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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FAHMY (Egypt) (Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Fahmy (Egypt), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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

AGENDA ITEMS 49 TO 69 AND 151 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation I would like to take this opportunity to extend our felicitations to Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela on his election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that under his able guidance, the Committee's deliberations on the various issues before it will be successful. He has my delegation's full support and co-operation. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

We now live in a period of unprecedented opportunities for peace. Many obstacles that had once stood in the way of international understanding have given way to dialogue and compromise. The international community must work as one to ensure that the remaining obstacles are permanently removed. We must make full use of the momentum towards peace that exists today.

We have witnessed significant and encouraging developments in the area of disarmament. The entry into force of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Soviet Union on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - was a historical step in the right direction. We look forward to seeing real and substantial reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. We are hopeful that the results of the recent meeting between the United States Secretary of State and the Soviet Foreign Minister in Wyoming will be translated into concrete and positive actions in Geneva and in other forums.

My delegation also welcomes the success of the March meeting between the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, which

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was aimed at enhancing international stability at a lower level of conventional forces in Europe. We are also following the progress of the ongoing negotiations on conventional armed forces very closely.

Within the past few months we have also witnessed promising developments in the area of chemical weapons. We were encouraged by the recent United States and Soviet pronouncements of their readiness to work towards the early conclusion of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. The January Paris Conference of States Parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol was productive. It reaffirmed international commitment to the Geneva Protocol. It concluded with a clear message that there is an international political will aggressively and effectively to eliminate chemical weapons from Earth. The 149 States at the Paris Conference also reaffirmed their support for the Secretary-General in carrying out his responsibility of investigating alleged violations of the Geneva Protocol. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of France for having hosted the Conference.

We also wish to commend Australia for having recently hosted the first ever Government Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons, in Canberra. The Conference was attended by representatives of 66 countries as well as by representatives from the world's chemical industry. There the chemical industry declared its support for an early conclusion and implementation of a chemical weapons convention. My delegation shares this sense of urgency. We would like to see a speedy and effective end to the use, production, development and stockpiling of chemical weapons.

In 1990 the Fourth Review Conference of States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty will take place. It will be an opportunity for us to consolidate the non-proliferation régime. Preparatory work for this important conference is well under way. My Government looks forward to working with other parties to the Treaty at the Conference.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

The world would indeed be a much more dangerous place without the non-proliferation Treaty. It is clearly in the interest of the international community to ensure the continued viability of the non-proliferation régime.

An issue closely related to that of non-proliferation is the nuclear-test ban. The Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water entered into force back in October 1963. That partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty was signed with the understanding that the parties were determined to continue negotiations towards the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time.

We have lived with the partial test-ban Treaty for 26 years now. My delegation fully supports the growing consensus that it is time for the international community to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Negotiations on this subject should focus on achieving an effective ban on all nuclear tests. We fully support the convening of an amendment conference to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We look forward to participating in the upcoming amendment conference.

Verification of compliance is a very important aspect of any disarmament agreement. Effective verification procedures help build the needed confidence among the parties concerned. They also contribute to the avoidance of possible dangerous asymmetrical situations. There is no doubt that the United Nations can do this job, and do it well. Last year the international community requested the Secretary-General to study in depth the possible role of the United Nations in verification. Let us not procrastinate. My delegation supports with no reservation the establishment of a universally applicable verification system under the auspices of the United Nations.

The establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world may indeed complement our endeavours to achieve a lasting peace through disarmament. When

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local conditions are appropriate we believe that such zones may help create conditions conducive to regional co-operation.

Thailand and the other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are working towards the realization of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia.

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Strict adherence to the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter by all States in the region would certainly move us closer towards the realization of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. Needless to say, a viable zone of peace, freedom and neutrality will also require an unambiguous assurance from the major Powers that they will forgo their rivalries within South-East Asia.

Our success in disarmament would indeed be elusive if we were to pay insufficient attention to outer space. The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an important question of universal concern. Let us, together, ensure that outer space is for ever preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Back on planet Earth, as we strive to protect ourselves from the danger of modern weapons, we must work together to protect ourselves from another serious man-made peril. This peril may not explode with a deafening bang, but it is lethal. It comes in the form of hazardous waste. My delegation shares the concern of the African and other States whose territories are being used as dumping grounds for hazardous waste. A firm and unambiguous international stand on this matter is of critical importance.

Our success in disarmament would also release substantial funds for the economic development of all countries, particularly developing ones. In his address to the General Assembly this past September, my Foreign Minister noted that:

"... a small reduction in the defence budgets of the major Powers in the armament field cannot possibly nullify their military capability to defend themselves. But the resources that could be diverted to development purposes would help redress economic imbalances and mitigate some of the causes of regional conflicts." (A/44/PV.13, p. 68)

General and complete disarmament is a difficult but worthy goal for humankind. It is a goal which cannot be achieved without a united and sustained

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international effort. My delegation hopes that progress in bilateral negotiations will be complemented by progress in multilateral co-operation. We would like to see the United Nations play an active and decisive role in disarmament, which is a matter of critical importance to the ultimate survival of humankind.

Let us also keep alive the dream of a world free of conflict and the scourge of war. Let those powerful words in the book of Isaiah be our guide:

"... they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (The Holy Bible, Isaiah 2:4)

Mr. SUYOI (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of my delegation I extend my congratulations to Mr. Taylhardat on his election to chair the work of the First Committee. His wide experience in multilateral diplomacy has already shown itself in the expeditious manner in which he has guided our deliberations thus far. I wish to extend my congratulations also to the other officers of the Committee for their contribution to our work.

The issue of disarmament has preoccupied many of us, and for good reason. The potential devastation that the continued arms race could bring to our planet is self-evident. Because of the complexity of present-day international relations, in which interdependence is no longer seen as sinister or as a sign of weakness, warfare is at the present time suicidal. As General Douglas MacArthur once said:

"The very triumph of scientific annihilation has destroyed the possibility of war being a medium of practical settlement of international differences ... If you lose you are annihilated. If you win, you stand only to lose. War contains the germs of double suicide. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door."

The work of the First Committee is therefore crucial in ensuring that further progress towards arms limitation and disarmament continue. Both the United States

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and the Soviet Union have provided the badly needed political leadership in the field of disarmament. The historic agreement that culminated in the conclusion and realization of the Treaty between the United States and the USSR on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - is an example of such leadership. This is a clear reflection of the consolidation of awareness that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We hope that, following the INF Treaty, further agreement such as in the present strategic arms reduction talks (START) on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons - can be reached.

