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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142 (continued)

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

Mr. LUCE (United Kingdom): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this First Committee. I know that your wisdom and experience will guide the Committee in its consideration of the vitally important issues of international security and disarmament. I should also like to thank the representative of Norway, Ambassador Vraalsen, who ably steered the Committee's deliberations during the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Before proceeding further I wish to extend to the Indian delegation, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, our sincere condolences on the tragic death of Mrs. Gandhi. India has been robbed of a leader of incomparable courage, vision and humanity. We totally condemn this evil act of terrorism, which is a tragedy for India and for the wider world.

For those who believe that violence and terrorism can never be an answer to political problems, the events of yesterday were horrifying. For those who believe that international problems, especially those of security, can be resolved by dialogue and arms control, the past year has been disappointing and frustrating. My Government is resolutely committed to the search for balanced and verifiable measures of arms control and disarmament; but there has been little progress towards those objectives. Negotiations about reducing the most destructive weapons have been unilaterally suspended. Other negotiations have inevitably been affected, despite the efforts of the Western allies to put forward fresh ideas and stimulate progress. None of us underestimates the critical importance of achieving greater international security and stability at lower levels of forces. Arms control and disarmament, however, must be seen in the broader perspective of international relations, and particularly relations between East and West.

Peace cannot be strengthened in a vacuum. My Government is convinced of the need for a deeper understanding between East and West. We are taking every opportunity to nurture a productive dialogue. Our aim is to increase comprehension of each other and, even more important, to avoid misunderstanding. We want to rebuild mutual trust and confidence. Only in this way will the prospects for new progress in arms control, which are inevitably linked to the wider East-West

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relationship, be enhanced. We welcome the fact that the Soviet Foreign Minister had a useful discussion with my Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, at the beginning of this General Assembly. It was their fifth meeting in the last 12 months, and we look forward to Mr. Gromyko's visit to London next year. We welcomed equally the meeting between Mr. Gromyko and the President of the United States against the background of the new proposals in President Reagan's statement.

(Mr. Luce, United Kingdom)

In the past year Sir Geoffrey Howe has attended the opening of the Stockholm Conference, and I have visited all the arms control and disarmament negotiations at which Britain is represented in Vienna, Geneva and Stockholm. This underlines my Government's vigorous commitment to the arms control and disarmament process. In all these meetings a common theme has emerged: that we are not far apart in our stated aims and principles, and that we must now translate those declarations of mutual interests into concrete and binding agreements.

The First Committee has an important task: to discuss and to seek new understandings on ways towards a safer future. It is fitting that all Member States of the United Nations should deliberate on disarmament and international security. We all face threats in different forms. The United Nations Charter enshrines the right of self-defence, and we all maintain armed forces and armaments in order that we may exercise this right if necessary. I need hardly remind this Committee that some 90 per cent of world military expenditure is devoted to non-nuclear forces. We all have the duty, therefore, to find ways of making arms control, both conventional and nuclear, a reality. We all share an overriding interest in releasing resources which we all need for other priorities like education, economic development and the relief of hunger and sickness.

This Committee does not negotiate arms control and disarmament agreements. But that is no reason to diminish its role, as some seem to do, by submitting one-sided or patently unrealistic resolutions. There is an obvious temptation to play to the gallery. But to do so in the arms control field is to betray the genuine concern of our peoples and to undermine the road to security for all. Benjamin Franklin may have been right to say there never was a good war or a bad peace. But there are good and bad ways of ensuring against the first and of strengthening the second.

The recent performance of the Committee makes me wonder whether it has unwittingly adopted the Olympic motto "Faster, higher, stronger". The thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly passed a record number of resolutions on disarmament and international security - 58. The thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly broke that record with a total of 66. Yet our aim should not be to break records. This proliferation of resolutions has certainly not been reflected in any faster progress towards disarmament. On the contrary, we have detected increased reluctance to modify proposals in the interests of securing

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the widest possible degree of consensus. In 1980 almost half the resolutions were adopted by consensus; last year only about a quarter were. It appears that we are no longer seeking agreement. Resolutions are duplicated or even triplicated, and make conflicting recommendations. Resolutions should be realistic signposts to peace, not repositories of unproductive rhetoric. If the United Nations is to make a real contribution towards disarmament, there must be greater realism and a serious effort to seek common ground. As the representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Troyanovsky, recently told this Committee:

"... today more than ever before there is a need to adopt a policy of realism, common sense and businesslike co-operation in the resolution of the problems facing mankind". (A/C.1/39/PV.3, p. 42)

I profoundly agree.

