



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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- GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)**

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

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

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: It is a very special pleasure for me to present, as the first speaker this morning, the representative of the Bahamas, Ambassador Davidson Hepburn, who, by his many years of outstanding service on behalf of his country to the entire United Nations, is well known to all members of this Committee. I have had the privilege of serving with Ambassador Hepburn in several of his capacities, and particularly in his capacity as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission earlier this year. It is in that capacity that he has come to the United Nations this morning to present the report of the Disarmament Commission (A/43/42).

Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas): This is the first time that I can recall feeling no embarrassment whatsoever in extending congratulations to the Chairman at such a late stage in the deliberations of our work in the First Committee. In fact, I told my successor that whether or not he had any personal interest in the First Committee, he had an obligation to attend the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its forty-third session in order to gain some experience as to what a no-nonsense approach to leadership can bring. I certainly feel, Sir, that under your guidance the First Committee will achieve some very positive results.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I have the honour and the pleasure of introducing the annual report of the Commission for its 1988 session, contained in document A/43/42. The report consists of four chapters, which reflect the result of its consideration on various disarmament subjects on the agenda during the 1988 substantive session held last

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May. In particular, chapter IV contains conclusions and recommendations which duly describe the deliberation on disarmament issues that the Commission has achieved this year. In this connection, it should be noted that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/42 G, an additional special report of the Disarmament Commission was prepared for the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament, covering the work of the Commission from 1982 to 1988. Therefore, the report of the substantive work on agenda items carried out by respective subsidiary bodies are included in the special report of the Commission as contained in document A/S-15/3. As I have already introduced that special report in the Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly at its fifteenth special session on 6 June 1988, I do not wish to elaborate extensively on the work done at the Commission's substantive session in May. However, I cannot fail to recapitulate the highlight of the Commission's work at the session. As representatives may recall, the 1988 session of the Disarmament Commission was de facto a "forerunner" of the work of the third special session and had before it eight - an unprecedented number - substantive agenda items on disarmament issues, which were considered by eight respective subsidiary bodies.

After three weeks of intensive deliberations, the Commission adopted a number of recommendations made by its subsidiary bodies on various agenda items. In this regard, it should be pointed out that it is heartening that the Commission was able to conclude two important items on its agenda, namely, verification in all its aspects; and guidelines for confidence-building measures. The Working Group on the question of verification in all its aspects addressed three major aspects and made concrete recommendations, namely: first, 16 principles of verification; secondly,

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provisions and techniques of verification; and thirdly, the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. With respect to the third part, the Commission welcomed the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his 1987 report on the work of the Organization that the United Nations can make a significant contribution in the field of verification. A number of concrete proposals made by delegations regarding the nature and scope of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification were discussed, although no consensus on those proposals was possible. However, it is anticipated that at the current session of the General Assembly, certain follow-up action would be taken on this subject. The success on this item may be attributed to a general willingness on the part of delegations to reach agreement on this issue, which they recognize as a matter of critical importance in the negotiation and implementation of arms limitation and disarmament agreement.

The Consultation Group on guidelines for confidence-building measures was able to finalize, at the 1988 session, the three outstanding paragraphs contained in the draft guidelines considered by the Commission in 1986, and thus the Commission completed its deliberations on the item and fulfilled the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. It is also anticipated that a follow-up draft resolution will be submitted on this subject.

The Commission also made some progress on the question of naval armaments and disarmament. The meetings of the Consultation Group resulted in a number of findings and recommendations on the subject. Further work might be pursued.

On the other hand, I must point out that during this year, the Commission was still not able to conclude successfully certain items on its agenda, particularly

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the questions of reduction of military budgets and conventional disarmament. Though the work of the Commission and its results accurately reflected the present state of affairs of multilateral relations and the positions of different countries on disarmament issues, as many delegations pointed out at this session, it could have done better. Notably, the Commission made only nominal progress on all other items. Therefore, it is expected that those subjects will again be included in the agenda of the Commission for its 1989 session.

As is known to the international community, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament failed to make any decisions and recommendations on its substantive agenda items, including those recommendations made by the Disarmament Commission before it in pursuance of resolution 42/42 G. In this regard, I wish to draw the attention of the First Committee to paragraph 32 of the annual report of the Disarmament Commission, which, inter alia, states:

"... the Disarmament Commission recommended that the General Assembly, at its forty-third session, should consider the decisions and recommendations adopted at its third special session devoted to disarmament in connection with the agenda items of the Disarmament Commission. The Commission further recommended that, should the third special session devoted to disarmament make no decisions or recommendations on the special report of the Commission mentioned above, all the recommendations contained therein be resubmitted to the General Assembly for consideration, at its forty-third session." (A/43/42, p. 7)

With regard to the organization of work of the Commission in 1988, as I reported before, it is significant to note that the Commission was free from

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procedural and organisational difficulties, namely, the question of equitable distribution of chairmanship among subsidiary bodies. Such an outcome should be attributed to the extensive pre-session consultations held both in Geneva and New York.

Moreover, I would like to echo the sentiment continuously expressed by members of the Commission that, as part of the overall disarmament process, the efforts undertaken during the recent years to strengthen the role of the Commission and to improve its capacity to deal effectively with the questions within its purview must be further pursued so that the Commission may serve as an effective instrument for the promotion of and assistance in the negotiations process on urgent and vital issues in the field of disarmament.

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In connection with the work of the Disarmament Commission for 1989, an appropriate draft resolution will be submitted to the Committee for consideration, which I am sure will, as in previous years, be adopted by consensus.

Finally, I should like again to express my thanks to all delegations for their understanding and co-operation in the conduct of the work of the Commission during 1988's substantive session. Without their spirit of compromise the Commission would not have been able to make substantive progress on certain important issues. A special tribute should be paid to the officers, Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Sipos of Hungary, and to the Chairmen of the various working groups, the contact group and consultation groups, namely Mr. Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Mr. Melescanu of Romania, Ambassadors Perera and Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Engo of Cameroon, Ambassador Butler of Australia, Ambassador Ekeus of Sweden, Ambassador Melbín of Denmark and you, Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Roche of Canada, for your arduous work in the subsidiary bodies and consultation groups of the Commission. On behalf of the Commission, I also express my sincere gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the assistance provided to the Commission, particularly by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Kuo-Chung Lin, as well as their colleagues serving as secretaries of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission. To all other members of the Secretariat who assisted the Commission in the conduct of its work, on behalf of the Commission, I extend my great appreciation.

With these words of introduction I present the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as contained in document A/43/42.

Mr. OBEIDAT (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): The major reason for the establishment of our international Organization was the disastrous consequences of the Second World War. Following that war, the peoples of our planet called for the creation of an international organization capable of facing international problems through agreed-upon international will, expressing the hopes of all peoples, while being guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter.

From the very outset, disarmament has been one of the primary objectives of the United Nations. This is natural. Arms were the major tool of war from which the Organization hoped to save the world. In this connection, the Organization adopted numerous important resolutions. In addition, it undertook constructive initiatives to give form to that hope. We are sure that among its most important achievements was the establishment of multilateral negotiating machinery to deal with disarmament problems, so as to achieve the desired objective, namely, general disarmament.

As was stated by His Majesty King Hussein, in his message to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament on 6 June 1988:

"The United Nations cannot properly play the important role which has been entrusted to it unless nations enable it to do so. Just as collective action through the United Nations cannot, in current international circumstances, serve as a substitute for individual efforts and bilateral endeavours on the part of States, so these efforts and endeavours cannot be successful without joint action in the context of the United Nations. We, in Jordan, believe in the United Nations central role as a peacemaker and as a pioneer in ensuring the well-being of mankind." (A/S-15/PV.6, pp. 18-20)

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan firmly believes that our world cannot do without the United Nations, whose Charter expresses the interests of all Member States. If the potential of the Organization were fully used and Member States in fact drew their inspiration from the Charter, that would be sufficient to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization in resolving regional problems and conflicts and preserving international peace and security.

