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5th meeting
held on
Thursday, 18 October 1984
at 3 p.m.

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. de SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MURIN (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): Permit me first of all, Sir, to extend to you my sincere congratulations on your election to the important post of Chairman of the First Committee. The Czechoslovak delegation will co-operate actively in the achievement of positive results in our Committee's work at this session.

The present session is taking place at a time of an increased nuclear threat and heightened tension throughout the world. This dangerous situation has arisen as a result of the policy of confrontation and escalation of the arms race pursued by the aggressive circles of imperialism, particularly those of the United States, which this year has reached a new critical stage. The production and deployment of new first-strike nuclear weapons systems and other types of weapons of mass destruction has been accelerated, and a real danger has arisen of the arms race being extended to new spheres and getting out of control. The endeavour to achieve, at all costs, military superiority over the socialist countries and the pursuit of a policy of strength, interference in the internal affairs of other States, throttling the national independence and sovereignty of States and fanning hotbeds of tension and crisis situations, combined with the policy of state terrorism practised by certain Governments, have brought the world one step nearer to the brink. Naturally, this course of events is worrying and alarming for the peoples of the world, who demand resolute action to reduce the level of military and political confrontation and, first and foremost, to eliminate the threat of nuclear catastrophe which hangs over the head of mankind.

This question must be accorded the very highest priority on our agenda for it holds the key to the solution of all other global problems. To attempt to preserve peace without resolving this question could soon be beyond man's power. We are convinced that if the States Members of the United Nations take this position and evince the political will and determination necessary to stem the rising tide of nuclear adventurism this session could produce significant and positive results in this respect.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

To achieve this goal, it is necessary, first of all, to renounce the policy of confrontation and to display a realistic and constructive approach to proposals aimed at erecting moral, political and material barriers to the launching of a nuclear catastrophe. It is necessary to abandon doctrines and concepts which attempt to argue the "admissibility" of nuclear war, and authoritatively to reaffirm the condemnation of such war as the most atrocious of crimes against humanity. It is necessary to refrain from attempting to impose one's own positions and interests on others through military pressure and to return to productive and constructive talks based on the principle of equal security.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic stated in the general debate:

> "Together with our allies, we have already expressed our willingness and readiness for such negotiations in a wide-ranging set of important peace initiatives aimed at reaching agreement on the most vital current problems." (A/39/PV.20, p. 36)

Now as before, we consider that it would be an important step towards averting the danger of a nuclear conflict if States possessing nuclear weapons assumed the commitment not to make first use of such weapons. The conclusion by nuclear Powers of a convention which would contain such an international legal obligation as proposed by the Soviet Union would undoubtedly become a powerful guarantee of peace and it might become a starting point for the adoption of subsequent concrete measures designed to limit and reverse the nuclear arms race. We think that the current session of the General Assembly should do its utmost to put this important and urgent measure into practice.

The same approach should be adopted, in our opinion, in respect of the Soviet proposal that the conduct of nuclear Powers be governed by certain binding norms and, in particular, that those Powers undertake to regard the prevention of a nuclear war as the primary objective of their foreign policy. The draft of such norms formulated in the statement of Konstantin Chernenko in March of this year constitutes, in our view, an extraordinarily important and timely contribution to the efforts aimed at securing peace, improving the international situation and reducing the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear conflict. This is a far-reaching proposal, whose implementation would meet the fundamental interests of all States, promoting the restoration of stability on a global scale and a general strengthening of confidence. We hope that the consideration of this proposal at the present session will be directed towards the creation of political prerequisites which would make it possible for these norms to be accepted and declared binding by all nuclear Powers.