My Government treats this Committee seriously as a forum charged with responsibility for the pursuit of peace. Our contribution to this debate and the resolutions we sponsor or support are designed to explore and stimulate agreement on practical proposals. Reviewing the voting records of last year's First Committee, I have been struck by the very large number of positive votes cast. Indeed, a majority of the Committee voted for 90 per cent of the resolutions. And this when a number of resolutions sometimes contained conflicting and inconsistent proposals. Serious analysis of the resolutions requires an effort. But we believe such an effort is essential. For our part we ask ourselves when we vote whether a resolution will genuinely contribute to progress towards disarmament and a safer world. We look beyond the titles of resolutions and study precise texts. We vote in favour when we can. However, if we do decide to abstain or vote against, we explain the reasons. This year it is my hope that a properly serious spirit will inspire all delegations. Let us work together in a genuinely practical way to achieve real progress.

My Government's objective remains the strengthening of peace and security at lower levels of arms and expenditure. We will firmly maintain our capacity, with our allies, to defend ourselves and to deter any potential aggressor. Last month the British Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, recalled Winston Churchill's warning: "Once you take the position of not being able in any circumstances to defend your rights against aggression, there is no end to the demands that will be made". But we will always remain determined to talk, to negotiate and to be constructive. The

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United Kingdom's record in negotiating, and achieving, multilateral arms control and disarmament is a source of pride to us. As Sir Geoffrey Howe stated last month: "We have shown, not just by words, but by our deeds, our solid commitment to arms control, to understanding and to peace."

I would like to consider briefly two key principles which underpin our approach to arms control and disarmament: balance and verification. Balance is fundamental. If rival military powers are to reach agreements, the terms must be fair and be seen to be fair by all sides. They must be expressed in clear, readily understandable terms. This much is generally accepted. To turn the principle of balance into practical agreements, however, requires imagination and flexibility. Technology does not stand still. The existing numbers and structure of forces are not always symmetrical. In order to achieve balance we may need to find mutually acceptable means of comparing different types of forces. My Government welcomes the fact that the United States showed this sort of flexibility in its nuclear negotiations before they were suspended by the Soviet Union. At the same time such an inevitably complex process must not be pursued at the expense of our own security.

It is also common ground that arms control and disarmament agreements must be verifiable, although this is the area where it often proves most difficult to translate agreed principles into agreed treaty provisions. It is all but impossible to achieve a standard of verification that is 100 per cent perfect. Equally, inadequate verification is unacceptable: nothing is more likely to sap trust and undermine confidence in arms control agreements.

The definition of adequate verification in each case will be a matter for careful political judgement, resting upon technical factors. These are the questions I believe we must ask ourselves. Will any undetected evasion of the agreement provide a significant military advantage? Will significant non-observance of the agreement be detected early enough to allow any necessary countermeasures to be taken? Even if the evidence of such non-observance is available, will it be convincing enough to justify such countermeasures? If we are confident that we can give the right answers to these questions, will we then be able to deter any temptation to depart from strict compliance with the agreement?

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We seek arms control and disarmament agreements not for their own sake but so that they should be put into practice. Our aim is to ensure that future agreements contain unambiguous and effective provisions providing the maximum incentive for strict compliance. This is the only way in which arms control will strengthen confidence between States. In some cases, such as a chemical weapons convention, verification will inevitably demand stringent inspection. We are ready to accept such stringent verification for ourselves, in the interests of achieving disarmament. We urge other States to recognize that co-operation over such verification, whatever its inherent problems, is the only way to create confidence that agreements will be observed.

