

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records *



FIRST COMMITTEE
24th meeting
held on
Friday, 5 November 1976
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 24TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/31/PV.24
8 November 1976
ENGLISH

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Strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament: report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament /50/

Implementation of the conclusions of the first Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons /116/

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, AND 116 (continued)

Mr. HARMON (Liberia): After the state visit to the United States in connexion with the celebration of its Bicentennial, Mr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., President of the Republic of Liberia, in addressing the General Assembly on 29 September issued the now universal warning that the world arms race is accelerating while the pace of negotiation is discouraging.

President Tolbert expressed his dismay at the level of expenditures for armaments, which had reached the astronomical sum of \$300 billion annually, and that this vast sum spent on arms: "is an important factor in the failure of the developing nations to make greater progress in the advancement of the Second United Nations Development Decade". (A/31/PV.9, p. 17)

In the light of this devastating situation, we observe that the world has come to this pass in the era of the United Nations which is, by commitment to our people, the era of peace parallel with the equally astronomical dimension of appalling poverty, hunger and under-development in the world -- this mad coincidence, and I submit, one which staggers the imagination.

More than that -- it staggers the intellect, it appalls peoples, it baffles statesmanship. It is a coincidence of inverse and mutually contradictory factors which staggers the intellect, appalls the generality of the human family and baffles statesmanship like some monstrous mathematical riddle that came to us from another planet with perverse logic of its own, totally alien to the human mind.

Commenting further, we have before us now many items, including reports of Committees, progress reports and all the trappings of the sophisticated categories in which the so-called disarmament concept now stands divided. We also have some very important observations in the frantic effort to develop a number of generalizations and rationalizations that might restore the issue to what the Colombo disarmament resolution calls "the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of agreed measures (as) an essential prerequisite for the opening of a process of genuine disarmament". (A/31/197, p. 126)

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

This is an intriguing phraseology and it reflects the insightful thinking of the Colombo Conference as to what the problem before us basically is. It is the problem of developing a formula ... "a comprehensive" formula ... an approach ... "a comprehensive" approach ... a key ... a golden key ... that will open to us the iron door behind which our baffling problem is now securely locked in.

Being faced with this grave situation and before embarking on this decoding process, it is most essential in our opinion to express the common consensus that prevails in this Committee: firstly, that basically no progress has or is being made. Instead, the armaments piles are growing higher and higher ... seemingly in direct ratio to every effort to halt it. Secondly ... and this must be admitted despite some comforting assurances from the two super-Powers, the whole problem is in reality running out of control. Without disparagement of their earnest efforts ... the complicated palliatives contained in their reports ... we quote here the United States Senator McGovern, a distinguished member of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a member of the United States delegation, who stated in his recent press conference in his house that "It is the whole arms traffic which is out of control ... worldwide." He also said with regard to SALT that "new weapons systems are coming into being faster than we are achieving agreements on how to control the older ones". On the question of control, his colleague, another distinguished member of the United States delegation, Senator Baker, said the same thing on the run-away situation of nuclear non-proliferation. He said he thought it may already be too late to halt the spread to a point of control.

My delegation has no qualms about pressing the point that ... if we are honest with ourselves and our people, if we do not engage in an attempt to cover up a tragic and appalling situation, if we dare to admit that we are wrong when the situation is all wrong ... we must accept the bitter conclusion that the disarmament problem has become a mad, frightening, run-away horse. And there is only one thing to do with a run-away horse ... it is to stop him, to stop him as quickly as possible and then to reharneß him firmly and securely until he is brought back to manageable control.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

Our overriding task, as we see it, is to begin to control the accelerating anarchy of an uncontrolled arms race. Sadly, we must conclude that the progress reports before us do not give us the controlling reins.

In stating this, my delegation does not imply a negative attitude towards the various resolutions which will undoubtedly emerge -- resolutions mainly asking us to authorize continued negotiations on the depressing catalogue of unfinished business.

However, in further stating our position on the agenda items before us, we wish to state that after much consideration, we, for our part, shall support, if necessary, the continued work of the Ad Hoc Committee to review disarmament, which has made some important recommendations. Here also, we wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks the working paper submitted by the delegation of Sweden, emphasizing, however, that these contributions are mainly in the realm of improved procedure, and that procedure is not disarmament, that -- to reverse a famous phrase -- here the good can even be the enemy of the best.

We shall also lend our support to any tightening of the restrictions that might contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear energy for war, although we believe that eventually this will not come about unless the two major nuclear Powers fulfil their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Speaking, therefore, as a small nation and one which advocates peaceful coexistence in our one world, we must urge greater effort and more determined application in negotiating the conclusion of an accord on incendiary weapons and on all deadly chemical weapons, expressing our surprise and indignation at the positions taken by some Governments and experts with respect to incendiary weapons and the indispensability of some of them in the name of defence, even at the cost of human suffering. To draw a more vivid analogy, I will again reverse a saying by stating that it is more in anger than in sorrow that I note the insensitivity of certain so-called experts sent by Governments to elevate their lovely weapons about the human equation. As for the negotiations which consist of careful appraisals of their respective deadlines, my delegation can only stand in awed admiration at such nicely-sliced sophistication.

Of course, despite the misleading attitudes and divisiveness existing among the sophisticated nations, we shall vote -- as in a nightmarish dream -- for any draft convention which assures us that the two major scientific Powers will try

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

to spare us from man-made earthquakes, tidal waves, cyclones, hurricanes, climate modifications and alterations of weather patterns and ozone layers. We would suppose that they would be ashamed to suggest in any forum of mankind that such scientific arrogance could enter their minds to be used against mankind. As it is, we can only say that, in the realm of such science fiction, H. G. Wells is still more entertaining and his Martian monsters slightly more human, for they at least did not use violence against their own kind.

Perhaps the mockery of history has fated the disarmament issue to become the theatre of the absurd. The Secretary-General has warned us that, unless some forward step is taken to halt the armaments avalanche, the people may deny us their confidence. They may do worse than that -- they may laugh us out of court!

Of course, we are happy to take note of the fact that in this area the Soviet Union has intimated some concession to the principle of verification, again noting that this will be subject to much bargaining as to procedure.

In all of these negotiations -- including SALT -- we seem to be in the midst of a slow-motion scenario, as if time itself stands still while the Big Power scientists and technologists are working with unseemly haste.

However, we shall eagerly support any full-scale international conference that will bring to bear a massive assault on the problem that has for 30 years evaded the many committees and commissions on disarmament -- which, like a certain type of cancer, grows and expands with every dosage to contain it. On this issue, the reply of my Government to the Secretary-General's request for the views of Members concerning the feasibility of convening a world disarmament conference was as follows:

"There is a strong pull for a world disarmament conference or, as an alternative, a special General Assembly session on disarmament. There may be other opinions, but my own delegation has in mind the possibility of a committee of experts, military scientists and men of similar expertise which would make a basic review of past performances -- what has been accomplished and what can be achieved by way of a new approach -- and submit it as a supplementary report to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session. This is not a proposal, and other delegations may have other ideas that could eventually be considered." (A/31/28, p. 38)

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

I would underline here the phrase "new approach". I shall deal with this shortly because, in the view of the Liberian Government, these words have a special meaning and I must here emphasize this fact.

But, first, I deem it necessary to sort out the realities from the fictions that have crept into our years of rhetoric from the grim realities of the world situation.

Let me say here that, looking at some of these realities, what we see firstly is, the concept now gaining currency that political détente must, in the very nature of things, beget military détente. In logic this is the essence of common sense, but in reality it is pure fiction, since the leading Western Powers have argued quite forcefully that there can be no credible détente unless guaranteed by sufficient defence, a view to which the Helsinki Agreement is no exception, since the Helsinki provision calling for a balance of armed forces in central Europe may, at best, result in some reduction of forces, but the concept of the balance remains intact with the vast military array of forces in both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact.

Indeed, this gap between the détente concept and disarmament is further widened by the recent deterioration of political détente resulting from the events that occurred in Angola, which brought the big Powers' confrontation right into the heart of Africa. We deplore this, of course, but we cannot delude ourselves into thinking that there exists an automatic relationship between détente and military disarmament.

Secondly, there is also the fiction of the fright, the notion that we can hasten nuclear disarmament by scaring the people with the peril of being destroyed by a nuclear war. Well, it appears that the scare approach simply has not worked, that people have somehow developed a kind of immunity to the existence of the big bombs. There has developed a silent conviction that the bombs will never fall. It may be faith in the deterrence of the balance of terror. In any case, we see no outward sign of hysteria -- but, on the contrary, whether we like it or not, a kind of complacency. In our view, therefore, the rationale for denuclearization must be found elsewhere.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

Thirdly, there is also the fiction of what is called "the will" -- a kind of mystical concept that if nations and Governments only evoke this phenomenon called the "will", results will begin to fall like apples from an apple-tree, and accordingly much of our energy is going into some sort of exorcism to evoke that elusive "will". The will is a fetish. It is non-existent, and what is called the will is only policy based on certain concepts of what constitutes national and regional and even global security. It is there that we must concentrate our energies, to reorient the world geopolitical situation -- for example, as we may say with some pride, has been achieved by the concept of non-alignment.

Elaborating further on the question of a "will", it is said that where there is a will there is a way. More likely in the issue of national security it might be said that where there is a way there will be a will, and the high road to any hope for substantial disarmament must be found in the joint efforts of all nations to reduce tensions, to encourage what I might call the good proliferation -- the proliferation of the détente or whatever magic word will mesmerize the Big Powers into a mentality of confidence instead of a posture of suspicion and doubt.

Fourthly, new fiction is creeping into our tendency to slice into easy and over-simplified generalizations. It is the fact that some of the smaller nations are now being beguiled, so to speak, into allocating considerable national budgets for the imports of armaments, and that somehow this constitutes a cardinal sin, contributing to what is called the mounting traffic in armaments.

And this is deplored as a diversion of funds by developing nations from the meagre funds they possess of which every penny is needed for their economic and social development. They are even accused of acquiring a military establishment for so-called "status", and in any case it is a luxury they can ill afford.

