



FIRST COMMITTEE
9th meeting
held on
Friday, 21 October 1983
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

Statements were made by:

- Mr. van Well (Federal Republic of Germany)
- Mr. Morelli Pando (Peru)
- Mr. Wasiuddin (Bangladesh)
- Mr. Mongbe (Benin)
- Mr. Sahnoun (Algeria)
- Mr. Hollai (Hungary)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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

AGENDA ITEMS 43 to 63 139, 141, 143 and 144 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. van NELLE (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. Chairman, I would first like to offer you my warm congratulations on your election to that important office. In view of the close relations between our two countries, it gives me special pleasure to see you presiding over this Committee's proceedings. Having appreciated your circumspection and skill in handling the preparations, we are confident that this session will benefit considerably from your guidance.

A word of thanks goes also to Ambassador Gbeho for his contribution to the Committee's work as last year's Chairman.

The representative of Greece has already spoken in his capacity as the current President of the Council of the European Communities and I fully endorse the views he has presented to the Committee.

All who have addressed this session of the General Assembly have pointed to the dangers of the present international situation. With growing concern and alarm we witness in many parts of the world the flagrant violations of the principle of non-use of force enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Since the 1970s détente and co-operation between East and West have suffered severe setbacks.

We therefore appreciate the Secretary-General's unambiguous references in his annual report to the dangers to world peace and to the tensions between East and West.

It is impossible to tell what the consequences of the increase in tensions will be. Addressing the Assembly on 29 September, Foreign Minister Genscher said:

"Today once more international discussion focuses on East-West tensions rather than on comprehensive North-South co-operation in pursuit of development in the third world. Once again the East-West confrontation is preventing the United Nations from doing its job of preserving world peace."
(A/38/PV.11, p. 18)

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic
of Germany)

The First Committee, intended as a forum for debate on world-wide security and disarmament issues, is increasingly becoming, against our wishes, a forum for East-West confrontation, for a discussion of strategic matters concerning the super-Powers hardly relevant or appropriate to the complexity of the subject-matter, and for questions of security in Europe. Urgent problems of security in Asia, Africa and Latin America, on the other hand, are neglected. We consider that the fundamental security interests of the non-aligned countries, in particular, deserve more attention.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic
of Germany)

None the less, we should not give up in resignation - precisely not at the present time and precisely not here in the United Nations. Safeguarding peace and preventing war are more important than ever. Allow me, therefore, to outline our policy in this respect.

The goal of the Federal Republic of Germany, and its criterion, is to maintain peace in freedom. In a policy statement on 4 May, Chancellor Kohl said the following:

"German foreign policy means above all safeguarding freedom and consolidating peace in Europe and the world. To us an active peace policy is a political necessity and a moral obligation."

This has been the objective of every Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The safeguarding of peace and the pursuit of disarmament are indispensable elements of our peace policy. That policy is based on our membership in the European Community and in the Atlantic Alliance, whose purpose is to prevent any war.

We all know that progress towards arms control and disarmament is made difficult when negotiations take place in a climate of mistrust and political tension. Conversely, a stronger system of collective security and the unconditional observance of the comprehensive ban on the threat or use of force prescribed by the United Nations Charter would enhance confidence between nations and thus also be conducive to agreements on arms control and disarmament. What terrible consequences exaggerated mistrust can have was illustrated by the shooting down of the Korean civilian airliner, which evoked indignation and fear all over the world.

In the 10 years that it has been a Member of the world Organization the Federal Republic of Germany has strongly supported the efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The United Nations is the most important forum for the discussion of global security and disarmament issues. It will not be possible to achieve an effective balance of security interests in a world characterized by growing interdependence unless all nations play their part. Seen against the background of poverty and want in many countries, the world's arms bill of \$800 billion this year is a shocking fact. The responsibility for this lies with the community of nations, for it is only through common efforts that this trend can be stopped.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic
of Germany)

The seriousness of our efforts to achieve the aims of disarmament and arms control in all fields is borne out by, among other things, our active involvement in the United Nations, especially in this First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Later in the session my delegation will be covering our work in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament concerning chemical and radiological weapons, a comprehensive test ban, outer space, and other matters. Today I should like to illustrate once again the fundamental objectives of our policy.

We want specific, militarily significant and balanced disarmament steps, the observance of which must be reliably verifiable. We want an argumentative and realistic dialogue among all nations of the world on the goals and concepts to be pursued. As in the past, we shall concentrate our work on areas where progress can actually be made, even in times of international tension. Here priority is given to the prevention of war, especially confidence-building through openness and transparency. These goals are in the interest of all nations. They should therefore be acceptable to all.

My Government and its allies have time and again declared that the foremost aim of their security policy is to prevent war and to create the foundations for lasting peace while safeguarding freedom. The most important means of preventing war is the unqualified observance of the principle of non-use of force. The Heads of State or Government of the Atlantic Alliance declared at their meeting in Bonn on 10 June 1982: "None of our weapons will ever be used except in response to attack." Let me emphasize once again here today: this comprehensive and unequivocal pledge by the Alliance never to be the first to resort to weapons must, in our view, be the quintessence of any sincere policy aimed at safeguarding peace and security.

I should now like to turn to the latest Soviet proposals on arms control and disarmament. In the general debate the Soviet delegation focused attention on two draft resolutions which it wants to be treated with priority. One concerns a declaration condemning nuclear war, the other a freeze on nuclear weapons.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic
of Germany)

These subjects have featured prominently in previous statements by the Soviet Union in the United Nations. My Government has on several occasions commented in detail, both in this Committee and in the Committee on Disarmament, on the Soviet position regarding the prevention of war and wishes once more to make its stance unmistakably clear.

The Soviet Union complains of a war hysteria which it itself started and which it stirs up anew day by day, and it criticizes the arms and modernization measures of the West - measures, which it has itself been carrying out for about six years and which it is still carrying out. In contrast, the Atlantic Alliance did not immediately respond to this arms build-up with a build-up of its own. On the contrary, it has offered negotiations and the complete renunciation of an entire weapons system.

As to the Soviet drafts, a declaration condemning nuclear war appears at first sight to express the heartfelt sentiment of no doubt every peace-loving individual. The Federal Republic of Germany and its allies, too, utterly condemn nuclear war. But they do not condemn nuclear war alone; they condemn any war. The fact that the Soviet draft declaration does not mention conventional war of the kind currently being fought in various parts of the world - Afghanistan, for instance - is not a chance omission. A second look at the draft leaves us in no doubt: the implication of such a text would be to deny a country or an alliance the right to defend itself against an aggressor having superior conventional capabilities with all the means at its disposal - mindful of the principle of proportionality - including, in the extreme case, nuclear weapons. It is plain to see that a declaration of such substance stands in sharp contrast to the right of self-defence embodied in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

I would recall in this context that the Federal Republic of Germany upon acquiring sovereignty, signed an agreement renouncing nuclear weapons. By virtue of this we insist on the right not to be threatened by such weapons and if that threat persists, to secure the protection of an ally. Thus the Soviet proposal is not acceptable to my country, whose security ultimately depends on the nuclear shield of the United States.

Any narrowing down of the general ban on the threat or use of force to specified types of use is incompatible with that principle, which is of necessity of a comprehensive nature. It would amount to a qualification of the concept of force and hence to a restriction of the right of self-defence.