In his speech to the General Assembly this year Sir Geoffrey Howe spoke of the need for pragmatism and a step-by-step approach to the solution of international problems. This is the essence of my Government's approach to arms control and disarmament. We believe that the principles of balance and verifiability should be applied with imagination and flexibility, with due regard to the art of the possible, and of course to the legitimate interests of national security. It is only sensible, for example, that the two Powers which control 95 per cent of the world's nuclear arsenals should negotiate bilaterally to reduce those weapons. In addition, I endorse the many recent statements in this Committee and elsewhere calling for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, as the leading Powers in the exploration of outer space, to do everything they can to prevent an arms race there. By contrast, regional problems, such as the reduction of armed forces in Central Europe or the building of security and confidence throughout the European continent, can be fruitfully discussed between all the interested States. All the available avenues to progress - the highways and the footpaths - must be explored. But we should beware of short cuts that can lead to dead ends. Pragmatism means building, brick by brick, on what common ground already exists; realism means a clear-eyed and determined approach; grand proclamations often turn out to be neither pragmatic nor realistic.

I come now to specific areas of arms control and I start with nuclear weapons. Reviewing the thousands of words on this subject, it is almost incredible that at this moment the vital Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) negotiations remain unilaterally suspended

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by the Soviet Union. The urgent need for talks to be resumed between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of nuclear arms needs no added emphasis from me. But this requires both sides at the negotiating table. The United States has made it clear that it is willing to resume negotiations anywhere at any time. It does not impose pre-conditions; nor should the Soviet Union. It must be in the Soviet Union's interests, as well as everybody else's, for the talks to be resumed. There has been some discussion of the merits of merging the two negotiations. My Government would have no objection to this in principle, provided both the United States and the Soviet Union believed it would hasten progress towards nuclear arms reductions and would not merely pile one set of problems on top of another. The important thing is to keep an open mind and look for the best way of making progress.

Meanwhile, my Government and its allies have continued to demonstrate, by deeds not words, our sincerity in wanting to reduce stocks of nuclear weapons. In 1980 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) removed 1,000 nuclear warheads from Europe. A year ago NATO Ministers decided to withdraw 1,400 more, as well as one warhead for every cruise and Pershing-II missile deployed. As a result, five warheads will have been removed for every new one deployed, and the number of NATO's nuclear warheads in Europe will be at the lowest level for over 20 years. In the same spirit, the West has shown one-sided restraint by not producing chemical weapons. These concrete actions bear witness to our resolve to maintain security at the lowest possible level of arms. On the other hand, our experience clearly demonstrates the lack of response by the Soviet Union to these previous unilateral measures.

My Government would like to see all nations that are interested in a responsible approach to nuclear disarmament follow the example of more than 120 States that are already parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The British Government is totally committed to this vital Treaty. We have been active in strengthening it by seeking the widest possible adherence. We welcome Dominica's decision, since the last General Assembly, to accede to the Treaty. Our aim is universal membership. The Non-Proliferation Treaty and the associated safeguards implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency have become a solid bastion against instability and insecurity. In this connection, I welcome the fact that

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the Soviet Union is following the example of my own country and the United States by negotiating a voluntary safeguards agreement covering civil nuclear facilities.

My Government is actively preparing for the Third Review Conference on the Treaty, which, of course, is to take place in Geneva next year. We will work with determination for its success. We urge others to do the same. The Treaty has been remarkably successful. Twenty years ago there were forecasts that by the early 1980s there would be at least 20 countries in possession of nuclear weapons. In fact, since the Treaty came into force in 1970 those forecasts have proved wrong. There is no room for complacency. The net result however is that at the moment the Treaty makes a major, positive contribution to international security. It represents a security gain for all its parties. And it helps the development of international trade in nuclear materials, equipment and technologies for peaceful purposes, by ensuring that such trade may take place without the risk of proliferation. My Government wishes to do everything possible to encourage this process.

Of course nuclear weapons will continue to cause profound anxiety, but I cannot repeat too often that we must now allow our rightful concern about nuclear weapons to push from our minds the horror and destructive power of other sorts of weapons: instruments of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons and all the other means of waging war which go under the relatively bland name of conventional weapons. It is these, not nuclear weapons, which have been the instruments of over 10 million deaths in international conflict since 1945, not to mention millions more in civil strife. In this context, I welcome the United Nations study on conventional arms and armed forces, which was completed recently and adopted by consensus. The study emphasizes that it is the responsibility of all States to seek reductions in conventional forces.

