

UNITED NATIONS  
**General Assembly**  
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION  
*Official Records*

FIRST COMMITTEE  
17th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 26 October 1989  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela)

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89-63099 4240V (E)

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.1/44/PV.17  
2 November 1989  
ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. LOEIS (Indonesia): Mr. Chairman, in associating my delegation's congratulations with those expressed to you by other members on your unanimous election to preside over our work, as well as with those addressed to the other members of the Bureau, I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend to you our felicitations on your well-deserved appointment as Deputy Foreign Minister and to wish you the best of success in your future endeavours.

The First Committee is meeting this year in an atmosphere of renewed expectations. Mutual accommodation and rapprochement between the major Powers have lessened international tension, created opportunities for dialogue and negotiations and exerted a beneficial impact on the ongoing endeavours for arms limitation. Thus, the resumption of the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union to reduce by half their strategic arsenals have registered some progress. Important multilateral efforts are continuing in the field of chemical weapons. New proposals and initiatives are on the table in Vienna on conventional-arms reduction and confidence-building in Europe. In those and other negotiating forums new initiatives have been advanced, and there is a growing understanding of new concepts and approaches to security and disarmament. Prospects appear brighter now for arms reductions in an over-armed world as bilateral and multilateral negotiations on a range of issues seem to have made discernible advances.

However, critical issues and growing uncertainties continue to cloud many of those negotiations. Following the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles between the two major Powers, our

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

hopes for an accelerated momentum leading to a phased, time-bound programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons have yet to be realized. Those who hoped for militarily significant reductions in existing or planned strategic-weapons systems, or even for a slow-down in the introduction of new and more dangerous technologies, have little grounds for satisfaction. New technologies looming on the horizon promise more advanced weapons with greater versatility and more devastating capabilities for annihilation. As a result the ongoing efforts, welcome as they are, have not led to tangible progress on a reduction in the number and destructive capacity of strategic armaments.

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

Today we have become more than ever aware of the dangers posed by an unrestrained arms race in the nuclear era, which, apart from its potent threat of self-extinction, also constitutes a serious impediment to the pursuit of optimal development. It is clear that we can no longer temporize over the arms race, ameliorating its manifestations rather than terminating it in substance. It is in this context that my delegation has called for negotiations on the priority issues at the multilateral level, elaborating inter alia the stages of nuclear disarmament, including the responsibilities of the nuclear Powers and the role of the non-nuclear States; the identification of the duties and obligations of the nuclear Powers to refrain from the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear States and their duty to prevent nuclear war; and, finally, the search for alternatives to the doctrine of deterrence and reliance on nuclear weapons.

The critical importance of a test-ban treaty in de-escalating the nuclear-arms race has long been acknowledged. Indeed, it is supported by a broadly representative group of non-nuclear States from all regions. Despite differences of approach and emphasis on certain aspects, they speak with one strong and united voice in expressing the conviction that testing, for whatever reasons, is unacceptable and that banning it is of the highest priority.

Yet a test-ban treaty has long been obstructed for wholly untenable political and technical reasons. As a result, trilateral talks have been suspended for several years. Bilateral negotiations being conducted on the basis of a stage-by-stage approach, involving inter alia a joint verification experiment, promise to prolong the process of reaching an agreement indefinitely. Negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament has been effectively blocked, and no multilateral talks involving all the parties to the partial test-ban Treaty have ever taken place.

(Mr. Loewin, Indonesia)

Under these circumstances, various non-nuclear States have taken initiatives to advance viable and realistic proposals. In this regard, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Indonesia, together with 35 other States, have called for the convening of a conference to amend the partial test-ban Treaty to make it a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The convening of the conference, which is mandatory, is endorsed by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly. We believe that the preparatory session should be convened early in 1990 and that the conference itself should be convened as early as possible in 1990. A positive response by the nuclear Powers in achieving the paramount objective of the conference would constitute a tangible expression of their professions of co-operation with the non-nuclear States on disarmament issues.

Because of its ramifications, the question of a test ban was considered in all three Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Neither its reaffirmation nor the protracted debates at those review exercises have made any impact. The test ban has special significance for the non-proliferation Treaty, because the depositary States' commitment to abandon vertical proliferation was made as a quid pro quo for non-nuclear States' commitment to forgo horizontal proliferation. A key element in this regard is a comprehensive test ban.

Indonesia regards the non-proliferation Treaty as an important instrument in the body of treaties governing nuclear arms. Over the years the Treaty has been strengthened by wider adherence and by measures towards a more effective safeguards system, and it has codified the interests of a vast majority of States, reflecting an abiding commitment to its validity and continuity.

At the same time, however, Indonesia reiterates the misgivings that it shares with other non-nuclear States over the uneven implementation of the essential provisions of the Treaty, especially article VI, relating to the cessation of the

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament. While the non-nuclear States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty have lived up to their commitments, the nuclear Powers have not, since in the past two decades the pace of the nuclear-arms race, far from diminishing, has actually accelerated. Geographical proliferation on land and sea has proceeded apace, rendering the possibility of mutually balanced reductions even more difficult. A new element in the strategic equation - the prospect of an extension of the arms race into outer space - has further complicated the situation.

We welcomed the INF Treaty as a concrete initiative to fulfil the obligations under article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty, whose implementation was long overdue. None the less, in view of the magnitude and level of the arsenals, even the envisaged 50 per cent reduction will still leave the major Powers with nuclear weapons that far exceed those they had in 1968. Hence, the rationale for this proposal has become even more relevant today. Such a reduction should be accompanied by a mutually agreed moratorium on the development of new weapons and should be rapidly reinforced by formal agreements to eliminate a wide range of armaments. My delegation is fully convinced that only through such a bold and sweeping departure from the present military postures can we go to the heart of the problems posed by the nuclear menace.

In retrospect, it is heartening that the Third Review Conference of the parties to the non-proliferation Treaty adopted a Final Declaration, given the dismal failure of the Second Review Conference. On the other hand, its utility in relation to the outcome of the First Review Conference clearly reflects the discord and the reluctance on the part of some States to express a genuine commitment to full implementation of the Treaty. Hence, my delegation shares the misgivings expressed by other States over the persistence of the imbalances in the Treaty, especially the misplaced stress on the obligations of non-nuclear States vis-à-vis those assumed by the nuclear Powers.

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

In this context, the forthcoming Review Conference will have to undertake a thorough, critical examination of the operation of the Treaty during the past two decades to determine whether all its provisions have been faithfully implemented, and as a result of such an examination to adopt measures to remedy the inadequacies. Only time will show whether the non-proliferation Treaty will sustain its efficacy or whether it will lapse into less and less relevance to the quest for nuclear non-proliferation.

