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Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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Statements were made by:

Mrs. Theorin (Sweden)
Mr. Tornudd (Finland)
Mr. Golob (Yugoslavia)
Mr. Ott (German Democratic Republic)
Mr. Cheang (Singapore)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 48 TO 69 AND 145 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): Let me at the outset warmly congratulate you, Sir, and the other officers of the Committee on your election. I pledge to you the full co-operation of the Swedish delegation and I am convinced that with your dedication and skill you will lead our work to a successful conclusion.

There is something basically wrong when children do not believe in their future. The children of the world are frightened today. Several international studies show that children and young people are deeply affected by their knowledge of nuclear weapons. They do fear a nuclear war.

Why are our children frightened? Why are they so pessimistic? Why do they distrust adults when it comes to peace and disarmament? I think it is because they see the world as it is. They cannot be fooled by empty rhetoric and non-committal phrases.

We must listen to our children. We cannot neglect their fears. We have a moral and political responsibility for them and for their future. We must shoulder this responsibility and reverse present developments into a path leading to a world free from nuclear weapons, a world of peace, justice and hope.

Let me express my deep satisfaction over the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. By this award the importance of combining knowledge and commitment to work for peace and disarmament has been recognized. I warmly congratulate the organization.

The nuclear arsenals long ago reached the point where the two super-Powers have no other choice than to survive together. As has been said many times before,

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

and deserves to be repeated over and over again, there are no winners in a nuclear war, only losers.

The super-Powers must therefore negotiate and co-operate on the most basic issue of all, survival. They should work together to achieve a common security.

Bilateral negotiations, indispensable as they may be, are not enough to safeguard the interests of the whole international community in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. To the non-nuclear weapon States the multilateral approach and the role of the United Nations are vital. The principle of self-determination means that we have an equal right to be masters of our own destiny. However, as pointed out in the Delhi Declaration, during the last 40 years almost imperceptibly every nation and human being has lost ultimate control over its own life and death.

We can never accept an order that in a way resembles a colonial system where the ultimate fate of our nations is determined by a few dominant nuclear Powers. We cannot accept mankind's being made hostage to the perceived security of the nuclear-weapon States.

The five permanent members of the Security Council bear a major responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Those States are also nuclear-weapon Powers. They have the means to destroy not only their potential enemies, but also other nations not involved in any conflict and wishing nothing but to live in peace. Such are the effects of nuclear war.

As long as nuclear weapons exist they may be used. The nuclear-weapon States, in particular the Soviet Union and the United States, must freeze and reduce their nuclear arsenals. But they must also take additional measures to prevent nuclear war. This would increase the security of both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

A range of measures could be envisaged at the global, regional and national levels. They should be designed to increase confidence, to avoid nuclear war by mistake, to reduce the fear of surprise attack, to encourage nuclear disengagement and commitments not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and, above all, to respect the wish of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be affected by the nuclear-arms race.

Could there be a better occasion than the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations to initiate work on such measures in the Conference on Disarmament?

If agreement can be reached on appropriate measures, they could, taken together, as long as nuclear weapons exist, be seen as a code of conduct for nuclear-weapon States.

All States, regardless of their size, political system or geographical location, have a legitimate right to national security. Security is just as important to small States as it is to major Powers.

Among those who reflect seriously on the requirements of security there is general recognition of the urgent need for security concepts conducive to a gradual reduction of distrust among the major Powers and to mutual confidence. This is a matter of concern to all Members of the United Nations.

Therefore, two years ago Sweden initiated a General Assembly resolution calling for a comprehensive study of concepts of security. The Group of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to carry out this study has adopted its report (A/40/553) by consensus and the report is now before the General Assembly. We hope that it will be seen also as a contribution to the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations

The legal and moral foundations of security assume particular prominence in the era of nuclear weapons. Public opinion, religious leaders, scientists and

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popular movements of many kinds are deeply troubled by the moral implications of the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Increasingly it is being maintained that strategic concepts which foresee indiscriminate killing and destruction on an unprecedented scale, also in nations not directly involved, are incompatible with ethical standards of civilized life.

More knowledge is available on the effects of the use of nuclear weapons. New studies confirm the "nuclear winter" scenario. There is general acceptance of the fact that nuclear war and survival are incompatible. Therefore, nuclear strategies cannot be regarded as the exclusive concern of the nuclear Powers.

As the nuclear threat looms over mankind, the world community may legitimately demand that the nuclear-weapon States give full information about their nuclear-weapon policies, that is, what is usually referred to as their nuclear-weapon doctrine. The Swedish delegation may revert to this question later on during this session.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Nuclear weapons are a threat to the survival of mankind. More and more States are beginning to discuss nuclear weapons also in terms of international law. The United Nations Charter prohibits the threat or use of force. The use of force in self-defence that is recognized in the Charter must be proportionate to the force used by the attacker. Furthermore, it should be noted that existing international law relating to armed conflict contains some general principles which outlaw certain methods of warfare. Relevant principles in this context are, inter alia, the principles of distinction between military and civilian targets, the ban on methods and means that cause unnecessary suffering, and the principle of proportionality. The latter prohibits attacks which may be expected to cause civilian losses that would be excessive in relation to the direct military advantage anticipated.

In my Government's view the use of nuclear weapons in contravention of the principles I just referred to would be in conflict with international law. Principles of international law place a heavy responsibility on any Government considering the use of nuclear weapons.

The Swedish Government notes with great satisfaction that the Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was able to adopt a Final Declaration by consensus. It reaffirms the commitment of the States Parties to the Treaty to the purposes of the preamble, the provisions of the Treaty, and their determination to enhance the implementation of the Treaty and to strengthen its authority.

The Review Conference, with the notable exception of the United States and the United Kingdom, called on the nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty to resume trilateral negotiations in 1985 and on all the nuclear-weapon States to participate in the urgent negotiation and conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a

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matter of the highest priority in the Conference on Disarmament. The nuclear-weapon States should heed those calls and conclude such a treaty, already long overdue. Those calls are well in line with the increasing public pressure for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

There is rightly among people a great deal of distrust of the super-Powers' talk about disarmament when at the same time they extend the arms race to outer space and continue the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons. Not only governments, but also peace organizations, churches, trade unions and women's organizations are all protesting against continued testing. They demand a stop to the rehearsals for nuclear war.

Reductions of nuclear weapons are important, and equally important is a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. It would stop not only the development of new nuclear weapons but over time also render obsolete existing weapons. A test ban would therefore in practice lead to reductions of nuclear arsenals. It would also degrade the reliability of existing warheads and thus render any first-strike calculations even more uncertain. A test ban would therefore significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war.