We are also deeply concerned to help prevent an arms race in the new area of outer space. We have no wish to see space turned into a theatre of war. The way out, as Mrs. Thatcher said in July, is the way of negotiation and mutual restraint. We welcomed the swift and constructive American response to the Soviet proposal at the end of June for talks on outer space arms control. It was profoundly disappointing that the Soviet Union proved, in the words of Sir Geoffrey Howe, unable to take yes for an answer.

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Nevertheless, my Government remains convinced that contacts between the United States and the Soviet Union offer the best prospects for progress in this field. Since both these countries want to hold talks on outer space arms control, I hope they will soon find mutually acceptable conditions to enable the talks to get under way. I welcome President Reagan's recent assurance to the General Assembly that the United States would consider what measures of restraint both sides might take while negotiations proceeded. NATO Ministers have also welcomed the readiness of the United States to discuss with the Soviet Union research programmes on strategic defence and, most recently, a similar readiness to negotiate at any time and without pre-conditions on both nuclear issues and matters affecting outer space.

Other States, too, have an interest in averting uncontrolled military competition in space. My Government has supported the formation of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament, with the specific mandate to identify and examine issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in space, taking into account all existing agreements and proposals, and future initiatives. We were disappointed that the Conference could not achieve consensus on forming an ad hoc committee with such a mandate.

The Conference is the global forum for the multilateral negotiation of disarmament measures. But again this year it has failed to live up to the responsibilities with which it has been entrusted. The Conference on Disarmament, like other forums, cannot work in isolation from the effects of developments elsewhere. The resumption of bilateral negotiations on nuclear arms reductions could help to improve prospects for negotiations there. None the less, my Government takes little satisfaction in the 1984 session. The Conference's failure to agree on mandates on outer space and for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on the nuclear-test ban were reasons for disappointment.

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Early in the session when I visited Geneva I made clear to the Conference my Government's views about mandates. During the session we and our Western partners showed ourselves willing to compromise and modify our stance. The Western draft mandates could have formed the basis for the Conference to abandon procedural wrangling and turn to detailed constructive work on these two important issues. It is regrettable that other delegations were not prepared to show similar flexibility. I hope that the interval before the Conference's next session will be used for sober reflection and will convince all delegations of the need not to repeat this year's experience. Willingness to get down to hard, nuts and bolts discussions is a real test of sincerity.

The Conference on Disarmament's work on a chemical weapons convention was the one area where some progress was recorded. Even here, however, I must note that our hopes at the opening of the session were not fulfilled. During my visit to the Conference in February, I put forward a new British proposal for challenge inspection, in cases of non-compliance with the convention which could not be resolved through routine inspection procedures. My Government warmly welcomed the full draft convention submitted by Vice-President Bush in April. We also welcomed the acceptance in principle by the Soviet Union of continuous international on-site inspection of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. The United Kingdom submitted in July the latest in a series of detailed proposals on ways to ensure non-production of chemical weapons after the entry into force of the convention. We are grateful to those countries which have provided data about civil chemical production. I very much hope that all other countries that attach a high priority to the success of these negotiations will shortly supply the relevant information, in order to enable informed negotiation on this aspect of the convention. We also look for constructive responses from all parties, including the Soviet Union, to our proposals on other vital aspects of the verification of a convention.

I must make clear that my Government is deeply concerned about the growing threat posed by chemical weapons. We have shown unilateral restraint by abandoning our own chemical weapons a quarter of a century ago. The United States has not produced any chemical weapons since 1969. But this restraint has not been reciprocated by the Soviet Union, which has an ever-growing chemical warfare capability, now estimated to comprise over 300,000 tons of lethal nerve agents. We have all been reminded of the horror of chemical weapons by their use in the tragic conflict between Iran and Iraq. That use was confirmed by the Secretary-General's

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group of specialists. My Government condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, especially when it is in breach of solemn obligations under the Geneva Protocol. In the light of the evidence of the use of chemical weapons in the Gulf, my Government and other Western Governments have imposed export controls on certain chemicals which could be misused to make weapons.