An important role in creating material guarantees for the prevention of a nuclear war could be played by an agreement on a nuclear-weapons freeze by all nuclear Powers or, as a first stage, by the Soviet Union and the United States. A nuclear-weapons freeze would certainly be an important step towards halting the nuclear-arms race and successive reductions of existing nuclear armaments up to the complete elimination of all kinds of those weapons. The idea of such a freeze, which was supported by a decision of the General Assembly last year adopted at

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

the initiative of the socialist countries, has met with wide international approval. In this connection, we wish to commend the call of the Heads of State and Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania of 22 May of this year addressed to the nuclear Powers to halt immediately all tests, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and delivery systems and to proceed subsequently to substantial reductions of nuclear armaments. In our opinion, it is necessary that the General Assembly once again pronounce itself resolutely in favour of a nuclear-weapons freeze and call upon all nuclear-weapon States to create conditions for putting the relevant United Nations recommendations into practice and achieving such an agreement as soon as possible. It is a fact that the prospects for concluding an agreement on this significant measure are worsened to the same extent as the well-known plans aimed at achieving military and strategic superiority become reality.

Something we consider to be of fundamental importance too is the speedy elaboration and conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The adoption of such a treaty would be, at least in practice, tantamount to erecting an obstacle to the further development of nuclear armaments and of new, more dangerous kinds of such weapons. We view with alarm the refusal of the United States to engage in constructive work for the drafting of such a treaty, disregarding repeated appeals of the General Assembly and the wishes of the overwhelming majority of countries. By creating artificial obstacles to the conclusion of a treaty, imposing ultimatums and pre-conditions and rejecting the constructive proposals of the socialist and non-aligned countries, it is just perpetuating the nuclear-arms race and making such weapons ever more dangerous and sophisticated. We believe that the General Assembly should resolutely concentrate its efforts on overcoming the stagnation on this significant question.

A significant place among the measures designed to avert the nuclear threat is held by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the régime which it set up. We attach great importance to all-round strengthening of that Treaty and to a further increase in the number of parties to it. For its part, Czechoslovakia will do its utmost to promote good preparations for and the successful outcome of the Review Conference on the implementation of the Treaty to be held next year. Taking into account, inter alia, the dangerous military and political situation which has arisen in the world, we consider that any weakening of the operation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would be extremely risky. We hope that this position will be maintained by all States Parties to that Treaty.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

Among the most pressing problems of the day, high priority should be given to to preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space. States Members of the United Nations cannot passively watch the incessant growth of the threat of nuclear war not only on land, in the air and at sea but also in outer space. The urgent need to solve this question has been highlighted by the implementation of programmes to produce space weapons designed to strike targets in outer space and targets on earth from outer space. The most sophisticated types and systems of space armaments - conventional, nuclear, laser, particle beam and even other kinds of weapons - are becoming more and more real. Space command centres are being established and the existing systems of strategic and tactical weaponry are being adapted for the purpose of carrying out a first strike in conjunction with the new space weapons. The arms race is thus assuming a qualitatively new dimension and is multiplying the possibilities of the outbreak of nuclear war and the subsequent catastrophe. From the economic point of view, expenditures on these programmes are supposed to exceed all the moneys hitherto spent by mankind for destructive purposes. Despite this, negotiations on this most important question have reached a stalemate, for which, as is well known, the United States must accept the blame. It is hardly possible to agree to what is proposed by a group of Western countries at the Conference on Disarmament, namely, that consideration of this question should be confined solely to the "identification of the issues relevant to the prevention of the arms race in outer space". No constructive response has been made so far to the proposal of the Soviet Union to start bilateral Soviet-United States talks on this issue. The approach put forward by the Soviet Union envisaging both the prohibition and liquidation of the entire weapon class of "space attack systems" shows us the proper way towards reliably blocking off all channels towards the militarization of boundless outer space.

We have given our careful consideration and full support to the new important Soviet initiative submitted at the current session in respect of the adoption by all States of the historic undertaking to ensure that outer space is used exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind, which could lead in the future to the establishment of a global organization to that end.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

It would meet the vital interests of nations if the United Nations intensified its efforts aimed at implementing its other important decisions. Among them are decisions aimed at conducting negotiations and reaching agreement on such issues as the adoption of a programme of gradual nuclear disarmament, the provision of reliable security guarantees for non-nuclear States, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world and the prohibition of the development and production of new kinds of mass destruction weapon systems, including neutron weapons.