The deterrence guaranteed by the North Atlantic Alliance has been one of the main reasons why no armed conflict has occurred in Europe since the Second World War, in spite of the various political crises. It is in the interest of all nations that peace and stability in Europe should be maintained. We Germans know better than most that even a conventional war would bring terrible devastation to central Europe. Hence we, in particular, cannot and will not expose ourselves to such a risk. It therefore remains vitally important to us to continue to prevent war by means of effective deterrence.

But this illustrates only one aspect of our position on the problem of nuclear weapons. Though the Alliance cannot, under the existing circumstances, relinquish the right to allow such weapons to be deployed on its territory as a deterrent to any kind of war, it has strongly urged both sides to reduce their nuclear arsenals substantially.

This brings me to the second Soviet draft (A/C.1/38/L.2) calling for a freeze on all nuclear weapons. The Committee will understand my assessing this proposal against the background of the military situation with which my country in particular, but also a number of non-European countries, see themselves confronted. Basically, it is a situation in which the Soviet Union, which has superior conventional capabilities and continues to enlarge them, has in recent years rapidly and continuously expanded its intermediate-range nuclear potential by deploying modern SS-20 missiles and thus built it up

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

into a huge threat to its neighbours. I therefore put it to the Soviet Union: why has it since 1977 uninterruptedly produced and deployed this weapon system, which I emphasize is directed not at the United States but against the Soviet Union's European and Asian neighbours, in spite of the fact that there are no comparable weapons in those countries and therefore no comparable threats to the Soviet Union?

In its statement to the General Assembly on 4 October the Soviet Union maintained that there existed:

... in all areas ... strategic nuclear arms, medium-range weapons in Europe, the conventional armed forces of NATO and of the Warsaw Treaty - an approximate equality between the two sides".

(A/38/PV.13 p. 34-35)

The Soviet Union made this contention years ago and has repeated it every year since, regardless of the fact that the number of its warheads has continued to increase. Mr. Brezhnev also stated the same thing during his official visit to Bonn in May 1978. At that time the medium-range category consisted of 550 SS-4s and SS-5s with an equal number of warheads, but only 50 SS-20 missiles with 150 warheads, a total therefore of 730 warheads, while the West had nothing comparable with which to match them. When Mr. Brezhnev made another statement on 23 February 1981, reiterating the assertion of approximate balance in connection with the announcement of the Soviet moratorium, the Soviet Union had already increased its SS-20s to 200 with over 600 warheads, and still had, in addition, 400 SS-4s and SS-5s, which meant that it had over 1 000 warheads on intermediate-range missiles at its disposal. Today it has over 350 SS-20s with over 1,000 warheads, whilst the total number of Soviet intermediate-range warheads exceeds 1,300. Now, in view of this one-sided threat to Western Europe and countries geographically close to the Soviet Union, can one speak of an approximate balance?

Every advocate of the freeze concept must realize that such a proposal is tantamount to expecting the countries threatened by the SS-20s to acquiesce in a codification of the Soviet superiority and to live with that threat for an indefinite period, unable to resort to adequate counter-measures.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

The most sensible solution to this problem, created by the Soviet Union, and one which would take account of the security of all concerned, would be an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union providing for either the complete renunciation of land based long-range intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), a category which poses a special threat, or at least a reduction to the lowest possible level. This the West has proposed in Geneva, but the Soviet Union has to date agreed neither to a mutual renunciation nor to a limitation of these weapon systems on a basis of equality. The United States, following intensive consultations with its allies, has now submitted new proposals in Geneva which allow to a considerable extent for the concerns expressed by the Soviet Union. With these new proposals the West has put forward all the elements for a fair and balanced agreement. If the Soviet Union so wishes, such an agreement can be worked out even before the end of this year.

With its new proposals the United States has demonstrated its willingness to compromise and its flexibility, not only in the field of INF, but also with regard to the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), which are even more important in terms of achieving a global balance of power. The build-down concept, in particular, shows the American determination to achieve substantial reductions in the strategic sphere. An agreement on this with the Soviet Union would, for the first time, establish a binding basis for a progressive reduction of the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union and thus respond to the hopes of the nations of the world.

This build-down concept is a more adequate and at the same time more attractive solution than a mere freeze. The argument often put forward in defence of the freeze concept, that whilst reduction negotiations are in progress the arms build up continues, applies equally to a freeze. A freeze, too, could not become effective until agreement had been reached on the difficult question of verification. An agreement on a freeze would require the same amount of time as an agreement on the verification of an accord on reduction.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of
Germany)

It all boils down to this. An adequate defence capability, an unqualified renunciation of force that is actually carried out, as well as concrete, balanced and verifiable arms control and disarmament steps, coupled with a policy of dialogue and confidence-building, are the only realistic instruments with which to safeguard peace. The West not only feel themselves committed to this realistic and consistent concept for peace, they also practise it. We want security based on equilibrium and co-operation, not one that is rooted in intimidation and the fear of others. The condemnation of nuclear war alone and the call for a freeze at the present level are one-sided and superficial proposals that are not conducive to enhancing stability and strengthening peace.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

One contribution to the enhancement of stability, in our view, is the strengthening of confidence between States. Many speakers at this session of the General Assembly have deplored the alarming loss of confidence of States in their relationship with one another, particularly in East-West relationship but also in many parts of the world.

By an argumentum ex contrario this state of affairs shows the significance and urgency of new initiatives designed to restore confidence. Times of tension and crisis, more than others, call for the maintenance of a dialogue between States.

Confidence building is a fundamental principle of State conduct; trust in the predictability, the peaceful intention and the co-operative behaviour of other States forms an indispensable basis for the members of the international community to make their contribution to the orderly interaction of States. This is true not least for co-operation in the areas of economic and development policy.

In the central domain of peace and security, we speak of confidence-building measures. By this term we designate patterns of behaviour which States observe to signal and to prove credibly over time that their intentions towards their neighbours are of a peaceful nature. Confidence-building measures are designed to strengthen the trust of other States in the non-existence of specific military threats. However, they attain this confidence-enhancing effect only if the States applying these rules manage to demonstrate convincingly that their intentions and acts are mutually compatible.

Mere declaratory announcements, often enough offered for purely propagandistic purposes - such as we have heard again during this session of the General Assembly - do not meet the requirements of confidence-building measures in this accepted definition. On the other hand, firmly agreed measures which enhance openness and transparency regarding the military posture of a State are well within this definition, as are measures which provide for the prior announcement of military activities - for instance, military manoeuvres - and for clarification regarding their dimensions; and, further,

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

measures by virtue of which States forgo, in a verifiable manner over a period of time, the use of certain technically possible military options under the precondition of undiminished security.

Confidence-building measures fall short of being disarmament measures; they leave military potentials intact. However, considering the difficulties that we are encountering in our search for negotiated disarmament steps on the bilateral and multilateral levels, it is doubly urgent to prepare the ground for a positive outcome of negotiations by agreement on confidence-building measures which attenuate confrontation and reduce the fear of armed conflict. Confidence-building measures thus become a catalyst, a key for genuine disarmament steps.

This insight has motivated the Federal Republic of Germany for a number of years to contribute to the conceptual development of confidence-building measures and to efforts aimed at their world-wide acceptance. I should like to remind the Committee of the United Nations Study Group on Confidence-Building Measures, presided over by the representative of the Federal Republic in the Committee on Disarmament; of our initiative at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament for an International Symposium on Confidence-Building Measures - an event which took place in May of this year with broad international participation; and, finally, of the efforts begun this year in the United Nations Disarmament Commission to secure the elaboration of guidelines for confidence-building measures. The Federal Government hopes that the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be in a position, on the basis of the promising first segment of its work, to prepare definitive recommendations in the course of 1984 which will then be submitted to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

In the same spirit the Federal Government was actively involved in the successful completion of the Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Madrid. Notwithstanding the heavy strain on international relations, it perseveringly worked for a forward-looking concluding document. That document is now before us; it has cleared the path for a Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

The Conference, which will commence in Stockholm on 17 January 1984, is a necessary complement to the Vienna negotiations on mutual balanced reductions of conventional armed forces in central Europe with its inherent geographical limitation.

