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Chairman: Mr. SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the first speaker I have a statement to make. With regard to the procedural issue raised at the end of the 20th meeting of the Committee last Tuesday, 30 October, I should like to state the following understanding reached with the delegations directly concerned:

"It is understood that no delegation intended to exercise its right of reply more often than provided for in section F of decision 34/401 of the General Assembly. It being so, the record of the 20th meeting of the First Committee will reflect that understanding."

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee so decides.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142 (continued)

STATEMENTS ON SPECIFIC DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS AND CONTINUATION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BLANCO (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like first of all to express the profound sorrow of my delegation and Government at the tragic death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India. My delegation and Government have already expressed those feelings in the appropriate forums. I wish simply to reiterate them now, together with the expression of our solidarity with the delegation of India.

Before I begin my statement, I should like to say how happy my delegation is to see you, Sir, conducting the work of this Committee. Your well-known skills and experience are a guarantee of success and the delegation of Uruguay is very gratified to see a representative of Brazil chairing the meetings of the First Committee. I should also like to say that we fully appreciated the able and intelligent way in which Mr. Tom Eric Vraalsen, of Norway, conducted the proceedings at the last session.

(Mr. Blanco, Uruguay)

The Charter provides appropriate mechanisms for weapons control and disarmament, but undoubtedly the necessary political conditions for such mechanisms to operate fully have disappeared. Disarmament, in fact, cannot be viewed in isolation from the international situation, as if it were possible to achieve it in spite of the circumstances surrounding it. We live in a world divided into military and political blocs. There has been a dramatic increase in terrorism. Violence is manifested at all times and recourse to force to settle differences is certainly not infrequent.

(Mr. Blanco, Uruguay)

That is the present scenario of disarmament. The tensions and confrontations in that context are the major obstacles to progress. The accumulation of weapons is the critical element in the increase in tensions and confrontations.

The point of departure for any attempt to restore certain minimum bases and thus break the vicious circle lies in the political will of States to adjust their conduct to conform with international law. In this connection, all States can and should make a contribution to that end in both their words and their deeds. In particular, it is indispensable strictly to respect the principles of non-intervention and self-determination. Experience has shown that much of the tension and that many of the conflicts stem from or are aggravated by the attempts of one or several States to change the political, economic or social system of others or to influence their sovereign decisions, using the most varied direct or indirect means to accomplish that purpose.

Respect for such principles cannot be selective or discriminatory, depending on what may be convenient at a given moment or to the liking of some. It must be practised in full in all cases and towards all States.

Apart from the basic attitude of abiding by those principles of international law, there are other relevant elements for the creation of a propitious climate for disarmament. I am referring, inter alia, to the system of collective security, to the means for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the strengthening of the role of the Organization, peace-keeping operations and confidence-building measures. It would be desirable for action relating to those various questions - although they are dealt with in different forums - to be co-ordinated with a common perspective in order to create a unified system for the promotion of peace and disarmament.

An alert and demanding world public opinion that would speak out everywhere without restrictions is another factor that would help to create a favourable climate for disarmament and stimulate the political will of States. Along with that we must work in the field of disarmament as such. Unless concrete steps are taken on this question, there will be no credibility and it is obvious that the international climate will continue to deteriorate.

General and complete disarmament is the objective set by the international community and it must be pursued unremittingly.

(Mr. Blanco, Uruguay)

The present strategic system highlights the major responsibility of the main military Powers to endeavour, through negotiation, to achieve the progressive solution of disarmament questions, especially in the nuclear field. Balanced, mutual and verifiable disarmament to the satisfaction of the parties will take time to achieve. But we must begin the process of negotiation as soon as possible and reverse the arms race. In this connection, we wish to reiterate our appeal to the Soviet Union and the United States to undertake a further negotiating effort in all forums in order to achieve significant results. Relations between those two countries and their negotiations obviously have a major impact on the overall world situation and, in particular, on the climate that is required in order to make progress on disarmament. Recently we have seen positive indications of steps taken in the right direction, and such action should be further encouraged.

At the same time, we must strengthen action at the multilateral level, especially the work of the Committee and of the Conference on Disarmament aimed at establishing a comprehensive programme of disarmament and carrying out other mandates of the General Assembly.

Without overlooking the due importance of nuclear questions, we must dwell on the conventional aspects of disarmament. The recent technical study on the conventional arms race in document A/39/348 highlights the magnitude and tragic consequences of the non-nuclear conflicts that have occurred since 1945.

The realistic recognition of existing difficulties should not lead to a standstill. Gradual progress in some areas could be a practical form of achieving certain agreements, however limited they may be, in terms of the subject-matter or geographic scope. In this context, we should mention, among others, the following: the generalization of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests; the establishment and improvement of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace; instruments to guarantee the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; the prohibition of the production and use of particularly destructive weapons, especially chemical weapons.

Consideration of those questions and any solutions that might be arrived at must, at any event, be associated with efforts aimed at linking disarmament with development and security, thus maintaining the harmony of the basic approach to peace, as enshrined in the Charter.

(Mr. Blanco, Uruguay)

Steps that may be taken along those lines, however partial, would slowly create a whole network of agreements, important in themselves but also relevant to the reversal of the climate of tension and mistrust. The United Nations can play a significant role in this field through the various forums of the system.

