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FIRST COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 17 October 1984
at 10.30 a.m.

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. de SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil)

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Statements were made by:

Mr. Garcia Robles (Mexico)
Mr. Butler (Australia)
Mr. Troyanovsky (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Rossides (Cyprus)
Mr. Hepburn (Bahamas)
Mr. Sutresna (Indonesia)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142

GENERAL DEBATE

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable (A/C.1/39/2), this morning the Committee will begin its general debate on all disarmament agenda items, namely, items 45 to 65 and 142.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Jaipal, who is present here. In my more than 30 years of diplomatic life, mainly in multilateral diplomacy, I have found Ambassador Jaipal to be one of the most outstanding international civil servants I have ever come across. He is most welcome among us.

In my capacity as Chairman I should like now to make some introductory remarks at the start of this phase of the general debate.

Thirty-two years ago this month the honour of chairing the Political and Security Committee of the General Assembly was bestowed on my compatriot, Ambassador João Carlos Miniz, then Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations. I quote from his opening address:

"Although we try to keep our hopes high and our search for peace unabated, it would be hardly possible to deny that the pattern of international relations in our time does confront us with some problems and situations the seriousness of which it would be futile to minimize."

He went on to state:

"we are slowly becoming desperately reconciled to the idea of a new war, which would certainly mean the utter destruction of human civilization."

Today, more than three decades later, a representative of Brazil again has the honour of presiding over the proceedings of the First Committee of the General Assembly. The international situation in the field of disarmament has not improved since. On the contrary, prospects for a safer world are at their lowest possible ebb, in both the bilateral and the multilateral spheres.

The two most heavily armed Powers seem unable to resume concerted talks with each other on questions vital to the whole community of nations. Multilaterally, no results have emerged in the past few years in any of the major international forums - from the negotiations in Europe on balanced force reductions to the

(The Chairman)

Stockholm Conference on confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament, from the United Nations Disarmament Commission to the Conference on Disarmament.

By the same token, the commitment to the principles and objectives unanimously agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, and solemnly reaffirmed at the second special session in 1982, is fading away into oblivion. Fulfilment of the objectives of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, which was adopted by consensus at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly and set forth short-term and near-term goals to stop and reverse the arms race, is now more distant than ever.

(The Chairman)

But it is not only political and diplomatic commitments that are being disregarded. Legally binding instruments, ratified over 10 - even 20 - years ago, have not been implemented either, and the major Powers which took the initiative to propose them to the international community are now accusing each other of their violation.

The performance of the First Committee offers no exception to that picture. Our Committee, with no negotiating role, could at least provide some guidelines for international action in the fields of disarmament and security. The backward trends in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, however, have precluded constructive treatment of the most crucial and high-priority issues on our agenda, such as nuclear disarmament, the cessation of nuclear weapon testing, the utilization of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes, the prevention of nuclear war, assurances to non-nuclear countries against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and, almost forgotten, the broader question of general and complete disarmament.

During the 1970s, a few limited agreements were reached both between the most heavily armed Powers and in multilateral forums. Such agreements did not bring about disarmament, but rather set up rules for the management of the arms race. The concept of disarmament was downgraded to the acceptance of a tolerable pace of military competition. From today's perspective, however, military escalation, and particularly nuclear escalation, has reached a state of utter mismanagement. The most deadly weapons, spread in increased numbers and destructive power, now encompass the whole world, under the twin fallacies of equal security and of deterrence. In Europe, where the two greatest catastrophes of this century erupted, the spread of nuclear weapons has become practically a daily event. Thus, incentives for proliferation are being provided by the very Powers which once sought to circumscribe the threat of the dissemination of these weapons. The frightening lesson that each and every weapon ever invented ended up by being used in war is all but forgotten. Such was the case with chemical weapons in 1914 to 1918 and with the atom bomb in 1945. Yet the most heavily armed Powers continue their relentless build-up of new means of destruction, and lack of agreement may result in their dissemination into outer space as well.

(The Chairman)

Confrontation undermines disarmament efforts, both at the bilateral and at the multilateral levels. Progress or paralysis hinge on the attitudes of the main protagonists. They are responsible for the situation in which we find ourselves today. They carry the heaviest responsibility for its solution to the satisfaction of the international community as a whole.

If that responsibility is heeded through a commitment to constructive and rational action, the current climate of distress would be reversed and we could look forward to some possibility of progress on issues that concern all nations. Otherwise, we can do nothing but again and again recognize our failure, as we have too often done in this room.

It is my fervent hope that the former rather than the latter will prevail in the task we are about to face.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, those of us who have had the opportunity to assess your vast knowledge of disarmament matters and your ability to conduct the deliberations of a multilateral body - whether a negotiating body, as was the case in June 1979 with what was then called the Committee on Disarmament, or whether a deliberative body, as was the case in 1982 when you chaired the Disarmament Commission - have reason to be pleased to see you guiding the work of the Assembly's First Committee.

My delegation rejoices in this, and is happy to offer you its unconditional co-operation in every way required.

A year ago, speaking first in the general debate for 1983 - as it is now my honour to do for 1984 - I drew attention to the fact that the General Assembly had adopted at its thirty-seventh session no less than 58 resolutions on disarmament, the highest number to that date in the annals of our Organization. It must be noted today that at the last session, the thirty-eighth, that total was surpassed: the resolutions in question numbered 64.

Unfortunately, if resolutions have been on the increase the same cannot be said for results of work on disarmament, either in the General Assembly or in the sole multilateral negotiating body on the subject, the Conference on Disarmament. This prompts me to reiterate with special emphasis what I said a year ago: that given the situation that we are faced with in this regard it is difficult to remain calm and it is an effort not to become impatient.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

In the statement to which I have referred I mentioned 10 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. Those resolutions were selected after a very rigorous consideration of their importance and urgency, and of their all having been adopted, in one case, by consensus and, in the other nine cases, by overwhelming majorities, averaging 124 votes in favour, while votes against were so few that there had been no negative votes on three of the resolutions, only one negative vote on three others, and only two on another.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Our hopes that, because of this, the States to which the resolutions were addressed would finally decide to change their position and implement them have been almost totally dashed, despite the fact that today we could list the same number of resolutions adopted in the same circumstances by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

I have said "almost" totally dashed since, largely because of the eclecticism and perseverance of the Chairman, the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament, which is entrusted with the task of negotiating a convention to achieve the elimination of chemical weapons, has finally been able to organize its work in a way that makes it possible for us to envisage positive results, even though only in the long term.

On the other hand, we find a very different result in the report of the Conference on Disarmament with respect to the fruitless efforts pursued by the vast majority of its members in connection with the Conference's agenda items on nuclear weapons, items which, in accordance with the Final Document, should be given the highest priority in disarmament negotiations. Item 1 is the cessation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons, an item that has been considered by the United Nations for more than a quarter of a century now; item 2 is the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and the achievement of nuclear disarmament - this is undoubtedly the most important item in the long term; item 3 is the prevention of nuclear war, which in 1978 the Assembly stated by consensus was "the most acute and urgent task of the present day"; and item 5 is the prevention of an arms race in outer space - perhaps the most urgent matter at present. What took place this year in respect of those items at the Conference on Disarmament is a clear example of what the General Assembly, in its resolution 38/62, called "the persistent obstruction of a very small number of its members". The style normally followed in the drafting of the reports of the multilateral body for disarmament negotiations - whether it is called a "committee" or a "conference" - is not, to be sure, the one most likely to give us a clear idea of what has occurred in that body. Furthermore, it is my impression that something that could be of the greatest interest to the 119 Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Conference on Disarmament would be reliable information on the basis of which to make an objective assessment of the reasons that have prevented the Conference on Disarmament from establishing a

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

single subsidiary organ to deal with any of the items to which I have just referred. Therefore, I shall take the liberty of recommending to those who may share my impression that they read the statement I made on 21 August 1984 to the Conference on Disarmament, at its 283rd plenary meeting. I trust that the secretariat has available in New York a sufficient number of copies of the verbatim record of that meeting.

In this statement I shall limit myself to recalling that, in each of those cases, a process has been repeated whose essential elements may be defined in the following way.

First, the Group of 21, which is made up, as everyone knows, of the members of the Conference on Disarmament that are not members of any of the two major military alliances, submit draft terms of reference for the subsidiary organ that it is desired to establish. This draft has been prepared extremely carefully in order to reflect the relevant Assembly resolutions as faithfully as possible and to take into account the views of the other delegations - the only limitation being the desire to prevent some of them, for reasons of internal politics, from attempting to give the organ in question pointless terms of reference with the sole aim of erecting a smokescreen to create the impression that substantive negotiations were being carried out.

Secondly, the Group of 21 makes a formal request to submit the draft terms of reference to the Conference for decision, at a plenary meeting, in order that what occurs there may appear in the verbatim records.

Thirdly, the Group of Socialist States makes a statement, at a plenary meeting, in support of the draft of the Group of 21.

Fourthly, a spokesman of the Group of Western European and Other States makes a statement expressing regret that the "Group must inform the Conference that it is not in a position to join in a consensus concerning the draft terms of reference".

Fifthly, the Chairman of the Conference makes a statement that, in view of the latter statement, it is impossible to adopt the terms of reference proposed by the Group of 21 - which, of course, also implies that it is impossible to establish the subsidiary organ being proposed.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The deplorable course of events that I have just summarized and that is described more fully in the statement reproduced in the verbatim record of the 283rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament - to which I referred a moment ago - furnishes four irrefutable examples of what the General Assembly rightly defined last year, as I have already recalled, as "the persistent obstruction of a very small number" of the members of the Conference.

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

Therefore, the General Assembly should without delay contribute to remedying a situation which, of course, is not that envisaged in the Final Document, which gave rise to the multilateral negotiating forum as it is now composed. In the report that the Conference itself has submitted to the General Assembly this year we find a few possible procedures that could be used for that purpose. I shall confine myself to three, as follows.