In the concluding document of the Madrid CSCE Review Meeting, the objective of the Conference has been fixed as follows:

"... to undertake in stages new, effective and concrete actions designed to make progress in strengthening confidence and security and in achieving disarmament, so as to give effect and expression to the duty of States to refrain from the threat or use of force in their mutual relations."

We are thus entitled to expect that the future Conference on Disarmament in Europe will help give more substance to the prohibition of the threat or use of force - a pivotal command of international law - in the practice of mutual relations among all participating States.

This squares fully with the political views and objectives of my Government. Agreed rules for more transparency and predictability in the military field should serve to exclude the use of military power for purposes which are contradictory to the prohibition of the threat or use of force, but also facilitate verification of whether all States concerned in the **establishment**, and the use they make, of their military potential conform to the interdiction of force and to the requirements of a purely defensive security policy. The concluding document of Madrid has stipulated in addition - fully compatible with the firmly held views of my Government - that the confidence-building measures to be agreed upon must be of military significance and politically binding, as well as adequately verifiable.

We also expect positive impulses for the further development of confidence-building measures on a global scale, and for the activities of the United Nations in this field, from the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Europe, in which the Federal Government will actively participate.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

Confidence-building measures are an essential ingredient of political strategy aimed at the prevention of war, including nuclear war. Precisely in the nuclear area, the United States of America and the Soviet Union prepared the field in the 1970s by agreeing on a first series of confidence-building measures. In his speech in Berlin in June 1982, President Reagan attempted - and my Government welcomed that attempt - to build on this shared set of rules of behaviour by suggesting additional nuclear confidence-building measures. Since then, the United States Government has clarified, as well as amplified, this package of suggestions.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of
Germany)

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the concrete proposals which the United States of America has submitted in the framework of the negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) concerning agreements on confidence-building measures. It would be highly desirable for the Soviet Union to respond specifically in those negotiations and give its consent to agreements in this area.

In the course of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany sought to demonstrate, in a working paper submitted in conjunction with other partners, the contribution that confidence-building measures can make especially to efforts to prevent nuclear war. It has further developed its ideas in the proceedings of the Committee on Disarmament during the current year and enumerated a wider array of individual measures which States could take, in part to prevent accidental conflict as a consequence of a technical mishap or miscalculation, in part to eliminate the root causes of armed conflict by enhancing confidence in general.

My delegation greatly appreciates the Belgian delegation's special contribution to the further conceptual development of the idea of confidence-building measures in the nuclear domain. It is now up to the nuclear Powers themselves, among them, in the first place, the two super-Powers, to draw on the intellectual contribution of numerous delegations and agree on further confidence-building measures of this kind.

At the same time, it is an important task of the Committee on Disarmament and of the United Nations itself to examine in what manner the larger international community could contribute to the development and application of confidence-building measures for the prevention of war, in particular nuclear war.

Nothing is more conducive to the creation of confidence than the confidence in an adversary's peaceful behaviour which emanates from empirical insight into and the transparency of its military conduct. Efforts to attain greater transparency must therefore be at the centre of confidence-building. For this reason, the efforts of the General Assembly and of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to render military budgets more transparent and more comparable and to fix rules for their verifiable reduction merit particular praise.

(Mr. van Well, Federal Republic of Germany)

I should also like to point to efforts, which took the form of a resolution for the first time at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to make progress in the evaluation of military force relationships and the improvement of information on military capabilities. It is essential that these efforts to achieve greater transparency be continued in the multilateral framework and that an ever-growing number of members of the international community, including members of the socialist group of States, share in these endeavours. Efforts aiming at greater transparency acquire a qualitatively new dimension in an age of excessive arms build-up in many parts of the world.

Perhaps more than ever the present session of our Committee faces the risk that the centre of gravity of the debates and of draft resolutions may shift to comprehensive declaratory demands which are partly utopian and partly the expression of parochial interests without objective validity.

Such tendencies are indeed to be observed. We must jointly strive to fight them and to redirect the attention of all to our obligation to take the objective security situation in the respective regions, the requirement of undiminished security for all States and the common interest of all Members of this Assembly in the maintenance of stability, security and peace as yardsticks for our work.

My delegation, jointly with others, will make a determined effort to oppose unilateral attempts to politicize our work and to abuse this Committee for the imposition of one-sided interests with a comprehensive concept for the prevention of war and the enhancement of peace, based on the Charter of the United Nations. We are interested not in spectacular projects and resolutions, superficially seductive, but in patient work to intensify our global dialogue, in a sustained effort aimed at the formulation of a common approach to security and disarmament.

Mr. MORELLI PANDO (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): I take great pleasure in congratulating you on behalf of the Peruvian delegation, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your recognized experience in disarmament affairs is a guarantee of the wise conduct of our work. I wish also to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

The prolonged persistence of serious confrontations in various parts of the world jeopardizes international peace and security. At the core of this state of affairs we find the spiralling renewal of the policy of antagonistic blocs, an aberrant substitute for the systems of collective security of the United Nations, which has so far been prevented from ensuring the full and universal effect of its principles.

Together with the qualitative escalation of nuclear weapons, the danger of which is less and less under human control, there is a discernible constant, which is the lack of the will to negotiate on the part of the Powers that are mainly involved.

Non-nuclear-weapon and non-aligned countries such as Peru view with perplexity and legitimate concern the so far fruitless bilateral negotiations in Geneva. Instead of receiving thorough information about these talks, as the General Assembly requires, the international community simply gets the unilateral declarations which the super-Powers deem necessary for their respective public relations purposes.

As an eminent United States citizen recently said, there does not now seem to exist the desire for understanding that led to the 1963 Treaty and other similar treaties. Indeed, the situation today may be more serious than it was 20 years ago, in the sense that the possible failure or deadlock of the bilateral negotiations now under way could lead to a step backwards that could include the cancellation of those treaties, with incalculable consequences.

It is in the light of these facts that we should consider our agenda item on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the establishment of a preparatory committee for the forthcoming Review Conference on that Treaty. Many full parties to the Treaty, including Peru, renounced the possession of nuclear weapons by virtue of the 1968 Treaty, on the understanding that the nuclear-weapon States had undertaken to carry out effective negotiations to eliminate such weapons.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

But that has not proved to be the case, as was made clear by the Second Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Therefore those parties are entitled to make it known to the nuclear Powers that their lack of political decision to start the process of nuclear disarmament may, apart from anything else, jeopardize the future of this highly important Treaty.

Peru supports the establishment by common agreement of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones. This attitude is consistent with its status as a fully-fledged party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has established what is, strictly speaking, the only nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. That is why Peru, together with other countries, has made known its concern at the possibility that a nuclear Power outside our continent, a party to the Additional Protocols to that instrument, may have introduced nuclear weapons into the South Atlantic.

It is striking to note that there are still differences of opinion as to disarmament priorities despite the Final Document of 1978 of the first special devoted to disarmament which drew up a list of priorities that, while immutable and unequivocal with regard to nuclear disarmament, does not exclude simultaneous related efforts in the field of conventional disarmament. In the view of my delegation, this is the sense of the continuous appeals made on the subject by the Secretary-General.

