UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
Tenth meeting
held on
Monday, 21 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALPMAN (Turkey)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

This record is subject to correction
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned
within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750,
2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/46/PV.10
25 October 1991

ENGLISH

91-61505 6686V (E)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alpman (Turkey), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. RIVERO (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Cuba wishes, first of all, to extend to the Chairman and to the other officers of the Committee our congratulations oa their election. We are confident that under their leadership we shall be able to bring our work to a successful conclusion. In that work, they can rely on our delegation's full cooperation.

la our statement today we should like to refer to some of the disarmament items on our agenda, while reserving our consideration of other subjects, of egual importance, for another time.

Recently, we have witnessed new steps forward in the area of nuclear disarmament. After a long process of negotiation, last July the Soviet Union and the United States signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), according to which about 30 per cent of the strategic nuclear weapons of both countries will be destroyed,

Last September, the President of the United States put forward an initiative whereby, inter alia, some categories of nuclear weapons would be unilaterally eliminated; a few days later, his Soviet counterpart did likewise in announcing unilateral elimination of certain weapons categories, and also proposed a new moratorium on nuclear tests.

Towards the end of last week, the nole politico-military grouping which still persists in remaining in existence, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), decided to eliminate 50 per cent of all the airborne nuclear bombs, which it has stored and available for delivery.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

Hardly 48 hours ago, we learaed that, according to officials of the United States Government, the United States Government intended to withdraw all the nuclear weapons that it has deployed in United States military bases in the south of the Korean peninsula, in the event that this is carried out, it will without a doubt contribute to the realization of the proposal by the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to establish a nuclear-free zone in that part of the world.

The delegation of Cubs welcomes these steps and the measures the two major Powers have been taking to eliminate the danger of a nuclear conflagration, in accordance with the demands of the international community.

The delegation of Cuba expresses its confidence that the aforementioned measures will be implemented in full; that other, farther-reaching steps in the same direction will be taken in the days and months to come; and that, in due time, other nuclear Powers will be involved in the process. In so doing it reiterates that the nuclear warheads withdrawn under the agreements or measures which have been adopted should not be allowed to be used to improve and modernise the nuclear weapons which still exist.

The goals of achieving a total and definitive suspension of nuclear-weapoa tests and of possibly turning the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty coatiaue to be objectives of the international community, objectives which our delegation fully supports although it will not be achieved despite the fact that the Past-West confrontation has come to an end. Pursuant to a major initiative undertaken by a group of non-aligned countries, the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty took place last January; the Conference did not succeed as was desired, as it concluded merely with an agreement to continue consultations.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

Also in the nuclear arena, the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmamont, he8 been unable, in the are8 of moratoriums on nuclear tests, to begin its negotiating activities, basically because of the opposition of some delegations. Our delegation urges the par:ies to the bilateral dialogue to follow up oa tho multilateral level. The recent initiative by Sweden, whereby it put forward a draft comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty - which we welcome - is another opportunity to express the necessary political will and the necessary will to negotiate.

A8 long a8 nuclear weapons continue to exist, the danger of their being used, or of the threat that they will be used, will persist. Our delegation, therefore, subscribes to the criterion that, even if the best assurance of the non-use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, while they continue to be part of the arsenals of some States - as an expression of doctrines and concept8 which have *never* been accepted by the international community, and are, moreover, outmoded and aimed at strategic enemies and rivals which have already ceased to exist - it will be necessary to provide the necessary security guarantee8 againrt the use or threat of use of these weapons to countries which, like Cuba, do not possess nuclear weapons.

In other areas of disarmament, intense *work* has been carried out over the part year. Within the Conference on Disarmament, negotiations have been intensified with a view to concluding the convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, which will provide for the destruction of such weapons and of their production facilities, and work is continuing intensively with a view to concluding negotiations as quickly as possible, and a8 early as possible in 1992.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

The incorporation in the convention of a ban on the use of these weapons, the renunciation by the two countries which possess these weapons Of their intention to keep 2 per cent of their chemical arsenals after the stipulated period for them to be destroyed - an intention which had ken rejected by a number of countries - and the renunciation by one of those countries of retaliation, or retaliation in reprisal - all these were factor8 of major importance and obstaoler which were eliminated in order for the work to continue.

There remain key questions to be resolved: for example, the issue of verification in the civilian sector of the chemical industry; the provisions concerning the composition, functions and role of the ● xeoutive council; and the issue of the financing of the activities of the future organisation. These are all matters about which our delegation has already stated its views and has, on some subjects, already put forward specific ideas.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

For Cuba, a country that does not possess chemical weapons, as we stated at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament held on 22 August 1991, the conclusion of a non-discriminatory convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, transfer or use of such weapons end containing the necessary provisions for destroying existing arsenals, production installations and launching systems, is not only of major importance but would also provide an indispensable guarantee for our security.

We will continue to participate in the negotiations on the future convention. In Cuba's view, the coavention rhould be universal in character and include all States possessing chemical weapons. All States, whether chemical-weapon States or not, should have equal obligations and rights, although, in order to be realistic, those States possessing such weapons should have certain additional obligations. The coavention must ensure that after ths initial period of destruction no State party could again have stockpiles of such weapons or have the capacity to produce them. The convention must also cover all existing chemical weapons and production and stockpiling facilities.