The positive international climate now prevailing, and which has characterized our debate, fills our hearts with hope and optimism. It makes us work in a positive and constructive spirit. Indeed, this session is being held at a time when numerous signs and indicators point to a general international development towards greater adherence to the noble and lofty objectives of the Organization and more intense efforts to find peaceful solutions to conflicts. This should encourage us to multiply our efforts to resolve problems and conflicts which genuinely threaten international stability and security. We are now at a time when we are in fact seeing the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, in accordance with the Agreement concluded between the two super-Powers, and the verification process in operation, as was envisioned.

We hope that these trends will be expanded and that in fact the two super-Powers will fulfil their promise to reduce their stocks of strategic weapons by 50 per cent.

In addition, the climate of détente between the two super-Powers has had a positive effect on many regional problems, among which I would mention the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran and the direct negotiations aimed at restoring peace; the agreement concluded with regard to Afghanistan; the positive developments with regard to Namibia and Central America; the dialogue begun between the parties involved in Cambodia; the outlines of détente in the Korean peninsula; the hope for a settlement of the question of Cyprus, and so forth.

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As for the problem of the Middle East - of which the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is at the heart - it has become a clear symbol of the deterioration in international relations and a hotbed of great danger. Attempts have been made here to diminish the role played by the United Nations with regard to that problem. The chief reason for this situation is that Israel has continued to occupy the Arab territories since 1967. Israel insists on depriving the Palestinian Arab people of its legitimate right to its land without effective international will.

An additional factor contributing to the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East is that Israel has acquired nuclear weapons. Since the 1950s Israel has been trying to build up its nuclear capability and to develop it to the point that it represents the most serious danger to the region, indeed, for the entire world.

The situation is all the more dangerous since military and nuclear co-operation exists between the two racist régimes in Israel and South Africa, which resort to all kinds of technical piracy. Through that co-operation Israel is in violation of all international agreements. It has refused to accelerate to the non-proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons and is refusing to submit its nuclear installations to the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That country is thus contributing to introducing the arms race into the region and, to achieve that objective, is developing long-range missiles. It is also contributing to introducing the arms race into outer space by launching a satellite. This is all the more evident since we know that Israel has not acted in good faith since its creation.

My delegation would like to emphasize the points made here regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. First of all, Jordan supports the relevant resolution and has affirmed its position here in the

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First Committee and in General Assembly, as well as in meetings of the IAEA.

Secondly, Jordan, a party to the non-proliferation Treaty also believes that all States of the region must submit their nuclear installations to the IAEA safeguards system.

Thirdly, Jordan believes that all States of the region must declare their commitment not to attack peaceful nuclear facilities in neighbouring States whose installations are covered by international monitoring, whether those attacks be carried out with nuclear or conventional weapons or through sabotage operations.

Fourthly, all States of the region must refrain from stockpiling weapons or having bases or stockpiling nuclear material of a non-peaceful nature whether for their own use or for a third State party or for a long or short period of time and also refrain from any action that would endanger the region through the use of nuclear weapons.

Fifthly, all States of the region must refrain from concluding conventions or bilateral agreements - be they overt or covert - allowing any State in the Middle East to make use of nuclear weapons that are stockpiled or come from a region outside the Middle East. Therefore we should like refer to General Assembly resolution 42/44 of 30 November 1987 regarding the Israeli nuclear armament and Israel's persistence in refusing to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards as well as its co-operation with South Africa in the field of nuclear weapons.

My delegation, while calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has the same position regarding other regions of the world, namely, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, Africa, the Indian Ocean, South-East Asia, the Korean peninsula, the Balkans, Eastern and Central Europe and other regions.

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My country's delegation attaches great importance to the conference of parties entrusted with monitoring the non-proliferation Treaty and the Treaty on underground tests and believes that we can achieve a Convention that fully bans nuclear testing only within the framework of an effective system allowing for verification through the co-operation of all. We also attach great importance to the efforts being made to halt the arms race.

We should like to repeat our conviction that the theory of deterrence, which is based on a build-up of arms, cannot guarantee peace and security. On the contrary, it forms a vicious circle which continues to swallow ever greater human and economic resources. We must make all possible efforts to allow the Conference on Disarmament to carry out its mission through negotiations aimed at achieving measures guaranteeing general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Here I must refer to the two final documents of the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Cyprus last September and of the meeting of Ministers held in Cuba last May. Those two statements reaffirmed that general and complete disarmament, be it nuclear or conventional, is the path towards achieving international peace and security and releasing badly needed resources for development. We must also emphasize the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development held last year to guarantee additional resources for development.

Although we need to prevent the horizontal proliferation of the arms race, we must also prevent that arms race from spreading vertically, which would result in the creation of still greater dangers. Here I am referring to the need to preserve outer space from the arms race and to limit its use to peaceful purposes since it is a common heritage of mankind.

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The danger we see at present is that the international community finds itself without any international convention on preventing the extension of the arms race into outer space, a race in which an ever-growing number of countries is participating, and this in the absence of any international laws to prevent its use in a way that would endanger the security of the international community.

My delegation believes it is necessary to work out international laws which would prevent the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in regions of the third world by irresponsible parties who exploit misery and poverty. We would like to warn against the dangers resulting from the practices of certain corporations which are dumping these dangerous wastes in Africa and elsewhere. We approve and welcome the African initiatives which were submitted during this session and we support the establishment of international machinery regarding dangerous wastes.

Jordan, convinced of the importance of human law and the new humanitarian order, proposed by Prince Hassan, approves the adoption of an international treaty on the total banning of the development, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. We approve the proposal for the holding of a conference in Paris to deal with this matter.

My delegation is convinced of the honesty and sincerity of Iraq and opposes any unfounded accusations made against that country.

Finally, if war begins in the minds of men, that thought then develops and grows and leads to efforts being stepped up to make war. Why should mankind not mobilize to destroy that thought in its cradle, by placing emphasis on humane behaviour and convincing humanity of the dangers of arms and war? To submit to the provisions of the United Nations Charter, to support it so that this Organization

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may achieve its objectives and principles and respect the sovereignty of all is the responsibility of all Members.

Mr. ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express to you my warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Committee, which is considering a problem fundamental for all of us who consider ourselves to be the United Nations - that of international security. I extend my congratulations also to the other Officers of the Committee.

For a long time the central responsibility of this main Committee was frustrated by the belligerent confrontation between the two blocs and it concentrated wholly on a matter of the highest priority, that of avoiding a nuclear winter. That was an era of security understood as a question of survival. Today the thaw at the summit heralds the beginning of spring. Having achieved at least the survival of the species, we have begun to destroy the first instruments of extermination. Thus it is said that we now know that we are going to live and what remains to be solved is only how we are going to live. This is the era of security understood as quality of life. We believe that this is still a far-fetched and optimistic view, because in many parts of the planet the quality of life remains a sophisticated and intensive intellectual exercise, although what is at stake is life itself. That is why developing countries, although deeply involved with nuclear disarmament - and even more with conventional disarmament, which affects us so directly - have always sustained the thesis of security as being not only military security, which was the official reigning interpretation for decades, but also integral security, which encompasses political, economic and social components, to mention only its most significant aspects.