In this context the arms race must not be seen as the sum total of the various regional arms races. As an essentially world-wide phenomenon, the arms race, particularly as regards conventional weapons, has reached qualitative and quantitative levels which to a large extent are directly or indirectly determined by the Powers possessing the largest military arsenals.

Similar thoughts are prompted by analysis of the Final Document of 1978 whose provisions with regard to the transfer of arms deserve to be mentioned since they are substantively linked to the arms race. A point of particular importance is the provision in that Document relating to the need for consultations between countries supplying arms and those receiving them.

Within an unbalanced international structure, the lack of understanding between the two great military and economic blocs, on the one hand, and between those blocs and the third world, on the other, has increased and international society finds itself in the situation where certain States or groups of States seem

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

to act solely for their own interests in disregard of the common interests of all mankind.

At a pace that is in inverse ratio to that of the production and transfer of arms, international development efforts are showing signs of stagnation. After countless conferences and forums covering subjects that range from the political to the technical, from the regional to the international, from the sectoral to the global, one is repeatedly confronted with the frustration of the developing countries with the consequent danger, which has been foretold but about which nothing is being done, of a new threat to world peace.

Much has been said in this forum about the economic and social cost of, and the waste of scientific resources resulting from the accumulation of armaments, bearing in mind the exponential increase in the production and upgrading of arms. Realizing that this cost is detrimental to their progress and well-being, the developing countries, through their broadest collective entity, the Non-Aligned Movement, have been promoting disarmament, as can be seen from the latest summit meeting held in New Delhi.

In this constructive spirit, my delegation views with all due respect the initiative of the President of France, who called for a conference on disarmament and development at the earliest possible date as an appropriate framework within which to confront once and for all these two closely related aspects - armaments and underdevelopment.

While not part of those areas of the developing world with the highest military expenditure, Latin America has taken a number of responsible initiatives in favour of arms control and limitation, as a consequence of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Peru has been in the forefront of those initiatives in the subregion, with special emphasis on the problems of conventional weapons and related matters.

The successful outcome of all these efforts is always facilitated by the fact that Latin America is relatively removed from the focal points of international tension. Unfortunately, events which took place only recently and others which now affect the Central American subregion have made the region as a whole vulnerable and thereby exposed to the danger of a breach of important principles and sovereign rights as well as to the direct effects of the world arms build-up.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

In keeping with its mandate under the Charter, the General Assembly year after year reflects the demands of all the peoples of the world for peace and discharges its functions by periodically renewing statements of principle and guidelines for action adapted to the current complex and most serious international crisis.

However, it would be useful to determine whether the General Assembly is really meeting the challenge of that crisis with its usual responses, many of which are repetitive, or whether the Assembly should, on the contrary, look for more selective responses in the light of the mounting gravity of the situation.

At its first special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly gave the international community the most advanced and in every sense the most balanced document that had ever been produced on disarmament within the framework of an international forum. The General Assembly then reflected an extraordinary convergence of views between East and West and between North and South and laid down norms valid for the future. But the results achieved in 1982 were generally quite the reverse, leading to the negative outcome of the second special session devoted to disarmament, which in turn reflected worsening international relations. However, even in those circumstances it was recognized that the Final Document of 1978 was still fully in effect.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

Given this background, therefore, we would do well to examine the possibility that this General Assembly might concentrating, though not exclusively, on the promotion of measures to be undertaken initially in the short term, but which would form a necessary part of a broader and more profound process of disarmament in the future.

With this approach, there would be no change of principles but merely changes in procedures concerning how to make a realistic and effective start on tasks preliminary to disarmament, but necessarily linked to the need to reach this goal in accordance with the priorities and guidelines of the 1978 Final Document.

As regards short-term measures, prominence should be given to confidence-building measures, which have so far been somewhat sporadic and confined to a limited geographic framework. None the less, their application as a consequence of the Helsinki Agreements, and the progress that can be expected from the forthcoming meeting in Stockholm, suggest that they could be systematically and extensively applied, particularly by the nuclear Powers and those possessing the largest military arsenals, in order to establish the climate necessary for later disarmament action. In this respect considerable progress has been made - although it could have been taken further - in the Disarmament Commission, whose work on the subject will have to continue actively this year.

As many delegations have pointed out, it should be noted that confidence-building measures are not an end in themselves and would soon fail to achieve their goal if they were not accompanied by other measures demonstrating the determination of the great Powers to proceed with the disarmament process.

Ambassador Garcia Robles, the representative of Mexico, has recently drawn our attention in this Committee to ten resolutions which he rightly deems to be basic in the disarmament field, and which were all adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. If one compares those resolutions with the subject matter discussed by the Committee on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating organ, it may be concluded that the most urgent goals, among those of most importance, are the following:

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

My delegation has listened with great attention to the statements made in this Committee during the course of the week. One after another preceding speakers have underlined the sombre state of affairs which prevails in the world today. The unprecedented arms race, further intensified by the introduction of the most sophisticated and lethal weapons into the arsenals of the two super-Powers and other militarily significant States, threatens not only international peace and security but also the very existence of mankind. It should be crystal clear to all of us now that world peace and security cannot be assured through the accumulation of arms. Some will try to justify their participation in the arms race by asserting that it was necessary to guard their national security. But has it given them security? On the contrary, they have bought greater insecurity at higher cost. Furthermore, the massive military expenditure stands out in sharp contrast to the current critical international economic situation. The social opportunity costs resulting from the diversion of scarce resources for military use are writ large in both the developed and the developing countries.

Bangladesh has in the past expressed its disappointment at the failure of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We are all painfully aware that unprecedented international tension prevented substantive agreements on issues of vital importance in the field of disarmament. What we have witnessed during the past year is a further deterioration in the international situation and a sharp escalation in the arms race, both nuclear and conventional. At the same time, new strategic perceptions have been introduced in the field of international security. These actions are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Programme of Action of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The heightened international tension and the unprecedented arms race have aroused grave concern among peoples throughout the world about the impending threat of nuclear war. There is also a greater realisation of the heavy price the world is paying in terms of social opportunity costs resulting from the current arms race and its negative impact on the world economy and ecology. The massive anti-nuclear and anti-war movements in various parts of the world, both East and West, have underlined the universal awareness of the harmful effects of the arms race. This awareness should be further fostered with a view to promoting the World Disarmament Campaign.

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

Bangladesh is totally committed to the cause of general and complete disarmament. Our participation, at the highest level, in the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament demonstrated the importance we attach to the question of disarmament and international security. As the Head of Government of Bangladesh, Lieutenant-General Hussain Muhammad Ershad, said in his address to the seventh summit Conference of non-aligned countries:

"We are committed to general and complete disarmament. We support a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Our decision to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty was based on our firm conviction that there can be no durable peace except through the elimination and destruction of nuclear weapons and their stockpiles. We believe that the limitation of nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction is an important first step in creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence and the relaxation of international tensions."

General Ershad also stated:

"The unrestricted use of scarce resources for military purposes has on the one hand created a sense of fear and uncertainty among nations and on the other led to universal social opportunity cost. We can and we must rectify the situation. The resources must be released for the benefit of mankind. It is now universally acknowledged that a redirection of resources from the production of armaments would help both the developed and the developing countries by providing a much-needed stimulus to production, investment and international trade."

