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Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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ENGLISH

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

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Mr. da COSTA LOBO (Portugal) (interpretation from French): In evaluating the results obtained in the course of these past years in the field of disarmament, we cannot but be struck by the contrast between, on the one hand, the magnitude of the task before us and, on the other, the scant progress achieved. Undoubtedly it is important to analyse the reasons for such a situation, especially if that analysis is carried out for practical purposes, in other words, aiming at eliminating the factors responsible for that lack of progress. On the other hand, I believe it is idle to speculate at length on the progress that might have been achieved if Governments had had the political will they do not have, or if groups with vested interests were less selfish or if men were more reasonable. Things are what they are, favourable or unfavourable. They constitute inevitably the point of departure, for the actual facts underlying this problem. Thus, in applying these thoughts to the specific case of this Committee, I would say that the most effective method of work would consist, in our view, in identifying the favourable conditions, the positive elements, the viable ideas and in attempting to draw the best possible benefits from this set of circumstances. Were we to proceed in this manner, progress would perhaps not always be felt where it is most needed, but it would certainly be felt where it is possible.

I do not claim that it is impossible to influence what I have called the facts underlying the problem, in particular the political will of Governments. I would even add that any fundamental change in questions of disarmament must necessarily entail first a change in this element. But in the meantime the impossibility of achieving the basic objectives immediately should not serve as an excuse for us to confine ourselves to mere expressions of regret.

This interpretation of the role of organs dealing with disarmament suggests to my delegation the following observations.

First, the pursuance of limited objectives, even in fields that may be regarded as collateral, would justify our devoting as much attention and effort as possible to this task.

(Mr. da Costa Lobo, Portugal)

Secondly, the action undertaken in these fields should not make us lose sight of the wider disarmament objectives.

Thirdly, the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament would appear to be useful and timely.

I intend now to develop, albeit briefly, the three aspects to which I have referred. If, on the whole, very little progress has been achieved in resolving the great problems of disarmament -- assuming there has been progress -- it is on the other hand undeniable that positive results have been achieved in certain limited sectors, or certain initiatives undertaken that encourage us to expect such results. I have in mind in particular the prohibition or limitation of certain types of armaments in respect of a certain region, or the combination of these two criteria. In this field an objective that should not be lost sight of is that of the creation of denuclearized zones which is, moreover, a sound example of the application of the method to which I referred a moment ago. I should like, in this connexion and availing myself of this opportunity, to put forward certain principles or guidelines which, in my Government's view, should inspire the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the régime governing them.

First, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone must result exclusively from the initiative of States forming that zone.

Second, nuclear-weapon-free zones should possess an effective system of verification ensuring respect for the obligations assumed.

Third, prohibition to produce, to test or to possess atomic weapons should not prevent States in the zone in question from benefiting from nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Fourth, nuclear-weapon-free zones must have very precise geographic limitations.

A State party to a nuclear-weapon-free zone may conclude military alliance with States which are not within the zone, but no commitment undertaken by virtue of those alliances can justify exceptions to the obligations embodied in the treaty establishing the zone.

Nuclear-weapon States should undertake to respect the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zones and in particular not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a State part of the zone in question.

(Mr. da Costa Lobo, Portugal)

The pursuance of the limited objectives should not in any case make us forget the broader questions of disarmament, such as the total cessation of nuclear tests or the effective reduction of all weapons, nuclear and conventional, by all States. Thus, on the one hand, eventual progress in collateral or peripheral sectors should not create a kind of good conscience which in any way could delay progress in respect of the principal problems. Secondly, international bodies, however small their influence may be on Governments -- especially the Governments of the great Powers -- in respect of questions that the latter regard as vital, should not, however, renounce their possibility of pursuing the great objectives of disarmament. They can play a constructive role in this field, since in fact they can, for instance, reveal the existence of convergencies susceptible of serving as a basis for future agreements between States; they can act directly on world public opinion and thus, indirectly, influence Governments; they can also, on a long-term basis, become successively more effective and obtain results in the future that today appear to be beyond their reach.

In our view, a special session of the General Assembly devoted exclusively to disarmament problems would combine a set of favourable conditions capable of leading to positive results. Some of these conditions can be readily indicated.

First, a special session of the Assembly would enable Governments to devote priority attention to disarmament problems during the session. In fact, the diversity and the importance of questions dealt with in the course of a regular session of the General Assembly make it extremely difficult to carry out a comprehensive and in-depth study of each of these questions. But, the situation is different if Governments can, in the course of a session, devote their attention to a single type of question. The precedent we have in the seventh session of the special session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to the problems of international economic co-operation and development, might be regarded as encouraging.

Second, the fact that this would be the first special session on disarmament enables us to hope that all Governments would make a supplementary effort to guarantee its success. Routine is the enemy of progress. The nature of such an Assembly would minimize the routine factor which the regular sessions cannot totally escape.

