



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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- (a) Report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament;
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- (c) Report of the Secretary-General

Strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament: report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament /50/

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

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50 AND 116 (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call upon the first speaker for this afternoon, I should like to inform the Committee that the United Nations has been visited by the delegation of the World Conference to End the Arms Race, for Disarmament and Détente, held in Helsinki from 23 to 26 September of this year.

While in New York the delegation -- which comprised a number of eminent personalities from 11 countries of all regions of the world -- was received by the President of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Yesterday, at its request, the delegation was also received by me and other members of the Bureau of the First Committee. The delegation informed us of the results of the World Conference to End the Arms Race, for Disarmament and Détente, and presented to me the texts of the final documents of the Conference. In accepting the documents I have noted with pleasure that their contents very much coincide with most of the issues on the agenda of the First Committee. In my view, the results of the Conference are an example of the interest and support of the broad quarters of world public opinion for actions towards limiting the arms race, disarmament and détente.

In this context, I have taken the liberty of informing the delegation of the work of the First Committee this year and the progress achieved so far.

Mr. WILLIAMS (Sierra Leone): My Government's position on the whole question of disarmament was briefly summarized in the statement made by my Foreign Minister during the current session's general debate in the General Assembly, in which he said:

"Since the Second World War, and more especially in view of the destructive potential of nuclear armaments, the problem of disarmament has assumed increasing urgency for mankind. For us in the third world, in particular, this problem constitutes one of the central themes in our programme, realizing as we do that peace and stability are vital to the orderly pursuit of our development programmes. We do realize also that no section of humanity is immune from the effects of a nuclear holocaust, or even the effects of conventional warfare. Thus disarmament is no longer merely an aspect of détente and big Power accommodation, but a problem of universal dimensions requiring universal concerted action for its solution."

(A/31/PV.12, p. 52).

It is therefore on this basis that my delegation will set out its view on the many disarmament issues facing this Committee.

Each year the question of disarmament continues to be in fact the most important item on our agenda. Each year brings us very little or no hope of reaching anywhere near an acceptable solution, but sees a string of resolutions, most of which really mean very little. This year, more than ever before, has seen about the largest volume of reports and statements on these issues. It is therefore well for us now not only to review what progress has been made so far, but also to speculate -- for this is the only thing we can possibly do -- on what hope the future holds for the success or failure of the world's disarmament efforts.

During the general debate on disarmament last year in this Committee, my delegation, in reviewing the progress made so far, expressed disappointment at the fact that we were nowhere near achieving our main objective of complete disarmament. The past year has not brought much change in the arms stalemate. Nuclear arsenals of enormous quantities and potential are still being stockpiled; more and more sophisticated and deadly conventional weapons are produced, and the military budgets, particularly of big Powers, continue to increase at an absurd rate. The arms race is making such large demands on the financial resources of some States that they tend to neglect the economic and social welfare of some of their own peoples.

(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

This is also the main reason why the new international economic order is still a dream. The economic survival and welfare of a substantial part of the world continues to wait without hope for the willingness of the big Powers to curtail their enormous military expenditures by a meagre 1 per cent. Developing countries in the third world continue to be concerned at the lack of any efforts by the nuclear Powers to reduce their arms spending.

While debates, discussions and consultations are perhaps necessarily prolonged, the stockpile of nuclear arsenals and other deadly weapons continues to accumulate to an astronomic level. It will be an almost impossible task to induce these States to make a genuine reduction in such stockpiles, since it would in fact mean throwing a substantially large part of their taxpayers' money down the drain -- money that could in the first instance have been used wisely. The urgent need to arrest this massive arms build-up is greater today than ever.

The highest priority, therefore, must be given to the limitation of arms, particularly the nuclear arsenals. Although the SALT I Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union marks an advance in this direction, much remains to be done. My delegation would like to join others in urging these two super-Powers to redouble their efforts not only to reach a final agreement on SALT II, which is now long overdue, but to advance to general and complete disarmament well before the end of the decade.

My delegation would like to pay a tribute to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament as a whole and to its Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts for their work done so far and their latest comprehensive report to the General Assembly contained in document A/31/27. It is true that we expected more substantial progress than was made by the Committee and that my delegation feels disheartened by the lack of progress in arriving at a consensus on some important matters it spent so much time in discussing. We fully appreciate how difficult their task was.

My delegation, however, believes that the report takes us a step forward and gives us some slight hope for the future. It has clearly explored and spelt out the views common to some States. It has spelt out even more clearly the divergent views of some States -- views that should now form the basis for further disarmament efforts. Most important of all, it has recorded the general fear of all participating States concerning the devastating consequences of the use or misuse

(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the need to work urgently towards the goal of complete disarmament.

Considering the urgency of all the disarmament issues before us and the vital role that the United Nations is still expected to play in this field, my delegation would like to associate itself with the agreed proposals but forward by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament in its report contained in document A/31/36. It is essential for the relevant United Nations bodies and that section of the Secretariat dealing with disarmament to be strengthened adequately to facilitate their work. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that detailed information on disarmament issues should be readily available to all Governments and to the public as a whole. In this regard, the proposals to publish a disarmament yearbook and a disarmament periodical are welcomed by my delegation.

My delegation would also like to commend the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference under the able Chairmanship of the Ambassador of Iran, Mr. Fereydoun Hoveyda, for the work reflected in the third report, which sets forth in greater detail the views of Governments on the convening of a world disarmament conference. The main obstacle now appears to be the lack of consensus among the nuclear-weapon States. We consider it essential for the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its work in further exploring common ground enabling all States, particularly the nuclear Powers, to participate in a world disarmament conference at the earliest opportunity. My Government has already made it clear that it would favour the proposal to convene a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, to be followed by a world disarmament conference.

My delegation views the subject of mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade not so much in terms of the past -- that is, what has been achieved since the beginning of the Decade. Considering the continuous arms build-up and the constant threat of nuclear holocaust, the time spent in looking back and discussing past achievements should be minimal. My delegation holds the view that the Disarmament Decade should be viewed rather in terms of what is still to be achieved by the end of the Decade. A brief survey of all the unresolved disarmament issues before us should prompt all well-meaning States to give their fullest co-operation in the interest of peace and security for all our peoples.

(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

My delegation believes that the cause of international peace and security cannot be justly served by making available to the white South African régime highly sophisticated weapons and nuclear facilities. Records show that in 1974 South Africa alone acquired major arms worth \$161 million compared with \$227 million for the rest of Africa. This trend continued in 1975. This massive arms build-up in South Africa is encouraged by some big Powers which are blind to the safety of the oppressed peoples of South Africa itself. The dangers of external war are not so imminent as to justify entrusting such weapons to the care of a régime whose irresponsible treatment of some of its own people leaves so much to be desired. States that provide South Africa with these nuclear capabilities, even under the pretext of use for peaceful purposes, will also be guilty of crimes that will be committed when these are used for clandestine purposes against neighbouring States or against its own people when there is any opportunity to do so. To allow such dangerous devices to be in the care of a Government that ignores all United Nations resolutions and world opinion concerning its disregard for human dignity is to endanger world peace and security, particularly in that area of the African continent. Well-meaning Governments cannot but be concerned at this.