Without disregarding unilateral views or political understandings, we must formulate binding juridical instruments that offer the maximum guarantees under international law. The concentration of efforts in some areas, such as the ones I have mentioned or similar ones, would avoid the dispersal of efforts over too wide a front and with limited effect.

The organization of the work of the First Committee should also contribute to the achievement of that objective.

The concept of "clusters" is a positive element in this respect. We could make further progress by co-ordinating the resolutions on each of the subject-matters and reducing the number of those resolutions. In that way, decisions on each item - in terms of both the statements and the votes - would be clearer. That would undoubtedly strengthen their political impact while facilitating the process of having a frank assessment of the results achieved.

Even in the present circumstances, the difficulties of which are well known, we must continue the endeavours of the international community to strengthen peace and security through disarmament. Let us untiringly and with imagination explore all possible channels and let us agree to make progress, however limited it may be. I pledge the full co-operation of my delegation in that endeavour.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): Before making my statement on the agenda items, I should like to take this opportunity to express the condolences of the Algerian delegation to the Indian delegation on the cruel loss of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India and current Chairman of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries. The tragic news was too shocking for us to be able to express all that we felt before this drama that has struck the whole world, all the non-aligned countries and the international community as a whole. Mrs. Indira Gandhi symbolized everything that non-alignment means - the defence of freedom, national independence and solidarity with oppressed peoples, especially the Namibian people, the South African people and the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The very special links that bind Algeria with India more than ever strengthen our bonds. We feel the loss painfully. We know how much India has contributed to the union and soundness of the Non-Aligned Movement in a world more than ever confronted with the hard realities of a serious crisis and with disruptions imposed by policies of force, which sorely test the universally recognized principles and the search for international democratization. We express our feelings of solidarity with the friendly people of India and stand with them in their terrible loss. We should seek together ways and means of accomplishing the work that she had made it her duty to carry out.

Speaking for the first time before the Political Committee of the General Assembly, I note how much hope the international community places in the work of a body which deals with the key problems of our times, disarmament and international security. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to be working under your chairmanship, which is so fraught with meaning and symbolism. Your unanimous election is just recognition of your qualities as a distinguished diplomat and dedicated fighter for disarmament, which are clearly evidenced by both the competence and conviction of your work, particularly at the Conference on Disarmament. That a representative of Brazil should be called upon for the second time to chair the political and security Committee is undoubtedly a tribute to your country, with which Algeria is happy to maintain bilateral relations of great value and to carry out co-operative international action, especially in the Group of 77, for the establishment of the new international economic order, and in the Group of 21, for the achievement of disarmament. Your election to the chairmanship of this Committee is highly significant for the third world. This action reflects our shared fundamental claim to peace and development, to which we all aspire in the face of the continued deterioration of international life.

Crisis has become one of the basic elements of the relations between States, a distinctive sign of our times, a serious and global crisis, a profound and durable crisis, a crisis which irresistibly affects all sectors of international relations and disrupts their very fabric. At the global level the persistent absence of a real dialogue between the big Powers considerably darkens the horizon and removes any prospects of solutions to the major world problems, such as disarmament. The increased confrontation between the blocs accentuates the bipolarization, increases antagonisms and revives the cold-war spirit.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

In such a climate the open and potential crises throughout the world cannot but be resuscitated and aggravated and cannot but increase in acuity, because the exacerbation of the East-West confrontation and the recrudescence of imperialist activities threaten world peace and undermine co-operation among nations.

The racist and aggressive régimes find there a propitious ground to multiply their faits accomplis and give free rein to their unbridled policy of force. The world economy is settling into recession and the associated disruptions to its very foundations. The reduction in international co-operation is aggravated for the weakest by the inevitable consequences of certain budgetary and monetary policies. The arms race, especially the nuclear-arms race, has become unbridled. Dumbly, it continues and accelerates. Sometimes, it takes off spectacularly. At a speed which astounds the imagination, it even enters the most unexpected fields. The star wars that we are promised for tomorrow appear to have become an irreversible fact. The enormous sums thus squandered are felt particularly in the cut-back in development assistance at a time when the need for such assistance is most pressing and when the indescribable living conditions of several dozen million human beings, especially in Africa, call out to our consciences and demand resolute solidarity. All the possibilities of science, and all the resources of human intelligence appear so irrationally to be involved in the development of means which make the destruction of the human species inexorable. One would think that man's suicidal impulse today prevails over the very instinct of preservation of the species.

Nuclear catastrophe, which for a long time for the initiated was a mere theoretical hypothesis, whose absurdity precluded credibility, is becoming a sort of tragic fatality propelled in our everyday life by the infernal succession of discoveries, developments, deployments and accumulation of the most terrifying and most sophisticated weapons, a fatality which cool warmongering declarations, unless we are careful, will eventually trivialize.

Is there anything more normal, therefore, that from every corner of the earth voices of condemnation should be raised against such an absurdity? The questions of war and peace, which throughout the history of mankind were the distinctive sign of government, have become popular themes, because everyone sees that his own life is at stake. In the most unexpected places, a powerful will to live is expressed in the face of the irrational prospects of general obliteration. Even the most desperate reactions stem from this will to live and from the same rejection of the logic of destruction.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

This is the profound meaning of the poignant example of young people, whose innocence and age, however, allow for every dream, to proclaim the right to suicide in order to escape the prospects and terrifying conditions of the nuclear winter, which would inevitably follow a nuclear war.

