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FIRST COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 1 November 1977
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOATEN (Ghana)

later: Mr. PASTINEN (Finland)
Vice-Chairman

Mr. HOLLAI (Hungary)
Vice-Chairman

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ENGLISH

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Mr. KAMAL (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, I should like to congratulate you upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. May I also extend my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee. We hope to work with you in a very constructive and positive spirit.

We are convinced that the world now needs all our efforts to ensure the welfare of man and the preservation of his cultural heritage for future generations. Human civilizations are gauged in terms of the human and moral values of a community; they are not measured on the strength of instruments of war and destruction. Communities must base themselves on such moral values, or else the whole process of civilization will be fraught with danger and threaten man throughout his life. History offers many such examples. Science and knowledge have become eternal, whereas civilizations which developed on the strength of weapons have disappeared, although they may have left their mark on the history of mankind.

Today, when we consider disarmament questions on the agenda of this Committee, we note the importance of this particular issue for us all. We note, however, that the number of questions relating to disarmament on our agenda increases from year to year, and in our view this shows that the attempts to curb the arms race that have been made and are still being made have not succeeded.

We are meeting here before the convening of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to general and complete disarmament. My delegation welcomes the agreement arrived at in the meeting of the Preparatory Committee on the organizational and procedural aspects of the special session, as can be seen from the report drawn up by the Committee under the chairmanship of

(Mr. Kamal, Bahrain)

My country's Foreign Minister spoke on 4 October last in the General Assembly and mentioned this particular question. He said:

"The arms race is one of the most important problems facing the world today.... The huge arsenals of conventional, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons... cause increasing concern because they threaten the existence of humanity on our small planet and stimulate outbreak of wars among States. It is indeed regrettable that huge amounts of money should every year be dissipated on the development of destructive conventional and strategic weapons instead of their being spent on ... alleviating the burden of indebtedness of the poor countries. It is estimated that this year about 300 billion dollars have been spent on armaments - at a time when the majority of people in our world are living in hunger, squalor and deprivation.

"In the Middle East we find Israel building a huge arsenal of weapons to consolidate its occupation of the land of States Members of this Organization, refusing to recognize the rights of the people of Palestine and acting as a fortress for continuous... expansion at the expense of others.

"Obviously the reduction of arms of all kinds and the non-development of new weapons would provide huge financial resources that could be used... for development projects of many countries.

"The danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons increases every year. There are indications that both Israel and South Africa possess the ability to make a nuclear weapon. The ability of those two racist régimes in Palestine and South Africa to possess and to make nuclear weapons endangers international peace and security not only in the Middle East and on the African continent but all over the world. Therefore we consider it the duty of the international community represented in this hall to spare no effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons ... and the nuclear and great military Powers should refrain from producing vast quantities of nuclear weapons." (A/32/PV.16)

(Mr. Kamal, Bahrain)

As a country belonging to the Middle East region, we supported the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly of an item proposed by Iran and Egypt. The idea of denuclearizing the Middle East was favourably received by the overwhelming majority of Member States since it offered a new basis for peace and security throughout the world.

During the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations submitted reports to the Assembly reflecting the views of the countries in the region and requesting the parties concerned to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in order to fulfil that objective. The General Assembly also made a number of recommendations to the countries in question and to the nuclear States. I am referring here to General Assembly resolution 3474 (XXX).

The idea of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones is, as it were, the response of the developing countries to the problem with which we are all concerned, namely, the need to put an end to the dangers that threaten their very existence and survival. But Israel opposed that idea. This bears witness to its intent to pursue its aggression. Israel opposed all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in this field, thus revealing its desire for expansion.

The appeal to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone encompasses in itself the idea of the need to establish peace and to put an end to any danger threatening peace and security in the world, as was the case in 1956 and in 1967 when Israel started wars against the Arab countries.

This idea should prompt the peace-loving countries to strengthen their economies and to improve their living conditions. In his statement before the General Assembly, my Foreign Minister stated:

"Bahrain has on more than one occasion unreservedly supported the proposal for the Middle East to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone and for the Indian Ocean... to be a zone of permanent peace and security. Therefore, in our area, in the Gulf, we have started to engage in contacts and dialogues with all the States lying on the Gulf to establish the bases for mutual co-operation to keep the area far removed from the dangers involved in the rivalries of outside States. We therefore support the proposal for the holding of a conference to put into effect the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, provided thorough preparations are made for the conference.