(Mr. da Costa Lobo, Portugal)

Third, the great Powers, which undoubtedly hold the main trump cards but which certainly would not wish to come with empty hands to an Assembly that would attract particular world attention, would in all likelihood be compelled to redouble their efforts in order to achieve significant progress. In this connexion, it is permissible to add that, while the great Powers have special privileges in this field, foremost among them is undoubtedly that of bearing a greater share of responsibility. Moreover, medium-sized Powers and small countries would participate too in the discussion of problems and in the search for solutions on an equal footing with the great Powers.

Fourth, the resolutions adopted and the consensuses reached at such an Assembly would no doubt have a special prestige and might thus exert a more marked influence.

The responsibility for the major disarmament decisions rests essentially with the Governments of States. This is how the international community is structured, and it would be misleading to act as though this were not the case. However, international organizations and organs -- in particular this Assembly and this Committee -- can play a highly important role in establishing conditions conducive to the adoption by Governments of the decisions best suited to the international community as a whole.

No doubt this is a difficult task, but it is not an impossible one. It is an exercise that cannot be expected to yield spectacular results, but which nevertheless can yield positive results. True, it will not bring about disarmament; but it can contribute significantly to disarmament.

Baron von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): The subject at present occupying us in this Committee has lost nothing of its topicality since the United Nations was first established. On the contrary, we are witnesses of a stepped-up arms race involving not only the quantity but, to an increasing extent, the quality of weapons systems as well. Scientific progress and technological development lend it a frightening dimension.

We agree with the United Nations Secretary-General who, in his report to the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, called for maximum priority to be given to disarmament in all its aspects. For one thing, efforts to promote détente, peace and security are doomed to ultimate failure if the arms race progresses unhindered. For another, the wastage of scanty resources in nearly all parts of the world is to the detriment of man. "The world", as Foreign Minister Genscher put it in the general debate of this General Assembly, "needs plough and work bench more urgently than rifle and missile". (A/31/PV.7, p. 36).

Looking back on the disarmament discussion of recent years and comparing aims and results, there is indeed no reason to be contented. What we have accomplished affects the periphery rather than the substance. Experience shows, however, that success can only be achieved step by step and by persevering negotiation. Although scepticism may therefore be indicated in view of all the ambitious plans, resignation certainly is not.

Here we proceed from the sober recognition that disarmament is not an end in itself but must serve the safeguarding of peace. Measures in the sphere of disarmament and arms control that are not aimed at the most stable and balanced global and regional constellations of power possibly may have dangerous consequences. Moreover, efforts to remove the sources of political tension must proceed hand in glove with steps to mitigate military confrontation. In addition, mutual confidence in the mutual performance of agreements should be strengthened by means of adequate verification arrangements.

The problems and prospects of concrete negotiations in the field of military security are illustrated by the endeavours being made in the special forum of the MBFR negotiations in Vienna.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

The prospects of these negotiations lie in the fact that the participating members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact can make a considerable contribution towards mitigating military confrontation in Europe and towards stabilizing peace and security. This aim could be reached if it were possible to establish, at a lower level, a more stable balance of military power in the form of identical maximum total strengths of the forces on both sides. The Federal Republic of Germany pursues this aim, together with its allies. The Federal Government hopes that the Vienna negotiations will lead to satisfactory results.

The growing exportation of conventional weapons and weapons technologies to nearly all parts of the world fills us with concern. The Federal Republic of Germany will continue to exercise restraint in this field. But without international arrangements no satisfactory solution to this problem is possible. It would be necessary to examine whether regional approaches could facilitate the resolving of the problem.

One of the most urgent tasks of our time is to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. To forgo the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is not to be seriously considered. Indeed, the point is to harness the possibilities it offers for the progress of mankind while taking into account the long-term requirements of international security. This task can be accomplished only when all countries, regardless of their level of industrial development, are conscious of their common responsibility and ready for international co-operation.

We consider the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which meanwhile more than 100 States have acceded, to be still an indispensable instrument of non-proliferation policy, and we have welcomed the fact that this year a country of Japan's importance has decided to accede. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany would renew its appeal to all States not yet having assumed their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to review their position.

In the meantime, the United Kingdom and the United States, as nuclear-weapon States, have voluntarily subjected their civilian nuclear installations to international control. My Government is very satisfied with this development. It would like to see other nuclear-weapon States follow this example.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

The policy of promoting the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons can secure lasting success only if the nuclear-weapon States equally meet their legal and moral responsibilities. Horizontal and vertical proliferation must not be viewed in isolation from each other. This was also illustrated by the Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany regards the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) as an important step towards fulfilling the obligations assumed by the nuclear-weapon States under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We appreciate the progress achieved so far, hoping that it will be possible soon, by means of a SALT II agreement, to give substance to the framework agreed in Vladivostok. This would pave the way for a reduction of strategic arms. We understand the dissatisfaction shown by world public opinion and many countries at the sluggish progress of the talks and again appeal to the world Powers to continue energetically their efforts to reach agreement.

