



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia)
(Vice-Chairman)

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Petrovsky (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Adelman (United States of America)
Mr. Bhatt (Nepal)
Mr. van Schaik (Netherlands)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The main task facing mankind today - and this has been the recurring theme of virtually all statements in our Committee - is to eliminate the nuclear danger hanging over it.

It is with this task in mind that we approach the negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament. For us, negotiations are a serious and responsible matter, an instrument which should be used for working out practical measures to prevent nuclear war and curb the arms race, above all the nuclear arms race, on earth and in outer space. The soviet Union considers it necessary to use all available opportunities provided by both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. It is in favour of obtaining greater practical results or, to put it differently, of getting greater efficiency out of all the existing forums, and it also advocates the start of negotiations on the problems which so far have not been dealt with but cry out for solution.

Soviet-United States talks undoubtedly play an important role in the arms limitation and disarmament efforts. It is noteworthy that when the American side has shown realism and a will to build relations as equals to our mutual advantage and to the benefit of peace, we have been able to come to important agreements. Today, however, the reality is that the United States has derailed Soviet-United States talks on the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms, has broken off and refuses to renew other talks it had earlier been conducting with the Soviet Union and is blocking the work of the multilateral forums.

At the same time, the United States is carrying out crash military programmes in circumvention or even direct violation of the existing arms limitation agreements. In order to clear the way for such programmes it is trying to sow mistrust with regard to the agreements already achieved by resorting to baseless allegations about their violation by the other side. Recently the President of the United States, Mr. Reagan, said that the United States is ready to renew a dialogue with the Soviet Union on a wide range of arms limitation issues. In response to

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

questions put to him by The Washington Post, Konstantin Chernenko, 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 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, emphasized in this particular instance that:

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

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The existing multilateral negotiating forums constitute a necessary mechanism for dealing successfully with the issues before them on the basis of the principle of undiminished security for all the participants in these forums. It is imperative, however, to move them off dead centre where they are now and, moreover, not just to move them, but to obtain tangible and practical results from them.

International practice shows that, when all the parties have had the political will to overcome the difficulties arising during negotiations, multilateral negotiations have been an effective instrument for reaching specific agreements on the most complex disarmament problems. Examples of that can be found in the agreements on the principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space of 1967, on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons of 1968, on the prohibition of the emplacement of weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and the ocean floor of 1971, on the prohibition of bacteriological weapons of 1972, on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques of 1977 and others. They have erected serious barriers to the spread of the arms race in its various areas.

A special role in the negotiating mechanism functioning today belongs to the Conference on Disarmament, which, as the United Nations document states, is "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body". It has fairly good possibilities of translating the discussion of its agenda items into practical deeds. To realize this potential, however, it is essential to ensure that the Conference should not become yet another disarmament deliberative body, but that instead it should really focus on conducting productive negotiations as called for both in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and in numerous appeals of Member States of this Organization as reflected in the decisions of its General Assembly sessions.

The Soviet delegation has already had an occasion to present its views before this Committee regarding the contribution that the Geneva Conference could make towards reaching practical agreements on steps to prevent nuclear war, curb the nuclear-arms race and avert the militarization of outer space.

Today we would like to address ourselves to the question of what the Conference could also do in other areas of arms limitation and disarmament. I will mention, inter alia, the prohibition of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The Soviet Union views the prohibition and destruction of this type of weapon of mass annihilation as one of the priority tasks inscribed on the agenda of the Geneva forum. As a result of the persevering efforts of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in the past few years at the negotiations conducted within the framework of the Conference, it has been possible to make some headway in reaching agreement on a number of major problems concerning the prohibition of chemical weapons, and thereby the possibility of concluding an international convention on the subject was opened up.

Our interest in speeding up the solution of this problem has been clearly demonstrated by the numerous initiatives that we have put forward in the course of these negotiations and, above all, by the draft that the Soviet Union put forward before the Conference some two years ago of basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. This draft constitutes a well-balanced basis for an agreement.

The Soviet Union has more than once elaborated on this initiative by making numerous constructive proposals that take into account progress in the negotiations as well as the positions of other participants. The political will of the Soviet Union to reach breakthroughs in this field is vividly demonstrated by the initiatives it has taken this year alone - a proposal to establish permanent control over the entire process of destroying chemical weapons and an elaborate proposal, put forward jointly with other socialist countries last August, on the establishment and activities of a consultative committee, an international body to carry out consultations, exchange information and promote verification in the interests of observing the provisions of a convention. The Soviet Union has indicated its readiness to incorporate into a convention some provisions on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons; it has submitted a number of proposals designed reliably to guarantee non-production of chemical weapons at civilian chemical plants and to facilitate verification in this area. We have also expressed our views regarding the development of a special procedure for the destruction of the stockpiles of chemical weapons which would ensure the security and interests of all States parties. Other constructive steps aimed at reaching agreement have been taken as well.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The blame for the failure thus far to reach an agreement at the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons lies entirely with the United States. By relying on a further build-up of chemical weapons and the production of new types of such weapons, in particular the binary weapons, the present United States Administration is pursuing at these negotiations what in effect amounts to an obstructionist policy and is constantly creating ever-more barriers to solving this problem of singular importance.

Any unbiased person who has read the United States draft submitted at the Conference last April can have no doubt that this draft was prepared in such a way as to make it unacceptable in advance to all those who have an interest in leaving no room for chemical weapons on earth. First of all, this draft does not have the scope of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons since it does not prohibit the use of herbicides for military purposes as well as irritants in armed or other conflicts, that is, exactly those toxic chemicals that were widely used earlier by the United States during its aggression in Viet Nam. Neither does verification get any better treatment from it.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

As the "new word" in verification it is suggested that inspections be carried out on the basis of a "standing invitation". However, an analysis of this fine-sounding formulation reveals that countries should provide - automatically within 24 hours and at the first request - unimpeded access for inspectors to any chemical plant or facility regardless of whether or not it has anything to do with chemical-weapon production or even chemical production as such. From the point of view of prohibiting chemical weapons there is certainly no need for such - pardon the expression - verification. There is, however, a direct risk of exposing military and commercial secrets which are not related to the production, stockpiling or storage of chemical weapons.

It would be a mistake to believe that by proposing this absurd system of verification the United States is ready to have such verification applied to itself as well. Not at all. Such verification would apply only to plants that "belong to Governments or are Government-controlled".

In other words, in the Soviet Union and socialist States, as well as in countries with a partially nationalized industry where all or most plants are State-owned, practically all civilian and military facilities, even those not related to chemical production, would be subject to verification, whereas in the United States private plants, including major United States chemical corporations capable of producing chemical weapons covertly, would be placed outside the purview of verification. Clearly, this is patent discrimination, however hard the United States might try to prove the opposite.

Such an approach is all the more unacceptable if account is taken of the possibility of producing components of binary weapons at private plants. Incidentally, the United States draft obscures altogether the question of prohibiting binary weapons. Highly dangerous supertoxic lethal agents also are virtually ignored, regardless of their production levels, if they are formally designated as being for peaceful rather than anti-chemical defence purposes.

On giving the impression that it is making verification proposals - which are based on double standards and are unacceptable in advance to numerous countries - Washington seems to be trying to deadlock the negotiations under the same pretext already "tested" at other negotiations that "agreement proved impossible", and then to proceed to the implementation of a \$10 billion chemical rearmament programme for the United States Army which provides for a twofold increase in the present United States arsenal, which already consists of some three million units of chemical

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

weapons of various types. Incidentally, that was stated rather clearly when the United States draft convention was introduced at the Conference on Disarmament. It was said then that measures were being taken in the United States to prepare for the possibility of producing modern chemical weapons "if there is no agreement on their comprehensive ban".