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We see today that our thesis has finally prevailed because of the realities of life and the force of history, as the problem of security has shifted from the political to the economic plane. The new protagonists in the game of world power are, first of all, the economic powers - European Community and Japan.

The economic reforms undertaken in the Soviet Union and China come as a response to their need to bolster their competitiveness in this field. The very climate of understanding between the super-Powers and the beginning of the disarmament process, tentative as they may seem, are ultimately due to the need to curb an indefinite arms race because of financial limitations.

There is no doubt that this constitutes a new element and a new way of looking at the question of security in East-West relations. But the folly of an unbridled arms race has already had fatal consequences for the rest of the world. The unnatural financing of enormous military budgets has put the international economy out of control, derailed the finances, the trade and the currencies of the world and thrown developing countries into their most serious economic crisis, because basically it has diverted to destruction and death enormous resources which might have been used to eliminate poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance among millions of human beings. For almost half a century it prevented the possibility of our having today an integrated and just world, a more secure, stable, egalitarian and happier world. This is the reality we face today with regard to the problem of security in a world still divided into three parts. This is the challenge which the international community faces on the eve of the third millenium. We must face it with realism and vision, and without the arrogance which has led to the imposition of limited and disjointed concepts of security on the political, social and economic reality of a world which was not taken into account in the design of those strategies.

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We cannot agree that peace between the super-Powers should be interpreted a priori as peace for everyone, or that the opportunities for growth and co-operation for the economies of East and West will, in and of themselves, solve the development crisis of the South. The détente between the major Powers and the relaunching of their economic co-operation are positive steps, but they will acquire universal significance only if their scope and substance are extended to mankind as a whole, and especially the developing world, which suffers the most from war and hunger. Otherwise, the inadmissible equation of "peace among the rich and war among the poor" would be imposed on us.

Instead, what is required is détente with international economic justice and respect for human rights and the rights of peoples and without intervention in internal affairs, without economic coercion, without spheres of influence and without measures of force - in other words, a process of détente accompanied by a juridical system of guarantees that respects the rights of all peoples to their independence and self-determination and that imposes on all States, and especially the most powerful, the duty of living up to their international obligations and making their conduct conform to the principles and rules of the United Nations Charter and of international law. We advocate the kind of détente that is based on the pressing need to guarantee every human being a minimum of dignity and well-being, that distances itself from abstract concepts and concentrates on the material and spiritual needs of human beings, who suffer the consequences of our inability to solve their very real and immediate problems.

Those of us who shoulder responsibilities in the international arena often have the tendency to resort to theories and schemes that estrange us from the suffering, the pain, the dreams and the hopes of concrete people - those who experience war or peace, development or underdevelopment, 24 hours of every day of

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their precarious existence. The threat of nuclear holocaust is very irrelevant to them when, throughout their lifetime, they will be unable to find work or their children will die in the arms of desperate parents who cannot feed them or cure their diseases.

Let us not forget that the North-South conflict and the economic violence it engenders result each year in more deaths than all the military conflicts, put together, that we seek to solve or have solved. Certainly, there are many more victims of that conflict and that violence than there were from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. For our peoples, therefore, that is the real, the most bloody conflict, the greatest and the nearest danger. In spite of that fact, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union in its address to the plenary General Assembly made any reference to the question of development - a question that, more than any other, affects the security of four fifths of the countries that were listening. That silence has given rise to deep concerns and to major question marks about the concept of security at the basis of the understanding between the great Powers, and about the possibility that the maintenance of the world economic status quo might be one of its components.

Thus, we must dispel these grave concerns and re-establish the certainty that the bipolar predominance does not imply the stratification of international society. The opportunities are within reach. The urgency of serious negotiations on the world debt problem and the respective relaunching of the North-South dialogue to solve, once and for all, the problems raised by an unequal, contradictory interdependence has been set forth by the developing countries in the Assembly, the general debate of which revealed the high priority attached to this fundamental question by those who make up the overwhelming majority of mankind. The reaction to this demand must be in keeping with the reality of the new concept

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of security and must extend to the South the achievements and progress generated within the North by the recognition of this new reality.

Faced with the East-West détente, North-South détente is now required for the security of all.

The political will that is leading the developed world to search for solutions to problems engendered by power cannot and must not be less than the responsibility that history imposes for the solution of situations of underdevelopment which - stemming from old forms of political dependence and from the archaic current system of economic relations - have a direct impact on the question of security.

A peace that does not take into account a critical condition of underdevelopment at the international level will always be a precarious peace, no matter how important and valuable the political agreements among the big Powers or how strong the political, economic and military blocs that emerge from them.

That is our concept of security as a whole. Within that framework, my country attaches special importance to the question of the indiscriminate transfer of weapons, which has negative effects on regional disarmament processes, sacrifices the scarce resources of the dispossessed majorities of the Earth and sometimes assaults the legitimacy of power. Therefore, the regional efforts for peace and disarmament being made in various parts of the world must be firmly supported. The contribution made to them by the regional centres for peace, disarmament and development deserve our special attention and support, not only because they disseminate the message of our Organization but also because they are forums for political understanding in the field of disarmament and for reconciling the wishes of States. That is one of the important results of the silent but effective role which the Department for Disarmament Affairs plays within the context of its very important task - notwithstanding its budgetary constraints. It deserves our gratitude and appreciation.

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

Zones of peace are also important elements in the strengthening of security, and my country supports them.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the corner-stone of the non-proliferation régime. Peru fully complies with the obligations it undertook, in all sovereignty, to respect. My delegation therefore regards the holding of the fourth review conference of the parties to the Treaty as a matter of capital importance. We are confident that the dynamic of this process and the one generated by the very first dismantling of nuclear arsenals will lead, as desired by my country, among others, to the complete cessation of nuclear tests and the entry into force of the relevant international instruments.

Only by using our joint capacity to agree on policies that strengthen peace and the progress of mankind will we succeed in facing the challenge posed to our civilization by the explosive mixture of the arms race, power politics and the injustice of an economic system that is generating more and more misery and violence every day. This calls for joint, far-sighted and deliberate efforts to banish force and replace it by mutual understanding, to give life its brilliance again, to sow hope where there has been only death and suffering and to renew faith in the common destiny of our species. In the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, "If mankind continues to live, it will not be simply because it was born but because it has taken a decision to go on living."

Mr. BOKOV (Bulgaria): The Bulgarian delegation is speaking for the second time in our debate in order to give a more detailed account of its views on two important issues on our agenda, namely, verification in all its aspects, and naval armaments and disarmament.

It is our considered view that to be effective and adequate any system of verification established as a part of disarmament agreements should provide reliable guarantees that all signatories to the agreements will fulfil their obligations. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range missiles has set up qualitatively new, unparalleled standards of openness and control. The experience gained in the work on this Treaty and in the course of its implementation can be very useful in the development of verification procedures for future agreements. Such procedures should thus cover all armaments, industrial, military and stocking facilities, installations and testing-grounds relevant to the agreements and falling within the jurisdiction or control of the States parties regardless of their actual location. This the only way to achieve complete confidence that all loopholes for activities banned by the agreements have been closed in order to prevent any party from obtaining unilateral military advantages.

The joint Soviet-American experiments on monitoring nuclear tests, the on-site inspections carried out in accordance with the Stockholm agreements and the co-ordinated additional procedures under the Convention on the prohibition of bacteriological weapons substantiate the thesis that the obstacles in the field of verification can be overcome provided that all countries are sincerely willing to achieve positive results on the basis of reasonable compromise and taking into consideration not only their own security interests but those of other States as well.

Bulgaria has been actively involved in the discussions at the United Nations on verification in all its aspects. We are happy to note the growing convergence of views among the Member States on a matter that had, until recently, been so sensitive and disputed.