In welcoming the present climate of détente that characterizes the relations between the two super-Powers, we do not need to be reminded that the road to nuclear disarmament is still long and winding. While we can herald the present achievement as a significant indication of shared responsibility to save our planet from the scourge of a nuclear war, we cannot afford to be complacent in the areas in which further disarmament efforts are required. The threat to humanity and the danger of proliferation continue to be very real indeed. It is with a deep sense of concern that we note, for instance, that despite the fact that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been acceded to by 141 countries, several non-nuclear-weapon States have acquired the capability to produce nuclear weapons. My delegation's concern arises from the grim possibility that this could result in a regional nuclear-arms race, and in a conflict-ridden region may trigger a nuclear war.

For small countries like Brunei Darussalam, disarmament is not a game of numbers - a few reductions here and a few additions there. For us, it is a matter of survival. We cannot afford to count on assurances from the nuclear-weapon States that nuclear weapons will not be employed in times of conflict because once the weapons are used we will no longer be around to tell them that they have broken their promises.



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Our support for the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world, not least in South-East Asia, must be seen in this context, and is consistent with the effort to prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We therefore consider it important for the parties to the NPT to live up to their Treaty commitments fully. We hope that the Review Conference scheduled for 1990 will further reaffirm the commitment to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It is also with this in mind that Brunei Darussalam supports the convening of a conference to discuss the conversion of the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty into a treaty on a comprehensive ban. In our view, a comprehensive ban on all nuclear testing would be another important step towards nuclear disarmament; and since nuclear testing is the trigger for new technologies and refinement, it is only logical to ban nuclear tests if we do not want nuclear weapons to be continually developed and produced.

The current focus of disarmament must not be solely on nuclear disarmament. As mentioned in the October issue of Disarmament Newsletter, over 80 per cent of military expenditure is for conventional weapons and forces. The effects of their build-up, in terms both of numbers and of the technology employed, on threat perceptions, on resource allocations and the debt burden, demand that no effort towards disarmament be spared. The announcement made by President Mikhail Gorbachev from the rostrum of the General Assembly last December that the conventional forces of the USSR in Eastern Europe would be reduced by 500,000 men within two years was indeed a welcome development as it has led to announcements of significant force reductions elsewhere. We believe that this would not only make East-West relations more stable and reassuring but would also remove the threat of conflict caused by well-armed standing forces.

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Another area about which my Government is seriously concerned is that of chemical weapons. Despite the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons and the 1971 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, chemical weapons continue to be used in regional conflicts. We do not have to be reminded of the disastrous consequences of the use of chemical weapons. Their scope is not confined in space or time, and their deleterious effects on the balance of nature are irreversible. We feel that no effort should be spared to strengthen the existing conventions.

Brunei Darussalam associates itself fully with the outcome of the Paris Conference, held last January, at which 149 States condemned the use of chemical weapons, affirmed their commitment to refrain from using them, and urged the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to speed up its negotiations on a comprehensive ban. In this connection, we welcome President Bush's proposal, announced in his address to the General Assembly last month, that all United States chemical weapons be destroyed within 10 years, once all nations capable of building chemical weapons had signed a treaty totally banning them.

The precept that security is possible only through military build-up is no longer valid. Today we are witnessing a new model of security based on arms reductions coupled with several confidence-building measures. A study undertaken by the United Nations on the concept of confidence-building measures, which was completed in 1981, recognizes that confidence-building measures of a military character are of primary importance. But confidence should be promoted by the removal of mistrust between nations. The sources of mistrust are to be found in a complex of historical experiences, as well as in geographical, strategic, political, economic, social and other elements. These factors, according to the

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study, are related to perceptions of threat that constitute psychological causes of mistrust.

It is for this reason that the constant theme in Brunei Darussalam's foreign-policy statements has been the desirability of maintaining friendly relations with countries in our region, as well as with those afar - relations based on the principles of non-intervention, respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of other States, and the non-use of force or the threat of force. We believe that these principles are important ingredients in confidence-building measures in our relationships with others. We believe also that regional arrangements such as the arrangement between the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) contribute to the establishment of a favourable climate for mutually beneficial co-operation and the maintenance of regional peace and security.

International peace and security is no longer something confined to the realm of disarmament, although, in our view, the cause of peace will certainly be advanced if complete disarmament is achieved. There are other threats to mankind that, unless concerted and co-operative efforts are made, could spell danger of immense proportions. I speak, of course, of the threats caused by environmental pollution, poverty, AIDS, and so on. In a world as interdependent as ours we cannot treat these as threats to others but not to ourselves.

In conclusion, I should like to quote from President John F. Kennedy's speech at the American University, Washington, D.C., on 10 June 1963. He said:

"So, let us not be blind to our differences - but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all

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breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): I should like, first, to say how happy I am to see you, Sir, in the Chair of this Committee today. One cannot but be reminded of your father, who presided with distinction over the First Committee many years ago.

The Algerian delegation is especially pleased at the election of the representative of Venezuela to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session. His skills as a man of dialogue and as an experienced diplomat and his great competence in matters pertaining to international security and disarmament will enable him to carry out his very exacting task and are for us all the best portent of success in our work. To my sincere congratulations I add the assurance of the support and co-operation of my delegation.

The particularly serene atmosphere that prevailed during the General Assembly's general debate, as well as in the work of the Special Political Committee, is an indication of the positive trend in international relations. Today, international relations are characterized less and less by confrontation as the international community realizes anew the value of dialogue, harmony and negotiation. Today, in many regions of the world, the logic of power is in retreat and confidence is extending progressively to new areas. The numerous hot-beds of tension about which the General Assembly used to have to concern itself are becoming relatively calm or, better, are now subject to a process of negotiated regulation in which our Organization is systematically involved.

The positive climate that now pervades international relations presents a rare opportunity for the First Committee to promote multilateralism still more vigorously and, in particular, to promote the United Nations as an irreplaceable

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framework for dialogue, deliberation and decision-making on the numerous proposals designed to lead to peace, security and disarmament.

The establishment of this new climate is largely due to the rapprochement in American-Soviet relations in recent years. For all of us, the most obvious illustration of this was undoubtedly the solemn signing, followed by the implementation, of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - because, let it be said yet again, in the sphere of security and disarmament the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe is the most serious challenge confronting mankind. It is our most urgent, most exacting task, and no tactical consideration must be allowed to divert us from this primary purpose.

We do not mean to diminish the importance of other aspects of disarmament if we emphasize that, so long as the threat of nuclear apocalypse persists, efforts relating to other weapon systems will remain relative, regardless of their intrinsic merit. Today, no one can doubt that, because of their potential for total destruction and the qualitative development that they are constantly undergoing, nuclear weapons constitute the most terrifying, most immediate threat of the extinction of mankind.

