed to safeguarding international peace, strengthening the security of States and promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. My Government considers it essential that the review conference to be held in 1990 should have a successful outcome. It is an important task for the Committee to initiate that process.

At this session of the General Assembly, Norway intends to introduce a draft resolution on the holding of the third review conference of the Parties to the sea-bed arms control Treaty in 1989. The importance of that Treaty arises from the fact that it prohibits nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and in the subsoil thereof.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

There is a pressing need to ensure that the arms race is not extended to outer space. Outer space must be preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes, and it must be utilized in a way that promotes the scientific and economic development of all nations.

Efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space should be pursued on a bilateral and a multilateral basis, since such efforts are complementary. In the multilateral area, the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament have an instrumental role to play. Since its thirty-eighth session, the General Assembly has adopted a single resolution on arms control in outer space every year. That practice should be followed up at the present session. That resolution has provided impetus to the efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to examine and identify issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In their first phase, those efforts should be aimed at establishing a common understanding and definitions of the scope and specific objectives of multilateral efforts in that field.

Disarmament and arms control agreements should provide for adequate and effective measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned in order to create the necessary confidence and to ensure that they are being observed by all parties. The verification measures require the employment of different techniques, such as national and international technical measures and international procedures, including on-site inspection. The convergence of views on the subject of verification that was confirmed at the third special session devoted to disarmament this summer was a very positive development. However, the multilateral aspects of verification deserve further in-depth consideration. Against this background, we support the proposal to undertake a United Nations study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification of arms limitation and disarmament agreements.



(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

Disarmament is closely related to security and therefore cannot take place in a political vacuum. Security is not, however, dependent on military factors alone. A broader concept of security encompasses political, economic, ecological, social, human rights and humanitarian aspects.

This broader security concept was highlighted in the Final Document of last year's International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. It was also a key element in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. It is vital, in our view, that we retain that broader concept of security in the further disarmament process.

The active and successful role played by the United Nations in settling regional disputes and conflicts has given all of us new hope for progress in other areas of multilateral co-operation, above all in the field of disarmament and arms limitation.

Norway remains convinced that multilateral disarmament must be pursued as an essential part of the overall disarmament process. Arms control and disarmament are matters of global concern. We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in initiating, supporting and supplementing disarmament negotiations in other multilateral, regional and bilateral forums. There should be a close correspondence between the global discussion on disarmament issues and bilateral negotiations. Developments in each of these areas will reinforce developments in each of the others.

Mr. PIBULSONGRAM (Thailand): It gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are fully confident that your long years of experience in the disarmament field, combined with your outstanding diplomatic skills, will chart an efficient and successful course for our work. My delegation pledges its full

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

support and co-operation to you in your endeavours to make the work of the Committee a success.

We are on the threshold of a new era. We are in a period of renewed hope for peace. A transition period towards what Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, has called "a new world order of peace and justice". This session is therefore being held at a time of great importance. The world has now caught a glimpse of some positive developments. We welcome the signing and ratification of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. We see this Treaty as a major step towards the halting of the arms race.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

In addition, the ongoing negotiations between the two super-Powers towards implementation of a 50-per-cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons have further strengthened our sense of optimism. My delegation hopes that both sides will continue to work tirelessly towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament. Let us make sure that recent achievements will give further impetus to substantive progress in the whole range of present and future bilateral and multilateral negotiations on arms control and disarmament.

The new international atmosphere and the regained prestige of the United Nations should lead to the revitalization of the multilateral negotiations on disarmament affairs. Thailand continuously supports efforts aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We believe that the United Nations must play a central role in this sphere and assist the international community in pursuing the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. We live in an interdependent and interconnected world. Bilateral diplomacy and multilateral diplomacy should complement and support one another. Each of us has the responsibility to maintain and support the arms control and disarmament process.

International verification is today recognized as a fundamental element in disarmament agreements. The possible role of the United Nations in the verification process of future agreements deserves encouragement. Effective verification procedures must be agreed upon to ensure that arms control and disarmament are observed.