We value highly the work done under your able guidance, Mr. Chairman, in the past two years by the Working Group of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on verification, as a result of which 16 principles of verification have been agreed upon. The discussion of verification methods and procedures has also had a good start. We are convinced that the United Nations is and should be established as the centre for broad international co-operation in this field. The international community has at its disposal the necessary organizational and technical means for initiating the development of a broad international mechanism for verification under the auspices of the United Nations, as a number of States have already proposed. This mechanism could be established on a stage-by-stage basis, with the functions of the United Nations gradually increasing until the conditions become ripe for the eventual setting up of an international verification agency. Such an agency could then co-ordinate the operation of the verification mechanism for every specific agreement and could carry out verification work on its own, with the consent of the States concerned. Similar ideas are included in the document submitted by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union to the Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly at its third special session on disarmament (A/S-15/AC.1/15).

A suitable first step towards the creation of an international verification system would be the setting up of a multilateral centre with the office of the

Secretary-General, staffed by qualified experts from interested Member States. This centre could formulate the guidelines for international verification; systematize the experience of the United Nations and other international organizations in the field of monitoring and verification, and co-ordinate their co-operation; study the existing verification procedures with the aim of using elements of them in the future agreements; grant, upon the request of Member States, consultative and technical assistance and services in the development and functioning of the respective verification systems for negotiations and agreements; and send observers and experts to regions of conflict and tension, with directions from the Secretary-General. An integral part of this centre could be a data bank on verification, as proposed by Finland, to which the States could voluntarily send relevant information. The possibilities of setting up a verification centre and, as a first step towards this goal, establishing a data bank, could be studied by the Secretary-General in consultation with the interested Member States.

The preceding considerations do not exclude, but indeed presuppose, the establishment of bilateral and multilateral verification systems in conformity with specific agreements. These systems could in the future become components of a broad international mechanism, as described above.

I should like to state that the Bulgarian delegation is fully prepared to work with other interested delegations on identifying and solving the numerous issues related to verification with a view to facilitating the prompt and successful completion of the multilateral negotiations now in progress.

To our regret we should note here that unlike the progress made in other fields, naval activity and armaments have to a large extent remained outside the

efforts of the international community to halt the arms race and to bring about disarmament. The time has come for naval forces and armaments to be afforded due place in the whole complex of disarmament problems that are currently being negotiated, in order to avoid an increase in the existing asymmetries and imbalances and the emergence of new ones. It would be even more inadmissible to attempt to compensate for reductions in land-based armaments by increasing naval arms.

Guided by the awareness of this crucial fact the States Members of the Warsaw Treaty proposed opening negotiations with the participation of the great naval Powers and other interested States with a view to limiting and banning military activity in mutually agreed upon sea regions, limiting and reducing naval forces, and adopting confidence-building measures at sea in order to guarantee security and freedom of navigation.

In the course of the discussion of this issue at the United Nations the majority of States have voiced their understanding that certain measures for limiting and reducing naval armaments and for strengthening confidence and security at sea could be implemented at a very early stage without even upsetting the military balance on a global scale. The reports of the Chairmen of the Disarmament Commission, in documents A/CN.10/83, A/CN.102 and A/CN.113, the United Nations study in document A/40/535, and the documents submitted to the Disarmament Commission and to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament can serve as a sound foundation for continuing work in this field. All proposals made so far and all future ideas can be discussed at a multilateral meeting of military experts at the United Nations, which can also work out principles of naval disarmament and principles for strengthening confidence, and

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which could develop a programme of action for the international community to curb the naval arms race. This meeting could set the stage for the subsequent holding of a special international conference or meeting of the Security Council on these issues.

A suitable first step would be the timely identification and adoption of measures for strengthening confidence, to be applied in the regions with the busiest sea routes or where the danger of conflicts is the greatest. I am referring here to the need for early warning about transfers of naval forces and manoeuvres, the limiting of the number, scale and regions of naval exercises, inviting observers, and the general exchange of naval information.

(Mr. Bokov, Bulgaria)

The comparison of data about the naval forces in terms of numerical strength and classes of weaponry, as well as the adoption of principles of naval activity, would also help to strengthen confidence. The example of the Soviet Union in providing the United Nations with data on its naval forces and the number of military vessels, as specified in the statement of Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovsky, should be followed by other big naval Powers.

The negative attitude of one or two countries which are categorically opposed to the holding of negotiations on naval disarmament is to be regretted. None the less, we believe that efforts should continue to find a formula for involving as many countries as possible in serious consideration and eventually negotiations on the limitation of naval activity, confidence-building at sea and naval disarmament. In the meantime, the inclusion of an item on naval disarmament in the agenda of the forthcoming session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission would be fully justified.

The presence of a large number of arms on highly mobile carriers, which are both difficult to detect and capable of posing a threat from variable positions, brings an element of unpredictability to relations between States. From this point of view, an agreement covering the operation of submarines capable of striking a number of targets would have a stabilizing effect on the international situation. The General Assembly could recommend the initiation of negotiations on the conclusion of such an agreement within the framework of one of the current forums, such as the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Bulgaria supports the proposal made by Sweden and other States on the signing of a multilateral agreement on preventing incidents on the high seas and in the overlying air space.

(Mr. Bokov, Bulgaria)

It is also necessary to work out guarantees for the security of sea communications. These guarantees could, for instance, include a ban on military exercises and manoeuvres in international straits, in zones of intensive shipping and fishing and in the overlying airspace, and measures to combat terrorism and piracy at sea. The setting up of a United Nations international naval force would also be a means of strengthening security at sea on the basis of the collective security mechanism envisaged in the Charter.

The creation of zones of reduced armaments and the strengthening of confidence in the regions along the main sea routes by withdrawing offensive forces from them would help to eliminate the threat of a first strike. The new Soviet proposals made by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev last September in Krasnoyarsk are of special significance in this respect. They could serve as a model for a new and responsible approach to other pressing international issues as well, such as foreign military presence and the elimination of military bases on foreign territory.

We believe that all types of sea-based nuclear weapons could gradually become the subject of negotiations. In fact, sea-based strategic forces have already been included in bilateral Soviet-American negotiations. It is our hope that the issue of sea-based long-range cruise missiles will be suitably resolved during the elaboration of the treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear forces.

However, we should not forget that a large number of nuclear weapons continue to remain outside all negotiations. In this connection, we believe that it is necessary to limit the number of ships carrying tactical nuclear weapons.

It is also true that all aspects of the naval arms race are in one way or another linked with each other. One of the main goals set in the United Nations

(Mr. Bokov, Bulgaria)

study on the naval arms race is the adoption through negotiations of effective measures for naval nuclear disarmament and the guaranteeing of stability at significantly lower levels of conventional naval forces. The nuclear element occupies a very significant place within the whole complex of interrelated issues and will certainly have an impact on the discussion of each and every one of these issues. It is no mere coincidence that the countries with the largest navies are precisely the nuclear-weapon States. All this provides sufficient grounds for activating multilateral efforts in this field.

In our view the regional approach to the problems of naval disarmament can also play a very significant role. The People's Republic of Bulgaria supports all proposals aimed at the non-deployment of nuclear arms at sea and their withdrawal from predetermined sea regions, with the ultimate goal of setting up nuclear-free zones and zones of peace in the Pacific, the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, the northern seas and the Mediterranean. The working documents of Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union submitted to the Disarmament Commission earlier this year (A/CN.10/109) and to the third special session devoted to disarmament (A/S-15/AC.1/16) include a broad programme of measures on a regional level.