While resolutely condemning such a policy we again reaffirm quite clearly our readiness today to work further for the early conclusion of an international convention on this issue. In this context, we also consider it essential to have effective verification of compliance with it. What is needed now on the part of all countries participating in the negotiations is a serious, business-like approach. There should be no room here for dishonest political manoeuvring, and it would seem to us that it is only by showing their own will in opposing those who would rather see the negotiations fail that the participants in these negotiations will be able to accomplish the crucial task entrusted to them by General Assembly decisions, namely, to expedite the drafting of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

For this purpose we are prepared to continue to co-operate constructively with all other States interested in solving this problem in actual fact, not just in words.

We are also convinced that the demonstration of a political will and a constructive approach by all participants would undoubtedly contribute to a successful solution of other problems on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. These include "preventive" prohibition of the development and production of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons through the conclusion of both a comprehensive agreement and separate arrangements, prohibition of radiological weapons, adoption of effective measures to ensure safe development of nuclear energy, and so forth. We believe that an appeal to this end by the General Assembly could help to intensify negotiations on these questions with a view to their early solution.

At the same time, the Soviet delegation cannot fail to note with concern that at present quite an abnormal situation prevails at the Geneva Conference. That multilateral negotiating body is practically unable to discharge its main function. It cannot even start meaningful negotiations on a large number of priority issues related to curbing the arms race and to disarmament as urged by General Assembly decisions.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The representative of Mexico, Ambassador Garcia Robles, has already given here one example of a tactical move to which some countries resort in order to impede the work of the Conference. In particular, attempts have been made to that end to give its subsidiary bodies:

"... pointless terms of reference with the sole aim of erecting a smokescreen to create the impression that substantive negotiations were being carried out". (A/C.1/39/PV.3, p. 12)

As we see, so much energy is thus being wasted that if it were put to constructive use we could long ago have worked out a whole series of disarmament agreements or would be close to their completion.

While fully sharing the puzzlement of Ambassador Robles as to:

"... why in some members of the Group of Western European and Other States the word 'negotiations' provokes ... genuine aversion and even horror" (Ibid., p. 17)

we believe that the time has come to put an end to the prevailing situation and make it possible for the subsidiary bodies of the Conference to conduct negotiations on a broad spectrum of disarmament issues, above all on measures for the prevention of nuclear war, for nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space in accordance with the clear mandates established by the General Assembly.

Unlike the Conference on Disarmament, which dicusses, so to speak, global issues of arms limitation and disarmament, the other two existing multilateral forums - the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe and the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and arms in Central Europe - are formally regional talks. I say "formally" because it is clearly obvious that their successful outcome will definitely contribute to a better international situation, stronger peace and security not only in Europe, but also far beyond its confines.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The imperative of the present tense international situation is to build confidence in the political and military fields. For this reason the peoples of Europe and of the entire world quite justifiably place great hopes in the Stockholm forum. For its part, the Soviet Union has put forward a whole series of major proposals in Stockholm designed above all to avert nuclear war and truly lead to greater trust and understanding among States. There can be no doubt that this goal would be greatly promoted if the nuclear Powers which have not yet done so followed the example of the USSR and undertook not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and if a treaty was concluded on the mutual non-use of military force and on the maintenance of peaceful relations among States, as proposed by socialist countries. This is also the thrust of our other constructive proposals before the Stockholm Conference, in particular, the proposals to cut military expenditures, to free Europe of chemical weapons, to create nuclear-free zones in various parts of Europe, to work out additional confidence-building measures as a follow-up to the Final Act of Helsinki and so on.

We are confident that the key to a successful conference lies in the adoption of an equitable approach to discussing both political and military confidence-building measures and in the combination of major political steps with military technical measures.

We regret to say that there are some who are clearly seeking to lead the work of the Stockholm forum away from building the necessary confidence. In their desire to gain unilateral advantages, the representatives of the countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are in effect blocking the elaboration of mutually acceptable agreements and are trying instead to make the Conference discuss the programme that they have drawn up - a programme of poorly disguised espionage which focuses precisely on those areas and types of military activities that are of particular interest to NATO. While trying to impose a whole system of measures aimed at "X-raying" Soviet military activities over the country's entire European territory up to the Urals, at the same time they do not say a word in their measures about United States territory, on which - and I emphasize this - the foundations of the NATO military machine are to be found. Is this not another case of the double standards which also have been so obvious in the United States approach to banning chemical weapons? The Western proposals also ignore the issue of limiting military exercises. The NATO countries have thus left out independent air force and naval activities and have "forgotten" to extend measures of control to troop movements.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

In Stockholm we are hearing a plethora of high-sounding words about the importance and usefulness of confidence. But confidence is created by deeds; it is inconceivable without renouncing aggressive concepts and preparations for their implementation, without renouncing the policies of total power confrontation with its "vertical and horizontal escalation". In the absence of this, all talk of confidence and trust will remain pious words.

The Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe are another important area where progress towards the long-awaited agreement would help to create a better situation in Europe and elsewhere. Although next week will mark the eleventh anniversary of the talks, it will, unfortunately, not be an occasion for celebration since, as the saying goes, things have not budged an inch there.

And it is not that there is no basis for a speedy elaboration of mutually acceptable agreements. There is such a basis which incorporates a simple and practical approach to the solution of this problem, namely, the new draft proposed by the socialist countries as early as June 1983, entitled "Agreement on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments and on related measures in Central Europe".

The substance of this approach is to put aside the so-called data discussion which has been used for so long artificially to slow down progress in the Vienna talks, to begin in practice the process of reducing armed forces and armaments in Central Europe and to take it as far as establishing agreed equal collective ceilings on the number of armed forces of the sides at a lower level.

The proposals of the socialist countries provide as a first step for immediate reduction of a certain number of Soviet and United States forces and armaments in the Central European region by way of a reciprocal example, as well as for a subsequent freeze on the levels of armed forces and armaments of all the direct participants in the negotiations, which could be effective pending the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement. Moreover, all negotiations are expected to be completed in the shortest possible period of time, that is to say, within a year.

The draft agreement provides for States directly participating in the negotiations to assume an obligation to reduce, within three years after the entry into force of the agreement, their land forces in Central Europe so that as a result the overall number of military personnel on each side would be brought down to equal collective levels of 900,000 men, including 700,000 for land forces with the air force personnel on each side limited to 200,000.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The draft agreement provides - and I want to draw particular attention to this - for control over the process of reducing not only foreign but also national troops, as well as for sufficiently effective verification of the levels of military personnel remaining after all the reductions.

For their part, the United States and its allies are evading solutions to fundamental questions having a direct bearing on the reduction of military confrontation in the centre of Europe, in particular to the questions of arms reductions, air force personnel limitation and the scale of military exercises.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The widely publicized "new" proposals introduced by the West last spring in Vienna have also turned out to be yet another political manoeuvre aimed at concealing behind an ostensible flurry of activity reluctance to come to mutually acceptable agreements. Not only did these proposals contain no elements pointing to ways out of the deadlocks, but they in fact led to an even greater departure of the NATO positions from the agreed objectives of the negotiations. Having in effect ignored our proposal to break the existing "data" deadlock, the West complicated still further the discussion about the number of forces.

These proposals also contain a package of verification measures not at all intended to lead to mutually acceptable agreements and absolutely incompatible with the nature and scope of the proposed reductions. Moreover, attempts are made, in contravention of the mandate of the talks, to extend these measures beyond the agreed area of reductions. What is more, it is being suggested, again on the basis of the now traditional double standards, that even this should be applied only to the Soviet Union by establishing rigid control over the routine activities of its armed forces on a large part of its European territory.

The "new" Western proposals openly allow for the possibility that Soviet and United States forces alone will be subject to reductions; an attempt is being made thereby not to extend reductions and limitations to the armed forces of NATO countries in Western Europe, above all the Bundeswehr of the Federal Republic of Germany, which is already the main strike force of this military bloc in Europe and continues to undergo vigorous rearmament and modernization.

Naturally the position adopted by the Western participants can only hinder progress in Vienna. As for the Soviet Union, it has no intention of slackening its efforts to make the Vienna forum a success, but that success will be achieved only if our negotiating partners abandon all kinds of political manoeuvring and finally adopt a constructive approach.

While considering it necessary to breathe new life into the ongoing negotiations, the Soviet Union is consistently advocating the start of negotiations on those arms reduction and disarmament problems which so far have not been covered by the negotiating mechanism.