Turning to chemical weapons, my delegation remains concerned with recent reports regarding the use of such weapons in certain parts of the world. Thailand reaffirms its strong opposition to the production, development, stockpiling and use of these weapons in any circumstances. The effective prohibition of chemical weapons is long overdue. My delegation believes that every effort must be made to

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

achieve an early conclusion of the global convention on a ban that would save future generations from the horror and suffering inflicted by chemical weapons.

My delegation therefore urges the Conference on Disarmament to continue the negotiations on chemical weapons as a matter of the highest priority and to exert the maximum effort in order to reach a solution to the outstanding problems.

My delegation joins with all those countries which have repeatedly expressed the imperative need for full compliance with the obligations embodied in the Geneva Protocol of 1925 in the absence of a comprehensive ban.

The call for an international conference on chemical weapons is an important initiative. We hope that the conference will provide an impetus for the negotiations in Geneva to reach an early conclusion on the comprehensive-ban treaty.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on a partial test ban. It is regrettable to note that nuclear-weapon tests continue to take place today and that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty has not yet been concluded. My delegation believes that such a treaty would contribute towards the termination of the development, improvement and production of more sophisticated and lethal nuclear weapons.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My Government reaffirms once again its endorsement of, and commitment to, that instrument. Although nuclear disarmament is primarily the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States, nuclear war is a threat to humankind as a whole. The international community must continue to do its best to prevent the spread of such weapons. My delegation calls on States which have yet to become parties to the NPT to do so. We believe that the fourth review conference of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1990 will provide an important opportunity to evaluate its implementation and to examine ways

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and means to improve and strengthen the non-proliferation régime.

My delegation believes that the establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world would contribute to regional as well as international peace and security.

Thailand and the other members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are working towards the realization of the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia. We are convinced that the establishment of such a zone will be possible only after the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea and through the full co-operation of regional States, together with an assurance from the major Powers that they will forgo rivalries in South-East Asia.

ASEAN is also examining the possibility of establishing a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. My delegation supports the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in principle as an important disarmament measure sanctioned by the United Nations. The establishment of an effective and enforceable nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia, comprising all States in the region and contributing to regional as well as international peace and security, is our aspiration. Such a zone should be established when we are certain that existing circumstances will allow it to enhance regional and international peace and security. The timing of its establishment is therefore very important. A nuclear-weapon-free zone must not, in any way, create or contribute to an asymmetrical situation.

Prior to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia we shall consider very carefully its political as well as other implications. We shall take into consideration the problems and circumstances surrounding existing nuclear-free areas and environments, namely Antarctica, Latin America, the South

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Pacific, the sea-bed and outer space. We shall study the proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions. We shall also consider the legitimate interests of all States concerned, including nuclear-weapon States.

A nuclear-weapon-free zone may indeed help to increase mutual confidence among the States concerned. However, a degree of mutual confidence must exist beforehand so that a nuclear-weapon-free zone may build upon it. In South-East Asia, the Kampuchean problem remains an obstacle. A lasting political settlement of that problem would be likely to create, among all States in South-East Asia, the degree of confidence that is required before a region-wide discussion of the possibility of establishing a South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone could be initiated.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an important question of universal concern. Outer space must not become an arena for an arms race. It is of the utmost importance that the sanctity of outer space be preserved. Outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Its resources should be considered as the common heritage of mankind.

Though fully aware that nuclear war poses the gravest threat to the survival of humankind, we must never overlook the importance of conventional disarmament. Today, modern conventional weapons are being used in regional conflicts, which clearly threatens regional as well as international peace and security. There is an urgent need to bring the conventional-arms race under more effective control. My delegation strongly feels that conventional disarmament is an essential element of general and complete disarmament, and that due attention should be accorded to it.

