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at 3 p.m.
New York

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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)

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Mr. Sheldov (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
Mr. Dorji (Bhutan)
Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SCHEMIDT (Denmark): Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to offer you and the other members of the Committee my sincere congratulations on your election. Your professional skill, Sir, and your wide experience, not least in disarmament matters, are well known to all of us.

I would like to refer to the statement made the day before yesterday by the representative of Greece, speaking on behalf of the 10 member States of the European Community, which statement, of course, we fully endorse.

The international situation and developments in the field of international security and disarmament during the year that has passed since the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations cannot be described in optimistic terms. Progress, if any, has been slow and the deteriorating international climate has certainly not provided an impetus to the major Powers in their pursuit of concrete results. Instead of arms limitation and disarmament, we have witnessed a further acceleration of the arms race, the introduction of new and more sophisticated weapons systems, and the continuation of armed conflicts in many parts of the world.

At the same time, and in response to these deplorable developments, people all over the globe have, on an unprecedented scale, raised their voices in a call for peace and disarmament. This, at least, is an encouraging development that should give inspiration and motivation when the arms race and disarmament issues are discussed.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

In his report to last year's session, the Secretary-General stated that

"The United Nations itself has been unable to play as effective and decisive a role as the Charter certainly envisaged for it."

(A/37/1, p. 1)

In the same vein, the Secretary-General's report of this year considers, that "actual developments of the past year have been far from encouraging".

(A/38/1, p. 2)

It is more necessary than ever and of crucial importance that no effort be spared to enable the United Nations to play the role envisaged for it in the Charter. This holds true especially for disarmament and security issues. No problem can be solved without good will on the part of all nations and the maintenance of dialogue.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

Paragraph 8 of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament states that our final goal is general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The immediate goal is that of the elimination of the danger of a nuclear war and the implementation of measures to halt and reverse the arms race and clear the path towards lasting peace. It is a moral obligation of all nations to pursue this goal actively. In the view of my delegation, it is very important that the First Committee, in order to move closer to attaining the common goals we strive for, concentrate its efforts on the issues which are given high priority in the Final Document.

My Government remains strongly committed to supporting the Secretary-General's efforts towards strengthening the United Nations. In this context I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the joint report of the five Nordic countries entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations" which has been circulated as an official document No. A/38/271-S/15830 of the General Assembly and the Security Council. In the report the five Nordic Governments propose a number of concrete measures, which, if implemented, could have a significant impact on the future work of the United Nations, in the fields of international security and disarmament, among others.

My Government had the privilege of participating in the drawing up of the report on the important United Nations study on disarmament and international security. This report calls for the strengthening of the United Nations system for international law and for wide international co-operation - in preference to force - as the rational basis for relations among States.

Disarmament and international security are closely interrelated issues which should be approached along parallel paths. The disarmament process should be based on the preservation or enhancement of the security of all States. A strong and efficient United Nations security system would be an important contributory factor towards this end.

The conclusions of the study fit well with the thoughts which the Secretary-General expressed in his report of last year - in short: no amendments to the Charter of the United Nations are needed; improvement could well be achieved within the existing framework of the Charter.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

Particularly in a field like disarmament the necessary impetus does not arise out of nothing. Adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles for relations among States, as laid down in the Helsinki Final Act, remain the key to achieving an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. And such an atmosphere is, in turn, a clear prerequisite for progress towards halting the arms race and towards disarmament.

It is encouraging to note that although the causes of tension and mistrust have not been removed and although, for that reason, there has been no real progress in international relations, this year it was possible to reach East-West agreement on a substantial and balanced concluding document at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) follow-up meeting in Madrid. It is significant that further East-West co-operation within the CSCE framework has been secured, in principle, through the agreement to hold another follow-up meeting in Vienna and a number of expert meetings. The decision to convene a Conference in Stockholm on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe is, naturally, of particular importance.

We believe that this development in the European context could have a positive influence on general East-West relations, to the advantage of global efforts towards disarmament and arms control.

Taken as a whole, multilateral negotiations in the nuclear field can be said to be stalemated pending the outcome of the negotiations in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union on intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe - the INF negotiations - and strategic weapons systems - the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).

My Government still considers those negotiations to be of the most crucial importance. Failure to reach an agreement could have very grave consequences for the future. We hope that the two Powers can live up to the special responsibility which the possession of the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons in the world imposes on them, and we urge both parties to show the necessary flexibility. We hope and we believe - that the negotiations will lead to concrete results before the end of this year.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

In an effort to halt the nuclear arms race the proposal to impose a freeze as a first step towards nuclear disarmament was discussed last year at length in this Committee and this year several proposals on this issue have been put forward. The expediency of a freeze and the possibilities of verifying it and judging its implications for the overall military balance between the major nuclear Powers have been disputed. Believing that all possibilities for agreements in the nuclear field should be explored, my delegation expresses its support for negotiations on a mutual freeze and reduction at the global level of all types of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

Restraint in the nuclear field is not solely a matter of concern to the nuclear Powers. All responsible nations must join forces to prevent a nuclear war and an extension and expansion of the nuclear arms race.

An important step was taken in 1963 with the conclusion of the partial test ban Treaty. By banning nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions in the atmosphere, the Treaty has contributed significantly to the reduction of radioactive contamination of the atmosphere. But as an arms limitation or disarmament measure the Treaty has been of limited importance since it has not been acceded to by all nuclear Powers and since it has not banned underground nuclear test explosions.

In June of this year a draft of a comprehensive treaty banning all nuclear weapon test explosions in all environments was submitted to the Committee on Disarmament. A complete banning of nuclear tests would be an important factor in curbing further development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The problem of adequate means of verification remains unresolved, but important work on this and other crucial issues is going on in the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Committee on Disarmament and in the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, the activities of which my country follows actively. It is a promising development that among the parties and experts dealing with these matters there is a growing conviction that a viable

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

international verification system could be within reach. We urge the Committee on Disarmament to continue to give priority to negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In the meantime, States which have not already done so might demonstrate their willingness to halt the nuclear arms race by ratifying the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

The issues of a nuclear test ban and nuclear non-proliferation are closely interrelated. Even if the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 has not yet been acceded to by all States, the régime established by virtue of that Treaty may be considered a not negligible success, which is all the more noteworthy against the otherwise dismal background of the general situation in the disarmament field. This achievement certainly deserves an even more solid underpinning in the future. That might be brought about, inter alia, by universal accession to the Treaty and support of the safeguards system under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the activity of which deserves our approval. Furthermore, a review conference on the Treaty is envisaged for 1985.

