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Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)
later: Mr. de COSTA LOBO (Portugal)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

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The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the first speaker I should like to announce that Czechoslovakia has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1.

Mr. RESHETNIAK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Although the head of our delegation has already congratulated you, Comrade Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee on your election, I cannot refrain from saying how pleased I am at seeing you, in particular, preside over the proceedings of the First Committee.

In present circumstances, when détente is a prevailing trend in the development of the world situation, and when its fruits are being directly enjoyed by all States and peoples, the task of further strengthening détente and converting it into a lasting and irreversible process requires in the first place the cessation of the arms race and disarmament. This task has now become of the utmost importance and urgency for all mankind.

The halting of the arms race and disarmament are now at the very centre of inter-State relations. The solution of these problems cannot be postponed, referred elsewhere or frozen, since any delay would constitute a genuine threat to international peace and security, and the longer the delay, the greater the threat.

The memorandum of the Soviet Union on halting the arms race and disarmament, which was welcomed by a majority of delegations at this session of the General Assembly, strikingly and cogently demonstrates the growing danger of the arms race and calls upon all States to multiply their efforts to curb the arms race. The memorandum of the Soviet Union gives effect to the programme for further struggle for peace and international co-operation and for freedom and independence of peoples, adopted at the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union -- a programme which formulated a number of proposals aimed at eliminating the threat of nuclear war and freeing mankind from the senseless waste of materials and intellectual resources on the arms race.

(Mr. Reshetniak, Ukrainian SSR)

The idea of disarmament is not a propaganda artifice nor a tactical step taken to win popularity. It has been engendered by the urgent needs of the social and historic development of mankind and in this sense reflects the objective laws of the contemporary era. Genuine conditions and powerful forces exist today which make it possible to raise the idea of disarmament to the level of the possible and the feasible, and to overcome the opposition of all open and covert opponents of disarmament.

However, the cessation of the arms race and measures for disarmament will not come about of themselves. We have to fight for them. After all, the forces of peace and progress are opposed by the militaristic circles of a number of States which have stepped up their efforts in recent years -- by all those who would like to drag the world back to the dark ages of the Cold War and have us teeter on the brink of nuclear catastrophe.

In recent years it has been possible to achieve some progress in limiting the frenzied arms race, including the nuclear arms race. This shows that, given goodwill and the wish to arrive at agreement, it is possible successfully to resolve extremely complex questions affecting the vital interests of the parties. A number of problems have now been resolved -- a circumstance difficult even to contemplate only a short time ago.

(Mr. Reshetniak, Ukrainian SSR)

The task of achieving international agreement on the banning of all nuclear-weapon tests without exception by all States is becoming ever more urgent. Unfortunately, all kinds of obstacles and hindrances are being raised in its path. The Soviet Union is the only nuclear Power that has shown genuine concern to arrive at agreement on such a prohibition and at the last session of the General Assembly it was the initiator of the conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Other nuclear Powers on various pretexts, particularly the technical difficulties of verifying the implementation of the prohibition of underground nuclear tests, have declined to engage in talks.

It is generally acknowledged that in order to identify nuclear explosions it is quite enough to use the national technical means available. However, in a display of goodwill and in order to accommodate the wishes of certain Western countries, the Soviet Union has expressed its readiness to hold talks in a search for mutually acceptable agreement with regard to the adoption on a voluntary basis of a decision with regard to clarification of the relevant circumstances on the spot in cases where there is any doubt about whether the prohibition of nuclear-weapon testing is being observed. Such an understanding would give all the participants sufficient assurance that the obligation under the treaty to halt nuclear-weapon tests is being complied with. This step once again demonstrates the sincerity and seriousness of the intentions of the Soviet Union to prohibit all nuclear-weapon tests. If we really want to put an end to the arms race and prevent the emergence of new generations of nuclear warheads which will be even more powerful and destructive, then we must as soon as possible achieve complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon testing.

Although for some years now the General Assembly has been giving high priority to the question of preparing an agreement on the prohibition of the development, manufacture and stockpiling of all forms of chemical weapons and their destruction, and in spite of the fact that an appropriate draft convention was presented by socialist countries as far back as 1972, so far very little has been done to bring about such an agreement. The main reason for this, in our view, is the reluctance of Western countries to agree to the conclusion of such a comprehensive agreement. In the circumstances, it would be a step forward to implement the Soviet-American initiative with regard to the conclusion of the convention on the most dangerous, deadly chemical means of warfare.

(Mr. Reshetniak, Ukrainian SSR)

As an argument against a comprehensive agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons, references are made to the difficulties of verification of compliance by States with obligations relating to the cessation of the manufacture of chemical weapons and the destruction of stockpiles of such weapons. Such a position has been artificially complicating the problem of verification and making it more difficult to achieve progress in talks on banning chemical weapons.

In order to achieve progress in the talks on prohibiting chemical weapons, the Soviet Union, which believes that national means and certain international procedures are quite sufficient for verification, has proposed in the memorandum I have mentioned to consider the possibility of using additional procedures for verification, and in particular to discuss methods of verifying the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons which are to be excluded from the arsenals of States. It is to be hoped that the new Soviet proposal will be properly assessed and understood by our Western partners in the talks. It seems to us that a situation has now arisen when there is no longer any basis for any delay in questions with regard to the prohibition of chemical weapons. Finally, the time has come to prohibit this frightful silent weapon of mass destruction.

It is a source of gratification that the Committee on Disarmament has completed preparations on the draft convention on the prohibition of military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. Thus, the initiative of the Soviet Union on the conclusion of a convention banning the use of meteorological and geophysical processes for military purposes has yielded positive results. A generally acceptable, carefully thought-out and scientific draft text, which is entirely in keeping with the present level of scientific and technological knowledge has been prepared and agreed upon in this area. This instrument of international law will serve as an effective instrument for preventing the use of natural forces for military purposes. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR whole-heartedly supports this draft and considers that its approval would be entirely in keeping with the interests of all States and peoples. The social experience of mankind teaches us that it is much easier to prevent the use of scientific knowledge and advances for the benefit of mankind than to stop machines for the creation of means of destruction which have already come into operation.

(Mr. Reshetniak, Ukrainian SSR)

Study of the trends in the development of arms in the present-day world clearly indicates the threat of the possible use for military purposes of the latest advances in various areas of science and technology. Obviously, the growing development of science and technology does not of itself necessarily lead to the creation of new, increasingly sophisticated and destructive arms. This depends on the political will of States which want to use the advances of science and technology for the creation of such weapons. Now similar political will needs to be evinced by all States, to ban the use of the advances of mankind's genius for the purposes of destruction. This is precisely the aim of the proposal made by the Soviet Union at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly to ban the development and production of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. The Committee on Disarmament has done a certain amount of work in this direction. The discussion of how to define the subject of the prohibition is now getting down to specifics. The Soviet Union has proposed describing as new types of weapons of mass destruction any types of weapons based on qualitatively new principles of operation in terms of use and the character of the impact or effect.

In so far as concerns new systems of weapons of mass destruction, the question here is the banning of the creation of such systems as well as the banning of the creation of new types of weapons and also types of weapons based on scientific principles that are already being applied but which new technical elements for warheads or means of delivery could endow with even more dangerous qualities. We believe that the discussion of the question of banning the development and production of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons at this session of the General Assembly will make it possible to speed up talks in this area and to give them high-priority attention.