(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

On the matter of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, my delegation is aware of the numerous valuable economic benefits this would bring to many, particularly to developing countries. Indeed some developing countries are already enjoying some of these benefits. It is, however, necessary that in such explosions, precautionary measures continue to be adopted to prevent any possible misuse, especially for weapon testing. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should therefore continue to play its vital role and to ensure that the provisions of Article V of the Non-Proliferation Treaty are strictly observed.

An important aspect in the field of disarmament is the Non-Proliferation Treaty to which about 100 States, including my Government, have already acceded. So far we consider it as an effective instrument which, since 1968, has helped to play a positive role to curb the spread of nuclear weapons. We also welcome its use for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), held in May last year, has further strengthened and given added stimulus to the articles and operations of the Treaty. The safeguard systems operated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are an added asset to the effectiveness of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

On the question of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, my delegation welcomes the progress made by the latest improved identical draft convention put forward by the United States of America and the USSR. It is true that this draft as a whole, does not enjoy the absolute consensus of all the members of the CCD -- a task which obviously proved impossible to achieve. But we believe that the Convention has the support of a large majority of the CCD members and should be considered as an important advance in the efforts to overcome the dangers of environmental warfare. We also believe that explanations given by some States are acceptable. Further assurance is clearly spelt out in the "agreed understandings" submitted by the CCD in its report to the General Assembly, clarifying the meaning of the Convention. My delegation is satisfied that these explanations should help to ensure safeguards against the hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

It is also true that the draft convention is not as comprehensive as we would have liked it to be. But we feel that it is a step forward and forms a basis for future negotiations of a more comprehensive nature, especially as the IAEA and other appropriate bodies would act as added safeguards and keep constant watch to ensure that the true spirit behind the Convention is maintained during its operations until the next Review Conference. In that regard, we are prepared to support the draft resolution A/C.1/31/L.5 introduced last week by the delegation of Finland.

My delegation considers the report submitted by the Secretary-General on the Reduction of Military Budgets in document A/31/222 as valuable and believes this should go a great way not only to reinforce the 1974 Report, but also to advance the efforts of arms control towards complete disarmament. We would therefore like to commend the Group of Experts who undertook the very difficult task of studying the four specific technical issues of the measurement of military expenditures. We would therefore urge that this Group should be given further mandate to proceed to the next stage of their work, that is, the orderly reporting of military expenditures. When completed, these documents will form the basis on which the value of military budgets can be ascertained.

My delegation also believes that a Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) will be the most significant step towards nuclear disarmament. We are aware of the efforts made by the CCD, without any progress, towards a Comprehensive Test Ban in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3478 (XXX) of 11 December 1975. So far the real cause for the setbacks in CTB rests entirely with the two super-Powers who, as leaders in nuclear arsenals, have not yet taken a positive lead to hasten the pace of disarmament so that other States can follow. We, however, anxiously await the final outcome of the study by the Group of Seismological Experts established under the auspices of the CCD to consider measures to detect seismic events on a world-wide scale. It is expected that at least a break-through will be made in the problem of verification.

There are some other very important items which I have not dealt with in this general statement and my delegation expects to take the floor again during our discussions on draft resolutions.

Mr. N'DONG (Gabon) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, may I, like other delegations which have spoken before me, offer you the congratulations of the delegation of Gabon. By electing you Chairman, our Committee has undeniably shown that it wishes to entrust to a man of great distinction, such as yourself, the task of carrying out our sensitive mission to a successful conclusion. We are convinced that under your wise guidance our Committee will produce the best results possible. We would also like to extend our congratulations to the other officers of the Committee and to assure you of our willing co-operation.

The debate on disarmament which appears on our agenda every year gives us an opportunity to review progress achieved in this area. The frequent recurrence of this topic, far from rendering it monotonous, leaves its importance undiminished. Indeed, it is evidence of the growing interest of the peoples of the world in the maintenance and strengthening of peace.

The heads of delegations in debates in the General Assembly were not mistaken. They devoted a good deal of time to matters relating to disarmament. The Republic of Gabon -- the slogan of whose national political party, the Gabonese Democratic Party, is "dialogue, tolerance and peace" -- has always attached special importance to the question of disarmament because we are convinced that the destiny and well-being of mankind hinge thereon.

For more than a century, the history of the world has been marked by unsuccessful attempts at disarmament. Plans for perpetual peace, whether that of the abbot of St. Pierre, or the version of Napoleon III in 1863, the two conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907, the Washington treaties of 1929 and the London treaties of 1930 and 1936, have all failed to produce concrete results other than the discrediting of the very concept of disarmament.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

Far from being discouraged by these defeats, the United Nations, born of the Second World War, whose emergence was greeted by the explosion of the first atomic devices, and which has grown in the midst of the perils of the nuclear era, has made disarmament one of its primary objectives. The founding Members of our Organization solemnly undertook to serve the purposes and principles of our Organization, the primary goal being the maintenance of international peace and security. To achieve that goal the signatories of the Charter conferred specific responsibilities in the area of disarmament and the control of weapons on the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The Charter had envisaged disarmament and arms control as merely stages in the gradual establishment of an international system of security. But the Charter was soon overtaken by the boundlessly inventive spirit of man in the matter of armaments. The development of new weapons of mass destruction, which could be used at any time, placed the problem of disarmament in the forefront of human concerns. Our Organization has set about this difficult, thankless and complex task because of the issues involved. Plans for general and complete disarmament have been compared and contrasted in the various bodies of the United Nations, and the debates on the subject have acquired a bad reputation. At the very most, the major Powers have been able to pinpoint and define the general principles that should guide negotiations in this area. Those principles are as follows:

- Gradualism, i.e. that disarmament should be brought about gradually, in accordance with a plan involving successive stages;
- Equilibrium, i.e. that no State should be at a disadvantage as regards its security during the process of reduction of forces, the initial relations of power remaining constant, but at constantly decreasing levels;
- Control, i.e. that every State should be assured that the measures agreed upon are carried out by every other State.

The application of these principles with a view to achieving general disarmament affecting all weapons -- nuclear and conventional -- has never been possible owing to the scope of the enterprise and the disparity in the armaments and strategic positions of the major Powers. Finally, the emergence and development of nuclear weapons has profoundly modified the problem of disarmament.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

Various theories have emerged, among them that of the nuclear deterrent, according to which nuclear weapons can establish nuclear peace. That concept, which is held by many experts and by many countries, is based on the experience of the past 30 years and on the argument that the power of nuclear weapons is such that those weapons can never be used, since the risk of mortal retaliation against the country that first used them would be too great. Nuclear weapons, according to this theory, would serve merely as deterrents; hence nuclear disarmament is no longer necessarily desirable.

My delegation cannot subscribe to such a theory, which overlooks the fact that the world is filled with people who are not very wise, and that States are sometimes governed by Caligulas who might press a button at any time. In other words, neither a balance of forces, nor prevention through fear, nor the creation of more and more nuclear-weapon-free zones can constitute a lasting solution in the area of disarmament.

Prompted by caution, by the need to avoid the irreparable, and by the realization that general and complete disarmament is a difficult and complex task, the Soviet Union and the United States have moved in a new direction: that of partial but practical measures which, without implying that the major Powers will abandon their nuclear forces, permit a kind of joint deterrent action and a certain limitation of the arms race. It is within the framework of that new course of action, called "arms monopoly" that several agreements have been reached. However, although these agreements represent a considerable success, and are practical achievements on the road to disarmament, they cannot replace general and complete disarmament. The immediate positive result of those agreements has been détente.

