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Chairman: Mr. SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ALBAN (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, first of all I wish to congratulate you on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and I should like to wish you every success in your difficult work. We are certain that your acknowledged competence will make it possible for considerable progress to be achieved in our work. I also express my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee.

The biggest question confronting the United Nations since its establishment has been what level of weapons is to be considered right for a country, to what extent are weapons necessary for the security of a country and in what way do they affect its economic and social development. Many theories have been put forth in interminable discussions without our succeeding in elucidating these important ideas.

The truth is that today, for political, ideological, religious or economic reasons, the representatives of all States have declared themselves enemies of the arms race and have expressed their hope that gradual, sustained disarmament will take place to the limits considered strictly essential for the internal and external functioning and security of States.

(Mr. Alban, Colombia)

Almost all the intellectuals of the world at large have shared that view as they see in weapons a source of concern because of the threat that they constitute and because they divert resources that could be used for matters of greater interest for the different communities.

Almost all resolutions submitted to the General Assembly on the question of disarmament have been adopted in past years by consensus, but they have not yet been implemented. In areas where conflicts have appeared it has been very difficult for the world Organization to work for disarmament.

In June 1978, the Assembly entrusted the Secretariat with the preparation of a study, with the help of qualified governmental experts, on the possible link between disarmament and development. That study was submitted in September 1981 and was the work of individuals of the highest competence in this field. Some of the speakers at that session referred to the study for some months, but today, it seems that the topic of disarmament and development and the study formulated as a result have been relegated to a secondary position. The representatives who have spoken in this forum have referred to the item briefly, making passing reference to problems which seem so complicated that they are not considered to warrant preferential treatment. But the fact is that the situation has become worse in recent years. As we look through the pages of that document, A/36/356, and the forecasts of military expenditures contained in it for the years 1980 to 2000, we see that the figures have gone beyond the most pessimistic estimates, in other words, figures that pointed to a spiralling arms race. It seems that the \$685 billion estimated as military expenditures for 1990 will be reached by the mid-point of this decade and there is no sign of hope whatsoever that that phenomenon will be slowed down.

Sometimes we wonder whether what happened is that States feel more insecure today than they did a decade ago, or whether the super-Powers have reached such a degree of distrust that they consider the arsenals that they have already accumulated as insufficient for their security. In this connection, considerable light is shed by an interview that was granted some time ago by the Secretary of Defense of the United States to the journal l'Express when he stated that the defense budget of his country was not prepared in Washington but rather in Moscow, since the military expenditures of his country had to respond to the level of weaponry attained by the other super-Power.

(Mr. Alban, Colombia)

The truth is that the capacity of weapons to fulfil their objective of providing security becomes more debatable day by day, although the increases in the quality and quantity of them are generally considered greater threats to peace and security. We all understand today that the future security of all nations is and will be threatened by factors such as declining prospects of economic growth, limitations that afflict certain societies and the increasingly unfair distribution of the wealth of mankind.

It is not our intention to discuss what levels of military might would make a State lose its fear of attack or military pressure or what would make it possible for it to control internal disorder because security is a prerequisite for sustained economic and social development.

However, I cannot help but think that the nuclear arms race is outright squandering of resources since the arsenals already accumulated by any of the super-Powers are already enough to destroy mankind, and it is clear that the world cannot be destroyed more than once. It is of the greatest interest to all peoples that the powerful countries feel secure from the military point of view so that they can from then on lend their decisive support to resolving the real problems of security that cloud the future of the poor peoples of our world.

The current wishes to achieve security among nations go far beyond the question of the simple military might of possible adversaries. The economic growth rate of the third world countries has been reduced and almost wiped out. Considerable shortages have begun to be noted in important raw materials, the environment has deteriorated more and more and the process of the concentration of wealth in certain rich nations has become more pronounced. All of those problems are interrelated and dovetailed in a complicated situation from which no nation can escape.

(Mr. Alban, Colombia)

We are fully aware that these situations can be overcome and that the world of today can find a way to improve the well-being of peoples; but very little can be achieved if international co-operation is not strengthened and made more resolute and if differences are not resolved by peaceful means.

Therefore, it would not be superfluous for a peace-loving country such as Colombia to make an appeal for greater awareness of problems which without doubt seriously influence the security of nations. My country wishes to participate in all crusades for peace in our hemisphere, not the least of which are efforts made by the Contadora Group, composed of Panama, Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia, in the search for harmony in Central America. Now that one stage in the work of the Contadora Group has been concluded, we can take deep satisfaction in the fact that the peaceful solution of disputes is not a concept lost in the United Nations Charter.

My country regrets that atomic tests are being conducted by the Government of France in certain islands of the South Pacific, because we consider them harmful to the marine fauna, the environment and the regulation of the climate. The member countries of the South Pacific Organization, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, have regarded France's response to its requests for the suspension of such tests as unfortunate and unfriendly. Likewise Colombia announces its opposition to the deployment of weapons in outer space.

