

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

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Statements were made by:

Mr. Vaerno (Norway)
Mr. Lai Yali (China)
Mr. Vejvoda (Czechoslovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 30 TO 45, 120 and 121 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. VALRHO (Norway): The Norwegian Government shares the growing concern about the accelerating arms competition which already has been dramatically described by a number of speakers. In common with others, we do not believe that a higher level of armaments necessarily means increased security. On the contrary, we are of the opinion that the arms race threatens political détente. Stability and continuity in the détente process also require stability in the military field.

In spite of the Disarmament Decade, which is now coming to an end, world military expenditures continue to climb to ever more exorbitant levels. The two largest military alliances account for about 70 per cent of these expenditures - though their share of the total has decreased during this decade. These facts reflect a spread of the arms race also to the third world where military spending doubled during the Disarmament Decade, and increased faster than their gross national product. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) figures, the third world now spends three times more on armaments than it receives in official development aid. This, we feel, is an indicator of the growing militarization of the world.

The stockpiling of destructive power, particularly by the major Powers, far beyond what has any conceivable military purpose, represents not only a threat to the security of mankind, but constitutes a deplorable misuse of resources in a world marked by poverty and distress.

Efforts to create stability and détente through arms control and disarmament are constantly being frustrated by the momentum of military research, development and introduction of new weapons systems. The arms control agreements that have been concluded so far have not succeeded in curbing the arms race. Current arms control negotiations tend to be overtaken by the dynamics of modern weapon technology. The arms race, it seems, has a dynamic all of its own.

(Mr. Vaerno, Norway)

There are, however, some encouraging signs as we now look back on the Disarmament Decade. We did achieve agreement during the special session on a Final Declaration, including a programme of action to guide our work for a safer and better world. The programme of action requires follow-up action both unilaterally by individual countries and through the international negotiating machinery. The ultimate value of the Final Document will depend on this follow-up. The responsibility for translating this document into concrete measures lies with each and every one of us.

One of the decisions of the special session was the initiation of a study by a United Nations group of governmental experts on the relationship between disarmament and development. This study comprises the broadest and most comprehensive research programme that has ever been undertaken by the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The report to be presented to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly should provide a basis upon which the second special session on disarmament could take decisions and recommend concrete action. As stressed in the interim report by the group of governmental experts to the thirty-fourth session, the successful execution of the mandate of the United Nations study would be dependent on a strengthening of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament.

The most important achievement during the past year is the conclusion of a SALT II agreement. This agreement promises continued negotiations aimed at further qualitative as well as quantitative limitations and real reductions of nuclear weapons. We welcome this highly significant event and hope that the agreement will soon come into force. Further efforts in this direction are needed within the framework of SALT III. In this framework, the so-called gray-area weapons should also be made a subject of arms control negotiations.

A speedy follow-up to SALT II is vital not only because of the impact on arms control, but also because of the implications for the further development of détente.

(Mr. Vaerno, Norway)

My Government has also noted with satisfaction that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which came into force in 1970, has gained more acceptance during the past decade. Today more than a hundred countries support this most important barrier against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Looking ahead, the most urgent and immediate problem facing us concerns nuclear proliferation. Recent developments give reason for concern that the non-proliferation régime could be in jeopardy. If we are not now able to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons capability, it will be increasingly difficult to do so in the future.

The special session re-emphasizes the shared responsibility between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States for halting further nuclear proliferation. It is, therefore, a matter of great importance for the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime that agreement has now been reached on SALT II.

The early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty would also contribute towards this end. Such a treaty would help curb the horizontal as well as the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States are also a matter of the highest importance. We should like to emphasize that nations which are not protected by a nuclear security system and which meet the same conditions of denuclearization have a legitimate claim to universally applicable security guarantees against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The non-proliferation régime would also be enhanced through the strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system as well as by the development of more proliferation-resistant technologies. A guiding principle should be that non-proliferation considerations must take precedence over commercial interests. International co-operation in the field of nuclear energy must not be allowed to serve as an avenue for further nuclear proliferation.

(Mr. Vaerno, Norway)

Acceptance by all non-nuclear-weapon States of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all their nuclear activities would enhance international trust and confidence that proliferation of nuclear weapons will not take place. The development and the achievement of nuclear explosive capability by any additional State or States would not only pose a grave threat to the international community as a whole, but would also be detrimental to the efforts to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy - which is important to many countries.