More than 10 years ago our prime concern was to prevent a nuclear holocaust. Although that danger has not been completely removed, the risks of a thermonuclear war have been reduced. Confrontations among major Powers have given way to ever broader dialogue. Thus the international situation is at present marked by relative détente.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

My country welcomed the Helsinki Agreement, but we regret its very limited economic and geographic scope. The Helsinki Agreement concerns only Europe and America, whereas it is Europe and America that have stirred up tension and war in southern Africa, Asia and the Middle East. We recognize that the present détente has led to coexistence and to active co-operation among the different blocs, which is a very positive thing. But my delegation thinks that détente, like peace, is not divisible; détente must be global, and détente and peace must not be confused. What the world ardently desires is genuine peace, not détente.

Turning to the very object of the treaties that led to détente, that is, the treaties on the limitation of armaments and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, one cannot fail to be struck by the fact that, despite speeches, declarations of intent and conferences on disarmament, the international armaments market has never been more flourishing. The euphoria which greeted those agreements has yielded to scepticism, for it was soon realized that all those agreements bore the seeds of contradictions. Let us try to determine some of those contradictions, which are obvious even to the uninitiated, like ourselves.

The Moscow treaty provides for the prohibition of nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, but it does not ban underground tests. The Mexico treaty bans the use of nuclear weapons in Latin America, but it does not ban the trans-shipment of such weapons, and some States still believe that the explosion of nuclear devices for peaceful purposes is lawful. What is the difference between an explosion for peaceful purposes and an explosion for non-peaceful purposes? The question deserves to be asked. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is intended to limit the number of nuclear Powers. On the other hand, it does not ban the dissemination of weapons, that is, their possible stockpiling on the territory of non-nuclear States.

The treaties I have just mentioned do not set up any machinery for international control under the United Nations and merely formulate a ban. The ban thus formulated is not in itself a disarmament measure, and the nuclear Powers still have their stockpiles of bombs. Add to that the fact that all these agreements have a denunciation clause.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

Undeniably, the proliferation of nuclear weapons remains a very serious danger for the future of mankind. But if "arms monopoly" has been the subject of controversy, it is because it corresponds to the exclusive interests of the two super-Powers and because it has led to their nuclear co-imperialism. Objectively, those treaties establish a nuclear balance between the two major Powers and are discriminatory regarding the non-nuclear Powers, which they simply exclude from the atomic club.

What power do we have in the face of this discriminatory situation? In the name of what moral principle shall we call on the non-nuclear Powers to refrain from possessing the nuclear weapons that others have? Let no one be surprised that some States have adopted a "wait and see" attitude, while others have proceeded to produce their own nuclear arsenals, thereby assuring their own security. A State cannot ever relinquish that responsibility, because its primary mission is to protect its territory and its nationals. In other words, if a complete ban on nuclear weapons and the total destruction of those weapons remains the ultimate and noble objective, the tests at present undertaken by other Powers are designed only to break the nuclear monopoly of the super-Powers.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

Thus, neither the détente the benefits of which we referred to above, nor the agreements between the two super-Powers have put an end to the arms race; that arms race is continuing with increasing intensity. The limitation on the number of nuclear devices in the new treaties has spawned a new form of rivalry between the two super-Powers. At the present time, the competition is in the area of the precision and the power of these devices, in other words it is no longer quantitative but qualitative. In the area of nuclear weapons, the 1975 report of the International Institute for Peace Research is rather gloomy as regards the future. The year 1974 witnessed a splurge of nuclear tests. The Club of 5 was increased. The prospects of international control over nuclear weapons are no longer bright. According to the authors of the report, only the two major Powers can generate the proper climate to discourage the small and medium-sized Powers from developing a nuclear arsenal. Until the major Powers have shown a real political willingness to curb the arms race, any effort to prevent a dissemination of nuclear weapons will be interpreted by the small and medium-sized Powers as unjust and discriminatory.

The Vladivostok Agreement places a limit of 2,400 devices for each of the two super-Powers. In that treaty also, all is negotiated as if other countries have nothing to say. Of these 2,400 weapons, 1,320 may have several nuclear warheads. Such a limit -- still a very high one -- is hardly likely to solve the problem of curbing the arms race. The continuation of a dialogue in this area of strategic weapons remains fraught with many difficulties.

The advent of more precise and less "avoidable" MIRVs and PMGs (position-guided missiles) has led to a renewed qualitative arms race. Neither of the two super-Powers will yield any advantage to the other side. In this stage of imbalance, negotiations have very little chance of making any progress and reaching any agreement, the more so as the recent generation of PMGs can also be adapted to conventional weapons and carry nuclear warheads. With the MIRVs and the PMGs, reciprocal control by satellites is no easy matter. Satellites at the present stage of technology in this area, cannot detect whether there is one or several nuclear warheads. The only solution is local inspection, which seems to be something not yet accepted. The problem of supervision, then, is a major obstacle to the SALT negotiations.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

Finally, arms control is made particularly complicated by the sale of nuclear power plants, sold with reprocessing factories. What technical measures can be taken to prevent States that acquire these nuclear power plants from using them to produce atomic explosives? It is a very good question. The salesmen of nuclear power plants should give serious and conscientious consideration to this matter, because commercial competition for the major markets should not sacrifice the safety of mankind.

The subject of disarmament has long been dominated by the lack of precise definition of the concept of disarmament. Perhaps this explains why the peoples of the world have always failed to reach agreement on disarmament. The term "disarmament" is used, in fact, in the sense of a limitation on weapons, which might very well mean an increase in the case of States which feel that the present level of their arms does not meet the minimum requirements of their security; the term is also used as meaning a reduction of weapons; again, the term is used as meaning the elimination of weapons, a connotation that leads to the thesis of complete disarmament. That is the connotation given to the term by my delegation. These many definitions can only lead to difficulties and endless discussions. The irony of fate is that the five members of the Security Council -- the body which has the primary responsibility for peace in the world, according to the Charter -- are the very ones who are responsible for the unbridled armed race. Everyone is aware of the fact that they are the States who have the nuclear arsenals. They are the ones who sell guns, who, for reasons of ideology or hegemony, for gross material reasons, have made the solution to the problem of disarmament impossible. There can be no genuine and lasting progress in this area until the five permanent members of the Security Council begin to trust one another and undertake honest political commitments.

The approach to solving the problem of disarmament adopted by our Organization has so far yielded only meagre results. As was stated by the Foreign Minister and the Minister for Co-operation of my country, and I quote:

"At a time when the threat of hunger weighs on millions of individuals, massive expenditures are devoted to destructive efforts; the incredible indifference of the gun merchants, the complacency of those who sell and buy, at a time when the provision of food in those countries that are suffering hunger poses such anguishing problems fills us with consternation."

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

Since the end of the Second World War, the total of military expenses has reached \$6 billion, that is more than five times the gross national product of all the developing countries together. An F-16 fighter plane, which is rated as an inexpensive plane, costs about eight times more than the \$83 million needed by the World Health Organization to eliminate smallpox in the world. According to the American Agency for Arms Control and Disarmament, mankind last year spent \$285 billion for strictly military purposes -- a new and sad record which will be surpassed in the years to come. While this senseless arms race is abnormal and abominable in many respects, it is all the more so having regard to the billion human beings in the world whose minimum living income is less than \$200 a year.