For example, we believe that the process of reducing conventional forces and arms should be firmly woven into the fabric of international negotiations and agreements. Guided by this position of principle, our country has repeatedly proposed that this problem be solved both globally and regionally.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The Soviet Union stands, inter alia, for the solution of such problems as the limitation of international sales and transfers of conventional arms, which now run into tens of billions of dollars. Proposing the renewal of the Soviet-American talks on the limitation of arms transfers, unilaterally suspended by the United States, the Soviet Union believes that as far as this problem is concerned multilateral efforts can also bring about practical results and it is willing to have other States take part in its consideration.

As to conventional arms limitation, it is very important, from the point of view of the USSR, to continue the process of limiting or banning certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. The Soviet Union was one of the first States to sign and ratify the international Convention and three Protocols annexed to it, which proved to be the first practical result of multilateral negotiations in this area.

Unfortunately, the efforts of a number of States, and first of all by the United States, Britain, France and other militarily significant States to stall the process of ratifying the Convention have, in fact, prevented it from becoming a meaningful instrument in the area of arms limitation. We believe that the General Assembly could speed up this process by calling upon those States which have not yet done so to ratify the Convention.

As for the limitation of the conventional arms race, we would like to note also that the study of this problem recently completed by the United Nations Secretary-General stresses the need to take practical steps to curb the conventional arms race in its various areas.

In his letter of 6 April last addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General, Andrei A. Gromyko, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Foreign Minister of the USSR, set forth the position of the Soviet Union on another major problem which, we believe, can and should be solved through the channel of multilateral negotiations, namely, the problem of the limitation of naval activities and naval armaments.

The USSR expressed its readiness to participate in negotiations, called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/188 F, on curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans, especially to regions with the busiest sea lanes or regions where the probability of conflict situations is high and presented a number of practical considerations which could serve as a basis for discussion at these negotiations.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

As an urgent step it might be possible to agree, for example, that States would not expand their naval activities in areas of conflict and tension. Moreover, it is desirable, in our view, to seek solutions that would avoid a situation in which the naval fleets of the great Powers are at sea for a long time, far from their own shores. It might also be useful to take such steps as withdrawing vessels equipped with nuclear weapons from certain ocean and sea areas, establishing limits on the presence in those areas of vessels of various classes and other similar limits.

The USSR could go even further towards the direct and effective limitation of naval armaments. Such measures could include, for example, limitation of the number of warships of the principal classes. Consideration should at the same time be given to placing limits on anti-submarine forces and weapons and to measures concerning naval bases on foreign territories. Subsequently, consideration could be given to the balanced reduction of the numbers of vessels in the combatant arm of the fleets of the great Powers. This applies particularly to such vessels as aircraft carriers which have a highly destabilizing effect and are used in a show of force and as an instrument for exerting pressure on independent States.

All the necessary measures should, of course, be elaborated and implemented in accordance with the principle of undiminished security for all, with due account being taken of all factors that determine the alignment of forces at sea as well as other ways of limiting arms which affect naval forces in one way or another. The Soviet Union is also ready to consider measures needed to ensure the mutual confidence of States in fulfilling the obligations they have assumed.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

However, owing to the position taken by the United States and a number of its allies, the problems of limiting the naval arms race are in practice not being solved. The reason is to be found in the military field. It is common knowledge that the United States has begun a new round of the arms race in such arms. New warships equipped with the latest systems of destruction are being built and commissioned while the old ones are being re-equipped with the same systems. The United States naval presence in various seas and oceans is growing, and cases in which its naval forces are used directly to exert pressure on sovereign States are becoming more frequent.

We think that in this situation the General Assembly can and should at the present session pronounce itself forcefully in favour of immediate multilateral negotiations on the reduction of naval activities and naval armaments with the participation of all major naval Powers and other interested States.

The Soviet Union is flexible as to the choice of a forum for such negotiations. Since one of the alternatives to the holding of those negotiations would be the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the USSR is also prepared to examine the possibility of starting separate multilateral negotiations on the whole package of issues relating to this problem. Furthermore, we also think that the United Nations Disarmament Commission could play a useful role in this instance. Although the Commission is not a negotiating body but a deliberative one, its decisions could not only have a moral impact in favour of the holding of such negotiations, but could also contain useful recommendations as to what concrete steps should be taken effectively to limit naval activities and naval armaments.

Multilateral efforts could also bring about practical results in strengthening security, trust and stability in individual regions and sea and ocean areas such as the Indian, Atlantic or Pacific Oceans, the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

Thus, for example, the convening of the international Conference on the Indian Ocean is in our opinion being unacceptably delayed although the situation in that region can but give rise to serious concern. The Indian Ocean is increasingly becoming an arena of military tension as a result of the stepped-up activities of the United States in this area and the creation by Washington of the "Central Command", whose zone of operations covers a vast area of South-East Asia comprising 19 States as well as a substantial part of the Indian Ocean. Such actions can only be viewed as a direct threat to the security, independence and sovereignty of all the States of the region.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The Soviet Union, which consistently supports the proposal of the non-aligned countries that the Indian Ocean be turned into a zone of peace, believes that the holding of a Conference on this issue in the first half of 1985 as called for by the General Assembly would constitute an important step towards realization of the idea of creating such a zone. For our part we are willing fully to co-operate in the practical preparations for convening that Conference.

Working with perseverance for the implementation of tangible measures to curb the arms race and to attain disarmament in a close relationship with the solution of problems of world economic and social development, the Soviet Union considers the reduction of military budgets to be one of the promising possibilities in this regard.

In an attempt to get this question off the ground, the USSR and its Warsaw Treaty allies have this year taken a new initiative in proposing to the NATO member States that practical negotiations be started on mutual non-increase of military expenditures and their subsequent reduction. In addition to the previous proposals, we listed a number of new specific measures whose implementation would make it possible to take a decisive step in reducing the military budgets of States.

In so doing, we have assumed that agreements on the reduction of military expenditures would be implemented in such a way that all participants in such agreements would be sure of their fulfilment. It goes without saying that this problem should be discussed in concrete terms subject to the substance of possible agreements.

The proposal of the Warsaw Treaty countries is addressed to the NATO countries. However, bearing in mind that the solution of this problem certainly interests not only the States of the two major military and political alliances, we believe that other States could also take part in implementing the specific measures we have put forward to reduce military spending.

Unfortunately, so far we have not detected a willingness on the part of the United States and its allies to reduce their military appropriations. They have programmed a staggering growth of those appropriations through the beginning of the next century. As is the case with many other questions, this unwillingness is covered up by a semblance of vigorous activities. Various proposals are put forward for the evaluation of "military efforts and capabilities" of States, attempts are made to replace the reduction of military budgets through deliberately complex computer studies of their comparability - that is, by nothing other than

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

endless disputes about data among economists, statisticians and other experts. Clearly this is one more version of negotiation for negotiation's sake or, to be more precise, the creation of a semblance of disarmament efforts as the arms race continues to escalate.

In this statement the Soviet delegation has dwelled in detail only on certain problems whose practical solution might be facilitated by the multilateral negotiating forums. This does not in any way imply that there are no other fields in which multilateral efforts could also yield truly tangible results.

Since it advocates the use of all possible channels for negotiation, the Soviet Union, for its part, is ready to do everything it can to consolidate the foundations of universal peace, to remove the threat of war, to secure the limitation of arms, above all nuclear arms, and their eventual elimination.

Andrei A. Gromyko has stressed that:

"In the name of this we are ready to co-operate with all who seek to reduce the danger of war. This is also the thrust of the proposals of the socialist countries put forward at the Stockholm Conference, at the Vienna talks, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and in the United Nations."

In confirming its earlier proposals and advancing new ones, the Soviet Union does not claim that it knows the absolute truth. It is ready for a wide discussion of problems related to limiting the nuclear-arms race and disarmament, and it is highly appreciative of the efforts of other countries that are indeed directed at the elaboration of practical measures in this field. We are convinced that mankind's future is the shared responsibility of all nations present here.