Bulgaria welcomes the readiness of the Soviet Union to adopt, together with the other nuclear-weapon States, the practice of providing information on the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard ships entering ports of foreign countries. It would also be useful to develop on a multilateral basis technical means of verifying the presence of nuclear weapons on ships. As in all other fields of disarmament, we stand for the strictest possible comprehensive verification, with the use of national technical means, procedures for consultation

(Mr. Bokov, Bulgaria)

and co-operation, and on-site inspection of, among other things, naval bases and facilities on foreign territory.

All these proposals are aimed at achieving a gradual transition to such a composition and structure of naval forces as would make them suitable defensive purposes only on the basis of reasonable sufficiency. As a first step towards that objective, the Conference on Disarmament or the Disarmament Commission could discuss criteria or parameters guaranteeing the defensive nature of naval forces.

For its part, Bulgaria proposes to hold an international symposium on the issue of naval armaments and disarmament, under the auspices of the United Nations World Disarmament Campaign, next year at a time acceptable to other interested Member States. We shall provide more details of this proposal at a later stage. The aim of the symposium will be to discuss common approaches to this highly complicated issue.

We fully understand that the set of proposals and ideas formulated in this statement represents an ambitious, all-out agenda, which might create at first glance the impression of unattainability. Therefore we suggest that a step-by-step approach be adopted, and we will support every single measure, irrespective of how insignificant it may seem, that would contribute to the achievement of the final goal.

Mr. VAJPAYEE (India) (spoke in Hindi; English text furnished by the delegation): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation extends its felicitations to you and to the other officers of the Committee. We hope the session over which you are presiding will be a fruitful one under your experienced and able guidance. We would like to assure you of our full co-operation in the discharge of your responsibility.

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

When I addressed the General Assembly in 1977 as Minister for External Affairs, I emphasized the urgent necessity for the mind to free itself of narrow military logic, for enlightened political will to assert itself, and to reverse the nuclear-arms race. In 1977 we were looking forward to a new departure and a programme of concrete measures being formulated at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, scheduled to be held the following year. Today, 11 years later, we reiterate our conviction, now as then, that international peace and security can be ensured only through general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, under effective international control.

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

The First Committee is meeting at a significant moment in the area of disarmament negotiations. Only a few months ago we assembled here for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We came with the hope that that special session would provide the much-needed political impetus for multilateral disarmament. We were encouraged by the positive results of the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of nuclear arsenals. We had welcomed the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - as a positive first step, as the beginning of a process which needed to be carried forward to its logical conclusion - the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The Indian position was set out in detail by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during his address at the third special session devoted to disarmament, when he put forward a comprehensive action plan for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2010. The action plan calls upon the international community to negotiate a binding commitment to general and complete disarmament. While nuclear disarmament occupies the central place in each stage of the plan, it is supported by collateral and other measures to further the process in a comprehensive manner so as to enhance security for all countries. The plan includes proposals for banning chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, for halting and reversing the arms race, for using scientific and technological developments for the benefit of mankind and for reducing conventional arms and forces to minimum levels required for defensive purposes. Finally, it outlines ideas for the conduct of international relations in a world free of nuclear weapons.

A number of other valuable, constructive proposals were made by other leaders. Nevertheless, the results of the third special session on disarmament

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

fell short of expectations. This gives cause for reflection, but the discouragement should not dishearten us. The era of new bilateralism is a sign of change and, with persistent efforts, this will, we hope, reinforce multilateralism in negotiations relating to security and disarmament. Many of the fresh ideas and impulses at that session will no doubt take practical shape during the years to come, and some earlier concepts will need to be jettisoned. These trends should become clearer through the deliberations in our work this year in this Committee.

In the six-nation initiative, the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania have given voice to the acute international concern at the continuing threat that nuclear weapons pose to humanity. The catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war, even on a limited scale, are well documented today. The blast, heat and radiation effects would trigger an arctic nuclear winter which would transform the Earth into a darkened, frozen planet. The United Nations Group of Experts, in a report published earlier this year, concluded that there is no escape from total and irreversible disaster in the event of a nuclear war.

It is a historical fact that weapons alone cannot be the basis of long-term security for nations. Unfortunately, it is also a historical fact that the realization of the validity of this precept has often been too short-lived. In the nuclear age, however, this precept has acquired an apocalyptic meaning. To think that deterrence with nuclear weapons is the same as deterrence with conventional weapons is a delusion. More and more strategic thinkers, including those who have contributed to the development of doctrines of countervalue and counterforce, are questioning their validity. Recently a group of eminent scientists carried out a study on civilian casualties from counterforce attacks, which during the past two decades have formed a key element in the targeting strategy of the two military alliances. Their conclusion was simple and unambiguous:

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"large-scale application of nuclear weapons against military targets is not qualitatively different from their application against civilians."

Ironically, this conclusion is not even new. More than 25 years ago a General of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, while briefing the United States President, also said:

"The other side would not be able to distinguish whether it was a countervalue attack or a counterforce attack that had been launched. Further, given the co-location of the targets and the widespread effects of the weapons, limiting attacks to military targets has little practical meaning as a humanitarian measure."

The General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to disarmament, declared that the removal of the danger of nuclear war was the most acute and important task of the day. In subsequent years the General Assembly has adopted resolutions by overwhelming majorities on the most pressing areas relating to nuclear disarmament, such as the prevention of nuclear war, a freeze on nuclear-weapon production and a ban on nuclear-weapon testing.

Despite the very clear mandate given by the General Assembly to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference has been denied the possibility of commencing negotiations on any of these crucial issues. For many years India has proposed, both at the Conference on Disarmament and in the General Assembly, that, while the most effective guarantee against nuclear war is nuclear disarmament and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the immediate measure has to be negotiations on a convention which would outlaw the use or threat of use of such weapons. Today it is accepted that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. A commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons is now also a generally held position. These positions are incompatible with a security doctrine that reserves the right to resort to nuclear weapons. Such a convention would not only remove the threat of nuclear holocaust that looms over our planet

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but also remove the totally untenable legitimacy that it is sought to attribute to nuclear weapons as a currency of power. In the face of the danger of common annihilation, the distinction between the powerful and the weak has become meaningless. We are convinced that countries which possess no nuclear arsenals also have a responsibility in determining their fate, and are determined to exercise it.

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

As Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden stated in his address to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament:

"One important step would be to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. I believe that the time has come to explore the possibility of such a step. Some argue that this is a risky proposition. It is my conviction that the risk incurred by forbidding the use of nuclear weapons would be far less than the risks we are now all running because of the nuclear arms race".

(A/S-15/PV.2, p. 37)

Closely linked to this measure is the appeal to nuclear-weapon States to apply an immediate freeze on production of these weapons and intended fissile material. Such proposals have already received wide endorsement by Governments and peoples. Arguments advanced by some nuclear-weapon States and their allies that such a freeze would perpetuate existing imbalance are unacceptable. Parity under such circumstances is a mere game of numbers and ceases to have any practical relevance when there exists excessive overkill capacity to the extent of four tons of TNT equivalent for every man, woman and child on this earth.

The third issue closely related to the nuclear arms race is the nuclear-weapon-test ban. For more than three decades, the nuclear-weapon States have ignored the appeal of the world community to end nuclear-weapon testing, thus halting the on-going process of development and refinement in the lethality of nuclear weapons. For a long time, inadequacy of verification was put forward as a justification for not undertaking such a commitment. This has now proved to be untrue. Developments in seismic monitoring, the offer made in the Six Nation Initiative to verify a moratorium on nuclear testing, the results of the deliberations of the Group of Scientific Experts under the aegis of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the possibilities for the establishment of an

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international seismic network, all clearly indicate that verification can no longer be the obstacle to commencing negotiations for a nuclear-test-ban Treaty.