(Mr. Kamal, Bahrain)

"We hope that the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament... will be able to deal with all matters of disarmament without exception and will strive to reach the goal of disarmament for development". (A/32/PV.18, p. 67)

In our era, weapons have become the symptom of a disease, something that we must put an end to, because unless we do away with this evil we shall endanger the welfare of mankind and somehow cancel out everything that we have achieved in the past. Sufferings resulting from wars are enormous when they are arrived at through conventional means. What would happen then if we were to have a nuclear war? "It is better to prevent than to cure", says an Arab proverb.

(Mr. Kamal, Bahrain)

The fate of the whole world will be endangered if a nuclear war is unleashed. Our world cannot continue to live in this state of terror and fear. We cannot wait until man has squandered all the resources available to him without deriving any benefits from them. We believe that in view of the present circumstances all countries must show goodwill and put an end to the arms race. The special session of the General Assembly to be devoted to disarmament will offer all States an opportunity to demonstrate of their goodwill. We should embark upon the course of creating propitious conditions for the success of the special session so as to overcome the difficulties that at present prevent us from achieving this objective. We are convinced that the political decision in the field of disarmament that should be taken by the nuclear Powers and the other major military Powers would guarantee the security of the whole world and thus ensure also the success of the special session, of which the whole world expects so much.

Mr. FUSCHER FERREIRA (Portugal): Mr. Chairman, this being the first time I have spoken in this Committee, allow me to congratulate you and the other officers of the Committee on your election.

The first impression of an observer viewing recent developments in the field of disarmament might be one of optimism. Indeed, during the past year some very important steps have been taken in various areas. The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques has been concluded and has already been signed by 35 nations. Preparatory work has begun on the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament which is scheduled to take place within a few months and from which we all hope will result new and decisive initiatives. Furthermore, news recently made available to the public and statements made in this Committee seem to indicate that the signing of a second strategic arms limitation agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States may be imminent. In some other fields, including that of chemical weapons, new treaties and noticeable progress have also been achieved. Thus a new determination seems to prevail in disarmament negotiations.

(Mr. Futscher Pereira, Portugal)

However, a more careful analysis of the situation leads us to a far less optimistic view. As a matter of fact, if we study the existing international conventions in the field of disarmament we will realize that they contain mainly measures of limitation of armaments or restrictions on their development in certain fields and that none of them has so far led to the real elimination of any single existing weapon.

These measures, the importance of which we are the first to recognize, fall short of the desired and necessary solutions and can create an illusory and dangerous feeling of tranquillity. The real situation is very different. Military expenditures, the production of new and more and more sophisticated weapons systems and the increase of existing arsenals continue in a way that causes great concern. Furthermore, if we consider the information made available concerning the new Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, everything seems to indicate that the objectives foreseen are extremely limited.

Having closely followed the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament we cannot fail to express our apprehension that despite the noteworthy efforts that have already led towards certain achievements we have noticed a certain tendency to reduce the importance of the special session and to transform it into a kind of forum for the approval of extremely vague declarations with, obviously, more than doubtful practical results. But, because in these matters it is difficult to cease to be an optimist, I would rather emphasize the new spirit that seems to surround disarmament questions; let us hope, therefore, that the special session of the General Assembly will contribute to strengthening it.

In terms of priorities we cannot fail to call attention once again to the urgent need for the suspension of the nuclear-armaments race followed by the reduction of existing nuclear arsenals. The first step towards this goal should be the immediate suspension of all nuclear-weapon tests, which has been under negotiation for too long a period of time. Such a measure, if and when adopted, would be the clear sign of a new era. Even if a comprehensive test ban regrettably did not include from the outset all

(Mr. Futscher Pereira, Portugal)

the nuclear Powers, its application by the two major nuclear States would constitute a decisive step. We are fully aware of the extreme complexity of such measures; we cannot fail, however, to urge the Soviet Union and the United States to hasten their efforts towards the conclusion of such an agreement.

Closely linked to this problem is that of peaceful nuclear explosions, which should also be the subject of an agreement. The apparent difficulty at this stage of drawing a distinction between nuclear explosions for peaceful and those for military purposes leads us to call for their total suspension or for the acceptance of strict rules for on-site inspection.