In the meantime, great and small States spend incredible sums in the name of hegemony, security, in the name of détente, in other words for a balance of power or for peace imposed by force, while no industrial country or country rich in natural resources, except Sweden, the Netherlands and Norway, has been able to reach the target of .7 per cent of the gross national product set by the United Nations for assistance to poorer countries. The implementation of the recommendation of the General Assembly adopted on the initiative of the Soviet Union to reduce by 10 per cent the military budgets of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and to utilize part of the resources thus released for the purposes of assistance to under-developed countries, has encountered the same difficulties, although the funds thus released could very well have increased resources to satisfy in part the socio-economic needs of the developing countries in the areas of education, health and housing.

(Mr. N'Dong, Gabon)

The continuation of the arms race, which has already acquired enormous and disturbing proportions, is becoming one of the main causes of the instability, tension and threat to international peace and security in the world. So, new action is required, and further efforts must be made to put a stop to that race and to reach agreement with no delay on a general, complete and controlled disarmament.

The meagre results which have thus far been achieved by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, stress the urgency of and the need for a universal gathering. Disarmament is too serious a question, too important a matter, to be considered only by a few Powers. The present bodies dealing with disarmament are very limited bodies and do not encompass all the major Powers.

That is why the Government of Gabon, like the Governments of all non-aligned countries, firmly upholds the principle of the convening of a conference without prior conditions of a special session of the General Assembly, devoted solely to the problem of disarmament. That conference must not be reduced to a mere recital of pious intentions. It must advocate the kind of action which would bring about the destruction of all nuclear devices without any exceptions, a ban on all nuclear tests, and strict control by the United Nations.

For my delegation, all States, whichever they may be, possessing the arms covered by our agenda must disarm. But in order to disarm, as my delegation has already stated in this Committee, there must be effective control by the United Nations, with majority participation by the non-aligned countries. An inventory must be drawn up of all those weapons which have accumulated since 1946, then they must be systematically destroyed together with all other existing arms and a ban must be placed on the production of new weapons. And finally, nuclear power centres and laboratories at the present time used to produce those weapons must be supervised in such a way as to ensure that they operate for technological development purposes. It is only when we shall have shown that weapons are no longer useful and when no nation need any longer fear its neighbour or any threat to its existence, that the commission of control will be able to decree the final cessation of all those tests which we condemn, since there will be no further justification for them. For the peoples of the world will be able to live in peace only if they have a deep sense of security knowing that no threat will come to disturb their peace. That is not the case at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Gabon for his kind words addressed to me personally and to all the officers of the Committee.

Mr. FARHANG (Afghanistan): In the view of my delegation, the most important question facing mankind today is the question of disarmament. There are, of course, many problems that are threatening the peace and security of our world. There are hot-beds of tensions and conflicts that might erupt into wars, but the real danger lies in the fact that we have not been able to achieve disarmament and thus prevent tensions and conflicts from bursting into wars if not resolved in accordance with the right or the dictate of one or the other party. It is the considered view of my delegation that only by a general and complete disarmament, in particular, nuclear disarmament, under strict and effective international control, could we eliminate the dangers that are threatening peace and security in the different parts of our globe.

My Government is firmly and sincerely committed to the cause of disarmament. We are conscious of the role that small countries could play in bringing about a general and complete disarmament; we are determined to play our part, convinced that it will have a positive effect. But we have no doubt about the very important responsibility that major Powers, especially nuclear Powers have in the failure or success of all bilateral or multilateral negotiations currently under way in the field of disarmament or arms limitation. My delegation believes that the United Nations role and influence in the negotiation and reaching of solutions of disarmament issues should be strengthened. We have studied therefore, with great attention, the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (A/31/27) and I should like to express here my delegation's views on some of the subject-matters dealt with in the report of the Committee on Disarmament.

Disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, is the most important problem confronting the international community. The political declaration of the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries has expressed its conviction that universal peace and security can be assured only by general and complete disarmament, and in particular, nuclear disarmament. My delegation believes that a cessation of nuclear arms race is the first indispensable step towards a nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Farhang, Afghanistan)

Partial and limited agreements reached in the field of nuclear disarmament are rendered meaningless by the accelerated and frightening development of new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. In our view, nuclear-weapon countries have the undeniable responsibility of reaching agreements on the prohibition of developing and producing new types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, and the expansion of the existing stocks. This bold action would put an end to the qualitative, as well as to the quantitative, nuclear arms race.

A comprehensive nuclear test ban agreement could be the first step in this direction. Although significant progress has been made in this field with the partial test ban treaty of 1973, but an agreement on banning underground nuclear tests for military purposes is indispensable for reaching agreements to stop the nuclear arms race. We welcome the signing of the treaty between the United States and the USSR on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and the threshold test ban treaty; but we believe that the agreed threshold clause diminishes its effectiveness and usefulness. The General Assembly, in its resolution 3466 (XXX) has asked the Committee on Disarmament to give highest priority to the conclusion of a test ban treaty. Unfortunately, the Committee on Disarmament this year has not been able to make significant progress in this field.

We have taken note of the establishment of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to consider international co-operation measures to detect and identify seismic events by the Committee on Disarmament. We hope that this Ad Hoc Group will be able to find a solution to the important and sensitive question of verification which hopefully might pave the way for reaching an agreement on the other aspects of a test ban treaty. My delegation believes that, in this field, as in the other fields of disarmament, countries, especially the major Powers, ought to demonstrate their political will to reach an agreement and this, in our view, is the most important factor assuring speedy progress on the question of nuclear disarmament.

We share, at the same time, views expressed in the CCD to the effect that any agreement on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty should not hamper the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and that all countries, in particular, developing countries, should have free access to benefits deriving from peaceful nuclear explosions. In the absence of such a guarantee, only a few countries would have the monopoly of fully enjoying such benefits, as today, only a number of countries have the monopoly of possessing nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Farhang, Afghanistan)

Taking into account the fact that progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and even the limitation of the nuclear arms race is disappointingly slow, we believe that the nuclear weapon countries have the responsibility to undertake never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon countries. A great number of countries, mostly developing countries, have adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and thus have renounced the nuclear option in their right of self-defence. By depriving themselves of this option through an international treaty, these countries have the right to ask the nuclear-weapon countries to undertake, in an equally binding international treaty, never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon countries.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world, a concept to which Afghanistan fully adheres, should be considered in the same context. By proposing the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in their part of the world, non-nuclear-weapon countries are actually seeking the prevention of a nuclear arms race among themselves and, therefore, the nuclear-weapon countries have the obligation of preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons in these areas by accepting and co-operating in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

My delegation believes that the question of reaching an agreement on the effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons is the most important problem before the Committee on Disarmament in the field of non-nuclear disarmament. My delegation has noted with disappointment that no significant progress has yet been achieved by the Committee on Disarmament on this question. We have noted also that again the two most critical obstacles in this field are the problems of identification and verification. The only action taken by the Committee has been to request the Secretariat to prepare a compilation of appropriate material from the working papers and statements submitted to it by the different delegations. The fifth summit conference of the Non-Aligned Countries has asked for the immediate prohibition of the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We are urging the Committee on Disarmament to take resolute and firm action in this field and we call upon all those countries which are producing and stockpiling these weapons, in particular, the major Powers, to take bold steps by demonstrating their political readiness to reach an agreement in this field.