In accordance with its tradition, Colombia will vote in the First Committee in favour of all draft resolutions that have the objective of attaining general and complete disarmament; those seeking the tranquillity of the human person and the security of States; and those aimed at resolving problems regarding security of a non-military nature, which we feel are the problems that have a direct bearing on the future of mankind. My country is convinced that no one wishes to continue to live under a constant threat to the survival of the human race and the freedom of peoples.

Mr. FISCHER (Austria): I should like first of all to express to you, Sir, the cordial congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and our confidence that under your guidance the Committee's work will lead to concrete and positive results. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and wish them full success in the performance of the responsible tasks with which they have been entrusted.

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

The intensification of the arms race remains at the very centre of our collective concern. A heightened sense of insecurity pervades the entire international community before the prospect of an irreversible spiral of escalation. Today we are confronted with a virtual deadlock in all negotiating forums on disarmament and a suspension of important arms control negotiations already under way. International peace and security, the sovereignty and independence of many nations and indeed life itself on earth are seriously threatened. At every moment there is the possibility that a random accident might lead to the annihilation of mankind by nuclear means. At this time, which is crucial for the future of disarmament, we have to respond with even greater determination and commitment to the pleas of mankind for a halt to this fatal rush towards self-extinction.

One might say that lack of progress in disarmament negotiations is dictated by political realities. Yet, in a climate of confrontation, determined efforts to negotiate are particularly important. The international community has the right to expect that the nuclear-weapon States, which have the primary responsibility for disarmament, act firmly to halt and reverse the course of the arms build-up. A new, determined approach, as distinct from the piecemeal disarmament efforts of the past, is needed, comprising both quantitative reductions and qualitative restrictions. The wider the range of weapons covered the greater would be the value of such an effort. The prevention of nuclear war, the curbing of nuclear arms proliferation, the limitation and reduction of nuclear arsenals, a ban on chemical weapons and a halt to the arms race in outer space remain priorities on the international agenda.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be the issue of highest importance. At the bilateral level, the United States and the Soviet Union have conducted negotiations on mutual reduction of strategic nuclear arms. The discontinuation of these negotiations is as regrettable as are the events that led to it. It is the view of the Austrian Government that the nuclear Powers, and especially the two super-Powers, should begin negotiations on all types of nuclear weapons as soon as practicable. We consider it essential that the United States and the Soviet Union should agree concerning the limitations on their strategic armaments and the related arrangements between them to be observed after 31 December 1985. This is

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

the date of expiration specified by the SALT II accord. Naturally, we hope that before this date the two major Powers will have agreed on more drastic reductions in their weaponry than those envisaged in SALT II.

The negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on intermediate-range nuclear weapons, which have also been discontinued, are of special concern to us. In this context I wish to recall that my Government appealed to the parties at the Geneva negotiations on 18 October 1983 to reach a political consensus concerning the basic elements of such an agreement. To our great regret, instead of a negotiated solution, a situation has been created which has led to further deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe. Austria sincerely hopes that negotiations will be resumed without delay. Let me add, in this context, that the inclusion of the tactical nuclear arsenals in the arms control process constitutes an urgent necessity in the view of my delegation.

In an effort to halt the continued build-up of nuclear weapons, we support the idea that the nuclear-weapon States should agree to a verifiable freeze on all types of nuclear weapons as a basis for negotiations on a balanced build-down, taking into account the security interests of all States. In this regard, we welcome the Joint Declaration by Heads of State and Government from five continents of 22 May 1984, which also contains an urgent appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to proclaim a nuclear arms freeze.

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

There must also be steps towards arms control and disarmament on the regional level. Such initiatives should aim at improved stability and security in order to contribute to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. We therefore support all realistic efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in accordance with the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament. Nuclear-weapon-free zones can, in the view of the Austrian Government, contribute to international peace and stability provided they assist in maintaining the regional and global balance of power and are accompanied by concrete measures of disarmament.

Measures to curb and reverse the nuclear arms race should be complemented by steps to maintain and improve the effectiveness of the non-proliferation régime.

During the coming year, the Non-Proliferation Treaty is to be reviewed. This Treaty has served the international community well since it was instituted in the 1960s and remains one of the most important single achievements in the field of disarmament. The forthcoming review conference should make progress in strengthening the non-proliferation régime and in facilitating international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

To stem the qualitative improvement and prevent the development of new types of weapons, the need for a comprehensive treaty banning the testing of all types of nuclear weapons in all environments has become even more urgent. In the view of the Austrian Government, at least a treaty banning the testing of all nuclear weapons with the exception of those of very small yield could be concluded right now. We hope that the nuclear Powers will find it possible to show the necessary political will to reach agreement on such a treaty, which would greatly inhibit qualitative improvements of nuclear weapons. By displaying their commitment to nuclear disarmament and making tangible progress towards a comprehensive nuclear test ban, the nuclear-weapon Powers would, for their part, contribute to the successful outcome of the third Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference, in 1985.