Drawing on the experience accumulated in the past, multilateral negotiations can under the present circumstances contribute to safeguarding mankind's future provided that all States participating in them demonstrate realism and political will and direct their efforts towards implementation of the decisions adopted by such representative and authoritative multilateral forums as the United Nations General Assembly urging us to use every possibility to prevent nuclear war and curb the arms race.

Mr. ADELMAN (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, it is a great pleasure to be back with you once again. The setting is familiar, as are many of the colleagues around the room with whom I have shared for two years some important work and with whom I built up some very fine relationships. It is good to see them all once again. I am particularly pleased that the First Committee is under the chairmanship of Ambassador Souza e Silva, a worthy veteran - ancien combattant - in United Nations disarmament affairs. Let me say that it is good to see Mr. Martenson up there as well.

The United States takes this annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly very seriously, as we take the United Nations very seriously. We see this meeting as an important opportunity to clarify United States positions on security issues, to hear the views and proposals of others - as we did at the beginning of this morning - to participate in a collective stock-taking for the year and, most critical of all, to discuss what it is that we can accomplish together.

We recognize the United Nations as an attempt to fulfil mankind's hope for peace. This aspiration is reflected in President Reagan's repeated reminder to the world, which was repeated last Sunday night, that: "A nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought." This sets the context for the importance of arms control efforts in this, the nuclear age.

A year ago at this time and in this chamber, I presented an assessment of security and arms control issues. I presented that assessment at that time in justifiably sombre terms. Several incidents had recently heightened international tension. The fate of the nuclear arms control negotiations then lay in doubt. Against such a darkened background, I attempted to discern the brighter prospects in the future and, to that end, reaffirmed the deep commitment of the United States to reaching effective, verifiable arms-control agreements, ones aimed at really reducing nuclear weapons, and really increasing stability around the world.

Events of the past year give grounds neither for complacency nor for joy. Serious armed conflicts are continuing in Afghanistan, South-East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Central America. The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) negotiations, on which we had pinned so much hope, have been suspended since the Soviets walked out nearly one year ago. The hoped-for meeting in Vienna between my Government and that of the Soviet Union on space matters has not been accepted by the Soviet Union as yet, even though the Soviets themselves had proposed the idea. Negotiations to ban chemical weapons altogether, as well as other multilateral arms control talks have proceeded at a disappointingly slow pace.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

It is clear that we cannot settle for a sustained lack of progress in arms control. I was interested to hear Ambassador Petrovsky make the same point. My Government is prepared for, and yet eager for, a substantive movement towards real arms reductions. The United States has not lost its conviction that, while it must maintain its capability for deterring aggression - which we do - deterrence alone, is just not good enough. As President Reagan told the General Assembly, upstairs, just last month:

"We are ready for constructive negotiations with the Soviet Union.

"We recognize that there is no sane alternative to negotiations on arms control and other issues between our two nations, which have the capacity to destroy civilization as we know it." (A/39/PV.4, p. 11)

Today, the prospects for arms control are brighter, if only the Soviets are willing to take it as seriously as we do.

The damage arising from the Soviets' unwarranted suspension of nuclear negotiations has fortunately been contained. The United States has worked hard to prevent a worsening of the political climate in spite of the unfortunate Soviet walkout from the talks. We cannot but wonder whether the walkout may be the forerunner of a breakout from agreed restraints and restrictions. We can only hope that such is not the case - and we do hope that - but a Soviet walk back into serious negotiations on nuclear and other weapons would be highly constructive and reassuring, however overdue it would be right now.

The efforts of European leaders, leaders all across Europe, to explain to the Soviet leadership how Moscow has a grave obligation to move ahead on serious arms control - for the sake of the Europeans across that continent, for the sake of the Soviet people, for the sake of the American people, for the sake of the people of the whole world - will be very helpful in the coming times. Indeed, the Soviet Union, like the United States, has a legal as well as a political and moral obligation to have ongoing negotiations on strategic nuclear weapons. This legal obligation comes under the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM), which provides - I believe it is article 11, if my memory serves me right - that each side must continue active negotiations for limitations on strategic offensive arms. President Chernenko himself has written that:

"not a single opportunity, not a single chance, should be missed for returning to the path of talks".

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

Here we are and we want the Soviet Union not only to return to the path of talks but to return to the talks themselves, both START and INF. These are very good intentions expressed by President Chernenko and embodied in article 11 of the ABM Treaty but they really need to be accomplished by the Soviets returning to the arms control talks.

We now perceive new opportunities for productive discussions on difficult issues. We welcomed the recent statements by President Chernenko, which Ambassador Petrovsky also referred to this morning, that:

"there is no sound alternative at all to a constructive development of Soviet-United States relations".

His recent statements were on the whole, we believe, a positive afternote to the meetings between President Reagan and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. We also welcome the fact that the Soviet Union has agreed to explore new ways to intensify the United States/Soviet dialogue. Such meetings help to create new possibilities for co-operation.

These favourable conditions do not mean, however, that significant arms control measures can be easily reached. It is, and always has been, a very difficult process, this arms control disarmament process that I know the First Committee is so deeply involved with. But we are ready to expend every effort to reach the kind of sound and lasting agreements that would be in the interest of people around the world.

President Reagan has proposed establishing a much broader framework within which step-by-step negotiations can proceed. This has been a constant theme of the United States over the past four years. I have talked about it myself in this hall, in 1981, 1982, even 1983. As President Reagan stated in May 1982:

"Our challenge is to establish a framework in which sound East-West relations will endure."

It was on that same occasion that he stressed the need for dialogue and his readiness to meet with the late President Brezhnev. In the pursuit of such a long-range framework - an umbrella, if you will - the latest proposals of the United States to set broad mutually agreed objectives for arms control over the next 20 years are designed to make a solid contribution, within a vision of progress in foreign policy.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

If realized, this kind of broad framework would help to guide the arms control process and monitor in a very comprehensive way the progress of the various individual negotiations.

Beyond some sense of the ultimate purpose, successful negotiations also require a degree of mutual confidence. We all need to know whether or not and to what extent agreements now in force are being observed. Arms control is empty without compliance and compliance is unknowable in closed societies without effective verification. Hence the important relationship between the two. In international relations, such confidence is, more than anything else, the product of a track record or concrete experience.

Sadly enough, some critical agreements are not being observed. It is therefore all the more necessary to develop the means of ensuring that compliance with any future agreements can be effectively verified. To pursue arms control agreements that did not provide such assurance would, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, in the long run undermine the confidence on which much of the security of free societies ultimately must depend.

One essential element in building trust is the commitment of the United States and its allies and friends around the world to the concept of an open society. We live this commitment, for that is the way we organize our Governments and our lives. The issue of free access to information and to the means of public expression affects arms control in a number of very different and yet direct ways.

The activities of genuine peace movements, for instance, depend on freedom of information and expression. President Reagan has called the treatment of peace groups "a litmus test of a Government's true desire for peace". And we all remember that the United Nations General Assembly itself is on record as saying, in a General Assembly resolution that was adopted by consensus, that:

"... the best way to build trust and confidence and to advance the conditions which contribute to the cause of disarmament is through the co-operation and participation of all States and by the widest possible dissemination of information and unimpeded access by all sectors of the public to a broad range of information and opinion on questions of arms limitation and disarmament".

(resolution 37/100 J)

I know that is quite a mouthful but its essence is that it is best to have progress in arms control in a situation where the people get realistic information from all kinds of sources and not just from government handouts, and that

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

Governments have an obligation to listen to the voice of their people on these critical issues and to pay attention to that voice. The West passes this test, as we all know, with flying colours. The initial Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) deployments in Western Europe were carried out in the last year in the full glare of open public and parliamentary debates. These debates began several years before the deployments and were quite extensive. We did not seek a false unanimity orchestrated by the authority of the State.

If Governments cannot bear to subject their own security policies to public scrutiny - and we know that a lot of Governments cannot do so - then those policies are suspect, and rightly so. The structure of free democratic Governments is such that excessive secrecy is made impossible. Should any leadership attempt to close off that openness, to increase the secrecy, then it could and probably would be voted out of office by the people at the next free elections.