But, if we look at the mounting crisis in southern Africa, what is the reality? The grim and even dangerous situation is that only in recent days Rhodesia, an illegal armed Power in Africa, has been attacking and killing Africans across the Mozambique border. South Africa, even a greater armed Power located on our continent, has used her forces to invade Angola -- and did so from military bases in the United Nations territory of Namibia. Today Africans are fighting for their freedom with their bare breasts to the enemy, throwing rocks when the other side has guns.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

Given South African preparations for war, it may well be high time for African States to acquire a basic and minimum defence establishment in self-defence in the approaching showdown facing Africa now on the question of war and peace, slavery and independence on our continent.

The irony is that we are counselled to give our money and trust in the brilliance of Western diplomacy while the same Western Powers are supplying arms to our enemies. It is a rather curious case of the militarily strong counselling the defenceless nations as to the virtues of staying disarmed. We say curious, but in effect we are oddly being told to forego the key Article 51 of the Charter which spells out the supreme and sovereign rights of nations to provide for their national defence. This argument might be more convincing if the permanent members of the Security Council, fulfilling their responsibility under the Charter, would send a collective force under the United Nations flag to invade Namibia and to oust the intruder from his illegal possession. Or, if they are not prepared for this action, to fulfil their duty by supplying arms to the front-line nations in Africa enabling them to do their own fighting.

In this context, we were somewhat surprised when, in the plenary debate on apartheid, a number of Western nations, shying away from the relevant draft resolution, advised us -- in Africa -- to pursue a policy with the Vorster-Smith Axis of "peaceful dialogue". What really surprised us was that some of these nations were at the very moment engaged in some important joint military manoeuvres in the Pacific and Indian Oceans as an area of defence against a hypothetical enemy. In so doing they understood how the virtues of "peaceful dialogue" is best implemented -- with ample hardware in their hands. We only ask them therefore in return to let us practise not only what they preach but also what they practise.

This then brings us to the greatest fiction of them all: the myth of so-called "Disarmament" itself. What accusing realities lie under this umbrella! Future historians will ponder endlessly how the greatest accumulation of armaments in the entire history of mankind was made under this label. They might call it "the big lie" of the world Organization. Now then, seeing this whole drama in proper perspective and realizing what we have today in the name of disarmament is, on the one hand, an augmented race in the rivalry for more qualitative missiles, and, on the other, a struggle to avoid if possible, the mounting burden of new generations of weapons spewed out from the womb of scientists run amok with their computerized technologies in the realm of new and improved weapons.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

In the devil's workshop, the basic disarmament remains untouched. The best that we can do is to try and achieve a programme for the reduction of armaments -- perhaps, and this is a suggestion, in a series of three or five-year plans, so that we no longer hold out false expectations to the peoples of the world.

In effect, what we need is to face realities, the first reality being that of complete and general disarmament which is not around the corner, but would require us to scientifically organize our work in a planned, business-like manner, setting realistic goals to realistic time-tables. As we now study the possibility of the enlargement of the Secretariat Division on Disarmament, let us give serious thought to the possibility that this Department might be augmented with a staff of scientists and experts -- as suggested in Liberia's reply to the Secretary-General -- charged with the task of putting our entire disarmament programme on a planned and projected basis.

In short let us enlist some of the scientists to work for peace instead of war. The conditions essential to such a new beginning would be to establish a ceiling on production and to complete the comprehensive test-ban. In other words, to call a truce in the race, and stabilize the whole process at a given level, so that we can begin the all-important task of reversing the process in which we are all now so desperately engulfed.

And now, as I come to the close of my statement, and in view of the great importance which my delegation attaches to this question, may I deal with a question, which, as far as I have been able to follow, has not been answered as of now. The question is this: granting that the problem is at the height of its complexity, what is our real difficulty?

In all probability we shall agree on the holding of a Special Assembly session on the question, and while there is already some talk about the necessity of making the proper "preparations", this we must avoid, and we must also avoid, in any such preparations, getting bogged down in procedural questions. Too frequently procedure is the line of retreat when we have sustained defeats and disappointments in the area of substance.

Having said this, we repeat: what is our real difficulty in arriving at a comprehensive diagnosis of the neglected and aggravated problem we face?

If we can supply a reasonable answer to this question we can at least hope to find a promising way of approaching our problem.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

Delegations will undoubtedly have different answers and we can speak only as Liberia sees it. It seems to us that we must go back to the beginning, to the genesis of the armaments race. The major premise was the cold war, the polarization of the world into two potential enemy camps which set off the race between them. Our premise then was starkly simple, almost elementary in its orientation.

But since then time and history have not stood still. The two camps are still there, but, thank God, their sharp confrontations have largely evaporated. The two alliances are still there, but the duel-to-the-death of two ideologies has apparently vanished. When the United States entered into a *détente* with China and the Soviet Union, whether that *détente* is complete or not, the ideologies of the two Socialist Powers became an accepted fact in the Western world, a reality that can no longer be erased from the face of the earth. And on the other side, the concept of exporting communism and all the confrontation that implied has apparently been abandoned.

The struggle between two opposing ideologies, at one time considered irreconcilable, is no longer there, certainly not as an issue in war and peace.

Therefore, any comprehensive approach to the problem must be based on a different set of premises.

It is our opinion that the new approach must be not ideological, but economic. The struggle now has shifted from the area of the big Powers to the struggle involving the nations of the third world, the developing nations, and the hundreds of millions of peoples they involve -- nations which did not even exist when the ideological war was ignited almost within a year after the 52-nation membership emerged from the San Francisco Conference.

This struggle finally reached its grand climax in the concept of the new economic world order.

This, and not the confrontation of economic and social theories, is the major issue now challenging any attempt to establish a world order of law, peace and security.

The cause of war in the 1940s, which was largely political, is now chiefly economic. Some here may say that it has always been thus. Perhaps -- we shall not enter into polemics about determinism. But I think all will agree that never was the economic factor projected on such a global scale, among so many nations involving so many people -- perhaps the entire human family.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

It is to this obvious -- I may say incontestable -- factor that the disarmament issue is now linked. This is the mighty axiom to which our arms corollaries must be reoriented.

If I may say so, what we must have if we are to enter the halls of an international conference, whether in a special session or in a world disarmament conference, is a new philosophy of disarmament. I repeat, a new philosophy of disarmament. We may call it a new rationale, or a new basic premise, or a new doctrine, but whatever name we choose to describe the vacuum that must be filled -- it comes to a new doctrine of thought, new convictions and new formulations.

Such a philosophy might be best embodied by this Assembly in the form of a declaration -- the declaration of the philosophy of disarmament.

This philosophy must embody first and foremost the aspirations of the peoples of the world to free themselves from the ancient bondage of militarism. It must express the yearnings of peoples in our time for a better life -- a better society and for a more just economic order.

It should underline the historic process, the great transition that has altered the physiognomy of the world community. It must stress a point too frequently overlooked, that this is not a contest between the consumer of plenty and the consumer of too little.

It must enunciate in a more comprehensive way the concept of interdependence -- the economic interdependence of all peoples, to underline that the privileged consumer today is just as insecure in his prosperity as the undernourished man is in his poverty, as proved by the recession which has engulfed the rich nations lately.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

It must emphasize the simple economics that the world's capital resources are not unlimited, that the demands of world order are virtually unlimited, and that in this equation there is no room for the extravaganza of the armaments orgy which now haunts and shames all nations.

It must issue the warning that just as the old orgy premises for arming have given way to new premises for disarming, so the old causes of war are now yielding to new causes of war. The everlasting conflict between those who have the explosive elements of a destructive war are not confined to the mighty arsenals of the military giants. More explosive than a nuclear bomb is a poor nation whose people rise up in anger and anguish, in rioting and violence, bringing down governments, inviting interventions, and perhaps eventually bringing down the citadels of civilization itself.

My delegation wishes to announce that it will shortly submit a formal proposal in this Committee embodying such a draft declaration, inviting other delegations to join to make their contributions to the draft. We cannot and should not adjourn this session with mere rubber-stamping of cut-and-dried resolutions and proposals. This we may do in the event. But beyond this, the time has come for this session to talk with the voice of the entire Assembly of all nations -- 145 Members of the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will note the intention expressed by the representative of Liberia to submit a draft declaration concerning disarmament at the proper stage.

Mr. PASTINEN (Finland): To begin with, let me simply say that it is an honour for the Finnish delegation and a privilege for me personally, Mr. Chairman, to serve under your chairmanship in this Committee.

It is the firm conviction of the Finnish Government that the most important question which the First Committee will have to deal with at this session is that of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This question appears on the agenda of the First Committee as item 116, entitled "Implementation of the conclusions of the First Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". This item was proposed for inclusion in the agenda by the

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

Government of Sweden on behalf of the States parties to the Treaty, Members of the United Nations, in accordance with a decision of the Review Conference.

My Government's views and actions on the question of proliferation of nuclear weapons are extensively recorded in the proceedings of this Committee as well as elsewhere. One of the lines of action the Finnish Government has been pursuing is elaborated in document A/C.1/31/6. To bring our views to the attention of the Members of the United Nations, we have considered it appropriate to ask the Secretary-General to distribute as an official document to this General Assembly a memorandum submitted by the Finnish Government to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards on a comprehensive basis.

Ever since 1968, when the representative of the Finnish Government was entrusted with the chairmanship in the negotiating process which led to the commendation by this same General Assembly of the United Nations and by this same First Committee of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty for signature and ratification by States, my Government has considered that Treaty the most important piece of international legislation to come out from disarmament negotiations so far. My Government continues to do so. Nothing has happened in the intervening years to cause the Finnish Government to change its view or to waver in its conviction. If anything, the opposite is true.

When we look at the world today, we must recognize with some appreciation the farsightedness of the action of the General Assembly eight years ago in providing the international community with a tool that can -- if properly used -- effectively guard against the dangers that proliferation of nuclear weapons poses to us all. These dangers threaten all countries, whether big or small, all Governments, whether allied, non-aligned or neutral but, most of all, they threaten the peoples of those countries. And the peoples do have a legitimate claim on their Governments to protect their most basic human right -- the right to survival. It was in the name of the peoples that the Organization of the United Nations was founded; the Governments must represent their interests if they claim the right to govern.