We have already had occasion to emphasize that among the undeniable merits of the INF Treaty, which was signed two years ago, the psychological impact was certainly the most significant, because the Treaty was the first authentic disarmament agreement. Of course it applies only to an infinitely small part of the nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers, and of course the disarmament contemplated applies to only one part of the globe. But we are beginning to hope

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that this first step will lead to others that will contribute still further to attainment of the common goal of the reduction and then the elimination of the nuclear threat.

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To be sure, the dialogue is continuing and one initiative follows another, but still without the decisive breakthrough that would make it possible to say that the process of nuclear disarmament is today irreversible. Of course, we welcome the resumption, on a more promising basis, of the Soviet-United States negotiations with a view to a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons, but we are also obliged to recall that the nuclear Powers will still retain capabilities quite sufficient to annihilate all life on Earth. More serious still, the armaments race is being conducted at unprecedented levels and day by day it is being directed towards ever more sophisticated systems of total destruction, mortgaging any progress made quantitatively in nuclear disarmament.

This dangerous drift is one which the General Assembly has noted every year for more than a quarter of a century when it has placed the pursuit of nuclear testing at the very heart of the arms race. We believe that the cessation of test explosions is likely to put a check on the perfecting of nuclear weapons and thereby prevent horizontal proliferation. That is to say that a generalized prohibition of all nuclear tests by all States in all spheres must remain our primary objective. By reason of its universality this prohibition would be the simplest, but also the most radical, answer to the highly controversial question of verification, which today has been largely out-distanced by the progress made in seismic surveillance technology.

The Conference on Disarmament, to which the multilateral negotiation of a legal instrument in this field was entrusted more than 10 years ago, has not so far made the slightest progress unless perhaps with regard to the terms of reference of the subsidiary body needed for the thorough examination of all aspects of a treaty banning all nuclear tests. Must we any longer allow the perversion of the consensus rule that now prevails in that Conference to prevent the functioning of

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country whose hated régime has been outlawed by the international community. The apartheid State is continuing to bear down on whole regions of our continent with the terrible threat of the weapon of absolute destruction.

In the Middle East, a régime which enjoys a guilty silence is developing, with total immunity and subject to no international control, nuclear capabilities in order to ensure, by blackmail and terror, its domination of the whole region.

Should we be surprised that South Africa and Israel, to name these countries, established some time ago close co-operation in the development of nuclear weapons and remain deaf to the numerous warnings of the international community? The nuclear ambitions of these two régimes pose the problem of disarmament in its most elementary form: it is clear indeed that peace based upon the might of weapons and on denial of the rights of peoples carries within it the ferment of confrontation and conflagration.

At the beginning of this year, in Paris, the international community found rare unanimity in giving a new political impetus to multilateral negotiations on chemical weapons. Thus the Conference on Disarmament recorded real progress in the elaboration of a global and universal convention aimed at banning the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Algeria, which participated actively in this undertaking, reaffirms here its faith in this globalization of the approach to chemical disarmament. We have always been convinced that this undertaking could not validly be reduced to the truncated framework of a simple non-proliferation treaty.

First, such an instrument would not have solved in any way the crucial problem of the gigantic arsenals of chemical weapons possessed by certain Powers. Further, it would have created barriers which are as artificial as they are discriminatory and, for the developing countries, it would have made even more uncertain the



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that body? In any event, it is to meet the justified frustration of the international community, faced with the condemnation of the single multilateral negotiating body to inertia, that the proposal has been made by certain developing countries for the convening of a conference in 1990 of the States Parties to the Moscow Treaty to extend its application to underground nuclear tests. At this stage we can merely reaffirm that we cannot support the so-called progressive approach aimed at the gradual reduction of the power of underground tests because in the last analysis it would only result in a perpetuation of the nuclear-arms race through its regulation.

We see this same dangerous drift in the ever-increasing threat of the extension of the arms race to outer space. The protective legal system set up more than 20 years ago by the outer space Treaty is becoming increasingly ineffective in the face of the challenges posed by the dizzying progress of science and space technology.

Need we reaffirm here our shared determination to protect this common heritage of mankind from military rivalries and to set up the necessary conditions for the promotion of its peaceful use for the benefit of all peoples on Earth? As we expect new provisions to supplement and strengthen the legal régime of outer space we appeal to the sense of responsibility of the Powers that have space technology to show restraint in the development and manufacture of anti-satellite weapons.

More than 25 years ago, the African Heads of State, meeting at their first summit in Addis Ababa to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU), declared unanimously that our continent should be a nuclear-free zone. Today, when nuclear disarmament is more than ever on the agenda, the implementation of this illustration of African wisdom remains blocked by the nuclear ambitions of a

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transfer of the technology and international co-operation necessary for the development of their chemical industries for peaceful purposes. Here we are pleased that the Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons which has just taken place in Canberra, Australia, has confirmed this global approach and has called for an acceleration of the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament for the conclusion, as soon as possible, of a convention for the complete prohibition of chemical weapons.

Need we emphasize that the Group of 21, of which Algeria is a member in the Conference on Disarmament is fully aware that the year 1990 will be crucial for the achievement of this goal? At these negotiations we shall continue to demonstrate political will and a constructive spirit, but also steadfastness in our position with respect to the globalization of the work on chemical disarmament to which we are all attached.

It is this same positive spirit which has caused us to appreciate, quite appropriately, the resumption at Vienna of the negotiations on the reduction of conventional weapons and forces in Europe. We are particularly sensitive to this because it is in our immediate neighbourhood, in other words the northern seaboard of the Mediterranean, and in Europe that the strongest concentration of armed forces is to be found and this region is still faced with the real risk of a conflagration.

The debate in the First Committee has shown the virtually unanimous will of the delegations present here to strengthen and develop the positive trend which is beginning to take shape in this important field of international relations, namely disarmament. This commitment is assuredly ours as well. But progress so far in

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the search for new world equilibriums that would be more sure and more stable should not obscure the anachronisms and the flagrant injustices in that other vital field, international economic relations. Does the state of underdevelopment in which the majority of the peoples of the world live not constitute just as obvious and perilous a challenge to the international community? Is it not a fact that today famine, ignorance and disease continue to kill more people than war itself?

In these precincts two years ago we unanimously recognized the organic link between these two formidable challenges facing humanity - disarmament and development. Genuine peace, to which we all aspire, cannot be divorced from development and cannot be reconciled with the fact that each year colossal sums, equal to the total debt of the third world, are swallowed up in a race for military superiority, a race that is as vain as it is suicidal.

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We believe that the allocation of part of the resources freed by disarmament for development of the least developed countries would contribute decisively to the emergence of a more peaceful, more-united world.