Opening access to information is, of course, a very key ingredient of the kind of arms control agreements that we seek. At the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe, for example, the West has proposed a number of very concrete confidence-building measures aimed at reducing the likelihood of a surprise conventional attack in Europe - a scenario that, as we all know, could have the most dangerous implications for escalation into a nuclear conflict. Such proposals clearly aim at the heart of the issue of preventing war in the nuclear age.

In addition, the Vienna talks on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) sadly have long been stalemated because the Warsaw Pact figures on manpower levels for their forces just do not agree with the facts. The manpower levels for Western forces are not in dispute. In any case, they cannot be in dispute because the evidence from Congressional and Parliamentary papers is so voluminous that it would almost fill up this meeting room. It is essential that force reductions begin in MBFR and elsewhere from known starting points and result in the maintenance of verifiable manpower levels on both sides. The West has shown additional flexibility to try to overcome this impasse by proposing major new initiatives last summer, as I recall, to resolve disagreements over the size of the conventional forces in Central Europe. We would think that after 11 years of negotiations on this matter the participants in the MBFR talks could at least come up with accurate information on the level of current troops in the area. But we will keep trying.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

Vice-President George Bush presented a draft convention in Geneva last April that reflects our overriding interest in banning chemical weapons from the earth - a very terrible category of weapons of mass destruction. Open access to information about the use and abuse of such weapons is essential to our urgent efforts to achieve a ban. As in the case of the highly successful and beneficial non-proliferation régime of 1968, access by the international community to accurate information on the activities of individual States in this area will be vital in establishing the combination of effectiveness and confidence necessary to sustain the prohibition. I note that Ambassador Petrovsky spoke about that Treaty this morning and said that there were no verification provisions for non-governmental facilities involved in the manufacture and production of chemical weapons. As we explained in Geneva again and again - and he must have heard it perhaps 20 times - that is just not the case and he should look at the Treaty once again and re-read some of our previous statements. If he has objections to that or to any other provision, then he has an obligation, I would think, to make sure that his objections are grounded in fact instead of continually repeating something that is just not true.

I should now like to address the theme of openness in yet another way. The ideal of the open society can be a mere phrase, a posturing, if you will, or it can be validated by concrete guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of information. As President Harry Truman once said:

"If we should pay merely lip service to inspiring ideals, and later do violence to simple justice, we would draw down upon us the bitter wrath of generations yet unborn."

Thus, arms control reduced to the heaping up of empty phrases and declarations - I am sad to say, as some delegations in this room may do - would betray our responsibility and make a mockery of our deliberations on the issues of peace and war.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

People around the world expect more and a lot better of us than anything of that kind. President Reagan's most recent proposals address the need for greater openness in very specific terms. One focus proposed, when the President attended the General Assembly, was United States-Soviet ministerial- or cabinet-level meetings that would exchange information on five-year military plans. The United States has, of course, advocated the widest compliance possible with appeals by the United Nations on the subject of military plans. We have urged States voluntarily - and have done so ourselves - to submit detailed data to the Secretary-General each year on their national military expenditures. The proposal to expand exchanges of observers at military exercises and locations would introduce more transparency into each other's activities. Such measures would increase the element of predictability that is important to our plans for the negotiated reduction of armaments. We have proposed such items in a host of multilateral and even bilateral arms control negotiations and would be eager to have the Soviets pick up the idea.

As important as openness is, however, it is not by itself sufficient to build the necessary trust. Another crucial element is respect for and observance of basic legal and other norms of the international community of sovereign nations, including the United Nations Charter.

The use or threat of use of force, except in self-defence, cannot be a legitimate instrument of international relations. Let me say that my predecessor, Eugene Rostow, who spoke before this Committee in 1981 and 1982, never tired, and never tires, of speaking of the need for all States to recommit themselves to Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter, not only in spirit and emotion, but in activities, and that, he believes, is the crucial question of our age. I think, as I have thought for years, working with Eugene Rostow on this question, that there is a lot to that. For this principle really lies at the heart of not only our arms control efforts but our vision of a safe, secure and free world. While nations require sufficient arms to defend themselves, the means of self-defence could be - and we believe should be - regulated at substantially reduced levels.

The principle of non-aggression in international relations is far more critical in the nuclear age than it has ever been. This is because when one looks at possible ways - God forbid - of getting into any kind of nuclear conflict, an escalation from a conventional war that somehow has got out of hand is one of the most likely scenarios. To the extent that we can dampen down or even preclude such

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

conventional warfare in the first place, that we remove the chance of that kind of escalation. Hence it is that we have all these efforts to reduce the possibilities of surprise conventional attack in Europe, as I mentioned before, to reach negotiated settlements in the Middle East and elsewhere and to elaborate methods of consultations with the Soviet Union and other nuclear-weapon States that reduce the chances of miscalculation in an emergency. Our recently completed agreement with the Soviet Union - and here let me say that the Soviet Union has worked very co-operatively with us and should be applauded for doing so - to upgrade the communications link between Washington and Moscow, the hotline agreement, is very important in this regard. I think both Washington and Moscow should take a measure of pride in working this out.

The world community has developed very strong norms by which arms control could reduce the means of aggression and lower the likelihood of arms ever being used.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty of Tlatelolco are the two principal international mechanisms for countries to pledge themselves formally not to acquire nuclear weapons. They are in themselves outstanding success stories in developing a set of international arms control norms.

Let me say that at this time, when all of us lament the lack of progress in arms control, non-proliferation is one area where arms control has done a lot better than people expected over the years, and thank God that is so. I am reminded that President John F. Kennedy in 1963 predicted that by 1975 there would be 15 to 20 nuclear-weapon States around the world. When he made that prediction, there were four or five nuclear-weapon States. There are five acknowledged nuclear-weapon States now with India, as we know, in 1974 exploding a nuclear device, and there are a few other suspected countries, but the dire - or as it was thought at the time realistic - anticipation of 15 to 20 nuclear-weapon States by 1975 has just not come about. To a great extent that is due to the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself and, just as important, the kind of values and norms that the Treaty reinforces. The United States feels very strongly about the Review Conference next year. I shall be proud to head our delegation which will attend the Conference. I believe that all of us should reaffirm the value of this Treaty to the security of all countries - and it is to the security of all countries.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

The Antarctic Treaty is another signal achievement. It ensures that the entire continent of Antarctica will be used only for peaceful purposes. All military activities are banned and on-site inspections are allowed. This is important in setting precedents which will be needed for arms control in the future. Any risks of upsetting this balance would give cause for very grave concern in view of the Treaty's contribution to international peace and security. Growing close co-operation by the Treaty signatories maintains the consensus by which Antarctica can remain demilitarized and denuclearized. Accession by other States would help to strengthen this régime, and we would welcome their doing so.

In view of both the general and particular interests involved, the two nuclear super-Powers in particular should proceed expeditiously to the negotiation of substantial armaments reductions at balanced levels. As I have mentioned several times already, we wait for the Soviets to come back to serious arms control, especially in the nuclear area, in INF and in Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). We are ready to do so any time that they are ready to do so.

Every effort should be made to resolve regional conflicts through negotiations, and States should urgently seek an end to destabilizing arms build-ups.

The United States, I am pleased to report, has responded positively in each of the areas that I mentioned. For example, we have been ready to resume strategic arms reduction negotiations ever since the Soviet Union suspended them in, as I recall, November 1983. We are flexible on the procedures and are ready to get on with reducing nuclear weapons. We have a detailed proposal for deep reductions of ballistic missiles warheads which would bring them down by a third and, to make the situation a lot more secure at a lower level, have a deterrence at a lower level of armament.