It must not contain any provision that might limit or restrict international trade in chemical substance8 for uses not prohibited by the convention. We share the view already expressed by a number of delegations that, once the convention has been concluded, there should he no additional control machinery that right establish a double standard set up to supervise ♦♋♏ ♦♐♋♎♏ in chemical • b8tance8 for approved purposes, The convention must include provisions for assistance in case of the use or threat of use of chemical weapon8 against another State party.

(M r ,)

The ● conomic'and technological development of States parties must not be adversely affected in any way. With regard to verification, en adequate balance must be struck between the need for a reliable and effective system and what may be actually viable without becoming an unnecessary financial burden, that might even act as a disincentive to universal accession to the convention.

The types of inspection to be undertaken must be complementary. They must constitute au essential minimum and must be a8 unintrusive a8 possible. They must not affect the legitimate manufacturing interest8 of States. Inspection by denunciation must never be used indiscriminately by any State, and no political or other kind8 of consideration must enter into the inspection process.

Before concluding on the subject of chemical weapons, the delegation of Cuba wishes to state that it welcomes the initiative taken by the Finnish authorities to organise training courses on matter8 closely related to verification activities. We also welcome the priority given to analytical chemical8 from developing countries.

Cuba has already participated in a useful training course for those who will eventually work in some future national authority or a8 possible inspector8 in the technical secretariat of some future organization. We very much appreciate that initiative because of the high scientific and technological level of the training and because of it8 significance for international cooperation, especially with the developing countries.

At the same time, Cuba would urge other countries to promote such cooperation in other area8 related to the convention.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

An important milestone war reached with the successful conclusion last September of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on the prohibition of biological weapons. We feel that that Conference and the Final Declaration restated two fundamental principles: the rejection of the very existence of such weapon8 of mass destruction and the continuing need to respect the ban while allowing for peaceful uses.

In spite of all the military and other harassments to which Cuba ha8 been subject over the past three decade8 and in spite of it8 economical 8traagulation by the world's most developed country through its criminal economic blockade, Cuba, at the cost of major sacrifices, ha8 accumulated the necessary scientific and technological knowledge to serve it8 social needs. This include8 knowledge in the fields of medicine, biotechnology *and* genetic engineering. At the present time we have a large army of scientists who, through innovative contributions and discoveries, have raised our national standards in the fields of health and scientific applications. We have also brought these benefits to other countries.

Because of this high level of scientific development Cuba is prepared to contribute expert8 for the various tasks that will be performed under the aegis of ths United Nations and of the Convention.

The expansion of confidence-building measures agreed to at the last conference on that subject will certainly help to promote the attainment of the Convention'8 objectives. My country ha8 participated in information exchanges on matters related to the Convention, and we urge others who have

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

not yet done 80 to take part. At the same time, we urge those who are not yet parties to the Convention to accede to it.

The regional aspects of conventional disarmament have also developed recently. This is especially true in Europe, as evidenced by the agreements signed last November in Paris. These agreements will undoubtedly help to reduce the gigantic military arsenals existing in that continent. By the same token, tensions between State8 in that region should also be lessened.

As we have already stated, the Cuban delegation believe8 that progress in the area Of conventional disarmament cannot be separated from progress in negotiations concerning nuclear and Other weapon8 of ma88 destruc:ion.

As we consider conventions1 disarmament in the regional framework, we must take into account the characteristics and peculiarities of each region; the degree of tension and conflict that already exists; the disparity between volume of weapons and armed forces; and the trade in aud production of weapons.

Obviously, if 8uch negotiation8 are to be realistic and stand any chance of success, not only the State8 of the region but also outside State8 that have military bases or troop8 in the region should participate. A commitment by nuclear and other ailitarily important State8 to respect the agreements reached in various region8 would obviously be another factor favouring the success of such agreements.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

On the subject of international transfer8 of conventional arms, we want to thank the Secretary-General and the governmental ● ☒□◆□♦◆ who assisted him for the study they have carried out. The study shows the importance Of this subject and the need for in-depth analysis.

We wish to express a few preliminary thoughts on this aatter. The Cuban delegation agrees that transparency in information can help eliminate unfounded suspicion and fear with respect to the position and behaviour of a given State and can help prevent the spiralling possession of weapons, which results in a great wastage of resources needed for the economic and social development Of peoples.

With respect to arm6 transfers, that concept CM be useful only if accompanied by reference8 to other way8 by which States come into possession of weapons, particularly those of a threatening or aggressive nature: that is, production and stockpiling. It would be truly unfair and discriminatory to ask a State that depend8 on weapon8 imports to defend it8 sovereignty to tell the world what type8 and quantities of weapons it ha8 received while States that continuously produce, update and develop all manner of weapons, making use of any international situation a8 a proving-ground, are permitted to remain silent on their production figure8 and their stockpiles of weapon8 for export or, more dangerous still, for arming their own force8 on their territories or on their military bases throughout the world.

Although the moral fibre and courage of a people determined to defend to the death it8 homeland from aggression weigh8 more heavily than the weaponry it8 possesses, we must not underestimate security considerations. High ideals and aspirations to peace must not make us forget the realities. Countries which, like Cuba, have been - end, even at the dawn of the so-called new world

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

order, remain - the target of constant threat8 and aggression of all kinds, including armed military throat8 making use of the sophisticated techniques of war produced by the United States military-industrial complex, cannot share partial concepts or proposals that foment insecurity rather than building confidence.