Many countries, including my own, have joined in the request to the Secretary-General for the inclusion of an item on this issue in the agenda of the present session. My delegation, for one, looks forward to a discussion under that item and hopes to contribute its share in the efforts to ensure an efficacious framework for this exceedingly important conference, the results of which will have a crucial bearing not only on the Treaty itself, but also on the international situation in a wider sense.

Over the years, a number of proposals have been promulgated regarding the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world. The Final Document from the first special session on disarmament recognizes that, under certain conditions, which should be kept clearly in mind, the establishment of such zones could constitute an important disarmament measure. In the Danish view, this still holds true, as these zones could contribute to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to regions where not all States are parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Various agreements, such as the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, have so far, it seems, managed to limit the implications for outer space of the accelerating arms race. However, there are indications that weaponry already operational or in the process of being developed may threaten peaceful outer space.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

It is therefore encouraging that a number of interesting proposals have been put forward with a view to meeting this challenge, and that the majority of members of the Committee on Disarmament appear to have reached agreement on setting up an ad hoc working group which might clarify our perception of problems looming in this field. In the Danish view, the grim prospect of an intensified arms race in outer space underlines the necessity of serious efforts within the Committee with a view to ultimate negotiations on effective and verifiable agreements aimed at preventing that arms race.

To the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament, which is already quite comprehensive, has been added a new item entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". We hope that the disarmament efforts will benefit from the upcoming debate on this item. Considering, however, the grave risk that a conventional war between the world's major-Power blocs might develop into a nuclear catastrophe, a very important element in the debate should, in our view, be the question of how to prevent war as such. In this connection we hope that the deliberations in the Committee on Disarmament will promote a better understanding of the security perceptions in the different regions of the world, which of course differ widely.

Since 1971, the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons has been discussed in the Committee on Disarmament and its predecessor as a separate issue.

It is indisputable that large-scale use of those weapons could conceivably have deleterious and irreversible effects on the ecological balance and cause unspeakable human suffering.

We urge all parties to show goodwill and flexibility in order to speed up negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament on this issue.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States have put forward comprehensive working papers. And several other countries participating in the negotiations of the Committee on Disarmament have produced working papers on the various technical aspects of a convention on chemical weapons. All those papers must be backed by political willingness.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

For several years now the Committee on Disarmament has also tried to reach agreement on a convention banning radiological weapons. Although doubts have been raised as to the value of such a convention as long as radiological weapons have not been developed, we support the continuation of this work in the Committee on Disarmament and hope that a draft convention will materialize.

This year two new agenda items came up for discussion in the Disarmament Commission. Special interest was attached to the deliberations on the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, the so-called Palme report (A/CN.10/38), which was published shortly before the second special session on disarmament. The report was welcomed in my country, and we have been anxious to learn, through the discussions in the Commission, the views on it of other member States.

The report introduced into the United Nations the new concept of common security. The thinking behind this concept was in many ways familiar to us. It was indeed a noteworthy and significant achievement that prominent personalities of different political convictions from various regions of the world proved able to reach agreement on a new approach to disarmament.

My Government supports the view that all States must unite in an effort to reach a common understanding of security and disarmament. What we cannot do alone we must do together. But we also have to consider that the application of the principles of common security must be tailored to the political and military realities in specific situations. As rightly stated in the report, disarmament measures should be balanced and be the result of negotiations in which all parties concerned must have a say.

The other new item on the agenda of the Commission was the elaboration of guidelines for confidence-building measures and the implementation of such measures based on the recent United Nations study on the subject.

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

As I have already stressed, confidence among States is essential if progress is to be achieved in arms control and disarmament negotiations. We believe that a major and significant cause of mistrust is the lack of reliable information on the military activities of other States and on other matters pertaining to mutual security.

In the gloom caused by the present state of disarmament and arms control negotiations, one is cheered even by mere flickers of light. One such flicker was the recently concluded Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Sub-soil thereof, which proved able to achieve consensus on a final document in a largely harmonious atmosphere. It is indeed encouraging that the Treaty appears to have functioned as originally envisaged. This is borne out by the fact that no Party to it has so far wished to invoke its provisions on complaints and verification. In the Danish view, it is furthermore encouraging that there was agreement on the necessity of providing adequate information on relevant technological developments before the next Review Conference, which will take place not later than 1990.

The conventional arms race continues, so does the world-wide build-up of conventional weapons, and the demand for more and more sophisticated weapons seems unlimited. It is therefore more necessary than ever to identify ways and means of dealing with this important aspect of the arms race within the machinery of the United Nations.

In the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, nations agreed that:

"Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament." (Resolution S-10/2, para. 81)

(Mr. Schmidt, Denmark)

As is the case with so many other declarations in the Final Document, there has not been any significant progress with respect to the declaration on conventional weapons and armed forces. Nevertheless, we certainly have the impression that perceptions are constantly moving in favour of a greater awareness of the need to put an end to the conventional arms race. This trend was particularly apparent in the debates during the second special session on disarmament. Since then the Secretary-General has repeatedly stressed - also in his report of this year - that conventional arms also constitute a threat to international security and that, considering the many wars fought with conventional weapons, effective measures to promote conventional disarmament are also essential.

Looking at the world today we are certainly not in need of incentives to start working on the problems of conventional disarmament.

In resolution 36/97 A, originally submitted by Denmark, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to set up a Group of Experts to study all aspects of the conventional arms race. Since the last session of the General Assembly, the Group has held five meetings and made much progress. But, owing to the very wide area to be embraced and the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved, the Group will need more time to complete its work and submit a final report to this Assembly, as requested in resolution 36/97 A. Completion of the study is of the utmost importance for future efforts on conventional disarmament. We hope, therefore, that the General Assembly will at this session agree to request the Secretary-General to continue the study and to submit a final report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. I shall revert to this matter in due course.

In concluding this statement, I should like again to refer to the Secretary-General's report for this year in which he says:

"In no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of humanity than in the field of disarmament and arms limitation."