The right to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones has been explicitly recognized by the non-proliferation Treaty. In a period of widespread knowledge and availability of nuclear technology and fissionable materials, these zones provide a viable means for the non-nuclear States, on their own initiative, to ensure the total absence of nuclear weapons from their territories and enhance their mutual security. They can also promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy within the zones by facilitating the establishment of regional or international fuel cycle centres, with their attendant economic and physical security benefits for extracting uranium, fabricating nuclear fuel and reprocessing plutonium. Above all, they can provide the means for obtaining security assurances from nuclear Powers not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

In our part of the world, this is exemplified by the entry into force of the Rarotonga Treaty for the South Pacific region and the ongoing efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. As all the States in that region are signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this common denominator augurs well for the success of the nuclear-weapon-free-zone initiative. It is particularly desirable for our region, which has a long history of endemic conflicts and instability as well as external involvement. My delegation further believes that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would also constitute a positive step in reducing tension and fostering co-operation on other, wider, regional issues, and make a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament, including the strengthening of non-proliferation by progressively reducing the geographical areas within which nuclear weapons can operate. Ultimately, a denuclearized zone in South-East Asia, taken together with the areas covered by the Treaties of Rarotonga and Tlatelolco, would cover a vast and contiguous zone free from the menace posed by nuclear weapons.

Ever since the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, my delegation has been fully aware of the potential benefits its implementation would bring for the littoral and hinterland States as well as for the external Powers. Considering its strategic location encompassing major sea lanes vital for international trade and communication and the dynamics flowing from a multitude of regional and extra-regional factors, the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Indian Ocean is self-evident. The fact that its littoral and hinterland is overwhelmingly comprised of newly independent non-aligned States eager to harness their abundant resources for development free from great-Power rivalry and competition adds poignant urgency to the establishment of zonal peace in the Indian Ocean.



(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

These aspirations, however, are being seriously set back by the growing militarization of the Indian Ocean, which has instilled a pervasive sense of instability and insecurity, both region-wide and beyond. The Indian Ocean zone of peace cannot materialize as long as naval manoeuvres, the fortification of foreign military bases and other manifestations of military-power projection continue unabated. The complex ramifications of the problems involved and the differing perceptions of them can only be addressed comprehensively through the long-pending international conference on the Indian Ocean. Indonesia and the other non-aligned States therefore remain committed to its convening no later than 1990 to secure the objectives of the Declaration.

In this context as well, it was only recently that the international community accorded belated recognition to the dangerously neglected issue of the naval arms race. Members have become increasingly aware of the particular characteristics of naval armaments and the mode of operation of naval forces in the overall context of the global arms race. Apart from the fact that no less than one third of the world's nuclear arsenals are destined for naval deployment, the distinguishing feature of sea-based nuclear forces is their ability to proliferate geographically throughout the world and to be deployed along any coastal points. While the stationing and movement of tactical nuclear weapons on land are restricted by treaty provisions, their naval deployment can place any State at risk.

The horizontal and vertical proliferation of sea-based strategic and tactical nuclear weapons cannot but be of utmost concern to Indonesia, an archipelagic country located astride important waterways linking two oceans and two continents. With the steady development of sea power, maritime strategies and ballistic-missile submarines at sea, each carrying unprecedented explosive force in their armoury of nuclear warheads, the security and survival of the human race is placed in serious jeopardy. In this context, we have noted the observations made by some delegations

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

during the current session of our Committee on the need to move forward in an appropriate forum in order to define certain principles and establish guidelines on measures for naval arms limitation and disarmament.

Turning now to non-nuclear issues, Indonesia is gratified that the Geneva Protocol has been adhered to by more than 100 nations. This reflects mankind's abhorrence of the use of chemical weapons, which are second only to nuclear armaments in their indiscriminate lethal power. The critical importance of the Protocol, as one of disarmament's most enduring international legal instruments, is undeniable. Regrettably, however, these past six and a half decades have also provided ample evidence of its shortcomings and of the fact that, in the absence of a truly equitable and comprehensive convention banning chemical weapons, neither the use nor the spread of these weapons could be prevented. No less disturbing is the competition to apply new technologies to produce a new generation of more advanced chemical weapons with ever greater destructive capabilities. Consequently, chemical weapons, which were once viewed as just another lethal armament, today are loathed as weapons of mass destruction capable of indiscriminate killing and maiming of civilians rather than well-protected and well-trained soldiers. Hence the need to achieve a total ban through a legal régime on the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction has become imperative. The Paris Conference of last January generated momentum for the Conference on Disarmament to move forward with a sense of urgency for the early conclusion of a convention.

The Canberra Conference held last month provided an unparalleled opportunity for the representatives of both Governments and industry to discuss and exchange information on all relevant aspects of a chemical-weapons convention as well as the modalities for its implementation. It emphasized the critical importance of co-operation and co-ordination between them, especially on questions concerning the

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

technical aspects of verification and the protection of legitimate commercial operations. The Conference has thus made a significant contribution in clarifying issues facing the negotiators.

Notwithstanding divergencies that continue to exist on certain key issues, steady progress continues to be made on several aspects of the future convention, and we at the Conference on Disarmament now have a more nearly complete and acceptable text. Many provisions of the convention have already been agreed upon, and many detailed provisions elaborated. It is particularly gratifying to my delegation that the Ad Hoc Committee has been able to tackle many sensitive subjects such as challenge inspection. At this stage, we should like to express our collective determination to expedite the ongoing negotiations so as to finalize the comprehensive convention banning chemical weapons no later than the year 1990 or 1991 and to exhort all States to accede to it without delay and thereby ensure its early entry into force. This will constitute a historic milestone and a major achievement by the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Loais, Indonesia)

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development sought to address the close and multidimensional link between two of the most urgent challenges facing the world today. The Final Document and Action Programme adopted by the Conference has provided us with a sufficiently broad framework for future action and continuing efforts in those two interrelated fields, upon which the building of a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world is so vitally dependent. My delegation expects that, on the basis of those decisions, follow-up actions will be pursued in the context of an interrelated perspective within the United Nations and its appropriate organs and agencies.

In conclusion, we have witnessed a palpable resurgence of support by Member States for the United Nations, including a renewed commitment to its strengthening and revitalization. Indeed, the Organization is today enjoying enhanced confidence and esteem as its role is being increasingly sought in conflict resolution. Yet this is not fully reflected in the field of disarmament and in the promotion of common security. It is only through the multilateral approach and the strengthening of the institutions for multilateral co-operation, especially the United Nations, that negotiations on all issues related to disarmament can be conducted to safeguard global peace and security. Towards that end, we should affirm the central role and responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament and commit ourselves to enhancing further the effectiveness of the machinery and procedures of multilateral disarmament endeavours.

Mr. SAETHER (Norway): Allow me first, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Norwegian Government, to express to you our warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to preside over the First Committee. I am sure that under your able guidance we will achieve progress in the field of disarmament. I also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

Over the past few years we have witnessed encouraging developments in the field of arms control and disarmament. The constructive dialogues being held today in a number of different forums are in sharp contrast to the mood prevailing only a few years ago. We already have several important achievements to our credit. The historic Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - has demonstrated the feasibility of a far more ambitious approach to arms control and disarmament than was previously believed possible. A momentum has been created that could lead to drastic reductions in strategic nuclear weapons as well.

Although the situation in the disarmament and arms-control field is more promising than ever before, there is no reason for complacency. The process started by the INF Treaty needs to be pursued with vigour in both bilateral and multilateral forums if concrete results are to be obtained.