President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev should decide to start negotiations on a test ban immediately, in accordance with the Final Document of the Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The whole world will follow closely their forthcoming meeting. It expects and demands that the meeting lead to increased confidence and concrete results in the field of disarmament.

In April of this year the World Women Parliamentarians for Peace was founded by women parliamentarians with long political experience, from 15 countries and all continents. I have the privilege of being its chairperson.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Coming from different political and ideological backgrounds, we have agreed that in the nuclear age security must in the final analysis be built on co-operation, not on confrontation and nuclear deterrence. We have also proposed, as transitional measures, an immediate moratorium on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, called for the aboslute prevention of an arms race in space, and proposed negotiations aimed at a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In the current arms competition qualitative improvements dominate. New scientific discoveries and technological advances are rapidly transformed into new weapon systems. Today's research and development projects become tomorrow's ever more sophisticated weapons in an infernal cycle.

In 1982, when Sweden introduced the proposal for a United Nations study of the military use of research and development, one compelling reason behind the proposal was precisely the intensity of the qualitative arms race and its destabilizing effects. The study was meant to look into the fundamental questions of the causes of the qualitative arms race and the mechanisms involved in its continuous escalation.

Today, three years later, the need to ask and answer those basic questions has acquired added importance and urgency. The role of military research and development in the qualitative arms race must be seen as a continuing long-term concern of the United Nations.

Despite considerable progress, the Group of governmental experts was not able to reach consensus on the draft report as a whole, but the area of disagreement was quite narrow. In view of the crucial nature of the subject, it is essential that the study of the military use of research and development be finalized.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Efforts to stop the arms race are threatened by the expansion of the arms race into outer space. Events in this field clearly show the results of military research and development. It is not yet altogether clear what the consequences of the present trends will be. The issue of preventing an arms race in outer space has attracted much attention recently. The Swedish Government believes that security cannot be achieved through technical solutions - for example through new military systems which can be introduced in outer space. They cannot solve the fundamentally political problem that reliance on nuclear deterrence constitutes. Increased security can be found only through co-operation and negotiated political solutions, not through confrontation.

The anti-ballistic missile Treaty represents one of the most important achievements in the area of arms limitations. However, certain developments threaten to erode that Treaty. Anti-satellite technology can be used also for anti-ballistic missile purposes. Anti-tactical ballistic missiles (ATBM) may soon have a capability to meet certain strategic missiles. It is essential that the anti-ballistic missile Treaty be maintained and that efforts be made to prevent its erosion.

The Soviet Union has carried out a long series of tests of its anti-satellite system and the United States recently tested a new more advanced anti-satellite weapon. Both of them should scrap their systems and co-operate with other countries in negotiating a total ban on anti-satellite weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. The primary responsibility for the prevention of an arms race in outer space rests with two major space Powers. Outer space must be preserved for peaceful uses and co-operation.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The seas and the oceans, covering more than 70 per cent of the earth's surface, are also the scene of an intensive technological arms race. The tasks of national navies range from coastal patrol to intervention in distant conflicts, from local self-defence to global power projection, and from age-old gunboat diplomacy to nuclear deterrence.

The major maritime Powers maintain naval forces ready for rapid deployment also in distant areas. Naval units often operate off the coasts of other countries and even penetrate their territorial waters. This increases tension and further accelerates the arms race.

The naval arms race does not involve only conventional weapons; far from it.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The nuclear-weapon Powers possess more than 7,000 submarine-launched ballistic missile warheads. They also have an estimated 5,900 tactical nuclear weapons for use by naval forces against surface ships, submarines, aircraft, and land targets. Thus, about 13,000 nuclear weapons are earmarked for naval use, that is every fourth nuclear weapon in the world.

The principle of freedom of navigation permits the nuclear Powers to move these nuclear weapons across the seas and oceans, and to deploy them almost off any coastal point to their liking. Indeed, they frequently do so as a matter of routine.

The great number of tactical nuclear weapons on board warships has largely been overlooked. One reason is the policy pursued by nuclear-weapon Powers neither to confirm nor to deny the presence of any nuclear weapons on board any particular ship at any particular time. This creates legitimate concern in many countries, especially when warships of nuclear Powers in accordance with international law make use of their right to innocent passage through these countries' territorial waters or call at their harbours. The policy neither to confirm nor to deny does not build confidence between States. Quite the opposite. It is in fact a confidence-blocking practice that should be abandoned.

The technological development of the means for naval warfare has been no less rapid than that concerning warfare on land. The nuclear revolution, the electronic revolution, the aviation revolution, the computer revolution, the automatic battlefield revolution, the weapon-effect revolution, all apply to naval forces.

It is a source of concern to my Government that growing naval activities have increased both the risk of deliberate confrontation at sea, and the risk of unintentional incidents in the vast sea areas.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The nuclear-arms race at sea has been largely neglected in multilateral disarmament negotiations. The new Convention on the Law of the Sea provides some new elements for discussing naval arms limitation and disarmament.

In 1983, Sweden initiated a General Assembly resolution calling for a United Nations study on the naval arms race. The aim of the study was to facilitate "the identification of possible areas for disarmament and confidence-building measures". (General Assembly resolution 38/1886) The study, which was adopted by consensus by the group of governmental experts, is now before the General Assembly. In our view, the time has come to address maritime confidence-building measures and naval disarmament.

I should like to mention some measures that, in Sweden's view, should be worked out without delay:

First, long-range sea-based cruise missiles should be banned before they are produced in large numbers;

Secondly, all tactical nuclear weapons on board warships should be taken ashore and not be on board on routine patrol;

Thirdly, the legitimate claim of coastal states to reasonable "seaboard security" should be confirmed;

Fourthly, the inalienable right of all States to the freedom of the seas should not be infringed upon by military activities;

Fifthly, a modernization of the current laws of sea warfare should be undertaken.

The vast consumption of material, technical and human resources for potentially destructive purposes is not only in sombre contrast to the want and poverty in which two-thirds of the world's population live, but is in itself also a source of international tension.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The impact of military expenditure on the world economic situation and on development should be a matter of concern for the entire world community. The time has come for high-level consideration of this issue. We welcome last year's General Assembly decision to convene an international conference on the relationship between disarmament and development.

Negotiated reductions of military expenditure have not been tried as a means to stop the arms race. They would make it possible to reallocate resources to economic and social development, particularly for developing countries.