Deep concern has been caused by the new complications in the solution of problems related to the prohibition of chemical weapons. The ongoing talks on this issue at the Conference on Disarmament, which had already begun to move forward, have again become caught up in the web of deliberately created artificial obstacles embodied in the United States draft convention submitted last April. The essence of that draft consists in abandoning the understanding already achieved on a number of disputed aspects of the problem in question while at the same time raising new controversial questions that have no direct relation to chemical weapons. It is impossible to hold practical negotiations on such a basis. We think the General Assembly should call for the stepping-up of practical work aimed at concluding a generally acceptable, realistic text of a convention based on the progress already achieved, including that noted concerning verification.

At the current session, profound concern has been expressed by States in connection with the substantial deterioration in their economic conditions. The position of the socialist countries on this issue is unambiguous: in the Declaration of the member States of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance adopted at the highest level last July it is stated: "The halting of the arms race is the most important condition required also for the improvement of the economic situation in the world".

The Czechoslovak delegation and the socialist countries have been consistently striving to solve the problem of reducing military budgets and putting forward constructive proposals to that end. We cannot be blamed for the fact that no progress has been made in solving this issue for many years either. At the beginning of March this year, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty launched

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

another constructive initiative related to freezing and reducing military expenditures. They proposed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member States that talks be started on freezing and reducing military expenditures, talks in which other countries could participate, particularly those possessing major military potentials. The importance and the topical nature of this initiative need no proof. And what was the response from NATO? Silence so far. This year the General Assembly should express its support for a truly constructive approach to this problem.

The question of limiting so-called conventional armaments, which constitute an ever more dangerous component of the destructive arsenals of States and tie up tremendous material, financial and human resources, has become much more pressing. As new, ever more sophisticated kinds and systems of conventional weapons are developed, the line dividing this kind of weapons from weapons of mass destruction becomes fuzzier. This process produces a further destabilization of international relations and an intensification of the military and political confrontation. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic considers that the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly should come out strongly in favour of negotiations aimed at limiting the conventional arms race.

We support the highly topical proposal of the Soviet Union that at this session the General Assembly should categorically condemn the policy and practice of State terrorism. This proposal is designed to ensure that relations among States will be peaceful in nature and that mutual trust will be strengthened. Consequently, its implementation would considerably facilitate the solution of the pressing problems of disarmament.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

Particular concern about the fate of peace is aroused by the fact that the United States and its closest allies in NATO have opened a new and highly dangerous phase in the nuclear arms race in Europe and have brought about a sharp rise in the level of military confrontation by embarking upon the deployment of new United States intermediate-range nuclear missiles on the territories of the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy. This has caused a heightening not only of military but also of political tension, the cause of dialogue has suffered and the process of negotiations has been disrupted. The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, including Czechoslovakia, have thus been forced to take the necessary defensive countermeasures and to proceed with the deployment of operational tactical missiles having an increased range. The responsibility for such a course of events lies exclusively with the United States and the Governments of those countries which, in disregard of the interests of their peoples, have decided to allow the deployment of United States first-strike nuclear missiles on their territories. The only way out of this dangerous situation is the immediate discontinuation of the deployment of such missiles and a return to the situation that existed last autumn.

We attach great importance to the work of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security- Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, and we hope it will adopt measures for the achievement of an overall reduction in the level of confrontation and the creation of political, legal and material guarantees for peace and security.