Among the factors that motivate States to acquire weapons, the study highlight8 military threats. We fully agree with that assessment, and with the view that it is the sovereign right of every State to acquire weapon8 for it8 defence. But it would have been useful to stress several points that are missing from the conclusions and recommendations ret forth in the study despite their importance and their impact in reducing arm8 transfers.

I am referring to: the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes; the non-use or threat of use of force; non-agression; the principle *that* territory is not to be occupied by force; and full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. To abide by and implement strictly those principles of international law, which are also enshrined in the Charter, would unquestionably be the best confidence-building measure, one that would bring State8 greater success in their effort8 to achieve general and complete disarmament and to devote all possible resources to the economic and social development of their peoples.

In keeping with it8 calling and desire to enable all people8 to live in a just, worthy and lasting peace, Cub8 will support any legitimate, non-discriminatory measure that can help our people8 achieve the peace and security they desire. But we cannot fail to express our surprise that some Of the countries which for years have fanned hostility and promoted fratricidal struggles between peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America by flooding

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

certain countries with weapons end transferring weapons-production technology to them, causing vart losses of resources and lives and prejudicing their sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination and independence, are Bow making themselves out to be models and champions of the immediate implementation Of multilateral machinery on arm8 transfers. That machinery is carefully devised to meet their conditions and suit their interesta, and is offered a8 a first, innocent instrument that might be needed in the future to determine - by who knows what criteria - whether a given State will be allowed to import weapon8 for its own defence.

Today we are talking of transparency in arms transfers; tomorrow we may be talking about limiting such transfers. But in Our discussions of general and complete disarmament we have agreed that the level of armament should be the minimum necessary to defend national sovereignty and internal order, Thus, to achieve our purposes we must al80 talk aow of transparency in production, stockpiling and transfer8 both of arms and of technologies - all without forgetting the principle of the need to maintain the security of States. Perhaps tomorrowwe candiscusslimiting the production, stockpiling and transfer of weapons and weapon8 technology.

We must not limit our scope. Today there is great concern about weapons of ma88 destruction, and we have heard many proposals for preventing their spread. We could easily include conventional weapons along with weapons of ma88 destruction in our deliberation8 and our agreements.

The Cuban delegation believes that this item deserves thorough, serious consideration, and thst Member States should be asked to state their views on the subject.

(Mr. Rivero, Cuba)

We consider that, to be useful, any confidence-building measures we might eventually adopt should meet the following criteria: they should be adopted without a vote and enjoy the support Of all delegations; they should be strictly voluntary; they should take into account the security interests of States; they should be universal, broad and non-discriminatory; and, with respect to transparency, they must involve consultations with and partiaipatioa by, both suppliers and receivers.

Obviously, we must define what specific weapon8 are to be included in the register. That identification should be made at another time, but my delegation considers that special attention must be given to all weapon8 that could be considered offensive weapons and to those t&at have been used in surprise attacks and to commit aggression against States.

May MOROMIECKI (Poland): I express congratulations to the Chairman, and to the other officers of the Committee on their election. I also wish to [illegible] warm greetings to Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi and to the able members of his staff, on whose competence we depend so much.

Many speakers in the general debate at this session of the Assembly, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Skubiszewski, referred to the momentous times through which the international community is living. Some considered the unprecedented unanimous upholding of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter by the permanent members of the Security Council to mark a watershed in the history of the United Nations and in international relations at large. Others considered as history in the making the spontaneous collapse of ideologies, alignments and power structures and their replacement, as reference points, by the rule of law and common human values. Both views appear to be accurate. Equally accurate is the opinion of the Secretary-General, who states in his annual report;

> "The perspectives that have now been opened should enable us to weave collective approaches in [the field of arms limitation and disarmament] more tightly into the fabric of peace-making and conflict control@@. (A/46/1, p. 11)

Indeed, as the report notes, the militarisation of human society is one of the principal sources of chronic instability in international relations and, I would add, on the national level as well. An aspiration to reduce this instability, taking advantage of the end to the 40-year-long cold war, stands out as a primordial challenge to the United Nations.

(M t .

The sense of history, Of the unique opportunities as well a8 the challenges,is perhaps nowhere more pronounced 'than in the area8 falling within the purview of this Committee - that is to say, peace, international security and disarmament.

The steady degradation of the international security environment in term8 of the vital East-West platform was checked *and* dramatically reversed with the signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in November 1990 in Paris. Strict implementationof the Treaty is of paramount importance to stability and security not in Europe alone. The process of ratification and entry into force of the Treaty should therefore be completed as loon a8 possible. We believe, moreover, that succession to the obligation8 under the Treaty must take place with regard to all State8 emerging on Soviet territory.

Those two requirements have to be met if European manpower levels are to be aut substantially in a new negotiating forum which, it is hoped, will be established next year with the partiaipatioa of all the State8 of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCB). The CFB Treaty and the now-operational regime provided for in the Vienna Document on confidence- and ● ecuritpbuildirrg measures are important building blocks of a system of security, stability and cooperation in Burope which ha8 important extra-regional implications. It is to be hoped that the open skies regime - if and when agreed upon - will add a new and meaningful dimension to the confidence-building process. It is our firm view that all the State8 of Europe should associate themselves with t&e open skier concept given it8 potential role and it8 aoatribution to confidence and security in Europe.

(Mr.