In view of the magnitude of the tasks involved in the cessation of the arms race and disarmament, the need for bringing about radical progress in this direction, and the interest of all States of the world in solving these problems, they should be considered in a forum which meets a number of criteria. In our view the forum should be broadly representative, of a genuinely world character; it should have authority and competence, that is it should have the right to take effective and authoritative decisions; it should examine in depth, in a highly competent way the whole complex of disarmament problems, with due account taken of all factors.

(Mr. Reshetniak, Ukrainian SSR)

Such criteria would be met by convening a world disarmament conference. Within the framework of this conference, all States would have an opportunity on an equal footing to examine all facets of the problems of disarmament, and by their joint efforts to define the most effective, constructive and acceptable ways of resolving those problems.

Taking into account the resistance of two nuclear Powers to convening a world disarmament conference, many delegations have proposed the holding of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. In supporting this proposal, we believe that the special session should be an important interim stage on the way to convening a world disarmament conference. In our view, the primary task of the special session would be to prepare for the comprehensive and responsible consideration of the problems of disarmament in the framework of a world disarmament conference. For precisely this reason it is important that the special session should not be restricted in advance by strict and narrow guidelines in respect of either duration or procedure.

There are a number of other problems of disarmament whose solution would facilitate the strengthening of international peace and security and enhance the role and authority of the United Nations. Among these are the strengthening of the system for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, and the reduction of national budgets.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that the arms race should give way to the achievement of real measures of disarmament. The objective needs of peaceful development and the current level of political relations among States with different social and economic systems urgently require substantial progress in the matter of military confrontation. And it is the task of all those genuinely interested in eliminating the threat of war, and in creating a world without armaments and war, to fight for the attainment of this goal.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I thank the representative of the Ukrainian SSR for his kind words to me personally.

Mr. BALETA (Albania) (interpretation from French): This year, as in previous years, our Committee has to deal with a long list of items on disarmament. The delegation of the People's Republic of Albania would like to make known its views concerning some aspects of disarmament and thus add its modest efforts to those of others who are sincerely interested in objectively examining this question.

In the course of the discussion in this Committee a number of speakers have repeatedly and rightly stressed that, while much has been said on disarmament, little progress has been made so far. We believe that the basic condition for any proper and objective examination of the problem of disarmament is, first of all, to determine what sort of disarmament is under discussion, who is to disarm, who can really work for disarmament and who is making difficulties.

For objective reasons it is impossible to accept the argument that the countries that carry out aggressive policies can view disarmament problems from the same standpoint as the countries that are threatened by such policies. It is therefore unrealistic to think that all countries have the same interest in and can make a real contribution to the solution of these problems, which are complex in themselves, and which are further complicated by the various reactionary and imperialist régimes.

To judge the position of the different countries on this matter we must take account not of their words but of their acts. We have to base our analysis on facts and not on slogans that are bandied about in connexion with disarmament. And it is in this spirit, therefore, that we should consider the distance that separates the aspirations of the progressive and democratic peoples on the one hand from the plans and practices of the imperialists and various reactionaries on the other.

For many years the two imperialist countries which, as we know, are the protagonists in the frenzied arms race, which are the biggest manufacturers of all types of weapons, and which possess the biggest arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, indulge in speculation on disarmament and seek to impose their dangerous concepts on everyone else. Through their enormous propaganda machinery, the two imperialist super-Powers are trying to persuade the peoples of the world that they will spare no effort to resolve the disarmament problem; that they are prepared to do the impossible to put an end to the arms race, and to establish

(Mr. Baleta, Albania)

peace, détente and tranquillity throughout the world. In exchange, they ask for only a small thing: that the peoples approve their magic panaceas for disarmament and accept the notion that disarmament can be born under the shadow of the United States and the Soviet Union, amid the din of their weaponry. The American imperialists and the socio-imperialists of the Soviet Union hatch one plot after another, propose meetings and conferences, invent treaties and agreements, in order the more easily to lull the peoples' suspicions, and to play upon the concern that is created among sovereign States by the headlong arms race and the enormous quantities of weapons of mass destruction that the Soviet Union and the United States have accumulated. The two super-Powers even claim unabashedly that it is the other countries that make it impossible for them to take further steps towards disarmament, because -- according to them -- the other countries have still not been able to understand that weapons are dangerous and must be destroyed, because they do not realize that arms spell a threat to international peace and security, to the freedom and independence of sovereign States.

But the peoples always know the nature and the plans of the imperialist Powers better, and they reason along their own lines. To them it is obvious that world peace and security, freedom, independence and national sovereignty are not threatened by the arms possessed by peace-loving and freedom-loving nations for their own defence. On the contrary, it is the two super-Powers, and other imperialist Powers that are armed to teeth, that are ready to unleash war at any time.

The peoples are not lulled by the slogans of the two super-Powers regarding world peace and security and détente at a time when the two super-Powers are intensifying their preparations for war, their rivalries, their haggling in their efforts to control and dominate the planet. The peoples cannot believe that disarmament is at hand when they see that the imperialist Americans and the socio-imperialist USSR pursue their arms race without respite, raise their military budgets, manufacture ever improved weapons of mass destruction and continue to spread their military networks throughout the world, filling the skies, the oceans, and the land with their murder-dealing weapons.

(Mr. Baleta, Albania)

There is no reason to believe that the two super-Powers have any serious intention of seeking a real solution to the problems of disarmament. The aggressive expansionist and hegemonic policies practised by these two Powers push them constantly further towards arming, not towards disarming. They count primarily on armaments and weaponry to achieve their aim: to intimidate, oppress and exploit the peoples, and to threaten or invade sovereign nations.

In this connexion, the leader of the Albanian people, Mr. Hoxha, made the following statement at the seventh congress of the Albanian Labour Party that was held recently:

"The imperialists and the socio-imperialists know that, by maintaining their stockpiles of modern weapons and the monopoly of their production, they also maintain the ability to blackmail and to threaten, to feed the fear and insecurity created by their war machines, and to maintain the constant pressure of their weapons without even having to use them."

The hypocrisy and cynicism of the American imperialists and the socio-imperialists of the Soviet Union about disarmament are limitless. Their logic of hegemony and aggression transcends the wildest dreams of the most insane warmongers of the past. Each side, taking God as their witness, smite their hearts and seek to make others believe that they have no aggressive designs, and that they manufacture weapons only to maintain peace and security, and of course -- also -- to defend their own interests which, according to their contention, are more or less co-extensive with the world. The leaders of the American imperialists and of the Soviet socio-imperialists -- generals, admirals, marshals -- think it quite natural to ask that other countries should recognize without challenge their right to possess any types of weapons, and as many as they wish, whereas those same countries should not worry about their own defence, and could have weapons when the two super-Powers supplied them.

(Mr. Baleta, Albania)

To overcome the resistance against their deceptive theses, the two super-Powers constantly invoke as their argument the horrors that would befall the world if the modern nuclear weapons that already exist were to be used, particularly nuclear, chemical, bacteriological, and even meteorological weapons. To be sure, all these weapons are dangerous, but it is not only weapons themselves that constitute the main danger to the peoples of the world.