We have not wavered in our willingness to achieve what the President would really like, which is the total elimination of land-based INF systems in Europe or, if the Soviets cannot agree to a total elimination of an entire class of nuclear-weapon systems - and it seems that they have not done so - to achieve equal levels as low as the Soviets would accept. In the meantime, we have already taken steps to eliminate 2,400 nuclear warheads from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) stockpile in Europe. Here, too, we think the Soviet Union should return to the negotiating table - in case anybody missed the message that I have been trying to convey, although I doubt that many missed it.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

In the nuclear testing area we have been ready to pursue discussions with the Soviet Union on improvements necessary to verify the bilateral treaties on limiting underground nuclear testing. We are encouraged that President Chernenko has recently acknowledged the importance of addressing this unfinished business. President Reagan underscored our sense of urgency in his statement made in the General Assembly when he called for finding ways to exchange visits by experts to each other's test sites to monitor tests. We hope that concrete discussions can begin in the very near future. We are waiting to hear from the Soviet Union on that matter.

The Conference on Disarmament also addresses nuclear testing issues and could given effective participation by all its members, do further work on key verification problems. Addressing and resolving each of the problems associated with nuclear test-ban issues is the only way to make solid progress. Finally, we stand by our willingness to take up, without any pre-conditions - without any pre-conditions - the Soviet offer to discuss space arms control. We hope that in time the Soviets will be able to take "yes" for an answer. Our own position is quite clear. The United States is prepared to address all aspects of space arms control. We are prepared to discuss what mutual restraints would be appropriate during the course of the negotiations. We are prepared to discuss the research programmes now under way in both countries on new defensive systems. And we are prepared to discuss the basic offensive-defensive issues. We think that discussion could be most interesting and even most productive. It is a return to the intellectual foundations which existed at the time of the ABM Treaty and the SALT I accord in the 1969 to 1971-1972 period.

We have no illusion in all this that arms control talks, even when the Soviets agree to resume them, will be easy. They never are. There are very difficult issues to be resolved, including verification issues. In the space arms control domain, for example, there is the additional problem that the Soviet Union possesses the only operational anti-satellite capability. The elimination of such a capability would be extremely difficult to verify, if possible at all, but we will seek to overcome such problems.

We are prepared to discuss all these subjects in a comprehensive format. We are also prepared to discuss them individually, if the Soviets cannot take a comprehensive approach to these far-reaching related issues. We are prepared to

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

meet immediately without pre-conditions and we are open to all new Soviet suggestions and proposals. We would be eager to hear some.

Progress in arms control is just too important, however, to be allowed to depend on the course of only one set of negotiations, and so it is within the larger framework we mentioned, where each State has a responsibility, not just the nuclear-weapon States, to ensure that these negotiations are held.

Every conflict being fought today, it should be remembered, in however remote a part of the world, carries a particular risk for world security in the nuclear age. It is thus an urgent matter to get at the regional sources of these conflicts and to take steps to curb the increase in armaments that fuel such conflicts. In the past decade, during a period of serious economic difficulties for much of the world community - and this is an interesting point that we should all remember - military expenditures rose at a real rate of about 5 per cent per annum for the developing countries and 2.4 per cent per annum for developed countries. This means that military expenditure in developing countries is twice that of developed countries. That is a very sad statistic, since the burden of insecurity has thus weighed most heavily on those least able to afford it.

In closing, let me refer back to Thucydides, the Athenian, who wrote in his classic treatment of the Peloponnesian War, that:

"Good policy against an adversary is superior to the senseless attacks of mere force."

Because United States policy, in fact, is consistent with this timeless wisdom, we face the future with hope. We seek progress in arms control and disarmament. Our hopes for our common future reflect our commitment to such progress. We are met here today, after all, to rededicate ourselves to the highest goals - to the pursuit of peace and a better future for all those who follow, and I hope that in my speech in this chamber next year and in each succeeding year we will be able to report more progress to the Committee and will be able to take up the challenge and work together with the Soviets and others in really resolving so many of the critical issues in arms control of our time.

Mr. BHATT (Nepal): It is my great pleasure to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. I am confident that your long experience and diplomatic skill will help this Committee to conclude its work successfully. I also wish to convey my felicitations to other officers of the Committee.

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

Disarmament has been recognized by all as the essential basis for maintaining international peace and security. Accordingly, this subject has been the focus of attention of the international community for a long time. As at the previous sessions, during the course of the general debate in the plenary of the thirty-ninth session, and here in this Committee, member States have expressed their serious concern over the rapidly deteriorating international situation. The arms race in both the nuclear and conventional fields is continuing unabated. Space is also becoming another arena of arms build-up. In an atmosphere of worsening East-West relations the hope of achieving even a limited measure of arms control has become more elusive than ever. While professions of peaceful intent and readiness to negotiate arms control are being constantly made by the two most powerful nations, each side blames the other for lack of progress. In the past, at least some dialogue was going on between the two super-Powers, raising hopes for arms control. At present there is no such dialogue which could lead to serious talks on disarmament. Instead, security is being sought in the acquisition of ever increasing and more sophisticated weapons, thereby creating a situation of insecurity, in which more and more nations are inclined to acquire arms. The thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, therefore, has a difficult task before it, which is to take stock of the developments in the area of disarmament and to suggest concrete ways and means to break the impasse before us. We hope the member States of this Committee and, in particular, the two super-Powers, will be forthcoming in this direction.

We note with deep concern the lack of progress towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon tests. General Assembly resolution 2373 (XXII) called for the widest possible adherence to the Treaty by nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. Yet we are to travel a long road in the implementation of this resolution.

Similarly, in our view, the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty is an important instrument to check the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, owing to either the lack of political will or the deliberate pursuit of so-called national security interests, a number of countries have failed to accede to the Treaty.

The 1975 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty clearly demonstrated that it can play a vital role in averting further proliferation of nuclear weapons, to achieve the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to promote effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament. In our view, the solemn commitments that

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

were undertaken by the major nuclear Powers under the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty and the 1968 nuclear non-proliferation Treaty to work for a comprehensive test ban are still far from fulfilled. We, therefore, remind them of their commitments to attain a comprehensive test ban and thus demonstrate their willingness to avert the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We support the extension and development of the safeguard system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Such a step will help to enhance the status of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

My delegation reiterates its stand that non-nuclear-weapon States which are not party to any military alliance are entitled to a categorical and legally binding assurance that they will not be subject to a nuclear attack. My delegation regrets the lack of progress on this issue in the Working Group of the Committee on Disarmament.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different geographical areas of the world, on the basis of agreement freely arrived at between the States of the region, can be an important step towards the goal of disarmament. In this context, my delegation commends the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, which has provided a model for the establishment of similar zones in other regions of the world. We welcome also the efforts for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

Military build-up in any region can only aggravate the situation and create more serious problems in the area. In this perspective, we once again express our support of the General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. However, we are disappointed at the lack of progress in the implementation of the Declaration. We support the convening of the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean within a specified period and without pre-conditions. Such a conference can pave the way for the full implementation of the Indian Ocean Declaration.

The production and use of chemical weapons is another issue that has always remained a subject of concern to us. My delegation reiterates its position that the development, production and stockpiling of those weapons should be halted immediately.

Outer space is increasingly in danger of becoming a stage for military rivalry. Such a competition will lead not only to an immense waste of resources but will also add dangerous dimensions to the arms race. My delegation shares the universal concern over this issue and supports the call for the elaboration of further legislative measures to prevent the escalation of the arms race in outer space.

Among many other issues in the disarmament process, my delegation has never failed to repeat its call for an effective measure to curb the production and transfer of conventional weapons to other parts of the world. In this regard, we continue to believe that the process must begin with the most heavily armed States

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

in order to enhance an atmosphere of trust and understanding, which in turn can promote the relaxation of tension. We hope that the Group of Experts which has been established to study conventional disarmament will put forward a practical approach in this area.

It is a matter of concern to us that many developing countries have joined the arms race. Increasing military expenditure will not only have an adverse effect on development but will also make a negative contribution to the atmosphere of general insecurity now prevailing.