Another reason often cited for continued testing is maintenance of the reliability of stockpiles. Here, too, a study carried out as recently as 1988 by scientists at weapon design laboratories has concluded that "stockpile reliability is not a major consideration in arguing against a low yield or comprehensive test ban".

Political issues relating to on-site inspection no longer seem as intractable as before. Admittedly there are technical issues to be negotiated, but this only serves to highlight the fact that the basic reservations are political in origin. Given political will, meaningful negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, where all five nuclear-weapon States are represented, would help us to move closer to our shared goal of a comprehensive test-ban Treaty. The comprehensive test ban treaty was the first appeal in the field of nuclear disarmament - voiced by the scientists who had themselves worked on the Manhattan Project. In the General Assembly, this appeal was articulated in 1954 by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

The international community has recognized outer space as the common heritage of mankind. Recent developments in space research and technology offer a glimpse of the benefits possible for all countries provided outer space can be kept free of all weapons and reserved only for peaceful purposes. India would like to see the enhancement of international co-operation in peaceful activities in areas which offer the greatest benefit to the largest number of people. We are greatly concerned at reports regarding plans for the development and testing of space-weapon systems. Space, the new frontier, should not be allowed to become an arena for the application of the doctrine that long-term security can be based on weapons. Let humanity not launch its terrestrial folly into space.

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

There is already an international legal régime for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. But this needs to be strengthened and reinforced by being made applicable to the new systems made possible by technological developments. To safeguard outer space for present and future generations, it is all the more necessary that all States comply fully with the existing bilateral and multilateral treaties, while undertaking negotiations for a complete ban on all anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons and other space-weapon systems. As a useful interim measure, a large number of countries have called for a moratorium on such activity. The issues of verification are complex enough today. Once such weapons are deployed in space this problem threatens to become intractable.

The new weapons being developed are part of a much wider qualitative arms race. The new technologies have dramatically expanded the scope and intensity of conventional warfare. The range, precision and lethality of conventional weapons are being vastly increased. Some of these weapons are moving from being "smart" to being "intelligent". The momentum of developments in military technology plays a dominant role in accelerating the arms race. For this, we need to understand the implications of technological developments for international security and channel such developments in a positive direction. We need a system which fosters technological development but restricts its application for military purposes. Let the genie still in the bottle remain in the bottle. For too long has the arms control approach focused on quantitative ceilings. The disarmament approach must also develop arrangements for checking the qualitative arms race, as technology creates its own ever-escalating fatal momentum. Developments in frontier technology areas need to be continually assessed for their implications. A number of these developments, as in sensor development, communications and computing capabilities can have implications that may prove to be immensely beneficial in the verification of disarmament agreements. This leads us to believe that increased

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transparency in research and development of frontier technologies with potential military applications and systematic monitoring and assessment of their implications for security would contribute positively to multilateral disarmament negotiations. It would also lead to greater international co-operation to give technology a human face.

In Stockholm, the leaders of the Six-Nation Initiative, President Alfonsín of Argentina, Prime Minister Papandreu of Greece, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India, President de laMadrid of Mexico, Chairman Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden, made a proposal to establish a multilateral verification system within the United Nations as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security during the process of disarmament and in a nuclear-free world.

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

At this session the six delegations will take an initiative on the subject. We hope that this proposal, aimed at underlining the interest and involvement of the international community in all issues of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, will receive wide support.

In 1925, the world community, concerned by the increasing use of chemical weapons, prohibited their use in terms of the agreement known as the Geneva Protocol. In 1972, we built upon this basis and were able to strengthen the régime by bringing into effect the biological-weapons convention. Today we can do the same for chemical weapons, thereby eliminating this pernicious threat from our planet. We are convinced that the only way to eliminate the threat of chemical warfare is the early conclusion of a universal, comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention which would prohibit the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, while ensuring the destruction of all existing stockpiles and chemical-weapon facilities. We should continue to make all efforts towards this goal in the Conference on Disarmament. We have listened with interest to the proposals made by President Reagan and President Mitterrand for convening an international conference devoted to the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. We believe that such a conference could be a useful instrument to reaffirm our support of the Geneva Protocol, but more so, to provide the necessary political impetus to enable us to conclude our negotiations in Geneva on a draft chemical-weapons convention in the near future.

In today's shrunken world, peace can be preserved only through collective efforts and security has to be enhanced for the entire world community. Security can no longer be perceived in military terms alone. It has economic, social, humanitarian and ecological dimensions. Poverty, inequality and discrimination also constitute threats to security that are exacerbated by the arms race. The

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fourth report of the United Nations expert group on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures concludes:

"The most important feature of the arms race is that it undermines international security by creating a constant risk of war engaging the largest Powers, including nuclear war, and an endless series of wars at lower levels, hindering the development of an atmosphere which downgrades the role of force in international relations." (A/43/368, para. 2 (e))

The report also states that the negative trends perceived in its previous analyses have continued during the present decade. It finds that in the mid-1980s, the arms race among the major military Powers, particularly in the nuclear field, continued in the context of modernization of weapons and arsenals. Advances in military technology are still running ahead of the process of negotiations. Socio-economic development remains in competition with the claims of the military on limited human and material resources.

The first ever International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held last year, focused attention on the inter-dependence between disarmament and development. Its Final Document, adopted by consensus, clearly affirms that disarmament and development are the two pillars on which enduring peace and security need to be built. Further, these are priority concerns of the international community in which all nations, developed and developing, big and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, have a common and equal stake. The action programme emphasizes the central role of the United Nations and lists a number of activities and possible initiatives on which progress needs to be achieved.

Given the criticality of the issues before us, we can hardly afford the luxury of diverting our limited resources to less important matters and partial measures

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of disarmament in the name of "realism" or "pragmatism". Priorities for our work have been clearly laid down in the Final Document adopted in 1978. The only answer to the nuclear dilemma is a universal nuclear-disarmament programme, as nuclear weapons have reduced the entire world to a single military theatre. Survival is no longer possible in instalments or in part.

In the action plan submitted by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the third special session devoted to disarmament, the establishment and expansion of areas free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction have been placed within the framework of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. In presenting a time-bound approach as a basis for negotiations, the plan also seeks to convey the urgency with which standstill and rollback need to be applied in global disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. The goal must be seen, to bring it within our grasp.

It has been said that man is mortal but mankind is immortal. Today, we have come to a watershed on the scale of evolution when we ourselves hold the key to the immortality of mankind. This is a sobering realization. The responsibility does not leave us any room for error. There is only one rational choice. We must be clear-eyed and unambiguous about it. In the United Nations, we also have the instruments for implementing it and taking control of our destiny. What we need is a new way of thinking that must encompass the realization that, in the present day world, the destinies of all nations and peoples belong together and that there can be no substitute for an effective multilateral and universal system in the maintenance of international peace and security. Only then can we move forward to general and complete disarmament under effective international control as the cherished goal of mankind.

I should like to conclude on a note of hope. The Soviet Union and the United States which, along with other nuclear States, carry the primary responsibility in

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

ushering the world towards this goal, have taken the first step towards breaking the stranglehold of suspicion, fear and mistrust. This is to be welcomed by the world community. We may now dare to hope that the history of our times has taken a decisive turn away from the abyss and will progress steadily along this path so that accomplishments to be striven for, of which we have spoken, may become a reality, not only for succeeding generations or even for the youth of today, but for us deliberating this fateful theme in this room.