We welcome the efforts being made to reach more proliferation-resistant solutions in the technological as well as the political sense. The time has come to consider internationalization of the administration of nuclear fuels, used fuel storage and sensitive stages in the fuel cycle.

There is wide recognition of the urgent need for new approaches to curb the arms race, which to an increasing extent is technological or qualitative in character. This trend introduces uncertainty and unpredictability into the relations among nations.

There is a danger that technological development may circumvent efforts to bring the arms race under control. A truly comprehensive approach should be developed embracing the weapons-development cycle from the initial stages to actual deployment.

The idea of restricting the arms race in its genesis was reflected in the Final Document of the special session on disarmament by a recommendation that States should assess the possible implications of their military research and development for existing agreements. During the special session, my Government proposed as a further step that countries adopt a procedure whereby major new weapons and military programmes are made the subject of analysis as to their impact on arms control and disarmament efforts.

(Mr. Vaerno, Norway)

As the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs stated in his main address to the General Assembly, we would continue our efforts to gain international support for this idea. The proposal of introducing arms control impact analyses as a tool in the national decision-making process is based, inter alia, on the need for a strengthening of political leadership. The increasing complexity of modern weapons technology presents a challenge to political leadership.

The demands, on behalf of military security, for new and more sophisticated weapons must be seen in the broadest context in order that their effect on the long-term security interest of nations can be evaluated in all its ramifications. It is important to provide a link among these considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process in order to secure a balance among them for the purpose of optimizing security in the widest sense of the term.

Careful consideration should be given to the consequences of military research and development and of the effects of introducing new weapon systems on disarmament and arms control agreements, as well as on current negotiations, and on the efforts to promote arms control and disarmament in general. This would facilitate the identification of areas in which restraint could be exercised and promote the selection of weapon systems, or particular qualities of such systems, which would fulfil security objectives without promoting the arms race. It would also contribute to a heightened awareness of the impact of national decisions on international military and political stability.

In short, arms control considerations incorporated into the security policy decision-making processes of States may facilitate the achievement of military security at lower levels of forces and armaments.

(Mr. Vaerno, Norway)

For this reason, my delegation should like to recommend that all States consider the establishment of procedures for analyzing the consequences of major weapons and of their military research and development on arms control and disarmament agreements, as well as on current negotiations and on further efforts in the field of disarmament.

There is reason to hope that such measures would promote increased general awareness and understanding of all aspects of the arms race and that they would make a significant contribution to the achievement of increased security at a lower level of armaments.

Mr. LAI Yali (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Mr. Chairman, at a time when the First Committee of this session of the General Assembly is starting its deliberations on disarmament items, it is my sincere hope that under your guidance and with the efforts of all delegations, our Committee will achieve positive results in its work.

Over the past few years, the United Nations has convened a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and various other meetings, thanks to the initiative and proposal of many small and medium-sized countries. This reflects their increasing uneasiness over the super-Powers' aggression, expansion and military threats and their growing concern for the defence of their national independence and world peace. They have fought extensively against the super-Powers' arms race and against the imperialist and hegemonist policies of aggression and war, and have made useful contributions in this regard.

Since the special session on disarmament, thanks to the efforts made by the United Nations organs and the large number of peace-loving countries, there has been a break in the control of disarmament machinery by the two super-Powers. Earlier this year, the United Nations Disarmament Commission held its first session, during which member States were able to exchange views and discuss the elements of a Comprehensive Programme for Disarmament, submitting positive proposals which pave the way for the formulation of the Programme in the future. The United Nations also convened a Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean and a Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons in which many countries participated. The broad representation of these meetings shows that all States, large or small, strong or weak, have the right to discuss the questions of disarmament and security on an equal basis. This is an encouraging development in the sphere of disarmament.

It is regrettable, however, that disregarding the strong opposition of the many peace-loving countries, the super-Powers continue to intensify their arms race and obstruct real progress in disarmament. The year 1979 marks the last year of the United Nations "Disarmament Decade". Ten years ago, people placed hopes in the Disarmament Decade, thinking that the super-Powers might halt their arms race and adopt effective measures for disarmament so that the

(Mr. Lai Yali, China)

funds thus saved would be used in assisting development. Today, towards the end of the 1970s, instead of witnessing the realization of the objectives of the Disarmament Decade, we note the yearly increase of the military expenditures of the super-Powers and the unprecedented growth of their arsenals.