(Mr. Farhang, Afghanistan)

My delegation was a sponsor of resolution 3479 (XXX) of the General Assembly last year which had asked the Committee on Disarmament to work out the text of an agreement on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. We hope that the Committee on Disarmament will be able to overcome the difficulties facing it on this matter and will be able to start its work on this agreement as soon as possible.

My delegation believes that the question of the reduction of military budgets and the limitation of conventional arms and arms trade are of great importance and deserve careful examination. I would like to recall here that the fifth summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo stated in its final documents that "the arms race is inconsistent with efforts aimed at achieving the New International Economic Order in view of the urgent need to divert the resources utilized for the acceleration of the arms race towards socio-economic development, particularly of the developing countries".

(A/31/197, p. 37).

My delegation believes that an agreement on the significant reduction of military budgets would enable developed countries, especially major Powers, to alleviate the heavy tax burdens of their taxpayers on the one hand, and to release additional important financial resources for assisting developing countries in their efforts for sustained and substantial development on the other. Such a reduction would make it possible for the developing countries to utilize a much greater part of their internal resources and manpower for their socio-economic development. Likewise, a reduction in the stockpiling of conventional weapons, especially offensive conventional weapons, by the developing countries would eliminate the danger of an arms race among the countries of different regions and, a rational non-political non-discriminatory limitation by arms-producing countries of their arms trade could play an important role in this field.

The deliberation of the Committee on Disarmament on the question of the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade indicates that the performance of the major Powers in the field of disarmament fell far short of the goals and the objectives of the Decade. Not only was there no significant progress achieved in

(Mr. Farhang, Afghanistan)

this field during the first half of the Decade, but more disturbing and frightening is the advancement and expansion that has occurred in the development and production of arms, particularly nuclear arms. The real obstacle in achieving the objectives of the Decade is not so much the inadequacy of programmes and methods of work in the fora where disarmament is discussed, but rather a lack of trust and confidence among the major Powers.

My delegation believes that the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, with the aim of reviewing the problem of disarmament and promoting the elaboration of a programme of priorities and measures in this field, as requested by the fifth summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, would not only enable us to prepare the desired programmes of priorities, but would also afford us the opportunity to demonstrate our good will and firm political determination to achieve disarmament in the context of an agreed programme of priorities. It is with this objective in mind that my delegation has co-sponsored the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/31/L.7. We share the view that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, followed by a world disarmament conference, would have the additional merit of awakening world public opinion on the awesome development and expansion of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, and the absolute necessity of resolute and effective measures in the field of disarmament.

My delegation has studied with due attention the section of the report of the Committee on Disarmament dealing with the question of a convention to prohibit environmental warfare. My delegation was a co-sponsor of resolution 3264 (XXX) adopted by the General Assembly on this question. Likewise, we have carefully examined the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques submitted by the Committee to the General Assembly in its report on this subject. It is the clear understanding of my delegation that the terms "environmental modification techniques" and "other hostile use" in articles I and II, refer only to military situations and to situations with military objectives. It is also our clear understanding that, in accordance with article III of the draft convention, States have the right to use environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes in the context of their right of permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, and if other States believe that these actions result in adverse effects on them, no provision in this convention or its annexes would give them, under any circumstance, the right to request the application of the convention.

(Mr. Farhang, Afghanistan)

My delegation appreciates the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean reflected in its report (A/31/29). We have repeatedly stated that we support the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. We believe that the Ad Hoc Committee and the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean should continue their work and consultations on this subject. We believe, also, that all States invited to take part in these works and consultations should do so with the aim of furthering the cause of peace and security in this part of the world.

This Organization has been engaged in the discussion of disarmament questions for more than a generation. When we compare our deeds with our words during these long years, and take cognizance of the mammoth complexities of the problems related to disarmament, we might reach the conclusion that, by doing so little for so long in this field, we have perhaps missed the opportunity to realize man's ideal of building a world free of arms and free of wars. This sense of failure, coupled with the indestructable will of man for survival, might generate in us a new drive towards attaining our cherished but still elusive goal.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The position of the Byelorussian SSR on questions of disarmament has been repeatedly set forth at General Assembly sessions and in replies to inquiries from the United Nations Secretariat. This position is well known and is based on our desire to call a halt to the arms race which has been imposed upon mankind by imperialist forces and monopolistic circles and which is so dangerous for peace.

We are in favour, and always have been in favour, of reducing existing stockpiles of arms and we are in favour of disarmament. This position -- like the position of all the States of the socialist community and other peace-loving countries -- is totally in keeping with the goal formulated in the United Nations Charter, that of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and also with the persistent demand of the peoples of the world to eliminate the material basis for waging war and to use all that has been created by peoples' labour exclusively for constructive purposes, for the sake of interrupted progress on the part of all peoples towards economic and social development.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

The arms race, the designs of aggressive forces are being more and more roundly condemned and resisted by the peoples of the world, and this is only right. After all, who except die-hard militarists and all those who grow fat on the manufacture of the weapons of death and destruction can take any satisfaction from the fact that about \$300 billion, which is created by the labour of peoples goes up in smoke in the furnace of the military machine? Surely, it is absurd to have a situation where it costs 60 times more to teach a soldier the ABCs of destruction than to educate a child for creative endeavour.

Peace-loving people cannot feel enthusiasm at the fact that one contemporary nuclear warhead contains more explosive and destructive energy than all the explosives used in the Second World War. Surely it is clear what a new war would lead to in a nuclear age, when all the wars which have afflicted mankind hitherto have taken more human lives than exist in the world today.

So, there is one, and only one, irresistible conclusion to draw. The time has come to achieve agreement on radical measures of disarmament -- up to and including complete and general disarmament -- and, if, for the time being, because of the position of certain Powers we cannot do it all at once, then at least it is of vital importance to make step by step progress towards this goal.

Now, as the Memorandum of the Soviet Union on questions of ending the arms race and disarmament points out, "what is most important is to move on from discussions on ending the arms race to practical action" (A/31/232, p. 5). This document of the Soviet Union, following the noble ideals of the foreign policy programme of the twenty-fifth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, proposes for the purpose of concerted action by States, a realistic programme of joint action in the major areas of disarmament.

It is our firm conviction that in the current historical situation of détente and the intensification of détente and a general desire to see a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations concluded -- something which was approved the other day by a decision of the General Assembly -- there are now favourable conditions for achieving real results in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR welcomes the treaties and agreements which have been achieved on a bilateral basis between the USSR and the United States on the prevention of nuclear war, the limitation of ballistic missile defence systems and strategic offensive armaments, the limitation of underground nuclear tests and underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, and also the agreement between the USSR and France on warning in the case of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. We should like to express the hope that we shall see the early conclusion of talks between the USSR and the United States with regard to a new agreement on the limitation and reduction of strategic armaments on the basis of the Vladivostok agreement.

There are in existence quite a number of multilateral treaties and conventions concluded within the framework of the United Nations which limit the arms race in a number of areas. These treaties must be strengthened and their scope broadened, and we must strive for universal participation in them by all States, including those nuclear States which have not yet acceded to them.

However, along with the consolidation and development of what has already been achieved in this field, we must move forward and take new decisions and attempt to see that they are implemented. Therefore, any attempt to weaken existing conventions, agreements and treaties, or any renunciation of previously agreed principles and positions, is quite inadmissible. Nor can we permit the creation of artificial obstacles to new agreements.