Guided by the conviction that the desire of the peoples for peace should assume the form of specific undertakings on the part of States, the Warsaw Treaty States earlier this year took another major step forward in the interest of European and global security, by making an appeal to the member States of NATO to conclude a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. The essence of such a treaty, as emphasized in the Political Declaration of the Warsaw Member Treaty States adopted in Prague on 5 January 1983, could be the mutual undertaking by the States belonging to the two military groupings not to be the first to use either nuclear or conventional weapons against the other and thus not to be the first to use any kind of military force against the other.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty have called upon all the member States of NATO to redouble their efforts in the interest of détente, improving the political climate in mutual relations and strengthening confidence and world peace. To that end, they have called for a new phase in the deliberations on the proposed treaty, that is, to begin consultations on a multilateral basis. Such consultations would be open for participation also to all other interested European countries and they could cover both the idea of concluding such a treaty in general and the basic components thereof.

Our appeal represents a concentrated expression of the experience of the peoples of the world and the conclusions they have drawn from their painful history. The concluding of the proposed treaty could make an effective contribution to improving the situation in Europe and have a favourable impact on the international climate in general. It would be in conformity with the hopes of the peoples of the world, which are expecting tangible measures towards the achievement of international peace and security. We are convinced that our proposal reflects the aspirations of the international community today and the essence of historical experience, as it represents an endeavour to remove the threat of nuclear destruction and to turn away from confrontation and towards co-operation.

To that end we have been taking an active and constructive part in the negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Together with our allies, we have made efforts to overcome the deep stagnation that has prevailed in those negotiations for so long. As will be recalled, the major obstacle to the achievement of an agreement has been the numerical barrier artifically erected by the Western participants in the talks with the aim of exerting pressure on the socialist countries. In our view, the question of numerical data can be resolved on the basis of the principle of equal security without any further delays, provided that all the participants in those negotiations show the necessary political will therefor. A decision to that effect is contained in the set of proposals submitted by the socialist countries in 1983, and we are still waiting for a constructive response to those proposals.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

The improvement of the climate and the strengthening of security in Europe would be greatly served by the implementation of the well-known proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in northern Europe, central Europe and the Balkans.

Today we hear a great deal of talk about the necessity and desirability of dialogue. In this regard, I wish to emphasize that Czechoslovakia, like the majority of countries, attaches fundamental importance to the strengthening and broadening of fruitful and constructive dialogue as a necessary condition for the effective resolution of the problems of disarmament and of all other problems in international life. For our part, we have long and resolutely striven to bring about such a dialogue, and we are gratified when other countries state that they are willing to proceed in the same manner. However, we judge such statements in the light of subsequent specific deeds, since there is no other criterion for judging the sincerity of the statements. For example, it is difficult to believe in the sincerity of appeals for dialogue made by a State which in the last few years has broken off at least five bilateral or tripartite negotiations on a number of important issues related to the limitation of the arms race, a State whose position constitutes the main obstacle to the achievement of progress at the Conference on Disarmament, as well as in the United Nations and elsewhere, a State which is openly bent on achieving military and strategic supremacy.

(Mr. Murin, Czechoslovakia)

We shall of course continue to do everything possible to promote the restoration of genuine and constructive dialogue, based on the renunciation of a policy based on a position of strength, on the principles of equality and equal security. With this idea in mind, the Czechoslovak delegation intends, as it has done in previous years, to develop further the ideas of the Declaration on International Co-operation for Disarmament, adopted on our initiative in 1979 and, as our experience has proved, these ideas remain as relevant as ever. We hope that our approach will meet with support on the part of the Members of the United Nations and, for our part, we are ready to concert our efforts with all States in order to resolve the fundamental problem facing mankind today - removing the threat of nuclear war hanging over our heads, and bringing about a peaceful future for our planet.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call upon Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, current President of the Conference on Disarmament, who will introduce the report of the Conference on Disarmament on its work in 1984.

Mr. CROMARTIE (United Kingdom): I should like first to offer you my congratulations, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. You are well known to nearly all of us, and I need only say that the chairmanship of the Committee could not be in better hands. I assure you of my full support in reaching a smooth and successful outcome of the Committee's work, both on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation and in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, in which capacity I am addressing the Committee today.