Finland is a small, neutral country. As such, we are under no illusion as to the importance of our own views or actions on this matter of non-proliferation or,

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

indeed, on any other matter. Small countries do not wield an influence that will sway worlds or even sway this Committee. But we do have the right -- and not only the right but the duty -- to speak out with whatever conviction and persuasiveness we are able to put into our words. That is our duty, which we owe at least to ourselves. Others may refuse to listen; that is their right.

Today I shall not speak at length on the issue of non-proliferation. Nor shall I elaborate on our thoughts on what concrete steps should be taken. That will come later. But one word I would say. This is the time for action and that action should be carried out on a broad international front. The problem of proliferation of nuclear weapons is not a matter of parochial interest. Nor is it a problem of exclusive concern. It is not a problem of exclusive concern even to those 100 Governments which have a commitment to that concern in the most solemn form which international practice knows -- an international treaty with legally binding effect. The issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is of equal concern to us all -- parties to the non-proliferation treaty and non-parties alike. This is so because the basic security interests of us all are vitally involved. That interest should unite, not divide. If that simple truth is recognized, then we should be able to move together with benefit to all and with harm to none.

In its over-all assessment of the situation in the disarmament field the Finnish Government has noted, and perhaps not for the first time, some rather contradictory characteristics. On the one hand, the process of political détente has been advancing. Indeed, it has become a dominant pattern of international behaviour not only in the co-operation between major Powers but also in a more general sense. On the other hand, a real break-through in disarmament negotiations has yet to materialize, even if some positive achievements can be noted.

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

As my Government has said on many occasions earlier, in our view political détente provides the only realistic framework for international coexistence and co-operation. Despite some temporary setbacks and instances of local tension and conflict, the mainstream is nevertheless moving from confrontation and conflict towards negotiation and détente. That is undeniably the case of the European continent where the implementation of the Helsinki Act signed over a year ago is proceeding apace by the efforts of all the Governments concerned. In the Final Act, confidence-building measures in the military field are an innovation. For the first time in history, participating States are giving pre-notifications of major military manoeuvres within certain parameters. To our mind, this is a considerable achievement in averting tension based on suspicion of possible military confrontation.

But even in Europe political détente has not yet cleared the way to genuine progress in disarmament and arms control. Negotiations on force reductions in Vienna have recently entered their tenth round. Thus three years have elapsed without substantive results. My Government is following actively the Vienna talks. While we appreciate that some positive steps have been taken by negotiators on both sides, a real break-through still seems to be far away. Concrete results are urgently needed now that the participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) are preparing themselves for the follow-up conference in Belgrade in June 1977. Gradually the methods and procedures of the Vienna talks have assumed more pronounced political and diplomatic characteristics. We welcome this trend and see an important and promising point there.

To our profound regret, the long-expected Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) II agreement has not yet been concluded, partly for reasons that have little to do with the substance of the negotiations. But we are confident that because of the strenuous and, we believe, largely successful effort already put into it, the coming months are going to bring about the SALT II agreement. This might well open a new positive era of more important achievements in the field of disarmament at large. In this context, my Government also welcomes the conclusion of an agreement between France and the Soviet Union aiming at the prevention of

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

accidental nuclear war between those two States. To our mind, this is yet another encouraging step towards a more secure Europe and a more secure world.

Last year my Government established a special permanent office at Geneva to follow even more closely the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), the most important multilateral disarmament body today. In terms of number of meetings and coverage of work, the CCD has had an active session.

For the Finnish Government it has been encouraging to note that the CCD has again been able to revive the momentum of negotiation and agreement which the international community has learned to expect from it. After a hiatus of four years, the CCD has produced a draft of another multilateral arms control agreement for the commendation to this General Assembly.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland stated in his intervention in the general debate on 28 September 1976, the draft Convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, while limited in scope and substance, nevertheless does have the merit of outlawing the use of a potential weapon of mass destruction of incalculable consequences. He went on to say that as such the draft Convention deserves the endorsement of this General Assembly.

The draft Convention, as it stands, is a clear indication of the working capacity of the CCD, whenever this multilateral negotiating body wants to reach tangible results. A genuine negotiating process on this draft Convention has led to substantial improvements in article V dealing with the complaints procedure; in article III dealing with the peaceful uses of environmental modification techniques; to the addition of an article on the review of the Treaty; and a provision in article IX making the Secretary-General of the United Nations the depository of the Convention. The last stipulation is the first time that such a provision has been included in the text of an arms control treaty. A number of other problems raised during the discussion have also been satisfactorily resolved. In some cases the formulas found are of distinct value also for future measures of arms control and disarmament.

The divergence of views on the draft Convention has centred around article I, which deals with the scope of the Convention. In the CCD a few countries engaged

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

in the negotiations did not go along with the threshold approach chosen. We are confident, however, that this should not and will not prove a decisive obstacle to reaching broad agreement on the matter as a whole, nor should it detract from the over-all value of the draft Convention. In our assessment, the definition of the scope of the prohibitions in the Treaty in practice prevents the modification of the environment for hostile purposes. And that, after all, was the main objective which the General Assembly by its resolution 3475 (XXX), adopted by consensus, instructed the CCD to seek, and that instruction was given on the basis of the two identical draft conventions then presented. In accordance with this instruction by the General Assembly, the draft Convention now recommended by the CCD for the approval of this Assembly clearly aims at prohibiting military or any other hostile environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as a means of destruction, damage or injury to another State party.

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

For all these reasons, it is our view that the General Assembly should now commend for signature and ratification by States the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques as it now stands. A draft resolution to that effect has been distributed to this Committee in the name of the delegations of Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom, as well as in the name of my own delegation. We have been informed this morning that the delegations of the German Democratic Republic, Japan and Zaire have indicated to the Chairman their wish to become co-sponsors of this draft. In addition to these countries, a large number of delegations in this hall have indicated their preparedness to become co-sponsors and are expecting to do so shortly, subject to confirmation from their capitals.

I now come to other items pertaining to the duties of the CCD. CCD has now completed its work on the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. We believe it will now be able to move on to concentrate more effectively on its high-priority items. A ban on chemical weapons seems to be one measure on which the efforts of the CCD could produce results. The recent discussions on that topic have been more positive than before. After years of virtual stalemate, there now seems to prevail a consensus regarding the necessity of aiming at a comprehensive treaty covering all forms of chemical warfare as a goal. The elimination of the chemical arsenals may, however, require a step-by-step approach. The principal new development in this field has been the submission by the United Kingdom Government of a draft convention aiming at a prohibition of all lethal and other toxic chemical agents that might cause long-term physiological harm to human beings. To our mind this draft is an interestingly structured synthesis of various ideas and, as such, a valuable contribution to further discussion of the subject.

Under these circumstances, the idea of a joint initiative by the USSR and the United States to ban, as a first step, the most lethal chemical weapons is regaining strength. The communiqué issued on 30 August 1976 noted that useful results had been achieved in bilateral consultations in Geneva in August 1976, and that consultations would continue. As a first step towards chemical disarmament, it may well be necessary to start with a partial treaty removing

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

the most toxic, lethal agents, as proposed by the two major Powers. But this will not be enough. In our view, the treaty must be comprehensive in principle. Other agents should be successively added to the list of those to be destroyed. This should also include all agents which may be discovered in the future.

In addition to the destruction of existing chemical-weapon stockpiles, research into and modification, development and production of new varieties should be effectively banned. This long-term aim should not be lost from sight in the work of the CCD on chemical weapons.

While the main difficulties in the field of chemical weapons are political in nature, technical problems also remain to be solved. The most critical of these is verification. This is indeed a complex field where both trust and concrete measures are necessary.

Extended co-operation in developing further chemical-weapon control capabilities could be one of the measures needed. For four years now, my country has devoted both effort and resources to a study aimed at developing a national chemical-weapon control capacity which, if needed, can be put to international use. In order to be useful in alternative situations, the Finnish project has been conceived as a multipurpose project, both substantially and functionally. Substantially, the planned control capacity could be useful in three different verification activities: namely, verification of destruction of stocks, verification of non-production of chemical weapons and verification of alleged use. One of the results of this work, we hope, will be a handbook on methods for the identification and verification of chemical warfare agents. This could meet some of the concerns raised in the CCD in the context of a chemical-weapon treaty.

Another priority item of the CCD is the comprehensive test ban treaty. At the beginning of my statement, I expressed our deep concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. For purposes of non-proliferation, as well as for other purposes, the urgency of a comprehensive test ban treaty has never been greater.

As we see it, the principal merit of the Soviet-United States Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty integrally related to it is their potential value in solving the problem of the verification of a comprehensive test ban.

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

Besides being an important arms control measure in itself, such a ban would complement other efforts to halt the nuclear arms race. It would also be an effective measure to underpin the Non-Proliferation Treaty and would demonstrate the political will of the nuclear Powers to fulfil the pledges given in article VI of the Treaty.

As a consequence of our strong support for a comprehensive test ban, we sponsored last year both resolutions calling for a complete test ban -- the second of which, as this Committee will recall, derived from an initiative taken by the Soviet Union. We did so assured of the identical goals of these two resolutions. We regret, therefore, that the negotiations between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States provided for in resolution 3478 (XXX) have failed to materialize. For its part, the Government of Finland has declared its preparedness to participate in these negotiations within the terms of the resolution.

In its search for a comprehensive test ban, the CCD has continued to work on the question of detection and identification of underground seismic events. Finland has welcomed the possibility for non-member countries of the CCD to contribute to this work. We have participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on seismological detection and hope that even more countries from different regions of the world will do the same.

In this context, the proposal put forth by Sweden envisaging a world-wide remote-control monitoring system for verification purposes is yet another instance of the traditionally constructive and innovative Swedish disarmament policy, and as such it has the unreserved support of the Finnish Government.

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

In the context of nuclear tests the question of peaceful nuclear explosions, in our view, clearly belongs to the realm of non-proliferation. We base this view on the relevant provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which makes no difference between nuclear weapons and peaceful nuclear explosions. If difference there is, that is a matter of intention rather than technology. And experience shows that intentions may be more susceptible to change than technologies are.