The constructive and positive developments in the Vienna negotiations on conventional arms-control in Europe are particularly encouraging. They hold out a promise of significant reductions in the conventional forces in Europe and of the development of additional confidence-building measures. The focus of attention at Vienna has naturally been the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe. Those negotiations do, after all, address the very crux of Europe's security concerns, namely Soviet superiority in critical force categories. However, the contribution of confidence- and security-building measures should not be underestimated. Force reductions can only partly solve the European security problem. A more detailed code of conduct for whatever forces remain will clearly be required. The negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures and on conventional forces in Europe should therefore be urged on with equal determination.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

In the confidence- and security-building negotiations a number of common elements have been established in the proposals presented so far. By building on those elements it should be possible to reach an agreement on confidence- and security-building measures before the next meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at Helsinki in 1992.

In the conventional-force negotiations it has been possible to reach agreement on the important concepts of a future treaty in a remarkably short time. There is agreement in principle on which weapons are to be included and on the size of the reductions to be envisaged. It has also been agreed in principle that reduction measures should be supplemented by stabilizing and informational measures and a strict verification régime. Where opinions differ - and they still do on a number of important points - we have seen a gradual rapprochement among the parties on various issues.

The goal of reaching an agreement by the first half of 1990 was one of the far-reaching proposals made by President Bush and supported by the Allies at the summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in May. That is an ambitious but realistic goal that reflects our feelings about the urgency of this matter. We note with satisfaction that President Gorbachev has expressed his support for the Western initiative in this respect. That would contribute to facilitating an early agreement, which would form a basis for further and even more ambitious efforts.

However, an early and satisfactory agreement will also depend upon our ability to work together. The impressive results of the recent NATO summit meeting and the frequent United States-Soviet meetings at the political level are examples of how valuable the direct involvement of political leaders can be.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

We are also pleased by the positive prospects of the nuclear and space talks between the United States and the Soviet Union following the recent talks in Wyoming. Owing to the very constructive attitude on both sides an agreement clearly seems within reach. Thus there is now a firm foundation on which to begin building a strategic arms-reduction agreement.

If removing the question of sea-launched cruise missiles from the strategic-arms-reduction framework can contribute to an early agreement, that will be met with understanding on our part. However, the question of limiting sea-launched cruise missiles remains a matter of great importance to Norway. We therefore hope that a way will be found to enable the United States and the Soviet Union to devote more time and effort to the solution of the difficult issue of verification.

In the area of multilateral disarmament, Norway continues to give top priority to the work of the Conference on Disarmament on a global, comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention on chemical weapons. It was our hope, after the successful Paris Conference in January, that substantial progress would be made during the 1989 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Although our expectations have not been fully met, we have noted a certain amount of progress on a number of issues so that we now have a draft convention that is more complete than before. Yet final agreement on the remaining key questions has still not been reached.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

During the last few weeks, however, we have seen developments that give reason for more optimism concerning next year's negotiations. The positive outcome of the Canberra Conference represents a new dimension in government-industry co-operation. Furthermore, the Soviet-United States memorandum of understanding on a chemical-weapons data exchange and on the verification of these data should make it possible to proceed rapidly in Geneva towards agreement on the remaining verification problems. Moreover, the recent statements by President Bush and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in the General Assembly should give the negotiations a much-needed political impetus.

The agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the exchange of data should set an example to other countries possessing such weapons. All chemical-weapons States should provide information about the number of their stocks, their location, composition and overall size. We should take steps to encourage the following up of bilateral developments between the super-Powers by a multilateral exchange of data relevant to the chemical-weapons convention.

What we need to do now is to take advantage of the recent new momentum in the field of chemical weapons to make progress when negotiations are restarted in the Conference on Disarmament. The First Committee can contribute to this by incorporating the new developments in the Polish-Canadian draft resolution and sending an unequivocal signal to the negotiators in Geneva to speed up the work, with a view to concluding the convention at the earliest date.

As the endorsed Western candidate for membership in the Conference on Disarmament, Norway carries on the research programme on the verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons. The results are made known to the international community through documentation presented to the Conference on Disarmament. This research programme, which is being carried out by the Norwegian Defence Research



(Mr. Saether, Norway)

Establishment, is directly related to the negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention.

A comprehensive nuclear-test ban is another important issue on the international agenda. The Conference on Disarmament should, in our view, be given a mandate to initiate substantive work on test-ban issues. In the meantime, the Group of Scientific Experts on seismic events is making considerable headway in its work on a modern global network for the exchange of seismic data. Of particular interest is the ongoing technical test concerning the global exchange and analysis of seismic data. It is essential that as many countries as possible from all corners of the world participate in this experiment.

Norway is continuing its research programme on improving methods and techniques for seismic verification - in particular, by making use of regional arrays. Next February the Norwegian Seismic Array Establishment (NORSAR) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will organize a workshop in Oslo on regional arrays and their use in seismic verification research. Members of the Group of Scientific Experts and other experts have been invited to the workshop. The documentation presented at the workshop will be made available to the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me also express my Government's satisfaction over the outcome of the recent Review Conference of the Parties to the sea-bed Treaty - the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and the Subsoil Thereof. The Treaty has made a positive contribution to disarmament, and the Review Conference confirmed that there is no arms race on the two thirds of our globe covered by its provisions. It is our hope that the positive outcome of the sea-bed Treaty Review Conference will serve as an inspiration for next year's review of the non-proliferation Treaty.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

The non-proliferation Treaty is a corner-stone of the work on multilateral disarmament. The increasing number of States adhering to the Treaty is evidence of a growing international concern to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. We are satisfied with the smooth preparatory process, which augurs well for a successful outcome of the Fourth Review Conference. Norway attaches great importance to the non-proliferation Treaty, and its continued validity should be conclusively reconfirmed in 1990.

In order to strengthen the role of multilateral disarmament the potential of the relevant forums needs to be maximized. We have for some years now been examining ways and means to rationalize the work of the First Committee. While some progress has been made, there is still ample room for improvement. At the last session of the Disarmament Commission we started a debate on the need to enhance the role of this forum. The informal consultations that have been initiated on this subject give an opportunity for comprehensive discussions on all aspects of the functioning of the Disarmament Commission. The attempts to strengthen the role of these two deliberative bodies should be regarded to some extent as being interrelated. Only by making the work of the disarmament bodies more efficient can the United Nations hope to respond to the current dynamism in the bilateral and regional arms control forums.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize the growing international acceptance of a wider definition of security and stability. These two concepts have too often been referred to in terms of military factors alone. A broader definition is needed in today's world - a definition that encompasses political, economic, ecological, social, human rights and humanitarian aspects. It is vital that we retain this wider concept of security and stability in the further disarmament process.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

I feel that we can look ahead with a sense of optimism. The United Nations has proved that it can act as an efficient conflict-resolving organization. The international community is dependent on this function of the United Nations to meet new challenges constructively. The United Nations has an important role to play in initiating, supporting and supplementing disarmament negotiations in other multilateral, regional and bilateral forums. If we all make full use of the momentum that has been created, new and important agreements can be reached in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Mr. HAYES (Ireland): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to extend warm congratulations to you, both on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, on your appointment as your country's Deputy Foreign Minister. We extend our heartiest wishes to you for every success in the performance of the duties of that high office. Congratulations are also due to you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to the other officers of the Committee.

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

My delegation is confident that, under your skilful and able direction, of which I have had personal experience in other forums, the Committee will be able to carry out its heavy programme of work in an efficient and productive manner.