The Disarmament Decade has in fact been a decade of their intense arms expansion. This is indeed deplorable. At present, thousands of strategic nuclear weapons, tens of thousands of tanks, artillery and military aircraft and innumerable other conventional weapons have been piled up in the arsenals of these two countries. Their military expenditures account for two thirds of the sum total of world military expenditures and are more than all the military expenditures of the rest of the world put together. They are also accelerating the development and manufacture of weapons of new types, embroiling themselves in a sharp contest concentrating on the improvement of the quality of the weapons.

In particular, that super-Power which has been chanting "disarmament" and "détente" is expanding its armaments at a faster pace and on a wider scale. In spite of the pious statement made by the representative of this super-Power at the General Assembly that "the arms race has become sheer madness" and that it is ready to "halt the arms race", the evident fact is that it is this very super-Power which has been frenziedly expanding arms and going all out to seize military superiority. In the past decade, the total number of its strategic weapons has doubled, while it has gone all out to develop multiple independently-targeted missiles. The number of its tanks has gone up by more than 10,000, while its naval tonnage has doubled. Its aircraft carriers and new-type nuclear submarines are plying the high seas, yet it has gone further to build nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and a new generation of military aircraft. In a period of 10 years, its armed forces have increased by a million, making up a total of 4.4 million.

Back in the early 1970s, it was pointed out that the armed strength of that Power had far exceeded its defence needs. Nevertheless, its gigantic military expenditures have been increasing at a rate of 4 to 5 per cent per year along with intensified efforts to develop and manufacture various new-type

(Mr. Lai Yali, China)

weapons. The rapid rise in its military powers spurs the growth of its wild ambitions for aggression and expansion. On the strength of its military might, it is blatantly pushing a policy of global hegemonism.

In Europe, through the renewal of equipment, it is continuously strengthening its offensive power and is using its absolute military superiority to carry out threats and blackmail. In Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region, it is sending over large quantities of arms, grooming its agents and organizing mercenary troops to carry out infiltration, subversion and even engineering armed invasions or military coups. In the Asian and Pacific region, it has been supplying regional hegemonism with equipment, arms and funds, giving it blood transfusions and abetting it in launching a war of aggression against a neighbour State and perpetrating military occupation. Furthermore, attempts have been made to rig up an Asian collective security system to expand its spheres of influence. On its Far Eastern borders it has deployed a million troops for intimidation. It has greatly reinforced its Pacific fleet, and on the foreign territory which it has forcibly occupied it is strengthening its forces, building new military bases and staging military exercises for a show of its military might. Its hands are stretched so far as to reach Latin America, and it has sent its troops thousands of miles away to the Caribbean.

Small wonder that many representatives pointed out in their speeches at the general debate that the world at present is fraught with "turbulence and uneasiness, tension and conflicts" and that the big Powers are posing serious threats to international peace and security by means of "proxy wars". Irrefutable facts show that the late-coming super-Power with wild ambitions is the root cause of the growing turbulence in the international situation and the most dangerous source of a new world war. No amount of fine rhetoric about "détente" or "disarmament" can cover up these facts.

It is precisely this super-Power which has been frenziedly expanding its arms and seeking hegemony all over the world that has, during the Disarmament Decade, produced a great variety of disarmament proposals year after year, both within and outside the United Nations, passing itself off

(Mr. Lai Yali, China)

as a "standard bearer of disarmament" or an angel of peace. Recently, it has indicated its willingness to withdraw unilaterally a number of troops and tanks from eastern Europe. It considers this to be a very clever move, but it is, after all, nothing more than a gimmick, which world opinion can easily see through. As everyone knows, it enjoys an overwhelming military superiority in Europe. In these circumstances, even if some troops and tanks were withdrawn, can it be of any real significance in reducing its grave military threat to Europe?