In our opinion the reduction of military budgets provides a direct approach to disarmament. Budgetary measures could be used to circumvent various military-strategic considerations, particularly those that go under the name worst-case analysis. Such budget reductions would also release human and material resources for peaceful purposes. As a side effect, they might even alleviate global inflation pressures. In the view of the Finnish Government, the report prepared by the group of experts on this item is a valuable basis for the further consideration of this question.

A review has been made of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. A tribute is to be paid to the initiator of the review, the Government of Sweden.

The role of the United Nations in this area can be strengthened. It is self-evident that the United Nations has a central role in disarmament. But we continue to believe that organizational imperfections are not the reason for the lack of progress in this field.

In our opinion, the report of the ad hoc Committee provides a good framework for improving the capabilities of the United Nations in disarmament. Most recommendations concern information and the strengthening of the resources and manpower of the Secretariat for these talks. These recommendations have the support of the Finnish Government.

The Government of Finland has consistently supported the idea of a World Disarmament Conference. Under the generally accepted requirements, such a conference would in our view provide the international community an opportunity for a general review of the disarmament field in its entirety, for a reaffirmation of the goals of disarmament and for the charting of a course and fixing the priorities of future negotiations.

(Mr. Pastinen, Finland)

It is in this perspective that my Government supports the initiative of the non-aligned countries concerned, at their summit meeting in August, that calls for a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We shall support a resolution to this effect and we will be prepared to participate in the necessary preparatory work if so required.

As this Committee knows, item 43 entitled "Comprehensive study on the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all of its aspects" has been and continues to be of particular interest to the Finnish delegation. Previous resolutions on the subject have been adopted by consensus. In due course the Finnish delegation will introduce a follow-up draft resolution on this matter for the consideration of the Committee. We hope that it will elicit a consensus response from the First Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Finland for his kind words addressed to me personally.

The Committee will note that during the course of his statement the representative of Finland has introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/31/L.5, which was distributed earlier this morning.

Mr. JAY (Canada): Mr. Chairman, on this first occasion for me to speak in this Committee, may I congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your election. I am deeply conscious of the honour and the serious responsibility I share with other representatives in this room as we seek, under your leadership, to contribute to winning the slow battle for arms limitation and disarmament.

My predecessors in this Committee have repeatedly spoken of the growing impatience, frustration and deep disappointment felt by most countries -- and certainly by Canada -- at the continuing failure of the international community to face up more concretely and rapidly to the awesome problems that confront us in the field of disarmament. Despite some modest steps, the record of achievement in the past 12 months has provided no cause for comfort.

Will we have to voice the same harsh judgement at the end of the Disarmament Decade as we do at its mid-point? Will we be forced to admit in five years that the declaration of the 1970s as the Disarmament Decade was a half-hearted gesture?

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

I fear that international security will be in even greater peril if, in those next five years, we do not come to grips with the tasks set out for the Decade. We must reach early agreement on the most pressing arms control problems and follow through with the most vigorous possible action to resolve them. All States of military significance must share in this important task, but the primary responsibility to ensure that the Disarmament Decade is not a failure rests with the nuclear weapon States.

Of all the problems we face in the arms control and disarmament field none is greater or deserves higher priority than the need for limitations and reductions in nuclear arms, for an effective ban on all nuclear weapons testing and for further strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation system.

As valuable as they have been, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the United States and the Soviet Union have not yet slowed the nuclear arms race, much less led to any reduction in nuclear arms. Canada welcomed the SALT I agreement and the establishment at Vladivostok in 1974 of the principle of numerical equality in central strategic systems. Four years have passed since the SALT I agreement and the Vladivostok principles still remain to be confirmed in a definitive SALT II agreement. Over those years new developments in strategic weaponry have further complicated the task of achieving measures to curtail competition in nuclear weapons. All of us in the international community must be fully conscious of the complexity of the problems the United States and the Soviet Union confront in undertaking even gradual and partial measures of nuclear disarmament, but we strongly believe they must make a more determined effort to surmount these problems. We appeal to the two principal nuclear powers again to move with greater speed towards the conclusion of SALT II and to move on to SALT III -- that is, from limitations to effective reductions -- at the earliest possible date.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

Despite the appeals made year after year for almost three decades in resolutions of this Assembly, progress in recent years towards a ban on all nuclear weapons testing has been almost imperceptible. The Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 has not yet been signed by two nuclear weapons States, and one of them is still engaging in atmospheric testing.

The achievement of a comprehensive test ban, like strategic arms limitation, involves difficult security, political and technical problems and perceptions. In the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament many countries, including my own, have tried to contribute to the solution of some of those problems, particularly those that would have to be faced in verifying compliance with such a treaty. We hope the search for solutions will be advanced by the group of scientific experts established by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) this year to investigate the possibilities for international co-operation in detecting and identifying seismic events, but the work of that group will be more useful if it has the active support of all nuclear weapons State members of the CCD.

Although the CCD continues to grapple with the question of nuclear testing, it is difficult to accept that more resolute efforts have not been made by the nuclear weapons States themselves to overcome the obstacles to a nuclear test ban. We fail to understand why, as at least one nuclear weapons State has argued, movement towards a comprehensive test ban (CTB) is impossible unless all five nuclear weapons States participate from the outset. Ultimately -- and sooner rather than later -- all nuclear weapons States must stop their weapons testing in all environments. But what insurmountable obstacles prevent at least the two super-Powers, and as many other nuclear weapons States as possible, from entering into a formal interim agreement to end their nuclear weapons testing for a defined trial period?

When the two super-Powers already have nuclear weapons arsenals of such enormous magnitude, and when their own capacity for destruction so greatly exceeds that of any other nuclear weapons State, how can it be argued with any credibility that an interim testing halt by the two of them would threaten their security unless all the remaining nuclear weapons States immediately followed suit? If we are ever to have a comprehensive test ban someone must take the first step, and the two super-Powers are the ones that should take it.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

If such an agreement were reached for a fixed trial period it could, at the end of that time, be reviewed by its adherents to determine whether it might be further extended or be transformed into a permanent agreement including all nuclear weapon States.

One thing, however, must be stressed. In proposing an interim agreement, we are not calling for an unverified moratorium. On the contrary, we envisage an agreement open to all States, containing measures to ensure, first, that its terms are fully honoured and, second, that any nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes do not confer weapons-related benefits.

We can welcome the achievement by the United States and the Soviet Union of their Threshold Test Ban Treaty of 1974 and their related agreement on peaceful nuclear explosions, to the extent that they constitute mutual restraints and contain provisions for verification. But we consider these measures to be initial steps only. Agreements that permit the yield of individual explosions to remain as high as 150 kilotons are very modest indeed. In Canada's view a much more far-reaching demonstration of the super-Powers' determination to secure a CTB is required most urgently.

Although existing nuclear weapons arsenals pose the most immediate threat to world security, all of us continue to be haunted by the danger that nuclear weapons will spread to more States. If more resolute efforts are not made to avert this danger, we shall have frittered away completely whatever chance there still may be of eliminating the threat of nuclear destruction.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty and the system of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards continue to be the basic instruments of the non-proliferation system and the most appropriate framework for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. One of the important tasks of this Committee this year will be to assess the progress that has been made since the NPT Review Conference of May 1975. Canada is encouraged that some positive steps have been taken since the Review Conference, but we are convinced that much that should have been done in support of the non-proliferation objective has not been done. As we all know, the Treaty's obligations apply to all its parties -- to nuclear weapons States as well as to non-nuclear weapons States.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

While non-nuclear weapons State parties undertook not to acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the nuclear weapons State parties undertook, in return, to pursue negotiations in good faith and at an early date towards nuclear disarmament. We regret that the nuclear weapons States have not done more to fulfil their part of the NPT bargain. An effective non-proliferation system is in the interest of all States. But to be fully effective and to serve the interests of all States, the non-proliferation system must entail restraints on vertical as well as horizontal nuclear proliferation.

An important achievement has been the growth in the number of the Treaty's adherents from just over 80 at the time of the Review Conference to about 100. Parties to the Treaty now include almost all the most highly industrialized countries and the great majority of developing countries. By forswearing the acquisition of nuclear explosive devices and by placing all their nuclear activities under IAEA-administered safeguards to verify this commitment, this impressive group of States from all regions of the world has clearly rejected the mistaken notion that either the possession of nuclear weapons or the retention of an option to acquire them is a guarantee of security in some way essential to national sovereignty and the reinforcement of national prestige.

It is cause for the deepest concern, however, that this encouraging perspective is not yet shared by certain other States advanced in nuclear technology or in the process of acquiring that technology. We appeal to those States to reassess their reasons for not making a firm commitment to the non-proliferation objective, either by adhering to the NPT or in some other equally binding and verifiable way.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

In its Final Declaration the NPT Review Conference urged that "in all achievable ways" steps be taken to strengthen the application of nuclear safeguards as the reasonable and necessary condition for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Canada has taken this appeal very seriously indeed. We have made it clear in the negotiation of new bilateral nuclear co-operation agreements and in the renegotiation of others that we are determined to ensure that Canadian nuclear assistance will be used solely for peaceful non-explosive purposes.

We have been gratified by the measures that have been taken in the IAEA and among suppliers since the NPT Review Conference to reinforce and broaden the application of nuclear safeguards. Important steps have been taken in safeguards agreements concluded by a number of countries with the IAEA in the past year, especially their explicit exclusion of any explosive use and strengthened provisions for the application of safeguards to technology transfers. We very much welcome the detailed study being given in the IAEA and elsewhere to the need for exercising greater care and for applying more stringent controls in the use of the most sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle. Canada will continue to press in its bilateral nuclear relations and in all appropriate fora for the further strengthening and broadening of the scope of nuclear safeguards. In our view, safeguards will not be fully effective until they cover all peaceful nuclear activities in all States. As a country which has willingly accepted the application of safeguards to all of its own nuclear industry, Canada firmly believes that universal acceptance of such safeguards would provide the soundest basis for international nuclear co-operation.