(A/38/1, p. 4)

Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand): I shall begin my first statement in this Committee by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman. Your wide experience in the United Nations and your judicial approach to the problems before us make me confident that the Committee's work this year will be both orderly and productive. I can assure you of my delegation's full co-operation for those ends.

I do not intend today to offer a comprehensive statement touching on all the matters on our crowded agenda. New Zealand's views on the range of disarmament issues have been fully set out on other occasions, particularly at the second special session on disarmament in 1982. Instead, I wish to concentrate on explaining New Zealand's approach to those issues that are of particular concern to us at the present time.

Foremost among my Government's concerns is the nuclear arms race and the need for real progress towards an equitable and balanced reduction in the number of nuclear weapons. As anyone listening to the general debate in the General Assembly over the past few weeks will have heard, this concern is widely shared by the countries of the South Pacific. Our region may be remote from the centres of population and power in the world, but the nature of nuclear weapons is such that their very existence causes us profound concern. Nor are we in the South Pacific remote from the activities involved in the development of these weapons of destruction. Ours is, I think, the only part of the world where nuclear testing is still being conducted outside the main metropolitan territory of a nuclear-weapon State. The continuation of this situation, despite our strong protests, remains a matter of serious concern to the Governments of New Zealand and other South Pacific countries.

(Mr. Harland, New Zealand)

New Zealanders have had reason in the past to be concerned about the dangers of the arms race, but at no time in the past has the level of public concern been higher than it is today. The tensions that now exist between the super-Powers, the dangers that are created by each new development in weapons technology and the appalling waste of resources involved in the arms race, all make it more imperative now than ever before that real and rapid progress is made towards nuclear disarmament. For that progress we are dependent whether we like it or not, on the nuclear Powers themselves. Only they can reduce or abolish nuclear arms. What we can do is to use this forum, the United Nations, and any others open to us to encourage them to get on with serious negotiations that are aimed at real reductions in their nuclear arsenals, with appropriate emphasis on verification.

At this time we are anxiously watching the Geneva talks on intermediate-range nuclear weapons for signs of progress. We welcome the flexibility recently introduced by the United States in an attempt to meet Soviet concerns. It is vital, we believe, that all avenues of communication and dialogue between the two super-Powers should be kept open. In the absence of dialogue, mutual distrust can only grow. The tragic end of Korean Airlines flight 007 is a terrible illustration of consequences of such distrust. So we attach particular importance to confidence-building measures as a means of gradually reducing distrust and suspicion.

New Zealand wants to make sure that its voice, along with those of other concerned non-nuclear-weapon States, is heard by the negotiating super-Powers. We see the solution to the nuclear problem as the major challenge of our time. If progress cannot be made on the central issues, then we urge the negotiating parties to examine interim measures and compromise proposals that could contribute to a lessening of international tensions. In this regard, we have given careful attention to the Secretary-General's comments in his 1983 report that:

"The extension of the mutual observance of current limitations would also be helpful in order to allow consideration of a new longer-term approach. Future limits on qualitative improvements and modernization could provide a useful subject of discussion in both sectors of the Geneva talks. The object, while preserving military parity, should be to promote equal security for all at progressively decreasing levels and under effective international control. (A/38/1, p. 5)

(Mr. Harland, New Zealand)

We in New Zealand wholeheartedly endorse the Secretary-General's approach to this question.

The sense of frustration that non-nuclear Governments and their people feel at the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament is both real and understandable. But that frustration must not be permitted to reduce us to apathy and inactivity. In the General Assembly, in the Disarmament Commission and in the Committee on Disarmament, the search for practical and realistic disarmament measures must continue. We believe that there are useful areas for action by countries like New Zealand that are not directly involved in the Geneva disarmament talks. Current arms agreements should be strengthened by the widest possible adherence to the Conventions that enshrine them. At the same time new ways should be sought to limit the qualitative improvement of nuclear, chemical and conventional arms. Our aim should be to contain the arms race and to prevent its future diversion into new channels.

As my Prime Minister said in the General Assembly on 4 October, the New Zealand Government attaches great importance to the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We are particularly concerned about the conduct of nuclear tests in our own region, but we recognize that this is a problem that cannot be dealt with on a purely regional basis. In any case there is, in our view, no clearer step that the nuclear Powers could take to demonstrate their commitment to the reduction of nuclear arsenals than the conclusion of a treaty, with appropriate verification procedures, for the permanent banning of all nuclear tests in all environments for all time. For many years New Zealand has been active in preparing and sponsoring a draft resolution each year calling for the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a matter of priority. We are currently working on a draft resolution to meet current circumstances and we expect to introduce it on a later stage in the Committee's work.

We are convinced that the longer the delay in concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the greater the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Certainly the negotiation of a comprehensive test ban would put an end to the inconsistency in the positions of the nuclear-weapon States, who seek to persuade other States that nuclear weapons are unnecessary and undesirable, while they themselves continue their testing programmes. For our part, we attach the highest importance to controlling the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons

(Mr. Harland, New Zealand)

as well as the perpendicular. In that regard, we view the non-proliferation Treaty as a vital, if imperfect, instrument which we would like to see more widely accepted. We strongly hope that the non-proliferation Treaty review conference in 1985 will lead to a strengthening of the Treaty régime, together with the International Atomic Agency's safeguards system, on which it depends. A successful outcome to that review conference will be of vital importance to us all.

(Mr. Harland, New Zealand)

As my Prime Minister observed in the General Assembly, it would help to show that the process of multilateral legislation on disarmament is not at an end.

In concentrating on the need for nuclear disarmament we should not overlook the significance of other possible arms control measures. For our part, we continue to believe that a convention prohibiting the use of chemical weapons should be concluded as soon as possible and we hope that the Committee on Disarmament will continue to make progress towards that end.

I spoke earlier of the need to build confidence and trust if we are to halt and reverse the arms race and reduce the risk of nuclear war. Nothing could be more central to the development of confidence in international arms control arrangements than the adequacy of the procedures established for their verification. New Zealand fully recognizes that it is essential for Member States, and particularly for the nuclear-weapon States, to have a reasonable assurance that arms control measures can be verified. What seems to us to be required is greater openness in the provision of information, and flexibility in considering verification proposals, especially on the part of those States that have so far shown reluctance to co-operate in these areas. The development of the United Nations' own capacity to verify and control the implementation of disarmament agreements is also important. As a practical contribution in this area, with particular reference to the verification of a comprehensive test ban, we have arranged for New Zealand scientists to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Group on seismic events, in Geneva.