(r. Jai Yali, China)

This year, it has submitted a new item entitled "Inadmissibility of the Policy of Hegemonism in International Relations", attempting to deck itself out as a hero against hegemonism. In so doing, it is perhaps underestimating people's discerning ability. The numerous countries and peoples who are victims of hegemonist aggression, intervention, subversion and domination know full well who in the present world are practising hegemonism and who are opposing it. Whether it uses the tactics of a thief crying "catch the thief" to divert attention or resorts to demagogic embellishments, it will only further expose its utter hypocrisy. We shall comment in greater detail when we come to the consideration of this item.

We have noted that quite a number of countries have suggested that the United Nations declare the 1980s as a new disarmament decade. We admire and support these countries in their sustained determination to seek genuine disarmament. To avoid the same mistakes during the new disarmament decade, we think it necessary to look back on the path already trodden. What does the history of the struggle for disarmament during the 1970s tell us? In our view, it tells us mainly the following.

First, the main reason for the failure to attain the objectives of the Disarmament Decade and the lack of progress in disarmament is the absence of a real desire for disarmament on the part of the super-Powers and their refusal to adopt effective measures to reduce their super-arsenals. In recent years, more and more countries at various disarmament meetings have strongly demanded that the super-Powers should promptly halt the arms race and carry out disarmament. The reason is simple and evident. Relying on their military might, these Powers have been engaged in rivalry for global hegemony, so much so that the world becomes increasingly insecure. Unless there is a reduction of their huge stockpiles of nuclear and conventional weapons, international peace and security can hardly be maintained. Therefore, any genuine disarmament measure must start with the reduction of the nuclear and conventional arms of the super-Powers. When substantial progress has been made in disarmament by the super-Powers, the other nuclear countries and major military powers will then join them in reducing armaments according to reasonable ratios. This is the correct and effective way to set in motion the process of genuine disarmament.

There is no other way to achieve progress in disarmament. However, the super-Powers deliberately put the cart before the horse by clamouring for a "halt in the production of all nuclear weapons by the nuclear countries", the "cessation of all nuclear tests", and so on, in order to cover up their own refusal to disarm and at the same time to bind others hand and foot. We must be on guard against such tactics.

Secondly, in the past decade, certain so-called disarmament treaties and agreements have been signed, such as the "Convention on the Prohibition of Biological (Bacteriological) Weapons" and the "Convention on the Prohibition of Environmental Warfare", but these conventions have not in the least affected the huge arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons of the super-Powers. The United States and the Soviet Union announced not long ago the reaching of an agreement on the "prohibition of radiological weapons." There is reason to ask: Rather than making a big issue of banning weapons that do not yet exist, why do they not take some practical measures to reduce the large quantities of lethal weapons they already possess? Obviously, their main purpose in concocting these treaties and agreements is to enhance their own image and conceal their arms expansion. As for the so-called "strategic arms limitation" treaties and agreements they have concluded, neither SALT I nor SALT II will serve to restrain the intensifying nuclear arms race between them, much less prevent that late-coming super-Power from striving for nuclear superiority and carrying out nuclear threats. Some representatives have rightly pointed out that "despite SALT II, the world is still far away from real disarmament."

Thirdly, in view of the fact that the super-Powers divide spheres of influence according to strength and that armaments are the instruments in their rivalry for world hegemony, they will never disarm on their own initiative. Only by further strengthening the unity of the third-world and other peace-loving countries and carrying on persistent struggles will it be possible to compel the super-Powers to accept certain reasonable disarmament proposals and demands. In striving for genuine disarmament every step forward will entail arduous struggles.

The Chinese Government and people have been working actively for genuine disarmament. We submitted a "Working Paper on the Question of Disarmament" and "Proposals on the Main Elements of an Integrated Disarmament Programme" at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament and the first session of the United Nations

(Mr. Lai Yali, China)

Disarmament Commission respectively. These two documents succinctly reflect China's main position and views on disarmament, which have many things in common with those of the peace-loving countries of the world.

We are in favour of nuclear disarmament and we want to eliminate the threat of a nuclear war. In our view, only the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons can really free mankind from the danger of a nuclear war. Before this lofty objective is realized, all nuclear countries should undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries and nuclear-free zones.

In our opinion, nuclear disarmament is of course important, but in view of the serious threat to world peace and international security posed by the enormous conventional forces of the super-Powers, the reduction of conventional armaments should be given the same importance as that of nuclear disarmament, and the two should proceed in conjunction.