The NPT Review Conference called for intensified study of the application of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. It strongly reaffirmed the provisions of article V of the Treaty whereby any potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty on a non-discriminatory basis, under appropriate international observation and through appropriate international procedures, through an appropriate international body and pursuant to a special international agreement or agreements. It confirmed that any such benefits could be made available to

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non-nuclear-weapon States not party to the Treaty by way of nuclear explosive services provided by nuclear-weapon States and conducted under the appropriate international observation and procedures called for in article V. It concluded that the IAEA was the international body through which potential benefits of peaceful applications of nuclear explosions could be made available by nuclear weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Canada fully supported these conclusions. None the less we remain convinced that there are in fact few if any significant potential benefits in so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. We doubt that any benefits that may exist would outweigh the inherent risks. Certainly there can be no question that such explosions would have crucial arms control implications. It has been clearly recognized in resolutions of this Assembly in 1974 and 1975 that no distinction can be made between the technology for nuclear weapons and the technology for nuclear explosive devices for peaceful purposes and that it is not possible to develop such devices for peaceful application without at the same time acquiring nuclear weapons capability. It is for this reason that we are participating fully in the detailed study being conducted in the IAEA of the economic, technical, safety, environmental and legal aspects of peaceful nuclear explosions. The IAEA studies will require more time but we hope they will lead not only to broad consensus on the economic, technical and legal aspects of peaceful nuclear explosions but also to international arrangements for the provision of PNE services that are fully consistent with the requirements of the NPT and other international legal instruments including the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963. We do not minimize the difficulties involved in devising such arrangements. But it could be much harder to reach agreement on international arrangements to govern PNE services if we wait until whatever economic value they may have has been demonstrated.

The NPT Review Conference confirmed that internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones can be an effective means of curbing the spread of nuclear weapons and of strengthening the security of States which become fully bound by their provisions. The nuclear-weapon-free zone concept and the possibility of establishing such zones in various parts of the world have been the subjects of

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numerous resolutions of this Assembly in recent years and will be addressed again this year. Yet, apart from the Antarctic, Latin America is the only area of the world which has been established as a nuclear weapon free zone by treaty and that treaty is still not in force for some important countries of the region. Moreover its protocols have yet to be adopted by all of the States to which they were designed to apply.

In principle Canada supports the nuclear weapon free zone concept. Our understanding of this concept has been deepened by the thorough study undertaken in the CCD and presented to the Assembly last year. I wish to stress however that, in Canada's view, the value of any specific nuclear weapon free zone proposal or arrangement will depend on whether it has or is likely to have the support of most countries of the area concerned, including of necessity the major military powers of the region. It will also depend on a clear definition of the geographic area concerned, on assurance that the arrangement would not confer additional military advantage to any State or to any group of States and on the provisions made for ensuring that all component countries comply fully with the commitments involved and forswear the independent acquisition of nuclear explosive capability. It is also essential that supplementary arrangements applicable to States outside the region concerned be realistic and fully consistent with generally recognized principles of international law. Moreover, it is important to recognize that there can be no all-purpose blueprint for nuclear weapon free zone arrangements. Obviously, when requested, the United Nations has a responsibility to assist in the establishment of such arrangements but the terms of such arrangements cannot be imposed.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

Before leaving the question of nuclear proliferation, I want to emphasize the need for a constructive approach to the assessment of the progress achieved since the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Canada recognizes that the Non-Proliferation Treaty is not a perfect instrument. Nevertheless, it must be borne firmly in mind that, whatever its weaknesses, the Treaty's objectives are as valid now as they were when it was concluded. We agree with the many States which deeply regret that more has not been done to reinforce it.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the non-proliferation-system is as much in the interest of non-nuclear-weapon States as of nuclear-weapon States. It is as much in the interest of developing countries as of developed countries. The non-proliferation system has the cardinal value of sparing non-nuclear-weapon States the diversion of economic and human resources to non-productive and potentially destructive ends.

Although first priority must be given to checking the growth and averting the spread of nuclear arms, we must seek and exploit every opportunity to curb the growth and use of other weapons. For three decades we have been spared a nuclear war, but conventional arms have continued to exact an appalling toll in life, suffering and material destruction. The international arms trade has reached mammoth proportions and continues to devour vast resources urgently needed for productive economic and social purposes throughout the world. The need to check the growth and spread of conventional arms has been largely ignored in disarmament fora. Concerted international action is urgently required among both suppliers and recipients to check the growth in the arms trade. As other members of this Assembly have already suggested, it might be particularly fruitful to approach this problem at the regional level.

The Vienna negotiations for mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) in central Europe offer prospects of significant steps in disarmament and the reduction of the danger of confrontation at the regional level. Unfortunately, progress has been slow and the negotiations are now about to enter their fourth year with little measurable achievement yet in sight. Canada attaches high priority to MBFR and, in that forum as in others, will continue to work for the achievement of meaningful measures of disarmament and the improvement of mutual confidence.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

It is particularly timely that, in the middle of the Disarmament Decade, we are reviewing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Canada fully supports the search for ways of enabling the United Nations to carry out this role more effectively. We have participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established last year to undertake this review, and we are prepared to endorse its report. The United Nations remains the principal forum in which to focus world attention on the need to limit and reduce the levels of military forces and armaments, for the exchange of views among Member States on multilateral disarmament issues and for encouraging the examination of disarmament-related questions in other international fora.

At the same time, it has been repeatedly recognized in resolutions of this Assembly that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) continues to be the most appropriate forum for the negotiation of arms control agreements intended to have universal application. Canada deeply regrets that, except for the draft environmental modification convention, no arms control treaty has emerged from CCD in recent years. Nevertheless, CCD remains well suited to the negotiation of international arms control agreements, whenever fundamental political and other obstacles can be overcome. The value of CCD would be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of those nuclear-weapon States which have not yet participated in its work. CCD has decided to undertake a comprehensive review of its procedures early in 1977. Canada supports efforts to improve the effectiveness of CCD and will, in particular, be prepared to give sympathetic consideration to changes in the structure or procedures of CCD that would make possible the participation of more than three of the nuclear-weapon States.

The CCD's utility as a negotiating forum has again been well demonstrated this year by the elaboration of a draft convention to prohibit the military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. We are well aware of the reservations some countries have about the draft convention, particularly about the scope of its prohibition. We do not consider the draft convention to be a faultless document nor, given the other and more pressing priorities in the arms control field, do we regard it as a major landmark. Canada is nevertheless prepared to join in recommending to Governments that they sign the draft convention in its

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present form, in the hope that it will inhibit whatever plans some States might otherwise make or contemplate for the hostile use of environmental modification techniques. Its provision for periodic review is particularly important in dealing with techniques so little understood as those the convention seeks to regulate. We also support fully the provision in article III of the draft convention for the fullest possible exchange of scientific and technological information in the use of environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes which, we hope, will help to foster greater international co-operation in a field of vital importance to us all.

Canada sincerely hopes that the value of CCD will be further demonstrated in the continuing consideration it is expected to give to a convention to prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Discussion of this question in CCD and elsewhere this year has provided some glimmer of hope for at least a modest break-through toward resolving the problems, particularly the problems of verification, that have so long stood in the way of achieving such a convention. This Assembly should give further encouragement to CCD to press ahead with this task.

We also look for progress in the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Application in Armed Conflicts. At this stage all of us must redouble our efforts to ensure that agreements will be reached on certain prohibitions or restrictions on the use of specific conventional weapons that may cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects.

(Mr. Jay, Canada)

Many members of the Assembly have expressed the view that the cause of disarmament could be significantly advanced by the convening of a special session on disarmament. Canada stands ready to support a call for such a special session and to participate fully and constructively in it and in the careful preparations that it will require. It must not be a dialogue of the deaf. Our objective for the session must be to infuse a new sense of purpose into the quest for peace and security.

I have sought to underline the arms control problems which Canada considers most pressing. It should be clear to this Committee that Canadians firmly believe that no more time must be lost in seeking resolutions to those problems. We must all, as the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs said in this Assembly on 29 September:

"re-examine our traditional assumptions, take adequate account of the security concerns of others and seize all opportunities for concrete action".
(A/31/PV.9, p. 29-30)

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Canada for his kind words addressed to the Chairman and to the other officers of the Committee.

Mr. CZERNETZ (Austria): Allow me to say that I am not speaking as a professional diplomat, I am speaking as one of the parliamentary members of the Austrian delegation.

As I am not stationed in New York I could not follow your work in the daily routine. When I tried to get through the mountain of paper which had accumulated I was particularly struck by a remark about the "Disarmament Game" at the United Nations. If you follow the annual repetition of the United Nations debates on disarmament and the adoption of resolutions which have no practical result at all, one cannot deny that there is a lot of truth in the vitriolic remark about the "Disarmament Game" at the United Nations.

During last year's general debate on the various disarmament items, the Austrian delegation found it appropriate to evaluate the disarmament efforts of the United Nations in its first 30 years of existence. At that time my delegation -- as well as many other delegations -- could not but utter its profound

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regret and disappointment about the all too obvious lack of any substantial results in this essential domain. Unfortunately, the time that has elapsed since last November has given us practically no reason to change our feeling of concern and -- I have to add -- alarm about the apparent total stagnation of virtually all disarmament efforts.

Today the arms race is proceeding and thus continues to constitute the most serious threat to a peaceful and orderly future for the world community as well as a tremendous drain on resources urgently required for other purposes. It seems indeed outrageous that the world affords itself the luxury of spending approximately 20 times more on armaments expenditures than on development assistance.

At the same time the danger of a further proliferation of nuclear weapons is more acute than ever before without any real chance in sight for effective measures to block this death-certain road to universal holocaust. Furthermore, this last year has not brought us any nearer to the convening of a world disarmament conference proposed more than 11 years ago with the declared aim to cut the Gordian Knot of the disarmament impasse. Since 1971 the annual reports of the CCD have -- at least for those countries which must be contented with the role of outsiders vis-à-vis the rather small group of initiates -- been nothing else but a lengthy manifestation of complete failure to achieve any tangible progress. Certainly, this year the CCD has -- at least for the time being -- completed its deliberations on a convention to prohibit environmental warfare and this General Assembly will be called upon to endorse the draft treaty annexed to the CCD's special report on this question. However, even on this subject the CCD was unable to reach a general consensus of all its members.

The hopes we pinned on the review of the United Nations role in the field of disarmament turned out to be to a great extent just an illusion.

We cannot just discuss formulations and adopt resolutions -- without being able to change the appalling situation.