For it8 part, Poland seeks to promote this objective - a cooperative system of equal security for all - by closer and growing integration with the European Communities, the Council of Europe and other European institutions a8 well a8 through - with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which continues to exert au important and stabilising influence in Burope. Of no less importance in this endeavour are Poland's friendly relations with all the neighbouring and other State8 with which it shares common valuer, common interests and common aspirations. This community of values, interests and aspirations is manifested by our subregional cooperation - trilateral with the Republic of Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic; and hexagonal with, besides these two States, also include8 Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia.

it is our fervent hope that the ongoing ethnic strife that is tearing Yugoslavia apart will not ultimately result in irreparable damage to the fabric of subregional stability, eroding in the process the broader go818 0% regional security systems now maturing in Burope.

A8 for Poland's neighbour8 in the East and in the West, two important Treaties have just been ratified by united Germany and Poland, and we view with confidence the ongoing negotiation8 of the treaty with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic8 and the declarations on mutual relation8 with the neighbouring Republics that either have been or soon will be completed.

Finally, we attach great importance to promoting - and shall spare no effort to this end - a close inter-state cooperative scheme in the Baltic region designed to cover all parties situated around the Baltic region.

International security, confidence and cooperation need to be constantly buttressed if they are to withstand the challenges posed by regional disputes

(M t .

and conflicts in Europe and beyond. While political solutions may in such cases bring badly needed relief, they will stand little chance of enduring if they are not followed by meaningful arm8 control measures that not only will stem further growth but will cut back ● ri8ting arsenals. That is certainly the case in the Middle East. Poland, which ha8 always lent it8 support to the concept Of a nuclear-weapon-free sone in the region, is gratified by the timely initiatives of President Mubarak of Egypt and President Bush of the United States, which, if followed through, could result in much-needed stability in the region. In addition, the broader proposals of President Mitterrand of France and of Prime Minister Major of the United Kingdom - the latter pertaining especially to oonveatioaal weapon8 - commend themselves to careful examination and support by the international community.

The Gulf war painfully demonstrated how vulnerable State8 are in the face of ruthless aggression; yet the resolution of the conflict ha8 also shown the very real potential of the Waited Nations system and also the resolve of it8 member8 to uphold the Charter and enforce respect for it8 fundamental principles. The current process of peace management in Iraq is 8180 indicative of the role the Waited Nations can successfully play both in regard to international peace and security and in regard to disarmament.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

The mandatory elimination of Iraq's weapon8 of mass destruction pursuant to Security Counail resolution 687 (1991) merely confirm8 the lessons which the international community needs to learn from the case of Iraq's near-successful attempt at developing nuclear weapon8 - contrary to it8 obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon8 (NPT) - and from it8 possession of other weapons of ma88 destruction.

As a strong supporter of the NPT, Poland is among those parties to the NPT which strongly encourage the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to proceed to a substantive revision and reinforcement Of the effectiveness of it8 present safeguards system, which ha8 almost failed in Iraq. The Agency's record of achievement, experience and expertise appear8 to us to be sufficient guarantee that this goal CM be reached.

At this juncture, I should like to restate my country's profound satisfaction at the latest confirmation Of the Vitality and attractiveness Of the NPT. With the recent accession of Lithuania and of four African State8 - South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe - to the NPT, the Treaty has become a much more effective and universal instrument. The non-proliferation regime is also gaining in substance and credibility as a result of the announced intention of Prance and China, both nuclear Power8 and permanent member8 *of the* Security Council, to become parties to it.

Let me stress in this context that Poland attaches the utmost importance to the unequivocal declaration made in this Committee on 14 October by the Minister for Foreign Affair8 of Ukraine, Mr. Anatoly Zlenko, that hi8 country "'. . . doe8 not seek to possess nuclear weapons'" (A/C.1/46/PV.3, p. 79-80). We have been heartened that Ukraine "'... intends to join the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty a8 a non-nuclear State'" (ibid.).

(Mr. Moroniecki, Poland)

This is indeed an ● aaouraging policy statement by a aouatry with the scars of the Chernobyl disaster still fresh in it8 memory, a8 it is in the memory of it8 neighbours.

Polaad is confident that Ukraine will waste no time in becoming a party to the Treaty. As a strong proponent of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, our aouatry is committed to the further consolidation of the Treaty and its indefinite ● xtea8ioa at the 1995 review conference. We share the view of those delegations which believe that the preparatory process for the Conference should commence in 1993.

The review procedure of another multilateral arms ooatrol agreement, the biological and toxin weapon8 Convention, ran it8 course at Geneva late last month. It8 outcome is to our full satisfaction. We believe that the progress made with respect to aoafideaae-building measures will contribute significantly to the openness of activities relevant to the Coaveatioa, thus strengthening it8 effectiveness and oredibility. We are satisfied that the decision of the Conference ♦□ ● atru8t to a group of experts the talk of identifying and examining the scientific and technical aspects of potential verification measures is in the interests of reinforcing and promoting the universal appeal of the biological weapon8 Convention.

Poland strongly commends the Secretary-General on his informative and valuable report (A/46/301) aoataiaing the study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of aoaveational arms. Enhanced transparency in such trarsfers is indispensable, ● 8peaially in unstable and conf liat-prone areas. Without prejudice to the right of States to self-defence ● a8hrined in Article SI of the Charter, such traarpareaay mechanisms, under United Nations auspices, would function a8 an invaluable

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

early warning system to alert the international community to dangerous accumulations of arms which are clearly in excess of legitimate self-defence requirements.