First of all, the danger flows from the policies of wars and aggression pursued by these two great Powers, and it is that policy that may well lead them to use those weapons. By evoking the horrors of those weapons in support of their arguments, they try to intimidate peoples and States to accept their diktats and their domination. This is the type of disarmament that is proposed by the two super-Powers to constrain people to bow their heads and live under the threat of weapons. The United States and the Soviet Union, being for a long time involved in the armaments race, have also become the greatest manufacturers and traffickers of weapons, and compete fiercely to capture the arms market. The so-called assistance in the supply of military equipment and the sales of weapons are very often used by the United States and the Soviet Union in order to aggravate conflicts and divergencies between countries and complete their methods of blackmail and pressure, and thus interfere more easily in the affairs of the countries receiving these weapons. The so-called military assistance and sale of weapons constitutes a further way of extending their political, economic and military domination over these countries and even to force some of them into joining their military treaties and alliances. The two imperialist Powers speak loudly of the so-called bilateral negotiations and agreements that they have concluded or are preparing on the question of disarmament. But it is obvious that the two super-Powers have always used the treaties established between them to maintain a balance of force acceptable to the two parties and thus consolidate their conventional and nuclear arms superiority. The history of the SALT talks and all the USSR/USA agreements bear proof of this. The decisions resulting from those talks and the other agreements merely mark the end of a phase of the arms race and the sophistication of the weapons of the two super-Powers and the beginning of a new stage in the same direction. The United States and the Soviet Union act in accordance with their current and common practice. As soon as they have decided on certain types of

(Mr. Baleta, Albania)

weaponry and nuclear tests, they put forth proposals for the conclusion of an agreement prohibiting these tests and weapons, and immediately embark on the production and testing of new types of weapons. What the two super-Powers seek to achieve by means of these agreements is well known. What they want to do is to increase their own arsenals and disarm others. These agreements, as many others, including those that were arrived at at the so-called Helsinki Security Conference, have not prevented these Powers from continuing their arms race, from exerting pressure to maintain the military bases they possess, from setting up new ones in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and elsewhere, and from intensifying their efforts to strengthen their control over their respective aggressive coalitions, NATO and the Warsaw Treaty. These two pacts are the main pillars supporting the aggressive policy of the United States and the USSR and the basic instruments of their rivalry and their preparations for war. We are all witnesses to the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union use international bodies to impose their will in matters of disarmament. The history of the CCD deliberations in Geneva is evident proof of this. The same applies to the Vienna negotiations on the mutual limitations of the arms and military forces in Europe. These negotiations have become a travesty, where the two greater Powers try to create the impression that they are working hand and foot to rid Europe of its heavy military burden through some limitation of their arms and their troops. The Vienna talks have been stagnant for a long time and any compromise between the two super-Powers would be only to replace rifles with machine-guns.

It is obvious, therefore, that any agreement that the two super-Powers have concluded or are preparing, as well as the draft agreement that they wish to impose here in the United Nations and in other international bodies are not spearheads against disarmament but merely additional obstacles to disarmament. Such types of agreements leave intact the arsenals of these two Powers and do not provide any real guarantee against the use of these weapons. The treaties only create pipedreams and increase the dangers. The Soviet socio-imperialists obstinately continue to propagate these illusions here in the United Nations, year after year submitting some new proposal introducing one document or another. The document submitted to us this year is a synthesis of the demagoguery they have

engaged in up to now, standing up as the advocates of disarmament at a time when the world is aware of the fact that they are hand in hand with the Americans in their rearmament. The propaganda with which they surround their proposals for a world disarmament conference, however, does not impress too many people. Nevertheless, the socio-imperialists of the Soviet Union continue to advocate such a conference and try to impose it at any cost. However, today they are making even greater efforts to link their proposal with the idea of the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Acting thus, they hope to achieve better success than in the past, and in order to increase the value of their merchandise they insist that a special session of the General Assembly should be merely a preparatory stage of the miracle conference they have proposed. This again is another case where their megalomania and their hypocrisy is rounded out. The two imperialist super-Powers have always planned their many diverse tactics so as to undermine the solution of international problems. By means of slogans they try to create a vicious circle around the problems of disarmament. The two super-Powers say that it is impossible to widen the process of détente unless progress is made in disarmament, and then they say that disarmament cannot progress without widening the process of détente. Then the socio-imperialists add that, first of all, we must come to an agreement not to use force in international relations so that we can move firmly towards peace, détente and disarmament. But all this is calculated to sow illusion and confusion, to lead to futile and abstract discussions, to obscure the simple and obvious truth, namely, that imperialism and other reactionary forces will never cease to threaten international peace and security and the freedom and the independence of peoples, will never willingly renounce their aggressive aims and will never strive for true disarmament. The struggle to achieve disarmament is very closely linked to the struggle of peace-loving and freedom-loving sovereign countries and peoples to protect their rights and their interests, to the struggle for real peace and security and to efforts that must be made to denounce and counter the aggressive policies and actions of the imperialist Powers. The peoples that struggle for their national and social liberation, the sovereign States that are concerned over preserving and defending their freedom and their independence cannot disarm and remain impotent in the face of their aggressors and exploiters, particularly the socio-imperialists and the

(Mr. Baleta, Albania)

imperialists; it is their right and their obligation to take the necessary measures to defend and strengthen their own national and international security.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the next speaker I should like to announce that Canada has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.7/Rev.1, and that Denmark and Italy have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.11

Mr. LECOMPT (France) (interpretation from French): We all decry the clear inadequacy of our disarmament efforts. One after the other, speakers in this Committee have all deplored the unprecedented waste involved in the arms race in a world which has to face so many economic and social problems. The paucity of results attained by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has been stressed most eloquently on the very first day of our debate by the Foreign Minister of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Garcia Robles. The resolution adopted last year on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in disarmament is clear evidence that our Organization has grown aware of this alarming situation. Is then the problem insoluble and are we doomed to watch in resignation the escalation which is going on before our very eyes, and in which more and more countries are becoming involved?

(Mr. Lecomot, France)

My delegation believes that a comprehensive analysis both of the substance and the institutional procedures of disarmament should reveal conditions which would make it possible to achieve concrete results.

With regard to substance, in the light of the complex nature of the situation, we should go beyond fine words and define exactly certain concepts which are too often confused in current parlance when in fact they cover fundamentally different objectives and means.*

For almost 15 years now, it has been a habit to consider as disarmament measures arrangements which have the effect not of reducing or eliminating armaments, but simply of controlling their development, in such a way as to maintain certain balances between various Powers or groups of Powers. Indeed, over the last 15 years, efforts at effective disarmament have been abandoned in favour of partial arms control measures.

The political scope of these two concepts is clearly not the same. General and complete disarmament is in keeping with the aspirations of the peoples of the world. It is embodied in our Charter and constitutes one of its fundamental principles for the maintenance of international peace and security. It would enable the community of nations to devote its resources to peaceful activities and would give to the most underprivileged the possibility of developing in accordance with their legitimate aspirations and devoting all their resources to raising their living standards.

The difficulties of such an undertaking are unfortunately only too well known and it is because of these very difficulties that the policy of arms control has been preferred to it. We recognize the usefulness of this policy, the implementation of which can slow down the arms race, lead to the elimination of certain kinds of inhumane or dangerous arms, and make possible the establishment of agreed balances which in themselves exercise a reciprocal deterrent effect among the Powers. It can thus contribute to the maintenance of peace and the progress of détente.