In the late 1920s the French Statesman, Léon Blum, analysed in a book the relations between "Disarmament - Security and Confidence". No country was prepared to disarm without having real security; but without disarmament nobody could have

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real security. And no State had the confidence that the other countries would also disarm. Léon Blum drew the attention particularly to the fact that one of the fascist dictatorships of his time could not accept an international inspection because such an international control would endanger the power monopoly of the dictatorship. The bedevilled connexion between disarmament, security and confidence is still predominant.

In turning now to those aspects of disarmament which we consider to be of foremost importance, I should like to start with the question of nuclear disarmament, not only because of the devastating destructiveness of nuclear weapons but also because of their high symbolic value on the political balance sheet of today's world.

A realistic assessment of the situation with which we are faced today has to start from one undeniable assertion: nuclear proliferation is -- more than ever before -- a decisive phenomenon in international relations. Furthermore, apart from the all too obvious hazards of a truly "proliferated world", that is a world in which -- as some scientists predict -- as many as 40 nations will have enough plutonium in less than 10 years to produce at least a few nuclear bombs -- the actual process of creeping proliferation, which we are apparently unable to stop, creates additional dangers and uncertainties. Thus in our "proliferating world" the fear of nuclear proliferation -- whether justified in a given situation or not -- tends to destabilize the international political system of certain regions and has serious repercussions such as further acceleration of the arms trade and extensive build-up of conventional weapons. There can be no doubt that today's situation is much more complicated than 30 or even 15 years ago.

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

However, if the international community is unable to meet this challenge, we shall discover very soon that the problem posed by further nuclear proliferation has become totally unmanageable. Even now, we have to recognize that the continued development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes -- which gained new impetus with the world energy crisis -- has led to a situation in which the production of nuclear weapons presents hardly any major technical problems. For the same reason, the economic barrier against the manufacture of these weapons has been considerably lowered.

Today, there exists a means for any country with modest technological and industrial capabilities to obtain weapons grade material without outside assistance.

The result of these changes on the technical front has been a decline in the technical barriers to nuclear proliferation. Today a technical definition of the proliferation problem is worse than unenlightening; it is simply misleading. Consequently, for many countries the option "to go nuclear" becomes more and more an exclusively political one.

Moreover, the fact that the world has so far been spared an all-embracing nuclear catastrophe is the consequence of the "balance of power" -- a balance between the major military Powers. Out of the "balance of terror" came the very reasonable policy of peaceful coexistence. As there is no other alternative to coexistence than no existence -- as Eisenhower said -- in the nuclear age, the decision of the major Powers could only be in favour of coexistence. We know the solemn declarations for détente. We really need détente badly because only in an atmosphere of détente could a certain confidence be developed. The mad arms race creates new tensions over and over again. The arms race weakens or even destroys the policy of détente. The arms control efforts -- multilateral and bilateral -- over the past 15 years have failed to produce any nuclear disarmament or even to halt the nuclear arms race between the major Powers.

We expect from the great military nuclear Powers today not only that they themselves should not start an atomic war, but also that they establish the disarmament and arms control measures that are politically necessary in order to diminish the motivation for an independent development of new nuclear arms potentials.

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

We are certainly aware that we are thus assigning a particularly heavy responsibility to the great Powers. However, this responsibility seems to be quite in keeping with the privileges they enjoy.

Both the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which my country has strongly supported from the very outset, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), whose safeguard régime we consider to be of the utmost importance, might provide the framework for the kind of action I have just outlined.

In our view the NPT still constitutes a very important international instrument for the prevention of a spread of nuclear weapons. We therefore welcome the further increase in the number of States parties to this Treaty and continue to advocate universal adherence to it. However, whereas the obligations of the non-nuclear States have been put into effect in so far as articles I, II and III of the Treaty have been implemented and the development of the safeguards régime of the Treaty -- with all its imperfections -- has by and large made steady progress, the political underpinnings of the Treaty, as set out in the preamble, and especially in article VI, concerning disarmament by the nuclear weapons States signatories to the Treaty, have proved to be even weaker than the most pessimistic voices had predicted.

Can we realistically expect that a treaty based on mutual rights and obligations of all parties can be preserved if the just expectations of one group are constantly frustrated? Only if and when the major nuclear weapons States recognize the existing direct and specific link between the obligations of non-nuclear weapons States and their own commitments to bring about -- and here I use the words of article VI -- "effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and nuclear disarmament" -- only then will the NPT have any chance for further survival, and only then can States that up to now have preferred to remain outside the NPT system be convinced to adhere to it.

In this connexion I should like to quote from a recent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) publication:

"The two major nuclear Powers conceded themselves at the Vladivostok summit that it is not strict strategic equality they seek, but rather a sort of balance which would give them a perception of equal security. If this is

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

so, the contention that negotiations about reductions would be possible only when the very high levels permitted by the new agreement were reached seems untenable. It is incomprehensible why a balance and equal security could not be achieved by bringing the present levels, which are already high enough to destroy humanity several times over, down to a common, lower plateau, and by halting or significantly slowing down the introduction of new arms. The policy of continued armaments contradicts the declared intention to disarm. At present, neither side can really threaten the over-all strategic forces of the other, while an arms race, by its very nature, generates temptations among the competitors to overtake each other. It is bound to create instabilities, and thereby new difficulties on the way to weapon reductions."

Although the last session of the General Assembly, in its resolution 3466 (XXX), requested the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) to give first priority to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear weapons test ban agreement, this year's CCD report gives little indication of progress in this field. Indeed, it is very difficult to see why further tests by the leading nuclear-weapon States should be considered necessary to maintain the present strategic balance and to preserve their overwhelming nuclear superiority. Both nuclear Powers have an enormous "over-kill capacity", and one is entitled to ask what, under these circumstances, "nuclear superiority" really means.

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

Let me return to our daily routine: apart from a truly comprehensive test-ban treaty, there are a number of other options which these States could take up in the interest of universality of the NPT, an essential condition for its survival. I should only like to refer to the idea of a phased moratorium of nuclear tests, which was extensively discussed during the 1975 NPT Review Conference or to the idea that has been advanced by the Swedish CCD delegation, to expand the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, in order to lower -- as a first step -- the threshold of permitted tests from 150 kilotons to 10 kilotons.

Let me reiterate once more my firm conviction that in not making use of the possibilities inherent in the NPT and in not further developing its potential we would do irreparable harm to the prospect of future international security. I therefore sincerely hope that this General Assembly, in dealing under agenda item 124 with the conclusions of the first NPT Review Conference, will open new avenues for a comprehensive solution of the problem of both horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation.

Such a solution should also lead to an open management for the transfer of nuclear technology ensuring at the same time its exclusive use for peaceful purposes and the participation of all States in the potential benefits of nuclear technology. In this context the question of peaceful nuclear explosions which -- as we all know -- has specific arms control implications due to the technical impossibilities to distinguish between peaceful and military nuclear activities, must also be addressed. We are pleased to note that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group established by the Board of Governors of IAEA for the purpose of further exploring aspects of a peaceful nuclear-explosions service has already done a considerable amount of work in this regard. We hope that this course of action will be followed and pave the way for a comprehensive international régime for PNEs in accordance with article V of the NPT.

Before turning to the question of non-nuclear disarmament let me dwell briefly upon another approach to nuclear disarmament: the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Already two years ago we expressed our interest in this concept which we consider to be complementary to the global approach embodied in the NPT.

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

The report of the Secretary-General containing the views, observations and suggestions of Governments on the excellent study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones that was before the thirtieth General Assembly reveals a remarkable degree of agreement on many aspects.

Given the disparities of the political and geostrategic situations of different regions in the world the conditions for the viability of nuclear-weapon-free zones are bound to vary from region to region. Thus the apparent difficulties in the search for a universally applicable and agreed formula covering all aspects that are relevant for the establishment of such zones should not discourage further steps to promote such zones on a regional level and with reference to concrete zone proposals. We must, however, never forget that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot be regarded as an end in itself but only as a means towards the wider objectives of general and complete disarmament.

In the midst of our -- understandable -- preoccupation with nuclear weaponry the regulation of so-called conventional armaments has in the past years become to be a rather neglected dimension, although progress in this field seems to be of equal importance. We therefore welcome the emerging renewed interest in that field as demonstrated, for instance, by the very interesting proposal made by the Belgian Foreign Minister during this year's general debate, with regard to certain regional aspects of disarmament. Already at the beginning of my statement I have referred to the Draft Convention on the Prohibition of Military and any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. We note that the CCD has devoted a considerable amount of its deliberations to this topic. However, the CCD report also indicates that the Committee was unable to reach a consensus on the draft treaty which is now before this General Assembly. Nevertheless, we are willing to give our approval to the draft because we consider that its positive aspects prevail over its insufficiencies. We particularly welcome the machinery for consultations and complaints under article V of the Treaty as well as the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will act as depository of the treaty, thereby reaffirming the important role this Organization can play with regard to disarmament measures. May we hope that these new aspects of the proposed draft treaty will set a precedent for future disarmament agreements?

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

With regard to the question of weapons of mass destruction we recognize that some progress has been made in the intricate search for a definition of the scope of this proposal. We are fully aware of the difficulties involved in that process which stem from the fact that the proposal advanced by the Soviet Union two years ago aims at the prohibition of weapons that fortunately are not yet part of the military arsenals. My delegation fully agrees with the view that the prohibition of the manufacture of new kinds of devastating weaponries constitutes an important arms-control approach because we all know how difficult the elimination of such weapons becomes once they are no longer a menacing option for the future but a real threat to the survival of mankind.

We have always considered the question of the reduction of military budgets as a potentially useful approach to disarmament. The General Assembly has through the years on several occasions called upon its Members to take concrete steps to reduce the burden of military budgets, but conceptual and practical difficulties have so far prevented serious consideration of the expenditure approach. My delegation therefore particularly welcomes the report of the Group of Experts on the Reduction of Military Budgets entitled "The Measurement and International Reporting of Military Expenditures". This report and especially the suggestions for an implementation mechanism for the testing and refining of the recommended reporting methods deserve to be carefully studied by all members of the United Nations. I hope that the General Assembly will in the near future take practical steps to make the analysis contained in this report applicable to the real world.