When we speak of nuclear tests we are brought immediately to the problem of nuclear proliferation, which is today one of the greatest threats facing mankind. Responsibility for proliferation, however, does not fall exclusively upon States that do not yet possess nuclear weapons, for if nuclear States were prepared to give full guarantees that they would never use those weapons against countries that did not possess them this could certainly work as a very strong factor discouraging proliferation.

Directly related to the problem of nuclear proliferation is that of the transfer and utilization of nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes. In this matter the Portuguese delegation strongly supports the establishment of strict international rules of control by the International Atomic Energy Agency; such rules, to be applied by all countries using atomic energy, should be accompanied by a more active role on the part of that Agency and the most advanced countries in the field of nuclear technology in assisting the dissemination and application of such technologies to the less advanced countries. In this respect we have also to recognize that the nuclear States have not lived up to their obligations as expected of them.

Having referred briefly to some of the more urgent problems of disarmament I should like now to make some remarks concerning the bodies charged with negotiations in that field. Although often it has not produced the results expected of it, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has undertaken very difficult tasks with some practical results

(Mr. Futscher Pereira, Portugal)

even if of a limited scope. Its methods of work are obviously susceptible of improvement but we recognize the extreme complexity of the negotiations that take place in that Committee and the necessity of maintaining a negotiating body of a relatively specialized nature. However, we would emphasize once again that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament should follow more closely the trends and orientations revealed in the annual debates in the First Committee of the General Assembly, the sole existing organ of a universal character and the only one able to reflect the general concerns of the international community in this matter.

If we now turn our attention to the work of this Committee we shall be forced to recognize that year after year a large number of resolutions have been approved, have immediately been forgotten and have consequently become ineffective. No doubt all such proposals have been presented in a constructive spirit. Some, clearly doomed to failure, should eventually be dropped from the agenda as it is so obvious that they constitute a wrong approach to certain disarmament problems. But, alas, the very fact that they have been dragging on year after year without practical results is also a clear indication, albeit unnecessary, that the resolution of these problems will never depend, exclusively at least, upon our best efforts to analyse and discuss them.*

* Mr. Pastinen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Futscher Ferreira, Portugal)

Among the different matters that should be considered by this Committee, concerning which general lines of orientation should be drawn, I should like to mention the transfer of conventional weapons and regional disarmament, two problems that are closely linked.

Of the \$350 billion spent annually on armaments about 80 per cent are devoted to the acquisition of conventional weapons. Considering that a large part of this expenditure is made by developing countries, we will agree that such a situation cannot continue. However, this is one of the most sensitive and difficult problems, because it directly involves the security concerns of all nations, large or small.

Of course, we cannot assume the right to tell any Member State that the quantity and type of weapons it possesses are in excessive proportion to its defense needs. Yet something must be done in this area. Indeed, it is obvious that the accumulation of conventional weapons in certain regions of the world has become a vicious circle, apparently unbreakable, each State trying to surpass its neighbour in the acquisition of increasingly sophisticated weaponry, only to find that such arms soon become obsolete, more modern weapons having been developed. We hope, therefore, that the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament will deal with this issue, breaking the present impasse.

Directly related to the previous problem is that of regional disarmament. One of the first measures of regional disarmament already being taken is the creation of nuclear weapon-free zones. The First Committee has already studied this item at length, and last year my predecessor explained in detail the position of the Portuguese Government on this question. I do not want, therefore, to dwell at length on this matter, but I feel compelled to mention again that the guarantees that should be given by the nuclear weapon-States are among the fundamental requisites for the creation of such zones.

Regional disarmament, at the conventional-weapon level, seems to us to be both possible and desirable. Thus, we think that this Committee should debate this matter at length and we welcome the initiatives already taken in this field.

(Mr. Futscher Pereira, Portugal)

Those are the general comments that my delegation thought it advisable to make on the questions before us. Let me emphasize that Portugal finds it difficult to accept that the problems of disarmament remain constantly with us. In a world so fraught with severe economic and social iniquities such as hunger, illiteracy, disease and poverty, it seems intolerable to think that so little progress has been achieved by the community of nations towards the solution of disarmament problems and therefore towards a form of allowing mankind to improve and to work for the betterment of man's condition.

Mr. TEMPLETON (New Zealand): It gives me great personal pleasure to serve under the chairmanship of Mr. Roaten in this important Committee this year. I wish to congratulate him and the other officers of the Committee on their election.