However, we should not evade the fundamental question, namely, are disarmament and arms control truly mutually compatible? At first sight, it would appear that there can be a certain convergence between these two concepts. Measures such as

* Mr. da Costa Lobo (Portugal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Lecompt, France)

limitation of the use of certain weapons or the establishment of denuclearized zones can be categorized both as disarmament and arms control measures. However, by their very nature -- I would say, by their very essence -- these two concepts are not compatible. They conflict on a fundamental point: the balances sought by a policy of arms control necessarily imply the maintenance of stockpiles of arms at levels which are invariably high and which permit wide diversification in types of armaments. When the policy of arms control is put into effect as it is by the great Powers, this diversification of armaments applies not only to nuclear, strategic or tactical weapons, but to all conventional weapons used on land, at sea or in the air. These armaments, constantly made more sophisticated by technical refinements, end up by including all possible types of arms. There is thus practically nothing to which disarmament can still be applied.

A reconciliation between the two concepts is theoretically possible. Arms control, because of the limitations it may apply, could be a first step towards disarmament and a pre-condition of it. Such an approach is no doubt acceptable on a purely speculative level, but in actual practice the situation is different. As far as my delegation is aware, such a transition from arms control to disarmament, or even to a reduction of arms, has never occurred. A significant example of that is the Soviet-United States Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). In spite of the initial SALT agreements, in spite of the guiding principles agreed upon at Vladivostok, these two Powers have continued to develop, particularly qualitatively, their respective strategic armaments, and today, the number of nuclear warheads which these Powers possess is many times higher than it was at the time of the first agreement.

It is to be noted that the opportunities for choice between genuine disarmament and arms control are far from being the same for all countries; indeed, most of the countries of the world do not have an option. The decision of the great Powers, in particular the two greatest Powers, to opt for a policy of arms control binds all States through a kind of chain reaction: the interplay of alliances and the need to preserve national independence dictate a stand in favour of a policy of arms control, even though the deepest aspirations of most States are for a policy of effective disarmament.

All this may seem highly theoretical. What, in actual practice, have been the essential features of the policy of arms control as pursued for the past 10 years or so? As regards nuclear arms, the major concern of the international community continues to be to limit the threats flowing from proliferation. This is a concern shared by all countries, whether they be nuclear or not. The French Government has never varied in its policy of opposition to proliferation. Only recently, on 4 October 1976, at its first meeting, the Higher Council of External Nuclear Policy, presided over by the Head of State of France, laid down our policy in this area. I shall quote a key passage in the communiqué issued on that occasion:

"France will not promote the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In its nuclear export policy, it will strengthen the appropriate arrangements and safeguards relating to equipment, materials and technology."

(Mr. Lecompt, France)

The reservations made by the French Government at the time of the negotiation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which apply also to all the ancillary treaties surrounding the central text, relate not to the principle itself which we do not question but to the inequalities which it perpetuates and the method of implementation of its provisions. The Non-Proliferation Treaty seems to us to be the very prototype of an arms control treaty. Based on discrimination between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, it contains a series of implicit contradictions that limit its scope and effectiveness and become increasingly evident with the passage of time. It attempts to establish a kind of closed club of nuclear Powers and in this context reserves very different treatment to the two aspects of horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons which are none the less germane and equally a matter for concern.

The first, horizontal proliferation, is the subject of a series of detailed and meticulous rules aimed at denying to all States that are not members of the club access to nuclear capacity. That had also been the essential purpose of the Moscow Treaty of 1963 on the Prohibition of Nuclear Tests in the Atmosphere. Some day in the not too distant future, there will be a treaty totally banning tests. This event will be celebrated as an important measure in the field of disarmament. It will be above all proof that the two major nuclear Powers have concluded that it is thenceforth more in their interests to prevent other countries from carrying out such tests than to continue their own -- in other words, it will mean that in this area they will have acquired sufficient technical mastery.

The policy of horizontal, or geographical, non-proliferation of arms is easily adjustable to a series of limitations banning nuclearization from certain places or environments. The two major Powers, reluctant to disturb a delicate balance, obviously have no interest in pursuing the nuclear arms race with unpredictable results in areas which have so far been inaccessible to man. This consideration has given rise to a series of conventions: the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty on Outer Space and the Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI)) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons on the Sea-Bed (resolution 2660 (XXV)).

Horizontal non-proliferation reveals inadequacies which condemn it in the long run unless it is supplemented by a policy of vertical non-proliferation -- that is to say, quantitative proliferation of nuclear weapons. Such a proposal is obvious and was accepted by the drafters of the Treaty of 1968 which contains an explicit provision in this regard: article 6, the text of which is familiar to all delegations here. It is not enough to say that this article was not applied. In actual fact it was disregarded. Many speakers have deplored the lack of any real progress since 1970, the date of the entry into force of the treaty in the field of vertical non-proliferation.

I shall confine myself here to asking a series of questions. Is it not probable that there is a relationship between the somewhat disorganized and disorderly activity to be observed with regard to geographical proliferation and the contrasting silence of disarmament bodies with regard to quantitative and qualitative proliferation? To a certain extent are not all conventions and treaties that have been discussed and concluded over the last few years and those yet to be concluded, mere pretexts, alibis to avoid putting article 6 into effect?

This article relates to the whole of disarmament. But if no progress has been made in nuclear disarmament, not even an effort has been undertaken with regard to fundamental conventional weapons. In 1939 there were no more than 20,000 or so assault tanks in the whole world; military nations now possess more than 120,000 of them, considerably heavier and more powerful. The number and, above all, the performance of combat aircraft has increased in even more staggering proportions and even navies that do not appear to be more powerful than in 1939 have been reinforced with missiles that give even small ships greater firing power than that of the battleships of old. It appears clear that in this area what has been called the military industrial complex of the great Powers is in full operation and is finding more and more imitators.

If world public opinion is concentrated on nuclear peril, it is not sufficiently aware of increased dangers in the field of conventional armaments where proliferation is not only vertical -- since the great Powers are constantly increasing their armaments -- but also horizontal, for new military Powers are emerging and developing in parts of the world which hitherto have known no arms race.

(Mr. Lecompt, France)

It seems, then, that there is a fundamental flaw in our whole concept of disarmament which is apparently incapable of arresting and reversing this development. Above all, we must restore the priority of the main objective: that of genuine disarmament relating to all types of arms and accompanied by effective international control.

We cannot therefore help wondering about conditions which would make it possible to implement this true disarmament which should be our common objective. The dimensions of the problem obviously make it necessary for us to approach it in stages. The first of these should relate to limitation and then gradual reduction of nuclear arms because of the awesome power of these arms and the understandable horror that they inspire. However, the pursuit of nuclear disarmament -- because of the imbalances it is liable to create -- is inconceivable without the speedy initiation of a parallel process of reduction in the field of conventional weapons. But it would appear that such a process could not be pushed too far without the study and implementation of a system for peaceful settlement of disputes. Our Charter supplies the basic elements, with provision for subsequent developments. It is in this direction we should pursue our efforts for an enterprise which would be at once the consummation and the condition of disarmament.