The Federal Government advocates the conclusion of an adequately verified comprehensive test ban treaty and the cessation of all nuclear weapon tests. This would mean decisive progress towards limiting vertical proliferation.

We are aware that the conclusion of a treaty is ultimately dependent on a political decision of the nuclear-weapon States, but we would not underrate further scientific clarification of the complex verification problems. The Federal Government therefore supported the Swedish initiative for the appointment of an ad hoc group of experts. We participate in this group and expect that it will succeed in clearly indicating possibilities of international co-operation on the discovery and identification of seismic events. It is to be hoped that important countries still keeping aloof at the present time will participate in the expert group next year.

We do not believe that a comprehensive test ban treaty should enter into force only after all nuclear-weapon States have acceded to it. Nor was such a requirement attached to the partial test ban treaty of 1963.

Another unresolved problem is that of peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs), which has to be regulated together with a comprehensive test ban treaty. It is important to make sure that a ban on all nuclear-weapon tests will not be circumvented through PNEs.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

The bilateral United States-Soviet treaties fixing the same threshold of 150 kt for nuclear weapon tests and individual PNEs illustrate how closely the two fields are interlaced. We thought it a considerable step forward that the Soviet Union, for the first time ever, under the provisions of the PNE treaty, will permit on-site inspections in its territory.

It appears, however, that the verification system envisaged in the PNE Treaty, in the event of all weapon tests being stopped, fails to provide any means of verifying that no nuclear weapon developments are promoted through PNEs. We feel that priority should be given to the task of working out an effective verification arrangement to fill this gap. A temporary PNE moratorium might also be considered in this context.

Such a moratorium should not, however, prejudice the IAEA's present work of examining and creating the prerequisites for the implementation of article V of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The CCD submitted to this year's session of the General Assembly a draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

In view of the rapid and unpredictable evolution of science and technology, we are in favour of attempts to preclude from the outset the use of means of warfare that will become available only in the future, but it is important that the criteria for prohibition should be sufficiently defined and observance of the arrangements adequately verifiable.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany considers that the limitation of the scope for prohibition as provided in the text before us will be necessary to make sure that the agreement will be practicable. The intention is to keep away from the body to deal with complaints any limitless disputes over petty incidents and accusations that can hardly be proved. We regard the understanding on these terms as elaborated in the CCD as an authentic interpretation in respect of article I, which should be part of the final adoption of the convention.

The Federal Republic of Germany promotes international co-operation in the economic, scientific and technological fields and is trying to increase its contribution. We are glad, therefore, that a formulation has been found for

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

article III whereby the legitimate interests of developing countries in connexion with the application for peaceful purposes of environmental modification techniques can be given consideration. Questions relating to the transfer of technology will continue to require in each case specific agreements between the individual State and/or the competent international organizations.

The Federal Government has from the outset attached great importance -- which in fact transcends the scope of the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques -- to a satisfactory regulation of the verification and complaints procedure. We should at all events avoid a repetition of the unsatisfactory provisions in the B-Weapons Convention. With the appointment of a Consultative Committee, in whose work all contracting States may participate on the basis of full equality, a body has been provided which will establish facts as necessary. Any political decision reserved to the United Nations Security Council can be facilitated by the work of this Consultative Committee. Though the present solution is still not ideal, it can be noted with satisfaction that a first step has been taken in a direction which could bring us nearer to the solution of the verification problem in other sectors as well.

We are prepared to agree to a resolution recommending for adoption the present text of the Convention. Yet we in no way overrate the importance of such a Convention, being aware that it is but a modest step along the road towards effective control of the arms race.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has taken the view for many years now that priority should be given to the efforts to introduce the most comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons possible. We also have agreed to a step-by-step approach as a way of bringing these existing weapons of mass destruction gradually under effective international control. Regrettably, the CCD has still not been successful in achieving any decisive progress in the elaboration of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Yet it must be recognized that the past session was marked by particularly intensive discussion and the submission of useful working papers.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

Another meeting of CCD experts has helped to promote understanding of the complex technical problems of definition and verification. However, these problems are too complicated to expect agreement to have been reached on most of the fundamental scientific and technological questions. More meetings of experts will be necessary to clarify technical questions that still remain open.

Among the various working papers submitted this year, the United Kingdom draft convention deserves special mention. This initiative is an interesting attempt to combine different proposals. It would be desirable for the different viewpoints soon to become reconciled to the extent that negotiations on a draft can be taken up within the CCD.

In addition to the question of definition, the problems of verification which are inseparably connected with it, will require special attention. As we all know, it was the differing viewpoints on this question which mainly stood in the way of agreement. The Federal Republic of Germany has on many occasions emphasized the need for an effective international verification system for a convention of this high order.