Mr. MAHALATI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. Chairman, I can only comment on the able manner in which you have successfully conducted the work of this Committee. Canada has always had a positive and constructive approach to all disarmament issues. I am therefore confident that under your wise chairmanship the work of this Committee will bear successful results in the face of the immense task of disarmament we all confront.

The maintenance of international peace and security constitutes the main prerequisite for the economic and social development of all societies. In this regard the United Nations has a significant role to play. Unfortunately, for certain reasons, including the jingoistic policies pursued by some Powers and the rivalry between the two military blocs, as well as the unabated arms race, this international Organization has been sidetracked from its obligations to mankind vis-à-vis international events.

The prospect of a new era of détente and stability has now raised a spirit of optimism in the United Nations that deserves to be fully utilized and translated into concrete disarmament measures. Accordingly, our task in this Committee calls for a change in attitudes and a new constructive approach to the issues before us. Our efforts should therefore be focused on the most acute problems, in the knowledge that there is an interrelationship between security and disarmament and that one cannot be achieved without the other.

The arms race is a multi-dimensional process involving political, economic, technological and, most important, security elements. The interrelationship between disarmament and security should be considered from this angle. This means that international tensions, disputes and confrontations provide reasons for acquiring new and more weapons, while the acquisition of weapons in turn exacerbates the international situation.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

The quantitative arms race between the super-Powers may have been subdued for the time being, but the question remains whether the qualitative arms race involving the modernization of weapons and weapon systems has not been substituted for the quantitative arms race. In fact, there are reports to the effect that all five nuclear Powers have been involved in one way or other in the expansion and modernization of their nuclear arsenals.

Chemical weapons share a common trait with nuclear weapons in that they both have the capacity to inflict mass indiscriminate death. There is however one important difference between the two: chemical weapons are cheap and easy to manufacture. Hence the possibility of the spread and use of this type of weapon of mass destruction is acute and real.

Since the last session of the General Assembly and despite General Assembly resolution 42/37 C, adopted earlier by consensus in this Committee, to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning chemical weapons, the use of these inhuman weapons by Iraq went on unabated and on a larger scale.

United Nations investigation teams have on several occasions substantiated the use of chemical weapons by Iraq and there is no doubt that the lack of an appropriate response by the United Nations to the violations of internationally recognized rules, known as jus cogens, is seriously undermining the authority and prestige of this Organization. The non-implementation of the resolution also brings about a feeling of frustration provoked by negligence of the demands of the majority of Member States representing the international community.

Now at last it seems that the lives of thousands of innocent Iranians as well as Iraqi Kurds, who became victims of Iraq's chemical attacks, have opened the eyes of those who turned a blind eye to the facts and neglected their negative outcome, which resulted in the steady erosion of the existing international rules banning

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chemical weapons. It is certainly a relief that in the new trend positive attitudes are demonstrated. With the changes in the Soviet Union that country now welcomes the proposal for automatic investigation in the case of reported use of chemical weapons.

The President of the United States has in the meantime proposed the holding of an international conference to uphold the authority of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. It is interesting to note that, while expressing his concern over the present situation, he said,

"The use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war... jeopardizes the moral and legal strictures that have held these weapons in check since the First World War. Let this tragedy spark reaffirmation of the Geneva Protocol outlawing the use of chemical weapons." (A/43/PV.4, p. 33)

The French President also expressed his concerned and declared,

"let us create a situation that would make it impossible for any State to use chemical weapons with impunity to settle its external or internal problems."
(A/43/PV.10, p. 12)

Later, as we are all aware, the representative of France proposed in this Committee that Paris become the venue of that international conference from 7 to 11 January 1989.

Of course the issue of chemical weapons has many aspects, which should be given deep consideration by this Committee and all relevant organizations. One of the most important aspects is the transfer of technology for the production of chemical weapons. We all know that some kinds of chemical weapons can be produced by almost any country: mustard gas, for example, can easily be produced by any country. But there are certain other types of chemical weapons, such as nerve

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

gas - which has been used extensively by Iraq - which definitely needs the transfer of higher technology from other countries.

Now I do not want to get into this particular aspect of the matter, but, of course, none of us believes that that kind of technology was transferred to Iraq by countries such as Antigua, Barbados, Samoa or even Costa Rica. It is very clear which country was responsible for the transfer of such technology to Iraq, but in any case this is not an aspect I want to go into.

The main aspect, a very interesting one, is the change in the positions of those countries which were the last ones to give their consent to the adoption of Security Council resolutions 612 (1988) and 620 (1988), which took place only a few months ago. This is a whole revolution. We can of course only welcome such a revolution in the positions of those countries which had resisted strong measures against the continuous use of chemical weapons by Iraq, and we do not of course consider those changes as being hypocritical. We should like, rather, to consider them as being sincere. We hope that these have been sincere changes in the positions of those countries.

These are all encouraging signs, after a period of silence and indifference on the part of those States. However, we believe that the holding of the belated conference in Paris - on which there has been so much procrastination - should not be used by those countries as a means to conceal their shortcomings, or even their involvement in chemical warfare in recent years.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

Such a conference could have taken place after the filing of the first report by the United Nations investigation team substantiating the use of chemical weapons. The call could even have been made after the Halabja massacre or the adoption of the first Security Council resolution in this field.

My country, as the main victim of these dastardly weapons, welcomes any genuine effort to stop the production, spread and use of chemical weapons. Needless to say this is a position deriving not only from the fact that we are the victims who have suffered most from chemical weapons but also from our conviction that those weapons are inhuman and should be banned for ever.

The fact that my country opted not to use chemical weapons in the course of the war, notwithstanding our possession of all the means of manufacturing those weapons on a large scale and using them extensively in retaliation, clearly demonstrates one of the principles to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed.

This act of self-restraint, unprecedented in history, should set a good example for future generations which, because of advances in technology and progress in weapons systems, might face the same challenge as we did. We hope that they would come out of such a test with pride and honour.

Another perilous issue facing mankind is that of nuclear weapons. This is reflected in the Stockholm Declaration, adopted on 21 January 1988, which states:

"The strategic nuclear weapons pose a mortal threat all over the world ...

"... Agreements to reduce existing nuclear arsenals must be backed up by decisive measures to check the unbridled development of new generations of ever more dreadful and sophisticated nuclear weapons. The single most effective measure would be to end all nuclear-weapon tests, by all states." (A/43/125,

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

In this respect we fully support the initiative of the six countries which formally proposed to the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, which are the depositaries of the partial test-ban Treaty, that the Treaty be amended to become a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Although some steps have been taken towards nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-arms race is alarming. A report prepared by a Group of Consultant Experts appointed by the Secretary-General, entitled "Economic and social consequences of the arms race and of military expenditures", completed in 1982 and recently updated, has confirmed that

"in the mid-1980s ... the modernization of weapons and arsenals, despite the improvement during the past three years in the dialogue between these Powers and in the international atmosphere [is continuing]. Advances in military technology are still running ahead of the process of disarmament negotiations, and politico-strategic considerations continue to hinder improvements in the global economic situation." (A/43/368, annex, para. 4)

Referring to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - many delegations have rightly praised that agreement as a new development towards nuclear disarmament; but let it not be forgotten that that agreement covers only less than 4 per cent of the nuclear stock of the two super-Powers. In other words, even if the agreement is fully implemented it will constitute only a step along the path towards nuclear disarmament. It is therefore imperative that all nuclear Powers, especially the two super-Powers, in abiding by their international responsibilities move towards substantial reductions in their nuclear arsenals and, as a first step towards that goal, join other nations in signing an agreement on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

The naval arms race is becoming an increasing threat to international peace and security. The major nuclear Powers are involved in stationing more and more of their nuclear armaments at sea, and with any new arms control agreement between the two super-Powers the chances of transferring land-based nuclear weapons to the seas becomes even greater.