I would like also to express our appreciation for the excellent contribution of your predecessor, Ambassador Douglas Roche of Canada, and to the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and in particular, Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi.

My delegation has been encouraged by the perceptible mood of optimism and the pragmatic, constructive attitudes that have emerged in the course of our current general debate. There is a widespread recognition that the significantly improved atmosphere in international relations holds out much promise for the future. As confrontation and rhetoric progressively give way to reasoned dialogue, and as the sterile politics of the cold-war era fade into the shadow of history, there is increasing evidence of a shared determination to translate these positive trends into substantive and durable progress. Member States generally seem more disposed to place the United Nations at centre stage once again and to acknowledge the Organization's pivotal role in strengthening international peace and security. We now see greater support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to ease and resolve regional tensions in a number of conflict areas: in Central America, southern Africa and South-East Asia. These developments augur well for our work in this Committee over the weeks ahead, and our deliberations here should prove particularly fruitful on this occasion.

My delegation warmly welcomes the continuing efforts of the two great military Powers to guide their vital relationship along a more stable and productive path. We strongly support their endeavours to achieve further important agreements between themselves. We consider that each incremental step they take to build greater mutual trust serves to buttress our hopes that the many disappointments of

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

the past will not resurface. The recent meeting at the foreign-minister level between the United States and the Soviet Union marked another encouraging stage in the process of building a relationship of confidence that has major implications for the world as a whole and, perhaps in particular, for the future of Europe.

The significant developments we have witnessed at the bilateral and regional levels over the past year do not, however, diminish our anxieties about the scale and extent of what remains to be accomplished. The central issues in the multilateral disarmament field that have bedevilled the international community for decades still constitute a formidable agenda. That agenda needs to be addressed in an adequate manner. Despite the degree of support for the multilateral process expressed year after year by the overwhelming majority in this Committee, the gains made multilaterally continue to fall well below our reasonable expectations. In some instances, and especially on the question of nuclear disarmament, the very mechanism that should open the way to progress has not even been set up. My delegation remains fully committed to the position that the Conference on Disarmament should be empowered to negotiate on all items on its agenda. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament declared that "...effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority" (resolution S-10/2, para. 20), and it also recognized "the continuing requirement for a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum" (ibid., para. 120)

Yet that forum, the Conference on Disarmament, continues to be frustrated in its efforts and prevented from carrying out its mandate in the nuclear field. There have been other recent disappointments at the multilateral level: at its third special session devoted to disarmament last year the General Assembly failed to reach agreement on a concluding document. In our view, the obstacles in the way

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

of an agreement could and should have been overcome. The Disarmament Commission, at its 1989 session, could not reach agreement on even a single item on its agenda. It is therefore of the utmost importance that a renewed political commitment be made by all States to reinvigorate the existing multilateral machinery at our disposal and enable it to carry out the purposes for which it was established.

The need for a more urgent and sustained multilateral effort is amply demonstrated if we recall that over 50,000 nuclear warheads now exist throughout the world, amounting to an estimated total yield of some 15,000 megatons. Equally disturbing is the continued qualitative upgrading of these instruments of wholesale destruction.

These are sobering facts, even at a time when the improved climate in East-West relations holds out the promise that the arms race can be effectively halted and reversed. They serve to remind us of the enormity of the challenge we confront. Despite the important and positive pointers of the past two years, notably the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles and the apparent progress being made by the United States and the Soviet Union towards the early conclusion of an agreement on the reduction by half of their strategic nuclear forces, the fact remains that nuclear weapons continue to threaten the very survival of life on our planet. Enormous financial resources continue to be deployed and wasted in the quest for greater sophistication and for superiority. Nothing short of significant and wide-ranging dismantling of nuclear arsenals seems likely to end the arms race. Paradoxically, in circumstances where the number of nuclear weapons can be reduced, we must be alert to the danger of the development of new and more devastating weapons, resulting in numerically smaller but even more destabilizing arsenals.

In his address to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament, Taoiseach, the Prime Minister of Ireland, called for a commitment to

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

make disarmament a real factor in the security policy of every country. As he stated on that occasion, much of the sense of insecurity in the contemporary world springs from the very existence of nuclear weapons. Instead of offering protection, they are a constant threat, dangerous to all the people of the world, including their possessors. The increase in their number is a powerful source of tension, leading to a world of diminished security at ever-higher levels of armaments. This can only be overcome by a co-operative approach that seeks to build confidence among nations and to remove the fear of attack by getting rid of the means of waging war. Even in peacetime, these weapons are a constant source, not only of insecurity, but in certain cases, of actual harm. Indeed, as my Foreign Minister stated in the General Assembly last month, there are acute risks posed by nuclear submarine traffic in busy coastal shipping and fishing zones such as the Irish Sea. In practice, these vessels are underwater and highly mobile nuclear-power stations, with nuclear-weapons capability.

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

Like land-based nuclear installations, they are not immune to accidents, and they carry the additional danger of collisions. Thus they pose the constant threat of a very significant increase in the dangers already existing from the presence of radioactive waste in the sea as a result of unlawful dumping and emissions from nuclear installations.

The first step in the process of halting the arms race must be to stop developing new weapons of wholesale destruction. That requires an immediate end to nuclear tests since, without testing, improvements in the quality of nuclear-weapon systems would be extremely difficult. A total prohibition on nuclear testing should be seen as the first step towards disarmament, not as the final stage to be agreed only after disarmament has been achieved. A universal production cut-off on weapons-grade fissionable material is also required.

There is a close relationship between a comprehensive test ban and the attainment of significant cuts in the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear Powers. Those cuts could be nullified or become meaningless if nuclear Powers continue to test new or modernized nuclear weapons that would be more dangerous or destabilizing than those they replace. Rapid conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty would be the single clearest proof the nuclear Powers could offer of their willingness to discharge the obligations they have accepted and of their determination to bring the arms race under control. It would also significantly strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in preparation for its extension in 1995.

Although the cessation of all nuclear-weapon testing as a matter of top priority is a constant and annually repeated demand of the world community, 30 years of deliberations and negotiations have resulted in partial agreements only. None of the three nuclear-test-limitation treaties so far concluded has



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seriously affected weapons programmes by hindering improvements in nuclear weapons. Given recent progress in verification techniques, fears of inadequate verification can no longer credibly be put forward as an obstacle to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

We notice that since the requisite support of one third of the States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty has been obtained, the convening of an amendment conference is now under active consideration. As a party to the partial test-ban Treaty, Ireland will participate actively and constructively in the process leading to the conference and in the conference itself. We hope that it will lead to a commitment by all States, including, most importantly, the nuclear-weapon States, to a comprehensive test ban.

A ban on nuclear tests must go hand in hand with deep cuts in nuclear arsenals and the halting of the deployment of new nuclear weapons. Ireland strongly supports the aim of a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. We welcome recent reports of progress in those negotiations and hope that they will be successfully concluded as soon as possible. However, that measure, to be fully effective, must constitute a stage in an irreversible movement towards general nuclear disarmament. A 50 per cent reduction will have little meaning if the remaining warheads are retained or, a fortiori, if even more lethal engines of destruction are deployed. There should be an end not only to the development of new weapons but also of their delivery systems. A reduction in strategic weapons must be followed by extensive cuts in all other categories of nuclear weapons, both sea and land based, with the aim of their eventual elimination. In our view the only acceptable level of nuclear weapons is zero.