With the establishment of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament, it was hoped that substantial progress would be achieved in the field of disarmament. Although both those bodies have been working for the past six years, the progress remains unsatisfactory. Taking into account the significance of those multilateral deliberative and negotiating forums, stress should be placed on making them more effective. We have always supported the gradual expansion of the structure and functions of the Centre for Disarmament. It is indeed a matter of satisfaction that that Centre has played a crucial role in promoting awareness in favour of disarmament.

The international community is faced with some serious problems of a global and interdependent character. Poverty, hunger and widening economic disparities are indeed global issues which have a vital bearing on international peace and security. The growing military expenditures have drained away resources that could have been better used for economic development. My delegation therefore believes that a close relationship exists between disarmament and development. The convening of a conference on this issue, as proposed by the French President, Mr. François Mitterand, at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly and supported by many States, deserves serious consideration by all.

Despite numerous efforts which have resulted in many resolutions, declarations and agreements, the present state of international relations continues to be uncertain. Objectives laid down in this Organization's Charter for the harmonious development of a new world order remain unfulfilled. The deteriorating relations between the super-Powers have further aggravated the atmosphere, which has in turn made it more difficult to engage in serious and meaningful negotiations on the pressing issues of disarmament.

We have expressed our concern at the failure of the second special session devoted to disarmament and the lack of progress in other United Nations bodies

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

dealing with disarmament issues. All those factors have led to growing concern over the weakening role and capacity of the United Nations to deal with issues affecting the maintenance of international peace and security. We share the concern of the Secretary-General and support his appeal to take steps immediately to strengthen the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. That will be possible only when all nations and Members of the United Nations respect the Charter.

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): At this late stage in the debate, my congratulations on the election of Ambassador Souza e Silva and the other officers of the Committee can only be an echo of the footsteps of so many of our colleagues who have preceded me. However, everyone can be sure of our great confidence in Ambassador Souza e Silva's leadership, which - to borrow from our own jargon - needs no further verification. I wish also to express my delegation's readiness where possible to alleviate the heavy burden imposed upon the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee.

As the representative of Ireland, Ambassador McDonagh, said in his statement on behalf of the 10 countries of the European Community - a statement which my delegation fully endorses - our Committee starts its work against a sombre international background; in particular, East-West relations continue to be tense and difficult. We meet at a time of continued relentless growth of armaments and of unprecedented levels of stockpiles of arms, both nuclear and conventional. In practically all negotiating forums on arms control and disarmament, talks have been stagnating. For almost a full year now no negotiations at all have taken place on nuclear armaments.

Yet, we remain convinced that the arms race is neither inevitable nor irreversible. The urgent and eloquent pleas that we have heard here in this forum for an early resumption of the dialogue and for concrete, constructive negotiations have been manifold in these days. The message conveyed by almost all delegations is unequivocal: the arms race must be reversed; effective, balanced and verifiable measures of arms control and disarmament must be vigorously pursued.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

As we all know, this Committee produces more resolutions than any of the other Committees of the General Assembly. This is undoubtedly inspired by the earnest wish of Governments to make a maximum effort in addressing the very serious problems of armaments and insecurity. Unfortunately, however, the outcome, in the form of concrete measures based on those resolutions, is not commensurate with the number of resolutions, nor with the high ambitions embodied in them.

We therefore believe it is highly desirable that, more than in the past, we should focus our efforts on the essentials and concentrate on what unites us rather than on what still keeps us divided. We should remain receptive to the ideas of others and at the same time we should not shy away from voicing our own particular ideas in which we firmly believe; but, above all, we should show restraint, because it is only gradually that common ground can be broadened. Like Ambassador Lautenschlager of the Federal Republic of Germany, we believe in a pragmatic, step-by-step approach. As was said by Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia, in attempting to produce a modus vivendi it is important that logic and empiricism be allowed a full role. It is not so much that the wisdom of words and ideas are lacking but rather that we fail in unbiased appraisal and concrete action. We should patiently, but with vigour, work towards agreement on the areas in which fruitful negotiations appear to be possible. We should seek for negotiations leading to agreements which would effectively contribute to increased security. Those are objectives which cannot be achieved overnight.

Any arms control treaty should, in our view, conform to some basic conditions.

First, the agreement should contain real substance and also should be of significance in military terms. General expressions of intent and declarations are not sufficient. Commitments should be phrased in specific, well-defined terms so as to reduce the risk of misunderstanding and evasion of the application of the rules.

Secondly, the effects of any treaty obligations must be balanced. None of the parties should be provided with an undue advantage: in other words, parties should fully believe in the balanced end result of the negotiations, so as to avoid any misgivings at the stage when the treaty must be implemented.

Last, but certainly not least, compliance with any treaty rules should be verifiable. The conclusion of a treaty presupposes, of course, a minimum of mutual trust and confidence; but it is the contents of the treaty and the assurances embodied in it concerning the implementation of the rules that should reinforce that confidence. Verification is the key to confidence-building.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

It is only natural that in our hopes and ambitions for a safer world we should look in particular to the two major nuclear Powers, for they share between themselves the most important nuclear and conventional capabilities. We are gratified to note statements by those Powers, made recently at the highest level, indicating their desire to explore ways of reopening their dialogue. We earnestly urge the Soviet Union to take up the challenge, to respond to the appeal made by President Reagan to that effect and to return to the negotiating table.

Since 1977 we have been witnessing a substantial deployment of new intermediate-range nuclear missiles by the Soviet Union. Those SS-20 missiles, notably by their "mirved" and triple-warheaded character, pose an increased threat to Western security. The monopoly of the Soviet Union in those land-based intermediate-range missiles caused the West to take its double-track decision of 1979. In the absence of an arms control agreement eliminating that category of weapons, which would have obviated the need for deployment on the Western side, the stationing of United States intermediate-range missiles began at the end of 1983. As is well known, that deployment can be reversed, halted or modified upon the achievement of a balanced, equitable and verifiable agreement calling for such action.

On 1 June 1984 the Netherlands Government decided that if the United States and the Soviet Union were to reach an agreement on arms control, on the basis of which a number of intermediate-range nuclear missiles would be retained in Western Europe, the Netherlands would accept and deploy its share of such systems. The Government also decided that if no such arms control agreement should have been reached by 1 November 1985 and if the Soviet Union, as of the date of the Netherlands Government's decision - 1 June 1984 - should have increased the number of SS-20s deployed by it or should not, after such an increase, have reduced the number to the level of 1 June 1984, the Netherlands would deploy 48 Cruise missiles.

The essence of that decision is to give a clear signal to the Soviet Union to exercise restraint and to halt its build-up of SS-20s. It should and must then be possible to arrive, by means of negotiations, at the more balanced situation which is needed between East and West. It is our ardent hope that the United States and the Soviet Union will reach agreement on a substantial reduction, and preferably on the complete elimination, of this whole category of weapons. Our hope pertains equally to the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two major nuclear-weapon States, where an agreement is equally called for to bring about deep cuts and to prevent destabilizing developments.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Although the resumption of the bilateral talks between the two major nuclear Powers is of the utmost importance and of great concern to us all, contacts and negotiations on a regional level are of great value as well. Let me just mention two examples of a regional approach to disarmament and security matters to which my Government attaches great importance. The Netherlands continues to spare no efforts to contribute to progress in the talks on mutual and balanced force reductions in Vienna. We firmly believe that a balanced reduction of conventional forces in Europe will contribute to greater stability in that part of the world. We also value the dialogue between East and West that is currently taking place in the European Disarmament Conference in Stockholm. We are aware of the differences that, both in Vienna and in Stockholm, continue to divide the two sides, but at the same time we trust that common ground will gradually emerge. We feel that the outcome of the dialogue and of negotiations taking place in those forums is of vital importance not only to the peoples represented there but also - let it be said once again - to the world community as a whole.

It is obvious that the arms race has a global impact. Problems of disarmament and security also exceed the capacities of individual States or groups of States, however powerful and rich, to resolve them. We, as Members of the United Nations, should therefore work together to find solutions. Not only common risks and responsibilities link us in United Nations forums: we are linked also by the hope that together, as an international community facing its tasks, we can do more than we can on a limited regional scale.