Another area of particular concern to us is growing military expenditure. Such expenditure in the world today, now reaching \$1 trillion, constitutes a heavy burden on the economies of every nation, especially the economies of developing countries. Success in disarmament would make more funds available for economic development. As a developing country, Thailand is very concerned about the diversion of precious financial, material and human resources from development and welfare to armament. We believe that disarmament and development are intimately linked. Thus, we hope that members of the international community will participate in the Programme of Action formulated at the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development.

My delegation shares the concern of the African States about the dumping of dangerous toxic and nuclear wastes in Africa. We hope the international community will consider measures to monitor the transboundary movement of these hazardous wastes.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

The First Committee has been entrusted with the responsibility to deal with issues which affect our very survival. Let us all work together to reinforce and increase the existing momentum towards general and complete disarmament. It is the ardent hope of my delegation that the deliberations on these crucial issues in the weeks to come will proceed in a spirit of full co-operation and a sense of genuine collective commitment directed towards finding common ground acceptable to all member States. For its part, the Thai delegation wishes to pledge its strong support for and co-operation with you, Sir, in the performance of your complex and challenging duties.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Let me, Sir, convey to you my delegation's congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for the forty-third session of the General Assembly. Your election represents well-deserved recognition of Canada's role in disarmament and, it must be said, of your own meritorious work in that regard.

I wish also to congratulate the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, and to pay a tribute to the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. I assure them all that they can count on the support and co-operation of the Cuban delegation.

The First Committee is meeting in a promising atmosphere. Last year we saw the beginnings of an agreement in principle between the Soviet Union and the United States on the reduction of intermediate-range missiles. That agreement has now become a reality which is being implemented at a quickening pace. We trust that this atmosphere will make possible rapid agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear missiles, which would be the logical continuation of the steps already taken bilaterally by the Soviet Union and the United States. We trust too that the multilateral disarmament process will soon emerge from the present state of affairs. It is unimaginable that today, almost 10 years after the first special



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session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum in this area, the Conference on Disarmament, is still unable to initiate urgent negotiations on its nuclear-disarmament agenda items.

The international atmosphere of détente that we are now breathing is particularly appreciated by developing peoples. We believe that atmosphere signifies peace not only in terms of military threats to security. For us, the road to development can only be followed when peace is guaranteed. But we must also remember that we cannot talk about genuine human universal peace if it does not go hand-in-hand with the development of peoples.

Our peoples, for example, cannot understand the lack of implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development. The General Assembly must deal with this question with greater urgency.

In the view of my delegation and many other delegations, the resources released through the adoption of disarmament measures should be used to promote development, especially for the developing countries. We support the establishment of a disarmament fund for development to fight poverty, hunger, disease, malnutrition and all the ills that accompany underdevelopment.

It is not only safety from nuclear holocaust that underlies the developing countries' interest in peace. There are many other valid reasons why we see peace as an opportunity.

With the present international economic order - an unjust order that has been imposed upon us - underdevelopment grows worse every day. It is inadmissible that the world should continue spending more than \$1 trillion a year on weapons that can serve only to destroy it, while the economic problems of our countries continue to grow worse.

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Let us take the example of external debt and its grave consequences. It has been proven that this debt cannot be paid. Why, then, are we called upon to increase the poverty and pain of our peoples to meet that debt, when it would be more just and moral for financing to come from that trillion dollars being squandered on weapons? Those are the facts on which we must reflect and take action.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

Another item acknowledged to have priority is nuclear disarmament. It has often been said that nuclear weapons are not weapons of war; they are means of mass extermination, the use of which would mean the disappearance of life on Earth and the destruction of all the achievements of human civilization. When the Charter of the United Nations was signed the atomic bomb had not yet been tested; it was tested and used a few weeks later. But it provoked such a reaction that the first resolution adopted by the Organization, General Assembly resolution 1 (I) of 24 January 1946, was to establish an Atomic Energy Commission to consider concrete means to eliminate atomic weapons from national arsenals.