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The maintenance and strengthening of an effective nuclear-non-proliferation régime is essential. The non-proliferation Treaty, which is central to that process, remains one of the most important arms control agreements reached to date and is a significant contribution to world stability.

As we approach the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons next year we should remember that the Treaty came into being partly as a result of the acceptance by the principal nuclear Powers of undertakings to engage in negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. To that commitment by nuclear Powers was joined a corresponding commitment by the non-nuclear States that became parties to the Treaty. Their commitment was not to enter into the nuclear-arms race. That combination of commitments had the objective of ensuring that nuclear weapons would not acquire a permanent and incremental role in the international order. If the efficiency of the Treaty is to be judged solely on the basis of its implementation by the 137 non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to it, then it has definitely been a major success. It is regrettable that some States have remained outside the Treaty, and apparently reliable reports that certain of them have subsequently acquired or are approaching nuclear-weapon capability are a matter of serious concern. The non-nuclear-weapon States parties, which comprise the overwhelming majority of States, have by accepting the restraints imposed by the Treaty given the clearest possible demonstration of their determination to seek an end to the nuclear-arms race. It is imperative that that régime be universalized.

The Review Conference will also examine the manner in which the Treaty has been implemented by the nuclear-weapon States parties, including their obligation to pursue negotiations on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and to nuclear disarmament. At the 1990 Conference, whatever its

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conclusions may be in regard to the obligations under article I of the Treaty, the international community will be forced, unless there are some significant achievements in the meantime, to conclude that those States have not taken sufficient steps to discharge their obligations under article VI. For that reason also, it is essential that the significant progress towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty be achieved at an early date.

It is in the common interest of all States that the exploration and use of outer space, which is the province of mankind as a whole, should be for peaceful purposes only. New technologies relating to outer space have made a positive contribution, most notably in the field of communications satellites, which have strengthened the means of verifying arms control agreements. Those technologies must not, however, be adapted in such a way as to extend the arms race to outer space. Strict compliance with all existing agreements, and in particular with the 1972 anti-ballistic missile Treaty, is essential.

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The ABM Treaty is a proven corner-stone of the disarmament process, and its importance cannot be over-emphasized. It is also essential that no effort be spared, at the Conference on Disarmament, to consolidate and reinforce the existing legal régime applicable to outer space.

It is a matter of concern to my delegation that, despite the substantial progress already made at Geneva, a chemical-weapons convention has not yet been elaborated. The early conclusion and entry into force of a multilateral convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons is among the highest priorities of the international community. An enduring basis for international peace and security cannot be assured in a world in which these horrifying weapons of wholesale destruction form part of military arsenals.

The efforts of the Conference on Disarmament have been facilitated by the recent restatement, by the United States and the Soviet Union, of their commitment to achieving a multilateral convention and by their willingness to implement interim measures to reduce their stocks of chemical weapons.

A valuable impetus to the Geneva negotiations was provided by the unanimous reaffirmation of the validity of the 1925 Geneva Protocol by the 149 participants at the Paris Conference held in January last. The recent Government-Industry Conference in Canberra produced an important collective statement by the world's chemical industry of its commitment to assist Governments in bringing about a total ban on chemical weapons.

The opportunity presented by these encouraging developments must not be lost. The negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament must be intensified and the remaining difficulties, however complex, must be resolved. The convention, once agreed, must become truly universal as regards adherence to it.

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While Ireland believes that nuclear arms pose the greatest threat to mankind, we do not underestimate the threat posed by conventional weapons. Conventional military forces absorb 80 per cent of total military expenditure. Over 20 million people have been killed by conventional weapons since the Second World War, most of them in the developing world. While progress in nuclear disarmament cannot be held hostage to reductions in conventional armaments, it is a fact that the prospects for nuclear disarmament would be immeasurably enhanced if the threats posed by conventional forces were removed. The concept of general and complete disarmament was never intended to apply solely to nuclear weapons.

A clear signal is needed that progress is being made towards eliminating the threat of a war fought with conventional arms, and that the military option is being progressively abandoned. We welcome the fact that such a signal is currently being provided in Europe, which still today contains the world's greatest concentration of conventional arms and forces. Progress is being achieved in the talks on conventional armed forces in Europe and on confidence- and security-building measures currently taking place within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process. Although Ireland does not participate directly in the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe, we are encouraged by the good prospects for an early agreement. This, coupled with the adoption of new confidence-building measures designed to reduce the risk of military confrontation, will strengthen the co-operative approach towards international relations that I mentioned earlier, and upon which genuine security can be built.

According to a recent report, world military expenditure exceeded the staggering figure of \$1 trillion in 1988. This figure contrasts starkly with net official development assistance to all developing countries of merely \$49.7 billion in 1988. It has been calculated that 70 per cent of total world expenditure on

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armaments is attributable to a small number of States, with the largest share being incurred by the two super-Powers. Furthermore, nearly all technological innovation in weaponry takes place in a small number of countries. As the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament makes clear, States with the largest military arsenals have a special responsibility in the process of reducing conventional armaments. However, there is an urgent need for all States to explore ways in which they could initiate or facilitate efforts aimed at conventional arms limitation or disarmament. This is particularly applicable in the case of regional approaches, where the responsibility of States in their own regions is self-evident.

There is a genuine trade-off between the allocation of national resources to military purposes - 6 per cent of the world's output - and the ability to solve global economic problems. The world cannot devote enormous human and financial resources to armaments and at the same time meet its urgently necessary development goals. In a world where hundreds of millions live in desperate poverty and endure famine, malnutrition and disease, it is tragic to witness the sums dissipated on armaments. The world needs development of its agricultural, marine and industrial resources, better health and education, and improved infrastructures - not more weapons.

The environment is another area likely to gain from a possible rechanneling of military research and development. A prerequisite to arresting environmental degradation and redressing the damage already done is a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between the air, water and land environments. This requires the involvement of skills deriving from a wide variety of disciplines in both the natural and the social sciences, all or most of which already exist, but

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are devoted to military research and development. The United Nations has an important role to play in stimulating international and national action in this area.

Finally, given the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, it is essential that the opportunity afforded by the current improvement in international relations be availed of to achieve progress in disarmament negotiations at the multilateral level. It is disappointing that this improvement has not yet taken place. While the deliberative and negotiating instruments for disarmament established by the General Assembly in 1978 have proved their value as forums for discussions by the international community, there has been a noticeable lack of output in terms of concrete disarmament agreements. It is clear that positive movement on multilateral disarmament negotiations requires the support of both of the super-Powers and of the rest of the international community. At a time of progress in bilateral negotiations, it is essential that the same spirit be applied to overcoming log-jams at the multilateral level. It is our hope that a concrete outcome in some of the priority areas can be reached in the near future.

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The concrete measures we have called for today are: a comprehensive test ban and an end to production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons; deep cuts in strategic and short-range nuclear weapons as a prelude to the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons; strengthening of the non-proliferation Treaty; a complete ban on chemical weapons; reduction of conventional weapons; strengthening of international peace and security through development of confidence-building measures designed to reduce the risk of military confrontation; and an international recommitment to make productive use of the United Nations disarmament negotiating machinery.