The first in our view would provide a final solution to the ill that we wish to cure with regard to the establishment of subsidiary bodies and would be in keeping with what the Group of 21 suggested two years ago in proposing the reform of rule 25 of the rules of procedure of what is today called the Conference on Disarmament, by adding the following provision:

"The norm of consensus shall also not be used so as to prevent the establishment of subsidiary bodies for the effective discharge of the functions of the Conference in conformity with the priorities set forth in the Final Document and in compliance with the provisions of rule 23."

To that end, the Assembly could ask the Conference on Disarmament in one of the resolutions to be adopted at this session seriously to consider the advisability of making that amendment to its rules of procedure.

Secondly, it would be possible to use another procedure which is also expressly mentioned in the report of the Conference, with the same objective. As is stated there, the raison d'être of the body originally known as the Committee on Disarmament was that it should serve as the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum," as was expressly stated in paragraph 120 of the Final Document (S-1012), which the General Assembly adopted by consensus in 1978, and whose validity was unanimously and categorically reaffirmed in 1982. It is therefore difficult to understand why in some members of the Group of Western European and Other States the word "negotiations" provokes - let us not speak of antipathy or allergy - genuine aversion and even horror, as can be inferred from their attitude to the draft mandate to which I have already referred.

Since the negotiating function of the Committee, now the Conference, was established in two Assembly resolutions, both of which were adopted by consensus and both of which we believe no one would think of changing, it would seem that the best way to avoid more vetoes such as the four that we had to endure this year in Geneva and that I have recalled here today, would be for the Assembly, or the

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Conference itself under the Assembly's instruction, to adopt an authoritative definition of what is to be understood by "negotiations" for the purpose of the functions assigned to the Conference. We believe that if that task were carried out in good faith and in a constructive spirit it would not be difficult to adopt a definition acceptable to all, since the word "negotiations" is of itself innocuous and not at all esoteric, as may easily be confirmed by looking it up in the dictionaries of the official languages of the General Assembly, which are the same as those of the Conference.

Thirdly, I also consider it appropriate to refer here to another initiative of the Group of 21, an initiative whose possibilities of implementation could perhaps be profitably considered by this Committee. I refer to the proposal in paragraph 95 of the report of the Conference on Disarmament relating to the question of the prevention of nuclear war. After stressing that the Conference has not been able "even to establish a subsidiary organ to study appropriate and practical measures to prevent nuclear war", it expresses the conviction of the Group that "the General Assembly should take note of this regrettable failure by the Conference and, given the urgency of the matter and the insufficiency of already existing measures, conceive of other appropriate measures to speed up effective action with a view to eliminating the danger of nuclear war".

Of course, these should be "appropriate and practical" measures, aimed at the objective expressly set by the Assembly in its resolution 38/183 G of last year, which was adopted with 128 votes in favour and none against. Obviously, this is demanded by the seriousness of the international situation, and the measures to be recommended must be in keeping with the gravity and imminence of the dangers we are trying to avert, since no one would think of trying to cure cancer with aspirin or to put out a fire with thimblesful of water. Therefore, it is not a question of embarking on an interminable academic exercise, as some would wish and as would be necessary if one were preparing a comprehensive doctoral thesis on the matter. What we should try to do here is to make an effective contribution through the negotiation of concrete measures combining the two characteristics called for by the Assembly to achieve something described by consensus in the Final Document of 1978 as "the most acute and urgent task of the present day". (S-10/2, para. 18)

I now turn to another agenda item which undoubtedly requires the urgent intervention of the Assembly to encourage the Conference on Disarmament to devote

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

itself without delay and without further subterfuge to negotiating seriously and earnestly "an agreement or agreements, as appropriate" (resolution 38/70, para. 4), in order to prevent a nuclear arms race in outer space.

To anyone who has studied this matter, even if only slightly, it is clear that we are here faced with a question that admits of no delay, a problem with respect to which we cannot repeat the error committed with regard to the multiple, independently targetable re-entry vehicles, commonly known as MIRVs, since, as is the conclusion of lengthy studies of the issue by many expert scientists specializing in the matter, "the present moment could very well be almost the last" when it will be possible to stop the deployment in space of destabilizing weapons which would enormously increase the possibility of a nuclear conflagration.

In this regard, it should be recalled that at the last session of the General Assembly patient and lengthy negotiations co-ordinated by the Group of 21 resulted in the withdrawal of two draft resolutions submitted by members of the Group of Socialist States and of the Group of Western European and Other States, respectively, and it was possible to adopt by the most impressive vote - 147 in favour and only 1 against - resolution 38/70, in which the Assembly called upon the multilateral negotiating forum to:

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

"... to establish an ad hoc working group at the beginning of its session in 1984, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space". (resolution 38/70, para. 7)

The Group of 21 put before the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva a draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on this item which reiterated word for word the relevant provisions of resolution 38/70. It requested the Conference on Disarmament to draw up the terms of reference of that ad hoc committee with a view "to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space".

What happened with regard to this matter at the Conference on Disarmament - where, as I have already said, it was impossible to reach consensus on adoption of the mandate submitted by the Group of 21 - leads us to reach two conclusions: first, that those States that take a positive attitude in the Assembly with regard to a resolution should consider themselves duty-bound to maintain that attitude in the multilateral negotiating organ in Geneva, which did not happen, unfortunately, in the case of some of them with reference to the present item; secondly, that if there is such a marked difference as was seen in the Assembly on 15 December 1983, when, as I have also already mentioned, resolution 38/70 was adopted by 147 votes in favour to one vote against, it would seem most advisable for the sole opposing country to change its position and abide by the wise words we find in the Declaration of Independence of one of the nuclear super-Powers recommending the adoption of a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind".

On subsequent occasions, when we successively consider the various items on our agenda, my delegation will have occasion to define its position with respect to several of them, since in this statement I have dealt only with some of the main ones. Now before finishing, I merely wish, by way of a conclusion, to make a few comments on the following two points: first, the fact that we regret that, as was mentioned in the plenary Assembly by the Mexican Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Bernardo Sepulveda Amor, "We are witnessing today a resurgence of old doctrines of power and new forms of intolerance that cast doubt on the usefulness of international organizations" (A/39/PV.5, p. 32), first and foremost the United Nations, whose purposes and principles have always had and will continue to have

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

our unreserved support; secondly, the fact that on 22 May this year the President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid, together with the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Sweden and Tanzania, subscribed to a joint declaration in which, after emphasizing that a nuclear war "even if but part of the currently accumulated weapons were to be used, would bring about the death and destruction of all peoples", it was stressed that while the prevention of nuclear catastrophe "is the primary responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States, it is too important a problem to be left exclusively in the hands of those States".

That declaration, given the high political level and the well-deserved prestige of its authors on matters of peace and disarmament, no doubt strengthens the pressing request that on two separate occasions - in 1982 and 1983 - the United Nations made to the two major nuclear Powers:

"to bear constantly in mind that not only their national interests but also the vital interests of all the peoples of the world are at stake in this question".

Let us hope that the efforts of this First Committee and subsequently of the General Assembly will contribute to the achievement of this objective.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Mr. Chairman, we pledge you the full co-operation of my delegation in the work of this First Committee.

All States represented in this Committee share a great responsibility. The Charter of the United Nations commits us, above all else, to preserving peace and to fostering true social and economic justice. We have all promised to resolve political disputes peacefully; we have all promised never to use or threaten to use force, except in self-defence; we have all promised to respect the independence and territorial integrity of all States.

This Organization provides the only framework within which we can keep those promises and pursue those vital goals collectively. This First Committee of the General Assembly is the work-face. It is here in this Committee that the work of the United Nations directed towards the disarmament dimension of the maintenance of peace and the fostering of social and economic justice is carried out. In this Committee we must lay the foundation of overall international co-operation on removing the threat that arms pose to peace and to full human social and economic development.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The present scale of the global allocation of resources to arms, both nuclear and conventional, casts the longest shadow over humanity that has ever been witnessed. The foundation stones we lay in this Committee will determine whether or not we will be able to move out from under that shadow into the light of real human progress. This is our shared responsibility.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

We will succeed in this work only if we acknowledge the gravity of this responsibility, if we dedicate ourselves to sharing it, and if we recommit ourselves to the principles to which we have all given our solemn promise.

We must refuse the judgement of history that could already now be laid upon us that in this, the last quarter of the twentieth century, we lost our senses, that we became so mesmerized by arms and their alleged power that we gave every appearance of having gone mad.

We must also cut drastically the terrible cost in economic, financial and human terms which the arms race represents. That cost is staggering, and its effects are being felt throughout the whole spectrum of the world economy.

It is not Australia's purpose to point the finger of accusation at any particular Member State; nor do we claim any special ability to see or analyse this situation. But we believe it is important to speak out about these realities as we see them. We believe that none of us will fulfil our responsibility if we do not first acknowledge rationally and fairly among ourselves precisely the shape and consequences of the problems posed by arms.

One of the central issues which must be addressed urgently is the gap that has emerged between the reality of competition in nuclear arms and the associated nuclear strategies and public perceptions - the ideas held about these things in the minds of ordinary citizens around the world.

One reflection of that gap was documented only a few weeks ago in a publication issued by the Public Agenda Foundation here in New York City. That Foundation had conducted an extensive and objective national survey within the United States on attitudes towards nuclear weapons and nuclear strategies. The findings of that survey are detailed, and it would in some respects be unsatisfactory to seek to summarize them. Nevertheless the survey did demonstrate, unequivocally, a widespread belief among ordinary people here in the United States that nuclear war is unwinnable, horrible, unsurvivable.

The same view is held on an equally widespread basis in Australia and, as we all know, in many other parts of the world, including, I presume, within the Soviet Union and the countries allied with it.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The Public Agenda Foundation survey also showed widespread and deep confusion about the ways in which nuclear weapons might be used and about the nuclear strategy and doctrines which exist now. On the other hand, the survey revealed a deeply held conviction that the issue of nuclear war is too important to leave only to politicians and so-called experts. On the contrary, it is believed that ordinary citizens must have a say in any decisions that are made.