Bangladesh, in pursuance of its commitment to the concept of general and complete disarmament, acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are, however, distressed to note that, despite over 100 States having acceded to that Treaty, nuclear proliferation continues unabated. We are convinced that any use of nuclear weapons, whether or not limited in scale, would inevitably escalate, and the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, even though they were not remotely involved, would be equally threatened. It is our common duty, therefore, to adopt concrete measures aimed at the prohibition of nuclear

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

weapons. The legitimate concern of non-nuclear-weapon States and neutral States as regards threats to their security needs to be allayed. The nuclear-weapon States should provide them with negative security guarantees. We therefore feel that while negotiating the comprehensive programme of disarmament priority consideration should be given to ensuring that all States refrain from the testing of nuclear weapons, pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Simultaneously there should be a total freeze on the production, deployment and research and development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Similarly, the production, deployment, research and development of new chemical weapons should be suspended, pending the conclusion of a chemical weapons treaty. The attempts to use outer space for military purposes should be halted and it should be declared the common heritage of mankind, to be used for humanity at large.

Bangladesh believes in peace, peace in the region and in the world, through strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States. It is a matter of great regret that, despite our pledges to forsake the use of force or the threat of the use of force as a means of solving international disputes, such acts continue with impunity all around the globe. We would like to stress that without faithful and sincere adherence to the principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of all disputes, and non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States there can be no durable and just peace in this world.

In our efforts to build a solid base for the relaxation of international tension we have consistently supported the creation of zones of peace and nuclear-weapons-free zones in various parts of the world. The creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean is a matter of particular importance to us

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

and we maintain that the successful implementation of General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) will be in the interest of peace and security. It is in this context that we have actively participated in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and supported the convening of the Conference in Colombo to draw up an instrument for ensuring peace and security in the region, free from big-Power rivalry.

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

We are, however, aware that the success of the Colombo Conference will depend on the participation of the super-Powers and other militarily significant States, as well as the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean.

Bangladesh has also been making consistent efforts to promote peace and stability in South Asia through the creation of a climate of trust, understanding and co-operation in the region. Our joint effort with six other countries of the region has already achieved concrete results and we have been able to identify specific areas of co-operation. Very recently, we held the first ever meeting of seven South Asian Foreign Ministers. We in Bangladesh remain confident that as this regional co-operation develops so will the overall climate in the region.

Bangladesh, one of the least developed countries, firmly believes that there is a close relation between disarmament and development. The colossal financial and other resources which have been consumed by the armaments race ought to be directed to eliminating world poverty. As the Chairman of the Group of 77 during the last 12 months, we have made sincere efforts towards de-escalation of the arms race and optimum utilization of the available resources for the social and economic development of the developing countries. In his statement to the thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. A. R. Shams-ud Doha, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh stated:

"The interaction between disarmament and development, the glaring discrepancy in the amount spent on armaments as against development, do not bear recounting. Suffice it to say that the voice of this General Assembly must be heard loud and clear in support of concrete measures to promote disarmament and to divert resources from armament to development. One concrete way of doing this would be to institute without delay some measure of international taxation on all expenditure on nuclear arms.

"This session of the United Nations General Assembly must also take concrete measures to arrest the increase in armaments and particularly nuclear weapons. We must devise ways and means to depoliticise, as far as possible, the consideration of such questions within the United Nations."

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

We are convinced that the complex and interrelated issues connected with the question of disarmament can only be addressed in a multilateral context. Bangladesh, therefore, firmly believes that the United Nations has a central role to play in the field of disarmament, and has consistently supported the strengthening of United Nations machinery to help the Secretary-General in his disarmament efforts as well as in his peace-keeping role. To this end, we supported the proposal to expand the Committee on Disarmament. In keeping with our enduring commitment to work for general and complete disarmament, Bangladesh has applied for membership of the Committee on Disarmament and is ready to contribute to all future disarmament negotiations undertaken by that body.

In conclusion, the Bangladesh delegation would like to emphasize once again that we are meeting at a crucial juncture in the history of mankind. Never before has the human race been so dangerously close to the precipice of total self-destruction. Our awareness of the great dangers posed by the mad race for armament, and our consensus on the need to take urgent practical steps towards disarmament, must be translated into reality, to usher in an era of global peace and security. We have listened to many substantial and concrete proposals made in this regard during this session. What is important is that these proposals be studied and examined carefully in the coming days. Considering the almost unanimous view that the arms race is the single biggest threat to humanity, it is inconceivable that we should not take effective measures here at this session of the General Assembly at least partially to redress the situation. It is our sincere desire that all States, particularly the most powerful and militarily significant ones, should display self-restraint and moderation and enter into serious negotiations on disarmament.

In my statement I have indicated the general views of the Bangladesh delegation on the agenda items before us. We hope to make further observations on specific issues later.

Mr. MONCBE (Benin) (interpretation from French): I have great pleasure, Sir, in beginning this statement, which I make on behalf of the delegation of Benin, by congratulating you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for this thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your election to that important post clearly is a tribute by the members of this Committee to your outstanding qualities and shows the great respect in which the international community holds your country, Norway, which has always played a considerable role in international relations. My delegation is convinced that, that, thanks to your long experience and wisdom, our work will be crowned with well-deserved success.

I address a similar tribute to the other officers of the Committee and I assure you all of the positive collaboration of the delegation of Benin.

I should be failing in my duty if I did not express to Ambassador James Victor Gbeho of Ghana the admiration, gratitude and pride of my delegation concerning his calm and skilful conduct of our meetings last year.

A thoughtful examination of the items on the agenda of our Committee again this year arouses in feelings of great anxiety and frustration. Regrettably, we have to note that because of the scant progress made in the area of disarmament the General Assembly is forced year after year to inscribe the same topics on its agenda, while new items are added whose only merit is to show the worsening international situation.

Is it still necessary to say that the world is prey to an unprecedented danger of widespread conflagration because of the ill will of the major political Powers? Eminent Heads of State or Government and heads of delegations of sovereign countries, come to the thirty-eighth session from all parts of the world, express that feeling at the rostrum of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

It was indeed to set a better understanding of this serious threat and to deal with it that Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement - to whom my delegation wishes to render a respectful tribute - invited eminent world leaders to come to New York. I hope the important messages which they addressed to the international community through our Organization have sufficiently mobilized consciences to serve as a point of reference for the work of our Committee.

The delegation of Benin is profoundly concerned over the continuing arms race, especially the nuclear arms race, and over the incredible increase in military expenditures that is taking place despite of all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and of other international organizations.

The new escalation in the nuclear arms race of which the world has been the impotent witness for some time, arises from a futile search for supremacy by the major Powers, and from the consequent climate of mistrust and fear which has permeated international relations.

How many more resolutions, how many more appeals, how many more conferences, seminars and other meetings will be needed before the nuclear Powers resolutely detach themselves from the pressures of national pride, the spirit of hegemonism, and on the depraved appetites of the companies in the military-industrial complex?

How long will it be before those Powers understand, as the Palme Commission emphasized in its remarkable report last year, that:

"No nation can achieve absolute security through any kind of military superiority."

My delegation is convinced that nuclear weapons, by reason of their present quantity and quality, are no longer mere weapons of war, but rather the instruments of complete annihilation. That is why my delegation finds difficulty in understanding the determination of certain military Powers to pour astronomical sums of money into building an arsenal which is daily growing more sophisticated.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

My delegation exhorts the major Powers to stifle their selfish impulses, to show their faith in the survival of mankind and to embark firmly upon the road to complete a general disarmament. International peace and security cannot be guaranteed except through the effective elimination of all types of weapons, in particular nuclear weapons.