It was precisely in reaction to the inevitability of confrontation in a bipolar world that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was created nearly 30 years ago. Because from its inception it was on guard against the dangers flowing from the logic of power, the appropriateness of its original choices has today been confirmed by the changes taking place in international relations. Meeting a few weeks ago in Belgrade, the city of its birth, at summit level, the Movement reaffirmed that disarmament remained one of the principal elements of its political action,

"as the most tangible form of negation of military might and the use of force in international relations." (A/44/551, p. 21)

It is more than the recognition of right, it is the duty to contribute to this salutary task that the non-aligned countries wish to promote, because general and complete disarmament cannot be achieved without the participation of all countries. We are convinced that it is not admissible for a minority of States, simply because they possess nuclear weapons, to continue to impose their point of view.

While we readily acknowledge the merits and usefulness of the bilateral approach to disarmament, we firmly believe that it can only complement and facilitate multilateral action; it cannot marginalize it, much less replace it. Indeed, we have reached the stage where interdependence in this field is an incontrovertible reality and we must liberate the formidable potential of systematic application of multilateralism.

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That is why we call for the reinstatement of multilateral action as the outcome of the collective will, and believe that the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament should be more vigorous and imaginative.

In this context, the Final Document adopted by consensus in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament continues to be our guide and our frame of reference. Of course, the objectives of the international community have not been achieved. The sole multilateral negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament, continues to be prevented, by artificially created procedural obstacles, from carrying out a thorough analysis of priority questions, namely, those relating to nuclear disarmament. But our determination is unshaken, for we are convinced that the survival of mankind depends upon serious and productive multilateral negotiations with the final objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

We hope that the work of the Committee will be resolutely guided in this direction and that our efforts will demonstrate our commitment to the common quest for a more secure, just and humane world.

Mr. KHAMSY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): Since I am addressing the Committee for the first time, I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate the representative of Venezuela on his election to the chairmanship of this important body and to congratulate also the other officers of the Committee.

I take this opportunity to associate myself with preceding speakers in expressing profound sympathy to the delegation of the United States of America concerning the violent earthquake in the San Francisco area, and to the delegations of the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the

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Philippines and Algeria regarding the loss of human life and the material damage caused by the natural disasters that have just struck their respective countries.

The debate on disarmament item in the First Committee is taking place this year in an auspicious atmosphere, judging by the statements so far made by representatives of the main Powers possessing weapons of mass destruction.

The climate of distrust and confrontation of the cold-war period that followed the Second World War and the fear of a nuclear holocaust that because of the unbridled arms race has haunted our peoples have for some time now been steadily giving way to efforts to achieve mutual understanding, détente and constructive dialogue with a view to concerted action to resolve the most crucial problems of international peace and security, among which disarmament has the highest priority.

The improvement of the political climate in East-West relations, particularly relations between the two big Powers - the Soviet Union and the United States of America - made possible the successful conclusion in December 1987 of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty. The subsequent ratification of the Treaty and the success of its implementation are evidence of the strong political will and determination of the two parties concerned. The international community has good reason to be pleased, although the reductions planned and carried out represent only a tiny portion of the nuclear weapons that the two Powers and their respective military alliances still possess.

The signing of the INF Treaty was undoubtedly a milestone in the process of general and complete disarmament. Its complete implementation by the two parties would constitute an initial, very important step towards the overall reduction of nuclear weapons and a very significant example that would permit us to take an optimistic view of work in other fields of disarmament, whether bilateral, regional

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or multilateral. However, we must recognize that these are arduous and complex undertakings that require the perseverance and combined efforts of the States directly concerned and of the entire international community. We hope that the common aspirations of peoples to live in a non-violent world, free of nuclear weapons, will not be betrayed.

It is in this context that we hope that the resumed bilateral negotiations in Geneva between the two major Powers on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic offensive weapons will have conclusive results in the very near future; that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is to be held in Geneva in August of next year, will lead to an international consensus on effective means of preventing such a proliferation; that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will be concluded as soon as possible pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 43/63 A and B and 43/64, in order to complete the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963; and, lastly, that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact negotiators will soon find common ground in their talks in Vienna on reductions in their armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe, on which proposals and counter proposals were made at the beginning of this year.

(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

1989 is indeed the year most conducive to disarmament. The Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons held in January was the most eloquent and unanimous affirmation by the international community of the urgent need to conclude a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, transfer and use of chemical weapons, as well as on their destruction. The convention should complement already existing texts - the 1925 Geneva Protocol on chemical weapons and the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Special mention should also be made of the initiative of the Australian Government, which recently organized in Canberra a conference that brought together for the first time a large number of representatives of Governments and of the international chemical industry, and aimed at making them more aware of the horrors that could result from the use of those weapons and at obtaining the broadest possible international consensus on their total prohibition.

In the view of my delegation, the joint Soviet-American memorandum and declaration of 23 September 1989, which resulted from the ministerial meeting in Wyoming, constitute by far the most encouraging disarmament documents of the year, because they are a commitment by the two most militarily powerful States in the world. They also cover a vast range of areas and pinpoint the most essential tasks in the field of inspection and verification.

The international community undoubtedly has grounds for satisfaction in the encouraging developments that I have just outlined. But disarmament, in order to be total and complete, remains an extremely complex task and one of long duration. In order to achieve it, a large number of obstacles must be overcome, first among which is the different way in which States perceive their national security. For



(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

some, security rests on the dangerous concept of nuclear deterrence, while for others, including my country, the concept of security in the nuclear and space age can only be viewed in a global context and should apply equally to all States and peoples of the world, regardless of their size, their level of development, or their political, social and economic system. It is in that context that my delegation considers any programme for the exploitation of outer space for military purposes by any State as morally incompatible with efforts now under way for arms reduction and disarmament for the well-being of mankind.

It is also useful to note that the maintenance of military bases, the establishment of arms and munitions stockpiles, and the conducting of periodic military manoeuvres by some Powers outside their own territory still constitute a constant threat to the security and stability of the region where they exist or where they are carried out, and all tend to foster suspicion among States and to encourage the arms race at the regional level, to the detriment of the poorest developing countries. They should therefore all be prohibited by the international community, as should nuclear tests and all other forms of the arms race.

Negotiations on both nuclear and conventional disarmament at different levels - bilateral, regional and multilateral - need equally strong encouragement and support from the international community. In that undertaking, we must recognize that the United Nations always plays a primary role, one which should be strengthened, especially in the co-ordination of different efforts towards the development and final conclusion of accords, as well as to ensure their effective implementation. My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, highly appreciates the activities and efforts of our Organization in that field and will spare no effort to make its own modest contribution.