The danger of an arms race in outer space is a matter of deep concern to the Government of Austria. Given the pressing need for agreement on steps to avert this danger, we can only regret that bilateral negotiations between the leading space Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, have not yet taken place. We hope that such talks will commence without delay. Parallel with this, multilateral

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

consideration by the Conference on Disarmament of questions relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space is also desirable.

We can, and must, achieve nuclear disarmament measures. But this does not mean that we should simply accept the present situation in the conventional arms area. While we are concentrating on setting up effective controls on nuclear weapons, the extent and potential of conventional weapons are causing instability on a larger scale than we appear to appreciate. Therefore we hope that the report which the Secretary-General has submitted to the General Assembly on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces will be a first step towards effective measures of conventional disarmament, complementing measures of nuclear disarmament.

In the field of chemical weapons, Austria has fully supported moves to draw up a draft convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of this particularly cruel weaponry. Although important differences remain to be resolved, we hope that there is a general will within the Geneva Conference to bring these negotiations to a successful end.

The continent in which we Europeans live contains the highest concentration of conventional weaponry and forces in the world. This is one of the main reasons why Austria, in conformity with the mandate agreed for the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, which began work in January last in Stockholm, is seeking negotiated agreement in a first stage on a set of militarily significant, politically binding and adequately verifiable confidence- and security-building measures. These measures would be designed to diminish the risk of military confrontation in Europe, and thereby pave the way to a second stage of the Conference where the participating States would continue their efforts for security and disarmament in Europe in particular by controlled reduction of armament. We firmly hope that the Stockholm Conference will, as soon as possible, proceed towards substantive negotiations. Austria is convinced that this and other endeavours within the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe will lead to a better implementation of the Helsinki Final Act and tangible progress for the benefit of the peoples in Europe.

The importance of the relationship between disarmament and development has been underlined in the deliberations of the United Nations this year. There has

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

been agreement that the world economy, and particularly that of developing countries, would benefit from appropriate international action taking into account the close relationship of disarmament and development. We hope that it will prove possible to reach a broad measure of agreement at this session of the General Assembly on how the important question of giving concrete expression to the relationship should be pursued.

Let me finally reiterate the great importance which Austria attaches to the provision of objective information on military capabilities. My delegation is convinced that determined efforts are needed to improve the flow of military information and to enhance the reliability thereof. We believe that growing awareness of the favourable impact the possession of objective information on security-related matters would have on the establishment of greater mutual confidence, on détente and on disarmament will motivate Governments to adopt more open and predictable policies in the military area. Measures to enhance the quantity and quality of information should be developed on the national, regional and global levels. As a focal point of the sharing and exchange of military information, the United Nations could perform an important service to the disarmament negotiating process. Austria therefore will continue its efforts to ensure the implementation of measures to provide objective information on military capabilities. My delegation will elaborate further on this subject when introducing a relevant draft resolution at a later stage of our deliberations.

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

Last year the General Assembly adopted a record total of 63 resolutions on disarmament. Unfortunately, this considerable number of resolutions has not had much impact in terms of concrete disarmament measures. In fact, 1984 does not seem to have borne fruit with respect to disarmament - and even, probably, to détente - but it has not been completely lost for peace; we should beware of an excessive and unreasoning pessimism.

We advocate that we set ourselves to developing measures of confidence and security conducive to stimulating a climate in which negotiations having a more specific bearing on the reduction of armaments stand a better chance of success. We urge all parties to show good will and flexibility and to work together in an effort to solve some of the high-priority problems. In this context, we underline the Joint Declaration of last May by Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania. That Declaration, which has already been mentioned, stressed that while it was the primary responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States to prevent a nuclear catastrophe, that problem was too important to be left solely to those States. World disarmament, peace and security are the responsibility of mankind as a whole.

Mr. TONWE (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation is pleased, Sir, that you have been elected to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee during the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Given your wealth of experience in the service of your country, your firm commitment to the ideals of peace and security, your untiring dedication to duty and your perseverance, my delegation has no doubt that the difficult tasks before the First Committee will be approached with determination and realism.

The competing military ambitions of the major nuclear-weapon States and their perennial jostling for an increasingly elusive position of superiority in quantity, quality and deployment of weapons of mass destruction have led to an ominous heightening of international tension, and made the risk of a major war, involving the use of nuclear weapons, look very real.

In the face of this worsening international situation and our awareness of the dire consequences of a military confrontation between the major nuclear Powers, my delegation cannot but pitch its tent with all those peace-loving States which accord priority to negotiations aimed at reducing the risk of nuclear war. For this purpose, my delegation would like to see this Committee give a new impetus during this session to the stalled bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

The Non-Proliferation Treaty will continue to be a cornerstone of the non-proliferation régime only if all parties assume their responsibilities and obligations with sincerity. As long as the nuclear Powers continue with their vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, threshold States will consider it their right and duty to keep their options open, and non-nuclear-weapon States will doubt the wisdom of continued adherence to the Treaty. Urgent measures are therefore necessary to create the atmosphere conducive to the consolidation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nuclear-weapon States will have to be prepared to offer without further delay a freeze on the testing, production, refinement and deployment of nuclear weapons. An agreement on such a freeze that is technically verifiable will greatly reduce international tension and create the conditions necessary for peaceful coexistence and further disarmament.