I have the honour to present to the First Committee of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament on its work during the 1984 session. The report is contained in document CD/540, which has been circulated as Supplement No. 27 (A/39/27) of the official records of the General Assembly. Copies of the report are now available in English and will be available shortly in the other working languages.

The annexes to the report are being circulated to all Member States of the United Nations in the working languages as soon as they are received from Geneva. They contain the list and text of documents issued by the Conference, as well as the indices of statements by country and subject, and the verbatim records of the Conference.

(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

Members of this Committee will observe that, in pursuance of the decision taken last year, the then Committee on Disarmament became the "Conference on Disarmament" on 7 February 1984, the date of the commencement of the 1984 annual session. This change in designation has no financial or structural implications and the rules of procedure continue to be the same. The change of designation has not in any way changed the role of the Secretariat.

The agenda for the 1984 session of the Conference appears in paragraph 9 of the report. The Conference considered proposals by members as to how best to deal with the agenda items. The annual report gives a comprehensive picture of this consideration, including the views of the different schools of thought in the Conference. Although some progress was achieved in certain aspects of the Conference's work, it was not possible to move forward in certain other areas. Although the Conference has done much exploratory work in examining the items on its agenda, it is still in the pre-negotiating phase with regard to some of them. Generally speaking, the lack of progress reflects the existence of unresolved tensions and disputes and, above all, the lack of that mutual trust among nations which is an essential basis for the successful negotiation of measures on disarmament. An improvement in the negotiating climate is needed for the Conference to produce better results. Other members of the Conference will share my hope, I think, that the work of this session of the General Assembly, and in particular of this Committee, will contribute to the required improvement by fostering as wide a consensus as possible on the subjects of our deliberations.

Negotiations have begun, under the item on chemical weapons, on a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. The Conference's Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, under the able guidance of Ambassador Ekeus of Sweden, has, thanks to his tireless efforts, produced a substantial report, which is incorporated in the report of the Conference before the Committee today. It sets out the very considerable areas of common ground that have been identified in this field, and will provide an excellent basis for the continuation of the negotiations next year. The Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will again meet in January, before the Conference itself reconvenes in February, in order to give the work of the 1985 session a flying start on this subject.

(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

The question of selecting additional members of the Conference, on which the Conference reached agreement in principle last year, is covered in paragraphs 17-20 of its report. The Conference was aware of the urgency of this question but did not reach consensus on the election of additional members. It did however agree at its 1984 session that two candidates should be nominated by the Group of 21 and one each by the socialist Group and the Group of Western countries so as to maintain balance in the membership of the Conference. The Conference will continue its consultations with a view to taking a positive decision at its next annual session, and will inform the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly of it. It will fall to my successors in the chair during the 1985 session of the Conference in Geneva to conduct the necessary consultations leading to a decision by consensus of the Conference as a whole. In the meantime I should be happy to contribute further in any way I can to the resolution of this problem during the rest of my term of office as President before the beginning of the 1985 session.

The Conference also considered proposals by members for its improved and effective functioning and took note, with appreciation, of a working paper containing certain conclusions relating to the agenda and programme of work and other organizational and procedural matters, including questions relating to subsidiary bodies, the annual report, the composition of delegations and documentation. The Conference intends to keep this matter under continuous review.

Finally, I should like to thank the members of the Conference on Disarmament for their co-operation in the preparation of the report now before the General Assembly. I am sure that I am speaking for all of them in expressing our thanks to the Secretariat of the Conference, under the distinguished leadership of Ambassador Jaipal, for their admirable assistance not only in preparing the report but throughout the year. The Conference on Disarmament is deeply indebted to Ambassador Jaipal for his signal services to the Conference, for the wise and impartial guidance he has given to us, in the very best traditions of the international civil service, in his capacity as Secretary-General of our Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I should like to add a special word of thanks of my own for his unfailing help and advice to me, especially during my period as President of the Conference.

Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Permit me at the outset, Sir, to convey to you the congratulations of my delegation on your election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee. Your diplomatic abilities and wide experience in the field of arms limitation and disarmament will contribute to the success of the Committee's work.

I should like to take the opportunity also to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election to their important posts.

The course of this debate reflects the questions of great concern that occupy people's minds today, namely, the maintenance of world peace and the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe. It is the responsibility of this Organization, under its Charter, to relieve peoples all over the world of that concern. The German Democratic Republic is actively involved in the endeavours of the overwhelming majority of Member States to achieve an improvement in international relations.

To my country, which celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of its foundation a short time ago, this is a historical obligation. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, recently reaffirmed before representatives of the peace movement:

> "From the first day of its existence the German Democratic Republic has devoted all the strength first and foremost to working for the maintenance of peace and the permanent safeguarding of it. Disarmament, détente and the peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems have been and continue to be the primary objectives of our policy."

The principal guideline of my country's foreign policy has always been and continues to be the need to do everything possible to prevent a war ever again starting from German soil. We wish to reaffirm that commitment today, on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War in Europe and the foundation of the United Nations.

The German Democratic Republic has participated in shaping the system of European East-West treaties which have strengthened peace on our continent. We make no demands directed against the legitimate interests of any State, nor do we make territorial claims of any kind, and we strongly object to the intentions of those in certain circles to the west of our border who would like to revise the post-war order.

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

The bold and internationally acclaimed declaration of the six Heads of State or Government of 22 May rightly states: "Today the world is balanced between war and peace". We believe that the root causes of this situation are the political ambitions of those in the most aggressive imperialist circles, because the pursuit of world-wide hegemony is contrary to the interests of peoples; talk of "overcoming the division of Europe" - a formula which excludes peaceful coexistence - puts peace in the utmost jeopardy; and the temporary recognition, so to speak, of European borders is a glaring contradiction of international agreements and solemn declarations, including the Helsinki Final Act.

Further causes lie in military ambitions with those policy goals in mind. These include the drive for military superiority and supremacy, to build up first-strike capabilities and for opportunities for nuclear blackmail, all of which give rise to an acute danger of nuclear war; the stepped-up arms build-up and deliberate confrontation, which provide no basis for peaceful coexistence; and the deployment of new, additional United States first-strike weapons in Western Europe with a view, as has been stated, to upsetting the existing military strategic balance.

In order to determine who is responsible for the dangerous exacerbation of international tension it is sufficient to ask the following questions. Who is constantly starting new military programmes, extending as far as into outer space? Who, in the past few years, has unilaterally broken off four rounds of bilateral negotiations and deliberately blocked two others? Who is rejecting the multilateral negotiation process, particularly concerning nuclear problems? Who is simulating readiness to negotiate in order to cover up arms build-up programmes?

The answers to those questions show that the difference in the approaches to the most urgent tasks in the field of arms limitation and disarmament is a matter not of rivalry but rather of two opposing lines of policy. Since 6 August 1945 - since Hiroshima - history has shown that in regard to the position on nuclear weapons there have been two absolutely different approaches. On the one hand there is a straight line leading from the first use of a nuclear weapon at that time to today's refusal to forgo a first nuclear strike and on the other hand there is an equally straight line leading from the Soviet Union's proposal of 19 June 1946 on

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

the prohibition of the production and use of nuclear weapons to the solemn pledge made by the USSR on 15 June 1982 at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Our guiding principle is the preservation of peace and the renunciation of any ambition for military supremacy. In no case, however, will the socialist States permit the military superiority of imperialism, because that would constitute a mortal danger to the peoples of the world. We prefer to maintain the military strategic balance at continuously decreasing levels; therefore the deployment of United States nuclear weapons which is under way in Western Europe urgently called for appropriate countermeasures.

The Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and other socialist States issued a very timely and urgent warning of the consequences of the deployment of those missiles.

Our necessary countermeasures have been taken strictly within the scope of what has become indispensable because of the steps taken by the other side, and the socialist countries have stated that if measures are taken which will lead to the dismantling of the United States missiles already deployed they will simultaneously take steps to cancel their own countermeasures. That would pave the way for relevant agreements on freeing Europe from both intermediate-range nuclear forces and tactical nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

We agree with the President of the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly when he pointed to the need to stabilize the strategic balance and to make the utmost use of all possibilities contributing to understanding and co-operation among peoples. It is imperative and a matter of urgency to strive for a new qualitative improvement in international relations. People need and expect a positive change-over from arms build-up to disarmament, from confrontation to fruitful international co-operation. That objective can be achieved on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security for the parties. The Prague Declaration, the appeal of the Budapest meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee of members of the Warsaw Treaty and the Declaration of the summit meeting of the States of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance not only demonstrate goodwill but also contain a comprehensive peace programme which takes account of proposals made by many other States.

The German Democratic Republic considers the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe the key question of the day. As the General Assembly noted in its resolution 38/75, adopted at the initiative of the USSR, the unleashing of nuclear war would be the most monstrous crime against peoples and in a nuclear war there can be no victors; even the aggressor will not escape the deadly consequences of his own actions. Doctrines about nuclear war being feasible and winnable and about the limited and selective use of weapons are illusory and at the same time lethally dangerous.

Profoundly concerned about the continuing existence of such concepts, in May of this year the German Democratic Republic submitted to the United Nations Disarmament Commission a study of these aggressive doctrines of nuclear warfare and called for their condemnation. Warnings issued by eminent scientists in the East and the West about a "nuclear winter" in the wake of the massive use of nuclear weapons are, in our view, not just mere horror stories to frighten impressionable persons. The consequences predicted as a result of scientific research on the climate, atmosphere and vegetation on earth and the survival of human civilization itself are a serious warning to all the peoples of the world. The struggle to bring about urgent practical measures to prevent nuclear war has gained

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

considerable ground in the last few years. Credit for that goes to the United Nations and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, as well as to the powerful world-wide peace movement - and that gives some hope to mankind. The statement contained in the Final Document of the United Nations first special session on disarmament - "Removing the threat of a world war - a nuclear war - is the most acute and urgent task of the present day" (resolution S-10/2, para. 18) - has turned out to be wise and correct.

The socialist States favour material, political and international legal measures to avert the danger of nuclear war. To this end, in April of this year at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, they submitted a detailed programme for appropriate negotiations.

We entirely agree with the demand of the non-aligned States that this task should be included as a matter of the highest priority in the agenda of the United Nations and the multilateral negotiations on disarmament. The relevant resolutions adopted at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly make clear the path we must follow at this session in order to make a tangible contribution to the lasting preservation of peace. It is in that spirit that the German Democratic Republic will submit its proposals in the First Committee.

Nuclear-weapon States, of course, bear a great responsibility. The realities of the nuclear age require that they live up to that responsibility. Therefore, the German Democratic Republic welcomes and supports the USSR proposal, based on experience that has been gained, for an agreement on a code of relations among nuclear-weapon States. That would be a step forward in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations Charter, would help to build international confidence and would constitute a milestone on the path towards nuclear arms limitation and disarmament.

Because of its geographical location at the line of intersection between the two most powerful military blocs, and particularly after being faced with the recent deployment of additional and qualitatively new United States nuclear weapons in Western Europe, the German Democratic Republic has a vital interest in the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons. The demand for such a pledge is of world-wide importance owing to the spread of nuclear weapons to various parts of the world, something which is being resorted to increasingly by the major

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

imperialist Power. In the light of that, the significance of the bold step taken by the USSR in 1982 is becoming ever more evident. We expect that the nuclear-weapon States which have not yet done so will make the same commitment. This could also be done by means of an intergovernmental agreement in an international legal document.