The lamentable fact is that we are still discussing disarmament in terms of agreements hoped for rather than agreements reached. The arms race continues. With the high levels of political tension that exist at the present time, it is small wonder that people around the globe are pressing for urgent progress in the reduction of nuclear arsenals. For such progress we are principally dependent on the nuclear Powers. But lack of progress is the concern of all peoples and all Governments. The dangers to which every one of us is exposed by the absence of progress means that we can never accept the view that disarmament is a subject to be left to those Governments which possess nuclear or other sophisticated weapons or to those which have developed expertise over the years in the field of disarmament negotiations.

(Mr. Harland, New Zealand)

It is for this reason that we attach great importance to the discussion of these issues in the United Nations. We look forward to the Committee's discussions and will do our best to make a constructive contribution.

Mr. CARASALES (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): It is a great pleasure, sir, for the Argentine delegation and for me personally to convey to you our most cordial congratulations upon your election to serve as Chairman of this Committee. Last year I had the privilege of sharing with you the vice-chairmanship of this body and I had an excellent opportunity to appreciate your professional and human qualities, which will ensure active and efficient guidance of our proceedings. You can always count upon my delegation's entire support in the fulfilment of this task.

I should also like to convey my congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen, the representatives of Romania and Sudan, on the confidence that the Committee has shown in them by electing them to discharge their important task.

The programme of work that we have adopted includes a stage by stage consideration of specific groups of topics; that is why there will be more than one Argentine statement in this debate. Today I shall restrict myself to putting forward some general considerations concerning the huge problem of nuclear weapons.

It is an undeniable fact that the profound universal concern that now exists concerning disarmament relates almost exclusively to nuclear weapons. It is not ignoring the importance of other aspects of this topic to assert that the only weapons of mass destruction capable of affecting all of us without exception, no matter how far we may be from the conflict zone, are nuclear weapons.

The Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries, meeting in New Delhi in March this year, clearly defined in their Political Declaration the substance of the issue, when they said, "it is an issue of human survival" (A/38/132, p. 14). They asserted that

"the renewed escalation in the nuclear arms race, in both its quantitative and its qualitative dimensions, as well as reliance on doctrines of nuclear deterrence, has heightened the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war and led

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

to greater insecurity and instability in international relations. Nuclear weapons are more than weapons of war. They are instruments of mass annihilation". (ibid.)

That is why the Heads of State or Government

"rejected all theories and concepts pertaining to the possession of nuclear weapons and their use under any circumstances". (ibid.)

In the course of the last meeting of the Disarmament Commission, the non-aligned countries submitted an important document which underscored

"the unacceptability of a world system based on the continued development, possession and deployment of nuclear weapons". (A/CN.10/45, p. 4)

This is the view of a large segment of the international community, and I would venture to think that it is shared by the broad majority of the population in States that are not members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

However, it is obvious that the actual situation is very different and becomes more serious every year. Any objective analysis of the status quo reveals a continuously deteriorating situation which increases and intensifies the danger of a world conflagration with unimaginably horrifying consequences.

The tragedy is that the vast majority of the international society are inert and impotent in the face of this race, which can only be qualified as suicidal, although they are fully aware of the fact that their fate and their very survival are constantly threatened and that little, indeed nothing, can be done about it.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

The responsibility of the nuclear-weapon Powers and of the military alliances which they head is, therefore, tremendous. They are leading us to an intolerable situation. In 1945, the nuclear arsenal was minimal and its destructive capacity, while awesome, today seems to be modest in comparison with the 50,000 nuclear warheads, each a hundred times more powerful, which are possessed by a few States. They also have relations among themselves which are marked by rivalry, enmity and mistrust.

On the other hand, the nuclear factor does not have relevance merely in the field of the current competition between the two large military alliances. The general development of international relations in its various manifestations is also deeply influenced by the existence of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon Powers continuously use them even though it may only be implicitly. Behind that shield, colonial domination is either supported or tolerated; demonstrations of force are carried out which are designed to intervene in the domestic affairs of States and to impose given political systems; displays of military power are given for purposes of intimidation, an example of which is the strategic military base being established in the Malvinas Islands, which is injecting an element of destabilization into the South Atlantic, with world-wide repercussions.

This situation caused by the presence of nuclear weapons everywhere was graphically described by Mr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose authority derives from the functions he discharged. He said the following:

"Nuclear weapons shape the global context and the climate within which local conflicts occur at this time. The fact that nuclear weapons are not used in a customary way, such as occurred in the period of gunboat diplomacy, does not mean that they are not present and that they do not constitute a threat. The core of the problem is that a great number of crises in our era have already been affected by the existence of nuclear weapons and by the resultant change in the balance of power."

Mr. Brzezinski wrote this in the summer of 1982, soon after the nuclear weapons on board the British fleet had made their presence felt in the South Atlantic.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

It is this self-same undeniable reality which led the New Delhi summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement to express:

"grave concern that certain nuclear-weapon States have deployed or intend to deploy nuclear weapons in various regions of the world".

(A/38/132, p. 15, para. 32)

In this context, we consider that the Swedish delegation's initiative is interesting, related as it is to the naval armaments race. We consider that it should specifically be focused upon a study of military nuclear aspects of the massive naval presence in all regions of the world. In this regard, it should be recalled that the Co-ordinating Bureau of the non-aligned countries dealing with the peaceful use of nuclear energy, expressed last April their concern about the serious implications of military and naval manoeuvres as well as other operations carried out by nuclear-weapon States, during which nuclear energy is utilized for non-peaceful purposes and weapons are being deployed near non nuclear-weapon States, thereby imperiling the security of non-aligned countries.

Nuclear weaponry is a function of the desire by some nuclear-weapon States to dominate. Hence, we should not be surprised that the current negotiations are failing, that others have not even begun; and that commitments solemnly entered into are not respected. This includes legally binding international instruments. We are also witnessing the further emplacement of nuclear weapons, adding to the already excessive number of existing weapons.