We support the demand of many countries that the super-Powers be the first to reduce their astronomical military expenditures and to channel the resources thus released towards the economic development of the developing countries. Those two countries squander enormous funds in the arms race which not only endangers international peace and security but also impedes the establishment of a New International Economic Order and worsens the plight of the developing countries. It is only natural that world opinion has called on the super-Powers to come up with deeds instead of empty slogans.

(Mr. Lai Yali, China)

We have always supported the proposals of many countries for the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-free zones. In order to make those regions truly free from nuclear threat commitments by the nuclear countries not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons are indispensable, but it is also necessary to stop the various super-Power activities of aggression, expansion and rivalry for hegemony, to withdraw all foreign military forces and to dismantle all foreign military bases.

We have always stood for the complete prohibition and total destruction of chemical and biological weapons and firmly opposed the use of these weapons by any aggressive and expansionist forces, directly or through their agents and mercenaries, to massacre people fighting for national liberation and in defence of their independence and sovereignty. We believe that negotiations on a convention to prohibit chemical weapons should be accelerated so that a convention on the complete prohibition of such weapons can be concluded at an early date.

In our view, all countries have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and this right cannot be denied under any pretext. We support the proposal of the third-world countries for the strengthening of international co-operation in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In our view, all countries have the right to participate on a completely equal footing in the deliberations and negotiations on disarmament questions. Disarmament machinery and negotiations should not be controlled and manipulated by just a few countries. We welcome the establishment of the new Committee on Disarmament. We are pleased to note that the Committee has already undergone some changes, in that more small and medium-sized countries are now participating and have the same say in the work of the Committee, setting off a change in the unreasonable situation in which the disarmament machinery is monopolized by the two super-Powers. However, as representatives of the Committee on Disarmament have pointed out, the two major military Powers are still trying to maintain their direct control over negotiations on substantive questions. Therefore, it will be necessary to exert arduous efforts for a long time to come in order to free the Committee on Disarmament completely from their control and to enable the

(Mr. Lai Yali, China)

Committee to achieve concrete results on substantive questions. We are following with interest the efforts made by many countries in the Committee on Disarmament. Necessary preparations are now under way, so that we can directly participate in due time next year in the work of this organ and, together with the small and medium-sized countries, strive for progress in genuine disarmament.

The Chinese people ardently love peace and firmly oppose another world war. The Chinese Government has always pursued a foreign policy of peace. China is at present engaged in economic construction on a grand scale in an effort to build our country into a modern socialist State. For this purpose, we are all the more in need of a lasting peaceful international environment. However, the tree may prefer calm, but the wind will not subside. The harsh reality is: hegemonism is engaged in aggression and expansion everywhere and is stepping up its strategic preparations for world domination, seriously threatening world peace and international security. In these circumstances, we are prepared to join all the peace-loving countries and peoples in an unremitting struggle to oppose hegemonism and safeguard world peace.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): In my earlier statement devoted to the proposal by Czechoslovakia for the adoption of a declaration on international co-operation for disarmament, I spoke of events that have in recent times contributed to the improvement of the international climate and to better prospects for progress in disarmament negotiations.

Those events became important milestones along the road that must connect declared intentions with the achievement of concrete disarmament measures and fill the policy of détente with tangible content in the interest of peace, disarmament, security, development and the increased welfare of peoples.

The special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was the first among these new steps, laid the foundations of a joint disarmament strategy and strengthened the international machinery of disarmament negotiations, including the Committee on Disarmament,

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

whose first report is now under our consideration. Czechoslovakia has repeatedly emphasized that it attaches an extraordinary importance to the decisions adopted by the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and that it actively strives for their consistent, all-round and speediest possible implementation. It is the intention of my delegation to return to the substance of these questions at one of the next meetings of the First Committee.

The signing of the SALT II Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States in Vienna last June the ratification of which we all await and firmly hope for, represents a step of foremost importance in the direction of halting production, and gradually reducing the supply, of the weapons most dangerous to the entire world -- strategic nuclear arms. The entry into force of that Treaty is therefore a matter that concerns not only the two signatory States, but the vital interests of virtually all mankind.