Mr. BYKOV (Bulgaria): With the implementation of the Treaty on the

Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - we have witnessed real steps towards disarmament for the first time in human history. A substantive dialogue is under way between the Soviet Union and the United States on deep cuts in their strategic offensive weapons and between the two major political alliances on the reduction of their conventional forces. The prospects for the elimination of chemical weapons look better than ever. Verification is no longer a theoretical exercise but a practical element of the disarmament process. A number of countries have undertaken significant unilateral steps to reduce their armed forces. All this has given rise to the feeling that the world is on the threshold of major changes in the field of arms control and disarmament.

At the same time we cannot help noticing that progress in that field, which has been substantial by existing standards, has been limited mainly to bilateral measures and agreements. The changes in international relations have been slow to translate themselves into a quicker pace for multilateral disarmament negotiations. We are still waiting for the major breakthrough in that area to materialize.

The Conference on Disarmament has made great efforts and has some visible achievements in certain fields, such as in chemical weapons. However, it has been unable adequately to address and to make progress on such issues of great concern to the international community as the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, a nuclear-test ban, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances. These are phenomena that require the international community to redouble its efforts for the solution of outstanding problems. Given the present favourable international climate, that is an objective that can be attained.

(Mr. Bykov, Bulgaria)

Today I would like to speak on two of those outstanding problems. One of them is familiar, since it has been on and off our agenda for several years now. It concerns naval arms and disarmament. The other is a comparatively new one, but in the present times of change, in our view, it requires our attention. I am referring to the conversion of military resources to civilian purposes.

As my delegation pointed out in our previous statement in the First Committee, the deliberate exclusion of certain fields of disarmament from international dialogue is unacceptable. In our view, naval disarmament is an example of that.

The curbing of the naval arms race, the limitation and reduction of naval armaments, and the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans is imperative if we want the steps in the other disarmament fields to inspire trust. The inclusion of that item in the agendas of the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission reflects the growing concern that the further build-up and intensification of naval activities endanger international peace and security, torpedoes stability on a regional and global scale, and may lead to the escalation and widening of existing conflicts.

That concern also derives from the fact that the high seas and oceans are being increasingly transformed into a major arena of the nuclear arms race. Intensified naval activities in various parts of the world and the ambiguities surrounding the presence of nuclear arms aboard naval ships and submarines are fraught with the danger of provoking incidents of unpredictable consequences.

We therefore welcome the position of the Soviet Union in favour of adopting, together with the other nuclear-weapon States, the practice of providing information on the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard naval vessels entering foreign ports. The development, on a multilateral basis, of technical means of verifying the presence of nuclear weapons on board ships will, in our opinion, be extremely helpful in resolving the existing ambiguities.

(Mr. Bykov, Bulgaria)

My country is of the view that if the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, were to agree to assign a strictly defensive character to their military doctrines, and if the two sides accepted as the basis for their relations the concept of mutual security at the lowest possible level, they could, as a first step, eliminate certain types of naval armaments and limit certain naval activities involving nuclear weapons. This would also make it possible to impart a more balanced composition to the naval forces, as well as to demilitarize certain sea and ocean areas.

The regional and subregional approaches are of major importance for the strengthening of peace and the prevention of conflict situations. Inherent in this approach could be measures aimed, for example, at reducing naval activities in the Pacific, including the limitation of the patrol areas of naval vessels with nuclear weapons on board. Agreement could also be reached to reduce and subsequently to prohibit anti-submarine warfare in certain oceans and sea areas, to limit the number, scale and scope of naval activities in the Indian Ocean of any non-littoral State, to withdraw foreign naval forces from the Mediterranean, and so on.

Equally important is the question of ensuring the security of maritime communications by confidence-building measures of a political, legal and military and technical nature. In our view, the elaboration of such security guarantees for the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans as well as for international straits should be the subject-matter of negotiations.

Many Member States believe that the time has come to initiate constructive consideration of the question of extending confidence-building measures to seas and oceans. These could encompass, for example: prior notification of sea exercises; transfers of naval forces and manoeuvres; invitation of observers; restrictions on the cruising and patrol activities of naval formations; limitation of the scale,

(Mr. Bykov, Bulgaria)

scope and intensity of naval exercises, including amphibious forces; prohibition of exercises or manoeuvres in international straits and adjacent regions; and so on. In our view, these ideas are especially pertinent to the seas surrounding Europe, where the concentration of naval forces is extremely high.

Measures to combat terrorism and piracy on the high seas could also be worked out.

We find equally interesting the idea of elaborating a multilateral agreement to prevent incidents at sea, which should present no difficulty whatever, given the existence of the bilateral agreements in force between some of the major naval Powers.

All the proposals made so far, as well as any future ideas, could be discussed at special consultations with the participation of all States concerned and, above all, the major naval Powers. We consider such consultations a proper forum for considering problems of mutual concern and exchanging views on the principles of naval disarmament and also the mechanisms, scope and objectives of the respective future negotiations.

The important results achieved so far in real disarmament and the practical opportunities emerging in this area give significance to the national and international aspects of the conversion of military capabilities. In the most general terms, conversion could here be defined as a gradual process under which changes are implemented in the distribution ratios of manpower, financial and material resources of the civilian and military sectors. Conversion could be viewed as a natural and logical continuation and development of the process of arms reduction and elimination.

Some countries have already started work on the issue. Last December, President Gorbachev announced at the United Nations the Soviet Union's intention to develop and present its national conversion plan to the world Organization. We are

(Mr. Bykov, Bulgaria)

also aware of the Philippines initiative put forward at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our information is that the issue has been debated in the United States Congress. Other countries are also dealing with the matter. Judging by the debate so far in this Committee, there is sufficient interest among delegations to warrant presenting this problem for the attention of the international community.

As my delegation pointed out in its previous statement, Bulgaria has undertaken unilateral conventional disarmament measures which in our view should be followed by corresponding actions in the practical conversion of our military potential. For us, the need for conversion is also determined by the growing prospect of an agreement at the Vienna negotiations on reducing conventional forces, which may have important economic and social consequences. An interdepartmental group was therefore set up with the objective of studying the problems of conversion in our country. We feel that it is necessary to analyse ways and means to convert industries and defence establishments to civilian purposes by taking into consideration international experience and the specific conditions in Bulgaria.

We are well aware of the complexity of this problem and the anxiety raising it might cause some delegations. At the same time, we believe that conversion has a direct bearing on the process of disarmament and that it is a guarantee of its irreversibility. Therefore we feel that all countries which are really interested in disarmament should also have an interest in conversion, and should be ready to exchange information on their national experience in this field.

There are other arguments for our position that conversion is universal in nature.