Anyone who tries to dismiss an internationally binding renunciation of the first use as "declaratory" is practically robbing international law of its force and value. After all, international law includes the obligations of States with regard to certain actions or positions. The limitation on the demand of non-first-use merely to one weapon system does not - in so far as it concerns nuclear weapons - weaken the principle of or the demand for the non-use of force in the United Nations Charter but would, rather, make it more concrete in terms of the nuclear age. But our proposals go beyond that.

The seriousness of the intentions of the socialist States in putting forward far-reaching initiatives to avert the danger of nuclear war and strengthen the United Nations Charter is manifested in their Budapest appeal of 7 May 1984. In it the Warsaw Treaty States have proposed to the States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that a treaty, open to all parties and binding under international law, be concluded on the reciprocal non-use of force, containing the following substantive points: the obligation not to be the first to use either nuclear or conventional weapons; a pledge by all the parties to the treaty to work towards the cessation of the arms race, the limitation and reduction of armaments, and disarmament; and agreement on measures to avert the danger of surprise attack.

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

At the Stockholm Conference the socialist States have repeatedly declared their readiness to negotiate in the broadest sense on such a treaty, taking into account every realistic proposal. Like the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act or the series of European treaties of the 1970s which gave substance to the principle of non-use of force, this socialist negotiating initiative is aimed at strengthening the principle of non-use of force as embodied in the United Nations Charter. It is well known that Western States participated in producing these documents.

The call for a quantitative and qualitative freeze on nuclear weapons is now being voiced world-wide. As stated in resolution 38/73 E, conditions are propitious for such a step because of the existing rough nuclear parity between the two major military Powers. A freeze is not an end in itself. It would mark the beginning of a process towards nuclear disarmament. A freeze is verifiable. But to demand strict verification while working to build nuclear weapons systems that can hardly or not at all be verified is a contradiction in itself. The appeal to Washington by Foreign Minister Gromyko of the USSR, who said, "Let us set such an example", requires a constructive response.

It is already evident that ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space and preventing an arms race in that promising environment for mankind is rightly one of the priorities of the work of the First Committee this year. The importance of urgent measures in this field is only too obvious. The Soviet Union's constructive approach to this goal has been expressed in its proposals of 1981, 1983 and 1984. The new initiative of the USSR on the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind meets the people's expectations and aspirations and is in keeping with the unequivocal vote at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly on resolution 38/70. Our activities at this session should culminate in decisions which would finally enable the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to make a start on the multilateral negotiating process on this subject and give it the highest priority. Bilateral negotiations as proposed by the USSR could enhance this development.

The German Democratic Republic advocates the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Europe and in other parts of the world. It continues to support Sweden's

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

The socialist States are not only ready for serious talks but they actually insist upon them because we have to resolve problem number one in today's world, that is, the prevention of nuclear war and, proceeding from there, we must address the other global problems facing mankind.

We must free the resources necessary to build a world from which we will have banished underdevelopment, hunger and illiteracy, a world where people can live confident of peace and security.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform members of the Committee that this year more delegations than in the past appear to have indicated their wish to make statements in the general debate on the disarmament items on the agenda. I would therefore at this stage once again recall that the Committee's programme of work, as contained in document A/C.1/39/2, does not preclude the right of any delegation to make a statement of a general character during the period to be devoted to statements on specific disarmament items, which will commence on 29 October 1984. The Secretariat has already taken note of the delegations that wish to avail themselves of that opportunity.

I would urge other delegations that still wish to make general statements during the period 29 October to 12 November kindly to inscribe their names on the list of speakers before the deadline for the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate, which is Friday, 19 October, at 6 p.m.

May I ask delegations that wish to speak on specific disarmament items to make every effort to be prepared to address those issues starting Monday morning, 29 October.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.