True, all these manifestations of disruption are significant and explain the nature and scope of the dangers implicit in the present crisis in international relations. But precisely because the ultimate stakes are further highlighted, all of this makes us well aware of the profound sources of disruption which shake our world, because essentially the new awareness merely confirms the conviction reaffirmed repeatedly here by most people: namely, that the causes of disruption and disorder are contained in the laws governing the system of international relations. A warmongering bipolar system of which relations of force and a balance of power are the mainsprings. A system which organizes international life according to hierarchical criteria. A system which nourishes the precarious opulence of a minority by means of the institutionalized poverty of the majority. A system which bases the privileged status of some on the subordination, that is, the subjugation and exploitation, of others, chiefly through recourse to force and flagrant attacks against the most elementary rights of peoples.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The accomplishment of so vital a task as disarmament depends in substance on a real improvement in an international life profoundly marked by exclusivism and monopoly.

The failure of several decades of efforts on behalf of disarmament testifies in this connection to the need for urgent world action as required by the present situation, action that postulates the liberation of man and the united destiny of the species as the ends to be sought, because partial approaches have shown their limitations and inability to take account of the major challenges of our time. Agreements concluded or about to be concluded in such conditions are at best a fragile framework for disciplining the arms race with all the risks that this implies whenever the will for escalation prevails over the desire for appeasement.

Here lies the very essence of the present situation, where the relaunching of the arms race and the blocking of certain negotiation circuits are powerfully strengthening each other.

An analysis of the work of the Conference on Disarmament provides a striking example of the grave state of affairs in which the lack of dialogue nourishes the erosion of the hope that in 1978 had aroused the unanimous will of the international community, which conceived the Committee on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in order to take charge resolutely and responsibly of all disarmament problems in the common interest of all peoples.

The report of the Conference on Disarmament clearly demonstrates all the shortcomings therein.

Thus the vital question for the survival of mankind - the prevention of nuclear war - by its mere inclusion on the agenda has given rise to endless discussions and the most incredible negotiations. There has been no agreement to embark on negotiation or even to proceed to a subsequent consideration of the question despite the flexibility of the majority of the members of the Conference and in spite of the growing trend shown in the adoption of resolutions relating thereto by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions.

Despite the pressing need to achieve nuclear disarmament the Conference has not been in a position to undertake even preliminary discussions on that priority question even though it has been on its agenda since its first session in 1979.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The question of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, also a priority question, comes up against the same basic obstruction: a limited group of countries always trying to confine its examination merely to aspects of verification; substantive negotiation is continually deferred. Is it necessary to emphasize in this regard that verification could not be carried out in a vacuum and that the object of prohibition cannot be conceived as a mere consequence of its verification? Is it necessary to recall once again the unacceptability of the arguments adduced when the most authoritative voices have affirmed for more than a decade that there was no longer any technical difficulty in the way of an agreement on the question?

If some satisfaction is to be drawn from the limited and laborious progress achieved in the work on chemical weapons, the activities of the Conference on Disarmament on the whole certainly justify the greatest concern.

The desire to prevent an arms race in outer space has been forcefully expressed since 1982 by the General Assembly, which has thus come to grips with a concern expressed throughout the world. The almost unanimous appeal of the General Assembly addressed to the Conference on Disarmament a year ago has found no echo. No progress has been achieved in an area where a minimum of effort today would remove incalculable dangers tomorrow.

The comprehensive disarmament programme, because of its nature and implications, is seen as a coherent framework for the programme's achievement of genuine disarmament, but it seems to have definitely been led into a deadlock.

Progressively, the debates on negative security guarantees are being devoted more to the restrictions to be imposed on such guarantees rather than to the acceptance of a formal and unequivocal commitment on the part of the nuclear-weapon Powers not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States which do not have them.

The prolonged abuse of the rules of procedure combined with recourse to a whole arsenal of arguments derived not from any determination to achieve disarmament but rather from the strategic considerations of each State have exposed the true nature of the difficulty, even the impossibility, of negotiating today. I mean the absence of any real political will on the part of certain Powers to negotiate and therefore to assume fully their responsibility before history and before all peoples, including their own, which have become collectively the hostages of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

With the same causes producing the same effects, the work of the Disarmament Commission this year again has not had more positive results. Although its statute is that of a deliberative body which can only make recommendations, no compromise has been achieved despite the variety of questions on its agenda and the urgency of some of them.

Thus the nuclear capacity of South Africa which constitutes a serious and indisputable danger for Africa and thus for international peace and security, was once again the object of clear obstruction. Seized of that question for five years, the Commission has been unable to reach any compromise because certain limited, but powerful, collusions with the apartheid régime guarantee to the latter the protection it needs to pursue its obstinate course. It would be dangerous were short-term schemes to persist. It would be illusory to believe that misfortune always knocks on the same door and that the threat inherent in the nature of the apartheid régime will be confined to Africa. Recent history has shown the vainness of such schemes and the tragic developments they entail.

If we are convinced that peace among men must involve all men and that their proclaimed equality implies a need for security common to all peoples, the time has come to eliminate action that restricts security; the time has come to do away with the concept of the world according to which the third world represents only a pawn in the history of others, an area to which tensions brought from elsewhere may be shifted, a place on which the interests of others may be imposed.