My delegation, by rejecting the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which increases the risk of a nuclear holocaust, supports the idea of negotiations and the adoption of effective measures to prevent nuclear war.

My delegation reaffirms its conviction that disarmament is something too important and vital to be left to the major Powers alone. Disarmament is the business of all countries, large or small, rich or poor, powerful or weak. The United Nations therefore has a central role to play in this area which is certainly part of its basic responsibilities.

Consequently the different United Nations bodies, which make up the framework for multilateral negotiations in the area of disarmament must be supported so that they can more effectively carry out their mandate and adopt specific disarmament measures.

While awaiting general and complete disarmament, for which it wishes most earnestly, my delegation supports any measures to ban immediately the threat or use of nuclear weapons. It will support any draft resolution calling for a freeze on the development, production, stockpiling and deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as any draft which proposes the rapid conclusion of a complete test ban treaty. We will support any genuine action designed to impede effectively the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all their forms, or to prevent the extension of the arms race to outer space. Outer space, a universal heritage, must be used only for peaceful purposes.

My country supports the idea of and efforts directed towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace based on arrangements, conventions or agreements freely negotiated by the various countries in the regions concerned. The creation of such zones will inevitably bring peace and security closer at both regional and international levels.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

In this regard, my delegation is deeply concerned over the massive strengthening of the military machine of South Africa. Indeed, this country, encouraged by the political, economic and financial support which it receives from certain Western Powers, is headed towards the acquisition of a nuclear capacity, which would make it a real danger to the security of the African continent and indeed of the whole world.

My delegation, like those of all peace-loving countries, condemns any collaboration with the racist régime in Pretoria in the military and nuclear fields. The proponents of apartheid, in pursuit of their mad policy, can use nuclear weapons as instruments of terror and blackmail, which would be dangerous to international peace and security. Therefore, it is imperative that the appropriate organs in our Organization assume their responsibilities arranging for all Member States to join in a consensus to apply the arms embargo against South Africa.

My delegation is equally concerned over the situation which prevails in the Middle East, where Israel is emerging as a dangerous military Power in the region.

The implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace must finally begin through the dismantling of all military bases being built up there and of the rival fleets confronting each other there. That should also be accompanied by the holding and successful outcome of the Conference which has been so long postponed, and which is to take place in Sri Lanka in 1984.

The delegation of the People's Republic of Benin wishes to reaffirm that the principles and priorities set forth in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament are still valid, and that the measures advocated there remain a goal to be achieved. We invite all countries to work in good faith to that end.

My delegation feels that in spite of the general disappointment over the second special session devoted to disarmament it did nevertheless reach a consensus on a world disarmament campaign.

(Mr. Mcngbe, Benin)

As a large number of speakers before me have pointed out, the political will of all nations is necessary to reverse the continually escalating arms race, especially that between the two super-Powers, and to adopt effective disarmament measures. The success of joint efforts for international security and for the survival of mankind require as much. The achievement of this aim requires the deepest commitment by all to work sincerely and unremittingly to halt the lamentable and senseless waste of resources and to use the resources thus released for the economic and social development of the developing countries, and for improving the quality of life of the peoples in the developed countries.

In other words, I would quite simply say, like so many others have said before me, that there is a close relationship between disarmament and development. By creating a climate of confidence among the different nations our Organization will win its wager on peace and security and will for ever eliminate the explosive situation which is polarizing the world and mortgaging the work of economic and social development, and thus mortgaging the betterment of mankind. By so doing mankind will henceforth succeed in emphasizing and strengthening the development work without which there will be no well-being or security, and will finally succeed in making science and technology powerful agents and factors for global development instead of allowing them to degenerate into the handmaids of war and destruction.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

I have expressed the conviction and the hopes of my delegation that this challenge of our time will be answered by a commitment free of any selfish or hegemonist designs, free of any hint of domination - in short, free of any mistrust. We hope the commitment will be based on friendship among peoples which desire peace.

General and complete disarmament is an imperative to which all States in the world must subscribe.

Mr. SAHNOUN (Algeria) (interpretation from French): Let me start, Sir, by congratulating you, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Algerian delegation, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. To the pleasure of seeing an experienced and judicious man in charge of our work is added that of being able to congratulate a friend of long standing. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Committee, whose well-known abilities will also be a great help in our work.

As Chairman of the Committee, you are succeeding Ambassador Victor Gbeho, who, at a particularly difficult time, succeeded in conducting the work of the First Committee at the thirty-seventh session with the serenity, forthrightness and faith that we all recognize in him.

It has been a commonplace for several years now to describe the prevailing international situation as grave and disturbing. It is true that the international environment for a long time now has provided ample argument for the most pessimistic accounting. The situation has rarely, however, offered so much justification for feelings of insecurity and disquiet as it does now.

The perils generated by the current system of international relations are greatly increased by the profound and lasting manifestations of a world economic crisis, the many flashpoints of tension in the world and the recrudescence of the spirit of the cold war in relations between the blocs. Moreover, the plan to restructure the world economic system has been blocked, the very essence of the international dialogue in the cause of peace is now jeopardized and efforts to achieve disarmament have been frustrated.

(Mr. Sahnoun, Algeria)

This session is different from preceding ones in that there is unanimous agreement that a state of crisis exists and a very clear awareness of the need to do something about. In this respect, it is significant that the general debate in the Assembly was enhanced by the presence at United Nations Headquarters of nearly 40 Heads of State or Government. Their presence represents not only an expression of concern at the worsening of international relations but also an invitation to responsible political dialogue to eliminate the causes of the crisis, cushion its effects and at the same time provide mankind with all the conditions necessary for freedom, peace and well-being.

The sphere of armaments alone combines all the facets of an explosive situation. The latest statistics, as the Committee knows, show that some \$800 billion are spent in a single year. These figures take on a special significance when we realize that the two military alliances account for 80 per cent of the total. But in any case they are tragic, senseless and Kafkaesque when we think of the potential for destruction which they imply, at a time when tens of millions of human beings throughout the world die each year from hunger and hundreds of millions more survive in subhuman living conditions.

This inflation of budgets is accompanied by an increase in arsenals of nuclear weapons, the development of new systems and the sophistication and miniaturization of these weapons. New military programmes are being launched or are about to be launched. In this unprecedented frenzy, even outer space has been the subject of clear aggression.

An obvious symptom of this madness is shown by the two racist régimes, which are engaged in programmes designed to enable them to possess and control nuclear weapons, and their aggressive manoeuvres have been identified as a threat to international peace and security.

The dangerous international situation is of course the result of the relations of force and the power politics which have for too long constituted the corner-stone of international relations. While individual actions may have aggravated the situation or highlighted one or other aspect that is particularly dangerous, the present state of the world results primarily from the true and profound logic of our conflictual bipolar system.

(Mr. Sahnoun, Algeria)

Since their invention and as they have developed, nuclear weapons have created a subconscious illusion that they can be used for the maintenance of peace, by providing security through deterrence. Need we recall, however, that deterrence, by leading to a build-up and systematic upgrading of arsenals of nuclear weapons, has neither increased nor improved world security, or even that of the nuclear-weapon Powers. Need we recall that peace supported by weapons is not peace at all.

While deterrence might sometimes appear to bear the promise of ruling out the use of nuclear weapons - while at the same time increasing the possibility of such use - the technical and doctrinal developments in the last two decades reveal all the risks of a malfunctioning of the policy of deterrence. Whether it be in the features which are inherent in the new generation of weapons or in the doctrines which underlie their possible use, all the reasons for and the risks of the extermination of mankind are combined. Moreover, is not our faith in human reason increasingly weakened by the intrinsic and uncontrollable risks connected with computers?