(Mr. Bykov, Bulgaria)

First, an adequate balance between the civilian and military sectors of the economy is a problem for many countries. Due to the growing interdependence of national economies, this problem acquires international dimensions, and its solution might be facilitated by joint efforts. Conversion could also be regarded as a link in the chain for alleviating the existing energy, ecological, demographic and other problems threatening all nations.

Second, the overall interest in the issue is manifested in the concern of many countries as to the impact of military spending and the growth of military industries on the social and economic development of nations, especially on a medium- and long-term scale.

Third, contrary to some views, conversion concerns countries regardless of how they are organized socially and economically. There is a great degree of government control over military industry not only in the socialist but also, albeit with a different appearance, in the so-called free market economies. This illustrates the decisive role of Governments in guaranteeing transition from an armaments economy to a disarmament economy.

Because of the common interest of many nations in the conversion of military resources, we feel that the United Nations is the best place for the consideration and harmonization of these interests. Relevant endeavours in this field could encompass, for example, the following: exchange of information and national experience between Member States with the aim of joining the efforts of the international community in the study and solution of the problems of conversion, and elaboration of models, including general principles and guidelines, which could be used by interested countries carrying out conversion. Issues that could be examined might include national, regional and global aspects of the problem, specifics of conversion in the fields of nuclear, conventional and chemical disarmament and so on.

(Mr. Bykov, Bulgaria)

These ideas, if translated into action, could in our view assist the process of implementing the international agreements in the areas of arms reduction and disarmament. With these considerations in mind, my delegation intends to present to the current session a draft resolution on the conversion of military resources to civilian purposes. We believe that the issue merits deliberation by our Committee and hope that all delegations will find it possible to support us in this belief.

Mr. RASAPUTRAM (Sri Lanka): Mr. Chairman, I should like to recall the views of others in congratulating you and offering the felicitations of my delegation to the other officers of the Committee for the efforts being made to ensure success in our deliberations. My delegation stands ready to support you and the other members of the Bureau in all efforts towards achieving our objectives.



(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

We have listened to a great number of ideas expressed by various delegations. We all have one common goal - that of achieving durable and lasting peace, although the means of achieving that end may take different forms. We are pleased that promising initiatives have been taken, on the basis of realistic and fresh ideas, to move towards strengthening and enhancing international security. It is clear that there is a greater degree of understanding and respect for each other today than there has been before. We are deeply moved that in the interest of humanity and human welfare nations have declared their commitment to reduce suspicions, mistrust and tensions in seeking international and co-operative arrangements for the establishment of firmly rooted security for all mankind.

We all have a deep sense of responsibility to work together with a sense of realism and relevance to protect, preserve and nurture present and future generations from threats of nuclear annihilation, as well as from other risks and uncertainties that accompany an arms-polluted atmosphere. There are signs that we are poised for global integration. The opportunities and challenges for the achievement of solidarity and collective security cannot be allowed to slip away when they are within reach. All such opportunities should be relentlessly pursued and vigorously exploited so that we do not allow any deviation from current favourable trends.

We cannot and should not fail in our attempts to achieve the ultimate integration and harmonization of human values. It would be disastrous even to think that in an interdependent world the alternative would be disintegration. The economic and political changes that are taking place in the world are in our favour, and so are the psychological factors. They offer great expectations that must be strengthened and intensified.

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

As we leave the decade of the 1980s we feel happy that positive and concrete steps have been taken to reach agreement or near-agreement on many important issues. Although no multilateral agreement was concluded for a period of more than a decade, since the creation of the requisite machinery at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, an improved "psychosphere" has nevertheless been created by the negotiations that have taken place in multilateral forums.

One of our main priorities in the agenda for the 1990s is to prevent any retreat from multilateralism by strengthening the necessary machinery. It would be too simplistic to claim that the existence of the required machinery would automatically lead to a plethora of agreements. However, recent developments should impel us to look at multilateralism afresh. The First Committee, as the primary deliberative body on this subject, is an appropriate forum for doing so. We have seen the welcome development of United Nations multilateral machinery being given fuller play in the domain of peace-making and peace-keeping when enabling conditions were created for doing so - not least by members of the Security Council. The Stockholm process, which was essentially a multilateral exercise, albeit with limited participation, has borne fruit and paved the way for a process of negotiations on conventional-arms limitations and, it is to be hoped, on disarmament in Europe as well. The agreement to remove some nuclear weapons and the negotiations that are now under way drastically to reduce remaining nuclear weapons have been widely acclaimed. Those achievements have vindicated the belief long held by members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that open-ended arms competition would jeopardize rather than enhance the security of nations.

The successes achieved at the Paris and Canberra Conferences and the substantial progress made in negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament at

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Geneva on the same subject are ample evidence that, given the political will to recognize the imperatives of multilateralism in disarmament, consensus would not be beyond reach. Last month at Belgrade more than 100 States Members of the United Nations reiterated that self-evident truth by stating:

"The non-aligned countries do not pretend, nor are they in a position, to change the world by themselves; but neither can the world be reshaped without them. The non-aligned favour concordance rather than confrontation, regardless of whether common problems of mankind or issues of regional interest are involved." (A/44/551, annex p. 10, para. 6)

The economic and developmental dimensions of security should dictate that multilateralism in disarmament and arms control is a prudent course of action in a world poised for global integration on an unprecedented scale. The traditional bipolar power relationship that has existed since the Second World War seems to be giving way to a more concordant relationship that would, it is hoped, facilitate a more stable and equitable security order based on common security for all.

What is not clear at this time is whether the traditional power structures will dissipate into the multipolar power arrangements manifest in different regions. Such a phenomenon may be less discernible than the highly visible adversarial relationship that existed between the two alliance systems during the cold-war period, but it can be destabilizing and detrimental to the large majority of smaller and militarily insignificant countries that do not rely on military power for their security.

While what can be described as a tenuous state of no-war is claimed to exist in the traditional battlefield of Europe, supported by debatable military doctrines, new types of power arrangements could create conditions of greater insecurity in other regions. The answer to that potential danger is not to revert

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to the cold war and to bipolarism, or to be complacent in the belief that deterrence will endure: it is to be found in international co-operation in its broadest sense. In striving towards that end, multilateral bodies, both deliberative and negotiating, should be enabled to realize their full potential in the quest for achievement of common security through a progressively lower level of armaments on a global scale.

To achieve common security the concerns of all countries should be taken into account. The report of the Conference on Disarmament that is before the Committee indicates that such a positive attitude is overdue. One does not need to inject maximalist sentiments into this approach, as if one were looking to bring down an avalanche of instant disarmament agreements from multilateral bodies. What is required is modest, but serious and purposeful, multilateral work that would facilitate eventual agreement on priority disarmament and security issues. It is self-evident that complementarities between multilateral and bilateral efforts should naturally be made use of, and we cannot indulge in the luxury of allowing one process to place obstacles in the way of the other. Any other approach would not be commensurate with the wide-ranging changes taking place on the contemporary international and national scenes.