I should not like to conclude my remarks on the different non-nuclear aspects of disarmament without stressing the particular and continuous importance my country attaches to the question of a prohibition or restriction of the use of incendiary and other excessively injurious weapons. We have always voiced our firm conviction that with regard to these weapons the humanitarian aspect must be considered as overriding all other aspects and that therefore urgent decisive action to ban the development of these weapons was necessary. This year again we will join the Swedish and other delegations in presenting a draft on this subject. Already in the past years much has been accomplished in exploring the uses and effects of specific categories of weapons which for humanitarian reasons must be

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the subject of prohibitions and restrictions of use. This year's discussions both in the Lugano Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons and in the Third Session of the Geneva Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflicts have corroborated our impression that we will soon have a solid basis on which to take at least some first legal decisions. I sincerely wish that the fourth and probably last session of the Geneva Conference will prove that an optimistic assessment is not unfounded.

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

Let me in conclusion say a few words on the organizational aspects of disarmament matters and the way they are dealt with within this Organization. Certainly the decisive factor for any success of disarmament negotiations is the political will on the part of the participating States to arrive at tangible and mutually acceptable results. However, the organizational set-up is of great importance in so far as adequate procedures may help orderly discussion and facilitate agreement.

As in practice the United Nations machinery has functioned rather unsatisfactorily and therefore, in our view, needed improvement; we set great hopes in the deliberations on ways and means of strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, called for under last year's resolution 3484 B. However, and I have to say this quite frankly, the various recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament can only be considered to be a very moderate first step towards a comprehensive reform of the disarmament machinery of our Organization. Thus the proposed measures for a streamlining of this Committee's work constitute no more than cosmetic changes. The vital question of the relationship between the General Assembly and the CCD has not been discussed in detail and most of the proposals for a reinforced role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament that have been advanced by many Governments are only insufficiently reflected in the Committee's proposals.

We should at least give serious thought to the idea that one of the most important functions our Organization can assume is to stimulate public concern about disarmament and to channel it in constructive ways. And here I should like to quote from the introduction to the Secretary-General's annual report:

"It is essential that public opinion in the world should be actively aware of the dangers of present developments in the armaments in the face of the appalling reality of the arms race. In the light of its universal character and its recent experience of focusing world public opinion on important global subjects, the United Nations may well be able to play a major role in generating a new approach to this most dangerous of all problems."

(Mr. Czernetz, Austria)

I wish to place on record our firm commitment to all efforts that are undertaken in order to strengthen the financial and organizational infrastructure of the United Nations Disarmament Division. At the same time I should like to warmly commend on behalf of the Austrian delegation Mr. Bjoernerstedt and all the other members of his Division for their untiring efforts in assisting us in our work.

The convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament issues was proposed, at the initiative of Yugoslavia, by the Non-Aligned Conference at Colombo. We give our full support to this proposal and hope that such a special session will create a better atmosphere for the disarmament negotiations.

The main question of our time is whether the major Powers of the world really have the will to come to a mutual reduction of their military forces, nuclear as well as conventional forces. Do they really wish to come to a general disarmament under an effective international control. Is such a political will to secure peace by disarmament really existent? Can the major Powers convince the peoples of the world of their true and sincere political will? Peace will be secure only in a disarmed world.

Mr. VINCI (Italy): I do hope my statement will not come as an anticlimax, not only because of the late hour but because I follow such a vivid statement made by the representative of Austria. I hasten to add that I share most, if not all, of the views he has expressed, but I will convey them perhaps in less stringent, lively and eloquent terms.

We have been gathering here once again since Monday last, to discuss disarmament and draw up a balance sheet so that international public opinion may be informed of what we have accomplished during this year. Above all we are here to share our experiences and to draw from a new and stimulating exchange of views further encouragement to action.

As far as accomplishment is concerned, no one can deny that, against a background of some discouraging trends, this year has provided a number of positive results potentially significant, both politically and psychologically speaking. The whole record, however, does not give ground for complacency. In the words of

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our Secretary-General, "the problem of armaments continues to present the most serious threat to a peaceful and orderly future for the world community".

In putting forward the views of the Italian delegation on what we consider at this stage the key items on our agenda, I will start by reiterating our position of principle. The progressive achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control has always been and remains for Italy a basic choice and a primary objective. Keeping always this position in mind, I can say that the Italian Government has registered with satisfaction the recent initiatives taken bilaterally as well as multilaterally.

It is our keen hope that these measures will not remain ends in themselves. In our view, they should become part of a larger and far-reaching design and in that light, provide the means for gradually achieving not only effective and total elimination of arms -- primarily nuclear armaments -- but also a peaceful order wherein détente and security would join and grow together.

We all know that the road towards disarmament is a long one, paved with obstacles of all kinds --- political, juridical and technical. Many efforts are still required to remove these obstacles. It is more than ever clear to my delegation that in order to succeed in our relentless efforts, we must not lose sight of our final goal at any point along the way.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

Bearing this in mind, the Italian Government has repeatedly stressed the need for a coherent programme of organic and complete disarmament -- a programme outlining on the one hand the preliminary measures to be adopted in a short term, and on the other hand the course of subsequent negotiations in keeping with the main inspiration behind the whole process of disarmament.

A global formulation such as this, in successive stages but without rigid time-tables, would, in our view, enable us to proceed on the road of disarmament without recurrent pauses and deviations; one of the aims of each stage would be to build the necessary conditions of security and confidence for the success of the next stage. What occurs all too often, instead, is that we wander off the main road without any convincing reason; all too often most resounding declarations have failed to produce concrete results, this failure giving rise to a dangerous situation of inertia and stalemate.

The arms race -- uncontrolled, nourished on pretexts of nationalistic pride, and often pursued without any objective justification in terms of security -- is now, more than ever, a constant reality. A reality daily fraught with unknowns and risks which continue to cast a dark shadow on our hopes for peace and fruitful co-operation among peoples.

The Italian Government is deeply concerned with the growing rate at which some States are increasing their military forces. And here it must be stressed that this dangerous trend, while constituting an obvious threat to international détente, may seriously elude and undermine the real expectations of the new political and economic international order. Nowadays, one of the main features of our international society is the greatly increased number of peoples and nations who rightly request a more rapid economic development and better living standards. What our world community needs is not weapons, what it needs is better standards of living, which can only be attained through appropriate economic and social reforms and a more equitable distribution of the resources at present absorbed in all too great a quantity by the irrepressible arms race.

An evaluation of recent developments in the disarmament field leads me to stress especially the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). The work carried out by the Geneva Conference in its two sessions this year has been particularly intense and on the whole constructive, producing some achievements which deserve to be duly appreciated.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

The report of the CCD to the General Assembly, in its new format, shows in greater detail than in the past the depth and dedication with which the Geneva body has dealt with very complex problems and worked in a really constructive spirit.

One of the basic tasks of the Conference this year was to negotiate on a draft convention presented by both the United States and the Soviet Union on 21 August 1975, for the prohibition of so-called environmental warfare. The Conference set up an ad hoc negotiating group which made a most apt and useful contribution to the elaboration of the final text, upon which the General Assembly is now being called to pass judgement.

Even if, understandably, the Conference did not succeed in achieving unanimity, the new draft did attract the support of the great majority of delegations, which shared the feeling that the CCD had promptly and substantially fulfilled the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly's resolution 3475 (XXX) of 11 December 1975.

The task was certainly not easy, as it had to consider for instance, how to rule the use of techniques not as yet wholly defined by science, techniques which, like nuclear energy, can apparently be used for either peaceful and civilian purposes or hostile and military ones.

As in every multilateral negotiation, the new text is obviously the result of a compromise, and does not, nor can it possibly, reflect all the viewpoints and positions of the various participants. Even so, the exercise was far from fruitless -- and, thanks to the persistence of the negotiators, it allowed for the introduction of significant improvements and innovations.

It is true that there remain, even in our view, some unresolved questions, as well as some gaps which we hope can be bridged in a second stage.

There is indeed the important problem of the scope of the draft convention. As it now stands, the draft would seem to be what might be called a threshold-agreement, which operates only when certain circumstances arise, that is, when the military or hostile use of environmental modification techniques might produce "extensive, lasting and serious" effects by means of destruction, damage or offence to a participating State.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

The Italian Government is aware of the motives which at the present stage have prevented the co-sponsors of the draft from giving their consent to a global ban. While acknowledging the clarifications given also through the interpretive declarations added to article I, on the subject of the scope and conditions of the ban, the Italian delegation can only hope that this fundamental question will be reconsidered in the future. This could be done especially on the occasion of those review conferences for which the new text of the Convention has provided a rational and, it is to be hoped, effective mechanism.

Similarly, concerning article III: it would have been wise, in our view, to define more clearly the differences between peaceful and military uses of environmental modification techniques, specifying in more precise terms the question of responsibilities in case of involuntary damages to third parties. During the discussions, the Italian delegation has often recalled Principle 21 of the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, according to which the States are responsible for ensuring that the activities under their own jurisdiction or control "will not cause damage to the environment of other States or in other areas outside the limits of their national jurisdiction". In this regard, while reaffirming the need for complete freedom in the pursuit of ecological research and experimentation for peaceful purposes, we must underline the necessity that this research and these applications develop in accordance with generally-recognized international norms and principles. Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration serves as a clear reference and constitutes a fundamental guarantee in this context.

Again as concerns article III, the Italian delegation would have preferred a more exhaustive definition of the obligations accruing to international economic, scientific and technological co-operation in the field of peaceful development of environmental modification techniques -- particularly in the light of the special needs of developing countries.

Turning now to article V, and those provisions concerning the key problem of complaints procedures, we would like to recall what we said in Geneva, expressing a concern shared by other delegations as well. While the compromise solution embodied in article V, which is the result of complex and delicate negotiations, is acceptable for the time being, it still leaves open the problem

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of developing a more solid, equitable and cogent mechanism for the settlement of disputes; I mean a mechanism which would take into fuller account both the gravity of the consequences produced by possible violations of the Convention and the legitimate interests of the parties. This is also a matter for the Review Conference to consider.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

The Government of Italy considers the total prohibition of nuclear tests a question of extreme importance and high priority in the perspective of general and complete disarmament.