The British Government is firmly committed to working for a comprehensive, worldwide chemical weapons ban. We believe the urgent conclusion of such a ban would be the best way to ensure our security against the danger posed by those frightful weapons. We will spare no effort to this end. We urge other members of the Conference on Disarmament to show a similar sense of urgency.

Last month I visited the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe. At that Conference we are required to undertake new effective and concrete measures to give effect to the duty of States to refrain from the threat or use of force. We are therefore mandated specifically to negotiate confidence- and security-building measures which are militarily significant, politically binding, verifiable and cover the whole of Europe. The proposals submitted at the start of the Conference by the United Kingdom and our allies meet these criteria. They consist of a set of concrete measures designed to reduce the likelihood of an outbreak of hostilities in Europe, through greater openness about military behaviour. They are practical proposals, which, if implemented, could have a major and beneficial effect on mutual confidence. I hope all participants attach the same importance to this as my Government so that we can achieve concrete results before the Vienna review meeting in 1986.

Other proposals submitted at Stockholm, however, include statements of intent which, by their nature, cannot be verified; or they overlap with the work of other disarmament forums. A chemical weapons ban confined to Europe, for example, would be a poor second-best to the world-wide ban we are seeking in Geneva. And it is ironic to hear proposals for the freezing and subsequent reduction of military budgets from the very States which have consistently refused to take any part in the United Nations Secretary-General's exercise on the standardized reporting of military budgets. The balanced and verifiable reduction of military expenditure is a potentially important road towards disarmament. But if we are to travel down that road, we must start from a firm basis of comparable data. Openness about military spending should pose no difficulty to those who have nothing to hide. Again, what we need is discussion of nuts and bolts issues, not unrealistic declarations.

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I also visited the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR). In April the Western participants submitted a major new initiative, which offers a real opportunity to resolve the long-standing disagreement over the size of the Eastern forces in the reductions areas. The initiative offered flexibility on the initial data requirement in return for enhanced measures of verification. It built on various aspects of the Eastern position, particularly on the form and timing of reductions. So far the Eastern reaction has been disappointingly negative; but we hope the East will take a more positive approach in the current round of talks.

I would like very briefly to mention the First Review Conference of the Environmental Modification Convention which took place in Geneva last month. It is certainly heartening to note that this Review Conference was held in a spirit of co-operation, free from rancour or polemics. It is my hope that the spirit of goodwill shown at this Review Conference will pervade other review conferences and discussions of international security and disarmament.

Finally, I should like to mention the Antarctica, one of the many topics again on the First Committee's agenda. It is the only continent free from the tensions of military build-up and confrontation. That happy situation is due to the effective operation of the Antarctic Treaty, which has demilitarized and denuclearized the continent and kept it free from conflict. My Government is convinced of the value of this Treaty. We will oppose any move which would undermine it. The consequences of such moves could be serious and dangerous for us all.

My Government is playing an active part in all the current arms-control negotiations. With our allies or individually, we have this year made far-reaching but practical proposals in every one of those negotiations. We take this First Committee debate seriously, and expect other States to do the same. Like Tolstoy's Marshal Kutuzov, I believe in the virtues of patience and time. But I also believe in the need for determination. We cannot ignore the relentless march of military technology. It has rendered the goal of arms control both more complex and more urgent. But there can be no prospect of progress towards arms control and disarmament unless the political will is seen to exist. My Government has that will. Our objective is to enhance security for all at lower levels of forces. We will be vigorous and active in the months ahead. We will persevere in working for increased confidence and trust, and for a breakthrough in arms control. I challenge others to join us in the pursuit of genuine arms control; and in our efforts to achieve, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Mr. SYLLA (Senegal) (interpretation from French): First of all, the delegation of Senegal wishes to join in the tribute to the memory of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and wishes to express its deepest grief and sadness over this tragic loss for India and for the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. We wish to convey heartfelt condolences to the fraternal delegation of India.

Mr. Chairman, we wish to express to you and to the other officers of the Committee, our best wishes for success in the important functions with which the Committee has entrusted you.