We value as an event of extraordinary importance the new proposals and measures by the USSR involving medium-range nuclear arms as well as conventional weapons, including a unilateral reduction of the armed forces and armaments in Central Europe by the Soviet Union, as proposed by its highest representative, Leonid I. Brezhnev, in his address delivered in Berlin on the occasion of the festivities commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of a fraternal neighbouring country, the German Democratic Republic. Those of us who still clearly remember the apocalypse of the Second World War, and all those who view the situation truly realistically, cannot help seeing the great and important contribution to the cause of peace and military détente represented by the withdrawal of 20,000 soldiers and 1,000 tanks from the militarily most exposed part of the world. This significant step should undoubtedly produce an equally positive and constructive response from the Western countries.

In a statement on 12 October 1979, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Government warmly welcomed and resolutely supported these steps on behalf

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

of the entire Czechoslovak people. These proposals constitute a far reaching contribution towards enabling Europe and the whole world to continue to live in peace. The appeal, issued by the highest Party and Government bodies on that occasion, emphasizes

As a socialist country Czechoslovakia has a vital interest in the strengthening of peace throughout the world, in the intensification of the process of détente, and in its extension to the military sphere. That is why in the name of our people we turn to the nations of Europe and the whole world, to their Governments, representatives of political parties and organizations with an open and urgent appeal: to do their utmost in order to ensure that the constructive, peace proposals by the Soviet Union are implemented, that lasting peace is secured for both the present and future generations".

(l.r. Vojvoda, Czechoslovakia)

In co-operation with the socialist countries and all peace-loving countries, Czechoslovakia is determined to continue to search consistently for effective means of reducing the arms race and expediting disarmament negotiations and to strive for new practical disarmament measures. We shall continue to endeavour to overcome all the old as well as new obstacles that slow down the needed progress and hamper mutual understanding in the solution of the disarmament problems. On our side, such obstacles have never arisen and never will arise. On the contrary, we are determined to exert every effort in order to contribute to the creation of conditions that would facilitate and accelerate progress in the field of disarmament. The creation of such conditions is inseparably connected with the demand for the concretization of the conclusions adopted by the tenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, and their increased operativeness. That is also the purpose of our proposal, which I have explained at one of the Committee's previous meetings.

Today the time has already come when we must solve the question whether humanity will embark on the road of disarmament or whether it will be driven along the road of stepping-up the arms race, which can end in nothing but a nuclear catastrophe. More than ever before it is therefore necessary to unite and to intensify joint efforts to halt armaments and to achieve concrete decisive measures aimed at disarmament. That is why we warmly welcomed the declaration by the 95 non-aligned countries, which at their recent summit conference in Havana reaffirmed

"the adherence of non-aligned countries to the objective of general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, under effective international control and their determination to act within the United Nations and other bodies to achieve this objective." (A/34/542, para. 217)

The fact that the countries professing non-alignment as well as the countries of the socialist community -- that is, the overwhelming majority of mankind -- are determined to fight actively for disarmament ties the hands of the forces of imperialism and encourages the hope that eventually a decisive turn will be achieved in disarmament negotiations. We fully agree with the appeal made in in his address to the current session of the General Assembly by Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and of the Government of Cuba, and Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, when he said:

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

"The clashing of weapons, the threatening language and the overbearing behaviour in the international arena must cease. Enough of the illusion that the problems of the world can be solved by nuclear weapons. ...

"... moreover, this is the basic premise for human survival."

(A/34/PV.31, pp. 62 and 63)

In this context, too, we believe that proper attention should be given to the proposal of the Soviet Union concerning the inadmissibility of a policy of hegemonism in international relations. After all, hegemonism and the use of force, and threatening language and the stockpiling of weapons are two sides of the same coin.

In the solution of the questions of disarmament, which affect the interests of all States, a very important role is played by the newly reconstructed Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, which is the only negotiating body for disarmament questions. As a member of that body, Czechoslovakia welcomes the considerable increase in the intensity of negotiations as compared with previous years. We can associate ourselves with the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Alfonso-García Robles, who has drawn attention to the fact that the Committee worked out and approved very detailed rules of procedure, and in the course of four weeks managed successfully to prepare its agenda, which testifies to the Committee's competence. This undoubtedly is an asset for its future work. We also agree with his view that unfortunately the same cannot be said of the Committee's work on substantive questions.