The United Nations reporting system may be a useful starting point for negotiations on reductions of military expenditure. Two groups of experts have explored methods of comparison. Their conclusion is that the problems of comparison are possible to solve in the context of future negotiations. All States interested in agreements to reduce military expenditures should acknowledge that an exchange of data would be required. The scope and nature of such data would, however, have to be agreed upon in the course of their negotiations.

The principal aim of the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, which started in Stockholm last year, is to reduce the danger of military confrontation in Europe. This is an urgent task, since no other continent contains such large military forces and means of destruction. The negotiations in Stockholm should reach their conclusion in the form of an agreement well in time for the next follow-up meeting within the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. If this is achieved the Stockholm Conference can rightly be said to have made an important contribution to peace and stability in Europe.

It is our sincere hope that the Conference will soon be able to proceed to concrete disarmament negotiations.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

In conclusion, let me quote a young Swedish girl who said:

"It does not matter whether you ask a Swede, an American, a Russian or an African. It does not matter whether you ask your sister, Mr. Reagan, Mr. Gorbachev or a starving child in Ethiopia. You will get the same answer. If you ask any human being if she wants all the hatred, all the weapons, all the wars, all the injustices, you will get the same answer - No!"

She explains the deep feelings of young people all over the world. They want a peaceful and just world without the threat of nuclear weapons.

We, who represent the governments of the world, have a moral and political responsibility towards the young generation. A responsibility to stop the preparations and rehearsals for nuclear war. A responsibility to prevent an arms race in outer space. A responsibility to halt the naval arms race. A responsibility to contribute with constructive proposals for disarmament.

We must soon be able to give a decent answer when our children ask us: "What did you do for peace and disarmament?"

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): Sir, let me begin by expressing to you the warm congratulations of the Finnish delegation on your election to the Chair of this important Committee. This election honours both you and Indonesia which plays a constructive part in disarmament efforts in the United Nations and in the Conference on Disarmament. Our best wishes go equally to your colleagues, the officers of the Committee. My delegation is ready to co-operate with you in your difficult tasks.

The present session of the General Assembly will soon culminate with the commemoration dedicated to the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. In this connection, it is appropriate to recall the contribution of the Organization to the

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maintenance of international peace and security, the foremost of its responsibilities. There have been many armed conflicts since the creation of the United Nation, but humanity has been spared a conflagration of global proportions or repercussions. It would be naive to attribute this fact to the world Organization alone. Nevertheless, its role in defusing conflicts and keeping the peace should not be underestimated.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The United Nations Charter envisages a crucial role for the Organization in the field of disarmament as well. In Article 26 of the Charter, the Security Council is given the responsibility for "the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments". We know now that this ambitious scenario has not been implemented. We also know the reasons. The relationship between armaments and peace has become a complex and controversial issue. I only need to refer to the debate on nuclear arms that goes on year after year in this Committee.

This anniversary session offers an appropriate setting for assessing the record of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, which - I believe all here agree - has remained modest. The gap between the aspirations of the peoples of the world, as set out for example in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, and their achievements in disarmament through the United Nations, has continued to widen.

Perhaps this session could provide a pause for reflection in the annual adoption of growing numbers of resolutions on disarmament as a matter of routine. Last year in my statement in this Committee, I said that the number of resolutions on nuclear weapons is not a valid measure of mankind's concern over the nuclear arms race, particularly if some of them are overlapping or even contradictory. We might more properly concentrate our joint efforts in producing a simple and clear message on nuclear weapons. Such a message would be a contribution by this Committee worthy of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Looking at the most recent past, some indications of a positive change in international relations have emerged. My Government has welcomed the American-Soviet talks on nuclear and space weapons which began in Geneva earlier this year. The objectives of those talks, as defined by the parties, are shared by the international community. The comprehensive nature of those new negotiations

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makes it possible to cover a wide range of issues relevant to the achievement of strategic stability at the lowest possible levels of armaments. The Geneva negotiations have generated hopes for early and concrete results.

Yet the complexities of those negotiations should be fully recognized. There is no room for complacency or unwarranted optimism. Therefore the meeting of the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States in Geneva next month may prove crucially important. While no spectacular agreements are to be expected from the summit, it is a unique opportunity to pave the way for a more concrete phase in the talks on nuclear and space arms.

The Third Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was successfully concluded last month. After extensive negotiations, the parties to the Treaty adopted a substantive Final Declaration by consensus. My Government believes that this is a reaffirmation of the conviction of the parties to the NPT that the Treaty is a most important instrument in the pursuit of the basic security interests of the international community. The three basic goals of the Treaty remain valid: prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, development of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and joint efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

The main purpose of the NPT review was to strengthen the Treaty and ensure a better implementation of its provisions. The Final Declaration is not only an assessment of the functioning of the Treaty but also a programme of action containing both general and detailed guidelines on its future implementation. As a whole, the Final Declaration is a substantive and forward-looking document. Some of its parts are particularly relevant for the work of this Committee.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

First, the Declaration recalls the determination of the parties to discontinue nuclear testing. A comprehensive test ban would be crucial in the implementation of article VI of the Treaty. It is worth noting that the parties recognize that the implementation of article VI is essential to the maintenance and strengthening of the Treaty.

Secondly, the Final Declaration reaffirms the contribution which the development of the concepts of nuclear-weapon-free zones and security assurances could make to the realization of the objectives of the NPT. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones could be a valuable complementary instrument in promoting nuclear non-proliferation in a regional context. The Declaration gives further evidence of the relevance of such zones in building confidence and thus reducing the nuclear threat. In this connection, my delegation wishes to welcome the establishment of the nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific, which together with the Latin American zone and the Antarctica covers a sizeable part of the surface of the globe. My delegation has noted with satisfaction that the Review Conference made concrete recommendations on negative security assurances. We hope that this will speed up progress in the Conference on Disarmament in this matter.