If the nuclear age has affirmed interdependence as the central element in the life of nations, one thing is evident: world peace, international security and the economic and social development of peoples are as indissociable as they are indivisible.

I am referring, in other words, to the close correlation that exists between the promotion and the implementation of a system of collective security and general and complete disarmament.

Armed peace is not peace, and security based on weaponry cannot constitute the final answer to man's irrepressible need for freedom.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

We should emphasize here the danger of doctrines that tend to make us believe the accumulation of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, has a part to play in the maintenance of peace in the world. To say today that nuclear weapons are purely political and that their mere existence is an instrument of preservation of world peace is, from three points of view, obviously to misrepresent history.

It is to disregard the fact that at all times weapons were created to be used and that in situations of serious conflict, everyone, to win a war or to ensure decisive advantage, has resorted to the most destructive weapons in his power, including nuclear weapons. And if in the beginning the deterrence doctrine nurtured certain illusions on the subject, all theses and theories advanced in the last few years designed to lend credence to ideas such as surgical strike and a limited winnable war - and which are, when all is said and done, merely the corollary of deterrence itself - confront us again with the harsh realities of the contemporary world.

It is to disregard completely the real sense of the arms race, its hazards, the major crises through which it is passing and its obvious outcome, the establishment of arsenals amounting to enormous quantities of tens of thousands of nuclear warheads.

It is, finally, to ignore the millions of human beings who over the same decades sacrificed their lives precisely so that the universal ideal of freedom and peace might be achieved. In the last analysis, it would be to treat with disdain the life of all those martyrs of colonial wars and wars of aggression, or fallaciously to sublimate the Palestinian or South African freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the balance of nuclear forces and who forgot the daily tragedy of their people to applaud a new distant illusion of peace.

The same action is required in the face of certain facts - advanced parallel with the idea of peace preserved through nuclear weapons - facts whose emergence is used excessively to make it seem as if the developing countries bear a disproportionate responsibility for the state of the world, which is troubled by a multitude of conflicts. Because, to seek to render the third world guilty of all conflicts - which for the most part have been imposed on them as the price of their own freedom - is obviously and artificially to raise to the level of truth the untenable paradox that war has suddenly become the luxury of the poor.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

Such assertions are in no way in keeping with reality; nor do they stand up to an objective analysis of the situation and the conflicts which have shaken the third world since 1945 and even before then. Such assertions are not only unfounded; they are also dangerous since, through the amalgamation of causes and symptoms of one and the same phenomenon, they seek to consolidate the positions achieved in the strategic, military and economic spheres. We must say that, for the third world, war has often been something it has undergone; it has at best been the ultimate recourse imposed on many peoples which, to put an end to an unacceptable situation, have undertaken by the use of weapons to reconquer their right to sovereign existence.

But, precisely because they have lived in their own flesh the tragedies, sufferings and destruction that have unfailingly accompanied such wars, they know better than anyone else how vain weapons are when the objective is to impose the will of the strongest and how powerless military superiority is to guarantee the everlasting duration of advantageous relations of force, whose intrinsic injustice and potential dangers actually call it into question.

In their efforts devoted at present to the building of national independence, they know how imperative international peace and security are in a world characterized by growing uncertainty and shameful imbalances.

To all that, Algeria wishes to bear witness and can, in more than one respect, do so.

In celebrating today the thirtieth anniversary of the beginning of its armed struggle for national liberation, Algeria does so with all the moral and political authority drawn from the considerable sacrifice it made to achieve its aims. It does so also because it is convinced that there is no alternative to negotiation in order to overcome differences and resolve international problems. Finally, it does so because it has faith in a common future which we must forge together, a future where disarmament, even if it does not fill all our promises, plays an important part and is a decisive factor in the establishment of global détente.

If we speak out always to claim disarmament as the vehicle of efforts by the international community, it is certainly not to pay tribute to any rite - because, for our time, disarmament has become an indispensable requirement, and through disarmament mankind would enter a qualitatively new era in history.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

If we measure fully the difficulty of the task and the considerable effort it requires - because a work of civilization inevitably is a long-term task - we none the less retain the tenacious conviction that this choice is available to us if only there is an end to the actions and policies which have so far hindered the aspiration for universal peace.

Mr. LIPATOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): First of all, allow me to convey to the delegation of India our most heartfelt condolences and deep sense of sorrow in connection with the tragic death of Indira Gandhi, the outstanding stateswoman and international figure of our age, a glorious daughter of the Indian people and an outstanding champion of the peace and security of peoples.

In the whole complex of problems pertaining to arms limitation and disarmament, one of those enjoying the highest priority without any doubt is the question of the prompt prohibition and elimination of chemical warfare agents. The importance of an immediate solution of that task is prompted by the very nature of that barbarous weapon, whose use would cause massive casualties, particularly among the civilian population.

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

Many speakers in the First Committee have voiced their well-founded alarm at the fact that this issue still remains unresolved, particularly since the prompt attainment of an agreement on the full prohibition of chemical weapons has already been the subject of repeated appeals in the General Assembly, and the two special sessions on disarmament adopted a number of concrete recommendations on the problem. In this connection, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR wishes once again to emphasize with all the force at its command that blame for the fact that these recommendations remain unfulfilled lies fully with the United States, whose position has impeded the elaboration of an international agreement to put an end, once and for all, to these types of weapons of mass destruction.