Although the discussion of the individual items on the agenda and the concrete proposals that were submitted, including numerous proposals by the delegations of socialist countries, established a solid foundation for the achievement of tangible results, it must be regretted that more pronounced progress was not achieved even in cases in which the necessary prerequisites were provided. It will be all the more important to approach, without procedural delays, intensive negotiations on matters of substance from the very beginning of the Committee's session next year. In that concrete work the Committee must, in our view, continue to devote priority attention to the issue of nuclear disarmament, which is fully in accordance with objective needs and with the concept of the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as with the decision adopted by the Committee itself.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

However, it must be said that, despite the undeniably useful discussion on nuclear disarmament held at this year's session of the Committee, which helped to clarify a number of aspects of this vitally important issue, it should be within the Committee's power to embark on a substantive consideration of that issue. As a sponsor of the proposal to open negotiations on the halting of the production of and on the liquidation of nuclear weapons submitted to the Committee by the socialist countries as early as the beginning of February 1979, the Czechoslovak delegation is of the opinion that the concrete preparation of those negotiations should be started at the earliest possible time.

There is no doubt that the preparation and implementation of measures in the field of nuclear disarmament must be inseparably linked with the strengthening of the political and international legal guarantees of the security of States, especially the non-nuclear ones. The socialist countries as well as the non-aligned countries have repeatedly emphasized that nuclear disarmament and a ban on the use of nuclear weapons are the most effective guarantee against the use or the threat of the use of nuclear arms. However, as long as that objective is not reached, it is fully justified to demand the adoption of specific negative security guarantees on the part of all the States possessing nuclear weapons. We reiterate our conviction that these guarantees should take the form of a binding international agreement, and we believe that the Committee on Disarmament should speed up the work on the preparation of such an agreement.

Of fundamental importance to the halting and reversing of nuclear armaments is the speedy solution of the question of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests. Their continuation can have but one consequence: a further increase in the deadly risk of a nuclear conflict. That is why we fully support the proposal of the Soviet Union for the conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests, in which all nuclear States should participate.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

We think it is necessary that the current tripartite negotiations among the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain be expedited and that the results of those be submitted as soon as possible to the Committee on Disarmament. For our part, we are fully prepared to continue to participate in the elaboration of an international system for the verification of such a treaty.

We have welcomed and fully support the significant document containing major elements of a treaty prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons submitted to the Committee on Disarmament jointly by the delegations of the Soviet Union and the United States. We proceed from the fact that this is an exceptionally dangerous type of weapon of mass destruction which, along with the spreading of nuclear technology, could in a short time become a serious threat to international peace and security. Therefore we are of the view that this proposal should, without any further delay, be considered at next year's session of the Committee on Disarmament and submitted for final approval to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

We also advocate the complete prohibition of the production, use and deployment of nuclear neutron weapons and we believe that the Committee on Disarmament should consider the drafting, on the basis of the proposals submitted, of a relevant international treaty.

Along with the solution of these partial but now timely problems, we believe it is necessary for the Committee on Disarmament to intensify its work substantially on the whole question of the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction. After four years of negotiations, the rate of progress on this issue is far from commensurate with the urgency of the question. Therefore it would be appropriate to request the Committee on Disarmament to speed up further negotiations with the help of qualified governmental experts.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Czechoslovakia declares itself in favour of speedier and more resolute progress also on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons and the liquidation of stockpiles of such weapons. We welcome the progress achieved in the course of the bilateral Soviet-American talks and express the hope that the Committee on Disarmament will be able to embark on the elaboration of the concrete text of a relevant international agreement. It is Czechoslovakia's intention to work actively within the Committee on Disarmament to that end and also on the solution of the problem of verification of such an agreement.

A highly topical problem that continues to persist is how to avert the danger of the spreading of nuclear weapons, to strengthen the non-proliferation régime and achieve a universal Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Although the demand for equal access to the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy is fully understandable, at the same time such use should not be permitted to become a channel for the spreading of nuclear weapons. This question, in our view, should be considered responsibly and constructively by the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is to meet next year.

We support the proposal by Iraq that the current session of the General Assembly consider the question of Israeli nuclear armament. The United Nations should also take appropriate measures to prevent the acquisition of a nuclear capability by South Africa. We must not for a moment forget the fact that nuclear weapons in the hands of aggressive and racist régimes would mean a sharp increase in tension and a threat to peace not only on a regional, but also on a world-wide scale.