A regulation as contained in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and on Their Destruction is unlikely to generate among the contracting parties the necessary confidence in the other parties' observance of the terms of the Convention. Here, one of the most difficult problems will be to ensure that dual purpose agents which are produced and needed in large quantities for civilian purposes will not be diverted for military purposes, and that, with regard to verification of the destruction of warfare agents, no stocks are retained. We welcome the fact that the Soviet Government in its Memorandum on Disarmament, declared its readiness to discuss verification methods for the destruction of chemical weapons to be removed from national arsenals.

In future negotiations the following principles should not be left out of account: (1) the production of chemical substances for peaceful purposes must not be hindered by any chemical warfare ban; (2) the provisions of the Convention must not discriminate against any State or groups of States; and (3) all contracting parties must have adequate assurance that the terms of the Convention will be

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

observed. Given good will on all sides, it should be possible for the First Committee to agree this year, as in previous years, on the text of a resolution that can be adopted by consensus.

As regards institutional questions, we think that the CCD is still the most suitable body for negotiations on questions of world-wide disarmament and arms control. We are glad, therefore, that the responsibilities of the CCD have been recognized and left untouched by the Ad Hoc Committee which is concerned also with strengthening the role of the United Nations in the disarmament sphere. In our view, the CCD has proved this year that it is capable of lending considerable impulse to the solution of disarmament problems. It worked out the text for a new convention and, in its informal meetings in which experts participate, helped to solve other major problems. To appoint new additional bodies, on the other hand, does not seem a suitable means of expediting progress on disarmament matters, especially if they are to deal with some of the tasks that are already being dealt with by the CCD. For reasons of efficiency we are against such parallel functions.

(Baron von Wechmar,
Federal Republic of Germany)

My Government would, however, welcome a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on problems of world-wide disarmament and arms control, as called for by the non-aligned countries in Colombo. Hoping that it will provide new impulses also for the CCD's work, we are prepared to co-operate constructively in such a special session and intend to participate in the preparatory work as well.

I hope that the deliberations of the First Committee will yield constructive draft resolutions, that is, draft resolutions that will have prospects of being adopted. This, of course, calls for readiness for compromise and co-operation on all sides. Decisive progress will hardly be possible unless it is realized that arrangements to check the arms race must involve effective international controls.

The Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to do everything in its power to help ensure that the efforts to limit the arms race will soon produce results.

Mr. TAN (Singapore): May I first join other delegations, Mr. Chairman, in congratulating you and other officers of the Committee on your election to the posts you occupy in the Committee.

The Singapore delegation has agreed to co-sponsor the Yugoslav proposal for convening a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Its decision to do so is indicative of my country's concern at the lack of progress in disarmament during the last few years. We hope this new initiative may inject a fresh momentum into the process. We are concerned about several aspects of disarmament. We are concerned, first, about the widespread increase in the flow of conventional arms. Our second fear is that the proliferation of nuclear power reactors will increase the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. A proliferation of nuclear weapons will certainly increase the prospect of a nuclear holocaust.

Let me take up the second theme first. Recently, the spread of nuclear power plants has been spurred by the growing demand for electric power, the escalating prices of oil, and the growing fears of shortage of easily accessible fossil fuels, which in time are expected to run out. The growth can be seen from the computed potential expansion in operable nuclear reactors. Whereas in 1975 there were only 180 operable nuclear power reactors in 19 States, it is now estimated that, by early 1976, the number of nuclear power reactors already in operation and in the process of being built totalled 303.

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

This trend is an unchallengeable answer to the increasingly costly production of electric power from fossil fuels.

The extension of peaceful nuclear energy to non-nuclear countries is commendable. What is not is that the widespread use of nuclear power brings many risks, such as nuclear waste, malfunction and radio-activity and especially the expansion of nuclear weapons. Extension at the same time provides the recipient countries with the equipment, know-how and fissionable material, and thereby with an opportunity to build their own nuclear explosive devices. The danger of local or strategic wars where nuclear weapons are used will inevitably increase in incidence in relation to the increasing number of nations that possess them. To quote William Epstein in his book, The Last Chance:

"If an additional dozen or two dozen countries have nuclear weapons, the probability of a nuclear holocaust -- if not by design, then by accident, miscalculation, misinterpretation of orders, terrorism, blackmail or sheer madness -- would become almost a certainty."

It is estimated by the United States Energy Research and Development Administration that by 1990 the nuclear electrical output for the world would amount to 1,050,000 megawatts, compared with 72,000 megawatts in 1975. The production of the 1,050,000 megawatts would at the same time produce enough plutonium for 3,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs. This trend would be particularly alarming if nations had access to reprocessing plants and were thus able to develop their plutonium and other fissionable material from spent fuel. The plutonium could be converted into atomic weapons during times of crisis, outside international jurisdiction.