The Soviet Union continues resolutely and consistently to advocate the prompt cessation of the production of chemical weapons, the destruction of existing stockpiles and the prohibition of the development of new types of such weapons. In 1982 the Soviet Union took a major initiative by introducing basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction, which took into account the viewpoints of many States. The Soviet draft, which met with a widespread favourable response, contained provisions embracing the most important aspects of the problem, and that should have made it possible in a short time to achieve a mutually acceptable agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons and also resolve the question of monitoring compliance. However, the United States and other member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) chose to evade serious consideration of the important compromise proposals of the Soviet Union.

Subsequently, the Soviet Union took further steps towards agreement. During the work of the Committee on Disarmament last year the Soviet delegation submitted a number of far-reaching constructive proposals which took into account the opinions of the participants in the negotiations. These included a proposal for the inclusion in the convention of a provision on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons; a number of provisions which would reliably guarantee the non-production of such weapons at facilities of the civilian chemical industry and facilitate control in this sphere; and provisions dealing with the elaboration of a special system for the destruction of chemical-weapon stockpiles which would guarantee the security and interests of all States parties and others.

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

This year, seeking to find common ground with the positions of other States, the Soviet Union made another important proposal. It was announced that, during the elaboration of the control procedures for monitoring the destruction of chemical weapons at various special facilities, the Soviet Union was prepared to agree to a solution whereby the effectiveness of control, from the beginning of the destruction process to its completion, would be guaranteed either by the permanent presence at the facility of international control representatives or by a combination of systematic international verification measures at the facility and at the adjacent weapon stockpiles. That initiative, which was supported by the other countries of the socialist community, was directly designed to unravel at long last one of the most tangled knots in the negotiations - the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons and the monitoring of their destruction. Unfortunately, here again the Western States failed to show a spirit of co-operation and continued stubbornly to cling to their unrealistic demands in this field.

In our opinion, in matters of arms limitation and elimination, the regional approach is also very important. It is capable of opening up additional prospects for the solution of complex problems, because it makes it possible to take into account the military and political features peculiar to a given region. Such an approach has already won broad international recognition in a number of areas relating to the prevention of the danger of war, particularly in the sphere of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the limitation of armed forces and conventional weapons.

That is precisely the aim of another important act of the socialist countries - the proposal to commence negotiations in order to rid Europe of chemical weapons. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR considers that the removal of the chemical threat hanging over the States and peoples of Europe would make it possible to reduce substantially the risk of chemical warfare on the continent and, consequently, in the whole world, and make it possible to start the reduction of the arsenals of chemical weapons, strengthen European security and help to consolidate mutual trust. The implementation of such regional measures would be conducive to the success of efforts made world-wide to accelerate the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which is of course the final aim of the socialist States.

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

In this respect one cannot fail to note the attempts of the United States and certain other Western States to sow scepticism with regard to the very idea of ridding Europe of chemical weapons and to dismiss it as mere hollow propaganda. They argue that this could divert attention from the elaboration of an international convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons - as though the establishment of such a zone were not subject to control - because, they say, chemical weapons can easily be transferred, and so on. To put it mildly, this is strange logic, because practically any weapon can be transferred; yet no one is casting doubt on the effectiveness of the regional approach to arms limitation and the possibility of reaching an agreement on proper control measures.

It seems to us that the issue here lies not in control and not in Washington's desire to have a global solution of the question of chemical weapons. The position of the United States on this initiative of the socialist countries is yet one more clear example of its diametrically opposite approach to the problem of the prohibition of chemical weapons in general. Having made extensive use of toxic substances during the war in Viet Nam, the United States is now according an important place to these weapons of mass destruction in its strategic plans. Evidence of this is to be found in the \$US 10 billion programme for chemical rearmament, a significant part of which will be spent on the establishment of new and particularly dangerous binary weapons. Relying on a further continued build-up of chemical armaments, the present United States Administration is thereby impeding the attainment of mutually acceptable arrangements in the sphere of the prohibition of chemical weapons, by creating barriers to the negotiations on this exceptionally important problem within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament which will be difficult to overcome.

Notwithstanding this, thanks to the efforts of the Soviet Union and the socialist and other peace-loving States, it has in the recent past none the less proved possible to make some progress towards agreement on a number of important questions, and here prospects have opened up for the conclusion of an appropriate international agreement.

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

Many in these circumstances felt that one could have expected an attentive or meticulous attitude to the ongoing negotiations and the manifestation by all participants of political will, a spirit of compromise, flexibility and a desire to achieve compromise. Unfortunately this did not happen. Worse still, the United States throughout this year has undertaken a number of measures in the opposite direction - measures designed, if not to undermine or disrupt this already slender thread of international communication on questions of war and peace, at least to impede and further complicate negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

As has happened frequently in the past, the United States has had recourse to a routine manoeuvre designed to provide a screen under cover of which chemical weapons could be built up and made more sophisticated, in order at the same time to give the impression that they were making efforts to prohibit them. We have in mind the United States draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons submitted to the Conference on Disarmament on 18 April this year. Anyone who has even a general acquaintance with the long-standing negotiations on this subject will realize that this document cannot in any sense be a basis for serious work on the elimination of chemical weapons. In fact, it sends those negotiations reeling backwards.