This year's debate has opened in an atmosphere of greater optimism than has been apparent for some years. My delegation believes that a measure of optimism is justified, but that an excess of euphoria at this stage would be a serious mistake. There are undoubtedly signs of an intensified desire on the part of certain of the nuclear Powers to reach agreements which would lessen the danger of nuclear war and, eventually, lessen the burden of armaments expenditure. But goodwill and good intentions are not a substitute for action. We can only welcome the fact that active negotiations are in progress outside this Assembly on important problems, to which I shall refer later in this statement. We have no doubt about the sincerity with which these negotiations are being pursued. They are being conducted, understandably no doubt, behind closed doors, and the international community has yet to learn what progress has been made.

If customary procedure is followed, any agreement that aims at universal ratification will need to be considered in the first place by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, to gauge its acceptability to the international community, and then by the international community itself, either in this Assembly or in a diplomatic conference. I shall revert to the question of procedure later in my statement. A steady momentum in the negotiations needs to be maintained if full advantage is to be taken of the present favourable atmosphere and if the special session of the General Assembly

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

next year is to be in a position to discuss disarmament in terms of concrete progress rather than solely in terms of still more declarations, programmes and studies. It is our main task at this session of the Assembly, as we see it, to ensure that this momentum is maintained.

New Zealand co-sponsored the proposal to hold a special session on disarmament as a means of overcoming the state of inertia into which the serious business of disarmament negotiations appears to have settled during the seventies. My Government is committed to work for its success. There is already evident in my country a considerable degree of interest in the special session among concerned non-governmental organizations and the general public. Although New Zealand is not a member of the Preparatory Committee, my Government welcomed the opportunity given to non-members to participate in its work. New Zealand took advantage of this opportunity to present its views about the purpose and tasks of the special session both in writing and orally to the Preparatory Committee, and it is not necessary for me to recapitulate them in detail. The special session will provide a forum for a

The special session will provide a forum for stocktaking, for a restatement of objectives, for a review of priorities, for drawing up a new programme of work. But admirable and necessary though these elements of the special session's agenda may be, they are not enough, and their successful accomplishment will not, by itself, permit us to say that the session has been a success. It will not be a success unless it manifests very clearly a new determination to revivify the treaty-making process in the field of disarmament and to speed up the production of binding agreements which will not merely, for example, prohibit resort to esoteric means of destruction which have not yet been invented, but which will bring about actual reductions in the stockpiles of the already sufficiently terrible weapons that already exist. In this connexion, we can only welcome the progress which has been reported in bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

In particular, we welcome the statement by President Carter that the United States is prepared to agree to reciprocal reductions of ten, twenty or even fifty per cent in nuclear stockpiles. But with progress in bilateral negotiations on strategic arms there must go hand in hand progress in multilateral negotiations on all fronts.

The decision to hold a special session has engendered new hopes. It is hardly necessary to point out that its failure to achieve substantive results could well plunge the peoples of the world into new depths of disillusionment. A session which produces nothing more than still more words is unlikely to satisfy the legitimate expectations of mankind.

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

In our view, therefore, an important task of the special session must be to review the adequacy of the present machinery for producing agreements to limit, reduce and prohibit various categories of armaments.

I would, of course, agree with my colleague from the Netherlands and with other members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) that some such body of limited size is necessary for preparing multilateral disarmament treaties. I am well aware that some of the difficulties the CCD has encountered and which have severely limited its accomplishments in recent years are not of its own making. One of the difficulties is a deficiency in its membership, in that two nuclear Powers have turned their backs on it. Another is an apparent tendency for its programme of work to be determined by the nuclear Powers, and for such agreements as it is able to consider to be the subject of prior negotiation among two or three nuclear Powers, to the point where the CCD is in danger of being reduced to the function of a rubber stamp.

I know that I am stating the obvious in pointing out that an international treaty is only effective to the extent that sovereign States are willing to ratify it. The only way to ensure their willingness - and this is surely the normal method of treaty making - is to provide an adequate opportunity for their participation in at least the final stages of the treaty-making process. These are obvious facts, but experience has shown that they have tended to be overlooked in the preparation of arms limitation agreements in recent times. One has only to consider the partial test-ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, important and valuable agreements to which New Zealand is a party, to see that it is precisely those countries whose ratifications are essential to their full effectiveness which have not in fact ratified them. This regrettable fact contains a lesson which we hope will not be lost on those Governments at present actively engaged in disarmament negotiations.