It is quite clear also that such an effort must be contemplated in terms of universal context. It requires the participation and the political will of all nations and, of course, the active co-operation of the militarily important Powers and, imperatively, that of all nuclear Powers. The abstention of a single one of the nuclear Powers would make any progress impossible. The problem of the institutions and necessary mechanisms for the implementation of such a programme does however arise. Many delegations feel, as we do, that the standstill in disarmament is particularly due to the inadequacies and indeed the ineffectiveness of these institutions.

(Mr. Lecompt, France)

We have then before us today a number of initiatives aimed at remedying this situation. The first is the proposal to convene a world disarmament conference. My country still supports the idea of holding such a conference, provided that it is preceded by careful preparation and, particularly, that all the nuclear Powers agree to take part in it. Unfortunately, however, we have to note that these requirements do not so far seem to have been accepted.

This being so, a number of countries have put forward the idea of holding a special session of our General Assembly devoted to the problem of disarmament. No doubt the impact that may be anticipated from such a meeting will not be comparable to the impact of a world conference. However, France in no way wishes to minimize the advantages that might be expected from this initiative, and we definitely support it. However, if we want this session not to be a mere repetition, perhaps in a somewhat more solemn form, of the debate in this Committee, it too should be carefully prepared. A committee will doubtless be set up for this purpose. Obviously, it will only be able to achieve fruitful results if it is composed in such a way that the major military Powers and, of course, the nuclear Powers take an active part in its work. My country would prefer to see a committee as broad-based and as open as possible, for if the great Powers have special responsibilities with regard to the implementation of disarmament, all States are on an equal footing when it comes to working out concepts.

The French Government remains convinced of the need for a permanent specialized body in the realm of disarmament negotiations, and these are the important reasons which have prompted it not to take its rightful seat at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). We have felt from its very foundation that the Geneva Committee failed, in terms both of composition and of procedures, to meet the requirements which could and should have been formulated for the organ responsible for negotiating disarmament agreements.

We note with some regret that the CCD is not an organ which comes directly under the United Nations. Its fundamental short-coming seems to us to be the fact that it does not satisfactorily resolve what is undoubtedly the basic contradiction of disarmament: either the specialized disarmament organ will be subject to the preponderant influence of the military Powers -- in which case they would be

(Mr. Lecompt, France)

capable of conducting such an undertaking successfully but, being the countries most directly concerned, might be hampered in their actions by their concern to defend their immediate interests in the highly sensitive area of defence; or the specialized organ will be dominated by States not possessing significant military potential, which would no doubt like to achieve progress in disarmament but which would not be believed capable of assuring such progress.

It is an old problem touched upon by Pascal when he spoke of the relations between justice and strength:

"It is just that the just should be served; it is necessary that the stronger should be served. Justice without strength is powerless; strength without justice is tyrannical. It is therefore necessary to bring justice and strength together so that what is just can be strong and what is strong can be just."

This highly desirable balance has not been respected in Geneva, and the de facto pre-eminence of the two major Powers, reflected in the institution of the co-Chairmanship, channels the work of this organ in a direction which does not seem to us to be that of true disarmament.

My delegation would like to conclude by saying that it is not by adopting a multiplicity of detailed measures, by confining ourselves to collateral, marginal aspects of disarmament and particularly by laying stress on measures of arms control that we can progress towards genuine and effective disarmament. It is with some surprise that we see certain delegations deploring, with undoubted sincerity, the scanty progress achieved in the field of true disarmament, while they devote the bulk of their activities to proposals and negotiations which are not directed towards that end. Surely this is sacrificing basics to secondary issues. Of course, general and complete disarmament is a most difficult undertaking. But does that justify neglecting consideration of this subject and concentrating on measures which at best can only lead to the most limited results? We do not think so. We have tried to show that the present institutional organization, because of its very structures, promotes a grave distortion in the disarmament undertaking by giving an unduly privileged, in fact exclusive, position to partial and collateral arms control measures. And if this is indeed the case, then the remedy is obvious. Our

(Mr. Lecompt, France)

first task is to establish new mechanisms, the composition, functioning and programmes of which would finally allow us to tackle the problems of disarmament, problems which seem to have been lost from sight for too long.

If my delegation has ventured to strike a rather critical note, you may be assured that this is in no way intended in a spirit of sterile denigration. It is because we want to provide fresh momentum to an undertaking which we believe to be essential and in which we are ready to participate in the most active way. The most powerful Members of our Organization no doubt sincerely believe that they are doing what they can. We believe and hope -- indeed, we are convinced -- that it is possible and in any event necessary to do more.

Mr. NIKOLOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): In my statement I intend to deal mainly with the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. As a member of the Disarmament Committee, the People's Republic of Bulgaria takes part in its discussions and endeavours to the best of its ability to contribute to their successful outcome. I should like to deal first with the problems of nuclear disarmament which are of the utmost concern to the international community and deserve priority consideration. It has been recognized for a long time that a pre-condition for the cessation of the armaments race would be the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the total cessation of nuclear tests. That is precisely the reason for which the efforts thus made on a multilateral basis have been addressed primarily to the achievement of those two objectives. It cannot be said that those efforts were vain and sterile, because they have resulted in the conclusion of a number of international instruments, among them the Moscow Treaty of 1963 Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, as well as the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, two nuclear Powers and a number of other States are still not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The fact that the universality of the system of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has not yet been achieved is a very serious fact. Furthermore, underground testing of nuclear weapons continues, which means that the stockpiling and perfecting of these weapons of mass destruction is also continuing. It is true that the Soviet Union and the United States of America signed a bilateral agreement on the limitation of underground weapons tests, setting a threshold which is a welcome step in the right direction but as a whole, the problem of the total prohibition of nuclear weapons tests still has to be solved. Furthermore, one of the nuclear Powers, non-party to the Moscow Treaty, the People's Republic of China, is still carrying out nuclear explosions in the atmosphere and thereby continues to contaminate the environment with radio-active fall-out. Surely, all this casts ample light on the magnitude and urgency of the tasks that confront us in the field of nuclear disarmament.

With the ratification by Japan and a number of other countries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, new progress has been made towards the universal adherence to the system of non-proliferation. However, the danger

(Mr. Nikolov, Bulgaria)

of a proliferation of nuclear weapons is an ever-living one. The resort by many nations to the development of atomic energy in order to hasten the welfare of their people is a very legitimate one and further, one that is quite in keeping with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Yet the supplying of nuclear equipment and fissile material to States not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons causes very serious concern when such supplies are not provided in accordance with control requirements and safeguards laid down in the Treaty and in the statutes of the International Atomic Energy Agency. For the functioning of nuclear reactors is linked to the accumulation of plutonium which, in turn, could be used for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

It is primarily the export of plants for enriching and for treatment of radiated fuels to countries non-parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which carries within it the greatest of risks and which, lately, has become a matter of public concern. Trade and competition in these materials should not lead to the dissemination of nuclear weapons. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 1975, issued a final declaration which urged that "in all achievable ways, common export requirements relating to safeguards be strengthened, in particular by extending the application of safeguards to all peaceful nuclear activities in importing States not Party to the Treaty". The Conference also adopted other recommendations intended to put a stop to proliferation due to the export of nuclear technology to States non-parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation, and it recognized the importance of the idea of creating regional or multinational nuclear fuel cycle centres. It is believed that the implementation of such an idea would make the use of nuclear energy more economical. It would also localize radio-active waste in restricted areas and would allow the greatest security as well as effective control to be exercised by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the introduction to his annual report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim, stated:

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"Scientific and technical development in the nuclear energy field has now advanced to a stage where widespread use of nuclear power in all its ramifications is rapidly becoming a reality of the present rather than just a prospect for the future. In this situation, where the danger of nuclear proliferation has increased, it is essential that suppliers and receivers of nuclear installations apply the requisite rules to prevent a proliferation of nuclear weapons technology."