We lend our full support to, and will co-sponsor, the initiative of the European Community countries to establish a non-discriminatory register of conventional arms transfers, administered by the United Nations. We are confident that, given the European experience of the practical application of the principle of reasonable sufficiency of military force and of transparency in military matters, the draft resolution will commend itself, with strong support, to the First Committee.

Apart from espousing an effective international mechanism and procedures for checking further proliferation of atomic, biological and chemical weapons, Poland is also making a meaningful contribution to efforts to develop and extend the scope of a workable missile technology control regime.

At the beginning of my statement I referred to history in the making, with all its unprecedented opportunities and challenges to man's natural quest for a safe and secure future. Recent developments in the area of nuclear disarmament are a case in point. Following on the now-consummated Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) and the recently-signed Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) - which we hope will soon be ratified by both its signatories - the two nuclear super-Powers have just come forward with a new, important gage of their special responsibility in the realm of nuclear arms control and disarmament.

Poland has welcomed with profound gratification President Bush's historic initiative of 27 September concerning the unilateral reduction of the United

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

States nuclear arsenal. We have likewise hailed the subsequent positive response by President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union in cutting down the Soviet nuclear stockpile also. Thanks to there imaginative and ● peah-making decisions, people everywhere can breathe a deep sigh of relief that, for the first time in four decades, the strategic nuclear bomber8 of the two Powers have finally been stood down from their constant alert. To echo the words of Ronald F. Lehman II, the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in this Committee on 13 October, the two nuclear Powers "have begun to step down the thermonuclear ladder" (A/C.1/46/PV.4, p. 31). This is truly a historic turning-point. Poland, as, I am sure, other European States au well, now look forward to a possible breakthrough in regard to rhort-range nuclear arms also.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me briefly turn to what can be called a housekeeping problem of the First Committee: the rationalisation and streamlining of its agenda with a view to enhanced effectiveness commensurate with the wind8 of change and with the opportunities that are now opening up. Like the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Henrik Wagenmakers, who was speaking on behalf of the European Community member States, Poland believer that the general yardstick for modifications rhould be "effectiveness before rhetoric and flexibility before dogmatism" (A/C.1/46/PV.3, p. 63).

We also see much merit in the arguments for change adduced by the delegation of New Zealand. Indeed, the Committee would be well advised to take a close look at those agenda items and procedures which at this time are clearly irrelevant and/or have been overtaken by events, In regard both to the ● ◆♌◆♦♋■♋♏ and the mechanics of disarmament, let me also state in

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

conclusion that we welcome and support the valuable proposal by the Hungarian delegation concerning the desirability of ● rtablirhing a small United Nations peace and disarmament information centre in Europe alro. The arguments for ● ch a step speak for themselves.

(Mr. Woroniecki, Poland)

The delegation of Poland believe8 that the streamlining of the agenda and procedure of the Disarmament Commission ha8 set a valuable precedent and example for the First Committee to study and, perhaps, follow.

The delegation of Poland would like to reserve its right to address in a separate statement at M appropriate later date some of the issues arising from the report of the Conference on Disarmament, especially the task of halting the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and developing the indispensable verification procedures.

Mr. LIM (Singapore): With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent events, the cold war has finally ended. Two super-Powers are not only cooperating in the political and economic spheres but are also working together in nuclear disarmament. Recent announcements have raised the world'8 hopes of reducing the immense nuclear arsenals of both sides, a development which we warmly welcome. While the realisation of total nuclear disarmament still seems to be a very distant possibility, we have begun taking the first careful steps in that direction.

The strangest paradox is that while global tensions are being eased by super-Power détente and move8 towards eliminating some categories of weapons, those positive steps are not being emulated in the third world. Indeed, as fast a8 some old regional conflicta are resolved, new areas of conflict are emerging, for instance in the Balkans. The lesson that some developing nation8 have drawn from tho Gulf conflict is that since not all are blessed with vast oil resources, perhaps it is bettor to romain armed against any contingencies - and to be armed, preferably, with the latest precision-guided munitions and weapons systems. Hence, the cold war may be replaced by ono or two "little hot wars" conducted by nations that CM afford noithor tho

(Mr. Lim, Singapore)

destructive consequences of armed oonfliat nor the immense economic burdens of expensive arm8 import8 and huge military infrastructures.

It is against such a background that the proposal for a United Nationr arms register mustbe viewed. We welcome it a8 an attempt to increase transparency in iatornational arm8 transfers. We appreciate its valuo as a confidence-building measure. It may be ttuo that such measures may load nation8 to moderation in arming themselves and to the concentration of scarce resources on socio-economic development.

While supporting the proposal for a United Nations arm register in principle, we wish to offer certain comments and views. As stated in the Charter of the United Nations, ● ❖ℳ❒⍓ country has a right to loqitimato self-defence. Indeed, one of tho attribute8 of sovereignty is that any nation State that claims to bo independent and sovereign should be ablo to defend its people and borders from unprovoked aggression. It OM do so by itself or in a coalition with friends and allies, who are more inclined to give support and assistance if that State is also boon to bo making strong efforts to protect itself, *and* not just getting a free ride. Although the recent Gulf war shows that the United Nations ha8 the resolve and capability to reverse aggression, it is a costly and painful process fraught with many uncertainties. Elation ovor that victory should not mislead us into believing that thore is now an altornativo and automatic international shield against aggression. Hence, non-excessive national-dofonco ● qendituro remains both necessary and justified.