Nor should we be surprised by the attempt to change the disarmament priorities that were set forth in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, or by the fact that the United Nations is increasingly being shunted to one side in the disarmament process, if one can call it that. Moreover, it should come as no surprise that efforts are being made to divert attention to the developing countries, as if they are the cause of international tensions and the ones able to imperil the survival of mankind.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

What we cannot be expected to do is impassively to accept this situation, to ignore it, or not to react to it in time. Unfortunately, this co-existence with nuclear weapons imposed upon us by a small number of States may lead to a dangerous familiarity. Those weapons have been with us for four decades and today have spread to the four corners of the world. With sinister fertility there is a constant rebirth of doctrines which, whatever they may be called, are designed to explain and justify not only the possession of nuclear weapons but even their possible use. Some countries have gone so far as to invoke the Charter of the United Nations to legitimize the possible use of nuclear weapons, asserting that Article 51 does permit this option even where the defence is in response to an attack with conventional weapons. This is reflected in paragraph 22 of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group established by the Disarmament Committee as indicated in document A/38/27, para. 76. Here the question arises: if a nuclear conflict broke out on the strength of Article 51, what Security Council would survive to take the measures stipulated in that Article? A prime example of this type of thinking is the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, an unsustainable and indefensible doctrine that sacrifices the security of the whole world for the so-called security of a few countries.

If we accepted the validity of the premise that the security of those countries is based upon the possession and possible use of nuclear weapons, the logical conclusion of that reasoning would be that in an international order of States with equal rights, where all are entitled to the same level of security, each State should have its own nuclear arsenal. This is the absurdity implicitly advocated by some nuclear-weapon States. What is even worse is that, because of the insistence, in the name of a so-called realism and on the basis of the existing discrimination inherent in certain international instruments imposed by some of those Powers, we might drift imperceptibly into a kind of resignation to the situation which would be just as dangerous as the nuclear threat now looming over us.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

This is unacceptable, as are the continuance of an inexorable arms race towards self-destruction and the use of nuclear power in pursuit of obsolete aims of colonial domination. States which do not possess, do not want to possess, do not need to possess, nuclear weapons, which do not value them and have no trust in them, must erect an unscalable moral and political wall in the way of what constitutes a real case of international terrorism, if we consider that one of the accepted meanings of the word terrorism is "domination by terror".

It is only fair to recognize that not all nuclear-weapon States are following a similar policy. Moreover, within these States there is an increasingly widespread feeling of revulsion against these weapons. I could mention numerous examples, all very well known. However, what is particularly interesting and significant is the growing number of persons who, after having discharged high-level responsibilities in the field of security and defence, and thus having the opportunity to gain a particularly clear picture of the implications and consequences of a nuclear conflict, when they return to private life seem to acknowledge the strength of the evidence and deny the validity and, indeed, the utility of the doctrines which in public office they defended forcefully, although perhaps with decreasing conviction.

Thus, we consider that in the General Assembly and in all disarmament forums we must first, reject any theory or doctrine that would presuppose the continuance of the existence of any nuclear weapons; secondly, reject any attempt to legitimize the possible use of nuclear weapons on the basis of Article 51 of the Charter; thirdly, reject the imposition of a so-called realism implying that the international order should continue to be based upon the foundation of power that nuclear weapons provide; fourthly, reject the false option based on the idea that in order to achieve nuclear disarmament we must accelerate the conventional arms race.

During this session we will have to take a decision on various draft resolutions directly or indirectly related to the questions I have referred to in this statement. The Argentine delegation will take a stand on them on the basis of what I have said, basing its position on total opposition to nuclear weapons and to the terrible consequences of all kinds that they entail.

Mr. SHELDON (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, first of all, the delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic wishes to join in the congratulations already addressed to you and to the other officers of the Committee. We would like to wish you success in carrying out the responsibilities you have been given.

At this time, the world is going through a crucial phase. The complicated international situation has reached a dangerous level of tension. Every realistic political leader must realize that when weapons are daily becoming more sophisticated, the arms race is likely to get out of control. At the same time, there is a further escalation of the imperialist policy of force and confrontation; there are violations of the national independence and sovereignty of States; there is the establishment and strengthening of spheres of influence; there is a worsening of old conflicts and a heating-up of new ones. Again and again appeals are made to strengthen preparation for a nuclear war, to create conditions for victory in that kind of a war and the right to a nuclear first strike is being defended.

These aims are in conflict with the conscience of mankind. They are not compatible with any standards of morality which have been adopted by civilized society. The source of these aims and of the policy of implementing them is well known. It is the United States of America and its closest allies, which have openly adopted a policy of ensuring that the United States will achieve military supremacy over the Soviet Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will achieve supremacy over the Warsaw Treaty Organization. This is a policy of dealing with other countries from a position of force and the general intention is to attempt to impose the will of the United States and its allies on the world.

The United States, in the most direct fashion possible, is participating in military and subversive activities in the Middle East, in Africa, in Central America and in other regions of the world. They are also carrying out such actions against the peoples of Afghanistan and Kampuchea. What today determines the behaviour of Washington in international affairs is not a concern for a healthy political climate on this planet, but a desire for confrontation and for a nuclear weapons race, not mutually beneficial co-operation, but imperialist ambitions. These political preparations are going hand in hand with appropriate material preparations. One after another, the United States

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

is adopting decisions to create the newest possible types of the most destructive weapons and new means for delivering them. I am referring to intercontinental missiles, aircraft cruise missiles and submarine-based missiles. Decisions have been taken to deploy them in the United States, in Western Europe, in the Far East, in the seas and in the oceans. At the same time existing types of weapons are being modernized, and their number is increasing. Record amounts are being appropriated for all these preparations. The American war machine is speeding up more and more dangerously.

We should remember that during the entire period after the Second World War there was not a single moment when the United States genuinely lessened the speed and development of its war machine or when they took the smallest action to prevent the growth of their military potential. If anything has been reduced in the United States military arsenal it has been replaced by a more powerful means of annihilation and destruction. All of these mountains of lethal weapons are being accumulated, not to protect the Pentagon generals from the fate of the foot soldiers in the army of the unemployed, but to be used.