How long can man retain his indispensable reason, the wisdom and the necessary speed of analysis to prevent a possible holocaust? I am not being alarmist, I am being realistic.

Nuclear deterrence and all the doctrines and strategies deriving therefrom, as well as the balance of nuclear forces which it postulates and which is in essence unsteady, have only helped exacerbate tension, create distrust and increase insecurity in the world. They have revealed the illusory nature of any quest for military supremacy, and also the vanity of trying to achieve security through armaments. Paradoxically, the merit of the nuclear age will be that it demonstrated more clearly the interdependence of States and the indivisibility of world peace and security.

(Mr. Sahnoun, Algeria)

However, we realize that today urgent and specific actions are required to meet the most pressing needs and thus alter the perilous course of events. A certain number of actions can be taken to this end; they are within our reach. First, all of us - and particularly the two military alliances - must prevent any action that might result in the continuation of the escalation; secondly, everything should be done to promote and consolidate a genuine dialogue aimed at the solution of problems; thirdly, bold initiatives are needed to reduce international tension and help the world break out of the present psychological atmosphere in East-West relations so fraught with danger.

(Mr. Sahnoun, Algeria)

While the multilateral negotiating process continues to be the right framework for the promotion of genuine disarmament measures, it is none the less vitally necessary today for the bilateral Geneva talks to reach a successful conclusion quickly, not merely to reduce the current level of nuclear weapons but also to save Europe, already crammed with weapons, from a new and particularly dangerous escalation.

From this point of view, the prevention of nuclear war, since it concerns the very existence of all mankind is the ultimate priority.

A ban on the use of nuclear weapons or at least of the first use of such weapons is, in this context, a first measure to relax tension and stave off the threat of nuclear war. Similarly, the freezing of nuclear arsenals, particularly the two most important ones, as a starting-point for drastic reductions, is certainly a measure that should be encouraged.

Our Committee is a deliberative body with no decision-making power to affect the real situation of the arms race and of disarmament. It clearly has few specific ways of exercising a decisive influence on the international situation and improving it. Nevertheless, by virtue of its universal nature, the diversity of opinions expressed in it and the broad range of issues considered by it, it constitutes - if we are really serious - a privileged crucible for the expression of an international political consensus in favour of disarmament, thus echoing the demand now being made by a public opinion more concerned and mobilized than ever before. People of goodwill will certainly derive the necessary political impetus from this for far-reaching action. In the same way they will also find new paths to explore and ideas to delve into. These precincts invite us to replace the dangerous confrontation of weapons with the serene and fruitful confrontation of ideas.

Mr. HOLLAI (Hungary): Sir, at the outset I should like to congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee and to wish you every success in fulfilling your responsible and difficult task. My congratulations and best wishes go to the other officers of the Committee as well.

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

The Hungarian delegation is satisfied to note that the problems of disarmament, including the prevention of a nuclear war, received a particular emphasis in the recently concluded general debate in the General Assembly. This is a source of encouragement, not only because the goals of achieving disarmament, removing the danger of nuclear war and establishing peaceful co-operation among States are accorded absolute priority in the foreign policy of the Hungarian People's Republic, but also because we can take satisfaction from the fact that under the impact of recent, regrettably negative, processes, there is a growing number of countries and communities that are fully aware of the utmost urgency of solving these problems.

The people and Government of the Hungarian People's Republic are deeply concerned at certain developments in recent years. I refer, in particular, to the following: multibillion dollar arms programmes and military budgets are being approved; new types of nuclear weapons and weapon systems are being mass produced; new kinds of conventional weapons are being developed, which have a destructive power similar to that of weapons of mass destruction; attempts are being made to deploy nuclear weapons with sophisticated means of delivery in territories and areas where there were no such weapons previously and as close as possible to the borders of the Warsaw Treaty countries; a war hysteria is being whipped up, bringing about an atmosphere in which the slightest misinterpretation of any action could result in uncontrollable situations; deliberate attempts are being made to change the military-strategic situation in the world, to upset the existing military balance which, under prevailing international circumstances, would further threaten world peace.

The most alarming of all these trends is the emergence of new types and systems of nuclear weapons, which have raised the danger of coercion to a higher level than ever before, not simply because nuclear weapons, as distinct from all earlier weapons which humanity has suffered from, potentially carry in themselves the risk of the devastation of entire civilization, but above all because recent nuclear-weapons-related technological developments initiated by a nuclear-weapon State in its striving for strategic superiority could easily be identified as a deliberate effort to increase its ability to wage a nuclear war. And since they are coupled with a doctrinal evolution along the lines of a strategic counter-force posture, they have given birth to concepts like those of a limited and protracted nuclear war and of pre-emptive

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

first-strike possibility as proof of the constant feedback existing between technology and policy. They have contributed to overcoming many of the technological and political barriers which, since 6 August 1945, have separated the possession of nuclear weapons from their possible use. Would not this worrisome trend in itself, apart from all the other arguments, suffice to convince all of us without exception of the necessity of undertaking effective measures to prevent a nuclear war?

This important task, that of preventing a nuclear war, is an urgent though a complicated one. It is not easy to find rapid-acting or ready-made solutions. Nevertheless, earlier and more recent proposals by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries could be rightfully seen as endeavours to open up new vistas for the warding-off of a nuclear war.

The renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons or of both nuclear and conventional weapons might be a substantive contribution to lessening the danger of a nuclear war through strengthening confidence and reducing military confrontation. During the past few years, the socialist countries have made several proposals on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons. Those proposals deserve serious consideration, for an important lesson affecting disarmament in a wider context can be drawn from their evaluation. Their fate goes to show that although objections to certain proposals might be taken into due consideration, the proposals would never come any closer to realization if those objections only served as mere pretexts and if greater security was not sought through disarmament measures based on the principle of equal security.

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

As far back as 1976 the Warsaw Treaty member States, in a declaration signed by their political leaders at the highest level, proposed that all States signatories to the Helsinki Final Act should pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against one another. They received no official reply.

In 1979 the Foreign Ministers of the member States of the Warsaw Treaty proposed to the participants in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe the conclusion of a treaty containing a commitment not to be the first to use either nuclear or conventional weapons. Silence was the answer.

Taking into account the dilemma caused by the fact that the question of limitation and reduction of strategic and European nuclear weapons remained unsettled while the danger of a nuclear war was ever increasing, the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty in January 1983 - that is, this year - proposed to the States members of NATO the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual non-use of military force, whether nuclear or conventional. The States addressed have so far taken no concrete measures.

From the point of view of averting the danger of nuclear war, the Hungarian People's Republic attaches paramount importance to the commitment of the Soviet Union not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances. While it is an axiom of international relations that negotiations and agreements cannot be forced upon States, the nuclear age has another fundamental truth: there is no task more important than the elimination of the threat of nuclear war. We therefore believe that those nuclear Powers which have not yet assumed such an obligation should take reciprocal steps. Similar commitments by those other nuclear Powers would be received with great relief by international public opinion.

This year the Soviet Union made another important proposal in order to remove the threat of nuclear war, namely, that the General Assembly condemn nuclear war resolutely, unconditionally and for all time. That endeavour has the full support of the Hungarian delegation. The Soviet proposal fully corresponds to the letter and spirit of the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States of America on 22 June 1973. In article I the parties agreed that

"an objective of their policies is to remove the danger of nuclear war and the use of nuclear weapons"

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

and that

"they will act in such a manner... as to avoid military confrontations and as to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war between them".