The vast majority of States, including my own, in 1968 renounced their sovereign right to develop nuclear weapons by adhering to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Their sacrifice in the interest of humanity must not become a crippling scientific handicap, nor a potential weapon with which to subjugate or blackmail them. It is only fair that nuclear-weapon States should give the non-nuclear-weapon States an unequivocal pledge enshrined in a legally binding instrument not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. Secondly, nuclear-weapon States should make reliable arrangements to provide access to the peaceful uses of nuclear weapons technology to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Nigerian delegation is pleased about the progress, slow as it may be, that has been made towards agreements banning chemical and radiological weapons. Nigeria will continue to do all in its power to achieve agreement in these fields. It will also seek to ensure that any agreement reached in these areas will include adequate provisions under which the developing countries can pursue the development of their chemical and high-technology industries unhampered.

It is important that I underline the significance of the Declaration, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in 1964, which sought to keep the African continent a nuclear-free zone. That was a far-sighted contribution which the leaders of the continent made to the cause of peace and détente. The General Assembly has duly recognized this

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

foresight by calling upon all States to respect the African wish, and by condemning all co-operation in the nuclear field with the monstrous régime in South Africa, since such collaboration would only enable the racist régime to flout the African Declaration and frustrate its objectives.

All available information confirms that the exhortations of the international community have not been heeded by all. Thanks to the perfidious assistance given by some technologically-advanced States, South Africa has fast been developing its nuclear potential and the capability to manufacture nuclear weapons.

The net effect of this assistance to the racist régime in South Africa will sooner or later be to convert the African continent into another potentially active nuclear war zone. Worse still, it will in the long run make the risk of nuclear war more real, because the South African régime is one of desperate people, who, when driven to the wall, as they surely will be in the not too distant future, will be capable of doing anything to postpone their doomsday. The whole world has seen these people in action, in Soweto and elsewhere, assassinating and maiming harmless children indiscriminately in order to maintain their oppressive régime, or simply because they were jittery.

The dehumanized leaders of racist South Africa are not the kind of people into whose hands civilized nations put nuclear weapons. Those who do it in spite of that fact will take full responsibility for their action before posterity. Nigeria must say, however, that African States should not be expected to fold their arms and watch South Africa acquire nuclear weapons, weapons of unfettered power to blackmail, without seeking to protect their supreme national interests.

The world body should not be tired of calling upon its misguided Members to cease all collaboration with South Africa forthwith. Furthermore, pressure should also be put on the racist régime to place what nuclear installations it has already acquired under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

My delegation is gratified to note that the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament has made significant strides since its inception in 1979. This is evidence of the value and popularity of the programme. In view of the increased attention which international public opinion gives to the question of disarmament and related issues, my delegation suggests that a parallel fellowships programme should be set up for non-diplomats.

The concern which the Nigerian delegation has expressed in this brief statement is not extraordinary; it is the concern which the Nigerian people share with all sane men and women everywhere. That concern emanates from the awareness that the next holocaust, if man is not intelligent or enlightened enough to avoid it, will spare no region or race on the earth's surface and that the huge sums of money which the great Powers squander on arms, if spent on productive enterprises, would have created personal contentment and a collective sense of security.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Sir, please accept our congratulations on your election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and our best wishes for fruitful results. You will receive every support in that respect from our delegation. We wish to point out that you have already successfully dealt with the organizational questions of the First Committee's work and now we all have an opportunity to get down to business rather than to embark upon useless discussions on reorganization. We believe that taking into account your authority, experience and knowledge, nobody will venture to divert the First Committee from this course. I wish to convey my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee on their election to their respective posts.

The First Committee is now engaged in resolving the problems of disarmament and many speakers have told us of the need for negotiations on these questions. This is indeed so, but we must try to understand why a situation of deadlock has been created in disarmament matters. In answering this question we must point out that as a result of the fault of the United States and its closest allies the talks which had been conducted earlier have been broken off and those which are still continuing are just marking time.

We all know that the United States has unilaterally broken off its negotiations with the Soviet Union on the prohibition of chemical weapons, on

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

anti-satellite systems, on the limitation and subsequent reduction of military activities in the Indian Ocean and on the limitation of sales and deliveries of conventional weapons, as well as the trilateral negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons test ban.

The United States has also broken off the bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union on medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe and on strategic nuclear weapons and has begun the deployment in Western Europe of new nuclear first-strike missiles aimed at the Soviet Union and its allies. How was it possible to continue negotiations under the threat of such rockets?

Everyone will recall how many useful draft resolutions were adopted at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, which oriented the Conference on Disarmament and other forums towards constructive and fruitful work throughout practically the whole spectrum of disarmament problems. Yet results are lacking and the cause is very much the same - the unwillingness of the United States to take into account the will of the peoples for peace and disarmament and to demonstrate political will to solve these problems.