It is worthy of note that the proposed draft convention does not respect the comprehensive character of the prohibition of chemical weapons, the need for which has been emphasized repeatedly in resolutions of the General Assembly and elsewhere. According to the United States draft, the ban would not extend for military purposes to the use of herbicides and irritants in armed and other conflicts. Such an approach, indeed, is contrary to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The draft passes over in silence the question of a prohibition of such recent types of chemical weapons as binary weapons, which in our opinion constitute a fundamental question for the future convention and must be the focal point of attention in the negotiations at all times. Equally unacceptable are those provisions of the convention pertaining to control. For example, what value is one to attach to the new idea of unimpeded access by foreign inspectors, in other words, inspection by standing invitation of any military and industrial facilities, even if those facilities are wholly unrelated to the question of the prohibition of this type of weapon of mass destruction? Such a demand is in no sense conducive to the fulfilment of the task of prohibiting chemical weapons.

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

Worse still; the adoption of this convention would mean the disclosure by States parties of political, economic, scientific, military, commercial and other secrets not related to the question of the production, stockpiling and accumulation of chemical weapons. It would lead to the disruption of activities in various industrial sectors.

Discrimination against the socialist and many other States which have nationalized industries would clearly result from the procedure which provides for unimpeded access to facilities and enterprises which either belong to the State or are under State control. In other words, in socialist and certain developing countries, control or verification would extend to almost all civilian and military facilities whereas in the United States and in other capitalist States a considerable proportion of private corporations would remain outside the ambit of control. The unacceptability of the American proposal to exempt private chemical corporations from control is reinforced if one takes into account the fact that the United States at the same time insists that private corporations should be entitled to produce super-toxic chemicals, under the pretext of their use for peaceful purposes, and chemicals which could be used as components of binary weapons.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries have a realistic concept of control. Its essence is to provide guarantees that all parties to a disarmament agreement are carrying out that agreement and, by means of using various forms of co-operation, that it is designed to facilitate a solution of contentious issues, thereby ensuring the faithful implementation of obligations assumed by the States parties and building trust among them.

The form and conditions of verification provided for in any concrete agreement depend on the purposes, scope and character of that agreement and are determined by them.

As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Mr. Chernenko, has said:

"When there is a genuine desire to come to an agreement on measures for arms reductions and disarmament, control has not been and cannot be an obstacle."

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

This has been proved by past experience also. In fact, taking into account the policy and the practice of the United States, we are more interested than they are in reliable control and proper concrete measures to effect the limitation of armaments and disarmament. This sentiment applies fully to the issues of verification of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The Ukrainian delegation referred earlier in its statement to the relevant concrete proposals in this sphere. We firmly believe that they are fully consonant with the purposes and tasks of the future convention and will help guarantee its effective implementation.

This is also the purpose of the working document of the socialist countries submitted in August this year to the Conference on Disarmament dealing with the organization and activity of the consultative committee, the international organ for the holding of consultations, exchanges of information and the promotion of verification in compliance with the convention. I refer to document CD/532. The basic provisions of this document are founded on the proposals submitted earlier by the socialist countries. They also take into account the viewpoint of other delegations.

(Mr. Lipatov, Ukrainian SSR)

This document contains certain new elements, for example, on co-operation between international and national control bodies. The main functions of the Consultative Committee, as proposed by the socialist countries, include co-ordination of all forms of verification, the preparation of standardized verification methods, receiving, storing and disseminating information on compliance with the provisions and implementation of the convention, the holding of consultations, making arrangements and setting deadlines for international on-site inspections, verifying reports of the use of chemical weapons and considering requests for on-site inspections filed by States parties to the future convention.

As Ambassador Turbanski remarked when submitting this proposal to the Conference on Disarmament, our purpose is the establishment of such a mechanism for the functioning of the Consultative Committee as would guarantee the most effective co-operation among the States parties to the future convention, to make sure that it is not violated. That statement is contained in document CD/PV.280.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR hopes that the present session of the General Assembly will make a valuable contribution to the prompt prohibition of chemical weapons by advocating the adoption of urgent measures to bring the negotiations on this problem out of their current state of deadlock. Unfortunately, however, we have to note that the solution to this problem is not helped at all by various types of actions designed to disrupt existing agreements in the sphere of the prohibition on weapons of mass destruction, on the pretext that they need special verification mechanisms.

We also have grave objections to attempts to impose functions upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the control of implementation of disarmament agreements which are not properly his under the Charter. We believe that it is the duty of the First Committee to take such decisions as will substantially advance the cause of the prohibition of chemical weapons. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR, as in the past, will co-operate actively with other delegations towards that end.

Mr. TURBANSKI (Poland): Allow me, Sir, at the outset, to convey to the delegation of India our most sincere condolences on the death of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This tragic event has left the entire world in deep sorrow. Mrs. Gandhi's untimely demise has robbed India of a great national leader, the Non-Aligned Movement of one of its most eminent figures, the world at large of a

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

personality of historic stature and Poland of a tested friend. We condemn in the strongest terms, as we have always done in similar cases in the past, this despicable act of political terrorism.