Subsequent developments are well known to all, and there is no point in repeating them. I recall only that the development of nuclear weapons, the introduction of new nuclear-weapon technologies, the spread of such weapons over the seas and oceans and their growing accumulation have presented a continuing threat to the security of all States. That is why the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 declared that removing the threat of nuclear war was the most acute and urgent task of the day.

It is in recognition of that stark reality that we express the firm hope that the Conference on Disarmament will urgently begin negotiations on practical measures to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war and on elaborating a treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests in all environments, and that it will begin negotiations on an end to the nuclear-arms race. There are logical reasons for the doubts about the political will for dialogue and negotiation, when the Conference on Disarmament is prevented from carrying out the task that we ourselves have entrusted to it and when it has not been possible to obtain a unanimous commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

A complete ban on nuclear tests is an absolute priority, because such a ban

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would slow down the nuclear-arms race and considerably diminish the risk of nuclear war. In this regard, I wish to emphasize our opinion that the presumed lack of adequate means of verification is not a valid reason for continuing to develop and refine deadly nuclear weapons. As eminent persons in all spheres have recognized, the present means of verification are sufficient to guarantee the full implementation of a treaty completely banning all nuclear-weapon tests. No further delay should be countenanced.

Another item of acknowledged priority relates to the prevention of the arms race in outer space. We reiterate our position that outer space, the common heritage of mankind, should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It is intolerable to seek to extend the arms race into outer space, which would convert outer space into a new arena for confrontation and increased threats to peace.

Plans to militarize space involve squandering resources needed for peaceful production and increase the threats to international peace and security. They are also a violation of important legal instruments, such as the anti-ballistic-missile Treaty, article V of which expressly prohibits the development, testing or deployment of ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based.

The increase in the number of naval weapons, their continuing refinement and their use to threaten or commit aggression against developing countries are matters of concern to my delegation. The threat represented by naval forces necessitates in-depth consideration of the subject by the United Nations. Urgent negotiations are needed to check the naval arms race, particularly in regard to nuclear weapons, together with practical measures to limit their numbers, in view of the growing threat they present to the maintenance of peace throughout the world.

Another priority task for us relates to the banning of chemical weapons. We

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welcome the great strides made by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and we trust that we shall soon have a convention banning chemical weapons. Meanwhile, it is important that all States refrain from taking any action that might complicate the negotiations, including the production of a new generation of chemical weapons.

Another item of importance in our work is conventional disarmament. The refinement of conventional arms has added a new dimension to the arms race, particularly between States possessing the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals.

Conventional disarmament must be seen in the context of progress towards general and complete disarmament, bearing in mind the disarmament priorities already established. The States that possess nuclear weapons and the members of military alliances bear a particular responsibility in this regard.

We cannot close our eyes to the realities. The small countries, which do not have huge aircraft carriers, large fleets or strategic bombers, and which have to suffer the harmful consequences of so-called low-intensity conflicts used by the imperialists to achieve their political goals in every region of the world, have only modest conventional means for their defence.

Those countries cannot be expected to assume a posture of meek acceptance, while interference and intervention in their internal affairs continues, while they are still victims of threatening and intimidating military manoeuvres, while military bases are imposed against the will of their peoples and governments, and while acts of hostility and aggression, direct and indirect, are committed against them. In discussions about conventional disarmament there must prevail above all the concept of the inviolability of our sovereignty and the right of peoples to self-defence.

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Regional conventional disarmament must necessarily be conceived in terms of the specific features of each region, where the situation permits, and with the participation of all States concerned, so as to guarantee the security and independence of States and bearing in mind the right to self-defence and the right of peoples under colonial and foreign domination to self-determination and independence. In that context - for it is here that the situation is most dangerous - the process should begin in regions with a high concentration of nuclear and conventional weapons.

It is also important to bear in mind the adverse consequences to peace and international security of the transfers of arms and weapons technology to racist régimes. Such transfers are the very factor that enable those régimes to acquire nuclear capacity, which is of the greatest concern to the international community and poses a constant threat to their neighbours and to all the peoples of the world. It is no mere accident that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament signalled the dangers inherent in transferring weapons to racist régimes.