These measures are certainly not new. Nevertheless, they are essential steps which must be taken if we are to reach the aim to which we have committed ourselves: general and complete disarmament. Moreover, these measures represent areas in which progress can be made in the short term, particularly in the light of the present improvement in international relations.

Mr. CHACON (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): It is a source of great satisfaction for our delegation to see the representative of a fraternal country, Venezuela, as Chairman of the First Committee. Our nations have had extremely close and warm relations for many years. Many are the bonds that have united us, particularly over the last four decades. Striking among them is the shared struggle of our leaders for freedom, development and disarmament in Ibero-America. This is therefore a good opportunity for me to wish you every success in this sensitive task.

As Robert J. Lifton said in a beautiful and sad book, we are all heirs of Hiroshima. We have felt the weight of that great hecatomb this year, on the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War. That conflict left a large part of the world in ruins. The destruction seemed to bury old hatreds and ideological disputes that had inflamed hearts and minds since the end of the last



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century, disputes that had lingered from the so-called Great War, economic and social imbalances of an order that seemed obsolete and the world's complacency about weapons. But a sediment remained, ready to be stirred up at any time. It was on that foundation that we began to build a new order with the help of the delicate framework that is the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The arms race is the very antithesis of the principles which originally inspired the United Nations; it has become the most revealing indication that the old order is latent in the new. The United Nations was established in 1945 with the purpose of building a new and different world order on the remains of the one that had collapsed so dismally with the Second World War. Those who created the Organization were aware of the discrepancy between the ideals set out in the Charter of the United Nations, on the one hand, and the real structure of power, on the other. The latter, forged from the embers of past conflicts and conquests, was reflected in enormous inequalities and discrepancies, superiorities and inferiorities, domination and dependency. This whole situation has permeated the course of the spiralling arms race, as also education and culture.

The challenge remains almost intact, and has not been met seriously. The world peace of the last 40 years has been a reality only for the great Powers. Looking at the military panorama of the post-war period, the picture we see is utterly discouraging, and countries of the third world are the major protagonists. This vast region is where we find the real Achilles' heel of deterrence and its apparent success. Many studies have been done on the possible consequences of so-called local wars. All of these studies arrive, directly or indirectly, at a single obvious conclusion: in any conflict of this kind, there is always a risk of a total world conflagration because the inertia of confrontation and the arms race itself are enough to whet the appetite of the contenders.

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When we remember the beginning and the end of the Second World War, we immediately see the need to assess the problems of disarmament with 44 years of hindsight. Even given that there are grounds for hope due to the enormous number of encouraging signs resulting from recent events in world history, we must not forget that the course that has been followed in this field has not been equally positive. The optimism that has taken hold of the international community must not serve as a pretext for forgetting the discouraging aspects of a trend that has lasted for over four decades.

The fact that the two great Powers reach agreement does not mean we shall all do so. The fact that the two great Powers proportionally reduce their military expenditures should not stop us from having a true picture of world armament. The fact that the two super-Powers sit down at the negotiating table to discuss specific problems of interest to them cannot conceal the fact that the world has too many weapons. The new climate of confidence should cause us to seize the moment and give really effective impetus to the struggle for general and complete disarmament.

On the threshold of the last decade of the twentieth century, a decade we shall dedicate to disarmament, we have the same concern expressed at the World Congress on Disarmament Education, in 1980. On that occasion, the participants expressed their apprehension at

"the lack of real progress towards disarmament and ... the worsening of international tensions which threaten to unleash a war so devastating as to imperil the survival of mankind".

They went on to express their conviction that

"education and information may make a significant contribution to reducing tensions and to promoting disarmament, and that it is urgent to undertake vigorous action in these areas".

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Lastly they invoked the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, in particular its paragraph 106, in which the General Assembly urged Governments and governmental organizations to take steps to develop programmes of education for disarmament and peace studies at all levels.

Our country very highly appreciates the efforts the United Nations has made in this field through the World Disarmament Campaign. None the less we consider that its achievements do not constitute real progress - partly because of the scarcity of resources and partly because of the way in which the General Assembly's appeal in the Final Document of the tenth special session has been heeded.

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A world campaign based on second-hand information, or simply on the spread of information, cannot achieve authentic results; it must be based on an in-depth educational effort. Communications alone have still not been found to be capable of changing people's basic attitudes, the profound traits of a personality, the latent tendencies of a culture. Mass communications, which are basically unidirectional, have proved useful only for strengthening existing propensities in individuals and societies. Those who formulate the messages and content of the leading mass media of our day have grasped the need to make propaganda or publicity efforts on the basis of fundamental education and culture - that acquired in the schoolrooms, the family, religious communities and other basic groups of society.

The time is ripe for us to shoulder our responsibility under the United Nations Charter. For that reason, Costa Rica has proposed the inclusion of an agenda item whose goal is to ensure that the international community and its Member States make a real commitment to a shared endeavour to remove the foundations of the arms race and war. It is a matter of following to the letter the thinking expressed in the preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which says:

"since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

We shall elaborate on that when we introduce the draft resolution to which I have referred.

In order to evaluate the threat to international security posed by the arms race, we should bear in mind that this central feature of the world situation - the arms race - is linked to economic, technological, political, cultural and security elements. But above all, the competition in arms raises the risk of war between the big Powers. In studying its dynamic, we must consider the problem of nuclear weapons and other non-conventional weapons, military expenditures, military

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research and development, international arms transfers and their close link with the proliferation of weapons, the militarization of outer space and the production of weapons. It is impossible to examine the problem of the arms race in depth if we ignore any of those elements.

At present the arms race is a rivalry in military technology, based on military research and development. There is a complicated circular relationship in the rivalry between the great Powers, with each spurring on the other in research and development for military purposes. That relationship is now dominated by the fact that this research and development has acquired its own dynamic in the military field and has become the main driving force of the arms race. The fierce competition to achieve technological superiority has become a qualitative factor of the utmost importance. As Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb and originator of the star wars concept, once said, "What counts is not the development of weapons, but what goes on in research laboratories."

That is nothing new, of course. Since time immemorial, technology has played a very active role in the arms race. But it is only during the four or more decades since the end of the Second World War that research and development have become a crucial factor in driving on the arms race. Its influence has spread to almost all areas of the arms race, helping to blur the distinction between conventional and non-conventional weapons. Furthermore, it has created new problems in evaluating the arms race and making its dangers known to world public opinion.

The arms race has continued its inexorable course. In spite of small quantitative changes, several specific matters related to research and development have contributed to defining that course. First, there is the new fact to which I have already referred - the growth of the military complex, the machinery for research and development, which is closely linked to the arms race, and the

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introduction of the technological impulse into that race. Secondly, the whole area of military science and technology is to a great extent hidden from public opinion. Its achievements are kept much more secret than the parallel advances in civil science and engineering. Military science and technology have a very low level of transparency. Thirdly, the public's ignorance with respect to the problem is maintained by suggestions from official sources and the military establishment that such questions are too complex for the public at large and should be kept in the hands of experts.