At this stage of our debate, the delegation of Senegal would like to limit its statement to agenda item 57: "Implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa." Everyone today agrees that nuclear weapons constitute one of the most serious threats to the fate of mankind. Hence everyone should recognize that that threat is doubly disquieting since those weapons are in the hands of a country whose political system has been universally condemned as being a crime against mankind. Furthermore, that country is a neighbour to non-nuclear-weapon States that have for a long time now endeavoured to make their region a non-nuclear zone.

The fact is that the debate on disarmament continues to be monopolized by topics such as the strategic balance between major Powers, verification problems and hypothetical disarmament agreements, while South Africa - a country whose system is based on the very denial of man, continues unhampered to receive assistance in carrying out an atomic programme which today makes it a virtual member of the nuclear club.

That situation is all the more difficult to accept or justify since for 23 years now the United Nations has on several occasions stated its position on the non-nuclearization of the African continent. As long ago as 1961, even before the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the General Assembly of the United Nations called upon all Member States to consider the African continent as a denuclearized zone and to act accordingly.

The OAU itself, at its first session held in Cairo in July 1964, adopted a formal Declaration of Heads of State or Government of Africa on the subject, later endorsed by the twentieth session of the United Nations. In that Declaration, the African Heads of State or Government stated that they were ready to conclude, under the aegis of the United Nations, an international agreement under which our countries would be committed not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

Faithful to both the spirit and the letter of that Declaration, our countries later overwhelmingly adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, concluded in 1968. Hence it is not because of lack of desire or political will - which has so often been expressed - that today Africa must face the especially serious threat posed by the nuclear programme of racist South Africa, a threat which has been indicated many times. The explosion on 22 September 1979 - which is still mysterious - of what was thought to be a South African nuclear device in the South Atlantic, was the object of a particularly edifying report by the Group of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to study that question on the initiative of the African Group.

That report clearly establishes that there was no doubt that South Africa had the means to manufacture nuclear weapons and the necessary delivery systems. Worse still, the report indicated that it was possible for South Africa to adopt a proliferation strategy and secretly stockpile nuclear weapons while not testing them or openly deploying them. South Africa could adopt such a strategy since it has major nuclear installations not subject to safeguards and therefore closed to inspection.

Ever since that report, which was issued four years ago, South Africa has considerably improved its nuclear capability, as indicated in another report prepared by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), a report which my delegation has welcomed with great interest.

Since that report we have learned - in a book Sub-Committee on Energy and Non-Proliferation published the day before yesterday by a former special counsel of the American Senate, one of the main architects of the 1978 non-proliferation law - that South Africa today has some 15 to 25 nuclear weapons which it need not test, given modern computer-simulated techniques.

The implications are all too clear. If by complacency or complicity the nuclear Powers, which strictly control transfers of nuclear technology to third world countries, were to permit South Africa to join their "club", the consequences would be disastrous not only for Africa but also for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which many speakers, and not the least important among them, have already welcomed here as one of the major achievements in the field of disarmament.

Here I wish to emphasize that in the framework of that Treaty, we have not even received guarantees, which we have been requesting for 16 years,

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against the use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States, against those that have voluntarily renounced their acquisition.

An influential personality of a country member of one of the major blocs said some time ago:

"One may wonder whether a country which does not respect the territorial integrity of a nation in times of peace would respect nuclear-weapon-free zones in times of crisis or war. The only time nuclear weapons were used, it was against a country which did not have them. The only means to protect oneself against nuclear weapons is to possess them."

If the event were to arise, the system and the political practices of Pretoria could lead some to subscribe to that logic in the name of deterrence.

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

For our part, we wish to think that it is still possible to avert that threat. That is the reason why my country has asked that this matter be placed on the agenda of the next session of the Organization of African Unity. In doing so, Senegal wishes to urge at the African level that further thought be given to the denuclearization of Africa, in the hope that fresh momentum will thus be given to the consideration of this question, which is so vital for our collective security. We believe that the time has perhaps come to revive the idea, which was put forward in Cairo, of an international agreement on the denuclearization of Africa.