(Mr. Nikolov, Bulgaria)

As far as the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is concerned, we are in favour of any action both on the part of exporter as well as importer States to improve and complete the control and safeguards of the Atomic Energy Agency and thereby to strengthen the system of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Since the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons constitutes a previous step for international stability and security, everything possible should be done in order to obtain the adherence of all States, and particularly of all the nuclear Powers, to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation in order to prevent the further extension of the circle of States that possess these weapons of mass destruction. Because of the risks inherent in a new dissemination of nuclear weapons, the creation of nuclear-weapons-free zones is one that warrants special attention.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted, on the initiative of the Soviet Union, resolution 3478 (XXX) which once again recognized "the urgent need for the cessation everywhere and by all of nuclear weapon tests, including underground tests" and further called upon all nuclear-weapon States "to enter into negotiations, not later than 31 March 1976, with a view to reaching an agreement on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests".

Much to our regret the negotiations requested by the General Assembly in which between 25 and 30 non-nuclear weapon States did not take place because of the positions adopted by certain nuclear Powers. But the solution of the problems of nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved without the constructive co-operation of all nuclear Powers. It is a fact in itself and when adopting the resolution I have just mentioned the General Assembly merely confirmed that fact. A very specific responsibility rests with all the nuclear Powers, namely, to create conditions conducive to the opening of the negotiations called for in resolution 3478 (XXX).

The complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests today is an imperative dictated by international security. Everyone agrees that this would be a decisive step towards a stemming of the nuclear arms race and that in practice it would in fact put an end to the development of new generations of nuclear weapons.

By dint of progress in science it is now possible at a distance to control respect for a possible treaty on the total and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and to differentiate a test from a seismic movement without its being

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necessary to carry out inspections in situ. It is the general opinion that the use of national control techniques completed by international exchange of seismic information offer effective guarantees for the verification of the respect for that prohibition. Yet in its memorandum on the cessation of the arms race and the move to disarmament the Soviet Union showed that it was ready to consider additional procedure based upon the principle of free consent concerning decision-making on the in situ verification matter. It is obvious that the conclusion of a treaty on the general and complete prohibition depends solely upon the adoption of a political decision by the nuclear Powers. We continue to believe that for many reasons the selective approach cannot provide the key to the solution we are seeking. This is a problem that by its very nature does not lend itself to such an approach.*

Last year on the initiative of the Soviet Union the General Assembly decided by an overwhelming majority in favour of the prohibition of the manufacture, development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, and under resolution 3479 (XXX) the CCD was entrusted with the task of working out the text of an agreement on this matter as soon as possible. This problem appears on our agenda and is one of exceptional importance, for everyone recognizes that the arms race cannot be slowed down unless the qualitative aspects of its development are dealt with since in that aspect lies the competitive element. Together with the effort to limit strategic weapons quantitatively, the moment has now come to adopt specific and preventive measures to bar the road to qualitative development in the arms race.

The discussions that took place in the CCD with the participation of governmental experts dwelt on the definition of the notion of "new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction", on criteria for classifying them and examples of new types and systems of such weapons. The clarification of these aspects of the problem was necessary in order to be able to define the target of the prohibition and the possible later work to be done by the CCD. The initial examination of this new problem on the agenda of the CCD, whose complexity is

* The Chairman returned to the Chair.

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obvious to all, was undoubtedly useful and enlightening and at this stage in the negotiations it would I think be premature to try to draw general conclusions. However, we can already see the difficulties which will have to be overcome in order to find a solution to the agreement on the prohibition of the setting up and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. In the course of this very debate we have already heard opinions according to which this is a problem which is marginal to disarmament.

(Mr. Nikolov, Bulgaria)

However, this is by no means the sentiment in the General Assembly. At the CCD and in this forum, doubts have been expressed regarding the advisability of trying to prohibit in a single treaty the development and manufacture of all new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, and hence there is an implicit suggestion that these various types of weapons be studied separately. We do not believe that this problem need be broken up, in contradiction of the resolution and the will of the General Assembly. A number of delegations, expressing a certain scepticism, have implied that the idea of prohibiting weapons which do not as yet exist did not appear to be a feasible proposition. Yet the principle of banning weapons that do not yet exist, but whose emergence is considered as a potential danger is accepted, and is the basis for General Assembly resolution 3479 (XXX). The draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques also stipulates preventive measures for means of destruction which do not yet exist, but there have been no objections to this particular prohibition. We believe that the solution of the problem of the prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction should not be delayed or obstructed on the pretext that as yet very little is known about them. We know enough about them to be aware of the need to act now in order to prevent the danger. The conclusion of an agreement along these lines would be of great importance not only for the future but also for the present. In practice, such a measures must inevitably lead to a reduction in military expenditures, a considerable portion of which -- 10 to 15 per cent -- is devoted to research and development. According to the available data, approximately 400,000 scientists, engineers and others all over the world are currently engaged in arms research and development.

The task entrusted to the CCD is certainly not a simple or easy one, but if all the States participating in the CCD show the political will to achieve success in the negotiations, an agreement will emerge on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. It is obvious that such an agreement would in no way impair the general development of science and technology, since the prohibition would apply only to the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons, and not to the peaceful applications of new discoveries. We hope that at a later stage in the negotiations the CCD will make concrete progress towards the attainment of our goal.

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Last year, the General Assembly expressed its concern over the lack of progress in the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Morally, these weapons have long been condemned unanimously because of their nature and the horror which their use inspires in the minds of men. Their prohibition is constantly being urged by the international community. This problem has been the subject of negotiations at the CCD for the last four years -- namely, since the conclusion in 1972 of the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological Weapons. It will be recalled that, under article IX of that Convention, States undertook to continue negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

This year the CCD has redoubled its efforts on this matter, some technical aspects of which were examined with the assistance of governmental experts. The socialist countries, including the People's Republic of Bulgaria, have always stood by their position of principle in favour of a total and simultaneous ban on the development, manufacture and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction, but as a radical solution is as yet not feasible -- and we know where the obstacles lie -- they are ready to consider as a first stage a ban on the most dangerous and lethal chemical means of warfare. The idea of proceeding to a prohibition by stages has been widely supported in the Disarmament Committee; and this can be explained also by the desire to facilitate and speed up the achievement of an initial concrete result in this field of disarmament. A convergence of views also exists with regard to the definition of the agents of chemical warfare and on the scope of the initial ban. These new elements have conferred a more concrete character to the negotiations and create a favourable point of departure for an agreement.