Another negative aspect of the naval arms race is the increasing presence of the major Powers' navies in the vicinity and the territorial waters of other countries, especially those which are not members of any military bloc. This trend constitutes a serious threat to the security and sovereignty of littoral States. On the other hand there is a tendency on the part of some major Powers to revive the old and discredited gunboat diplomacy in pursuit of their policy of intimidation and dominance. The presence of foreign navies in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman during the past year has demonstrated what dangerous consequences that kind of policy can have. As a direct result of the United States presence in the Persian Gulf, an Iranian airliner flying along an internationally recognized air corridor was shot down by an American warship on 3 July 1988, causing the death of 290 innocent passengers, including 170 women and children.

Turning to another issue, I would refer to outer space. Outer space is increasingly becoming another battlefield of rivalry in the game of dominance. Today more than ever before, with the advancement of technology, the use of outer space has become an important concern of the international community. Outer space is the common heritage of mankind and should be utilized solely for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of the human society.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

As different reports indicate, more than 70 per cent of space activities are of a military nature. They include observation of military activities and the detection of nuclear explosions. The space Powers claim that most of these activities are related to the direct application of arms control and disarmament. My delegation does not share those views. Spy satellites and military information gathering by satellites interfere directly with the sovereign right of nations and therefore should not be permitted. We believe that the proposal, introduced by the Soviet Union, for the establishment of an on-site inspection organization has merit, since it would ensure that objects launched and stationed in space were not weapons or were not equipped with weapons.

The United Nations is now at a turning-point in its history. It is not long since it was faced with stagnation, coupled with diminished confidence in its ability to carry out its main task - the maintenance of international peace and security. Now it is passing through a very crucial and challenging period. This may be well demonstrated during the course of the debates at this session and the result-oriented resolutions which this Committee will adopt. We believe it is essential to strengthen the binding force, both moral and political, of the resolutions and other documents on disarmament adopted by the Committee.

We believe that the United Nations will be able to resume its rightful role as the protector and promoter of international peace and security only if all States become mindful of their obligations, so that no longer will many resolutions remain unimplemented.

Mr. BATIOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): In its statement today the delegation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic would like to dwell on questions of multilateral machinery in the disarmament sphere and the implementation of General Assembly decisions on disarmament.

The atmosphere in which consideration of items on the agenda of the forty-third session of the General Assembly is taking place today is noticeably different from that in previous years.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukrainian SSR)

We had not lost hope that in the final analysis common sense would prevail and the cause of disarmament would move from the stage of appeals to the stage of the implementation of concrete measures. However, only recently - to be precise, last August - did the long-awaited destruction of nuclear missiles begin, as the result of the implementation of the historic Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

The new international atmosphere is paving the way for new opportunities, but opportunities must be used in time. The situation in 1988 brings even more clearly to light the fact that the United Nations is perhaps not the ideal but certainly an irreplaceable instrument for the working out, adoption and implementation of multilateral measures to strengthen international peace and security.

A substantively important factor for the strengthening of international security is effective, tangible and timely action for disarmament, taken in harmony with measures for international economic and ecological improvements, for the reaffirmation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter in all spheres of international relations.

The United Nations, by mobilizing and involving all States in the discussion and negotiation process is playing one of the most important roles in the quest for solutions to disarmament problems. If that role is to be continually enhanced, consistent efforts must be made to increase the effectiveness of the work of all the major organs of the Organization in this sphere. The General Assembly and its First Committee, by engaging in in-depth and comprehensive consideration of problems, can and must provide for the working out and implementation of agreed disarmament measures. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR notes with satisfaction the active measures that have been taken, with your direct participation and under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, to improve the First Committee's work and to expand

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukrainian SSR)

the interaction by delegations in the search for and working out of viable, constructive decisions.

Full use has not yet been made of the potential of such machinery as the United Nations Disarmament Commission for harmonizing the approaches in the area of multilateral measures. In our time there will also be, as we see it, an increase in the significance of special sessions of the General Assembly on the most important and urgent individual disarmament problems.

At the same time, our delegation draws special attention to the role of the Security Council. The possibility of achieving practical results from the United Nations disarmament activities can be increased by a new approach to the use of the potential of the Security Council and its Military Staff Committee in order to ensure security with a lower level of armaments and a higher level of confidence among States. The Security Council, under Article 26 of the Charter, has primary responsibility for formulating plans for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.

We believe that, after the necessary preparations, it would be useful to convene a special series of Security Council meetings at the level of Foreign Ministers to discuss purposes and principles in the field of nuclear disarmament. We feel that it is precisely through stepped-up consultations and meetings of the five permanent members of the Security Council, where all the nuclear Powers are represented, that reliable measures could be worked out that would lead to freeing the world of nuclear weapons, as well as measures that would guarantee that such weapons would not reappear. As the representative of the People's Republic of Bulgaria has recalled at this meeting, it would be possible at a special series of Security Council meetings to discuss problems related to the reduction of naval forces. The Council could also consider reports submitted to it by the Secretary-General, at the Council's request or on his own initiative, on individual

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukrainian SSR)

questions of the maintenance of international peace and security, including disarmament questions. The Secretary-General could also submit to the General Assembly a yearly report on the disarmament process and could carry out studies closely linked to the problems of concrete negotiations under way at the present time.

The effectiveness of the functioning of the United Nations and other international bodies and machinery will determine the effectiveness of the international community's efforts in the disarmament field. That is why it is not fortuitous that statements made by delegations in the First Committee have included concrete proposals for stepping up, and maximizing the effective use of, the practical disarmament machinery of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations Disarmament Commission as well as for the fuller use of the negotiating potential of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. The attainment of practical results by the Conference on Disarmament is clearly lagging behind the demands of today's times, which urgently require the speedy conclusion of the work on drafting the convention on the elimination of chemical weapons as well as the focusing of the Conference's work on the question of the cessation of the arms race. Through real actions, the reputation of that multilateral negotiating disarmament forum must be enhanced.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR agrees that organs of the United Nations as well as its Secretary-General should have our support in their disarmament activities. In that connection, the necessary human and financial resources should be provided to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. The role, authority and effectiveness of the United Nations would stand to gain significantly if it were possible to improve the quality of its political documents on disarmament and to achieve an expansion of consensus.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukrainian SSR)

Recommendations on disarmament adopted by the United Nations should be dealt with in accordance with the commitments undertaken by Member States under the Charter. At the last session of the General Assembly the Ukrainian SSR, together with Czechoslovakia, drew the First Committee's attention to this question. The result was the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 42/38 J. There were 120 votes in favour of that resolution. Without in any way impinging on the legal status of the resolution, the co-sponsors and those who voted for it drew attention to the fact that the final objective of efforts in the First Committee was not only and not so much the adoption of resolutions but their consistent implementation. At this session of the Assembly too, the same co-sponsors will submit an appropriate draft resolution in this respect.

We believe that the role of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament could be substantively strengthened by the stepping up of efforts by Member States to implement honestly the relevant Assembly resolutions.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukrainian SSR)

In addition, there has been a change in the moral and political atmosphere during the adoption of resolutions on the part of all groups of States and representatives. Increased attention has been given to working out decisions and measures which have maximum support. All of this is creating more opportunities than ever before for the implementation by all States of decisions taken.

The United Nations has been the depository of many international treaties which have created a new political climate in the world; but it is also a depository for the hopes and the best aspirations of the peoples of the world. Let us not forget that the results of the work of the First Committee also determine the extent to which those hopes and aspirations will be justified.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.