The members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have always been ready to contribute constructively to that endeavour. They reiterated that at Belgrade, when they stated:

"... Clearly, the disarmament process cannot be carried out without a contribution by all States and especially by the great Powers and their military alliances, which have the greatest responsibility in that regard. ... the policy and practice of non-alignment stands for disarmament as the most tangible form of negation of military might and the use of force in international relations. (A/44/551, annex, p. 21, para. 5)

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

There is therefore an urgent need to revitalize the multilateral disarmament process in response to the multifaceted challenges that we face today. It is in that perspective that we should address the agenda of the First Committee. The draft resolutions we adopt should take cognizance of those realities. The First Committee normally carries a heavy agenda. There is no doubt that this gives an overview of the subjects that are considered important for common security. However, in such a situation we tend to gloss over even the most vital and outstanding issues that are within easy reach for co-operative action. Evidently there are some difficulties in being selective, particularly if the interests of various countries are to be accommodated. We see rationalization as a part of the political considerations underlying the substantive items we deal with rather than merely as an organizational question addressing redundancy and repetitiveness. Draft resolutions and agenda items denote varying degrees of importance to each Member State. We have seen how careful States are when they enter into negotiations to reduce or limit certain weapons or weapons systems. That is understandable, given the perceived utility of a particular weapon to State security.

Countries that place emphasis on more disarmament rather than on more armaments for security would be equally cautious about rationalizations solely for purposes of economy. We none the less support lasting rationalization that could emerge from our collective endeavours to revitalize the multilateral process through political harmony. Although an invidious selection of topics will be difficult, some agenda items need emphasis because of their topicality.

When we consider the need for fixing priorities my delegation would like to support the ideas put forward by Yugoslavia and several other delegations about the direct link between disarmament and development. The world community has an

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onerous responsibility for protecting and preserving present and future generations, not only from a nuclear holocaust but also from the ravages of hunger, poverty and deprivation.

Clearly, one of the most urgent of today's needs is the elimination of poverty throughout the world, with a well-designed programme for the transfer of resources to enable the poor countries to achieve stable growth with equity. Regrettably, there is a net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries. The future generations of the poor countries are not only denied a place in the sun; they are also compelled to live in squalor, degradation and deprivation without protecting the lives of the born and the unborn. The volume of resources that can be diverted for development are drained away by large military budgets.

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

Admittedly, the developed countries themselves need to cut down their deficits in public and international finance in order to improve their economic management. However, a certain percentage of budgetary savings can be effortlessly channelled to the developing countries to raise their incomes and output. This would strengthen the economic security of all countries and pave the way for greater expansion of economic activity and for improved and expanded markets for all goods and services.

It is poverty that is the root cause of instability, political convulsions, class warfare and the orgy of destruction of economic and political foundations. Sri Lanka's poverty alleviation programme, reinforced by structural adjustment, is an innovative method of achieving growth with equity, stability and security. Disarmament and development must necessarily be pursued together to build healthy nations. Combined efforts of development and disarmament will not only intensify and strengthen security on all fronts, but also provide the necessary impetus for creative work for peaceful purposes.

Development is another name for peace. The momentum for the successful conclusion of a chemical weapons convention seems to have reached a point of no return. The Wyoming Declaration issued jointly by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is another milestone on the long arduous road to achieving a complete ban on chemical weapons. We would like to congratulate all those who negotiated at the bilateral and multilateral levels for the high level of success achieved in this direction. The efforts taken by France at the Paris Conference and by Australia at the Canberra Conference, where new ground was broken by involving the private-sector chemical industry, are deeply appreciated. Once verification procedures are finalized, a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons must become a reality. Since there can be no retreat from the

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current trends in this environment, we are hopeful that a multilateral ban will soon be concluded.

The question of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty remains a topical one, not only because of persistent international endeavours for nearly three decades, but also because of recent developments and forthcoming events related to it. The United States-Soviet bilateral talks on nuclear test limitations give us hope that it will be vigorously pursued until the eventual ratification of the two existing Treaties.

Thus, given the political will to negotiate, long-standing verification obstacles are surmountable. As a matter of fact, the technical difficulties of verifying a complete test ban are considered to be much less burdensome than those associated with the 'threshold verification' necessary for the two Treaties. This should auger well for purposeful work leading to multilateral negotiations on the priority issue of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Bilateral talks currently under way fall far short of this widely shared objective. Those talks seek to regulate rather than eliminate nuclear testing. There is the disturbing prospect that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will then recede further into the indefinite future. This would be a situation that runs counter to the letter and the spirit of the partial test-ban treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Meanwhile, nuclear testing will continue with all that it entails in terms of fuelling the arms race, nuclear proliferation and damage to the environment. The latest figures of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute indicate that 40 test explosions were conducted in 1988. According to the Nuclear Test Monitor, 14-test explosions took place in the first half of 1989.



(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

The Conference on Disarmament reports that it was not possible to reach consensus to establish a subsidiary body of the Conference to deal with the nuclear test-ban question. Clearly, the problem is that certain countries are not yet ready to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We have, then, to find a compromise. The group of non-aligned and neutral countries were prepared to that, on the understanding that the work the Conference on Disarmament will undertake in this connection should facilitate negotiations leading to an eventual comprehensive test-ban treaty. Even this was not possible, and my delegation hopes that a suitable resolution can be adopted by this Committee for the Conference on Disarmament to undertake meaningful work towards negotiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty and not engage in cyclical debates.

The proposal to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test ban, through the due legal process provided for in the former instrument, has received wide support. The non-aligned countries, at their summit meeting in Belgrade, have endorsed the proposal and called for early preparatory work leading to the convening of the Conference as early as possible next year. We welcome consultations undertaken in this regard, including those by the depositary States, and hope for their early and successful conclusion. Sri Lanka looks forward to a constructive amendment conference to be held as soon as possible in order for the States parties to find a way forward for the realization of the purposes enshrined in the partial test-ban Treaty.

This is the last session of the First Committee before the convening of the fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons scheduled to take place next year. As a State party which took an active part in the last Review Conference, we look forward to a successful fourth review. This is

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all the more important since the States parties will have to decide in 1995 on the question of the extension of the Treaty. All States that value the continued validity and viability of a non-proliferation framework, of which the non-proliferation Treaty is an important component, should indeed strive for a successful fourth review. As the outcome of the last three Review Conferences indicated, all non-nuclear countries have faithfully honoured commitments they had undertaken. Important questions, such as a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, progress in multilateral work on nuclear disarmament and credible and unqualified security assurances to non-nuclear countries against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, would no doubt be of great relevance to a successful outcome of the forthcoming Review Conference.