We also regret that a number of Western countries at the Conference on Disarmament, under pressure from the United States, have departed on some questions from the positions which they assumed at the previous session of the General Assembly. Under these circumstances, the efforts of the States of the socialist community and the desire of the non-aligned countries to resolve any given question have therefore not met with success.

Therein resides the real reason for the deadlock in the consideration of disarmament questions and the consequences of this situation.

The sober reality of the present international situation resides in the fact that the nuclear threat is growing as a result of the adventurous, military policies of Washington, which is simply unwilling to renounce its mindless designs to achieve military superiority and to try to resolve by force the confrontation between two world-wide social and political systems. The policy of confrontation followed by the United States and some of its allies in the North Atlantic bloc increasingly aggravates the international situation and creates a threat to the socialist and non-aligned countries. Never has the spiral of the arms race been headed upwards so sharply as at present. It is not the Soviet Union or the

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

socialist States that bear responsibility for this. We have been and continue to be partisans of the most radical measures in the sphere of the prevention of nuclear war, the limitation of arms and realistic disarmament measures leading to general and complete disarmament. The socialist countries have consistently come forward with specific proposals on this score. However, the West remains deaf to them.

Genuine progress on the prevention of nuclear war and on nuclear disarmament would have been made if the nuclear-weapon States had been prepared to subordinate their activities to specific norms, whose purpose would be the prevention of nuclear war and of threats to peace, and unswervingly to follow those norms in their policies.

As is known, the Soviet Union has put forward an expanded proposal on the introduction of such norms into relations between nuclear Powers, in keeping with their responsibility before the present and succeeding generations. For its part, the Soviet Union has unilaterally assumed the obligation to observe one of the most important of such norms, namely, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. It is demonstrating its readiness concretely to discuss and achieve mutual agreement on this measure and on recognizing that the principal purpose in the foreign policy of nuclear States is the prevention of nuclear war, the renunciation of the advocacy of such a war in any of its forms, the non-use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances whatsoever against non-nuclear States upon whose territory such weapons are not based, respect for the status of established nuclear-weapon-free zones and the promotion of new ones, the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the non-stationing of such weapons on the territory of countries where such weapons do not exist, the renunciation of the transfer of the arms race into new spheres, including outer space, a freeze on nuclear weapons, including the prohibition of their testing, and the reduction of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. All this would contribute to the protection of mankind from the threat of nuclear war.

In this context, it is important now as never before for one of the infrangible norms of state policy to be the exclusion of outer space from the sphere of the arms race.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Throughout the history of the conquest of outer space, which began with the Soviet Union's launching of the world's first artificial satellite, the Soviet State has spoken out firmly in favour of ensuring that outer space be used for peaceful purposes exclusively.

In a declaration issued on 12 April 1961 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Government of the Soviet Union, in connection with the first manned space flight, that of the Soviet citizen Yuri Gagarin, the following was stated:

"We consider victories in the conquest of outer space to be the achievements not of our own people alone, but of the whole of mankind. We gladly place them at the service of all peoples, in the name of the progress, happiness and well-being of all peoples on earth. We place our achievements and discoveries not in the service of war, but in the service of the peace and security of peoples."

Let us now examine the principal landmarks of the course which has been followed.

In 1958 the USSR submitted in the United Nations a proposal to prohibit the use of outer space for military purposes. As is known, the United States and its allies were unwilling to accept the Soviet proposal, which would have blocked the spread of the arms race into outer space.

In subsequent years, at the initiative of the Soviet Union and other socialist States, a number of important treaties and agreements were concluded, providing a good basis for the accomplishment of the task of ensuring the exclusively peaceful conquest of outer space. A prohibition was placed on the testing and emplacement of nuclear weapons in outer space, and on the production, testing and deployment of components of anti-missile defence systems, including those based in outer space. Experience in connection with the agreements which have been reached confirms that where realism and responsibility have triumphed over other considerations in the policies of Western Powers it has been possible to make significant progress towards the prevention of the militarization of outer space. The impressive list of such agreements is a valuable possession of mankind; it should be protected and should be made to grow.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Three years ago, at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Soviet Union submitted a proposal on the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space. The idea of concluding such an agreement was approved by the General Assembly.

In 1983, the USSR put forward an initiative for the conclusion of a treaty on the non-use of force in outer space or from outer space against the earth. As has already been noted on several occasions, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on prevention of an arms race in outer space with a record number of votes in favour: 147. There was only one vote against, that cast by the representative of the United States.

By making these proposals the Soviet Union has demonstrated a thorough understanding of its responsibility as one of the leading Powers in the conquest of outer space. Clear evidence of that understanding is found also in the 1982 proclamation of unilateral adherence to a moratorium on the launching into outer space of anti-satellite weapons so long as other States act in the same manner. That step is further confirmation that the proposals made by the Soviet Union are totally free of all opportunistic or propaganda calculations.