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

The recent revelation of the directives of the Pentagon and the National Security Council of the United States shows that the United States is intending to use its military forces to deliver nuclear first-strikes against targets on the territory of the USSR and other countries in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and they are providing for the use of medium-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe. Intoxicated by militarism, they are planning to carry out nuclear strikes also on the territory of their own allies.

This is why we consider extremely timely the Soviet proposal on the condemnation of nuclear war and the declaration that the formulation, enunciation, dissemination and propaganda of political and military doctrines and concepts designed to substantiate both the "legitimacy" of the first use of nuclear weapons and, generally the "admissibility" of unleashing nuclear war are criminal acts.

The illusion of military supremacy and the policy of positions of strength are especially dangerous in the nuclear age, which has established its own rules. The destabilization of intergovernmental relations carries with it the danger of a nuclear war, and the catastrophic consequences of that kind of war would leave no nation untouched.

At one time the claims of national security could more or less justify the attempt to emerge victorious from a war. Now, however, the only realistic way to strengthen national security is to eliminate the threat of a new world war, especially a new nuclear war. Thus, in present conditions, national security is very closely linked to security on the international level. Such is the truth in the nuclear age.

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

In a recent statement, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Comrade Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, emphasized the following:

"In the nuclear age, we cannot view peace through the prism of narrow, selfish interests. Responsible statesmen have only one option: to do everything possible to avoid a nuclear catastrophe. To take any other position would be shortsighted, if not suicidal."

A real possibility exists of eliminating the threat of world war and avoiding a nuclear catastrophe. The first essential is that the action of States in the international arena is based on the principle that the security interests of other States must not be harmed. This principle is the basis of many international agreements. In the 1970s the principle of equality and equal security was broadly acknowledged in Soviet-American documents signed at the highest level. That principle is also incorporated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and has been confirmed in a number of subsequent decisions of the United Nations.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries take it as axiomatic that in resolving the questions of curbing the arms race and of disarmament the principle of equality and equal security is fundamental and significant. That principle, which is the basis of the position of the Soviet Union, is dictated by historical experience and by the conditions of the nuclear age. It reflects the obvious fact that no party to treaty negotiations will agree to harm its own security interests. That means that States participating in negotiations should strive not for supremacy over one another, but rather for the establishment of parity of military force at the lowest possible level.

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

It is a clear lesson of life that only on the basis of strict observance of this principle is it possible to overcome the difficulties inherent in the objective and subjective aspects of the solution of such a complicated problem, affecting the basic security of States, as that of limiting nuclear weapons.

The principle of equality and equal security was acknowledged by at least three previous United States Administrations. Unfortunately, as I have already said, the present United States Administration has adopted another policy. It directly rejects action on the basis of that principle, although parity as an objective reality continues to prevail. To justify its policy of an arms race, it even uses statistical data - much to our amusement - which tell us about the reduction of American nuclear potential in the past. But the real data show the opposite. Information on present plans for the future and particularly that published today in The New York Times, tells us about the intention of the United States to continue the escalation of the arms race by allocating huge amounts for that purpose - almost \$2 trillion in the next five years.

The Geneva negotiations on nuclear weapons in Europe and the limitation and reduction of strategic weapons remain deadlocked, because of the unwillingness of the American side to act on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security. The United States adopts a one-sided approach in its attempt to achieve military supremacy, to upset the existing balance of forces. On the other hand, throughout the negotiations the Soviet side has shown a constructive and genuinely flexible approach. It has done and continues to do everything it can to break the deadlock in the negotiations and to reach mutually acceptable agreements, which would prevent another very dangerous upswing in the arms race in both the areas being discussed in the negotiations. Whether or not such agreements are reached depends on the United States and on the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a whole.

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

A further fundamental truth in the nuclear age is that the higher the level of military opposition and confrontation, even where there is a strategic balance, the less stable and the more uncertain that balance is. This means that there is a greater potential for sliding into a nuclear conflict. The socialist States have repeatedly pointed out that in that new round of the arms race nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction will become even more complicated, and therefore it will be much more difficult to draft international agreements to limit those weapons, and that peace will become even less stable and more fragile.

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

For this reason it is important not to allow a new upward spiral in the arms race, especially the nuclear arms race. An important Soviet proposal on a nuclear arms freeze submitted for consideration at this session of the General Assembly is intended to achieve precisely that goal. It is still not too late to stop. That is the leitmotiv of yet another Soviet proposal, on the conclusion of a treaty banning the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the earth. The purpose of such a treaty is to avoid an arms race in outer space. A characteristic step accompanied this constructive proposal by the Soviet Union in the area of limiting the arms race and of disarmament - namely, the commitment not to be the first to launch any type of anti-satellite weapon into outer space. That decision is a further concrete demonstration of the good will of the Soviet State and of its determination to strengthen peace and the security of peoples. We should like to think that the United States would follow that example.

This year, 1983, is important and decisive. How events develop this year will largely determine whether the arms race will speed up or slacken and whether world stability and security will be strengthened or tension will grow to a critical point. In 1983 the socialist countries embarked upon a clear programme to fight for peace, security and disarmament. In the Prague Declaration by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, in January, and in the joint statement adopted in Moscow in June by the State and Party leaders of the socialist commonwealth, our leaders at the highest level proposed a detailed package of immediate and effective measures to ensure stability in the military strategic situation, to limit the arms race, to maintain and strengthen détente and to preserve everything positive that had been achieved in international relations in the 1970s. Further confirmation of this package of measures was given in the Sofia communiqué of the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Treaty countries, which took place a few days ago.

The implementation of a broad programme of measures to curb the arms race whether in nuclear or in conventional weapons, would open up the way to eliminating the threat of nuclear war and bringing about genuine disarmament. A broad plan of action was put forward at the Prague meeting, and here I refer to the initiative on the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual non-use of military force and the maintenance of relations of peace between the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO countries. The heart of such a treaty would be the obligation on those States not to be the first to use weapons against each other, whether nuclear or conventional, and consequently the obligation not to use military force in general, against one another.

In 1982 the Soviet Union unilaterally assumed the commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. That was a further extremely important and responsible manifestation of good will by the socialist commonwealth. On the other hand, the NATO countries, in refusing thus far to react positively to that proposal, are demonstrating to the entire world their unwillingness to agree to equal, stable relations in a world unclouded by military tension.