I do not of course suggest that the refusal of certain States to participate in the treaty-making process should be sufficient reason for not proceeding with that process in any particular field: on the contrary. But I do suggest that it is only common sense to ensure that all States which do want to participate in the process should have an opportunity to do so in a forum acceptable to them.

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

In our view, therefore, the essentially initiatory and preparatory role of the CCD needs new emphasis. The rotation of the chairmanship in a more democratic manner may well be desirable, and provision should be made for some rotation of membership. If the CCD insists on continuing as an exclusive club, its members should not be surprised that non-members treat it as such, and eventually look to other forums to give effect to their disarmament objectives.

One sure means of ensuring the success of the special session would be to produce, in the intervening months, one or more major draft agreements which could be brought to finality and even opened for signature at that session. It is in this context that I should like to offer my comments this year on an item with which my delegation has been closely associated in the past: the urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. For several years my delegation has taken an active part in preparing and sponsoring a resolution calling on the CCD to give this task the highest priority. The resolutions which the Assembly has adopted by large majorities have also called on the nuclear-weapon States to suspend their testing programmes by agreement pending the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty, and have emphasized the special responsibility of the three nuclear-weapon States which are party to international agreements in which they have declared their intention to achieve at the earliest date the cessation of the nuclear arms race. It is fair to say that until this year, the three-sided appeal has met with no response. Regrettably, the CCD has yet to negotiate a draft treaty. It was, however, with a very considerable sense of satisfaction that my Government learned of the initiation of serious negotiations on this issue among the three nuclear Powers to which the Assembly's appeal was specially directed.

It is now our earnest hope that, although time is short, these three Governments will conclude the initial negotiating phase in time for the CCD to take up the task in earnest at its spring session next year and produce a draft treaty for consideration and adoption at the special session. My delegation is at present discussing with other interested delegations the language of a draft resolution which would appeal for the achievement of this time-table. I hope that it will be possible to introduce such a resolution in this Committee in the near future.

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

New Zealand would, of course, hope and expect that all the nuclear-weapon States would ratify the treaty and that all nuclear-weapon testing would thereafter be ended permanently. At the same time, we would hope that the nuclear-weapon States would see their way to suspending their testing programmes immediately, without further delay, pending the entry into force of the treaty. We would also hope and expect that the nuclear-weapon States with the most advanced weapons technology would be prepared to give effect to the treaty immediately, even if all the nuclear-weapon States had not yet ratified it. To the extent that it meets this hope, we welcome the statement of the representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Issraelyan, that the Soviet Union is ready to have the treaty signed initially by the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, and to join with the other two Governments in a moratorium on testing for an agreed period.

On the important issue of verification, which in the past has appeared to be one of the principle obstacles in the way of agreement, my delegation last year expressed the view that national capabilities are likely to prove sufficient to detect all but very low yield explosions, and that the risk of undetected tests in that category must be weighed against the greater risk involved in the continuance of nuclear testing programmes without restriction. It has been our position for some time that the problem is a soluble one, and that it provides no pretext for delay in the conclusion of a treaty. We see no reason to modify that position. The report of the CCD suggests that useful progress on this question has been made during the year. New Zealand has this year sent an expert to join the ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts which was established to consider international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events. Our participation in this group reflects not only our readiness to take an active part in the search for an acceptable solution to the verification problem, but also our belief that New Zealand has a significant role to play, because of its geographical position and its experience of natural seismic events, in the establishment of a world-wide seismic network. I would confirm New Zealand's willingness to make its seismic facilities available for this purpose. It is my delegation's hope that the Group of Experts will shortly be in a position to make a definitive report with recommendations. We would hope that these would include the establishment of an international teleseismic network.

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

New Zealand would also favour the proposal in the draft treaty submitted by Sweden to the CCD which would establish a consultative committee of States parties to the treaty to oversee various aspects of its implementation. The setting up of such a committee would, in our view, help to establish confidence in the carrying out of the verification procedures envisaged in the treaty.

In expressing hopes for the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, it would be misleading to ignore the fact that at least one major negotiating difficulty remains, namely, the problem of so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. The problem is of course one that has been stated often enough in this Committee, namely, that the mechanism of a "peaceful" nuclear explosion is not essentially different from that of a nuclear weapon. Therefore, even if practical non-military uses for nuclear explosives exist or can be developed one is bound to ask two questions: First, are the benefits of peaceful nuclear explosions not achievable by other non-nuclear means? And, second, which is the more important - the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty without loopholes or to allow States to continue with so-called peaceful nuclear explosions?