Defence expenditures CM bo viewed a8 national insurance ● uponditurea, which Provido assurance to both citisens and foreign investors. A judicious level at dofonce spending is a signal that a country takes its defence

(Mr. Lim, Singapore)

responsibilities seriously. Many now countries often use compulsory military eorvioo as a nation-building instrument, and this gives it8 citisens confidence that if aonfliat doe8 break out they will be adequatoly armed and trained, This is tho vital basis for a country's intornal and ● xtornal stability. The social and ● aonomia return8 of ouch stability are ● normu8, provided, of course, that 8uah defence expenditures should be affordable and commensurate with the security needs.

It is often observed that defence expenditures havo a negative ● ffeat on social and ● aonomia development. This is too simplistic a view, as we have ● xplainod above. That statement usually conjures up an image of a military dictatorship spending billion8 on arms and showering benefits on it8 armed forces. While that may be true in certain cases, more Often than not, whoa an economy suffers decay, it is usually mismanagement of tho economy that bears the greater fault and not so much dofonco expenditure. Astute management of scarce oaonomic resources is the key to tho economic growth of a nation. This involves a judicious balance between allocating adequato resources for soaio-economic nerds and allocating thorn for security needs.

Developing countries depend greatly on the transfer of technology to achieve economic growth. Many civilian tochnologios havo military applications. Indeed, it is not unusual for a technology to be developed in a military research project in tho first instance before king used in civilian application8 - electronics, aerospace, information systems, material8 and others. It is easy to ● avi8age a situation in which developed nations could impede tho transfer of dual-use technology to doveloping nations on the pretext that they have military applications. Developing countries will thoroforo nood to study carofulty whether the proposed United Nation8 arm8

(Mr. Lim, Singapore)

register will have a negative impact on the transfer of toahnology, which ha8 important ● eoaoaio implications.

We should therefore be aaroful whoa considering any measure aimed at confidence-building that ha8 tho potential to load to this result. A8 we understand it, the categories of arm8 that are to be reported in the proposed United Nations arm8 register aro meant to be flexible and open to futuro revisions. This introduces the possibility of including such so-called technology-transfer items a8 production licensing, training, computer software, and high-tech eloctronio equipment, aoao of which is regarded as arm8 in the conventional sense. Our position is that those item8 aro vital to economic development. The proposed United Nation8 arms register should not therefore be a means to restrict their flow to developing economies.

A nation's security is something that its people must take most seriously. Any move that affoot8 national security must be carefully considered. Therefore, we would like to emphasise the importance of national security considerations in the context of transparency measures. This is in keeping with the principle Of undiminished security for all States. In this context, we note that tho proposed United Nation8 arms register contains provisions that may ● xp8ab it to inaludo other military matter8 beyond mere arm8 transfer. It is important that at the same time 8UCb provisions should stipulate this very important principle in ordor to assuage tho fear8 of all developing countries. Developing countries would feel mere assured that their national security is not compromised if it woro clearly stated in writing that the proposed United Nation8 arms register is organised on a voluntary basis and that whatever information that is disclosed is consonant with their

(Mr. Lim, Singapore)

national-security considerations. This is an absolutely ● arontial feature for many developing countries.

In addition, with the exception of arms transfers, all other transparency andconfidence-buildingmeasuresmay be more ● ffoativoly implemented on a bilateral or multilateral basis. That approaah enhances regional security, at which many transparency measures are aimed. Itis not imposed on any State and thus does not engender any fooling of being intruded upon. such feelings CM, more often than not, erode trust rather than build it. It increases direct contact between nations as they share their national security concerns, thereby promoting mutual understanding.

(Mr. Lim, Singapore)

Trust is beat built up by direct communication between the patties involved, not through an intermediary. When confidence-building is developed to a mature level, it may include bilateral exchanges not just in the military sphere but at all levels of society. This is what we have been engaged in within the region of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), where our armed fotaos conduct annual bilatoral exercises which promote mutual trust while our peoples establish economic, social and cultural ties.

Finally, we are concerned that there is an unusual rush on an issue which is of basic importance to all countries. The United Nations arm8 register is clearly a proposal that affects the national security of all countries, Careful study and thorough discussion are absolutely necessary because of the numerous implications and nuances and should be carefully carried out in a proper time frame by qualified experts who have been given a correct and precise mandate and terms of reference. All countries should be given the chance to state their views, and the recommendations of the experts should then be thoroughly examined again by Member States. With the recent Gulf conflict demonstrating that the world is still a dangerous place for small developing countries, we would advise that we should proceed with caution and due thought in formulating any agreement on international arms transfers and tbat there be proper discussions in that connection.

Mrs. RODRIGUEZ (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I want first of all to rtate the satisfaction of my delegation at the election of Mr. Robert Mroziewicz of Poland to the chairmanship of this very important Committee, and to congratulate the other Committee officers, who share the responsibility for guiding our work to success. We wish also to express our

(Mrs. Rodriques, Uruguay)

appreciation for the excellent work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and for tho positive endeavours of the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and his rtaff.

There is special meaning in the participation in this Committee of a mall, peaceful country that respects the law and whose roaurity is baaed on the concept of collective reaurity. Let me raise the voice of a aouatry committed solely to law and to principles.