A few months ago the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was held. Of course we did not obtain the hoped-for results, but the third special session devoted to disarmament did serve to demonstrate the importance of multilateral disarmament forums. Many countries made concrete proposals that were duly reflected in pertinent documents and that we must continue to consider for the sake of strengthening international peace and security. At that special session there were expressions of a firm determination to halt the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race, and to achieve disarmament.

I should not like to conclude my statement without reiterating to you, Mr. Chairman, my delegation's support in your endeavours. The atmosphere we enjoy

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today makes this a propitious occasion to move forward in our consideration of all aspects of peace and disarmament, including its non-military aspects, which are also a threat to the security of many of our countries.

Mr. SUJKA (Poland): I feel bound by your appeal to abide by rule 110, and I shall therefore proceed immediately to the subject of my statement.

For years the attention of the international community has been focused on negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. It has been widely considered that that is the area in which multilateral disarmament efforts are closest to achieving a major success. At present the growing risk of the proliferation and use of chemical weapons demonstrates all-too graphically the urgency with which a universal convention on the total prohibition and elimination of those sinister weapons should be completed.

When I look back at my own long-lasting personal involvement in the negotiations on a chemical-weapons ban, I cannot but stress that, since 1982, when I presided over the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 4 in Geneva for the first time, negotiations have developed considerably. Much has been achieved, and today we are in a position to say that all the articles of the draft convention have been dealt with, although they remain at different stages in the negotiating process.

In addition, in reviewing this year's results of the work of the Conference on Disarmament on the prohibition of chemical weapons we have to express our satisfaction at further progress, not extensive but nonetheless significant, in some specific areas. This has been possible thanks to the dedicated and painstaking efforts of many delegations, and I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep thanks to the chairmen of the working groups of the Ad Hoc Committee, the representatives of Czechoslovakia, Japan and Mexico, as well as to the item co-ordinators, the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden.

(Mr. Sujka, Poland)

However, in light of the increasingly urgent need to complete the convention resulting from the recurrent use of chemical weapons, one can hardly assess the progress achieved as being fully satisfactory. In addition, according to some the Conference on Disarmament was unable at its 1988 session to maintain its momentum and, consequently, the pace of progress towards a chemical-weapons ban was even slowed down.

No matter how deep the divergence of opinion may be, it seems clear that the Conference on Disarmament should have achieved more. As Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the current session, I cannot but regret that development, which is obviously not in keeping with the continuous appeals of the General Assembly that are expressive of the will of broad international public opinion to accelerate progress towards the conclusion of the convention, a will that was recently properly reflected in the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 42/37 A, which

"Urges again the Conference on Disarmament, as a matter of high priority, to intensify, during its 1988 session, the negotiations on such a convention". I believe the current session of the General Assembly will properly evaluate the situation and recommend appropriate action.

Poland attaches special attention to the ongoing work on a ban on chemical weapons. For that reason we appreciate the statements on the possibility - and, indeed, the necessity - of making a breakthrough in next year's negotiations on that issue. We take an active part in that process, trying insofar as possible to contribute to its successful completion. We have informed the Conference on Disarmament that Poland neither produces nor possesses nor intends to possess chemical weapons. We have also submitted relevant data on production by Polish industry of chemicals under the purview of article VI of the convention. In



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addition, we would also like to make clear that Poland is willing to undertake the steps necessary to be among the initial signatory States of the convention on a chemical-weapons ban.

It is our firm belief that openness and mutual confidence are of major importance in the future work on the chemical-weapons convention. It seems clear and rather indisputable that the pace of progress could be faster and easier if the Conference on Disarmament possessed broader comprehensive information on the present chemical-weapons stocks, facilities and capabilities of the participants in the future convention.

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Providing this information would be in full conformity with both the letter and the spirit of the consensus resolution I have just quoted. It would also be fully compatible with the generally reiterated opinion that elaboration of the convention must be concluded without unnecessary delay. Finally, the general exchange of information and increased mutual confidence would constitute an important first step towards ensuring the universality of the future convention.