The Final Declaration of the NPT Review Conference contains substantive recommendations on matters relevant to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as nuclear safeguards, assistance and co-operation. In this area more than anywhere else, new ground was covered and considerable progress made. This applies in particular to such questions as export requirements, safeguards coverage and the development of a financial infrastructure for peaceful nuclear co-operation. This sort of progress is very important to the NPT régime as a whole. I also hope that it augurs well for an event of interest to this Committee, the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

Last summer, 10 years had passed since the 35 States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) adopted, in the capital of Finland, the CSCE Final Act, and, as a part of it, a first set of specific confidence-building measures. They deal with prior notification and observation of certain military activities. In the course of the 10 years, the implementation of the agreed measures has become a matter of routine in the relations of the 35 States. Obviously limited in scope, they have not as such been enough to eliminate tension, let alone stop the arms race in Europe. But they have in a concrete way added to stability and predictability in Europe. Above all, they have marked the beginning of a process that is now going on in Stockholm.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

As a part of the follow-up to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Stockholm Conference has the task of designing a set of confidence and security building measures that in political and military significance go considerably beyond what was agreed in the Helsinki Final Act. The territory now being charted in Stockholm is new, and negotiations between the 35 States have proved challenging. While efforts towards arms limitation should be pursued both globally and regionally, the Stockholm Conference could also become instrumental in disarmament, first, by building confidence and security in Europe and thus creating conditions for security on a lower level of armaments and, secondly, by eventually engaging in a process of disarmament negotiations. For its part, Finland has called for concrete results from Stockholm so that the next follow-up meeting of the Helsinki Conference, due to begin in Vienna next autumn, could make decisions to this effect. As nations of the most heavily armed continent, we owe it not only to ourselves but to the entire international community to do whatever we can to lessen the danger of the outbreak of war in Europe.

Despite limited progress in some items on its agenda, it is a sad fact that stagnation still characterizes the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Frustration has gained further ground. This single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament is clearly not utilized to the limit of its potential.

One of the few positive elements of the work in the Conference on Disarmament was the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This permitted the Conference to begin a substantive consideration of this vital issue. But the most promising aspect of the work of the Conference on Disarmament continues to be chemical weapons. My country has for a number of years been engaged in a scientific project to develop methods for the verification of chemical disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament has been informed on a regular

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basis of the results of the Finnish verification project. We hope that the project for its part will be helpful in the elaboration of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons.

The Government of Finland has for many years been an active observer at the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor bodies. We have favoured a limited enlargement of its membership and sought full membership for ourselves. If elected, we would seek to co-operate, in accordance with our policy of neutrality, with all members of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly with those outside military alliances. We are convinced that we would have a positive contribution to make as a full member of the Conference.

A year ago the General Assembly was able to record its views on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space almost unanimously, with only one abstention. Accordingly, it can be stated that resolution 39/59 contains the basic considerations that have to be borne in mind in the efforts aimed at that objective. These principles are the obligation of States to refrain from the threat or use of force in their space activities, to take steps towards using outer space for peaceful purposes only and for the major space Powers to take the lead in contributing actively to the objective of preventing outer space from becoming an arena of the arms race. Against this background, and in view of the new institutional bilateral and multilateral negotiating frameworks in existence, at least some of the necessary basic conditions for successful substantive negotiations on all aspects of the problem have been achieved.

There is a widespread concern, shared by Finland, over the accumulating evidence on the increasing utilization of space for military purposes. Admittedly, certain military space applications may serve stabilizing and confidence-building functions, but the present trend in the military uses of space rather points to the possibility that space could become an arena, not just of an arms race, but of

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military confrontation as well. This trend must be reversed in time, before technological developments frustrate the efforts for arms control and disarmament. This is bound to happen if resolute preventive action is not taken in time. At the same time, the emerging space technologies bring closer to us the time when a truly meaningful international approach to the peaceful use of outer space becomes a possibility. In small countries international co-operation is an essential prerequisite for the economic utilization of space. An arms race in outer space would undoubtedly affect the potential for peaceful exploitation of outer space, and therefore all efforts should be undertaken to ward off the further militarization of outer space.

As the multilateral negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament should proceed as soon as posssible to the actual negotiation of an agreement or agreements preventing an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. This is another matter on which a clear message from the General Assembly is expected.

Several interesting and important disarmament studies initiated by the General Assembly are under way or have been completed this year. Some of them call for further comments on the part of the Finnish delegation later in this session. At this point, I wish to offer a few observations on the Study on All Aspects of the Conventional Arms Race. It is the first attempt, in the United Nations context, to assess the conventional arms race in a comprehensive manner.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The conventional arms build-up has traditionally been overshadowed by a preoccupation with the threat presented by nuclear weapons. While fully recognizing the reasons behind this prevailing concern, we must not forget that conventional arms are a constant source of insecurity, death and destruction in the world. Limiting and reducing conventional armaments is important not only to reduce the destructive effects of armed conflicts but also to lessen the danger of local or regional conflicts escalating into a nuclear war. In view of the continuing conventional arms build-up in many parts of the world, these problems require urgent attention, particularly on the regional level.

Mr. GOLOB (Yugoslavia): Mr. Chairman, your country and mine, Indonesia and Yugoslavia, are founding members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and are linked by friendship and in their efforts to achieve security and justice in the world. Your election as Chairman of the Committee is a recognition both of you personally and of your country. I have had an opportunity and privilege to work with you on questions concerning international peace and security on quite a number of occasions. You have always shown commitment to the cause of disarmament. And you are well-known here as a fair and knowledgeable diplomat with a steady hand and a quick mind. This Committee, we believe, has in your person a dedicated and able chairman.

Our congratulations go as well to Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia from Cuba, and Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya from Zaire, on their election as Vice-Chairmen, and to the Rapporteur, Mr. Yannis Souliotis from Greece. We are very glad that the imaginative and hard-working Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Martenson, is with us.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

The fortieth anniversary of the United Nations is an inspiring occasion. It would be difficult to confine oneself only to reviewing the period separating us from the last session. It would be wise to turn briefly to the past and express hopes that the future will bring more success.

Our hopes are not lost, nor has our determination to secure peace subsided. Today, perhaps more than yesterday, the United Nations is the only answer to the challenges of the present and future. It is true that all of us do not share the same perception of the United Nations. But nearly everyone is in agreement that the world is one and indivisible, and that interdependence in the world is continually increasing in all its aspects. This is in the best way reflected within the United Nations itself. But we do need a more effective world Organization that would be truly able to be a place of co-operation. Thus, it is necessary to give a balanced assessment of its achievements and its shortcomings.

True, global war has been avoided for 40 years. But on some occasions this was barely managed. And in many wars that have been fought none the less hundreds of thousands have died. The world has lived for four decades in a peace fraught with fear, with wars, with death and with deprivation.

The arms race has been intensified in every respect. It is being expanded into new areas, including lately into outer space. The bloc policy of strengthening and spreading spheres of influence continues unabated. The policy of force and the use of force continues to be pursued and is directed against the independence, territorial integrity and unhampered economic and political development of States, particularly the non-aligned and other developing countries. The world economic crisis is not being checked and it is increasing the difficulties of the developing countries. The threat of nuclear annihilation continues to face mankind. The use of nuclear weapons will solve nothing, but can destroy everything.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

The recent Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Luanda, Angola, pointed out that:

"Economic and social development and the construction of justice and human dignity will be in vain if nuclear disaster is not prevented."