Unfortunately, not all States Members of the United Nations are acting in accordance with the United Nations Charter, in order to solve the problem of disarmament. One nuclear Power is generally against any measures of disarmament and is waging a campaign of unbridled slander against the policy of those States which favour disarmament. It is posing as a champion of the non-aligned countries and yet is blocking their collective efforts in the field of disarmament. Not all nuclear Powers are parties to existing agreements on limitation of the arms race. There are even delegations which, instead, are intensifying the fight against the opponents of disarmament, or playing a passive role and thus weakening the unity of the anti-imperialist front of the supporters of disarmament.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Certain delegations are only prepared to discuss procedural and organizational matters, without realizing that in today's circumstances it is extremely important to create an international climate where there would be no place for manoeuvres on the part of the opponents of disarmament and where every State would have to adopt a policy decision in favour of disarmament.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Without losing sight of the goal of general and complete disarmament, the Byelorussian delegation believes that at this stage there are real opportunities to make additional efforts in the following directions.

We must ultimately strive for the total elimination of all types of nuclear weapons, strategic and tactical, offensive and defensive, and the means of delivering these weapons. Of course, nuclear disarmament is possible only with the participation of all nuclear Powers and also of all interested non-nuclear Powers. In this regard, we regard as unfounded the appeals of individual delegations on matters of nuclear disarmament which are directed only at some nuclear Powers, since this approach gives a kind of justification to the stockpiling and perfecting by other nuclear Powers of their nuclear weapons.

Progress towards the total prohibition of nuclear weapons would be made considerably easier as a result of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons testing, the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime of nuclear weapons and the elimination of the possibility of turning international co-operation in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy into a source for the production of nuclear weapons for those who do not yet possess them.

In so far as concerns the prohibition of nuclear weapons testing, we should, in our view, strive for the implementation of the decision of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly on talks for the purpose of concluding a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons testing. In other words, we cannot go back on an earlier decision on the need for the participation in such talks of all nuclear Powers, which, in the interval between the two sessions of the General Assembly, was also called for by a group of 25 non-nuclear countries which expressed their readiness to hold such talks. We also hope that representatives of Western countries which do not possess nuclear weapons will join the group of non-nuclear countries which have expressed the wish to participate in this work.

Further momentum for progress towards complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons testing is provided in the USSR Memorandum on disarmament questions which takes into account the position of Western countries on matters of control over the prohibition of nuclear weapons testing.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

The conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons would be a decisive measure for the halting of the nuclear arms race and would fundamentally restrict the practical opportunities for any further perfecting of such weapons and would facilitate further progress towards the goal of the prohibition of nuclear weapons as a whole.

Last year, in connexion with the consideration of the Soviet proposal on the prohibition of the creation of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, the question arose of what should fall under this prohibition. An answer to this is now contained in the Memorandum of the USSR which I have mentioned. Both this and the work of the experts from various countries at meetings of the Committee on Disarmament when it considered this proposal have given us every ground for believing that talks on this subject will enjoy the highest priority.

The Byelorussian SSR, as a sponsor of the draft convention submitted by the Socialist States in 1972, favours the prohibition and destruction of all chemical means of warfare as has already been done with regard to bacteriological (biological) and toxic weapons.

In the last few years, a number of countries have stated that we must begin by eliminating the most dangerous deadly forms of chemical weapons. In the light of the favourable attitude of practically all countries to such an approach, and the readiness expressed in the USSR memorandum to discuss as an additional control measure methods of verifying the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons to be removed from the arsenals of States, there should be no further delay in efforts to eliminate chemical weapons. The trust that this would engender if it were carried out successfully would undeniably develop into agreement for the total elimination from the arsenals of States of all means of waging chemical warfare.

Along with measures for the banning and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction and the prevention of the development of any new systems of such weapons, steps should be taken to limit and reduce the armed forces of States and conventional armaments, the destructive force of which is constantly increasing.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Ceilings should be established for the strength of armed forces of major States; foreign military bases on the territory of others should be eliminated; foreign troops should be withdrawn from territories; peace zones and nuclear-free-zones should be created without any loopholes such as exist to a certain extent in the Treaty of Tlatelolco. There should also be a halt of the arms race in certain regions, particularly in the Middle East, within the framework of a comprehensive political settlement in that area. The production of certain types of weapons should be given up and there should be mutual elimination of military and political groupings of States which are confronting each other, or, at least to start with, there should be a disbandment of their military organizations, reduction of military budgets and so on.

On all these matters the Soviet Government has tabled appropriate and relevant proposals, including the proposal for complete and general disarmament. These proposals still stand and could be the subject of talks given the goodwill of other States.

Of all these questions, the one we should like to examine in somewhat greater detail is the question of reducing military budgets. As we know, in 1973 a resolution was adopted providing for a reduction by 10 per cent of the military budgets of permanent members of the Security Council and other militarily and economically powerful States and also the allocation of part of the funds so saved for assistance to developing countries. Since that time three years have gone by. In the course of that time the military expenditures in the world have not gone down but have actually gone up.

The European members of NATO for the period 1971-1975 have doubled their military expenditures. The United States has seen its military budget reach the astronomical sum of \$113 billion.

By way of justification, Western countries have had recourse to false allegations about the so-called "Soviet threat". At the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the General-Secretary of the Central Committee, Comrade Brezhnev stated:

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"In actual fact of course, there is no Soviet threat, either to the West or to the East. The whole thing is a monstrous tissue of lies. The Soviet Union has no intention of attacking anyone. The Soviet Union has no need of war. The Soviet Union is not increasing its military budget, and is not reducing, but constantly increasing, its appropriations for raising the living standards of the people."

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

The recent plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the session of the Supreme Soviet whole-heartedly endorsed that statement.

The military expenditures of the USSR for 1970-1973 remained constant, at a level of 17.9 billion rubles. In subsequent years, these expenditures were even reduced, and now amount to only 7.2 per cent of the total budget of the USSR. All the rest is spent on the needs of the development of industry, agriculture, other branches of the economy and on improving the living standards of the Soviet people.

In the three years which have elapsed since the adoption by the United Nations of the resolution on the reduction of military expenditures, the developing countries, because of the failure to comply with this resolution, have been deprived of an opportunity of obtaining some \$5 billion or \$6 billion in additional assistance. At the same time many of them have themselves been forced to increase their military expenditures in order to protect their independence, which is threatened by colonislists and racists who have strengthened their military potential with the help of imperialist and other reactionary forces.

Now why is this happening? The answer is simple: Member States of the United Nations, instead of categorically calling for the implementation of the decision which has been adopted on the reduction of military budgets, have fallen in with the view of the representative of Mexico, as a result of which the attention of the United Nations has been diverted to conducting various investigations, which have not yielded anything and divert us from the main issue.

We mention this today because at this session, too, similar attempts are being made, with similar consequences.

The Committee on Disarmament has submitted for our approval an agreed draft convention on the prohibition of military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. It would appear that this draft convention should be actively supported by those who constantly criticize the Committee for failing to achieve practical results in its work, by those who call for harmonization of the positions of the great Powers, by those who are always saying that if, because of divergencies in the positions we cannot come to major agreements, we should at least do what we can. But no, some of them express distrust of an organ in which they themselves participate, claiming that what is called meticulously accurate use of

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environmental modification techniques is from a technical standpoint extremely complex, and would be made much harder within the proposed scope of the prohibition of such activity. They deliberately ignore the fact that the draft provides for a procedure amending the convention and that in five years, at the conference of States parties, consideration will also be given to the question of the effectiveness of the provisions contained in article 1, paragraph 1, of the convention.