The Polish delegation has already had the opportunity of associating itself with the felicitations and good wishes expressed to you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee. I trust, however, that I will not be ruled out of order if at this late time I address to you, Ambassador Souza e Silva, my colleague and a respected member of the Conference on Disarmament, my personal cordial greetings and congratulations. My congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee, two of whom also happen to be my Geneva colleagues.

In my statement today it is my intention to dwell on some of the issues which were only briefly referred to in the statement of the Deputy Foreign Minister of my country, Ambassador Henryk Jaroszek, on 18 October and which are dealt with in the report of the Conference on Disarmament on its 1984 session.

The debate at the current session of the General Assembly, both in the plenary meeting and in this Committee, has demonstrated amply and with rare, stark eloquence that people everywhere, the international community at large, are becoming increasingly alarmed and feel even more directly threatened by the unprecedented gravity of the crisis which has been afflicting international relations. As will be recalled, some of the underlying causes of that unfavourable state of international affairs were referred to when we addressed this Committee earlier.

In this forum I need hardly stress that the crisis appears most ominous in the critically important area of arms limitation and disarmament. It is widely agreed that for the international climate to change and be brought back to normal, it is necessary for all States, but especially the United States and the Soviet Union, to be back on speaking terms with each other. The first and long-overdue steps in this direction taken recently have been universally welcomed with a feeling of relief and anticipation that they augur a genuine change of climate and not of style alone. For this anticipation to materialize, the United States has to depart from its present policy of seeking military supremacy.

It is, indeed, imperative to create an international political environment conducive to efforts to check and reverse the accelerating arms race. It is important that bold and imaginative steps be taken - as recently proposed by the delegation of the USSR - in several areas of key importance for international peace and security. In our view, they must start with the halting of the irrational

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

build-up of nuclear armouries. They must seek to scrap the standing plans to launch the arms race into orbit and militarize outer space. They must also lead to the ultimate outlawing of all chemical weapons under effective and common-sense international control procedures.

It is a foregone conclusion that the international community would stand to gain if the disarmament horizon were widened and new vistas of meaningful disarmament were opened up, in the first place to free mankind of the spectre of nuclear catastrophe. Since in a nuclear war there would be no victors, only the vanquished, efforts to develop strategic nuclear superiority are utterly futile. The doctrines of nuclear deterrence and their derivatives banking on the illusion of a winnable nuclear war make no sense whatsoever - but this, unfortunately, makes them no less dangerous. Therefore, the only rational option left for man to avoid a nuclear conflagration is to freeze and then reduce nuclear arsenals until they are totally eliminated.

In the opinion of my delegation, a role of the first magnitude in the search for solutions in this and other disarmament areas should be played by the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

When I had the honour of addressing this Committee during the thirty-eighth session exactly a year ago, on 1 November 1983, commenting on the report of the then Committee on Disarmament, I said that the general feeling prevailing in the First Committee was one of keen disappointment.

This year, several preceding speakers in this debate have already presented their assessment of the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the results it achieved during 1984. The overall picture deriving from those declarations is such that the use in this respect of the word "disappointment" would be a singular understatement. As everybody will recall, the Conference on Disarmament is, in the words of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating" - and I stress the word "negotiating" - "forum". We have repeatedly drawn attention in the past to the fact that that organ was becoming more and more a deliberating forum instead of a negotiating one and that this was due to the fact that certain States, the United States in particular, were patently unwilling to undertake concrete negotiating steps and insisted instead on procedural, technical and secondary issues.

We believe that this year this obvious, if regrettable, truth has dawned on everybody. This belief of ours is borne out by what some of our colleagues felt compelled to say.

For instance, Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico stated on 17 October that it was:

"difficult to understand why in some members of the Group of Western European and Other States the word 'negotiations' provokes - let us not speak of antipathy or allergy - genuine aversion and even horror". (A/C.1/39/PV.3, p. 16)

Likewise, Ambassador Dubey of India stated on 23 October that the report of the Conference of Disarmament is:

"a sombre story of the total stalemate reached in that body and its dismal failure to come to grips with any of the critical issues on its agenda. This state of affairs has been brought about ... simply because of the unwillingness of a few important countries to use this multilateral forum for conducting negotiations". (A/C.1/39/PV.11, p. 3-5)

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

I should now like to turn briefly to some of the specific issues covered by the report of the Conference on Disarmament.

Together with our socialist allies, we have emphasized both in this Committee and in the Conference that the question of the prevention of nuclear war - which is, in the full sense of the word the number one global problem - should have the highest priority in the work of the Conference. The socialist States have proposed a number of concrete measures in this respect, among them the renunciation of first use of nuclear weapons and freezing, under appropriate verification, of nuclear weapons in quantitative and qualitative terms. In a joint effort of the Group of 21 and that of the socialist States, the Conference succeeded in having the question of the prevention of nuclear war included as a separate item on its agenda. It seemed then that the next logical step would ensue, namely, the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate appropriate and practical measures to avert the danger of nuclear war. Alas, owing to the obstructive attitude of the United States and its closest allies, it failed to materialize.

Likewise, no progress has been achieved with regard to either the prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests or the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament. The reason for failure was again the utterly negative position and rigidly unco-operative attitude of the same group of States.

I could go on in this way through virtually the entire agenda of the Conference, adding to my list the questions of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons or the prohibition of radiological weapons.