The arms race is incompatible with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This is particularly true with respect to sovereignty, with respect to refraining from the use or threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State, with respect to the peaceful solution of disputes, and with respect to non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

It may be recalled that the first resolution ever adopted by the General Assembly refers to the threat of atomic war. From then on there is an appalling discrepancy between words and deeds in the case of disarmament. Meetings have taken place and a multitude of resolutions and declarations in favour of disarmament have been adopted in the course of the last four decades. This is one reality. And the other reality is the arms race, pursued primarily by the two great Powers, an arms race has developed and assumed awesome proportions threatening the survival of us all.

The cost of the arms race, as well as its technological aspects, are helping to concentrate power in fewer and fewer hands. The circle of those that assume they are free to decide on issues of life and of freedom is growing smaller and smaller, and the trend to domination is growing bigger and bigger.

Dialogue and negotiations are the only way, and agreements are the only instruments for solving major international problems. Bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on nuclear and space weapons have been welcomed throughout the world, the more so, since the super-Powers, the main

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

factor of the arms race, are the most responsible for its cessation and for the beginning of the process of disarmament. We welcome these negotiations because we expect the super-Powers to pay due regard to, and respect the legitimate interests of, the entire international community.

But the fact that the negotiating process is in sight is not sufficient in itself. What we are looking forward to and what we need are concrete results. We hope that negotiations by the two super-Powers will soon show meaningful and tangible results in the measures agreed upon and in accordance with the demands of the international community.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

At this particular time it is of overriding importance that negotiations result in a substantial reduction of nuclear arsenals and that the spreading of the arms race into outer space be prevented.

There is no doubt that the entire membership of the United Nations and its General Assembly is looking forward to hearing from the super-Powers on the progress they are making in their negotiations. These negotiations on nuclear and space weapons should complement the multilateral negotiations on these issues; on the other hand, the multilateral negotiations should not be slowed down or blocked because of the ongoing negotiations between the two super-Powers.

It should be stressed that it is rightly expected that an agreement on disarmament measures will soon be reached by the big Powers. However, it would be another great disappointment if the negotiations failed to bear fruit, if they were interrupted or, for that matter, if they ended in an agreement on a controlled arms race and controlled rivalry. The General Assembly should express its interest in this vital question and formulate its views on the subject of negotiations between the two super-Powers.

In this regard, we hope that the General Assembly will find it possible to address an appeal to the two super-Powers negotiating in Geneva to halt the nuclear-arms race and adopt concrete measures to reduce their nuclear arsenals. The General Assembly may also find it possible to invite the two negotiating Powers to reach an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to undertake an obligation to use outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

On 31 December 1984, in its customary New Year message, the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia stated the following:

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

"The cessation of nuclear tests and the halting of the arms race would be a sign of good will on the part of the big Powers and their contribution to freeing the world from the fear of nuclear annihilation. We therefore call upon all those who bear the greatest responsibility for stockpiling and possible use of nuclear weapons to take at least initial steps towards removing the fear and the danger. It would be the best reply to the demand of mankind that the tragedy of Hiroshima be never repeated again."

The course of events in the past few years has only confirmed the urgency of that appeal.

The nuclear-arms race, particularly in its qualitative aspect, would be considerably slowed down, if not discontinued, through the introduction of a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons tests. For more than 25 years now this issue has been the focus of the demands of the international community that the arms race be ended. Therefore, we welcome each and every step in that direction. Serious negotiations on this matter have yet to be launched at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. This causes justified dissatisfaction, particularly since it has been proved that there are possibilities of verifying a nuclear-weapon test ban.

Those who entertain different thoughts should reconsider their position and contribute to the early conclusion of an agreement on a comprehensive and complete nuclear test ban. An agreed and binding moratorium on all nuclear tests by the United States and the Soviet Union would be welcomed throughout the world.

More and more frequent use of force and military intervention against the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of non-aligned and other developing countries have increased the threat to their security and the threat to the security of the world at large.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

Since its first Conference, held in Belgrade in 1961, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has been expressing its vital interest in the elimination of all foreign military bases and forces. The military presence of the big Powers, however, has been spreading continuously, and this aspect of security - or rather threat to security - has gained in importance.

The Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, Mr. Raif Dizdarevic, on 13 June this year made a statement in the Conference on Disarmament in which he stated:

> "In the conditions of the global arms race, the non-aligned and other developing countries are most frequently exposed to the use of force and military interventions. Therefore, in our minds, it is necessary, first and foremost, to achieve a gradual military disengagement of the great Powers and their military and political blocs from the regions of non-aligned countries. Thus, the space of their confrontation would be narrowed and the non-aligned countries' security strengthened. A limitation and reduction of their military activities outside their borders would be an important element conducive to such disengagement".

At the Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Luanda, Angola, at the beginning of last month, the Ministers stressed the need for limiting and reducing the military activities of the big Powers and blocs outside their boundaries. It is hoped that this view will find expression in the relevant resolutions that will be adopted by the General Assembly.

Tactical nuclear weapons are deployed all over the world, and their concentration is particularly intensive in the European region. Despite all the appeals contained in resolutions of the General Assembly, these weapons have not

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yet become a subject of negotiations. The ongoing negotiations between the two super-Powers should encompass the subject of tactical nuclear weapons as well. We feel that negotiations on this subject should be started without delay.

Resolute efforts should be made with a view to completing negotiations urgently on a comprehensive convention on chemical weapons. This would provide an important incentive both for the total banning of other weapons of mass destruction and for their final elimination. It would be of particular importance to ensure that new technological achievements were not used for the development of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction.

While halting the nuclear-arms race should be our primary concern, it is necessary to undertake appropriate measures for halting the arms race in conventional weapons as well. The arms race in conventional weapons has been developing at a faster and faster pace, particularly between countries with the largest military arsenals.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

The world is threatened by a mass-scale use of conventional weapons in numerous local wars and armed interventions. It is necessary to begin negotiations with a view to undertaking concrete measures for the reduction of conventional armaments.

We should like these views to find a place in the draft resolutions to be submitted.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development is expected to establish guidelines for the use of resources released from the military field for use in development needs, in particular those of developing countries. It should also examine the relationship between increased military expenditures, in particular those of the most powerful, and the world economic situation, and formulate recommendations in that regard. The Preparatory Committee for this Conference has successfully completed its first session and we expect that the General Assembly will renew the mandate of the Preparatory Committee.