The Byelorussian delegation calls upon the delegation of Mexico and other delegations which have not taken the stand of "all or nothing" not to press their draft resolution to a vote.

In the light of all the factors, this draft convention, after its approval, signing and entry into force, could become an important measure for the prevention of using the natural environment and climate for military purposes.

Our delegation wishes the Byelorussian SSR to be included as a co-sponsor of the draft resolution which proposed the approval and opening for signature and ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Other Hostile Use of Environment Modification Techniques.

In conclusion, permit me to say something about the need for convening a world disarmament conference. We are in favour of such a conference, with the participation of all States, for the purpose of giving profound and comprehensive consideration to the question of disarmament and the adoption of effective decisions.

Everyone knows who is creating difficulties in connexion with the implementation of this proposal. The search is continuing for ways of overcoming these difficulties, which have arisen because of the position of the opponents of disarmament. In this regard, the idea of convening a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament deserves attention. The Byelorussian delegation agrees with this approach. The session should be a special session in terms of its procedure and of the duration of its work, so as to ensure a breakthrough in a solution to the problem of disarmament.

Of course, the holding of a special session does not replace the question of a world disarmament conference. It should, in fact, facilitate the convening and successful conclusion of such a conference. In our view, this approach should be reflected in the decisions of the Assembly on disarmament, and this is particularly necessary because we have already heard objections even to holding a special session

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of the General Assembly on disarmament from the very same delegation which opposes the convening of a world disarmament conference.

The present discussion on disarmament demonstrates that the Soviet Union and other States of the socialist community are and have been consistently in the vanguard of the struggle for international peace and security and for a radical solution to the problem of disarmament. The memorandum tabled by the Soviet Union on questions of halting the arms race and disarmament is a striking example of this.

We are convinced that the achievement of lasting peace and the solution to the problem of disarmament is not a pious hope but a genuinely realistic goal, and we believe that other States too will make their contribution, so that we can move from discussion to practical action to strengthen peace on earth and bring about disarmament. The peoples of the world call upon us to do this, as does the World Peace Council and the World Conference for Halting the Arms Race and for Disarmament, held in September this year in Helsinki, the results of which were mentioned at the beginning of this meeting.

Our attitude to the draft resolutions will be determined by the extent to which they are in accordance with these goals and purposes and the obligations which have been assumed by States under the United Nations Charter, and to the extent to which they are in keeping with existing international agreements and facilitate not only the implementation of earlier constructive decisions of the United Nations, but also progress towards the strengthening of peace and the implementation of practical measures in the sphere of disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Russian): The Committee takes note of the fact that the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR wishes to become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1.

Mr. BOATEN (Ghana): Humanity is today living in a dangerous era in which the absence of global armed conflict is tending to be regarded as peace. The development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the massive transfer and acquisition of conventional military hardware have transformed our world into a vast arsenal of destructive machinery; and the risk of a thermonuclear holocaust hangs over us like the sword of Damocles. With the help of science and technology -- amazing attributes of his ingenuity -- man has been able to invade the silence of space and he is now unravelling the mysteries of nature; but within his own environment, mankind has become a prisoner of his own ingenuity.

It is against this background, that we are meeting once again to discuss how best man can liberate himself from the odious shackles in which he is enmeshed. It is also for the same reason that disarmament and its related subjects have, since the inception of our Organization, become a central theme of our deliberations.

For over 25 years the super-Powers have, along with countries within their respective blocs and alliances, discussed ways and means of controlling reducing and even eliminating the weapons of war and forces required to operate them. Although these discussions have resulted in a number of important agreements, they have not yet led to the imposition of safe limits on the size, composition or equipment of military forces. Efforts towards that end continue to be frustrated by the ambivalent attitude of the major Powers towards disarmament measures, particularly in the areas of horizontal and vertical non-proliferation.

The prohibition of weapons of mass destruction was given a major boost in March 1970, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came into force. At that time it was hailed as an important arms control measure, but today its provisions lie almost in ruins. The safeguard measures under the NPT have been gravely undermined by vast commercial interests which have stepped up their production of nuclear reactors and are now undercutting themselves in the sale of their products. Increases in the price of oil and provisions in the Treaty which permit nuclear activities for peaceful purposes without effective international control have been exploited by some countries to acquire nuclear reactors under the pretext of generating electric power. The prospect is that the large-scale production of plutonium as a by-product of electric power will soon be a new element which could render regional armed conflicts more dangerous to global peace

(Mr. Boatén, Ghana)

and security than they are now. In July this year, the President of the United States gave a warning, when issuing the annual report of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency: he said that by 1985 there would probably be nearly 40 countries whose reactors could produce enough plutonium to make bombs, in addition to the six existing members of the "nuclear club". About 25 of the 40 prospective nuclear Powers have ratified the NPT, thus binding themselves not to acquire the bomb and agreeing to let all their nuclear installations be inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency. But there are at least a dozen countries, including apartheid South Africa, that have not ratified the Treaty and therefore retain the option to go nuclear.

In the view of my delegation, this is a most dangerous development, particularly the prospect of South Africa acquiring a nuclear capability, which requires the urgent attention of the international community. Those of us who come from Africa sincerely believe that the ultimate aim of South Africa in acquiring nuclear reactors is to manufacture the bomb. With the acquisition of the bomb, the apartheid régime of South Africa hopes that it would be able to destroy the independence of African countries, thus giving itself the freedom to enslave and maintain the servitude of millions of Africans by its continued pursuit of the pernicious policy of apartheid. And if anyone is in doubt about South Africa's aggressive intentions, let its bare-faced invasion of the People's Republic of Angola and recent air attacks on the Republic of Zambia be an eye-opener.

Another related issue is the delivery of sophisticated conventional weapons to, and arms build-up in, South Africa. Anxious to protect their vast investment in South Africa, the Western Powers are helping the apartheid régime to build up a formidable military machine. In March this year, South Africa's Minister of Defence announced a \$1.8 billion defence budget, an increase of \$520 million, or 40 per cent, over the 1975 appropriations and almost double those of 1974. It is the biggest defence budget in South Africa's history since the Second World War. Much of the defence outlay is to be spent on the local armament industry established with the co-operation of Western countries. South Africa is today capable of producing military aircraft, armoured cars and virtually all types of small arms required by her forces. South African-made rockets include Atlas air-to-air homing rockets and Crotale-Cactus all-weather missiles produced under licence

(Mr. Boateng, Ghana)

granted by two Western countries. Last year, arms deliveries to South Africa by only three of her numerous Western allies were estimated at \$106.6 million. I leave this Committee to guess the total value of arms exported to South Africa by the entire Western world for that period. The only exception was Britain, and here I would like to pay tribute to the singleness of mind and purpose of the British Labour Government.

We express this appreciation in recognition of the fact that any Government without conscience, faced with economic problems of the magnitude of those plaguing Britain today, would have wasted no time in exploiting the lucrative arms traffic to improve the country's balance-of-payments position and its economy as a whole. This is why we consider the British action as a mark of responsible stewardship.