The socialist countries vigorously advocate the drafting of a programme for step-by-step disarmament. The achievement of agreements within that framework for the prohibition of the development and production of new systems of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of the production of fissionable materials for the purpose of creating various types of such weapons and their means of delivery would establish the preconditions of movement towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has said that it is prepared to reach agreement on appropriate controls which would guarantee the implementation of that programme by the nuclear States. For the purpose of such control, specific measures in the area of nuclear disarmament could be used, as they already are, in particular in the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system.

The drafting at the earliest possible time of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty would be of the greatest significance in the process of limiting the nuclear arms race. The question of the banning of chemical weapons has become more, not less, acute. The recent approval in the United States of appropriations for the production of a new lethal weapon, a binary chemical

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weapon, is a dangerous step in the direction of stepping up the chemical weapons race. To avoid that, it is essential that there should be rapid and substantial progress in drafting a convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. Unfortunately some States, led by the United States, are not showing a responsible approach to these negotiations. What is more, they are hindering progress where success is already within our grasp. The United States, in order to whitewash its use of chemical weapons in South-East Asia and to hide the lack of constructiveness in its position, is resorting to fabrications, which have repeatedly been refuted.

The rapid development of science and technology is an important factor with serious consequences as regards limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament. These consequences make the limitation of the modern arms race and verification of that limitation a more complicated, if not an impossible, task. A special cause of alarm is the programme recently adopted by the United States and the weapons development programme, currently under way. These weapons are based on very modern scientific discoveries and achievements.

All this, in the opinion of the Byelorussian delegation, increases the timeliness and urgency of the adoption of measures on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. We feel that the time has come to take practical action to solve the problem in a broader sense, by the renunciation of the use of new discoveries and scientific and technological achievements for military purposes. Our delegation intends to give special attention to these questions.

The problem of limiting the arms race is not simply a question of weapons of mass destruction. In the light of the continuing sophistication and growing power of conventional weapons, the destructive force of which, according to some assessments, is approaching that of weapons of mass destruction, it is necessary to make new efforts to bring about a substantial decrease in the present level of conventional weapons and military forces, both globally and in individual regions. The proposals of the socialist countries in this area are well known and they form a real basis for moving in the necessary direction.

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Bearing in mind that the stepping up of the arms race is closely linked with the increase in military expenditures, the socialist States have for many years now been appealing to the Western countries to reach practical agreement not to increase military expenditures but to reduce them, either on a percentage basis or in absolute terms. At a meeting of Party and State leaders in Moscow on 28 June of this year the participating States again made a constructive appeal to the member States of NATO to get down immediately to direct negotiations on an agreement not to increase their military expenditures after 1 January 1984, and on specific measures to achieve a practical, mutual reduction of those expenditures in the subsequent period, so that the resources thus released could be used to meet the needs of economic and social development, including the needs of the developing countries.

(Mr. Sheldov, Byelorussian SSR)

We must point out that thus far the NATO States have not responded to that proposal.

The tasks facing the international community in the field of disarmament are great and broad; they are very complicated. But the solution is not hidden in some inaccessible place. It can still be arrived at. The key to this is the manifestation of the political will to seek and to find mutually acceptable agreements for which the peoples of our planet are waiting.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR is prepared to join its efforts with those of the delegations of all peace-loving States so that at this session of the General Assembly we can adopt concrete decisions to bring about progress in limiting the arms race and in disarmament.

Mr. DORJI (Bhutan): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Also, may I request you to convey to the other officers of the Committee our felicitations on their election.

Arms expenditure this year may even reach the \$800 billion mark. That is indeed a staggering figure, especially when it represents more than a cumulative sum of 6,000 years of the present gross national product of a small country like mine. It seems that every effort of the international community directed towards complete and comprehensive disarmament is being thwarted. None the less, because of the inherent dangers of the spiralling arms race and its wasteful expenditure, we are compelled to speak each year to implore certain members of the world community to see reason and to emphasize the strong link between disarmament and development.

Clearly, as the arms race accelerates military expenditures increase. In turn, the burden of increased military spending is at the expense of development spending. The effects are more pronounced particularly for the developing countries. The absurdity of arms expenditures has often been pointed out, and we all continue to wonder why more is being spent only to have less security.

(Mr. Dorji, Bhutan)

In the general debate many Heads of State or Government, as well as others, addressed themselves to the sizeable resources that could be diverted from military expenditure to development. My delegation, like many others, believes that there is more than just a casual relationship between disarmament and development. This link needs to be stressed and every effort made to reduce the wasteful arms expenditure. Much of the savings realized should be channelled to development assistance, particularly for the poorer nations of the world. To achieve this objective, we look to the major military Powers with the largest arsenals of weapons to set the trend by agreeing to freeze and begin to reduce their arms expenditures.

In the field of disarmament, serious concern has been expressed about nuclear weapons, and rightly so since they affect the very existence of our world. The danger of nuclear war is increasing as international relations deteriorate. Moreover, to add to our fears, there is the growing possibility of an accidental nuclear conflict. Notwithstanding the calls for nuclear disarmament, nuclear armaments have reached new heights of sophistication and destructive power. There is therefore a need to agree on universal, non-discriminatory means to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Last year my delegation expressed its concern about the concept of a limited nuclear war, which we consider dangerous and as distorting reality. No nation believes that a nuclear war is winnable. We have heard this repeatedly expressed by all delegations in the United Nations. Most recently the President of the United States in his address to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly agreed that a nuclear war could not be won and stated that it must never be fought. The President of the Soviet Union has also expressed similar thoughts.

While my delegation welcomes such statements, we wonder why States continue to strive to improve and perfect their nuclear capabilities. In effect, nuclear Powers should cease to develop nuclear weapons of even greater sophistication. Clearly, the success of nuclear disarmament lies in the hands of the super-Powers, and we urge them to continue their negotiations to that end.

Mr. SHAH MAHAZ (Pakistan): My delegation joins the other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. This is a well-merited honour in recognition of the important role that you have played in the manifold activities of the United Nations and the prominent interest that your country has shown in disarmament. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election, as well as to pledge the fullest co-operation of my delegation in the successful completion of the work before us.