In the past four decades the United Nations has striven to halt the arms race and to open the process of disarmament.

There is no doubt that the results achieved are of value in the security, political and moral spheres. If, however, we evaluate these results against the backdrop of their influence on the existing military reality in the world, then we cannot but note that they are of marginal importance only.

In this anniversary year we believe that favourable conditions should be created to open up prospects for genuine disarmament. The creation of these conditions cannot be conceived without, or outside, the United Nations.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): Permit me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, and to wish you success in your responsible function. Your rich experience and your well-known

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

diplomatic skills will greatly contribute in the fulfilment of the task facing this Committee. Our best wishes go also to the Vice-Chairmen and to the Rapporteur.

We should like to express our thanks to the Chairman of the First Committee at its thirty-ninth session, Ambassador Souza e Silva, for his judicious and successful work.

Our session begins in a year of historic anniversaries. Together with the States and peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition, together with all fighters against war and oppression, we are observing the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism which created the conditions for founding the United Nations Organization.

With good reason much has been said and written about the historical lessons from the most devastating of all wars, the Second World War, and the most important conclusion that has been drawn is that there is a need and duty to combat war before the weapons speak. All those vested with responsibility for the future of their peoples must, in taking action in the present, heed this lesson from the tragic events of the past. That is the will of the peoples. The call to preserve and strengthen the world peace won at such great cost is becoming louder and louder all over the world. At the same time we are well aware that much remains to be done to secure the very existence of present and future generations. The prevention of nuclear war is a task affecting the very survival of mankind, because what is at stake today is either to survive together or to perish together.

The German Democratic Republic advocates a recovery of the international situation, a halt to the arms race on Earth and the prevention of the militarization of outer space. In working along these lines, it is fulfilling its constitutional mandate, that is, to do everything possible to ensure that never again will war be launched from German soil, but only peace. That will always be true of the German Democratic Republic.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The arms build-up and a policy of confrontation, in particular the attempt to reach for outer space with military means in order to attain strategic superiority over the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty States and to regain imperialist hegemony in the world, draw the peoples ever more deeply into the vortex of fatal dangers. But the experience of many years has clearly proved that more weapons do not produce greater security. On the contrary, they undermine trust and co-operation and heighten the danger of war. On the European continent, where the two most powerful military alliances of our time directly confront each other, this is particularly evident in the deployment of new medium-range nuclear weapons by the United States.

In the light of this fateful development, the Warsaw Treaty States are ready for the most radical steps to limit and liquidate any type of weapons. Their numerous and comprehensive proposals offer realistic possibilities to that end.

Of utmost importance, in our view, are the unilateral steps recently taken by the USSR and the new far-reaching proposals which the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, explained a few days ago in Paris.

This comprehensive and concrete peace programme offers a great chance to all those seriously concerned about peace. We would be failing in our responsibility if we did not seize this opportunity.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The new Soviet peace initiatives are, as can be seen from the world-wide response they have evoked, serious, businesslike and constructive. They are capable of easing the complicated, dangerous international situation. Given a corresponding political willingness of the other side, a genuine change of course in relations between East and West away from confrontation and towards constructive co-operation could be brought about.

In my country the new Soviet proposals have found unanimous approval, since they take into account the sensitive political and geographical - as well as military and strategic situation - in the heart of Europe. Essentially, they serve the interests of European and international security, place on the agenda an entire complex of constructive and realistic measures, and point the way towards concrete progress in arms limitation and disarmament. All peoples, indeed all mankind, would stand to benefit if a complete prohibition of space strike weapons and a 50 per cent reduction of nuclear weapons capable of reaching the territory of the other side could be agreed upon between the USSR and the United States.

Peace and security in Europe would be strengthened if the new initiatives for the earliest possible reduction of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe were adopted.

The conclusion of an international agreement on the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and corridors would enhance confidence between States and do much to promote a healthier international climate. This is equally true of the proposed measures to continue the process of détente in Europe - for instance, through a constructive policy designed to achieve concrete results in the negotiations in Stockholm and Vienna.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

There have probably never before been such comprehensive and far-reaching initiatives in the long and complex history of the struggle for peace and security, disarmament and détente.

The peoples now place their hopes in the forthcoming summit meeting between General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan. The Soviet initiatives have ushered in a new important phase in the preparations for the summit in Geneva. At the same time, they are a great encouragement for all forces of peace in the world.

As for the German Democratic Republic, it feels encouraged by the Soviet proposals to intensify its own activities for peace, security and détente and its endeavours for dialogue and co-operation between peoples and States, and to increase its broad-ranging efforts to create a world coalition of common sense and realism.

A proposal of far-reaching importance entitled "International co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization" has been included in the agenda of the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Implementation of that proposal would in essence free peoples from the acute threat to peace and security arising from a spread of the arms race to outer space.

The "star wars" project - known under the misleading term of the so-called strategic defence initiative - is being watched with growing concern by the international community. The recent test of the United States anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) and the formation of the United Space Command (SPACECOM) of the United States armed forces in Colorado Springs are by far more than just theory and research. Those activities are rightly regarded as concrete steps to extend the arms race into space.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The "star wars" plan has now been countered with an entirely different concept - the "star peace" plan, a peaceful outer space for the benefit and security of all peoples. Thus, a chance has been offered for a new dimension of world-wide co-operation of a new quality which could be of truly historic significance.

The German Democratic Republic, a State which within the framework of the INTERKOSMOS programme has for decades participated actively in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, which included the participation of a cosmonaut from my country in a joint space flight with the Soviet Union, fully supports this highly topical Soviet move. A constructive and unambiguous answer is given to the clear-cut question facing the peoples and their Governments today. Will outer space be harnessed ever more effectively for improving life on earth or will it be misused for preparing the annihilation of all life on our planet? Will the skies be gradually turned into a gateway to hell?

The Soviet initiative shows ways of employing space technology to cope better with economic and social problems on earth rather than aggravating them in a drastic way throug an unbridled arms build-up, on earth as well as in outer space. This long-range programme, which defines the main lines and principles of peaceful international co-operation in the exploitation of outer space, gives an indication of the tremendous potential that can be utilized in this field. A major step in this direction would be taken by the establishment of a world space organization that would enable States to co-operate on an equal footing in international space projects.