All nations endorsed the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations on refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations and on the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Charter of the United Nations does not need duplication, nor does it need amendment, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly observed in his report last year. It merely needs to be strictly complied with. Observance in good faith of those principles by all members of the international community would make the world a different place. The threat of the use of arms would then lose much of its acuity. In the course of time, strict observance of the principles would increasingly inspire confidence and would help to bring about a safer and more peaceful world.

As a participant in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, the Netherlands is making an active contribution to the efforts to bring closer the prospect of more substantial agreements. I should like briefly to comment on some of the issues on which the Conference on Disarmament is active or, rather, should be active.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

My Government continues to attach great importance to the early establishment of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We regret that this year the Conference on Disarmament has been preoccupied with fruitless procedural debates, which have precluded the continuation of substantive activities that last year seemed to be so full of promise. Unfortunately, no consensus could be reached on a draft mandate for a subsidiary body. In this way valuable time was lost - time which could have been spent on the detailed consideration of modalities of verification and other issues. We recognize the position of those countries which believe that our work should now comprise the drafting of a treaty on a ban itself. But we believe the all-or-nothing approach of some of those delegations not to be conducive to the gradual achievement of our common objective of a comprehensive ban.

But let me also mention the limited progress made in this area. At this very moment the first full-scale test is being carried out with an international system for the exchange of data in order to locate and identify seismic events. After this test run it will be easier to make an empirical assessment of the possibilities of verification by means of a multinational seismic system under a future nuclear-test-ban treaty. We have great expectations of the results of this test.

Events earlier this year have once more underlined the urgent necessity of an all-out attempt to conclude a treaty on the elimination of chemical weapons. We therefore hope that all countries involved will continue to make a decisive contribution towards the achievement of a chemical weapons treaty. I would in this context mention the valuable contribution made by the United States in submitting to the Conference a complete draft text of a treaty. We hope that the Soviet willingness to accept the principle of continuous on-site inspection of the destruction of chemical stockpiles will be followed by further steps on its part inspired by a constructive approach, which unfortunately was sadly lacking in part of Ambassador Petrovsky's statement on this point this morning.

On the whole, in this area also progress remained limited during the last session. The difficulties to be overcome mainly concern verification of compliance with the future treaty. Those difficulties are real, and they should be met with imagination. They are aggravated by the fact that from the beginning the production of chemical weapons has been closely linked with the regular production of the civil chemical industry. This fact alone taxes the inventiveness of negotiators faced with the task of elaborating the necessary verification measures.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Moreover, chemical weapons have unfortunately proved to be highly effective weapons systems. For this reason, countries legitimately attach exceptional importance to assurances on the observance of treaty obligations which indeed would lead to total chemical disarmament. These two complicating factors - the intricacies of verification and the required high degree of certainty with respect to verification - can only fully be dealt with by means of an unprecedented system of verification measures. We call upon countries to approach this problem in a constructive spirit.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Let me make one final remark on the urgency of our work on a future chemical weapons treaty. For us it is difficult to conceive that our deliberations in this Committee preclude concrete, constructive work simultaneously to be continued in Geneva. My delegation firmly believes that negotiations should be conducted on a continuous basis, uninterrupted by the traditional meeting schedule of the Conference on Disarmament.

Pending the achievement of a chemical weapons ban, the world community should do its utmost to prevent chemical weapons from being used. We are satisfied that the experts appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations have concluded their work on procedures with regard to investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons. We warmly welcome their report, which paves the way for the implementation of resolution 37/98 D on the machinery for such investigations.

I should like to say a few words about two other items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament: "Prevention of nuclear war" and "Outer space".

My delegation deeply regrets that this year it has once again proved impossible to reach an agreement on the proper framework in which the item "Prevention of nuclear war including all related matters" will be considered. As I said before, respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter is sadly lacking. Prevention of war, of all war, conventional or nuclear, should remain our goal. This is the core of the strategy of our alliance to deter any conflict.

The nuclear Powers, especially the two largest, bear of course a special responsibility. But the world community as a whole can and should also contribute to the elimination of the dangers of nuclear war. My delegation feels that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum for addressing this issue. We believe that specific measures, such as nuclear confidence-building measures, could also be discussed under this heading. We therefore remain resolved to contribute towards an understanding on the procedures to be pursued. Such an understanding would facilitate a substantial discussion on these important matters in the Conference on Disarmament next spring, which would also be welcome in the perspective of the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty later that year.

Like prevention of nuclear war, the prevention of an arms race in outer space is of global dimensions. Mankind is at the threshold of an entirely new phase in the arms race. Technology develops at an extremely rapid rate. The moment is near where it may affect global stability. These developments may very well dominate

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

our debate on security in the next two decades. As time goes by, the problems caused by technological advances with respect to outer space become more difficult to solve. There is not much time left.

My delegation holds the opinion that here too the major space Powers bear a special responsibility. We fervently hope that in the near future they will indeed be in a position to agree upon a proper basis to initiate negotiations on this subject.

Bilateral talks between the two Powers should in our view also inspire the work on prevention of an arms race in outer space to be undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, my Government regards multilateral and bilateral approaches to this problem as complementary. With this in mind, I cannot fail to regret the lack of consensus on the terms of reference of a subsidiary body of the Conference to take up its work on outer space issues.

What are the key issues with respect to the prevention of an arms race in outer space? In our view attention should be focused on a priority basis on the threat which anti-satellite weapon systems pose to those satellites that have a stabilizing function. Because of the technical complexities of anti-satellite arms control, as well as of adequate verification, our efforts should be pragmatic. A combination of verifiable and co-operative elements in a future agreement seems to be called for so as to make anti-satellite warfare hardly an effective military option.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the intensive research efforts going on in the field of ballistic missile defence, including space-based systems. If carried beyond the present stage of feasibility research, those developments could very well have far-reaching implications for arms control and stability. We hope that the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, once they are decided upon, will not forgo this dimension of the arms race in outer space.

Finally, a word on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will be under review by States Parties next year. The Netherlands attaches great importance to this Treaty and we look forward to a successful and substantive outcome of the Review Conference. My delegation is pleased to note that the vast majority of the countries represented here today are Parties to that Treaty. The widespread accession by members of the community of States proves that the value of the Non-Proliferation Treaty has been widely recognized.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

When the Non-Proliferation Treaty took effect, the number of nuclear-weapon States was frozen at five. Had the Treaty not existed, more countries might have entered the nuclear arena. The freezing of the number of nuclear-weapon States has prevented the world from becoming more unsafe. This does not mean that the possession of nuclear weapons thereby became, as critics of the Treaty tend to suggest, an inalienable right. It does not relieve the present nuclear-weapon States of their duty to negotiate the reduction of nuclear stockpiles, likewise in the interest of a safer world. The difficulties they experience in this process must, however, never be used by others as an excuse for statements through which the vital importance to the world of the agreement is put into question.

In concluding, permit me to return to the role of the United Nations - and more particularly to the role of the First Committee - with regard to disarmament, international peace and security. It constitutes a platform for all concerned to express their opinions and concerns and as such cannot be valued too highly. The time at our disposal, however, is limited and we owe it to those whom we represent to use it as efficiently as possible.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

As I said before, we should focus our efforts on the essentials. My delegation is gratified, Sir, to see that under your chairmanship procedures continue to be tightened. But my delegation thinks that more thought could be given to how we could further rationalize the work. We would therefore welcome very favourably the setting up of a small working party to consider these matters. We do not underestimate the difficulties involved, but we think that by streamlining the work of the Committee and by reducing the number of draft resolutions, delegations would be in a position to focus on the essentials.

At the beginning of my statement I referred to the sombre, dark background against which the Committee has started its work. Perhaps these are dark times also because we have reached the bottom of a deep valley. Looking upward, nevertheless, we see far above us the signals of what perhaps can be interpreted as a new beginning - as the beginning of what will surely be an uphill fight, but still, step by step leading us on the path to effective, verifiable and, indeed, stringent arms control and disarmament, which the world needs so much. These weeks, we, in the First Committee have a special responsibility as guides onto that upward road.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.