There is no doubt in our mind that the early conclusion of a comprehensive treaty must take priority. We would hope that the three negotiating nuclear Powers will come up with an acceptable recommendation on this thorny question. As we see it, the choice seems to be between a provision in the treaty which would prohibit all nuclear explosions of whatever kind and one which would allow non-military uses only after a universally agreed and universally applicable international system of supervision and control has been devised and put into operation.

Another question which ought to be solved no later than the special session is the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons. It is more than three years since the United States and the Soviet Union undertook to consider launching a joint initiative in the CCD on this topic. That initiative is still awaited, and in spite of helpful efforts by the United Kingdom and Japan to draft an appropriate convention no progress has been made. At last, however, serious bilateral negotiations seem to be

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

under way, and it would again be our hope that 1978 will see the emergence of a CCD draft treaty on chemical weapons.

We welcome the progress made at the fourth session of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts in respect of certain conventional weapons that cause unnecessary suffering. The Diplomatic Conference has recommended that a further conference of Governments should be held not later than 1979 to formalize agreement on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons. My Government supports the holding of that conference and hopes that it will not only embody in a treaty those areas of agreement and near-agreement which already exist but will also seek to broaden those areas of agreement by including additional categories of inhumane weapons as envisaged in resolution 22 (IV) of the Diplomatic Conference. In our view, the preparatory work for the conference should take due account of both aspects of the conference's task.

It has been New Zealand's consistent view that nuclear weapons are the greatest single threat to world peace and that it is right for the Assembly to concentrate on nuclear disarmament as a first priority. At the same time we are well aware that, for all but a few States, the economic burden which is the second great evil that disarmament measures are designed to alleviate derives from the cost of conventional armaments. On none does that burden fall more heavily than on the developing countries which, for the most part, are obliged to purchase arms from a few wealthy developed countries with highly-sophisticated armaments industries. The representative of Japan rightly pointed out, in a speech which gave considerable emphasis to that aspect of disarmament, that it raises difficult and sensitive issues. This is not an area where quick and easy solutions are likely to be found. As my delegation has said before, all States are entitled to maintain armed forces for their own defence and should not be obliged to develop arms industries for this purpose.

Nevertheless, we detect and welcome a growing appreciation on the part of the principal arms producers of the need to exercise restraint in the supply of sophisticated and expensive military equipment in manifest excess

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

of the defence needs of recipient States. We have noted the determination expressed by the United States Government to reduce current levels of arms sales. However, since there is little advantage in one arms supplier exercising restraint if alternative sources of supply remain available, there is an obvious need for all the principal arms producers to get together and agree on mutually acceptable measures of restraint. We remain of the opinion in particular that they should be prepared to join in an arms embargo against States whose Governments engage in the gross and systematic violation of human rights. We also continue to see value in a United Nations study of this question of conventional arms transfers with carefully drafted terms of reference, and we are disposed to support any renewed initiative to this end.

Of fundamental importance in this regard is the need to release resources from the military arena for social and economic development, especially in the developing countries. My delegation therefore warmly welcomes the Nordic initiative in the working paper submitted to the Preparatory Committee in document A/AC.187/30. We are in complete agreement with the view expressed in the paper that an analysis of the feasibility of a controlled readjustment of real resources freed by disarmament measures should include in its conclusions concrete suggestions as to how the readjustment should be made, how the inevitable problems such as re-employment are to be solved, and how the released resources may best be used for development.

I stress the need for the study to concentrate on specific recommendations because much of the information relevant to such a study has already been assembled in the valuable report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the arms race in document A/32/88. I suspect that the rather lengthy report, which came out last August, has not received the attention it deserves. The consultants who produced the report have sought to destroy some tenacious myths, including the belief that a high rate of arms expenditure protects against unemployment. They point out that in the United States, for example, \$1 billion of military expenditure creates 76,000 jobs, whereas the same amount spent on non-military government

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

programmes generates 100,000 jobs. The report stresses the vast wastage of resources, both natural and technological, involved in weapons development and production. It points out how arms sales widen the gap between rich and poor countries. It stresses that disarmament and development are intimately linked. It recommends the elaboration of an over-all "strategy for disarmament". I commend it to all members of the Committee as required reading.