My delegation submits that this is one of the pertinent disarmament problems at present, viz: how do we encourage the peaceful use of nuclear energy and yet discourage the conversion of the nuclear wastes into plutonium which in turn can be converted into atomic weapons? The obvious alternative is to turn more to, and research into, the utilization of other forms of energy. Next, there must also be introduced a foolproof "safeguard" system. Here we have noted that the NPT Review Conference has recommended that:

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

"In all achievable ways, common export requirements relating to safeguards be strengthened, in particular by extending the application of safeguards to all peaceful nuclear activities in importing States not Party to the Treaty;

"Such common requirements be accorded the widest possible measures of acceptance among all suppliers and recipients." (NPT/CONF/35/I, annex I, p. 4)

We have also noted that several nuclear exporting countries have formed a consortium and agreed to adopt certain standards on safeguards and other related legal and physical controls associated with peaceful nuclear exports. This is a step nearer to a tighter safeguard system and should be commended.

We also welcome recent international action to declare a moratorium on sales of enrichment and reprocessing plants; acceptance that commercial profits should not prevail over the more paramount objective; and the aim to launch multinational centralized enrichment facilities, perhaps under the aegis of the IAEA, to provide for international access to nuclear generated electricity.

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

This support is made in the firm belief that nuclear States must guarantee the right of access of all countries to peaceful nuclear energy without the harmful proliferation of nuclear weapons by utilizing the enriched waste. It is a demand, a condition, where responsibility lies with the nuclear Powers. They must demonstrate their willingness to do so and not evade this responsibility.

Returning to our first concern at the world-wide increase in the flow of arms we have noted in the speeches made in this forum and in the plenary various mentions of anxiety over the same subject. To quote General Carlos R. Romulo, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines on 3 November 1976,

"One of the major items not on our agenda concerns the runaway traffic in so-called conventional arms, many of which now involve killing power that is near-nuclear in scope." (A/C.1/31/PV.22, p. 34-35)

And again Lord Goronwy-Roberts of the United Kingdom stated, quoting from the Secretary-General's introduction to his report on the work of the Organization,

"The arms build-up in many particularly sensitive areas of the world has continued. The growth in quantity has been accompanied by a demand for even more advanced weapons systems." (A/C.1/31/PV.21, p. 72)

Similarly, Mrs. Inga Thorsson of Sweden said,

"The present level of military expenditures and the unabated arms race are incompatible with the quest for a new international order. This gives a new dimension of absurdity to the arms race." (A/C.1/31/PV.25, p. 52-55)

Other distinguished speakers have also spoken on the same lines.

My Minister, in his speech, similarly alluded to this theme. He stressed the alarming

"flow of arms from some half-a-dozen wealthy, industrialized countries into the third world" (A/31/PV.10, p. 37)

and later

"The massive flow of arms to the third world confronts it with a new danger. It is, first of all, a drain on their economies; but even more important is the fact that it creates a new form of dependence on the great Powers which can exploit the third world's dependence on them for arms to manipulate them, to engineer conflicts between them, and to use them as their proxies in their competition for influence and dominance." (ibid., p. 52)

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

The arms race in conventional weapons continues unabated. Despite the world recession, purchases have flourished as never before. It has acquired new dimensions both qualitatively and quantitatively and in terms of coverage. It is seen more and more as essential for the maintenance of a country's status and a prime instrument for maintaining supremacy over other countries.

In 1974 and 1975 the value of weapons transferred from developed to developing countries increased by more than 60 per cent. Whereas the cumulative value of major weapons transfer for the decade 1950-1959 was \$6.8 billion, it registered nearly double that figure -- \$14.2 billion for 1960-1969. Worse, in the last six years 1970-1975, it has already exceeded that figure to total \$19.2 billion, nearly three times that for the first decade of 1950-1959. Even discounting for inflation the growth represents a very worrisome trend.

The purchases were made by sovereign States free to dispose of their resources as they see fit. Yet the effects and impact on them as a consequence of such purchases are seldom realized. What are they? Firstly, conventional arms purchases represent a diversion of much needed and scarce resources. In the context of the third world it is a terrible drain on their limited vitality of means. Secondly, it allows the selling countries to have undue influence over the recipient Government and may lead them to commitments and involvements not originally intended. Thirdly, recipient Governments become unwilling and unconscious proxies in big-Power struggles as a result of their dependence. Fourthly, it upsets the balance in the region, and it may lead to escalation of tensions. And finally, purchases increase employment and improve the balance of payments, not in the developing but in the developed countries, and help them reduce their research and development costs and provide a useful outlet for unwanted and obsolete weapons.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) publication "Armaments and Disarmament in a Nuclear Age, 1976" states:

"The international transfer of weapons, weapon technology and industrial know-how for weapon production has passed well beyond the point at which it could be regarded as essentially a sideline of the main arms race between East and West in size, geographic scope and, particularly, in comprehensiveness. The arms race has become a phenomenon of major importance,

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

the control and limitation of which can only come about through a general commitment to diminish the role of relative military strength in international relations and through the pursuit of effective arms control and disarmament measures."