Public opinion should be alerted to the role played by military research and development in contemporary society and to its close link with the arms race. The technological impetus to this rivalry must not be accepted as a kind of technological determinism - an inevitable law of history. We do not need to seek technological solutions to our security problems. With a sufficiently rational approach and with political restraint and determination, military research and development could be brought under control. The energy now put into means of destruction could be channelled to meet the socio-economic and cultural development needs of society in both rich and poor countries. The arms race is a human creation. That is why it can and must be eliminated by human society, whose needs give rise to the problems of conversion, to which that part of the international community concerned with disarmament will have to give attention, and on which an important draft resolution will be introduced during the current session of the General Assembly.

It is with regard to nuclear weapons that we have seen some of the progress that has given rise to the current optimism. The agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States on the reduction of intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear weapons give reason for genuine hope. Although they are really symbolic, given the arsenals of nuclear weapons that both Powers possess and

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given the proliferation of such weapons in the world, the agreements open up a significant crack in a wall that had seemed impenetrable. Nevertheless, we must press forward in the struggle for the total elimination of this aberration. There, as with other problems, all Member States have great responsibilities, because we are all affected. Exclusive clubs are not the best places to resolve difficulties affecting an entire society.

One problem causing great concern is that of international arms transfers, in all its aspects. Last year the General Assembly took a major step in this regard when it adopted by an overwhelming majority, with no votes against, resolution 43/75 I. Nevertheless, that was only a beginning, dealing with only part of the question - the overt or covert trade in conventional weapons.

The most recent armed conflicts give clear examples of the danger presented by international arms transfers. We have seen how so-called low-intensity wars have provided lucrative and flourishing arms markets. That applies in those areas or countries where there have been wars or armed confrontations, such as Iran and Iraq, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Mozambique and Central America, and regions where there have been hostilities or where hostilities could be renewed at any moment, such as the Middle East, southern Asia and the Far East. All those conflicts or areas of current or potential conflict have exacerbated the arms trade or the trade in military equipment of all types and have brought about an increase in the third world's total military expenditure to an estimated figure of \$307 billion during the period 1980-1987.

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Until recently the majority of weapons supplied through international channels were conventional weapons. These were the basic combat systems that were the backbone of the war in the Persian Gulf and that still fuel existing or latent conflicts elsewhere in the world. In recent years, however, we have also seen the appearance in those areas of weapons of increasing complexity that can no longer be considered conventional - for example, medium- and long-range missiles, long-range combat aircraft, anti-submarine or anti-air missiles and chemical weapons. At the same time, international transfers of advanced military technology have increased to an alarming degree and regional conflicts have in turn tended to increase in scope and intensity. The war in the Persian Gulf has also shown how the escalation in non-conventional weaponry in the third world is beginning to threaten civilian populations far from the battlefields.

As a recent study pointed out, such international weapons transfers have become extremely dangerous because they have made it possible for three alarming military trends to converge: the accumulation of large reserves of conventional weapons in highly militarized States in areas of potential conflict; the growing proliferation of technology for missiles, chemical weapons and nuclear weapons; and the increasing acquisition by a number of countries of complex carrier systems that can transport highly destructive nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons over great distances. That convergence has created a military atmosphere of high risk and great instability. For that reason, it is increasingly difficult to doubt that a small, regional or even local conflict could turn into a global conflagration of major proportions. The possibility is even greater if we consider that the large supplies of conventional weapons now stockpiled in the arsenals of many third world countries enable them to undertake combat operations in ever larger geographical areas, with higher levels of violence and destruction.



(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

All those factors make it obvious that the international transfer of weapons is closely related to arms proliferation in all its aspects. That link becomes more dangerous with every increase in transactions and trade in non-conventional weapons, including nuclear weapons. A number of third world countries have been able to set up their own military industries and even have the capability to produce nuclear weapons thanks to the machinery of the arms trade, above all the black and grey markets. The international community must therefore give closer attention to this subject, particularly with regard to the trade in elements to be used for the production of nuclear weapons, medium- and long-range missiles, chemical weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

The militarization of outer space is the most recent element in the arms race. In the last two years we have seen a number of disturbing developments, both in programmes now under way and in technological advances. In the Soviet Union and in the United States large sums of money are still being spent on high-power and long-range missiles, with implications for the anti-ballistic-missile Treaty and strategic arms reduction talks that are as yet unclear. There seems to be tacit agreement that the most effective use of outer space for military purposes resides in the application of satellite or anti-satellite technology.

However, of even greater concern is the deployment of military satellites carrying nuclear reactors in Earth orbit. Of course, my country deeply admires the achievements made in the conquest of outer space, and especially those of wonderful spacecraft such as VOYAGER and MAGALLANES that make it possible to explore the solar system and areas outside it. We also know that nuclear energy is at present the most efficient and effective means of powering spacecraft over great distances. None the less, it seems to us that something different is at stake when satellites bearing nuclear reactors are placed in Earth orbit.

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

Considerable data is available demonstrating the dangers of orbiting satellites crashing to Earth. We had one such case only a short time ago, and there have been reports that in at least two cases there has been a loss of communication or a need to rescue a satellite that has lost orbit and threatens to crash. It does not take much thought to conclude that such anomalies affect all the inhabitants of our planet, and it is for that reason that the General Assembly should urge the two super-Powers to take steps to eliminate that threat of contamination and death hanging over us.

All of the items I have mentioned should form part of an agenda for the next 10 years. As we have said before, the best thing we could do as Members of the United Nations is to fulfil the Charter and take advantage of the present relaxation of tension to adopt irreversible measures in the field of disarmament. Peace should not be the peace of the graveyard. On the contrary, it should be a basis for effective thought and an impetus for us to demonstrate our genuine will to achieve disarmament in order to reach higher goals in development.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, allow me to express the happiness of the Bangladesh delegation at your election and our confidence in your leadership. Similarly, felicitations are due to the other officers of the Committee, who will doubtless provide any support you might require. We are also pleased that we shall continue to profit from the profound wisdom of Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi and be assisted by the Committee's astute Secretary, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi.

I should be derelict in my responsibilities if I commenced my statement without a word of praise for Ambassador Douglas Roche. He guided us with superb skill last year. He is not just Canada's boast - he is the pride of all his friends as well.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

We meet on a matrix of hope. The recent understandings between the super-Powers have provided our work with a backdrop knitted with confidence. These have engendered a new spirit of relaxation never experienced since the Second World War. We welcome the results of the Wyoming meetings and the various initiatives recently launched by the United States and the Soviet Union. Many a contemporary conflict is nearing resolution. This has created an opportunity that must be seized upon. Care must be taken that the neo-détente does not in any way result in conflicts being pushed below central levels. We must also be wary that these positive developments do not breed complacency. The price of peace, like that of freedom, is eternal vigilance.

We say this because the world still bristles with sufficient numbers of nuclear warheads to obliterate civilization hundreds of times over. Even with regard to conventional weapons there exists today a formidable plethora of devices for destruction. Over a trillion United States dollars are being spent annually on arms procurement by Member States. There are some signs that these figures might decline, but not enough to distract us from the relentless pursuit of solution of the problems that the arms build-up creates. The presence of massive quantities of armaments and their increasing sophistication enhance the probability of their use. Any one of the many current conflicts could increase in magnitude and engulf us in a mighty conflagration.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

This astronomical expenditure for the stupendous stockpiling of arms is unethical. It is so because we live in a world where 40,000 children die of malnutrition and disease every day. It is so because the total amount disbursed as official development assistance is less than 20 per cent of that spent on weaponry. It is so because the cost for the total eradication of smallpox is less than 33 per cent of the cost of a modern submarine. Perhaps, therefore, it is not wrong to ask that we spend less on arms and divert the balance to ameliorating the sufferings of the millions. We may debate the modalities, but we cannot question the need.