A further and I suggest deeply disturbing fact revealed in this survey is that the so-called experts in the field of nuclear weapons and strategy are themselves in thorough dispute and disagreement about the nature, purposes, utility and effects of nuclear weapons. This is so clear that it suggests a situation of the blind purporting to lead the not-so-blind.

I suggest that this situation has four key implications for all of us.

First, we must dismiss any suggestion that nuclear war can be lived with. It cannot be contained. No one would win, and its effect would in fact be total devastation. The position of the Australian Government is that it rejects the notion of a limited or winnable nuclear war. The only logical outcome in this situation, in terms of our own behaviour, is an urgent maximum effort to reduce the number of nuclear weapons held in this world and to do this down to the point where, ultimately, they are eliminated.

Secondly, we must clarify the so-called expert guidance that is proffered with respect to nuclear weapons and nuclear strategy. Much of that guidance purports to be mainly technical in character, when in fact it rests far more fundamentally on key political assumptions. That so-called guidance also often seeks to be reassuring by asserting that everything is under control, that everything will somehow work out in the future. But there is no such comfort. This, the nuclear reality we face today, is the play, not the dress rehearsal.

There is also the argumentation that says that somehow all these things are relative and that certain essential balances or perspectives are involved. Our answer to that confusion of relativism with true relativity is an absolute one. The argument that we should be content with the present because one could conceive of something worse is relativism out of all perspective. The correct perspective is that 50,000 nuclear weapons is vastly too many. Their number must be reduced. The two super-Powers must bring about those reductions, and we appeal to them to do so.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Thirdly, we must accept the responsibility of closing the gap which exists between public perceptions of aspects of nuclear weapons and the harsh and threatening reality of those weapons and of nuclear doctrines. Politicians, officials and experts share this responsibility in the sharpest possible way. It is clear that the people can understand the truth and want to. It is clear too that responsible government rests essentially on an informed understanding by ordinary people of the choices that they and their Governments face. The vitality of that relationship between the peoples and their Governments and between reality and the necessity of choice is at its highest in democratically organized societies. The Australian Government has sought earnestly and responsibly to accept the challenge of dealing openly and truthfully with the people who elected it on these vital issues.

Fourthly, what is at stake in many respects is not just removing the shadow of the arms race but the fundamental question of dealing with the potential conflict between technology and individual liberty. Nuclear weapons have come to be the most visible and dramatic symbol of the threat to that liberty which many people believe is posed by modern technology. Simply, freedom of choice, and above all the choice to continue to live, is seen by ordinary people as being eaten away, if not swallowed up altogether, by ever-growing technology.

Now, anyone who rejects this proposition does so at the cost of ignoring the repeated findings of attitudinal surveys conducted among young people, among our children. Whether those surveys are done in Australia, Western Europe or the United States, a common finding is revealed: far too many of our young people are coming to believe that their own education or the pursuit of job-training is pointless because they fear that at some time in the near future they will be blown away in a nuclear war.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

I am sure that the same would be true if similar surveys were taken and the results published in the Soviet Union and in the countries allied to it. Certainly there has been some indication of this in materials that have been published, for example, from sources in the German Democratic Republic.

The issues we deal with in this Committee have come to form the heartland of current human concerns and, as we all know, they are also the heartland of present international relations. They are the heartland because of the unprecedented scale of the arms race and the impact this has had upon overall international relations and upon the global economy, containing as it does urgent priorities in the developing world. Our responsibility is to work in this heartland with all possible energy.

Our agenda is long, but it includes, in the Australian view, four items of great priority.

It is essential that this world community produce a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Beginning in 1963 a step towards this goal was taken through the negotiation of the partial test-ban Treaty. That was then followed by the threshold test-ban Treaty, the Treaty on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Those agreements are immensely significant pieces of international law, and they contain the commitment to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. That commitment must be honoured. Multilateral work towards such a treaty is among the highest priorities of the Australian Government.

At the last session of the General Assembly Australia sponsored a resolution - resolution 38/63 - which provided a foundation stone for the development of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We subsequently sought to transfer that resolution into a mandate for a working group of the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Our mandate was accepted by the Western Group of States within the Conference on Disarmament, but consensus was withheld, in spite of the fact that our draft mandate was widely understood and supported. This was also done in spite of the fact that, as the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Bill Hayden, pointed out at the Conference on Disarmament on 7 August, while Australia itself very much preferred immediate negotiations, it proposed a draft mandate which would have allowed urgent practical work to be done towards a treaty, and the mandate had the virtue essential to all meaningful and practical nuclear-arms-control proposals, namely, the virtue of the prospect of being acceptable to nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

On that same day, Mr. Hayden also submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a working paper that provided guidelines for the verification arrangements which could and should be made in support of such a treaty. Those who chose to withhold consensus from the Western mandate did so on the stated ground that it did not go far enough because it did not provide for immediate negotiations. We deeply regret that decision and frankly fail to understand the logic which allegedly supported it, that is to say, "If I cannot get everything now, then I would prefer to have nothing".

This did not square with the stated goal of all concerned to bring a comprehensive test-ban treaty into being. It undervalued the work that could have been done under this mandate and it turned away from the obligations which have been accepted in international law.

At this session of the General Assembly Australia proposes again to sponsor a relevant resolution on the urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We are hopeful that it will attract the very great support that the New Zealand-Australia resolution was given last year. We will raise the matter again in the Conference on Disarmament in 1985. We will not give up.

We have complete conviction that what we are seeking here is right, that it reflects widespread international concern and that it is supported by existing provisions of international law. We appeal to those who have resisted this development to reconsider, to think again. There should be no further delay in working out what would be involved in a treaty which would end all nuclear testing - not just nuclear-weapons tests, but all nuclear tests by all States in all environments for all time.

Within the year ahead of us the operation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be reviewed for the third time. That Treaty has made and continues to make an extraordinary contribution to the maintenance of peace and security in this world. There have recently been some statements, mainly by States which have remained outside the Treaty, designed to criticize and sometimes attack this unique nuclear arms control Treaty. I want to record that we regret that. In fact, we reject such attacks.

I want to ask this question: What would today's world look like if we had not had the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in force for the last 15 years? What State can demonstrate that it would be safer, would feel more secure, if that Treaty had not been in force?

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The world would look very different, and it would be a far more dangerous place. Nobody would be more secure than he is today. Finely tuned and over-intellectualized criticisms of this Treaty, I suggest respectfully, completely miss this fundamental point.

Of course the Treaty is not a perfect instrument, and there are many of us who have worked hard to strengthen it. We will continue to do so, especially at the Third Review Conference next year. But the benefits it has brought us all, including those who have stayed outside the Treaty, are unassailable.

Australia possesses over 30 per cent of known deposits of uranium in the Western world. Many Australians have expressed concern about the possibility that the use of uranium for the generation of electricity could contribute ultimately to the spread of nuclear weapons. As a consequence, we have passed through a period in Australia of deep and sometimes passionate debate about the non-proliferation objective and the role of Australian uranium. Many Australians have argued that we should leave our uranium in the ground and that this would be our best contribution to nuclear non-proliferation. But the majority have agreed - and this is the policy of the Australian Government - that the export of some Australian uranium under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and our own national safeguards system, which is among the most stringent in the world, is the surest way for Australia to support the non-proliferation objective. All of this has been done under the vital shield of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We appeal to those who have not yet joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty to come and join. Universal adherence to the Treaty would strengthen it further and thus strengthen further the general peace and security.

We look forward, too, to a positive review of the Treaty in 1985, a review which will reaffirm that the Treaty is working and will consider ways in which we can add to its present very great effectiveness.

In the field of chemical weapons, important progress has been made in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The Australian objective, shared with many, is a comprehensive treaty which would outlaw forever the development, production, stockpiling, storage and, of course, use of those terrible weapons and provide for the destruction of existing stocks. Such a treaty would remove from our life horrible and indiscriminating weapons. It would benefit us all. Australia is actively engaged in this work and believes that every effort must be made to bring it to conclusion as soon as possible.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Looking further into the future, there is the awful prospect that the arms race may extend into outer space. It was therefore a matter of deep concern to us that work on a treaty or treaties to prevent an arms race in outer space could not be advanced this year in Geneva.

Let no one be in any doubt about the disastrous and destabilizing situation we would face if we failed in this objective. In many respects the outer space issue may be the point on which our whole history turns. We must not fail in this task.

In the year since we last met in this Committee there have been many heated exchanges between a number of States, including the two States possessing the largest number of nuclear weapons. I want to question the value of such exchanges.

Surely what is at issue here is the known fact that some of us, including the two major Powers, have very different views about a range of subjects, not least how to solve the problems of arms control and disarmament. But surely the single most important imperative emerging from those differences is the determination to live together and to do so in peace. For that reason it has been encouraging to see recently some significant attempts to put the brake on exchanges which emphasized differences.

Australia is a distinctive country, and the Australian people, for all our varied origins, are a distinctive people. We have some differences with others but we believe that the only way to bridge those differences is to take seriously and at face value the statements and concerns of others - not to dismiss them.

Equally, a search for the obliteration of differences would obviously be futile and would raise the important question of whether any of us want to live in a thoroughly homogeneous world. In some respects - in the whole range of human activities, whether in the political field or in the field of culture and art and research - what is most interesting is the differences rather than the similarities. This is certainly true of nature itself. In taking at face value the statements and concerns of others and then attempting to produce a true and peaceful modus vivendi, it seems vitally important to us that logic and empiricism be allowed a full role.

I want to refer briefly to the two main institutions in which Members of the United Nations work multilaterally on disarmament.

The first of them is this Committee. I have already expressed the Australian view of the importance of this Committee but I want to add this word.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Simply, there are too many competing resolutions on the same subject. The addition of any new agenda item seems inevitably to lead to further competing resolutions. There is also the related problem of the difficulty of getting items off our agenda even when that would obviously be the best course of action.