With the nuclear-arms race going on, however, condemnation of nuclear war and renunciation of the first strike may remain ineffective.

The quintessence of the subject is whether the nuclear-arms build-up initiated by a great Power really enhances the security of the State involved and how it influences the security of other nations and international stability as a whole. First of all, there is a solid empirical basis for proving that any kind of superiority, be it quantitative or qualitative, is but temporary. This axiom may be assumed to retain its validity in the future. At the same time, present efforts to gain superiority differ radically from earlier ones in that they direct the arms race towards an ever-growing increase in the relative advantages of a pre-emptive first strike. Thus, doubts about future intentions grow stronger than ever. Such aspirations are not only irreconcilable with respect for the principle of equality and equal security, as commonly agreed to in various treaties, but are also detrimental to the security of every State pursuing such aspirations. It might sound paradoxical, but it is true that a relative increase in superiority actually brings a decrease in national security. The world has reached the stage in the development of military technology where the strengthening of national security cannot be artificially separated from the strengthening of international security. It is our firm conviction that in the period to come national security can be enhanced only in an organic relationship with international security and through arms limitation and disarmament rather than through an arms build-up. In order to achieve that goal, the arms race must be stopped in a comprehensive way so as to have all its future channels effectively blocked.

In our view, the proposal of the Soviet Union urging all nuclear-weapon States to agree to freeze, under appropriate verification, all nuclear arms in their possession in both qualitative and quantitative terms could serve as a comprehensive approach to the prevention of a new round of the nuclear-arms race. This initiative is wholeheartedly supported by my delegation.

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

My delegation takes the view that the most important task in averting the danger of war and strengthening world peace is the strengthening of security in Europe. This conviction is rooted not just in the fact that Hungary is located in Europe which would lead us to declare that area to be the most important one. The principal source of this conviction is the fact that the European continent is the site of an enormous concentration of weapons, both nuclear and conventional, and is the area of direct contact between the armed forces of the two major military alliances. Therefore the efforts to upset the existing military balance in Europe, and especially NATO's intention of carrying out its decision to deploy new United States medium-range missiles on the soil of a number of West European countries, pose an extremely serious threat not only to the European peoples, the Hungarian people included, but also to the security of all mankind by increasing the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear war. With the deployment of new United States missiles in Western Europe, the warning time would be reduced to less than six minutes, a time-frame that on several occasions proved to be hardly enough to identify false alarms in the case of strategic systems. One need not have a bold fantasy to imagine the consequences of a false alarm if the said new weapons were deployed. The whole **situatcn** would be different from previous ones. It would be characterized by a total lack of confidence and by common insecurity in peacetime. It might become fatal in case of a military or political crisis and lead to an overall nuclear catastrophe.

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

That is why Hungary, together with other members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, considers its main task to be to prevent the starting of a new round of the nuclear arms race in Europe and to achieve a limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons there. Our intention is clear and honest. The political declaration adopted last January by the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty emphasized that the best solution would be completely to remove both medium-range and tactical nuclear weapons from Europe and that, should it not be possible at present to reach such a really "zero" solution, it would be expedient to pursue the course of drastic reduction in medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security. It is in the spirit of this principle that the Soviet Union has put forward a series of constructive proposals in order to reach an agreement at the Soviet-American talks in Geneva. The current position of its negotiating partner, however, precludes the possibility of a solution. That approach is not in keeping with the principle of equality and equal security on which disarmament measures must be based, and all the proposals conceived in this spirit have, in spite of their illusive diversity, one common purpose, namely to upset in NATO's favour the existing regional and global balance. And this is what cannot be accepted. The entire behaviour of the other side suggests that its real purpose is perhaps not to reach an agreement but to delay the talks and to deploy the new missiles in Western Europe.

We deem it urgently necessary that the talks on the limitation of nuclear weapons in Europe be conducted in a constructive spirit and that maximum efforts be exerted for a speedy conclusion of concrete agreements at those talks. The success of the talks requires that no action be taken which might complicate them. On the contrary, steps are needed to help create an atmosphere favourable to progress, and all States, especially the European States, should in every way facilitate the success of the Geneva talks on limiting nuclear armaments in Europe. We still hope that there is a possibility of finding a mutually acceptable solution. That hope is reflected in the communiqué issued at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party held on 12 October. The communiqué reads in part as follows:

(Mr. Hollai, Hungary)

"In this situation it is indispensable for Governments and political factors having a sense of responsibility for the destiny of the world to adopt a judicious attitude to international issues. The peoples of the European countries and all mankind are interested in avoiding the deployment of nuclear weapons where there are no such weapons at present and in reducing the number of such weapons where they are already stationed. Our country - that is, the Hungarian People's Republic - and people also have an interest in maintaining the historically established military balance and in mutually acceptable agreements being reached at the Soviet-American arms limitation talks, particularly at the Geneva talks on medium-range nuclear weapons. The Central Committee believes the possibility still exists of an agreement on the non-deployment of new American missiles in Europe".

In view of the great dangers inherent in a new round of the arms race the world simply cannot allow the continuation of the present state of affairs.

The disarmament community will only be able to match the challenge posed to world security if States give up routine counter-arguments opposing real and meaningful solutions. This is no easy task to accomplish but, if we succeed, results will have justified our efforts.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Some delegations have referred to the comprehensive programme of disarmament in their statements, and several delegations have approached me informally asking whether I have given any thought to the question of how the Committee is to deal with that question. I wish to make some observations and a suggestion in this connection.

As representatives are aware, in its report to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly (A/38/27), the Committee on Disarmament has submitted a text for the comprehensive programme of disarmament drafted by the Committee's Ad Hoc Working Group and has recommended that the text be given further consideration by the General Assembly during its present session. In this context, I should like to refer to the remarks made by the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Garcia Robles, in his statement in this Committee on 17 October. The First Committee is thus faced with the question how to organize its consideration of the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

I have given considerable thought to the matter and I have also sought the advice of a number of interested delegations. Taking into account the views expressed during those consultations, I suggest that we set aside one meeting, or if need be two meetings, for consideration of the comprehensive programme of disarmament. More specifically, I propose that during the afternoon meeting on Monday, 31 October, and if necessary the afternoon meeting of Tuesday, 1 November, priority be given to delegations wishing to make statements concerning the comprehensive programme of disarmament. To the extent that time is available to the Committee after having heard those statements, delegations would however be free to speak on any of the items designated for consideration during phase II of our programme of work, but priority will be given to statements concerning the comprehensive programme of disarmament. The decision as to further action with regard to the present text of the comprehensive programme can be taken by the Committee after having heard the statements during the meetings reserved for this purpose.

(The Chairman)

If there are no comments or objections, I shall take it that the proposal which I have just made is acceptable to the Committee.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall this afternoon come to the end of phase I of our programme of work. As previously agreed, however, the general debate on all disarmament items will continue next week.

Beginning on Monday afternoon, 24 October, we shall also embark upon phase II. As delegations will recall, that phase will be devoted to an exchange of views on a number of disarmament items, which are listed on pages 1 to 4 of document A/C.1/38/2 and Add.1. Delegations will note from that document that no deadline for inscription on the list of speakers has been indicated as far as statements relating to phase II and phase III are concerned. We have not established any deadline, but for practical reasons, it would be highly appreciated if delegations wishing to speak would put their names on the list of speakers as early as possible.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.