What can we, the representatives of Member States, do in order to bring about measures to curb, to prevent and perhaps to reverse the race towards further accumulation of conventional armories. It is self-evident in many ways that perhaps we should first focus a scintillating beam of light on the subject itself. In the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament this issue does not even figure as a specific agenda item. Similarly, in this august body and our Committee deliberations it does not, at present, have a niche, so to say. Yet does it not concern the majority of the Member States present and, more important, the third world and the developing countries, who are always at the forefront of so many other worth-while causes? I submit that this subject, "The growth in the international conventional arms race" should be included as an item in future deliberations of this Committee and perhaps even the special session on disarmament.

A systematic search could be made for measures which would be conducive to the attainment of this objective. I have been told that past attempts to lay bare the frightening facts by advocating public disclosure of production and trade in arms and of national military expenditure have not received the necessary support for a variety of reasons. Thinking aloud then, one of the strategies with some potential would be to promote disarmament on a regional basis aiming at the conclusion of regional disarmament agreements. We have seen in the past few decades a move towards more co-operation and understanding by countries belonging to the same region or subregion.

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

Take for example, the Andean and the ASEAN groups. The Heads of State and Government of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) met in February this year and signed a "Treaty of Amity and Co-operation" wherein, among other things, they "renounced the threat or use of force" and generally sought to develop and strengthen ties among themselves. In other articles, they agreed to promote active co-operation in international peace and stability in the region and elsewhere; in cases of disputes, to refrain from the threat or use of force, and at all times to settle disputes among themselves by friendly negotiations. The same applies to the Andean States which have signed the Declaration of Ayacucho which asserts the principle of collective restraint.

There are also embryonic arrangements in east and west Africa, the Caribbean and west central Asia. We have not, of course, forgotten the European Economic Community (EEC).

Would it be possible in these regional or subregional groups, for these neighbouring countries voluntarily to agree among themselves on mutual limitation of their armaments? Would it be possible to stimulate renewed efforts by, say, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to achieve a regional arms control agreement? A movement thus begun on a more humble scale within very limited parameters could gradually gain momentum as mutual trust was created over a period of time.

It could be launched by exemplary unilateral cuts in armaments by one party or perhaps agreement to curtail military expenditures and budgets. The disarmament process could, albeit with reciprocity, develop into a chain reaction of graduated arms reduction. Successive initiatives or steps could be limited in risks so as not to jeopardize the countries' basic security. The countries could also adopt purely confidence-building measures such as limiting military budgets, reduction of offensive -- as against defensive -- weapons or, finally, encouraging greater openness in military debates, military contacts, ties and even joint exercises.

Naturally, there would be an absolute need for reciprocity at every step of the way. Similar action must be taken by the other party. Yet the process started off by simple partial moves, taken gradually, offers a viable way to enhance confidence and reduce fear, thus leading to reduced needs to amass conventional weaponry.

(Mr. Tan, Singapore)

On a much wider scale, limited disarmament measures could be undertaken: first, to prohibit the use of cruel and inhumane weapons, e.g. fragmentation bombs and napalm; secondly, to prohibit or restrain the transfer of arms that are typically offensive in character, leaving purely defensive capacity less diminished, and, finally, to try to bring to a halt the competition for more sophisticated weaponry. These, then, are some of the more possible ways by which improvements may be made.

To conclude, my delegation would therefore view very favourably any initiative or move to focus and publicize the massive spread of conventional arms by bringing it to the attention of the United Nations and its bodies. Here we would support further discussion or study as to how best this wasteful expansion could be curbed or reduced, including the idea of regional or subregional arrangements or agreements.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The discussion in the First Committee on disarmament is evidence of the profound concern of States to reduce international tension, to relieve the burden of the arms race and to take practical measures to limit arms and to bring about disarmament. Greatest attention is being given to nuclear disarmament. These matters constitute the very crux of the whole question of disarmament, and the security of mankind depends to a large extent upon their solution. May I take up some of these points.

Close scrutiny is being given to the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests, which is a key issue in the process of limiting the practical possibility of further developing weapons of mass destruction. The Soviet Union has made, and will continue to make, unflagging efforts to resolve this issue. It is precisely for this reason that at the last session of the General Assembly we put forward a proposal for the conclusion of a treaty on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests and presented a draft treaty to that end. Naturally, general and complete prohibition of tests can be achieved only with the participation of all the nuclear States, and our draft treaty is based precisely on this prerequisite.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The USSR initiative won wide support at the last session of the General Assembly. As you know, the General Assembly called upon the nuclear States, with the participation of 25 to 30 non-nuclear States, to undertake talks not later than 31 March 1976 on the conclusion of a treaty on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear tests. Unfortunately, owing to the negative position of certain nuclear States, the talks were not begun. However, we are gratified to see that a large group of non-nuclear States of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and also socialist countries, have stated their willingness to participate in such talks.