In making these remarks I am very conscious of how much criticism the United Nations has faced in recent times, most of which was on the basis that it has become a mere "talking shop". It is vitally necessary for us to defend our Organization in terms of public esteem and public opinion. We also clearly need to work more efficiently. More efficient work would do a great deal towards the defence of this Organization.

We hope that it might be possible at some time during this session to explore ways in which serious consideration can be given to some measures of reform in the working methods of the First Committee.

With regard to the other body, the Conference on Disarmament, we believe the issue of mandates has to be addressed anew. The Conference itself has a negotiating mandate under paragraph 120 of the Final Document. It is highly questionable, therefore, whether arguments about mandates for individual Committees of the Conference are either necessary or valid. A substitution of form for substance has started to take place in the Conference. In our view, this must stop. We would be happy to join with others in trying to solve this problem.

I want to conclude by returning to the issue of what I called earlier the reality gap. In some respects we official representatives of Governments participate in the maintenance of that gap, whether willingly or unwillingly. Certainly we are all potential victims of it.

History should serve as a teacher. I think many of us have searched for an analogy in history for the situation we face today, where the experts in nuclear science, technology and strategy have under their control materials and policies which have the potential to kill us all. It is more than interesting that the number of those experts is miniscule, in comparison with the number of people who could be terminally affected by their actions and decisions.

If history can provide an analogy for this situation it may be that of a similar group of "experts" - and they too were experts on matters of life and death - that is, the clergy of the Christian church in Europe prior to the advent of printing. Their literacy in Latin was in many respects an achievement. It certainly brought great cultural benefits. But they too were very few in number in

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

comparison with the population as a whole. They had the expert knowledge that was then expressed in the Latin language and they too, according to the then popular belief, presided over matters of life and death - indeed over matters of eternity.

Then a German craftsman, Johannes Gutenberg, invented printing. The first book he printed was not in Latin but in the language of the ordinary people of his country. From that point onwards certain key aspects of the reality gap between the experts and the people started to disappear.

The age of printing was followed by enlightenment and now, today, by the nuclear age. There has clearly been progress. Our understanding of the natural world was completely reshaped by the theory of relativity. This has brought great material benefits. But will it have been unambiguous progress if it proves to have led to the reinstatement of a miniscule group of experts presiding over life and death on the basis of their exclusive knowledge - not, on this occasion, of Latin, but of atomic science? I doubt it.

What we must all do is close the present reality gap. We must speak the truth to people about what is at stake in the nuclear age, knowing that they will understand, because in fact one does not have to be an "expert" to understand the reality.

We must demonstrate to the people we represent that we acknowledge the reality of a single central point: the urgent need to bring about an end to the current madness of the arms race and to commit all our resources and human ingenuity to peace and social and economic justice.

Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Sir, I should like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the important post of Chairman of this Committee and wishing you success in your work. Your diplomatic qualities are very familiar to us from your work in the Disarmament Committee, and you can certainly count fully on the co-operation of the Soviet delegation in your work.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

As the general debate just concluded in the General Assembly has shown, most States are seriously concerned about the fate of the world, that concern is entirely justified.

Recently, the risk of war has increased, and the foundations of peace have grown shakier. The danger of a nuclear holocaust, far from receding, is becoming ever more real. Never before has the spiral of the arms race climbed so steeply upwards as it is doing now. Moreover, this danger threatens not only States directly involved in a nuclear missile "showdown", but all countries and nations without exception, human civilization, and even life on earth. No one would disagree with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of India, Mr. Mirdha, who said in his statement from the rostrum of the General Assembly Hall,

"Clearly, the dangers of the total annihilation of mankind, indeed, of any life on this planet, are so great and increasing with such inexorable rapidity that we cannot permit ourselves the luxury of either indifference or despair."

(A/39/PV.10, p. 77)

All countries, whatever their differences as regards size, level of development, geographical location or social system, are called upon to unite their efforts in combating this common threat. Here every contribution counts.

We agree with the Foreign Minister of Finland, Mr. Vayrynen, who emphasized in his statement at this session that

"the world has the right to expect that the nuclear-weapon States, which bear primary responsibility for disarmament, act decisively to halt and reverse the course of the arms build-up". (A/39/PV.6, p. 27-30)

As a nuclear Power, the Soviet Union is fully aware of its responsibility for the fate of the world, and it acts accordingly. Possession of nuclear weapons cannot be regarded as some kind of privilege or as the admission fee to an exclusive club. It only serves to place the onus of responsibility on the possessors to see to it that mankind does not stumble and fall into the nuclear abyss. It imposes on them an obligation to seek the limitation and destruction of nuclear arms, which is also the thrust of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and of numerous United Nations resolutions.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

While we shape our policy on the basis of responsibility for the fate of the world, we nevertheless cannot accept attempts to place on our shoulders any share of the blame for the growing nuclear threat. The Soviet Union and the socialist countries are not responsible for that. We have never initiated new rounds in the arms race; quite the contrary, we have always advocated the most drastic arms limitation and disarmament measures. The socialist States have constantly submitted proposals designed to achieve that end; it is not our fault that the other side continues to turn a deaf ear to them.

It is not we who have thwarted the ratification of the second Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT II) or who have been evading the entry into force of the Soviet-United States treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear weapon tests and on peaceful nuclear explosions. It is not we who broke off the talks on prohibiting nuclear weapon tests. It is not we who are rejecting a freeze on such weapons or who are refusing to assume the obligation not to be the first to use them.

It is not the Soviet Union and its allies who have started in Western Europe to deploy new nuclear missiles designed to deliver a strategic nuclear strike against the other party participating in the Geneva negotiations on nuclear arms, thereby making the continuation of those negotiations impossible.

All this and many other things constitute cogent proof of the way in which the policies pursued by the United States and some of its allies have become increasingly confrontational. Such is the stark reality facing the Soviet Union and its allies, and all the countries and peoples of the world. In these circumstances it is out of the question to speak of any sharing - either equal or partial - of the responsibility for the arms race and for the lack of measures which would curb it. That responsibility lies entirely with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bloc.

The Soviet Union wishes to be blunt and candid about this, and to emphasize that today more than ever before there is a need to adopt a policy of realism, common sense and businesslike co-operation in the resolution of the problems facing mankind, above all of the number-one question in world politics: the prevention of nuclear war.

As to President Reagan's statement that the United States is ready to resume dialogue with the Soviet Union on a wide range of questions, including arms control, Konstantin U. Chernenko, General-Secretary of the Central Committee of the

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Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, has replied to questions put to him by The Washington Post as follows:

"If what the President has said about readiness to negotiate is not merely a tactical move, I wish to state that the Soviet Union will not be found wanting. We have always been prepared for serious and businesslike negotiations and have repeatedly said so". (The Washington Post, 17 October 1984, p. A26)

The Head of the Soviet State also pointed out that the vital interests of the whole of humanity require that nuclear Powers observe certain norms in their mutual relations. In our view, those norms could be formulated more or less as follows: to regard the prevention of nuclear war as the primary objective of one's foreign policy, to prevent situations fraught with the risk of nuclear conflict and, should such a risk arise, to hold urgent consultations to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear conflagration; to renounce propaganda which sketches any scenario of nuclear war, whether global or limited; to undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; under no circumstances to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries which have no such weapons on their territories; to respect the status of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zone and to encourage the establishment of new zones of that kind in various parts of the world; to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in any form, not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever such weapons or control over them, not to deploy them on the territory of countries where there are no such weapons, and not to extend the nuclear arms race to new environments, including outer space; and to seek, step by step and on the basis of the principle of equal security, the reduction of nuclear armaments, up to and including the complete elimination of all types of such weapons.

The Soviet Union has founded its policy on those principles.

Our country is in favour of reaching agreement at any time with other nuclear Powers on joint recognition of such norms and on making them binding. That would serve to reduce the risk of the outbreak of a nuclear conflict.

In the present nuclear age, the observance of a principle of State conduct such as the renunciation of the extension of the arms race to outer space takes on extreme urgency. That urgency results from the circumstances of the time, from the realities of nuclear confrontation.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

The extension of the arms race to outer space would not diminish the risk of nuclear war, as claimed by its proponents, but, rather, would sharply increase that risk. There can be no doubt about the plans of the United States for the militarization of outer space.

Plans that have been announced - and, in particular, the presidential directive on space policy signed in the summer of 1982 - provide for the deployment of anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems in outer space, for a free hand in operating various kinds of anti-satellite systems, and for the stationing of the most sophisticated types of weapons, designed to destroy targets on the earth, in the air and on the seas.

Programmes to develop laser and particle beam weapons - the latest types of weapons for use in outer space and from outer space against the earth - are being carried out at a rapid pace. A special space command has been established in the United States; a joint control centre for military operations in space is under construction, as is a military launching and landing facility for reusable space vehicles of the "Shuttle" type; and the entire programme of their use is virtually under the control of the Pentagon. In a word, parallel with preparations for nuclear war on earth, the United States is engaged also in massive preparations for outer space warfare.

In the minds of those who have not abandoned their plans to gain military superiority, space weapons are to play the role of a key element in a first-strike capability.

Let us take a specific plan known by the catchy name of "Star Wars". It would be wrong to believe that it means something harmless, like some kind of science-fiction film. Here again we are dealing with an illusion, for hopes of gaining military superiority by the use of outer space are illusory. But this is an illusion that is lethal for mankind, since it implies the actual development and deployment over United States territory of a large-scale ABM defence system. And, besides, the very word "defence" in this case is misleading. Such a system can only be viewed as designed to deliver a first strike without the fear of retaliation, or in the hope that such retaliation would be substantially neutralized.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

That conclusion is also prompted by the fact that plans to deploy ABM defence systems are not accompanied by the cancellation of the build-up of offensive strategic programmes but, rather, by the accelerated implementation of such programmes. In any case, everybody agrees that an ABM interception system cannot be completely impenetrable, so it is conceived not as a defence against a first strike but as a means of reducing the power of a counterstrike as a result of the destruction of part of the enemy's ballistic missiles in their silos during a so-called preventive attack - or, to use the favourite term of some strategists, a "countervailing" strike.