An agreement on a comprehensive test ban would constitute the anticipated expression on the part of the nuclear Powers of their willingness to fulfil in practical terms the commitments they have assumed under articles V and VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The signing last May of the Treaty on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNEs) by the United States and the USSR represents a considerable development in the understanding between the great Powers, at both the political and the psychological levels. In this connexion, may the delegation of a country like Italy, which has no ambition to become a militarily nuclear Power and is mainly concerned with the harmonious development of international co-operation and co-existence, be allowed to stress again the need -- felt by so many other States -- for an appropriate distribution of all information and technology pertaining to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy: an action which would enable non-nuclear weapons countries to benefit, under the same conditions as nuclear-weapons Powers, from progress made in the research and development of atomic energy in all its non-military potential.

Within the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), the problem of the total prohibition of nuclear weapons tests has been for many years the subject of deep and careful study under several headings: among them, the means of control, the question of peaceful nuclear explosions, and the participation of all nuclear weapons Powers in an eventual agreement.

Of course the problem of verification procedures remains the most sensitive, and not only at a technical level. The CCD has this year provided a new, highly qualified contribution to the solution of this problem, through the establishment of an ad hoc group of scientific experts to study possible measures of international co-operation for the detection and identification of seismic events. Italy readily supported this initiative, and will be happy to participate in the forthcoming stages of the work planned by the group of experts. We are convinced that the investigation by the experts will significantly contribute to the elimination of those fringes of doubt and uncertainty still persisting as to the means of detecting and identifying these explosions.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

The Italian delegation wishes to renew its hope that experts of those States which have so far proposed procedures for a comprehensive test ban, founded essentially on national means, may be able to participate in the next meeting of the group of experts, the purpose of their work being none other than finding -- possibly in a spirit of constructive collaboration -- technical solutions which might be accepted by all, leading thereby to the formulation of responsible conclusions at the political level.

We need to go on with the job in this crucial area, and we hope that a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear weapons tests may soon be within our reach.

In this connexion the Government of Italy has noted with great interest a section of the memorandum on the cessation of the arms race and disarmament submitted to the General Assembly by the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union dealing with the verification of nuclear tests. We welcome these good dispositions, which were reiterated by the First Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Kuznetsov, in the statement he made on 1 November at the 20th meeting of this Committee, and we look forward to further exploration and elaboration of an understanding concerning on-site inspections.

Another important item, which has roused the concern of Member States and public opinion alike for years, is the question of banning chemical weapons. Here, too, we are dealing with a delicate problem whose solution becomes increasingly urgent as time goes on. The potential destructive capacity of chemical weapons has already been perilously tested. It contains, in the light of the most recent technico-scientific developments concerning these weapons as well as their carriers, an effective threat and an impending danger which must be promptly curbed and neutralized.

Once again this year, numerous delegations have presented to the CCD documents of solid scientific merit which add to the considerable material compiled in previous sessions. This documentation, as well as the personal contributions of authoritative experts in a subsequent round of technical meetings organized by the CCD, have provided an important stimulus for the production of a valid final effort in this sector.

The Italian delegation considered most interesting the draft convention recently submitted to the CCD by the United Kingdom which, developing ideas contained in an earlier proposal by Japan, seems to offer an alternative or a complementary solution to the joint initiative announced by the United States

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and the USSR on 3 July 1974 "with respect to the conclusion, as a first step, of an international convention dealing with the most dangerous, lethal means of chemical warfare".

The United Kingdom draft reflects the ingenious idea of an agreement comprehensive in its coverage but gradual in its application. It should lead to complete chemical disarmament in a series of steps, each of them implying the adoption and entry into force of further obligations.

The Italian delegation -- while hoping that the bilateral discussions between the Governments of the United States and the USSR may, as before, lead to an eagerly anticipated joint proposal -- maintains that the United Kingdom proposal may provide, at the next session, a useful basis for negotiations in the CCD. In view of this, Italy reserves the right to introduce at the appropriate time some procedural suggestions aimed at accelerating and possibly facilitating the conclusion of negotiations which have already been dragging on for too many years. We rely also on a greater spirit of conciliation than that which has existed in the past on this subject.

In Geneva, the last session of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts made some progress in its consideration of the problem of the prohibition of neo-conventional weapons. Various aspects of the question were discussed at a technical level by the Conference of Government Experts convened in Lugano last February under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Unfortunately, the necessary conditions -- including some of a political order -- for the adoption of practical measures of prohibition at the next session of the Diplomatic Conference apparently have not yet come to fruition. This notwithstanding, the problem deserves to be further studied in all its implications, not the least of which are those concerning security.

The Italian delegation has already pointed out the advantage of submitting this question to such an especially qualified body as the CCD. In recalling our viewpoint, we confirm our own intention to contribute to the search for rational and equitable solutions to the problem of neo-conventional weapons.

A number of items on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly deal with the idea of the establishment of nuclear-free zones.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

The vast network of problems connected with this idea has been profusely debated over past years in this Committee as well as in the CCD, and has been the subject of a special report containing an analysis of all its aspects.

The Italian Government wishes to reiterate here the opinion it has already expressed on other occasions on this matter.

We maintain that any initiative in this direction must meet precise criteria and be carried out within the framework of effective guarantees. The essential prerequisite is that whatever step is undertaken in this field, it must be undertaken by States belonging to the area directly concerned, in close consultation among themselves, and on a completely voluntary basis. At the same time, one fundamental and indispensable guarantee is the participation of the most militarily significant countries of the area in an eventual agreement.

Another prerequisite is in our view not less essential: every measure adopted in respect to denuclearization must preserve the existing balance of security in a given area, and avoid dangerous destabilizing effects of a type which might threaten the right of any State freely to choose the best means of safeguarding its own security.

The Italian Government attaches the greatest importance to the continuation of contacts between the United States and the Soviet Union for the success of the SALT II talks, viewing these negotiations as an essential step towards the effective containment of the arms race.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

In its capacity as participant with special status, Italy is following with equal interest the negotiations in Vienna on the mutual and balanced reduction of forces in Central Europe. We believe that the scope of such negotiations, for the purpose of stability and peace, far surpasses any regional boundaries.

Both the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the negotiations in Vienna on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions deserve greater commitment and intensified efforts. We wish full success to both these negotiations, feeling confident that if a right, common in inspiration, is behind them, they may produce before long the advocated results.

I think it is only fair to mention that we have also before us, in the form of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament, the valuable result of hard work and constructive negotiations of many delegations, including my own, have actively participated in this exercise and we hope the report will command unanimous endorsement.

I should now like to address myself briefly to the problem of the machinery available for negotiations on disarmament.

It is a long-standing conviction of the Italian Government that the prospects of general and complete disarmament are linked to political will, clear objectives and perseverance in action, rather than to the choice of one or other approach or method of negotiation, however important this might also be.

Of course, this conviction has not prevented us from considering with due attention -- now as in the recent past -- proposals and initiatives envisaging alternative or parallel courses liable, according to some States, to produce more rapid results.

Moved by the same spirit of understanding, Italy is ready to give to the idea of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to disarmament -- which is arousing considerable interest this year -- a realistic positive response. We do hope that such an idea -- when it materializes -- will be accompanied by an effective strengthening of a concurrent process of détente and a halt to the arms race for which we all yearn so eagerly.

My delegation believes that the participation of all nuclear-weapon States, and an exhaustive and in-depth preparation by the Preparatory Committee -- in which all States concerned, particularly and in the first instance the members of the CCD, should have the right to sit -- are essential factors for the success of such a special session. For our part, we look forward to taking part in its preparations.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

In the view of the Italian Government it would be wise once the special session is convened, to adjourn momentarily any preparations envisioned for a world disarmament conference. The deliberations on this matter should be left to the special session.

Beyond these considerations, the Italian Government acknowledges with satisfaction the most recent results of the CCD. These results fully testify to the Committee's vitality and capability in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to it. We do not, however, rule out the possibility of introducing further improvements into the procedures and methods of negotiation of the Geneva body. In this perspective, we have noted with satisfaction the declarations of Ambassador Martin, who has anticipated the readiness of the United States to set in motion a "comprehensive review" of the working methods of the CCD.

The Italian delegation stands ready, as of now, to make every possible contribution to such a review.

I would like, with your permission, to conclude my statement with a remark of a more general and humane nature.

In the last years, with growing intensity, the vital issue of effectively preventing nuclear dissemination, horizontal as well as vertical, has become paramount in this house and in the public opinion of the world at large. There is, unequivocally, a keen awareness that, unless a determined effort is made in this direction, the progress achieved in the field of détente and positive international co-operation in view of a more just and human international society, would be in serious jeopardy.

Nuclear arms reduction and disarmament are the corner-stone of the system of the United Nations. The lessons of history are there to instruct us. The failure of the League of Nations to solve this capital problem was at the root of the Second World War. The over-destructive power of the existing nuclear arsenals gives to this still impending menace a biblical tone and an apocalyptic dimension. We have to face resolutely the indisputable fact that in the world of today the first and essential task of disarmament concerns the progressive reduction and the final elimination of nuclear weapons. All the rest is very important indeed, but comes after. These endeavours must be exerted in two directions at the same time; if there is no progress in preventing vertical proliferation, the chances of containing horizontal proliferation will be greatly reduced, if not entirely

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destroyed. In this connexion a positive and encouraging note comes from the keen and articulated interest that the newly-elected President of the United States, Mr. Carter, has shown for what, I repeat, is the crux of the problem.

May the forthcoming President of the United States, a country which has such predominant responsibilities in this field, succeed in achieving the worthy goals he has so aptly and cogently outlined.

The CHAIRMAN: Before adjourning the meeting I have two announcements to make: first, that Mauritius has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.4, and, second, that there will be no meeting of this Committee on Monday afternoon.

On the other hand, as representatives may have noticed from today's Journal, on Monday afternoon the plenary Assembly will consider two reports of this Committee - the first, in document A/31/285, relating to items 31 and 32 concerning outer space, and the second, in document A/31/305, dealing with agenda item 124, namely, Conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations.

We have a full list of speakers for Monday morning, when the next meeting of our Committee will take place.

I wish representatives a pleasant week-end, and kindly ask them to be here punctually at 10.30 on Monday morning.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.