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The difficulties that are still to be overcome arise primarily from the differences of view regarding the nature of the means of verification to be set up to ensure observance of the prohibition. On this matter the Soviet delegation in the CCD rightly referred to resolution 2662 (XXV) of the General Assembly, which inter alia states that:

"... verification should be based on a combination of appropriate national and international measures, which would complement and supplement each other, thereby providing an acceptable system which would ensure the effective implementation of the prohibition";

The verification system suggested by the socialist countries in their draft convention meets these requirements. New possibilities in the field of national verification have opened up thanks to techniques that have been developed which allow surveillance at a distance from the territory of the State concerned, the gathering of atmospheric samples and the detection in these samples of any chemical substance, however small the amount.

Specialists know that bacteriological weapons are much easier to manufacture and that their possible clandestine production is more difficult to uncover. Despite this, States have agreed that the national means of verification to ensure observance of the prohibition of these weapons are effective and are acceptable. Regarding the prohibition of chemical weapons the Yearbook on World Armament and Disarmament, 1975, issued by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), on page 5 stresses that "In point of fact, verification is no longer a real problem." We can only agree with that finding.

If all States, and particularly the great Powers, adopt a decision of principle to renounce chemical weapons and to exclude them from their military arsenals, the radical solution of the problem will be much closer. The recent development of negotiations in the CCD leads us to hope that initial progress in the field of chemical disarmament may be made very soon but efforts to achieve that should be speeded up.

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament this year has been able to draft a treaty on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, thereby completing a task which had been entrusted to it by the General Assembly. In the course of an earlier statement the

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Bulgarian delegation advocated support of this draft treaty by the General Assembly and its opening for signature and ratification. The text presented to the General Assembly would allow the target to be achieved, namely to prevent the spreading of the arms race into a new field and to outlaw certain methods of warfare in the interest of international security as well as the preservation of the environment. It was these views that led a large majority of delegations to support the draft treaty.

A number of delegations, however, have stated that they are not entirely satisfied with certain of its provisions. An international instrument, being the result of multilateral negotiation, is very rarely a perfect document from the point of view of form and content. It always takes the form of a compromise between the desirable and the possible. If the draft treaty before us is not better, this is not in any way due to a lack of effort or imagination.

With all due respect to the representative of Mexico, it is very difficult for me to agree with the interpretation that he attached to article I of the treaty at the time of the presentation of draft resolution A/C.1/31/L.4 on 8 November. According to that article:

"Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to any other State Party." (A/31/27, annex I)

It does not automatically follow that, per argumentum a contrario, all that is not considered as having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects would be allowed. It is true that the draft convention, particularly article I, does not contain provisions defining a complete prohibition, but it would be wrong to conclude from that that in this case what is involved is a partial prohibition. The prohibition is far more than partial; it is almost complete, as some delegates have described it. And that, we believe, is one of the particular features of this draft convention. This conclusion flows from article II and the understanding relating to it. It is stated there that the list of examples of phenomena which it is prohibited to cause is not exhaustive, that other phenomena could be added to it and that:

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"... military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques as defined in article II, so as to cause those phenomena as a means of destruction, damage or injury to another State Party, would be prohibited." (A/31/27, p. 92).

Practically speaking, any use of these environmental modification techniques, which are listed by way of example, is prohibited by the treaty, since such activities must inevitably have "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects". To support what I have said regarding the scope and extension of the prohibition, we might also refer to the preamble of the treaty itself, which specifically expresses the desire of States "to prohibit effectively military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques in order to eliminate the dangers to mankind from such use." (ibid., p. 87).

We believe that States Parties to this treaty will fulfil their contractual obligations in good faith and thus will prove the effectiveness of this international instrument. Possibilities of improving the text of the convention are still open after its entry into force and provision has already been made for a procedure for that purpose, apart from the review conference. In these circumstances we see no justification for referring the draft treaty back to the CCD to be renegotiated. Such a decision would inevitably delay the achievement of the solution we seek and would divert the attention of the CCD from other pressing tasks.

This year we have participated in a very active session of the CCD. The work was more productive than the previous year and it is to be hoped that the negotiations next year will lead to more progress in the interest of peace and security in the world.

The CHAIRMAN: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I call first on the representative of Argentina, who wishes to raise a point of order.

Mr. ORTIZ DE ROZAS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I am grateful to you, Sir, for having allowed me to speak in order to make to you and to the members of the Committee, on behalf of my delegation a proposal that I believe reflects the unanimous views of the Latin American group. I refer to the following. The Journal of the United Nations, announces that tomorrow, at 10.30 a.m., His Excellency the President of the Republic of Venezuela, Dr. Carlos Andrés Pérez, will address a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. A meeting of the First Committee has been scheduled for tomorrow morning also. With the understanding and hope that it will be acceptable to all, I would suggest that -- as in previous instances -- there be no meeting of the First Committee while the General Assembly is hearing the statement of the Head of the Venezuelan Republic. I am sure that our work would suffer a delay of only a few minutes, and that no delay would be amply compensated for this by being given an opportunity of being present in the Assembly to hear the authoritative words of the Head of the sister Republic of Venezuela.

My proposal, then, is that the morning meeting of the First Committee tomorrow not be convened until immediately after the President of Venezuela has concluded his statement to the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Argentina. As he has rightly pointed out, there have been precedents in the past, when Heads of States have addressed the General Assembly of some committees adjourning or suspending their meetings to enable their members to hear those Heads of State. Although the President of Venezuela is scheduled to speak at 10.30 according to the Journal, I realize that in practice his address will probably be delayed somewhat, so if the Committee agrees I would suggest that we accept the proposal made by the representative of Argentina and decide to start the morning meeting of the Committee immediately after the conclusion of the statement in the plenary Assembly by His Excellency the President of Venezuela. I might add that we have a full list of six speakers for tomorrow morning. It will take us about two hours to

(The Chairman)

hear them all, but I think that if we begin at 11.15 or 11.30 we shall manage -- perhaps with an extension of 15 or 20 minutes which I think can be arranged -- to finish our meeting as planned. Accordingly, if the Committee agrees, I propose that we start tomorrow morning's meeting immediately after the conclusion of the statement in the plenary by His Excellency, the President of Venezuela. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is so decided.

It was so decided.

Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden): In the first part of my statement I shall speak in my capacity of Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament and I shall have the honour to introduce the report of the Committee contained in document A/31/36.

A year ago, on 12 December 1975, the General Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to carry out a basic review of the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field. The Committee would be open to the participation of all Member States. The principal objectives of the review were to centre around three main fields of action: the achievement of more effective procedures and organization of work, the improvement of existing facilities for information on disarmament issues, and the development of the possibilities of the Secretariat to assist in following up multilateral agreement.

As requested by the General Assembly, the Committee held an organizational session in January this year and two substantive sessions in June and September. At the session in January, I had the honour of being elected Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Saad Ahmed Alfarargi of Egypt kindly accepted to be elected Rapporteur, and the Committee also elected nine Vice-Chairmen. I am very glad to take this opportunity of extending my warm thanks to Mr. Alfarargi and my fellow-officers for their support to me personally and for their highly competent contributions to the work and deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The procedure for taking decisions in the Committee was given careful consideration at its first meeting. Against the background of the various views presented, the Committee adopted a procedure contained in a statement by the

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Chairman which is reproduced in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee. As a basic principle it was emphasized that it was desirable that the Committee achieve the widest measure of agreement on the issues at hand. At the same time, it was also important that all points of view and recommendations presented in the Committee be adequately reflected in the report. In accordance with this formula, the report of the Committee presents a set of agreed proposals as well as certain comments on the agreed proposals by individual delegations.