This is what prominent scientists and competent military and civilian specialists, including those across the Atlantic, are saying. Everyone who is familiar with the problems of military and political strategy knows that the inexorable logic of the modern-age nuclear confrontation is such that plans aimed at creating an extensive ABM defence system pursue offensive rather than defensive goals.

The renunciation of such goals is a major element in a policy of easing international tensions and reducing the threat of nuclear war. It was therefore only natural for the USSR and the United States to conclude in 1972 the Treaty on the limitation of ABM systems, banning the development of anti-ballistic missile systems for the defence of the territory of each of the two countries. That decision has been and remains of enormous fundamental importance in terms of restraining the nuclear arms race in all areas and, consequently, strengthening strategic stability and reducing the risk of war.

It is precisely this cornerstone provision of the ABM Treaty that is being undermined today. There is an open and undisguised policy of destroying the Treaty. Yet we all know that the ABM Treaty was not merely signed but also ratified in accordance with all the rules of constitutional procedure, and, moreover, it is of unlimited duration.

In this connection one cannot help wondering whether the explanation for such a slanderous campaign concerning alleged violations by the USSR of the arms limitation agreements is the need to create a propaganda smokescreen to cover up their own disruptive efforts to undermine the existing treaties, including the ABM Treaty. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, we are convinced that the ABM

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Treaty of unlimited duration as well as the other treaties must be scrupulously observed. The solemn renunciation of the very idea of deploying ABM systems in outer space would be consonant with the spirit and the letter of the ABM Treaty and with the task of securing a peaceful status for outer space, in the interest of all mankind. Such a step would be greeted all over the world as a manifestation of genuine concern for the peaceful future of mankind.

The question of banning anti-satellite weapons also brooks no delay. The deployment of these weapons would lead to a drastic destabilization of the situation and to a growing threat of a surprise attack, and would undercut the efforts to establish trust between nuclear States.

It would be a mistake to think that what is involved here is a kind of a duel which would be fought in distant space and would not be in any way related to the danger of an outbreak of nuclear war. No, the relationship here is most direct. The destruction by one side of satellites carrying no attack weapons but discharging important surveillance and communication functions would enable the attacker to count on "blinding" the enemy, taking it by surprise and weakening its capacity to retaliate in the event of nuclear aggression. Thus, an attack on a satellite would be a bona fide act of war - indeed, an act which could be clearly viewed as preparation for a first nuclear strike.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

As long ago as 1958 the United States began the development of anti-satellite weapon systems under the Spacetrack programme. Ever since, this work has never actually stopped. Back in 1959 the United States Bold Orion missile, which was launched from a B-47 bomber, intercepted an artificial earth satellite. In the early 1960s the United States deployed two ground anti-satellite (ASAT) systems, one on Kwajalein Island and the other on Johnston Island.

A particularly sharp tilt towards the militarization of outer space has occurred in the last few years. The present Administration has refused to resume earlier Soviet-United States talks on ASAT systems. There has been a steep increase in spending on the development of space weapons. This rate of increase by far outstrips the rate of increase in appropriations under other items of the United States military budget. The development of special anti-satellite missiles to be launched from high-flying F-15 fighter aircraft is currently under way within the framework of the ASAT programme. There have already been first tests of this system. Further tests are scheduled.

The Soviet Union is strongly opposed to competition in any arms race, including a space arms race. At the same time, it must be understood that if faced with a threat from outer space it will be forced to take steps reliably to ensure its own security. As has been the case each time the United States has attempted to achieve decisive superiority and to race ahead in new weapons, this time, too, the Soviet Union will be able to give an adequate response to the challenge that has been thrown down at it. The balance will be restored, but at a higher level of armaments. We believe that such a course of events must be prevented in the interests of all States, without exception.

In addition to increasing the risk of global nuclear holocaust, an arms race in outer space will also create other, additional threats to the security of all countries. The logic of the development of space weapons is such that if it were to receive an initial impulse it would soon embrace the entire spectrum of possible uses. In addition to systems for destroying satellites and missiles, other scenarios would emerge for the use of these weapons. The introduction of new generations of space attack systems would turn them into dangerous offensive

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weapons which would constantly hang over this planet and would have the capability of being used instantly against any area or State, against any sea or air transport vehicle, and so on.

Urgent steps are needed to prevent the militarization of outer space before this process becomes irreversible. Otherwise, it may be too late. Not only is it far more difficult to remove the weapons from their arsenals once they have become a reality than it is to prevent their development, but it is impossible not to take into account the fact that the extension of the arms race to outer space will cause its unprecedented escalation in other areas, too - above all, in the area of strategic offensive weapons. The introduction of the arms race into outer space would undermine the prospects for arms limitation and reduction as a whole.

Understandably, the militarization of space, if not checked in time, will consume enormous material and intellectual resources and trigger off unprecedented growth in military spending, thereby limiting the opportunities for releasing resources for the social and economic needs of States. An arms race in space will create insurmountable obstacles to international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of outer space and to the use of the results of scientific and technological progress in this field for peaceful purposes.

The costs of creating a new deadly threat which would hang over mankind will run into truly astronomical figures. Within the next five years alone the United States intends to spend \$26 billion on military space research and development. Experts estimate that the first generation of laser weapon systems alone will cost at least \$100 billion, while the space-based ABM defence system, according to former United States Defense Secretary Harold Brown, could become the first military programme to exceed \$1 trillion.

As to the peaceful co-operation of States in space exploration and in peaceful space programmes in general, it is not difficult to see that their lot will be that of a Cinderella living in a wicked stepmother's house. They will not only face shortages of finance and resources, but will also encounter suspicion, fear, hostility and secrecy, which inevitably accompany preparations for war. As the

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Foreign Minister of Burma justly pointed out in his speech in the General Assembly general debate, today the question is whether

"the world community stands to benefit or be endangered by rapidly developing space technology". (A/39/PV.19, p. 7)

Only guaranteed prevention of the militarization of outer space will provide an opportunity for its peaceful exploration for creative, rather than destructive, purposes. Thereby the way would be opened up for concerted efforts of States in this domain which could eventually result in the establishment of a world organization for the use of outer space for the benefit of mankind.

Recently we marked the twenty-seventh anniversary of the day when the world's first artificial earth satellite - launched by the Soviet Union - ushered in the space age for humanity. The great distance we have travelled along this road within a relatively short historical period of time is illustrated by the record performance of the three Soviet cosmonauts in orbit who recently completed the longest near-earth orbit mission in history - 237 days. They received two visiting missions aboard the Salyut-7 space station. One of them included for the first time a representative of the Republic of India, Rakesh Sharma, who worked together with the Soviet cosmonauts. During the second mission female cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya was the first woman to walk in space. Peaceful space exploration offers vast opportunities for the activities of representatives of various countries.

Konstantin U. Chernenko, welcoming the cosmonaut members of the international crew back on earth, emphasized:

"Our space programme, both national and international, is peaceful by nature. We keep on appealing to the peoples of our planet: Let us together, in a concerted way explore outer space in the name of happiness of the peoples of the world, in the name of a better life for future generations."

Peaceful exploration of outer space, which has become the symbol of spectacular achievements in science and technology, is meant to serve as an effective means of solving many global problems, including that of economic development.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

Today experts in many branches of the economy face the practical challenge of acquiring a new "space-age mentality" - that is, they have to take into account in their work the results of research, scientific and technological experiments and discoveries in space.

Today a new space-age mentality is also called for in international politics. The human race has now reached yet another frontier in its history. The necessary physical and intellectual potential has been accumulated to start large-scale space exploration for peaceful purposes. In this connection, unparalleled vistas are opening up for the development of human civilization. But at the same time the very survival of people will be put in unprecedented jeopardy unless man's entry into outer space is governed by a goal shared by all States and nations - the goal of peaceful co-operation - and unless weapons are barred from outer space once and for all. This is what the Soviet Union suggests we must work for, and work for in a comprehensive way without leaving any loopholes for the militarization of outer space.

(Mr. Troyanovsky, USSR)

True to our principled policy of blocking the spread of arms to outer space, one year ago we submitted a draft treaty on the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the earth. This treaty would provide in particular for a complete renunciation of anti-satellite weapons, including the destruction of any such weapon systems already in existence. To facilitate reaching an agreement, the USSR has unilaterally declared a moratorium on the placing of anti-satellite weapons in outer space for as long as other countries do likewise.

The Soviet initiative has been widely supported in the world. The General Assembly has urged the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on the elaboration of agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space. One hundred and forty seven countries voted in favour and only one voted against. Every attempt by socialist countries and States members of the Group of 21 to get negotiations started at the Conference on Disarmament, in pursuance of resolution 38/70, has been blocked by that Power with the actual assistance of some of its allies which cast their affirmative votes at the United Nations, only later to advocate at the Conference a study of the problem rather than its practical resolution through negotiations. There is and can be no justification for the refusal to start working on appropriate practical measures within the framework of the Geneva Conference.

Another major step has been our initiative in calling for Soviet-United States talks on preventing the militarization of outer space, which was spelled out in the statement of the Soviet Government on June 29 last. We believe that the USSR and the United States, as the leading Powers in the exploration of outer space, should do everything they can to keep outer space peaceful and, in particular, they should lay the foundation for multilateral arrangements with a view to accomplishing this task.

Full responsibility for the failure to hold these talks rests with the United States side. As a precondition for the talks with the USSR on the prevention of the militarization of outer space, the United States has in effect demanded that they be merged with the talks on medium-range nuclear arms in Europe and on strategic arms, to put it differently: to merge them with the talks that Washington itself has wrecked. This was an attempt to change the subject of the talks. And even when the United States response dealt with the subject of outer

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space, there was a timid reference to the possibility of considering a certain approach to the subject. The purpose of this negative response is clear: to make it appear as if the United States Administration really favoured negotiations. In fact there was not even any wish to hear about the Soviet proposal to establish a reciprocal moratorium on the testing and deployment of space-based weapons as of the start of the talks.