The bilateral consultations between the Soviet Union and the United States were of great significance to the results of the Ad Hoc Committee's work in 1988. After having been discussed in the Committee, some of the bilateral understandings - especially the definition of the term "chemical-weapons facility" - were incorporated into the rolling text of the draft convention. Poland fully supports that bilateral effort, which not only constitutes a valuable contribution to the elaboration of the convention but also appears to be the best illustration of the mutually beneficial relationship between bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The work of the Ad Hoc Committee has been enriched by the Soviet Union's initiative with regard to carrying out trial inspections in chemical industries on both a national and an international basis. The possibility of acquiring practical experience of certain very important provisions of the draft convention could, in our opinion, provide a valuable opportunity to speed up further work on relevant issues. A number of States have voluntarily undertaken this new and important contribution towards working out the most efficient verification régime.

Poland is among those countries that consider that the elaboration of the convention should be possible in the relatively near future, provided that there is enough good will on all sides. Some of the outstanding issues are sensitive and difficult to resolve. The main difficulties seem to be rooted, not in principles,

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but rather in the different approaches to reaching compromise solutions. That is why we believe that the time is ripe to seek mutually acceptable understandings on the issues outstanding.

It is our sincere hope that the General Assembly, in a single, consensus resolution, will further urge the Conference on Disarmament to complete the convention as soon as possible, thus providing the Conference with the political impetus necessary to finalize the negotiations on a chemical-weapons ban. My delegation is working hard and is willing to work hard with our Canadian colleagues and all other interested delegations towards such a consensus resolution.

My country unequivocally and vigourously condemns any use of chemical weapons. Pending the entry into force of a comprehensive ban, we strongly support any effort to strengthen the commitment to the existing international norms against the use of chemical weapons, namely, the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

Poland welcomes President Reagan's proposal for an international conference of the parties to the Protocol and of other States concerned, for the purpose of reversing the erosion of respect for that instrument. We also appreciate the timely initiative of President Mitterrand as well as the French Government's invitation to hold such a conference in Paris in January 1989.

My delegation shares the view - already widely advocated - that the conference would stand a good chance of achieving at least two goals. First, a renewed international commitment to one of the oldest and still one of the most important multilateral arms-control agreements would be expressed in the present political context. Secondly, the reaffirmation of commitment to the Protocol should give additional impetus to the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive chemical-weapons ban and should facilitate universal adherence to that future convention. As the representative of France, Ambassador Pierre Morel, has put it,

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"These two political steps can and should complement rather than detract from each other." (A/C.1/43/PV.9, p. 22)

Whether we like it or not, there is only one way effectively to prevent the use or threat of use of chemical weapons: their total elimination. A very serious opportunity for the world to enter the next century without these weapons still exists and it must not be missed.

International security cannot be built under the conditions of a nuclear-arms race. In the interest of all nations, nuclear and non-nuclear, this race should be stopped and nuclear arsenals reduced. The entry into force of the Treaty between the two major nuclear-weapon States, the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, has become one of the most encouraging events in the nuclear era. The history of the INF Treaty negotiations and of its ratification has also shown that, given the political will, all obstacles can be overcome, that the reduction of nuclear weapons is possible and that it serves the interests of national and international security.

But much more remains to be done - and no time must be lost. Poland hopes in particular for the early conclusion of an agreement on a 50-per-cent reduction of the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States of America, combined with an agreement on strict compliance with the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems in its 1972 form and on no-withdrawal from it within the time agreed. It should become the next step and a significant one in the implementation of the step-by-step programme for the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

We urge the USSR and the United States of America to continue on the path marked by their INF Treaty. We also urge other nuclear-weapon States to consider ways to support and contribute to the process of cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament.