We consider that the implementation of last year's General Assembly resolution on this item retains its full importance. We believe that, to this end, a further appeal should be made by the General Assembly to the nuclear States to undertake negotiations with the participation of those non-nuclear countries that have stated their willingness to participate in such talks.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

At the same time, we are gratified to see that a large group of non-nuclear States of Asia, Africa, Latin America and also socialist countries have stated their willingness to participate in these talks. We consider that the task of implementing last year's General Assembly resolution on this item still maintains its full significance. In our opinion, this purpose could be served by a further appeal on the part of the General Assembly to the nuclear States to undertake negotiations with the participation of those non-nuclear countries who have stated their willingness to participate in such talks.

Although, in the course of the current year, no practical headway has been made in solving the problem of nuclear tests, at the same time, we believe that new and important factors have emerged and conditions have now arisen which must and, in fact, should bring about further progress in this matter. In particular, this is true of peaceful nuclear explosions. The prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, of course, should not constitute an obstacle for people to enjoy the beneficial effects of such explosions. However, how can we ensure that, in conditions where there is a general and complete prohibition of tests, peaceful nuclear explosions are not used for the purposes of creating and further perfecting nuclear weapons? As you know, this problem was solved in the Soviet-American Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes which was signed in May of this year. The Treaty and the Protocol attached to it contained provisions providing for a reliable system of verification to ensure that peaceful nuclear explosions are in fact for peaceful purposes and are not being utilized for any other purpose. We consider that the experience gained in drawing up this Treaty can be used and undoubtedly will play an important part when tackling the similar problem as it relates to the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests.

Up to recently, the question of the prohibition of underground nuclear tests was complicated by the unduly exaggerated emphasis placed by some States on the question of verification. In our opinion, in order to verify the extent to which the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear tests is being observed, national technical resources are quite adequate, since at the present time they have reached a high level of sophistication. A supplement or complement of this would be co-operation among States in exchanging seismological information. At the

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

present time, this is an approach which is broadly recognized. However, certain States continue to assert that, without on-site inspection, it is impossible to monitor the extent to which States are observing their obligations regarding the prohibition placed on underground nuclear-weapons tests. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, announced in his statement at the present session of the General Assembly, and as is stated in the USSR Memorandum, the Soviet Union is prepared to participate in attempts to find a generally acceptable agreement on a compromise basis whereby the adoption of decisions regarding on-site verification of relevant conditions would be on a voluntary basis, while at the same time all parties to the treaty would be certain that these obligations were being fulfilled.

We are gratified to note that this proposal of ours has aroused the interest of all delegations. This was particularly demonstrated by the delegations of Sweden, Japan, Canada, Great Britain and other countries. At the same time, the desire has been expressed that this proposal be further developed and made more specific. This being so, the Soviet delegation would be prepared to make an appropriate addition to article 2 of the draft treaty on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests.

Another important problem which will have a decisive effect on the prevention of the escalation of the nuclear threat is the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We already have an excellent sound basis in this matter. For more than six years now the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has been in force. At the Conference which was convened to consider the effect of this treaty, which was held in May 1975, it was noted that the five years during which the Treaty had been in force had fully confirmed its vital importance, its effectiveness and its timeliness. The fact that 100 States -- in other words, more than two thirds of the States in the world -- are parties to it cannot but evoke a legitimate feeling of satisfaction. At the same time, this figure I have quoted shows that we must continue to attempt to expand the range of parties to the treaty so that it can be turned into a genuinely universal document.

We should also bear in mind another factor which could bring about the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the present time, in many countries of the world, the peaceful use of nuclear power is developing apace.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

In the process of the work done by electric power stations as a by-product, a fissionable substance is formed and accumulated -- namely, plutonium -- which can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons. The possibility for manufacturing such weapons is growing as international trade in nuclear materials, equipment and technology increases; and this trade involves countries who have not assumed obligations pursuant to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Therefore, it is necessary to have strict guarantees to ensure that this source of co-operation does not become a channel for the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This is not a question of trade; it is not a commercial matter, but primarily a political matter -- a matter which is relevant to international security. Naturally, particular responsibility is borne by those States who are suppliers of nuclear materials, equipment and technology. These States have already taken certain steps aimed at preventing the utilization of international co-operation in the nuclear field for the production of nuclear weapons. Naturally, these steps have absolutely no discriminatory character; they are not intended to prevent the development of co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear power. On the contrary, these measures provide new possibilities for such co-operation, since, if they are observed, the supplier States need have no misgivings that the materials and also the equipment and technology being supplied by them might be used in order to manufacture nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Today the Soviet delegation would like to dwell on one further point, namely, the convening of a world disarmament conference and the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on disarmament. We are convinced that the holding of a world conference would make a valuable contribution to helping solve the problems of disarmament. The motives which guided the Soviet Government when putting forward the proposal that such a conference be held are still as timely as they were then. We are gratified to note that Heads of State and Government belonging to the non-aligned countries, when they met at the Colombo Conference, called for "an early agreement on the convening of the World Disarmament Conference in order to promote the solving of basic issues of general and complete disarmament under strict international control" (A/31/197, p. 127).