This is unquestionably a historic session of the General Assembly. It is taking place as the world crosses tho threshold of a new era marked by the spread of democracy through an open, changing and inexhaustible process. The century now coming to an end will be known as the century in which democracy was revalued and restored. Once again we see that the struggle for democratic ideals has been and continues to be the great motive force of history. The factors in play could lead to a new world order, the result of many elements and related to this triumph of democracy.

The end of the cold war, growing understanding among the great Powers and the political changes in Eastern Europe are among the events that augur well for the advent of the new international order to which we aspire, a new order that must be established and dovoloped in the coming decades. When we talk of building a new international order we are not thinking merely of a modified rtatur quo or a new distribution of world power. We are trying rightly to ensure free coexistence among States, on the basis of the principle8 of the Charter, for all members of the iateraatioaal community.

(Mrs. Rodriguez, Uruguay)

The prohibition of the use of force, which ● xrtails respect for ths basic principle of non-intervention, should be further strengthened as ths keystone of international peace. The peaceful settlement of disputes should become invariable practice and should ● naoqass the solution or containment of conflicts through properly coordinated action by the United Watioas and regional organisations.

The disturbing and vivid experience of the recent Gulf crisis clearly proves the need for States in their actions to abide strictly by their obligation8 stemming from the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Clearly, there is a close and unbreakable link between the coucspt of disarmament and arms limitation and oontrol on the one hand and the concept peace and security on the other. Although dividing walls may crumble, although ideological confrontations may ease, although barriers to communication and interchange may fall, although the arm of democracy and freedom is stretching out to destroy anachronistic authoritarian systems, there can be no stable and lasting peace 80 loag as gigantic arsenals exist throughout the world ready for use by any authoritarian, aggressive Government. Uruguay has never been and never will be neutral on this subject. There can ha no neutrality between tha aggressor and the victim, between the invader and the one struggling to regain his violated rights and reestablish international law.

It is only a few months since a flagrant violation of international law which provided perfect proof that without a process of arms limitation and regulation there can be no genuine peace. The 'ragility of our world order was starkly highlighted, and we must now approach our task with even greater urgency.

(Mrs. Rodrigues, Uruguay)

The end of the cold war door not necessarily wan the end of the possibility of warlike aonfliat. Though fortunately the danger of an imminent worldwide aoaflagration has waned, threats to peace and security remain. We must thermfore ensure that the system of collective security be applied with complete respect for the Charter so that the competent United Nations bodies can exercise effective control.

In our view, we CM never place too much stress oa the fact that the future stability, peace and security of the world do not depend exclusively on the effective functioning of machinery designed to deal with extreme circumstances; this makes recourse to collective measures inevitable. Hence ths ever increasing need for multilateral preventive diplomacy making it possible to monitor and contain potential conflicts.

The now international situation should be used to ● tixulato the development of intsrnatioaal law in all fields. The law relating to disarmament and arms regulation CM particularly benefit from this new favourable situation. Uruguay hopes this new political climate will load to universal acceptance of existing arms-control and arms-reduction treaties and to the signing and, above all, the good-faith compliance with new treaties signifying progress in this ares, reducing tension and generating a healthy climate of security.

We have been pleased over the past year to note very important progress in the limitation of strategic arms, thanks t o the recent agreements between the USSR and the United States. President Bush's announcement concerning the unilateral ● lamination of all tactical nuclear weapons and thm offer to negotiate with the USSR on continued reductions of strategic weapons

(Mrs. Rodriguez, Uruguay)

constitute a very positive step that we are confident will be followed by further progress. We must recognize the full significance of the positive response of President Gorbachev.

In Latin America the first step has already been taken. The determination to find solutions is firm and deeply rooted. The region has been taking important decisions to consolidate the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the area. Thus, the agreement signed by Argentina and Brazil on 18 June in Guadalajara reaffirmed the desire of those countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only and reiterated their wish to adopt measures to give full effect over the broadest possible geographical extent to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Uruguay welcomes and fully supports that wish.

(Mrs. Rodrigues, Uruguay)

My country has often and in various forms expressed the desire that the whole of Latin America should be a nuclear-weapon-free zone - a goal which will not be achieved until all Latin American countries are parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Uruguay will continue to be toady to promote, to collaborate, to engaQ0 in all the necessary consultations, and to cooperate in every way possible to aoourwo the four countries which have not yet done so to sign, ratify or do whatever is necessary in order for the Treaty to cover the entire continent, thereby making the regional non-proliferation regime comprehensive.

Uruguay welcomes the recent accession of Lithuania and the four African states - Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and also the recently announced intention of Prance and China, both nuclear Powers and permanent members of the Security Council, to become parties to the Treaty. In this regard we understand that it would be very important for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to associate itself formally with the appropriate safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We hope that in the not too distant future new States will participate fully in the NPT regime.

In our view, the NPT continuer to be the keystone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime although we do, of course, recognize that there nay well be other means of achieving the same objective. The universality fo: the Treaty still continues to be out goal.

As regards chemical weapons, we must mention the Mendoza Declaration signed on 4 September 1991 by Argentina, Brasil and Chile a8 well as by Uruguay whereby our countries undertake not to develop ot produce, to acquire,

(Mrs. Rodrigues, Uruguay)

stockpile, possess or transfer, directly or indirectly, or to use ohsmical or biological weapons.