At the same time, the threat of the conversion of outer space into an arena of war and aggression has not yet been eliminated. Indeed, it has increased as a result of the policy adopted by the United States - to say the least, a mindless policy - of deploying large-scale enhanced outer space offensive weapons systems. This same threat to the cause of peace posed by Washington's policies - which run counter to all the aspirations of the international community - has been seen clearly with regard to the recent constructive step taken by the Soviet Union: the proposal of the Soviet Government to the United States that bilateral negotiations be commenced on the prevention of the militarization of outer space. That was an honest and frank proposal, and deserved an equally honest and frank response. But the present United States Administration has demonstrated yet again that it is capable of seeing the world only in terms of its desire to pursue the chimera of military superiority. Rather than agreeing to that proposal, Washington is trying to change the subject of the negotiations, attempting in essence to legitimize the deployment in Western Europe of new United States nuclear missiles of various kinds and to achieve superiority in all types of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Thus, it has blocked negotiations on the prevention of the militarization of outer space. One gets the impression that the principal aim of the rhetoric now being heard in Washington is to evade responsibility for all this.

The spread of the arms race into outer space would greatly increase the risk of nuclear war and would undermine the prospects for the limitation and reduction of armaments in general. That is an axiom of today's military and political situation. It is vitally important that this course of events be stopped before it is too late.

That is the purpose of the important new initiative of the USSR concerning the "Use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind". In order to eliminate all chance that outer space will be converted into the source of a deadly threat to the whole of mankind, the Soviet Union is proposing that agreement be reached on the elimination of a whole range of offensive space weapons systems, including space-based anti-satellite and anti-ballistic missile systems as well as any land-, air- or sea-based systems designed to destroy objects in outer space.

Any 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.

That is the task that the Soviet Union is proposing to achieve, and to achieve totally, leaving no loopholes whatsoever permitting the militarization of outer space. A decision along these lines could do no harm to the security of any State whatever, for it would place all States on an equal footing and would, moreover, be in keeping with the interests of a peaceful future for all mankind. At present it is entirely and readily feasible, for offensive space weapons have not yet gone beyond the development stage; what little has already been manufactured could easily be eliminated.

It is important to stress that such an agreement and the corresponding bilateral and multilateral treaties would not only prevent an arms race in outer space, but would contribute to the resolution of questions of the limitation and reduction of other strategic weapons.

A peaceful outer space has enormous constructive potential; this untapped potential opens up enormous new possibilities for mankind in such spheres as astronomy, meteorology, medicine, biology, agriculture, metallurgy, communications, maritime navigation, geological prospecting, and so on.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

But we must be realistic. It is impossible to move in two directions at once. The militarization of outer space would eliminate the possibility of using it for the benefit of mankind and of international co-operation in this sphere. When the exclusion of the arms race from outer space becomes an inviolable norm of the policies of States and a universally recognized international obligation, it will be possible to ensure united effort by States to make use of outer space for the solution of major problems concerning the economic, social and cultural development of mankind. It would be possible in such an atmosphere to establish a universal organization concerned with the use of outer space for the benefit of mankind.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Militarization of outer space on the other hand, if it cannot be checked in time, will not only absorb enormous material and spiritual resources but will increase the threat of universal nuclear war. These would be the consequences of the implementation of the military space plans of the American Administration.

Great concern is also caused by the fact that the United States is clearly striving to ensure that it has outer space weapons and not a treaty which prohibits them. In its attempt to justify its definitely negative and essentially isolated position on the question of the prevention of the arms race in outer space, the United States is using "arguments", including the argument of "Soviet superiority". But these "arguments" disintegrate when they are compared with the Soviet proposals on the prohibition and elimination of outer space weaponry.

The concerns expressed in the United States about the "impossibility" of verifying implementation of an agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space do not stand up to criticism. On the contrary, an agreement on this question would lend itself to reliable and effective control inasmuch as the testing and deployment of offensive outer space weapons cannot be concealed.

Such a conclusion is also supported by the assurances of numerous prominent American experts. For example, the Technical Assessment Bureau established by the United States Congress to advise legislators on new scientific and technological projects carried out studies on the question of anti-satellite systems. The report of the commission on this question, which was headed by McGeorge Bundy, a former national security adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, stated quite clearly that the members of the Commission considered that it would be very difficult to develop and deploy a highly effective new system without detectable testing.

Thus, the halting of tests of anti-satellite weapons can be monitored and monitored quite reliably, first of all, by national technical means. In particular, effective monitoring of compliance with the moratorium with regard to anti-satellite weapons operating in orbit could be ensured by outer space object tracking systems, which all parties have.

As for sub-orbital anti-satellite systems, apart from those mentioned, it may be possible to use other radio-electronic means deployed on land, in the Pacific Ocean and in outer space. In unclear situations it may be possible to have an

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

exchange of information and consultations. In case of necessity, other forms could also be found.