I have referred to arms deliveries to South Africa because my delegation believes that, if the trend continues, it will give rise to an arms race in a region of the world which already has a highly explosive potential. This is why my delegation believes that it should be the responsibility of all States Members of the United Nations, particularly the Western Powers, to take immediate steps to arrest the situation. To this end, we propose:

(a) rigid enforcement by all States of the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council against South Africa in 1963;

(b) immediate suspension of all nuclear arrangements contracted with South Africa, pending the lessening of tension in South Africa.

(Mr. Boateng, Ghana)

What I have said about the arms build-up in southern Africa is only part of the whole story. The situation in the Middle East and Asia is even worse. In his statement to this Committee on Tuesday, 2 November 1976, Lord Goronwy-Roberts, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said:

"The total value of global arms transfers, in constant 1973 dollar terms, increased by 60 per cent between 1965 and 1974. In that period, the level of arms imports by developed countries remained relatively constant at about \$2 billion each year. By contrast, arms imports by developing countries doubled to reach over \$6 billion. The rapid surge in arms deliveries to South-East Asia and the Middle East has accounted for virtually the whole of this increase."

This situation can hardly be regarded as a demonstration of a sincere desire to work for peace and security in the Middle East.

Horizontal proliferation of nuclear energy raises serious questions about the reliability of the IAEA safeguards system. How can we satisfy a legitimate desire to utilize nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and, at the same time, prevent its diversion into manufacture of nuclear weapons? The failure of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference last year to achieve positive results in the direction of establishing a non-proliferation régime justifies the apprehensions of many countries regarding the security guarantees of the NPT. Nuclear questions have become matters of life and death, and in such situations, it would be naïve to expect Governments with responsibility for lives of millions of people to place their faith in paper promises. A major defect in the IAEA safeguards system, as it operates today, is its heavy dependence on the goodwill of contracting parties to agreements. Experience shows that declared goodwill is not always a reliable mechanism in the conduct of international relations. Even within the comparatively short span of the life of our Organization, we have seen international commitments made and broken or repudiated at the convenience of Member States. For this reason, my delegation would urge this Committee to have a closer look at the draft resolutions and protocols proposed by the non-aligned countries at the Review Conference. We believe that the proposals truly represent a compromise formula on such burning issues as cessation of nuclear testing, limitation on strategic arms and security guarantees.

(Mr. Boaten, Ghana)

Another issue of great concern to my delegation relates to peaceful nuclear explosions (PNE). Although we welcome the initiative of the United States and the Soviet Union in concluding the PNE treaty of 28 May as a step in the right direction, the fact that the agreement limits a single explosion to 150 kilotons and the total yield of a group series to one and a half megatons does not persuade us to believe that explosions of that magnitude would be conducted only for peaceful uses. Moreover, we are not convinced that the benefits to be derived from such explosions would be greater than those produced by conventional explosive devices of high yield. This added to considerations of health hazards, ecological damage, and the high risk of inducing tidal waves and earthquakes, give us cause to doubt the urgency for nuclear explosions for so-called peaceful purposes. It is for this reason that my delegation would like to urge both the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to examine thoroughly the whole issue of PNE. We urge this, because the possibility of covering explosions for nuclear weapon development by characterizing them as peaceful is real. If PNEs should be found beneficial to mankind, it would be necessary to develop an international system of control to ensure that they are not used for military purposes.

I now wish to turn to the other side of the coin, namely, vertical proliferation of nuclear arms. It is generally acknowledged that further increases in the nuclear arsenals of the super-Powers could have little or no effect on the military balance. By the end of the Disarmament Decade, if not before, the super-Powers will have developed powerful strategic strike forces with greatly enhanced second strike force. A surprise nuclear attack therefore has ceased to have the advantage that we presumed in the past it could have. This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. This leads my delegation to the conclusion that any future development of nuclear weaponry would be a development towards the superfluous. Given this situation, my delegation believes that a point has been reached when it has become possible for the two main nuclear Powers to agree on measures to prevent further development of nuclear weaponry. We consider this as an important first step in our effort towards nuclear disarmament. We cannot talk of nuclear disarmament while we pursue a policy of increasing our nuclear strike force in qualitative as well as quantitative terms.

(Mr. Boateng, Ghana)

The elimination of causes and means of war has, admittedly, been one of the major preoccupations of the super-Powers in their countless negotiations, and, although some measure of success has been achieved, their over-all performance still falls far short of the expectations of the international community and what the urgency of the situation demands. The euphoria generated by the success of SALT I has now been undermined by the stalemate in SALT II. Virtually every proposal made by one side or the other at the negotiating table has aroused the suspicion of the other side and has led to a hardening of positions. My delegation believes that, with this situation, the time has come when our Organization must seize the initiative to break the deadlock. In this regard, my delegation is happy to be one of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/31/L.7 recommending that a special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament and related questions, be convened not later than June 1978. We believe that such a session would stimulate fresh ideas and provide the needed impetus for progress in subsequent disarmament negotiations at both bilateral and multilateral levels. It will also enhance the role of the United Nations and, even more important, emphasize the responsibility of the Organization to achieve general and complete disarmament. We, however, believe that for the special session to achieve maximum success, participation in its proceedings should not be limited to Members of this Organization. All non-governmental organizations and private institutions which have shown sustained interest in disarmament questions, and have invested resources in disarmament research programmes, should be invited to participate. It is our view that their contribution will enrich the substance and quality of our debate and give the final resolutions the stamp of global authority.

(Mr. Boateng, Ghana)

The question of reducing military budgets is, once more, under consideration by this Committee. It is one of the arms control measures which has immediate relevance to a major task of our time, namely, the establishment of a new economic order. When developing countries talk of disarmament and arms control, we do so not merely out of concern with the destructiveness and madness of the armament race; we also have in mind the vast economic possibilities which could have improved the living circumstances, not only of peoples in the so-called developing countries, but also of those who continue to live below the poverty line in the developed countries. Squalor, disease, poverty and illiteracy are, in our present world realities, not the monopoly of the so-called developing countries. In spite of these realities, we continue to apply some 6 per cent, or \$315 billion of the world's resources, to finance military expenditures. Of this sum, the United States and the Soviet Union account for 60 per cent, and more than 70 per cent is accounted for by the five permanent members of the Security Council. It is estimated that only one tenth of this colossal sum of money would be enough to raise the whole of the developing world to the level of self-sustaining economy.

Within the context of these wasteful expenditures, the condition of developing countries, the condemnation of a large segment of humanity to abject conditions of poverty, squalor and disease, becomes a regrettable tragedy of our time. We cannot talk about global interdependence when we demonstrate lack of concern for the poverty, disease, squalor and illiteracy existing in other parts of our globe; we cannot claim to act on behalf of the human society, when a part of the population within our own national boundaries goes to bed hungry, while we continue to apply a substantial proportion of our national resources to building machinery for human annihilation. Our generation is crying out for leadership; it stands in need of leadership which cannot be blinded by the narrow national interests that over the past half century have brought our world to sorrow. In the view of my delegation, the quality of civilization in our age should be assessed by our ability to harness the scientific and technological advance of the age for the improvement and well-being of the human community as a whole. Technological and scientific advances do not in themselves constitute civilization; they merely provide opportunities for a civilized life.

The CHAIRMAN: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to make the following announcements: Italy has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1; Congo and Madagascar have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.7/Rev.1; and Mongolia has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolutions in document A/C.1/31/L.9 and L.10.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.