Useful work in preparing for the world disarmament conference and in analysing the views and the proposals made by States on this matter, is being carried out by the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference. We believe that it should continue its work. We agree with the conclusions drawn in the most recent report of the Ad Hoc Committee which states that "it appears, therefore, to the Ad Hoc Committee that efforts towards creation of appropriate conditions for convening a world disarmament conference should continue and, in this connexion, opportunities which present themselves and which, in the view of the general membership of the Organization, could be conducive to the achievement of progress in the field of disarmament should be seized and fully explored."

The thirty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations must have its own weighty word to say regarding efforts to speed up the convening of a world disarmament conference.

Nevertheless, it remains a fact that despite the positive decisions taken by the United Nations because of the attitude of certain individual States, the question of convening a world conference has as yet made no progress. The responsibility for this situation lies fully with those Powers.

In the present situation it is essential that new steps be taken in order to concert the efforts of all States on the matter of disarmament, in order to convene a world conference.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

An appropriate forum for considering the full gamut of disarmament matters, and for determining by our concerted efforts the ways and means of solving these problems, could be provided by a special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Our views on this point have already been set forth, both in the Memorandum and in the statements made by Soviet delegations. Naturally the holding of the special session should not supersede the question of holding a world disarmament conference. We regard such a session as an interim stage, which by its decisions, should prepare for a broad and penetrating consideration of the problem of disarmament at the world conference. This is the approach which is essentially reflected in the documents adopted by the Conference of Non-Aligned States in Colombo, in which in particular it is stated that the agenda for the special session of the General Assembly should include also the question of the convening of a world disarmament conference.

In view of the useful role which the special session can play in preparing for a world disarmament conference, the delegations of the German Democratic Republic, the Polish People's Republic and the Soviet Union, have tabled a draft resolution on the question of a world disarmament conference which requests the Ad Hoc Committee to prepare a report containing observations and proposals on all relevant aspects of a world disarmament conference ... with a view to facilitating the discussion of the question of convening a world disarmament conference at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session (A/C.1/31/L.9). This draft resolution of the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union is to be found in document A/C.1/31/L.9, and in so saying, I am in fact introducing this draft.

Many delegations have already quite definitely come out in favour of the holding of a special session and we feel sure that the General Assembly will shortly take a decision on this score.

However, it is regrettable that one delegation which during the last few years has been blocking the convening of a world disarmament conference, and which quite recently evinced a negative reaction to the holding of a special session,

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

such an attitude is really not surprising because on all questions of disarmament, the People's Republic of China and this is in fact the delegation I am referring to, the Chinese delegation, has adopted an obstructionist position. This position was borne out quite recently in the statement of the Chinese delegation. This time, too, we did not manage to hear the least hint of anything constructive or the semblance of any desire to discuss questions appearing on the agenda of this Committee in connexion with the question of disarmament.

In conclusion, we should like to say something in connexion with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Mexico.

Criticisms of the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques which we have heard here are, in our opinion, unfounded. The draft convention opens up a new and important orientation in the field of disarmament. It came about as a result of prolonged and complicated talks with the participation of experts of world-wide repute. During the talks the Soviet Union and other countries who participated in them displayed a mutual desire to reach agreement and a desire for flexibility and a readiness to compromise and to take account of each other's wishes. The draft convention reflects the real possibilities of the present day; the complex and delicate balances between the positions of various States. It establishes an effective ceiling to the utilization of natural forces for military purposes.

It is our profound conviction that to refer the draft convention back to the Disarmament Committee would simply delay the conclusion of an important international agreement, if it were not even to threaten any actual agreement being reached on this point.

It may turn out that we are irretrievably passing up a favourable opportunity to conclude such an agreement. At the same time, work in this area would continue without any restraint. Such a turn of events would hardly be in the interests of all States nor would it serve the cause of strengthening peace.

The Soviet Union considers that in efforts to bring about durable peace there is no more important task at the present time than putting an end to the arms race and proceeding to disarm. We have no greater wish than to divert those funds which of necessity have been cut off from the national economy and to use

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

them to enhance the standards of living of the workers and for peaceful and constructive purposes. Even now we are prepared to get down to disarmament measures, either far-reaching ones or initially at least partial ones, on a generally just and reciprocal basis.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has noted that in the course of his statement, the representative of the Soviet Union introduced the draft resolution (A/C.1/31/L.9) on item 40 of the agenda, the World Disarmament Conference.

Before adjourning the meeting I should like to announce that Austria, Jordan, Panama, Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.7.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.