Furthermore, we attach great importance to the reaching of an agreement on the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present. We support the position of the Soviet Union that the current session of the General Assembly should call for careful consideration of this question by the Governments of Member States with a view to finding, at the next session, the best possible method for its specific solution.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Czechoslovakia has always supported and continues to support the idea of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as well as zones of peace in various parts of the world wherever the necessary conditions for it exist. Therefore we support the further consolidation of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America established on the basis of the Tlatelolco Treaty, as well as the consistent implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. We encourage the efforts by the States in the region of the Indian Ocean to establish a peace zone in that important part of the world. In that context, we advocate an early resumption of the bilateral talks between the Soviet Union and the United States and the abolition of all foreign military bases situated in that region.

Czechoslovakia is firmly convinced that an effective solution of the problems of disarmament requires the universal participation of all States and the establishment of an authoritative forum that would ensure the binding nature of the decisions adopted. That is why, in keeping with the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we advocate the convening of a World Disarmament Conference and the initiation of its practical preparation. It is our view that the conference should be the next step following the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in 1982.

The tenth special session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to disarmament, established an Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies. I believe, on the basis of my own experience, that the establishment of the board was a very appropriate measure. It must, however, be noted that so far this body has only taken its initial steps, and it will be necessary for it not only to find its proper place, to which end a great deal has already been done at its first sessions, but also to ensure that it is correctly and fully utilized. We believe that, among other things, all proposals for disarmament studies should first be considered by the Advisory Board, before a final decision is taken on them. The Board, of course, may be used also on many other aspects.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Close attention has been devoted by Czechoslovakia also to the question of the shaping of public opinion in favour of halting the arms race and embarking on disarmament. We actively support the work of UNESCO in this field, notably the convening of a world congress on disarmament education. Expert preparatory work for that congress was carried out in Prague last June, and the Director-General of UNESCO has informed the General Assembly of its results in document A/34/147.

Let me briefly return to the situation on the European continent. As a State on whose territory no nuclear weapons are stationed, Czechoslovakia follows with concern the efforts to increase substantially the already large stockpiles of nuclear-weapon missiles in the proximity of our borders. In fact, however, the plans for the deployment of new types of United States medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe represent a threat to all European nations. Their implementation would result in disturbing the historically established balance of forces in that sensitive region. In our view, it would be a dangerous step towards initiating a new round of military competition that would cause serious detriment to the policy of international détente and a deterioration of the situation on the entire continent. We share the position of the Soviet Union that, instead of increasing the military arsenals in Europe by adding to them new medium-range nuclear arms, an agreement should be reached on their reduction. We welcome the broad-minded and exemplary decision by the Soviet Union to reduce unilaterally the number of such arms stationed in the western parts of the Soviet Union, provided that the aforementioned arms are not deployed in Western Europe on the territories of States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It is our belief that this decision should be attractive to all European States.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

This situation underlines with additional emphasis the timely nature of the proposal by the States members of the Warsaw Treaty for the speedy convening of an all-European conference on a political level that would consider the whole complex of measures aimed at a military relaxation in Europe, including the expansion of the already existing confidence-building measures. In the present circumstances this would be the most important contribution to the further implementation of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.

Furthermore, the political climate and military détente not only in Europe but even on a wider scale would be greatly improved by the conclusion of an agreement among the participants of the European Conference that they will not be the first to use either nuclear or conventional weapons against each other. In other words, this would mean the conclusion of a kind of non-aggression pact as proposed by the socialist countries.

There is also growing urgency to reach an agreement in the Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. For our part, we are fully prepared for such an agreement, as has been attested to by a number of concrete proposals that we have recently submitted together with our allies.

I should like to stress our conviction that the path of disarmament is the only path that can ensure peace, security, freedom and development for mankind, and that it is necessary to embark on that path through joint efforts and in the spirit of constructive co-operation and to advance along it with greater speed than hitherto. The international Disarmament Week, which we so solemnly opened yesterday, should once again remind us of this fact. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is prepared to make an all-out contribution to that process.

The CHAIRMAN: We have just heard the last speaker inscribed on this morning's list and, as I said yesterday, I hope that the time left can be used for consultations and negotiations in terms of draft resolutions.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.