Given genuine interest in finding effective solutions in the course of the negotiations proposed by the Soviet Union, it may be possible to resolve all the matters raised in this issue, including those involving verification, with respect to anti-satellite weapons as well as on the whole question of preventing the militarization of outer space.

On the other hand the deployment of space and in particular anti-satellite weapons, and this is being accelerated by the United States, would create together with other serious negative consequences a constant threat to peaceful space objects. It would have a negative effect upon the prospects of achieving agreement on a freeze on nuclear weapons, their limitation, reduction and total elimination. The problem of verification by satellites would be made more complicated - that very problem of verification of agreements which for a number of years has been the subject of irresponsible speculation in the United States and is being used by it to avoid formulating new agreements and breaking existing ones.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Comrade K. I. Chernenko, recently stated:

"Is it possible that mankind, which has been striving since time immemorial towards the stars and towards the discovery of the secrets of the universe, has now achieved such impressive successes only so that the threat of a nuclear holocaust could come from there? An alternative exists ... an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the joint efforts to use outer space exclusively for constructive purposes for the benefit of mankind."

The struggle to bring about the prohibition of the militarization of outer space is now going through a decisive phase. For there to be or not to be an arms race in outer space, that is the question as it now stands.

The General Assembly must do everything so as to contribute to the maintenance of a peaceful outer space. This is the purpose which is served by the draft resolution of the USSR in document A/C.1/39/L.1 on the question of the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): May I first of all, Ambassador Souza e Silva, congratulate you on behalf of the Cuban delegation on presiding over the work of the First Committee at this thirty-ninth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are familiar with your capable work as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its last session, as well as with your work as the head of the Brazilian delegation at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva. We are convinced that under your leadership this Committee will have a fruitful consideration of the important agenda item before it.

I also wish to extend our best wishes to the Vice-Chairmen and to the Rapporteur and assure them that they may at all times count on the support and co-operation of my delegation in the discharge of the important functions conferred upon them.

Once again, the work of the First Committee is beginning in a tense international climate, when the attempts of imperialism and reactionary forces to prevail, from a position of force, and to achieve military superiority at any cost, become a very serious obstacle to the progress of disarmament negotiations and the solution of the delicate problems today threatening international peace and security in the different regions of the world.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

Yet in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva or in deliberations of the Disarmament Commission in New York, in the Indian Ocean or in the Caribbean, in the southern cone of Africa or in Central America, in the Middle East or on the European continent, the policy of force, the rejection of serious and constructive dialogue and the manifestation of a highly aggressive attitude, are the main characteristics of the action of those that obstruct disarmament negotiations and the achievement of concrete agreement in that sphere, just as they obstruct the peaceful settlement of disputes among States and are opposed to preserving the process of détente and peaceful coexistence in international relations.

Never before has the danger of a world holocaust been greater; never before have we seen such an accumulation of all types of weapons of mass destruction; never before has the community of nations felt so frustrated and so powerless to end such a state of affairs. This is the case primarily because not only is a desperate arms race imposed on us, at the expense of our economic and social development, but also use is made of the policy of threats and blackmail, of inflexibility and force, to avoid negotiations on disarmament in all forums.

It is sufficient to glance at this year's report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly to see that these are the facts that we are witnessing today. In spite of the urgent appeals by the General Assembly and the specific requests addressed to the Conference on Disarmament in recent years, the multilateral negotiating body on disarmament has been unable to begin substantive consideration of the items of greatest priority before it solely because of the persistent obstruction of the United States and a very small number of its allies.

The prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, an item whose urgency is recognized by the international community, continues to be a long-term objective for the United States Government, as has been stated on more than one occasion. This is an attempt to justify the growing qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons that has led to the runaway arms race from which we suffer today. The report of the Conference on Disarmament is clear in this connection and indicates that, while the non-aligned and neutral countries and the socialist countries worked from the outset for the establishment of an ad hoc committee which would make it possible to begin negotiations on the prohibition of tests, that was

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not possible because of the persistent opposition of the West, which was intent on repeating the patterns of the past and on imposing limited mandates which would only serve as a smokescreen for their lack of will to negotiate.

Nor could the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament - an issue whose priority is also of acknowledged priority - be given due consideration by the Conference on Disarmament this year. In this case, the report of that body to the General Assembly not only demonstrates the convergence of the views of the Group of 21 and the group of socialist countries but also emphasizes the attempts of the United States and a few of its allies to avoid multilateral negotiations on an issue of equal interest to all, with a view to confining its discussion to the bilateral level and thus evading the just demands of the international community and the active participation of the Conference on Disarmament in the solution of that important question.

In Geneva, the fate of the item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was no better this year, in spite of the fact that the request to begin specific negotiations on the adoption of an agreement, or several agreements, in this connection had the support of 147 delegations. Here again the non-aligned and the socialist countries demonstrated their desire to negotiate, while there were countries, as the report of the Conference on Disarmament points out, that, although they voted in favour of the relevant resolution of the General Assembly, opposed its implementation in Geneva, leaving no room for doubt as to their will and intentions.