The question of establishing such an organization could be dealt with at an international conference, which should be held not later than in 1987. It would be timely and should have the support of all those who are interested in peaceful co-operation in the exploitation of outer space and oppose its militarization.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Peace in outer space and peace on earth are our objective, and we will continue to exert maximum efforts to this end. That is the fundamental guideline governing the activities recently undertaken by the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Head of State of the German Democratic Republic in the cause of peace and security in Europe, and in particular with a view to continuing the process of détente on the basis of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference for creating nuclear-weapon-free zones and corridors, and a zone free of chemical weapons. The main task in averting the dangers of a nuclear war today is, without doubt, to prevent the militarization of outer space and to end the nuclear arms race. At the same time, progress in other fields of arms limitation and disarmament could improve the international climate and have a favourable influence on ongoing disarmament negotiations.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Along these lines, the German Democratic Republic takes a consistent stand in favour of a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction. Moreover, it is convinced that regional agreements on the establishment of chemical-weapon-free zones would be concrete steps towards confidence-building and towards a world-wide ban on these weapons. The German Democratic Republic wants to see Europe free of chemical weapons and favours as a first step the establishment of a zone free of such weapons.

In the letter dated 12 September 1985 from the Head of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, and in a similar letter from the Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Lubomir Strougal, addressed to the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Kohl, contained in document A/C.1/40/2, it is said, inter alia:

"The Governments of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic hold the view that practical possibilities do exist for the elimination of chemical weapons, particularly for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe. This could be a way to arrive at the removal of the chemical weapon stocks existing in the region and to ensure that no new, extremely perilous types of such weapons, notably binary weapons will be deployed on European soil. This has also been reflected in the talks between the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party of Germany on the establishment of a zone free of chemical weapons, which climaxed in the presentation of the political initiative known to you.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

"Next to nuclear weapons, chemical weapons are the most dangerous means of mass destruction. It is a matter of utmost urgency to prohibit and completely eliminate them. What is needed are resolute efforts both on a global and regional scale." (A/C.1/40/2, p. 2)

Moreover, chemical warfare agents are a particularly cruel category of weapons of mass destruction. Their use is banned under the Geneva Protocol of 1925 but not their production, stockpiling and further development. Hence, there exist today huge stockpiles of such weapons in Europe which, according to available official information, consist of thousands of tons and could destroy the entire population of the continent. Even in times of peace technical defects in stockpiled chemical agents could have disastrous consequences for everything alive within a wide radius. The establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone would considerably diminish the risk of a Bhopal catastrophe and of a chemical war on the European continent. It would curb the danger of a proliferation of this type of weapon and would also contribute to destroying chemical weapons world-wide.

With these considerations in mind, the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic declared their readiness to conclude with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany an agreement on the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone on the territories of these three States, to begin with, that are situated right along the dividing line between the two military alliances in Europe. Such a zone would be open to other States for accession.

The establishment of such a zone would be a practical and verifiable partial step on the road to an all-European and ultimately global prohibition of all chemical weapons. As is well known, negotiations on a comprehensive ban of these types of weapons have been under way in Geneva for 15 years. It is high time to

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conclude a world-wide convention. We are convinced that a partial solution at the regional level could play a pilot role and help bring about a breakthrough.

The proposed chemical-weapon-free zone would be established by removing existing arsenals and keeping it free of such weapons. In this context, we welcome the readiness declared by the Soviet Union to provide guarantees for respecting such a zone.

It would be possible to take into account in the relevant negotiations between the three States the outline of an agreement to establish a zone free of chemical weapons in Europe, which was worked out a few months ago by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party of Germany. This draft already contains many substantive ideas about possible treaty formulations, as for instance regarding the geographical definition of the zone, obligations, stages, purpose and validity. Especially with regard to verification of compliance with the treaty obligations by the parties concerned, the draft sets forth profound and realistic proposals.

In our view, there exist the conditions for immediate commencement of substantive negotiations. It is to be hoped that commonsense and political responsibility will at last prevail and ensure that one of the most cruel types of weapons is removed from Europe, that new impetus is given to disarmament and that security is thus strengthened on the continent and the world at large.

With this statement I have explained the position of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic on some problems which are the subject of discussion in this Committee. In the course of the debate we will express our views on other matters on the agenda and submit relevant proposals and initiatives.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Permit me in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, to assure you of the active and constructive co-operation on the part of my delegation in fulfilling the tasks of the Committee.

Mr. CHEANG (Singapore): Please allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your election to your present post. We, in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), who have long benefitted from your knowledge and wisdom, are happy to note that your exceptional qualities have been recognized by the international community. My delegation also wishes to extend its congratulations to the officers of the Committee on their successful election.

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

Although we are fully aware that, as a small country, Singapore can do little to influence the policies and decisions of the major actors in the international arena, it is not our intention to evade our responsibility as a member of the international community to do what we can to contribute to international peace and security. For this reason, we have signed various arms control agreements: for example, the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water of 1963; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968 and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof of 1971, to name a few.

Together with our ASEAN partners, Singapore formed in 1984 a working group to study the question of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. Those actions, as well as the fact that Singapore has supported many United Nations resolutions on arms control and disarmament emanating from the First Committee, testifies to our continuing desire to work towards a better and safer world.

Much has been said in this Committee and other international forums about the central issue facing mankind today, namely, the danger of a nuclear conflagration arising out of the nuclear arms race and the corresponding need to take measures to lessen, or better, to eliminate, this danger. However, events in the past 40 years since the birth of the United Nations point to another picture which, in my view, corresponds more to reality than the persistent allusion to the danger of a nuclear holocaust.

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

According to the report of the Secretary-General on the study on concepts of security, document A/40/553, dated 26 August 1985, more than 150 armed conflicts have taken place since 1945, costing the lives of between 16 and 25 million people. One should also not forget the loss in terms of economic infrastructure and the damage to prospects for economic growth, not to mention the trauma that was experienced and indeed is still being experienced. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has estimated that the global refugee population totals some 8 million; millions more for whom no accurate count is possible may be displaced within their own countries.

The question is now: Has this unparalleled tragedy in recent human history been caused by a nuclear conflagration or even by the consequences flowing from the threat of a nuclear war? The answer, I would submit, is obviously no.

No nation is blind to the unimaginable consequences for mankind of the outbreak of nuclear war between the super-Powers. It would mean the extinction of the human race and most other life forms. The super-Powers above all are cognizant of the horrendous consequences of a nuclear exchange. The leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union are rational and wise enough to know that a nuclear exchange would not only mean the destruction of their countries. More importantly, it would lead to their own physical extinction, their nuclear bunkers notwithstanding. It is doubtful whether those rational and wise men would even choose mutual nuclear suicide as a last resort. It is therefore hardly likely, in my opinion, that both super-Powers would want nuclear war to visit their lands.