As was stated today by Mr. Chernenko in response to questions put by The Washington Post - to which I have already referred -

"We are ready to engage in negotiations in order to start work and conclude an agreement on the prevention of the militarization of outer space. This would include the total renunciation of anti-satellite systems, and from the day the talks began there would be a reciprocal moratorium on the testing and deployment of space weapons. This has been the exact formulation of our proposal from the very beginning. We await Washington's response."

The Soviet Union is opposed to this reckless policy of promoting the arms race. Speaking at this session the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union stressed:

"We urge the United States Government to recognize that the militarization of outer space threatens the whole of mankind, including the American people themselves. We express the hope that the United States of America will refrain from actions which would make irreversible the process of turning outer space into an arena of military rivalry and that it will be willing to engage in talks with a view to reaching an agreement. For its part, the Soviet Union continues to be in favour of starting such talks as soon as possible." (A/39/PV.10)

Reaching agreement on the prevention of the militarization of outer space would be vital for all mankind. Moreover, it could in a way add to the elements of mutual trust in Soviet-American relations, elements that they so badly need. Such agreement as has been proposed by the Soviet Union would not only prevent an arms race in outer space but, more importantly, facilitate the solution of the problems of limiting and reducing other strategic weapons. And this should be emphasized in particular.

The cause of preventing the militarization of outer space brooks no delay. Every possible effort should be made to move it off the ground. We believe that the United Nations should exert its full authority to ensure that the exclusion of

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outer space from the sphere of the arms race become a mandatory norm of State policy and a generally recognized international obligation and that all channels for the militarization of outer space be reliably blocked.

In seeking to promote this goal in every possible way the Soviet Union has proposed the inclusion on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly of an important and urgent item entitled "Use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of mankind" and has also submitted a draft resolution on the subject which we officially present for consideration by the First Committee.

This initiative is an extension of the consistent policy of the USSR aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space and is one of the major areas where the Soviet Union is making efforts to avert the risk of nuclear war. The idea is that no attack weapons of any kind - conventional, nuclear, laser, particle beam or any other - should be placed and deployed in outer space, whether on manned or unmanned systems. Space weapons of any basing mode should not be developed, tested or deployed either for anti-ballistic missile defences or as anti-satellite systems or for use against targets on earth or in the air. Any such systems already in existence must be destroyed.

The use of force in outer space and from space against earth, as well as from earth against objects in outer space, should be prohibited for all time. In other words, the USSR proposes that agreement be reached on a radical solution of the question of preventing the militarization of space - on banning and eliminating the whole class of space attack weapons, including anti-satellite and anti-missile space-based systems, as well as any land-based, sea-based or air-based systems designed to destroy objects in outer space.

Agreement on banning and eliminating the whole class of space-attack systems clearly lends itself to reliable and effective verification of compliance by both sides with their obligations. Verification is made easier if only because of the fact that our proposal calls for a complete ban on developing such systems and for elimination of the few that have already been developed.

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This new Soviet initiative is aimed at a comprehensive solution to the problem of guaranteed prevention of the militarization of outer space and ensuring on that basis the possibility of its peaceful use and exploration. Its implementation would be crucial in terms of assuring human progress and diminishing the risk of nuclear war.

The United Nations should raise its voice in favour of an early elaboration through negotiation of appropriate reliably verifiable agreements on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

It is clear that, notwithstanding the importance of the exclusion of outer space from the arms race, such a measure alone will not solve the problem of preventing nuclear war, but this is one of the major areas of reducing the nuclear danger. Advancement in that area should in our view give impetus to progress in all other areas, thus leading to the consolidation of the foundations of peace and international trust, the prevention of nuclear catastrophe and, eventually, to the ruling out of the very possibility of such a catastrophe.

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): Mr. Chairman, in these critical times, faced, as we are, with unprecedented tension in relations between the major Powers and an escalating arms race, may I say how heartened we feel that a personality of your calibre is presiding over the deliberations of this Committee. We hope they may prove adequate for the exigencies of our time.

My felicitations and wishes are also extended to the other members of the Bureau.

As we near the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the significance of the effective functioning of the United Nations on the problems of the arms race and disarmament, and particularly their close relationship to international security, has to be examined more closely - particularly bearing in mind the experience acquired from the process followed so far, for over three decades, in futile negotiations on disarmament agreements, in which the need effectively to halt the arms race through international security has been wholly disregarded. This is a matter that should be given more serious consideration at the present juncture.

This situation cannot continue. The arms race has two original causes: first, the intense polarization of nations soon after the establishment of the United Nations; and, secondly, and more importantly, the lack of international security through the United Nations as required by the Charter - and as generally

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

expected - as a result of the default of the major Powers in not providing the Security Council with the means of giving effect to its decisions.

The drafters of the Charter could not conceive of the United Nations as functioning without an effective Security Council. They therefore gave the Security Council the means to enforce its decisions. It is the only organ of the United Nations whose decisions are enforceable. But they have been rendered unenforceable through non-compliance with the requirements of Article 43, vis-à-vis a United Nations force to give validity and effect to Security Council decisions and consequently to make the United Nations meaningful. The United Nations is therefore in effect a lame duck, deprived of its essential function.

I believe that in order to proceed at the present juncture we have to get co-operation between the two major Powers. But co-operation is not to be sought in disarmament measures, which is a negative function, but in international security through the United Nations. That is what is meant by the Charter. The Charter does not at all require the Members to disarm. That was a requirement of the League of Nations, whose direct purpose was disarmament. The United Nations, realizing the causes of the failure of the League of Nations, turned to international security as the means of attaining disarmament and peace. But this question of international security is ignored and bypassed by the major Powers, and consequently by the other Member States, which follow suit.

We cannot ignore, however, the fact that the Charter specifically provides for disarmament as part and parcel of international security, and that this is clearly spelled out in Article 11:

"The General Assembly may consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments ...". Disarmament and the regulation of armaments are included as part and parcel of international security. Therefore, it is of primary importance to have international security in order to have disarmament.

With regard to the experience acquired from the process that has been followed for more than three decades in futile negotiations for disarmament, without regard to international security, we ought now, at the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, to enlighten the peoples of the world so that they can stand up and say "We want international security through the United Nations as a means to attain disarmament".

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

Now, why are negotiations for disarmament futile? The reason is simple. In order to have successful negotiations for disarmament, there must be parity in weapons. Since they rely on weapons for security, they have decided that we need parity in weapons. But parity is never agreed upon by both sides for the simple reason that, to make sure it is safe, each side wants an edge of superiority, and therefore they are never at one regarding parity and consequently they can never have disarmament.

So after 39 years, at the fortieth anniversary, are we now going to continue this vague process? Are we not here to exercise reason and logic? Or are we here to quote what was said last year and the year before, and continue adopting countless resolutions all aimed at particular aspects of disarmament, forgetting the fundamental need for international security?

I am expressing a view that I am sure is, and should be, shared by all the peoples of the world - that what we need are effective disarmament negotiations. Only through international security can there be such negotiations. If we ignore the Charter, then we ignore the means of proceeding to effective negotiations for disarmament.

I want to say a few words about this concept, which is always repeated, that they must have negotiations for disarmament based on parity. Parity requires that there must be inspection, control and verification of the weapons possessed by each side. That would be interference in the affairs of the States concerned in order to engage in inspections and confirm that there is such parity. Therefore it is never attainable and has never been attained. And we are now faced with the fact that there has been no disarmament at all. Disarmament is a stagnant pretence and the arms race is a galloping reality.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

These are the two aspects of the problem, and I am taking this opportunity to raise my voice to say that we must change the course of events. I shall return to this at a later time, but for now I would say this: we must deal with the real causes of the present situation in which there are so many wars, wars being waged for years without either side coming to the Security Council. Why? Because they know that if they come to the Security Council they cannot expect to have any enforceable decision, even if there is a decision in their favour. As a result, we are working against the United Nations, against peace and security, if we continue in this course.

I should now like briefly to refer to General Assembly resolution 38/73 H adopted last year, which requests the Security Council to expedite the conclusion of the agreements making armed forces available to the Security Council, as required by the Charter, to render operative the collective security system provided for in the Charter and thereby facilitate productive negotiations for the cessation of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race, and for progress on disarmament. That resolution further requests the Security Council to submit a report to the General Assembly at its present session. It was adopted by 133 votes to none, with only a few abstentions.

I repeat, what we need is a change of approach to the whole problem of disarmament and peace, and the change of approach is to comply with the Charter of the United Nations. I reserve my right to go into greater detail at another time.

Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas): On many nights when perhaps the entire international community is dreaming I lie awake pondering whether anyone in this Committee is alarmed at, confused about or bored with the robotic way in which we perform our duties. Each year we come here and make impassioned or rhetorical statements, but attitudes remain fixed to the extent that talk of flexibility and compromise means acquiescing only if the other delegation could incorporate the wishes of one side of the issue. In looking at the agenda I see once again a proliferation of items that contain minute differences in substance. I envisage within a few weeks an inundation of draft resolutions identical in most cases except for the aspect of the dog-in-the-manger syndrome, which is unfortunately becoming the modus operandi of our deliberations. The whole process of familiar arguments will soon rear its head and, except on perfunctory and tired matters, we shall be unable to adopt consensus texts.

(Mr. Hepburn, Bahamas)

It may well be asked why my delegation has decided to make these opening remarks seem accusatory rather than complimentary. There are several reasons. First, the Bahamas is vulnerable - as, indeed, are all small, developing, militarily insignificant States - to the fall-out from any mistakes that are made regarding security and economic development. Similarly, it would be a beneficiary of positive progress. Of course, we would prefer the latter.