I think we are all aware of the true underlying causes of the present distressing situation in the Conference on Disarmament. The Polish delegation is of the opinion that it is high time to take concrete meaningful steps with a view to redressing the situation and putting the Conference back onto the right track lest its usefulness, effectiveness and prestige are completely and irretrievably destroyed, which in turn would have disastrous consequences for the whole process of disarmament.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

I would like to turn to the chapter of the report of the Conference on Disarmament dealing with its efforts in the area of chemical weapons. While its priority rating in military planning certainly yields to nuclear hardware, the international community is only too well aware that those, too, are cruel, indiscriminate weapons of mass annihilation. Their use, especially in heavily populated areas, would have devastating results on innocent and unprotected civilians, many times surpassing casualties among the combatants. This consideration and the likely prospect of further technological progress and possible proliferation of chemical weapons militate for renewed, dedicated efforts to proscribe those weapons and totally eliminate all possibilities of their use on any scale, anywhere.

Poland, which has traditionally sought to make a meaningful contribution within the multilateral framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva towards working out a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction, deems it advisable for States to consider early and effective steps to check the flow of those chemical agents that can lend themselves to be used, openly or covertly, for the manufacture of lethal chemical weapons. Before it is too late, all research and development work on those weapons should be stopped and the stockpiles of them effectively disposed of under strict international control.

An effective ban on chemical weapons must provide for an appropriate safeguard system against the non-production of chemical weapons by commercial facilities everywhere, both State-operated, private and controlled by multinational corporations. Indeed, an enduring and workable ban must be developed in conjunction with a broad-ranging international co-operation system to prevent its violation while, at the same time, enhancing scientific co-operation in peaceful research.

The Polish delegation is encouraged by the general sense of impatience and a desire to accelerate the pace of negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. We appreciate, in particular, the firm, unequivocal statement on this matter in the General Assembly by the First Deputy Premier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Andrei Gromyko. Those views cannot but have a stimulating impact on the negotiating process that has been going on in Geneva, perhaps going on for much too long.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

As far as chemical weapons are concerned, the negotiating process in 1984 in the Conference on Disarmament and its subsidiary body was important and worth while, although not as meaningful as could have been expected. My delegation wishes to pay here a sincere tribute to the untiring efforts and negotiating skill of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons for 1984, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus of Sweden.

Despite detailed consideration of several problems, such as scope of the prohibition, liquidation of stockpiles and of plants manufacturing chemical weapons, diversion of stocks for permitted purposes and conversion of production facilities for permitted activities, organization and operation of the Preparatory Commission and of the Consultative Committee, it has not proved possible to broaden agreement on the basic contentious issues.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

Early this year the problem of verification, difficult and complex enough as it was, became even more acute and complicated as the result of the proposal by the United States to introduce "total" international control based on the concept of unlimited "open invitation" for on-site inspection.

In its draft convention, the United States envisaged a three-tiered system of international control consisting of: first, systematic on-site control; second, ad hoc on-site inspections; and third, special on-site inspections. The latter would ensure free access to any military, State-owned or State-controlled facility. However, this system would fail to cover in the United States a considerable number of privately-owned chemical facilities, which are capable of manufacturing chemical weapons. Hence, it is obvious that this proposal is discriminating against the socialist States and against a number of other States as well. Also, we are aware that, despite all the United States delegation's assertions to the contrary, according to eminent experts - for example Mr. Louis Henkin, to name but one - inspecting private production facilities in the United States would require prior amending of the Constitution of that country.

One would feel compelled to ask what was the real reason that made the United States include in its draft such blatantly unrealistic and utterly unacceptable provisions, had not this question been convincingly answered in the statement of the USSR delegation in this Committee on 25 October. Therefore I would only remind this Committee that excessive magnification of the problems of verification is only making the negotiating process more complicated and certainly does not accelerate the reaching of an agreement.

Verification problems should not be used to impede reaching agreement, should not be discriminatory and in no case should be used to interfere in the internal affairs of States or damage their security. The primary task in this respect is to work out such measures and forms of verification that would be both effective and feasible in practice. We reiterate our belief that, if there is a will to agree on specific disarmament measures, the question of their verification cannot and would not be an obstacle.

What is also needed is for the chemical-weapon States to demonstrate, in a spirit of goodwill, readiness for concessions and compromise. It is precisely in this spirit that the Soviet Union, along with the other socialist countries, has during the last few years made several important constructive proposals which took into account progress in the negotiations, as well as the positions of other States.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

We have in 1984 obtained an appropriate mandate and an effective organizational structure for the Ad Hoc Committee, which my delegation believes should be maintained in the future.

Let us hope that goodwill and common sense will finally prevail and that in 1985 the Conference on Disarmament will be able, if not to reach its ultimate goal in respect of the prohibition of chemical weapons, then at least to achieve a much greater measure of progress towards this end.

In concluding, I should like to reiterate once again our long-standing position that it is only the genuine political will to work out, through negotiations conducted in a spirit of compromise and mutual accommodation, specific legally binding agreements that can bring about the long-overdue and vitally needed tangible progress in the field of disarmament. The Polish delegation will not be found lacking in either such political will or efforts, to the measure of our ability, towards finally enabling the Conference on Disarmament to discharge its mandate for the benefit of all mankind.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.