In the pursuit of disarmament, there are regional realities that must be taken into account by the international community. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa is a matter that is not only of interest to Africans. The international community certainly has a role to play in the attainment of that objective. That role should not be limited to taking note of the efforts made by Africans to that end. Africa should indeed be able to rely on the United Nations for all the necessary assistance. In particular, it should be able to rely on the nuclear Powers to refrain from any actions with regard to South Africa which could jeopardize the attainment of that objective. The same Powers should even go beyond that and act in concert in order to prevail upon South Africa to submit its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency inspection, if only to protect what has already been achieved through non-proliferation. Furthermore, the United Nations, like the nuclear Powers, should assist us in the attainment of a right: the right not to join in the suicidal process of the nuclear-arms race, so that we may devote our efforts to the struggle for the peace and well-being of our peoples.

Mr. MEISZTER (Hungary): I wish to convey to the Indian delegation our heartfelt sympathy at the tragic and untimely death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Mrs. Gandhi was an outstanding leader of her people, a resolute fighter in the cause of peace and development and an eminent personality of great human dignity who was deeply esteemed by the Hungarian people. Her personal contributions were a major factor in further broadening and deepening the traditional ties of friendship between our two peoples. My delegation is profoundly saddened by her tragic passing.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation has already congratulated you on your election but, as I am speaking in this Committee for the first time, I cannot refrain from expressing my pleasure at seeing you in the chair and my conviction that our

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Committee under your able leadership will achieve constructive results during the current session.

On 22 October the Hungarian delegation outlined in the First Committee the policy of the Hungarian People's Republic concerning the disarmament questions, stating that, as regards the threats to the peace of mankind, we give absolute priority to two issues - the prevention of nuclear war and the militarization of outer space. The position of the Hungarian Government on the first of those issues was set out in detail. At this time I wish to deal with the militarization of outer space.

The world public and many responsible statesmen have long been concerned at the persistent efforts by one of the nuclear Powers to use outer space for military purposes. Those efforts were formulated in a military doctrine when the idea of establishing an anti-ballistic system in space was put forward by the United States on 23 March 1983. It was the recognition of the danger inherent in the new doctrine and the ensuing extension of the arms race to a new environment that prompted all but two of the Member States of the United Nations to instruct their representatives at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly to vote in favour of a resolution requesting the Conference on Disarmament to undertake negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space.

Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament was unable to comply with that request by the General Assembly, because the very State that has made preparations for launching an arms race in outer space has prevented even the faintest manifestation of substantive work by starting a debate on the mandate of an ad hoc committee to be set up for that purpose. The most the Conference on Disarmament was able to achieve after a full year of unceasing efforts was to state, on 14 August last, that there was a lack of consensus on determining the mandate of that Committee.

We feel that one would not be mistaken in suspecting that the scholastic debate on the mandate was nothing but a delaying tactic to ensure that the multi-billion-dollar programme for the development of new space weapons and other sophisticated types of weapons, as set out in United States National Security Directive No. 119, could proceed unhampered. It seems to us that - apart from disturbing world press reports referring to the development in the United States of space devices intended for the carrying out of military operations, including the

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development of space components for anti-ballistic-missile systems, orbiting attack systems and so forth - the mere existence of the said Security Directive is ample proof that the danger of an arms race in outer space has not lessened but, on the contrary, has increased greatly.

This entire process is fraught with extremely grave dangers, for the following reasons. First, the space-based anti-ballistic-missile system, which is one of the components of the new doctrine, is presented in such a way as to create the impression of being a defensive one. In reality, this system is meant to secure the State in question against a retaliatory strike and in addition to destroy early-warning space systems and command and communication centres of the other side. What may on the surface seem to be a defensive weapon system could be justifiably regarded by the other side as an exclusively offensive design to acquire first-strike capability, seeking first use with impunity. If you add to that the lack of confidence among the major nuclear-weapon Powers and the rhetoric of one of them about the "evil" character of the other, you will not find it strange that the other side does not look on with folded arms. All this, unfortunately, might lead to a new, steep and unprecedented escalation in the spiralling arms race unless it is prevented in time.