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A comprehensive multilateral test-ban treaty prohibiting all nuclear tests, by all States, in all environments, and for all time, has become a pressing need. It is urgently required in order to stop the qualitative evolution of nuclear-weapon systems, to halt the nuclear arms race, and to strengthen the non-proliferation régime. It is particularly regrettable that, despite the calls of numerous Governments, public opinion, and the scientific community, no real progress has been made in this field during the last 25 years. A comprehensive test ban, as well as being long overdue, has ceased to be simply an arms-control issue and become also a moral issue.

We welcome the recent successful joint verification experiment by the Soviet Union and the United States and look forward to speedy ratification of the two bilateral treaties limiting underground nuclear explosions. We urge the two great Powers to make an early start on earnest negotiations on limitation in other aspects of nuclear testing, such as number, yield and the types of explosions.

Step-by-step negotiations between the two major nuclear-weapon States should not be an obstacle to parallel work in other forums. In particular, practical work on a comprehensive test ban should be started within the Conference on Disarmament, which must play its role in this field. Poland believes that during the forthcoming session of the Conference an Ad Hoc committee devoted to the question of a comprehensive test ban will be established and that it will undertake serious and urgent negotiations on the problem that has been at the top of the agenda of this multilateral disarmament negotiating body for more than 20 years.

Special attention should be given also to the six-nation initiative to convert the 1963 Moscow Treaty into a treaty banning all nuclear tests. We call upon the depositary Governments and upon all the parties to the Treaty to give serious consideration to this initiative and to undertake appropriate action, taking into

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account further developments in this field and, in particular, developments at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

The changing political climate, recent Soviet-American efforts related to nuclear testing, including their successful joint verification experiment, growing international pressure - these are positive factors which, my delegation believes, should give new momentum to the international debate on the important problem of bilateral and multilateral disarmament.

Six years ago an item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was included in the agenda of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. Since then the General Assembly has repeatedly urged that body to embark upon negotiations for an appropriate draft agreement or agreements.

It must be regretted that the Conference has not yet achieved any concrete results in this field. It must be noted, however, that its discussion of this problem produced a number of valuable ideas and proposals, thus creating a good basis for concrete and goal-oriented negotiations. The Conference now has a much clearer picture of different aspects of the question of preventing an arms race in outer space and a much better understanding of different ways and means of attaining that goal. Poland shares the growing feeling that, after seven years of general discussion, the Conference should re-orient its work on this item, embark upon a genuine search for acceptable solutions, and undertake negotiations leading to such solutions.

In considering outer-space problems we should take into account existing concrete prohibitions, as well as the established general principles governing the activities of States in outer space. Those prohibitions and principles not only imply abstention from specific behaviour but also require positive action. In particular, any outer-space activity of a State should take into account the common interest of all mankind in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes only;

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secondly, such activity should be for the benefit and in the interests of all countries; thirdly, it should be in the interests of international peace and security and should promote international co-operation and understanding.

This is why my Government notes, as an encouraging feature of the present debate on outer-space problems, the fact that more and more often bold ideas and proposals on international co-operation in outer space are put forward and discussed. They correspond with the existing legal obligations, and they best reflect real needs. A world space organization, an international verification agency and an international space inspectorate are good examples of existing possibilities for international co-operation, not only for the economic and scientific development of nations but also in the vital interests of international security.

The recent Soviet proposal to establish, on the basis of the Krasnoyarsk radar station, a centre for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space is the best proof of how international co-operation can be a good way to solve political controversies. We note this initiative with appreciation, and we hope that such a courageous step will be followed by other space Powers.

Outer space still can, and should, become an area for exemplary international co-operation. In that way it would, and should, best serve human ambitions at the end of the 20th century, the interests of economic and cultural advancement, and the interests of peace. My Government continues to believe that there is still a unique opportunity to prevent military competition in this new sphere of human activity and that that opportunity will not be lost.

The CHAIRMAN: At its meeting tomorrow morning, the First Committee will observe World Disarmament Week. In accordance with tradition, the Secretary-General will be present.

I remind members that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions on disarmament agenda items is next Monday, 31 October, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.