Nuclear-weapon States in general, and the depositary States in particular, have a special responsibility to take action-oriented decisions in order to create conditions conducive to progress in the multilateral domain. If multilateral work in these areas remains paralysed, it will be extremely difficult to ensure the continued credibility of the non-proliferation Treaty, particularly in an environment in which the utility of nuclear weapons and their vertical proliferation continue to be expounded. This will also act as a barrier against much-desired wider adherence.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an item on which the First Committee usually finds a large measure of common ground. As in the past, Sri Lanka will continue to be actively involved in negotiating a resolution on this subject. We look forward to the consultations the representative of Egypt will undertake this year. Over the years, the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament have developed a set of broad principles relevant to this subject on which further work can be carried out.

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

The report of the Conference on Disarmament now before the First Committee reaffirms these broad principles, while reiterating the importance and urgency attached to this question. There are, however, differences as to what course of action should be undertaken and how to prioritize them to prevent an arms race in outer space.

At the same time, we note the general recognition that bilateral work and multilateral work in this area should complement each other. We welcome the resumption of the United States-Soviet negotiations on outer space issues. It is also of importance to note that the bilateral negotiators have, in accordance with the requests made by the General Assembly, kept the Conference on Disarmament informed of the progress in their negotiations. My delegation will continue to strive for a consensus that would facilitate further multilateral work, leading to eventual agreements on this question. It is therefore important that we progressively build on the measure of agreement usually reached in the First Committee on this subject and not allow regression. The Conference on Disarmament has done useful work this year. We are pleased to note that the Conference has recommended that no effort should be spared to continue substantive work on this item, and for that purpose the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established next year.

Once again we regret that it has not been possible to make any headway in the long overdue multilateral work on nuclear disarmament issues. While bilateral achievements and prospects for further bilateral agreements are welcome, we continue to be concerned that no focused attention was paid to the nuclear disarmament issues in the Conference on Disarmament this year. The large majority of countries have emphasized time and again that multilateral work on nuclear

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issues is an undeniable necessity, since nuclear weapons and their qualitative and quantitative improvement affects the security of all countries. Moreover, States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty, which have undertaken the solemn commitment of renouncing the nuclear-weapon option, have long called for a more forthcoming attitude from nuclear countries on obligations they undertook in Article 6 of the non-proliferation Treaty. The Conference on Disarmament, which is the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, is the most appropriate forum for those States to manifest the necessary political will in that direction.

While nuclear issues have the highest priority, we should not overlook the importance and urgency of conventional disarmament. Sri Lanka and indeed many others have consistently advocated, both in New York and in Geneva, the need to address conventional disarmament issues in multilateral forums. The large majority of smaller countries do not depend on military means for their security. They have undertaken treaty commitments renouncing nuclear weapons. Regrettably, those non-military means of security have too often proved too vulnerable. Over 120 armed conflicts have taken place since the Second World War, entailing 20 million deaths. They have all been fought with conventional weapons and in the developing regions of the world. Arms transfers to irregular groups have proliferated resulting in increasing destabilization, unnecessary military expenditure and increasing violence in many third world countries.

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

We welcome the ongoing negotiations in Vienna with regard to conventional arms in Europe and are encouraged by the good prospects for progress that have been reported. The time is now opportune for the international community to address the question of conventional disarmament and arms transfers in a multilateral negotiating forum.

At its forty-third session the General Assembly decided to convene the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace in 1990. As members are aware, the declaration of the the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace has been a major disarmament initiative of the international community and the convening of the Colombo Conference in 1990 is considered to be an essential step towards the establishment of a peace zone in the region of the Indian Ocean. At the Belgrade summit the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries supported the convening of the Colombo Conference and called for full and active participation in the Conference by the major maritime Powers and the permanent members of the Security Council, whose co-operation is essential for the success of the Conference, and they requested the Secretary-General to extend the necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Committee to enable it to complete its preparatory work for the Conference. During this session, the enabling draft resolution will be discussed in this Committee and my delegation, on behalf of the non-aligned members, will make a detailed statement in this regard. It is our firm belief that the draft resolution on the Indian Ocean will enjoy the full support of this Committee.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to compliment the Secretariat and other bodies of the United Nations which have provided information and research material for discussing and negotiating issues relevant to disarmament and security. These inputs are a vital part of facilitating informed participation by all countries in the multilateral process of disarmament. We look forward to the

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completion of the updating of the comprehensive study of nuclear weapons. The Secretariat should be encouraged and supported in their endeavours. The useful and valuable work carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in this regard was appreciated by the summit Conference of non-aligned countries held in Belgrade and we would like to echo the Belgrade call for continued financial support for UNIDIR.

#### PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the Committee will conclude the first phase of its work, namely, the general debate on all disarmament agenda items, on 1 November 1989.

On Thursday, 2 November, the Committee will proceed to the second phase of its work, that is, consideration of and action on draft resolutions under all disarmament agenda items, namely agenda items 49 to 69 and 151. From 2 to 17 November a total of 24 meetings have been allocated for this stage of the Committee's work and it is hoped that the Committee will conclude consideration of those agenda items by Friday, 17 November.

After a series of consultations among the officers of the Committee, I wish to propose briefly the following programme of work for the period 2 to 17 November.

From Thursday, 2 November, to Wednesday, 8 November, a total of 10 meetings would be devoted primarily to the introduction and comments on all draft resolutions under disarmament agenda items. However, in view of the fact that the Committee would have concluded its general debate at that time, I hope that delegations would consider limiting the number as well as the length of their statements. I would urge those delegations that wish to introduce draft

(The Chairman)

resolutions or to make comments on them during those 10 meetings kindly to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as early as possible.

Beginning Thursday, 9 November, the Committee will proceed to take decisions on draft resolutions under the various disarmament agenda items.

It is the intention of the Chairman to try to present to the Committee on Monday, 6 November, a document containing his suggestions regarding the programme which groups together various draft resolutions in several clusters, on the basis of which the Committee will proceed to take decisions on draft resolutions cluster by cluster.

If there are no comments I will take it that the suggested programme of work for the second phase of the Committee's work is acceptable.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Following resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 with its annex providing guidelines for the operation of the contingency fund, the process of consideration and adoption of draft resolutions having programme budget implications may prove to be more complex and time-consuming than usual, and accordingly we should take this situation into account as delegations undertake their consultations on the various draft resolutions in the coming days so that we may be in a position to complete our work within the time allocated.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.