Permit me here to say something about the question of chemical weapons, as))(now ● tands in the view of my Government. It is well known that from the legal point of view, the present situation is governed by the existence and applicability of the Geneva Protoool of 1925 relating to the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, which was supplemented later by the 1972 Convention on biological weapons. These two texts, which are of obvious importance and must be applied, do not in any way eliminate the range of problems associated internationally with chemical weapons.

We would like to congratulate Ambassador Arteaga of Venezuela who, in his capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, presented us with an excellent report a few days ago on the work of the Conference during the last year, especially with regard to negotiations on the complete banning of chemical weapons - negotiations which, we are happy to note, are making good progress in Geneva.

Although at the present tims Uruguay participates in the Conference only as an observer, we must acknowledge the important and substantial progress achieved in these delicate negotiations over the last 12 months. Uruguay trumts that agreement will bs achieved next year and we are absolutely certain that the goal we all seek will be achieved - that is a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of tbo development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction. We believe that the most

(Mrs. Rodrigues, Uruguay)

outstanding and important characteristics of the convention ● hould be universality and transparency.

This is the great challenge facing us today. It is a serious and inescapable commitment on the part of the Conference on Disarmament vis à vis the international community and my country applauds and supports it.

We are optimistic, but we are also realistic and we therefore feel that without a profound spirit of international coope' .tion, without an unswerving determination to achieve, in the near future, a convention which will be sure to be applied immediately, without a true spirit of compromise on the part of all, ● ffortm which have been undertaken thus far will hava been in vain and empty.

In another contest, I ● hould like to point out that the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on bioloqiaal weapons, which concluded its *work* in Geneva only a few weeks ago, approved some important measures. These will, we believe, contribute to the strengthening of the regime of the Convention, particularly the ● stsblishuent of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts to examine and study methods of verification. In general terms, therefore, we can say that ths results of the Third Review Conference have been gratifying.

We would also like to say a Low words about the relaticnship between the limitation or regulation of armaments in terms of disarmament and the fundamental problem of our day - protection of the environment.

If we do not achieve as appropriate and rational process of limitation *of* armaments, if the question of nuclear tests and explosions is not settled, we shall be contributing to the awful problem of the deterioration of our ● nvironawnt and, hence, to the ♎♏♋♦♒ of our planet.

(Mrs. Rodriguez, Uruguay)

The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques is just an example - a first ● ♦♏□ - towards the regulation, by means of a convention, of the undeniable link between two vital factors for the future of mankind - that is disarmament and the environment. But this is a convention which focused on just one aspect of the problem. Moreover, the idea for that Convention first came up in 1972, that is 19 years ago, and the problem of protection of the environment is becoming more urgent, more serious, more important every day, There is an urgent need now for solutiona that transcend anything that might have been thought of at tha time. This means that we must face up to the problem ● guarely and we trust that this item will be approached with frankness and with the necessary thought at the Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Rio do Janeiro in June 1992,

Uruguay, faithful to its unswerving tradition *and* the principles it has been upholding in various forums on the subject, will support all efforts and initiatives designed to achieve this objective. In this regard we feel that the report *of* the Secretary-General contained in document A/46/364 gives us an intelligent, solidly based approach and a realistic view of the problem.

Finally, we must mention - if only briefly and by way of illustration - a theme to which all developing countries attach great importance. I refer to the undeniable and necessary link between disarmament and development.

Vow that democratic space has been opened up and is becoming mote widespread, Latin America is experiencing an ● conomia and sooial decline, one which will require an innovative response. As in all times of crisis there is light and shadow. International democratisation - the basis for any

(Mrs. Rodrigues, Uruguay)

development - has been reflected in a global improvement in human rights but the fact remains that now more than ever it is necessary to create new conditions for achieving global development.

The fuller integration of developing countries into a multilateral, open and equitable trade system is the basis upon which the very essence of democracy rests. This, in its turn, will not achieve full growth if it is not rooted in the fertile soil of peace and international security. An armed world in which tha great and the small acquire powerful and inhumane instruments of destruction and death is certainly not the most fertile soil for consolidating peace.

The Secretary-general, in his annual report, and Under-Secretary-General Akashi in his recent statement to the Committee, rightly remind us of the need to approach peace and security from a multidimensional standpoint - one in which the military aspect is considered in conjunction with political, economic, social and other elements.

(Mrs. Rodriguez, Uruguay)

The disarmament procaes rust necessarily go hand in hand with development. Therefore, new financial resources mumt ba allocated to priority civilian areas. Those priorities include - in the light of the current situation and the new order that we want to create - the environment, drug trafficking and terrorism. Hundreds of millions of dollars today being spent on armaments should be devoted to better causes.

Uruguay accordingly welcomes the United Nations study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms, and supports the recommended creation of a universal and non-disoriminatory register of arms transfers, We believe that putting into practice such a regime, as a first step, would contribute effectively and realistically to openness and transparency in this area.

As long as children continue to die in any part of the world as a result of extreme poverty, sickness and malnutrition, as long as thousands of millions of dollars are poured into armaments anywhere in the world, we shall know that we have still not done enough, we shall know that we have done very little for the well-being of humanity, we shall know that we have still not remedied a system that, as we are daily aware, is seriously unjust.

The saying that peace is not simply the absence of war has never been more relevant than it is today.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.