The Soviet people know what war is like, having suffered terribly in the Second World War. The American people, on the other hand, have not had the misfortune of other peoples, and have never experienced the horrors of modern war on their own soil - other than the attack on Pearl Harbor and a small number of incidents of sabotage by the Axis Powers. It is nevertheless safe to assume that

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

given their own losses, the American people, like the Soviet people, would never willingly engage in a nuclear exchange. That is why the super-Powers have done, are doing and will continue to do all they can to ensure that such an exchange does not take place. However, one of them would have us believe that a nuclear war is hovering above our heads and has consistently used this Committee and other interntaional forums to propagate this line. In my view, so long as the central strategic balance is stable - and it is, despite the protestations of the super-Powers - no real threat of a nuclear war breaking out exists.

The Soviet Union and the United States know that, while they have to play a serious game in trying to outmanoeuvre each other and gain strategic or other advantages in the third world, they will never press the buttons unleashing their angels of death and destruction unless pushed into a very tight corner in a region of vital national interest. Therefore, while the major Powers of the Eastern and Western blocs have enjoyed peace for over 40 years, they encourage, seduce and inveigle their surrogates in the third world to carry on their struggle on a conventional level.

The majority of the conflicts in the world since 1945 have occurred, or are occurring, in the third world. These conflicts have been or are being fueled by conventional weapons from the super-Powers and their allies in pursuit of their own selfish interests. The danger, therefore, lies in an escalation of conventional conflicts in the third world where both super-Powers and their allies have interests and support rival parties.

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

According to the World Armaments and Disarmaments Yearbook, 1983 of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the super-Powers are the principal suppliers of conventional weapons to the third world, in their efforts to compete for political and economic influence. The recent report of the Secretary-General on a study dealing with all aspects of the conventional-arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces, document A/39/348 dated 31 August 1984, provides further evidence of the major role that the super-Powers and their allies play in acting as merchants of death. For instance, during the period 1978 to 1982, the United States and the Soviet Union together accounted for about two-thirds of total arms exports of major weapons. Estimates from the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency indicate that the global arms trade has progressively expanded, in constant 1981 prices, from $US 20.3 billion in 1972 to $US 34.3 billion in 1982. Furthermore, of the $US 800 billion spent in 1983 on military activities, at least four-fifths, it is generally believed, was absorbed by conventional arms and armed forces.

The super-Powers are also not averse to unleashing conventional warfare against their weaker neighbours, as evidenced by the murderous campaign of aggression by one super-Power against the brave people of Afghanistan. While we in this Committee unceasingly discuss the danger of nuclear war, thousands of innocent men, women and children are being mowed down by tanks, helicopter gunships, jet fighters and so forth, only because they are defending their homeland against aggression.

Unfortunately, some countries of the third world have, for one reason or another, opened themselves to the manipulation of one or the other super-Power. In South-East Asia, one country has sought the assistance of a super-Power in order to advance its imperialistic interests in Cambodia. That country has been waging a

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

bloody conventional war against Cambodian nationalists, threatening in the process the territorial integrity of Thailand as well as the stability of South-East Asia.

Third-world countries, especially the small and weak, therefore face a more immediate and direct threat to their national security and survival from conventional conflicts than from a nuclear holocaust. The Permanent Representative of Zambia and President of the General Assembly, at its thirty-ninth session, Ambassador Paul Lusaka, correctly pointed out the deleterious nature of conventional armaments and warfare in an article entitled "The United Nations and Disarmament at Forty" in the journal Disarmament, summer 1985, when he wrote:

> "The emphasis on nuclear disarmament thus presented does not in any way diminish the priority attention which should be accorded and applied to conventional weapons and other non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Conventional weapons pose a practical lethal danger to human life. The world has indeed been seriously scarred by violence and conflict borne out of conventional war."

It should also be borne in mind that the world's armed forces are estimated to total more than 25 million military personnel. This represents an increase of more than 30 per cent over the past two decades. Conservative estimates indicate that the total conventional weapons inventory includes over 140,000 main battle tanks, over 35,000 combat aircraft, 21,000 helicopters, over 1,100 major surface ships and over 700 attack submarines.

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

Unlike nuclear weapons, these weapons have been or are still being used in many conflicts throughout the third world.

While it is not my intention to downgrade the urgent need to discuss and debate the issue of nuclear disarmament, I sincerely believe that the 16 million to 25 million souls who have perished in conventional conflicts deserve our giving an equal amount of time, effort and consideration to discussing in this Committee the dangers of conventional war as well as the production, deployment and export of conventional weapons to the third world by the super-Powers and their allies. I therefore fully agree with the remark made earlier by the representative of Finland, Mr. Klaus Tornudd, when he said:

"The conventional arms build-up has traditionally been overshadowed by a preoccupation with the threat presented by nuclear weapons." (supra, p. 26)

Given the above realities, third-world countries should give careful and serious consideration to the question as to whether one should continue to devote a disproportionately large amount of time to discussing nuclear war and its self-evident dangers. Rather, what should concern us in the third world is whether the super-Powers will be able to conclude an arms control agreement which will take not only into account their interests but, more important, also restrain or even limit their ability to exercise force in the third world for their own ends. We have had too many examples of the use of conventional force by the super-Powers and/or their allies or surrogates allegedly in defence of their interests to ignore the urgent need to introduce some element of security for third-world countries, especially the small and weak. We dismiss this fact of life only at our peril.

(Mr. Cheang, Singapore)

Therefore we should concentrate our efforts during this fortieth commemorative session on trying to resolve the issues of peace and security which are at present wreaking havoc on earth, although some would like to see us dissipating our energies by devoting our attention to the heavens.

We should stress here that the danger we in the third world face emanates primarily from conventional conflicts, not from nuclear silos or space-based weapons. Hence, more emphasis ought to be placed in this Committee on debating conventional conflicts, the conventional arms race and the exporting of conventional weapons to the third world by the super-Powers and their allies. This would then reflect, I believe, the realities of the international political scene and not the pet projects of the super-Powers, especially those projects directed only at gaining cheap propaganda victories and cynically devoid of sincerity or feasibility. The super-Powers and their allies have for too long used this Committee as an arena for staging contests of strength and confrontation, using the issue of nuclear war and disarmament. Let us once and for all put a stop to these attempts to turn this Committee into another of the many international forums wherein the only objective is to score propaganda points over one's adversary.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.