Secondly, it is assumed that small States can do little to change the status quo regarding the arms race. That is why my Government is desirous of finding and working with like-minded nations that would prefer to seek solutions to the arms race rather than promote confrontation among the militarily significant States.

Thirdly, the Bahamas, not being a power broker in any major or minor negotiations on this sensitive subject, must rely on frank observations and expressions as a means of awakening genuine concern and encouraging respect for the purpose of the United Nations.

Fourthly, during those waking hours to which I referred earlier, I came to the conclusion that a voice in the wilderness must continue to be heard. Consequently, I would not wish my silence to be misunderstood.

Fifthly, and most important, as my delegation does not have any arms policy comments to propose, it must therefore rely on the views expressed by Member States, particularly the militarily significant ones, in order to advise our Government and to make recommendations as to the contributions it can make towards curbing the arms race.

I realize that disarmament presents a monumental challenge, but in these trying times I am heartened by a Biblical historical account of the wisdom of King Solomon, who, in executing his onerous task as a leader, admonished his subjects to remember, inter alia, that:

"There is a time for everything under the sun: a time for birth and a time to die; ... a time for making love ... a time for war and a time for peace".

(Ecclesiastes 3 : 1 et seq.)

My delegation feels that now is the time to show greater seriousness about the results of our work. I realize that we are here to carry out instructions and therefore must uphold the national interests of our Governments. Yet we must also support the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and make bold attempts

(Mr. Hepburn, Bahamas)

to implement that course of action necessary to strengthen international security, establish goodwill, confidence and trust among nations and make suggestions that would enhance the credibility and image of the United Nations.

In his 1982 report, the Secretary-General said of the disarmament question:

"We live ... in the presence of a chilling and unprecedented phenomenon. At the peak of world power there exist enough nuclear weapons to destroy life on our planet. It seems evident that nothing worthwhile would survive such a holocaust, and this fact, above all else, contains the nuclear confrontation - for the time being at least." (A/37/1, p. 1)

In his 1983 report, the Secretary-General said:

"In no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of humanity than in the field of disarmament and arms limitation. The prevention of nuclear war remains the unique challenge of our time, since such a war would be the ultimate negation of all human endeavour. While the international community as a whole is deeply concerned with this vital problem, the key to its solution is in the hands of the two major nuclear Powers." (A/38/1, p. 2)

The Secretary-General's 1984 report states:

"The international community's inability to solve many of its problems, whether political or economic, even when it could agree in principle on what the solution should be, gave rise to a process of sidestepping the United Nations and recourse to other measures - force, unilateral action or confronting military alliances - which weakened reliance on the Organization." (A/39/1, p. 3)

Delegations will notice very clearly that in the first two of the above-mentioned reports of the Secretary-General there is a focus of attention on the danger of nuclear arms and the need for its eradication. In his most recent comment on the issue, he concentrated on the role of the Organization and how it is being or could be eroded because of a breakdown in the understanding or acceptance of the international body as a mediator in universal conflicts.

(Mr. Hepburn, Bahamas)

It is also clear that the Secretary-General's reports have fallen on deaf ears. In fact, despite the escalation in the wake of arms proliferation, we are still dawdling with rhetorical, repetitive resolutions querying how to reduce tension, eliminate conflicts and avoid the threat of nuclear war. In response to the report of 1982, the General Assembly managed to produce a watered-down ineffectual resolution on some of the questions raised regarding security and responsibility, but since then the whole issue has been stalemated in a sea of well-chosen phrases.

I ask myself constantly: if there is concern and if there is a desire to rid the universe of these abhorrent weapons of destruction, what is to prevent us from trying during this session to deny the "me first" doctrine and rely more heavily on the call for interdependence?

We are told often that there will be no progress until and unless the two super-Powers agree to reason in the arms race. Anthony Lewis in an editorial in The New York Times of 24 November 1983 said:

"What makes this time so frightening is our awareness that Soviet-American relations are not only bad but spiralling downward. Things are out of control. That is the feeling, and it is reason to fear a fatal miscalculation."

Of course, almost one year has passed since that comment was made, and there have been recent signals that serious negotiations would be resumed by the super-Powers. My delegation not only welcomes the initiative but also makes an appeal to the super-Powers to consider their differences as a positive yardstick for ensuring that the resumption of talks could produce a balanced and committed agreement. It may seem presumptuous and excessively naive for my delegation to consider such an exercise as a simple humanitarian responsibility, but I do so with the understanding that there is total acceptance of the premise that, as we are all in the same boat, the final outcome of any concrete deliberations on the part of the super-Powers would be of interest to us all.

Mr. Chairman, turning my attention to the programme of work, my delegation has no objections to your proposals on either the organization or the timetable. I am pleased to see that certain of the formulations of our past Chairman, Ambassador Vraalsen of Norway, are incorporated in your plan of action. At the

(Mr. Hepburn, Bahamas)

thirty-eighth session I particularly appreciated the innovative idea of "cluster" groups of items even though I had some difficulties with the use of the word. As an aside, the term reminded me of cluster bombs, which I am given to understand are much less harmful than other sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. I accept the addition of "cluster groups" to the United Nations jargon in the hope that the use of cluster bombs will be eliminated.

At this juncture I wish to point out one other factor. The clusters were responsible for what my delegation considered some very puerile and absurd actions on our part. There were emotional discussions on some groupings and virtual silence on others, even though few could disagree with the emphasis or main concepts outlined in the several texts. My delegation is convinced that as a result of last year's experiment we have proof that there could be further streamlining of our agenda. Despite our fallibility and imperfection, my delegation is further convinced that we could show even greater unanimity in our efforts to make general and complete disarmament a reality.

Last year the Bahamas delegation reiterated its Government's policy to support all efforts geared towards the reduction of the arms race. Yet I must be honest in saying that oftentimes conscience negated support for measures that seemed geared to promote greater polarization or non-implementation. This was true of several resolutions on nuclear weapons. In essence my delegation found certain arguments convincing, but the motive seemed to contradict the purpose. Consequently, we could not readily support one resolution over the others, even though my delegation was in total agreement with the main thrust of the texts. We hope that there will be a greater determination to combine all these overlapping sentiments into one strong and effective document. As has been stated on many occasions, the Bahamas Government categorically condemns nuclear, conventional, cold and all other kinds of war, but expresses some uneasiness about the current emphasis being placed on the need for elimination of nuclear war. There has to be a greater balance.

We need to be somewhat more realistic about the definition of general and complete disarmament. It cannot become a realizable goal as long as we have a power struggle and a belief that well-stocked arsenals preserve peace.

Strobe Talbott in the December issue of Time magazine says:

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"Arms control can be a very complex, esoteric subject. I have tried to bring a human dimension to it by describing the forceful personalities who shape policy on both sides of the negotiating table."

It seems to me that that is the real challenge with which we must all contend.

In sum, all nations have a responsibility. Let us not talk here of the degree, even though the importance of that fact cannot be denied. Among the many issues that confront us, let us not forget that in order to promote international strength and justice disarmament measures must be linked with the security of States; there must be a link between disarmament and development. In the same way as we cannot ignore the threat that the arms build-up poses to the preservation of humanity, we cannot overlook the need to agree on confidence-building measures. In view of the fact that South Africa's nuclear capability is no longer a secret, it behooves Member States to study the issue in conjunction with that régime's policy on apartheid and determine what concerted pressures could be brought to bear in order to prevent the South African Government's use or threat of use of that capability. We need also to consider seriously the merits of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to encourage all States to become parties and to abide by the rules and regulations.

The following statement by Mahatma Gandhi summarizes the responsibility of the international community:

"If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on real war against war, we shall have to begin with children; and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have to struggle; we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions; but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with peace and love for which consciously or unconsciously the whole world is hungry."

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to embarrass you unduly by listing your many talents and capabilities. As far as performance is concerned, I trust that you will be consoled by the simple fact that you will be far from the worst Chairman this Committee has known, and my delegation will give you its unreserved support.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): Sir, it is indeed a pleasure for me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Having had the opportunity and privilege of working with you in the then Committee on Disarmament, I have come to respect your deep commitment to the cause of disarmament and your manifold contributions to its furtherance. We are certain that the work of the Committee will be fruitful and successful in view of your knowledge and experience of the issues before us.

I should also like to take this opportunity to felicitate the other officers of the Committee and its new Secretary.

When we were meeting last year in this same room the international atmosphere prevailing was one of insecurity, anxiety and frustration. I think members will agree with me when I say that the same situation is still very much with us now.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

We are living in an increasingly insecure world, because nuclear weapons - the weapons of mass destruction - far from being reduced have been multiplied in terms both of numbers and of annihilating capacity. And these weapons are mainly in the possession of the two super-Powers, whose relations with each other have deteriorated sharply. Justifiably there continues to be anxiety among us, not only because conflicts in many parts of the globe have not decreased in their intensity - the consequences of which include the unconscionable loss of life and property - but also because the ramifications of the conflicts have widened, expanding beyond national borders. A sense of fear and frustration pervades us, because there seems to be no substantive motion regarding the world's most pressing problem - the prevention of nuclear war - in spite of the existence of concrete initiatives towards its solution.

Regrettably, such a situation seems to have become a common feature of practically all multilateral negotiating forums. My delegation, like others, had sought on many occasions in the past to explain the various factors which, in our view, had brought about this unfortunate result. The only conclusion one can draw from such an analysis remains the same: there is a lack on the part of some of the nuclear Powers of political will commensurate with the demands for survival of mankind made by the great majority of nations.