The situation is further aggravated by the fact that, in addition to the acceleration of the arms race, such a doctrine and the corresponding military posture under the pretext of defence seek to undermine the existing strategic balance, an important factor in averting a nuclear war, thus making a nuclear conflagration imminent. The feeling of threat created by the space anti-ballistic-missile system, which is claimed to serve defence purposes, is increased by the fact that the same side is already working on the design and has started the testing of an anti-satellite system based on F-15 fighters carrying intercepting missiles equipped with self-guided warheads.

The other reason why we see enormous dangers in the militarization of outer space is that it involves the emplacement in outer space of highly sophisticated systems which, given their distance and speed, need a great degree of pre-programming, which makes such devices react in an almost autonomous way. Weapons in outer space fly at enormous velocities and are calculated to destroy each other at a speed close to that of light. The time of reaction, which had been 25 to 30 minutes and which was reduced to 6 to 8 minutes by the deployment of

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Pershing missiles - a factor extremely threatening in itself - may now be decreased to fractions of a second, preventing presidential or any other human intervention in case of a technical failure or misunderstanding.

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All this leads, if I may put it in this way, although I know it sounds most awkward, to the "dehumanization" of space weapons, that is, that their action-reaction phase becomes detached from living human intelligence and from any possibility of intervention. What is the assurance that an accidental overheating through operational defects in a satellite will not be misinterpreted by such a system or that the destruction by a meteorite of a satellite of one side will not be interpreted by the other as a hostile act? And though these systems are naturally presented as the peak of technological perfection, I for one cannot believe in their fail-safe functioning. Suffice it to recall that not long ago the National Semiconductors Corporation proceeded to a post-control of its production and established that 26 million of all chips - those tiny but decisive elements of all computerized systems - delivered for use in weapons, had been inadequately tested. I do not know how many of them may have been defective, but the figure is so high that the presence of defective chips in weapons can be taken as assured. This is an example to show that neither the target nor the very operator of such weapons can feel safe from them. In one word, the large number of devices, their complexity and remoteness, as well as the need to have thousands of men and women on constant alert, sharply increase the chances of human error or technical failure or both. With such weapons in the background, the world would live in constant insecurity, regardless of the actual will or intention of the Governments possessing them.

Finally, we think that the economic consequences of such an arms race are extremely grave. The budget appropriations of the Defense Department of the United States of America for space projects amounted to \$6.4 billion in 1982, \$8.5 billion in 1983 and \$9.3 billion in 1984. While speaking about space projects for the next five years, or for the rest of the century, the sums mentioned are in the order of tens and hundreds of billions. And all this is referred to as a scaled-down modest research programme for the use of outer space for military purposes. These efforts are undertaken at a time when a considerable number of the developing nations find themselves in a grave economic situation for lack of know-how and funds, when the traditional industries in the countries at an intermediate level of development have to cope with a structural crisis as a result of delays in modernization and when no meaningful progress in combating world-wide diseases can be made for lack of material resources, not of knowledge and skills.

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Aware of the foregoing, my Government supports any initiative to ensure that outer space is used exclusively for peaceful purposes, any initiative that would prevent the militarization of outer space and avert a qualitatively new spiral of the arms race.

Therefore we welcomed the initiative of the Soviet Union in submitting to last year's session of the General Assembly a draft treaty concerning the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the earth, as well as the declaration of the Soviet Union not to be the first to launch anti-satellite weapons of any type into outer space and to establish thereby a unilateral moratorium on such launching as long as the other States refrain from launching anti-satellite weapons of any type into outer space. The fact that in a recent interview with The Washington Post, Konstantin Chernenko, the head of the Soviet State, speaking about the readiness of the Soviet Union to engage in serious and business-like negotiations, listed the prevention of militarization of outer space as an issue of top priority, shows that the Soviet Union is exerting consistent and resolute efforts in this direction. This is also demonstrated, inter alia, by the draft resolution which the Soviet Union has presented in our Committee under the title "Use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind", a draft that we whole-heartedly support.

We are certain that, given the political will of the other side, a good start could be made on a bilateral basis. While the eventual prevention of the militarization of outer space could be negotiated within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament - and we urge every State to act in this direction - it would be useful if the General Assembly reaffirmed the recommendation it made to that effect last year.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.