Negotiations on the prevention of nuclear war, which all States represented here described in 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as "the most critical and urgent task of the day", also encountered incomprehensible opposition in Geneva. The report of the Conference on Disarmament is explicit in this respect and demonstrates the attempt of the United States to impose on the Conference consideration of that issue on the basis of strategic doctrines clearly founded on the use of nuclear weapons and, in particular, their first use.

I have confined my remarks to a few of the considerations contained in the report of the sole multilateral negotiating body in the sphere of disarmament, which clearly point to the main difficulties that face us in our efforts to put an end to the arms race and to proceed to general and complete disarmament. These

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considerations show why such limited results have been achieved in recent years in the sphere of disarmament.

Of course - and this has often been repeated - the present international situation is not conducive to the establishment of the necessary climate of understanding and mutual trust that could promote the attainment of practical results in the field of disarmament. None the less, the problem must be seen in all its dimensions if we want to find just solutions. We must recognize that those that act against the disarmament negotiations are the same ones as promote tension at the international level and work to poison relations between States.

The problem that we are facing today is that those who oppose the commencement of multilateral negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament are also those that work against the bilateral negotiations on disarmament; deploy their weapons with first-strike capability in Western Europe; support the racist régime of South Africa and give it access to nuclear technology; support Zionism in the Middle East and actions against the Arab countries; threaten Cuba and Nicaragua and oppose efforts to establish a climate of peace in Central America; and rehabilitate old battleships for the massive shelling of other countries; conduct threatening and intimidating military manoeuvres against sovereign States under the pretext of preparing for the defence of their so-called vital interests.

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In other words, they are the ones that promote international tension and poison relations among States, in order to obstruct the disarmament negotiations and make it possible to implement the vast military programmes which they are developing not only in the seas and oceans but even in outer space.

Let us see who are the ones that refuse to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons; that try to disregard the principles and priorities they formerly accepted in regard to disarmament; that are endeavouring to achieve military superiority through the deployment of new types of nuclear weapons with first-strike capability; that violate commitments they have already entered into under important disarmament instruments; that oppose the commencement of serious negotiations; that plan to deploy new weapons systems in outer space; that oppose the majority of the resolutions adopted by this Committee. Then we shall see that they are precisely the ones that act against the new international economic order, against the new information order and against the establishment of a climate of peace and détente in all parts of the world.

It is precisely this situation that prompts them to describe as an exercise in rhetoric the adoption of draft resolutions in this Committee that specifically call for a freeze on nuclear-weapon arsenals, the adoption of practical measures to avoid the outbreak of a nuclear war, the establishment of rules of conduct for the nuclear-weapon States or the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons.

It is the same attitude that prompts them to try to apportion, or at least try to have us believe that other States share with them, responsibility for the growing threat of annihilation that we are facing today. In line with this, they unhesitatingly declare "crusades" against other States, invade small countries such as Grenada and even threaten the entire system of international agencies on which we rely. Underlying all this there is undoubtedly a desire to poison the international atmosphere in order to justify their actions aimed at beginning further rounds in the arms race in a quest for strategic supremacy.

It is in this context that my delegation approaches what has been called the rationalization of the work of the First Committee, to which some speakers have referred. We are prepared to work to increase the efficiency of our proceedings but we are convinced that, as is the case with the Conference on Disarmament, the problems here reside not in the structure or in the methods of work but rather in

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what the General Assembly itself last year described in its resolution 38/62 as "the persistent obstruction of a very small number of its members", which are very easy to identify.

We are not opposed to the exploration of formulas, acceptable to all, that could guarantee an improvement in our work, but we cannot accept attempts to limit our right to submit draft resolutions, ideas and suggestions on disarmament, much less attempts to make structural problems a cover for a lack of political will on the part of those who raise them.

The CHAIRMAN: We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon.

The representative of New Zealand has asked to be allowed to speak in exercise of the right of reply, and I call on him.

Mr. MANSFIELD (New Zealand): I do not want to take up the Committee's time by engaging in a protracted debate with the representative of France, but there are one or two points I must make in response to his comments this morning.

When I referred to French nuclear testing in the South Pacific in my statement on Friday I said that New Zealand's opposition was not motivated solely or even primarily by environmental concerns. I did not say that environmental considerations were of no concern to my country. That is very far from the truth.

New Zealand is opposed to all nuclear testing wherever it occurs. As members of the Committee are aware, we have been working for many years to promote a comprehensive test-ban treaty. That remains our goal. We are particularly concerned about French testing because it is conducted in the South Pacific, the area in which we live. Our concern springs directly from our interest in the security of our own region. It is not merely a political position.

Finally, this concern is not limited to New Zealand. It is shared by all the independent and self-governing countries in the South Pacific. Only two months ago their Heads of Government reiterated their strong opposition to continued nuclear testing in the South Pacific region by France or any other country.

New Zealand has long had a close and friendly relationship with France. We continue to hope that the French Government will heed the strongly held views we share with our neighbours in the South Pacific.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.