We have always thought that the advent of nuclear weapons has radically transformed the international landscape. It hardly needs to be recalled that nuclear weapons themselves are the symbol of the superiority of a handful of States compared with the great majority of non-nuclear-weapon States. Such a phenomenon has existed since the 1950s, and it has steadily grown. Moreover, the possession of these weapons has tended to be used as leverage to influence relations between the nuclear Powers. At the same time, the test of nerves reflected in the one-upmanship that fuels the arms race has left the great majority of States in the position of helpless spectators. Hence, the claim of a commitment to progress is not substantiated by the reality, which is one of mere lip-service, for they continue irrationally to view the context of the arms race, especially in its nuclear aspects and attendant doctrines, as being able to strengthen and safeguard their security at the expense of others.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Improvements in nuclear weapons, rendered possible by testing, have had a profound impact upon qualitative aspects. The nuclear arms race has also led to the endless drive to produce more varied, accurate and effective nuclear weapon systems. Any step towards the further improvement of nuclear arsenals on one side has been followed by similar efforts on the other. Thus, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the technological thrust of nuclear weapon development produced spectacular results in improving the range, yield, accuracy, manoeuvrability and survivability of nuclear weapons. The trend for the 1980s and beyond also manifests these many and varied aspects. There is, moreover, a pronounced interest in further technological innovation, augmented by very large investments in research and development. Compounding these developments are unilateral decisions regarding targeting these weapons in total disregard of the all-encompassing common security of all States. This cumulative and unsettling situation is the major challenge facing our collective wisdom and resolve during this session.

An international environment characterized by a relentless arms race has contributed immeasurably to mistrust, suspicion and adverse political relations. We are confronted by a virtual deadlock in all negotiating forums on disarmament and by a suspension of crucial nuclear arms control negotiations. Hence, the Conference on Disarmament finds itself in an impasse; its efforts are being continually impeded, especially on a total test ban, on a comprehensive programme of disarmament, on the prevention of nuclear war, and on nuclear disarmament. Even subsidiary bodies and their mandates to deal with these issues have not yet been established and agreed upon. In this regard, proposals by the Group of 21 representing the lowest common denominator of the positions held by many members have failed to obtain a consensus.

While the sole negotiating machinery and even the implementation of United Nations decisions remain stalled, painstakingly negotiated formulas for consensus have been subject to a process of steady erosion. To use a poignant example, the Final Document of 1978, the international consensus on a disarmament strategy, has remained a dead letter. Moreover, I need hardly remind members of the disappointing outcome of the twelfth special session, on disarmament, held in 1982. The result is very often a lamentable retreat from positions officially endorsed by this forum.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

It is high time that we faced up to the dismal reality of the lack of responsibility, in order to draw away from the brink of total arms control failure.

Indonesia regards the question of the prevention of nuclear war as being of paramount importance and as affecting all of mankind. This has acquired heightened urgency, given the continued emphasis placed on doctrines of fighting a nuclear war and other emerging strategic concepts that countenance the use of nuclear weapons. To describe the situation otherwise would be to conceal or distort the truth. We must therefore identify ways and means with which to confront this most critical issue facing the international community. We find in the position of the non-aligned countries concrete proposals and specific courses of action. These include a freeze on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of their delivery systems, and the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This should be followed by substantial arms reduction negotiations in the context of the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, it is only such a bold and sweeping approach that can address the danger of nuclear war and the threat of mutual annihilation.

One way to overcome the stalemate is to seize the opportunity offered by existing agreements and to build upon them a new and viable framework for nuclear arms limitation. Given the potential inherent in the partial test-ban Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the anti-ballistic missile Treaty and the first and second Treaties on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT I and II), serious commitment is now imperative to multilateral negotiations at this time, which is particularly critical for the future of disarmament. The interrelationship of the factors of security and disarmament necessarily dictates further integrated action to achieve a comprehensive test ban, to strengthen the non-proliferation régime, and to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Reflecting the long-felt global concern for the cessation of nuclear weapon tests, the General Assembly has over the past three decades adopted a succession of resolutions. The importance of this issue has been further underscored by its inclusion in a number of arms limitation treaties now in force. Moreover, trilateral negotiations conducted from 1977 to 1980 had resulted in agreements on all substantive aspects. Consequently, given the long-standing commitments and the progress made, there is no justification for delaying the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting all nuclear weapon tests.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains, in our view, one of the most important elements in disarmament. It is undeniable, however, that in several ways it has resulted in a monopoly on nuclear weapons and on control over international decision-making about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In the same vein, all anti-proliferation policies are in the category of denials. In fact, these policies are on a nation-to-nation basis rather than a multilateral one. Thus, nation-based action has led to resentment, discrimination and denial of equivalent rights. Moreover, it is a fearsome fact that, while a great majority of members are signatories and have scrupulously observed the Treaty's provisions, the number of nuclear weapons has multiplied many times over since it came into force in 1970. This unequal emphasis on the goal of horizontal proliferation has de-emphasized the equally important question of vertical proliferation. In sum, the balance of obligations and responsibilities is given a perverted and unilateral interpretation: all rights and privileges have been reserved exclusively for the nuclear Powers, while the non-nuclear States have become the sole bearers of obligations.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Despite these misgivings, my Government has ratified the Treaty, in the firm belief that effective measures should be taken at the national level and through international agreements to contribute to the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime. The failure of the Second Review Conference, however, has belied our hopes and expectations. This setback cannot be attributed to the non-nuclear States. Our sole concern during the third review conference, to be held next year, is to achieve a decisive breakthrough to ensure the validity of all the provisions by all the parties, and hence future durability.

With regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, Indonesia has always emphasized the relevance of the regional approach to security and disarmament. We view it as complementary to the global approach. Further, the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones is yet another approach to a further strengthening of the non-proliferation régime. Non-nuclear States can make significant contributions to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament through the creation of such zones. Moreover, our Organization has endorsed regionalism within the framework of nuclear-weapon-free zones. This is reflected in the proposals and resolutions every year for the establishment of such zones in various parts of the world. In this regard, I should like to inform the Committee that the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia was endorsed by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) during the meeting of its Foreign Ministers last July. As a follow-up, a working group is entrusted with the task of identifying guiding principles and modalities.

The comprehensive and universal character of the technological arms race has also penetrated outer space. In the past, publicity about satellites and space activities focused on their peaceful aspects and applications. Consequently, there was little debate in our forum about the military uses of outer space. Lately however a potentially destabilizing arms race in space has been looming large on the horizon, with its attendant dangers. If this is allowed, the gains already achieved in the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space for the benefit of all mankind may well be in jeopardy. In this context, it is pertinent to ask whether the relevant provisions of the existing treaties related to outer space are in consonance with the objective of an agreement on total demilitarization. Since outer space has been proclaimed as the common heritage of mankind, it is incumbent upon all States to consider seriously practical ways and means to ensure its preservation exclusively for peaceful purposes.

In view of the importance Indonesia attaches to the prohibition of chemical

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weapons, my delegation would like to express its views on certain aspects of this question.

History has already demonstrated the magnitude of the devastating effects on human beings and other living structures caused by the use of these weapons. Hence, our position on non-use is motivated solely by this reason. We are therefore committed to seeking a total ban on all their forms and methods of use, including environmental warfare agents such as herbicides. I should also like to stress the need to separate the obligation to destroy chemical weapons from the possibility of their diversion for peaceful uses.

My delegation is gratified that negotiations on a chemical weapons convention have progressed in the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that the momentum achieved will be carried further in resolving the many complex issues involved.

I have so far confined my remarks to weapons of mass destruction and related issues. This should not be construed to mean that we are oblivious to the menace posed by conventional armaments. Nor can we fail to note that the bulk of military expenditures in the world is being devoted to conventional weapons. Moreover, the increasing sophistication of these weapons - a fearful development in its own right - should not be overlooked in the concern created by the terrifying spectre of nuclear arms.

The report (A/39/348) of the Secretary-General on a study on conventional disarmament draws attention to the meager results achieved both within and outside the United Nations framework. As the report concludes, the conventional arms race is a divisive factor in relations among States, contributes to political tensions and undermines the prospects for peace. The report seeks to identify approaches that could lead to progress without perpetuating the existing asymmetries in the security of States. I recommend this study to all members for reflection and concerted action.

On the efforts to transform the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, my delegation has noted the divergence of views on certain fundamental aspects which stand in the way of convening the international conference on the Indian Ocean. In view of the complexities of the issues involved, it is the view of my delegation that the conference would represent the first step in a series to identify the principles and mechanism for the attainment of the objectives embodied in the 1971 Declaration. Therefore, despite the inordinate delays, we should move ahead and establish a firm but realistic time-table. I should like to recall the appeal to the great Powers and major maritime users made by my Foreign Minister, in his

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plenary statement at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 27 September, to facilitate the earliest convening of the conference in Colombo and thereby initiate negotiations on all relevant questions.

In the same context, Indonesia, situated in a strategic region, has noted disquieting trends of increasing naval build-up and the development of new naval arms systems. Such ominous developments will add a potentially destabilizing dimension to the over-all arms race. The decision by the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly that a group of experts should carry out a comprehensive study on all aspects of the naval arms race to analyse their ramifications is most opportune.

Against the unfortunate backdrop of total suspension in virtually all negotiating forums, the urgency of our task should be self-evident. We have witnessed the spectacle of unfulfilled commitments and one-sided proposals and even the questioning of the sanctity of existing agreements. Hence, we can no longer tolerate priority issues being relegated to the background under the pretext of their complexity, or any other self-serving reasons. My delegation is convinced of the existence of possible areas for the formulation of broad-based agreements. In this context, the recent contacts between the two major Powers may have generated some guarded optimism, but it can be sustained only by an immediate resumption of negotiations. At the same time, the considerable political and technical expertise acquired by the Conference on Disarmament renders it an indispensable multilateral negotiating forum. If allowed to play its role, it is bound to strengthen bilateral and regional talks which are today floundering.

Our assessment and appraisal must be tempered by the reality that progress has always been difficult. We must none the less remain committed to our objectives. Ultimately, we cannot approach our formidable task with the option of failure, as the questions before us impinge upon vital issues of mankind's very survival. Therefore, frustration and disappointment, setbacks and stalemate must never be allowed to dilute our commitment to ensuring a safer, more secure world, for our generation and posterity.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform members of the Committee that on Wednesday morning, 24 October, the Committee will hold a special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.