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Our recommendations are particularly detailed with respect to new approaches for achieving more effective procedures of work. As regards the General Assembly the key role, of course, is held by the First Committee. It goes without saying that all delegations feel free to address themselves to this forum on all issues on its agenda. At the same time, if we wish to achieve real results in our efforts we must organize our work in as efficient a way as possible. The Ad Hoc Committee submits a number of practical suggestions to the effect. The responsibility will now rest with the members of the First Committee, in consultation with each other to assist the Chairman in making these proposals effective. In addition to the proposals regarding the work of the First Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee makes certain recommendations as to the relationship between the General Assembly and other bodies engaged in the field of disarmament. It is for instance recommended that the report and other official documents of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) should be drafted in such a manner as to be more useful to all United Nations delegations and be distributed more speedily and effectively to those delegations in New York to enable them to follow on a continuing basis the work on disarmament carried out by the CCD with its restricted membership.

For the long-term disarmament efforts, qualified studies are indispensable for the in-depth clarifying of complex matters. In pursuing such studies, it is important that the Secretary-General should have access to the most qualified experts available, and that the capacity of the United Nations Secretariat be such as to ensure that it can effectively carry out its responsibilities in this context. The report contains recommendations to this effect.

The efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament will be more fully supported by public opinion once people are informed of the preconditions for our work and of possible results of alternative lines of development. This is one of the reasons why the information activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament have such important implications for the possibilities to achieve results. Evidently, access to facts about the main developments and ongoing negotiations in disarmament matters is important also for the consideration of Governments. The Ad Hoc Committee makes detailed recommendations in this area. It is proposed that a United Nations Disarmament Yearbook be published annually in all working languages of the Assembly. Moreover, on the basis of a report by

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

the Secretary-General on the publication of this Yearbook, the United Nations should consider the publication of a disarmament periodical with the purpose of presenting -- in a highly readable form -- current facts and developments, summaries of studies undertaken by the United Nations or the CCD, and other relevant material.

The Ad Hoc Committee also considered measures for ensuring the effective functioning and reviewing of multilateral disarmament agreements. Among the proposals made in this respect is a recommendation by the Committee that the Secretary-General be requested to assume the depository role for such conventions and treaties. The Committee also recommends that States participating in multilateral and regional negotiations of disarmament agreements give serious consideration to the inclusion of a review conference provision.

It goes without saying that all these proposals for giving the United Nations a strengthened role in the disarmament field -- modest as they are -- would be in vain if the Organization were not given the appropriate resources for implementing them in practice. Consequently, the Committee makes recommendations for the transformation of the Disarmament Affairs Division, within the framework of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, into a United Nations Centre for Disarmament, the elevation of the head of the Centre to the rank of Assistant Secretary-General, and the adequate staffing of the unit.

I shall now speak as the Swedish representative to the First Committee. I shall give the views of the Swedish Delegation on the matter before us and I shall introduce on behalf of several delegations a draft resolution.

Active participation in the work of the United Nations is a corner-stone in the foreign policy of Sweden. Our endeavours within the world Organization are oriented towards contributing to the democratization of the international community. This is manifested above all in support for the principle of universality as well as for a new international order. In the disarmament field the proposal for a special session of the General Assembly constitutes, to our mind, one important step in the same direction. It holds out the hope that a wider participation from countries can be translated into an increased momentum for a disarmament process built on the interests of a large majority of States.

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

Sweden has therefore with pleasure joined the group of co-sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/31/L.7/Rev.1) calling for a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Many delegations have rightly argued that the existence of a political will among Member States to start a process of genuine disarmament is the decisive factor for achieving successful results in our efforts. While we fully share this view, we hold it to be both necessary and possible also to improve and make more effective the tools at the disposal of Member States for discussions and negotiations.

As my country sees it, there are, at this moment two basic reasons for the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations and its Secretariat resources in the field of disarmament.

First, in more general terms, the United Nations is the only universal forum for discussing and reaching agreement on disarmament measures. The role of the Organization, in full consistency with the objectives laid down in the Charter, must be safeguarded.

A major fact to be considered in this context is that a majority of countries, including my own, cannot by any standards match the capacities of the important military countries in terms of general background and research services in this field. Adequate United Nations Secretariat resources could to some extent help to make up for this important element of inequality.

Second, the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee take on an additional importance in the perspective of a special session on disarmament. It must be assured that the preparatory committee for a special session is provided with such background-research capacities in the Secretariat as can be called for in the preparation of the session. Otherwise I am afraid that the background documentation for the special session will have to rely heavily on information currently produced in a few States with pre-eminent resources.

These are, in essence, the two reasons why my country has committed itself so strongly to the strengthening of the United Nations role in disarmament at this hour. The proposals of the Ad Hoc Committee, modest as they are, comprise functions of committee and conference services, studies on disarmament matters, compilation and dissemination of information, the follow-up of disarmament resolutions and agreements, and, consequently, a certain amount of strengthening of Secretariat resources.

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

As has been pointed out already by several delegations in the general debate of this Committee, the financial implications of these recommendations are so small that they cannot possibly be allowed to prevent the measures from being taken. In reviewing them, one must consider the increasing burden of work already now placed on the Secretariat, related to stepped-up regular activities and to servicing the expanded work of the CCD. Therefore a modest reinforcement of personnel is urgently needed.

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

It is also of importance to point out that the Ad Hoc Committee proposals do not prejudice any reorientation of the Secretariat's work that may be called for following a forthcoming special session. They should be seen only as steps necessary in order to make a very desirable adjustment in the general level of resources.

I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/31/L.11 on behalf of the following delegations: Austria, Grenada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Romania, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Venezuela and Sweden. In addition, the delegations of Costa Rica, Denmark, Italy and Nepal have now communicated their willingness to be co-sponsors of the draft resolution. The text calls for the implementation of the various recommendations by the Ad Hoc Committee, of which I have just given a brief account. It is very simple and short. Its three preambular paragraphs reiterate the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Committee by the General Assembly in the resolution I have already referred to. Its four brief operative paragraphs request the Assembly to endorse the agreed proposals of the Ad Hoc Committee and to decide that the question of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in this field should be kept under continued review. It asks the Secretary-General to implement these measures, which fall within his area of responsibility, as soon as possible and to report to the forthcoming thirty-second session of the General Assembly. Finally, the draft resolution urges Member States to make every effort to implement the objectives set forth in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee

In conclusion, the Swedish delegation would like to believe that, in view of the fact that the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee was open-ended and that active contributions were received from all geographical regions, there is reason to hope that the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus in this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Sweden and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament for her statement, in the course of which she introduced both the report of the Ad Hoc Committee in document A/31/36 and also the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.11.

Before adjourning this meeting I should like to inform the Committee that

(The Chairman)

Guinea has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1, that Burundi and Turkey have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.7/Rev.1, and Ecuador has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution (A/C.1/31/L.11) which has just been introduced by the representative of Sweden.

We shall meet again tomorrow, immediately following the statement in the plenary Assembly by the President of Venezuela.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.