We are, understandably, not all agreed on how to go about achieving our goals. This Committee provides us with a forum where we can exchange views, share ideas and devise methods for narrowing the differences between us in the sphere of disarmament. We must strive to broaden international consensus on the philosophical attitudes towards the issue. We should undertake pragmatic assessment of the objective situation and be future-oriented in identifying possible areas for forging agreements.

There is a saying in my part of the world:

"There is not much point in a flock of sheep passing resolutions in favour of vegetarianism if the wolves remain of another opinion."

Happily, this does not apply to the contemporary world scene, where there are no sheep or wolves, but only rational State actors.

We believe there should be adequate concentration on nuclear disarmament, which should have foremost priority, but at the same time we must bear in mind that there is a flip side to the coin. Attention should also be focused on measures for the limitation and reduction of conventional arms, which have killed 20 million to 25 million people or more since the Second World War. This must be pursued

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

resolutely within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. We must, therefore, address ourselves to these objectives.

All are aware that, for itself, Bangladesh has rejected the nuclear alternative. We have, therefore, acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We hope to participate in the forthcoming Fourth Review Conference of parties to the NPT. We hail the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles and firmly believe that future progress towards nuclear disarmament is a categorical imperative for peace and security. We support the call for zones of peace and all measures tending to promote disarmament and prevent continuation of the arms race. We see the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel and South Africa as cause for great concern. We are pleased that there is now an intellectual acceptance of the need to cap not only horizontal but also vertical proliferation.

Banqladesh is among the States parties that have requested a conference to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test ban treaty because, to our minds, that would narrow the arms competition by rendering impossible further development of nuclear weapons. Even if some States were to produce first-generation fission weapons without adequate testing, they would be unlikely to use them for fear of effective reprisals. There is now a scientific consensus that laboratory simulation tests do not suffice to predict the effects of more advanced nuclear weapons. Also, we believe, by their effective commitment to a comprehensive test ban, States would signal their willingness to abjure an arms race. This single act would significantly reduce proliferation.

Today, there is an upsurge of awareness of the consequences of pollution of the atmosphere and degradation of nature. A comprehensive test-ban treaty would satisfy the problems on many fronts. Adequate security assurances to non-nuclear States would also diminish their propensity to go nuclear. This would help

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

buttress the sense of security of small and weaker States. It would also obviate any criticism that some had kicked the ladder behind them after having climbed themselves.

Today, conventional weapons are acquiring increasing sophistication through technological advances. Some precision-guided munitions are able to strike exact targets at enormous distances. In terms of destructive power and "kill probability", the differences between these and some low-yield nuclear weapons are being reduced to an alarming degree. We therefore believe that the maintenance of conventional capabilities in excess of the legitimate security needs of a State can have destabilizing ramifications for the region and the globe. Wherever this is the case, there should be reductions, in a balanced and equitable manner, so that, while not affecting genuine security requirements, stability may be enhanced at lower military levels. In this respect, the acquisition of arms beyond perceived needs would heighten suspicion and encourage the arms race,

You will appreciate that, for a country in our geographical situation, an outlet to the sea is important. We are therefore deeply committed to the peaceful uses of the sea and its resources. We feel that indiscriminate naval build-up tends to spread apprehension. Therefore, my delegation would urge restraint in naval activities. This would mean that the criteria for legitimate naval security needs should be carefully formulated with a recognition of the principles of weightage in additional capabilities for weaker States. There is a need for a multilateral agreement on the prevention of naval accidents. All measures must be in harmony with, and not contrary to, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Our abiding support for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace is in pursuance of our commitment to peaceful maritime activities. We firmly believe that a conference on this matter should take place

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

in Colombo in July 1990, as scheduled. The Ad Hoc Committee should conclude its preparatory work as early as possible.

With regard to chemical weapons, we are heartened by the progress in the Conference on Disarmament on the convention banning them. These are horrendous weapons of mass destruction, and their use is a sad reflection on the values and ethics of our age. France deserves to be praised for hosting the Conference in Paris, in January this year. It was also then that Bangladesh acceded to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Australia is to be commended for holding the Government-Industry Conference last month, which demonstrates its interest in making an effective contribution to this field. We hope for early progress in this sphere; however, any measures proposed ought not to place needless constraint on the development of peaceful chemical industry.

There should be, in all cases, adequate transparency among States and an adequate exchange of data and information. This would help generate, in any given region and throughout the globe, an ambience of trust. In confidence-building, Europe has shown the path. It has come a long way from the time when the Trojan priest Laocoon warned his compatriots, who were rejoicing over the discovery of a large wooden horse beyond their city walls: "I fear Greeks, even when they bring gifts." Such total mistrust, happily, no longer exists. If States begin to have greater confidence in the behaviour patterns of neighbours, the ensuing process would vastly reduce tension in every region of the world.

In Belgrade recently, the leaders of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which Bangladesh is a committed member, again stressed the central role and the principal responsibility of the United Nations in the area of disarmament. Nearly all States in the world are represented in the United Nations. This body, with its character of universal representation, and its chief executive, the Secretary-General, must play an effective role in disarmament matters. This

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recognition was underscored by all Member States when they committed themselves to the Charter, which viewed the maintenance of international peace and security as one of the principal purposes of the United Nations. Moreover, this was to be done with the least diversion to armaments of the world's human and economic resources. The United Nations can, and indeed must, make an important contribution to encouraging agreements and also to the setting up of verification procedures.

In this context, we would like to point out that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, that Magna Carta of disarmament, had asked for a review of the membership of the single multilateral negotiating forum in disarmament matters, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The decision thereafter to expand it would make the Conference on Disarmament more representative of the global situation. This expansion could be achieved over a limited period of time, maintaining the balance of the Conference thus enhancing its ability to function more effectively.



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In the ultimate analysis, poverty is as great a threat to peace as weaponry, perhaps even a greater one. By the year 2000 there will be some 6 billion people. On our finite planet of limited resources, this will vastly increase socio-economic pressures. It is development alone that can deter destabilization. All wars, it has been said, are basically fought in order to obtain greater material resources. As these get scarcer, the struggle will become fiercer, unless justice and equity remedy the gap. As President Hussain Muhammad Ershad said at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament,

"For the hungry billions of this world life has been one long period of suffering, undivided by seasons. Their life is rendered immobile, inflexible, unchanging. Their sorrows will not be in vain if out of them we can build a new world, a world where all will help to ameliorate the pains of those who suffer so that the joy that follows can be shared by all". (A/S-12/PV.17, p. 16)

We must endeavour to build such a world if we are to succeed in our hope of disarmament, our quest for peace and our goal of development. In this, given will and determination, we cannot fail. Our human race is capable of great achievements. As Sophocles observed in *Antigone*:

"Numberless are the world's wonders, but none more wonderful than man."

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.