We have listened with great attention to the statements made in this Committee during the course of the general debate. Mankind throughout the ages has yearned deeply for peace and security, but never before has this need been as critical as it is today for never before have we had to contend with the threat of total annihilation. Consequently the burden of responsibility that we are called upon to assume has never been so heavy nor the opportunity to respond rationally to this challenge so fleeting.

The threat posed by the existence of large nuclear arsenals is felt deeply. The outburst of public opinion all over the world against nuclear weapons is real and by no means a mere expression of some vague and naively neutralist sentiment. At the heart of it lie fundamental and powerful motivations. In a world dominated by the super-Powers and by military alliances, the smaller, non-aligned States find themselves as helpless bystanders, witnesses to a spiralling nuclear-arms race which they deplore, knowing that if allowed to proceed unchecked it would lead to certain death and destruction for all.

It is true that the arms race in all its aspects is not a disembodied phenomenon. It is a manifestation of the existing uncertain global political and security climate, and is directly related to the increase in the level of international tensions caused by the growing resort to the use of force in the conduct of inter-State relations. A case in point is the military intervention in Afghanistan four years ago with all its attendant consequences for regional stability and in global terms on East-West relations. It is no mere coincidence that that military intervention in Afghanistan preceded a sharp deterioration in the international political climate and dealt a severe reversal to the fragile concept of détente. The small and medium-size States have a vital stake in an improved international security environment for the preservation

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

of their own freedom. The climate of insecurity and deepening confrontation between the super-Powers is therefore a matter of the utmost concern to all of us. We believe that a determined effort is needed to break the vicious circle of international tensions generating a new arms race, which in turn exacerbates international tensions. A way out of this vicious circle would be consciously to reject the option of increased armaments as a response to national security problems and instead to pursue diligently the course of arms limitations and disarmament. This is the only certain method of lowering existing political tensions.

Prevention of nuclear war and nuclear disarmament remain the central issues to which we must address ourselves. The nuclear-arms race and the continuing increase in the number of warheads, as well as the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, must be reversed. The deployment of new, more lethal, more accurate weapon systems has to cease. The alternative is a frightening prospect even for a world already living under the spectre of a nuclear holocaust. A lowering of the nuclear threshold means a dangerous contraction in the margin of time required and available for reflection and cool decision making.

An agreement on a nuclear-test ban is the indispensable first step towards progress on the entire range of nuclear disarmament issues. It will be self-deluding to believe that a comprehensive test-ban treaty, if it were to become a long-term goal, will not have negative effects both on nuclear disarmament and on vertical as well as horizontal non-proliferation.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on a nuclear test ban, established by the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva has, during its last session, followed its programme of work with great diligence. It has discussed and defined issues relating to verification and compliance, as called for by its mandate. It has also proceeded further and carried out a detailed examination of the various elements and means of verification of a nuclear test ban. This work has been supplemented by a detailed technical study of the same issue by the seismological working group. But further progress is contingent upon and possible only if the political decision to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty is forthcoming.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

diminish the legal status of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Equally, the question of verification of compliance must be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Confidence in the observance of the convention is for us a most important consideration.

In the field of outer space the urgent need for action is all too apparent. Outer space cannot be allowed to become another arena for the arms race. Negotiations must begin forthwith to conclude agreements to prevent its militarization. There is no longer any doubt as to the imminence of the development of the so-called futuristic weapons for use in outer space. Knowledgeable observers are already talking about a new generation of weapons of blinding speed and destructiveness, capable of destroying all the satellites in the sky and intercontinental ballistic missile warheads in the upper atmosphere. These are frightening portents of a critical future, which is rapidly moving from imaginative science fiction to ominous destructive reality.

My delegation continues to hold the view that there must not be any let-up in multilateral efforts towards disarmament. We also continue to believe firmly that we must not allow ourselves the luxury of an all or nothing attitude. Complementary to global efforts on such a priority item as nuclear disarmament, we can and should test less spectacular approaches. Pakistan's initiative on the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia and for the agreed reduction of conventional forces is designed to bring about security and stability through disarmament at the regional level. A determined implementation of disarmament measures at the regional level would, in our view, strengthen disarmament efforts at the global level.

Equally, it remains the firm view of my delegation that, where possible, interim arrangements must also be arrived at. I refer here to the question of concluding an effective agreement to ensure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In the absence of progress on nuclear disarmament, which remains the unshakable goal, interim arrangements can play a significant part in allaying the fears of non-nuclear-weapon States as regards their security. Work in this regard in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva has been most discouraging. In fact, the position of some nuclear-weapon States on this question is one of deep concern for us. We hope that those States will review their present attitude and become more responsive to what are the legitimate expectations of the non-aligned, non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

I referred earlier to the international political climate and to the disregard by some States of universally recognized norms governing the conduct of inter-State relations. The Secretary-General, in his annual report, has rightly pointed out that:

"In no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of humanity than in the field of disarmament and arms limitation." (A/38/L. p. 4)

In a world dominated by nuclear-weapon Powers, competing military alliances and global rivalries, the smaller non-aligned States can rely only on the moral authority of the United Nations and on the principles enshrined in the Charter, particularly those governing non-interference and the non-use of force, for ensuring their security. We in Pakistan attach the utmost importance to the upholding of those principles and to a policy of seeking friendship and peace in our region.

We live in an interdependent world - one which is becoming increasingly so. The arms race between the two major alliances, which is a product of their narrowly conceived security interests, has created conditions of military and economic insecurity world-wide. The magnitude of the expenditure on armaments presents a chilling contrast to the situation in which hundreds of millions of people in many parts of the world go hungry and shelterless. We must never forget, nor for a moment, that this misuse of resources on such a colossal scale can only sharpen the already hazardous polarization in our world. The threat to our security comes as potently from economic injustices as it does from the accumulation of weaponry. In the realization of a new international order, economic security and military security are two faces of the same coin. Disarmament, development and security are three inseparable elements on which a durable structure of peace has to be built. A consensus between the privileged and the under-privileged, between the strong and the weak, between the North and the South on how to reorder our world must encompass both the economic and the military dimensions.

I have indicated the general views of the Pakistan delegation on the items before the First Committee. We hope to make further observations and contributions on specific issues later.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.