(Mr. Templeton, New Zealand)

I conclude this statement by reiterating the keen sense of expectation with which the people and Government of New Zealand look forward to the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament next year. I think it impossible to overstress the need for the delegations of all Members of the United Nations, and not only those which possess nuclear and other sophisticated weapons, or which have developed expertise over the years in the field of disarmament negotiations, to join actively in preparations for the special session and to be fully represented at the session itself. New Zealand will do its best through conscientious application to make a modest contribution to its work. If we can all do this much, I believe that the special session is capable of bringing about the measure of progress which corresponds to the aspirations of humanity.

Mrs. GBUJAMA (Sierra Leone): I am aware that the characteristic modesty of our colleague and friend, Ambassador Boaten, does not make him desire any compliments from the floor, but since this is the first time we have spoken in this Committee this session, kindly allow us, Sir, to take this opportunity to pay him the highest compliments on his election to the very high office of Chairman of the First Committee during the thirty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, and to pledge the full co-operation of the Sierra Leone delegation.

My delegation is reassured that with his outstanding diplomatic finesse and international experience, he is very well equipped to execute the task of guiding this Committee through its deliberations. Africa is proud to have one of its own illustrious sons guiding the United Nations Committee which is responsible for the all-important question of disarmament.

(Mrs. Gbu,jama, Sierra Leone)

Our felicitations and gratitude are cordially extended to the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, and we are certain that this fine team will give the positive direction and leadership which this Committee needs to accomplish its work successfully.

Disarmament should be the highest goal of all mankind in the world today, if for no other reason than because of the legacy of mass destruction of human lives and property during the last two world wars, the more recent war in Viet Nam, and bilateral conflicts all over the world, not excluding our beloved continent of Africa. As a member of this august body of the United Nations, and a peace-loving nation for that matter, the Sierra Leone delegation would be remiss in its duties to mankind if it were to renege in its responsibility to seek peace by calling not only for the reduction of arms but for the complete arrest of arms build-up.

As a member of the non-aligned group of nations, Sierra Leone knows by now that the big Powers alone do not have the answers to all the questions of replacing a war-torn world with one in which peace prevails for all. That is why this group, concerned that mankind's survival has depended for two decades on mutual deterrence and a precarious balance of terror, has called for a world conference on disarmament since 1964, a call which eight years later was repeated by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. My delegation is concerned that this same group of non-aligned nations, which is so committed to general and complete disarmament, has not only increased its percentage of military expenditure on its gross national product while the developed countries have lowered theirs, but have tripled that amount of spending in the last ten years. Of course, the fact remains that the United States and the USSR still contribute two-thirds of the global military spending while NATO countries together take up an additional 20 per cent. But it is our belief that we third world nations cannot continue successfully and significantly to contribute to easing international tension if we yield to the temptation which is held out to us of amassing destructive weapons, however small the quantity may be. It is this phenomenon that makes it all the more imperative to have the world conference on disarmament convened very soon. Sierra Leone as a non-aligned nation

(Mrs. Gbu,jama, Sierra Leone)

looks forward to the convening, early in 1978, of this conference at which all nations of the world, big and small, will spend more time on the serious question of disarmament, because my delegation is convinced that only the total prohibition of mass destruction weapons can offer the best possible protection for humanity.

The United Nations has been preoccupied with the question of disarmament since the early years of its inception, and since my delegation joined its ranks as the one hundredth Member we have constantly called for general and complete disarmament including not only nuclear but also conventional weapons. The question of cessation of nuclear tests alone has been on the agenda of the United Nations since its ninth session in 1954. Yet today, 23 years later - almost a quarter of a century later - and in spite of a nuclear test ban Treaty, the threat of nuclear war still hangs over us, while those tests continue above and below the surface of our planet unabated. We cannot even claim at this stage to have definite promises from all nuclear Powers as to when and how they would use that destructive power which they have in their hands. I must confess that the very welcome pledge on the use of nuclear weapons by the President of the United States in his statement during the general debate was too over-qualified to leave us extremely happy. Consequently we find ourselves, 49 Member States later, still calling for the termination of nuclear weapons testing and the complete halt to all chemical and biological weaponry which threaten the world with mass destruction, and still urging the world body to take up the world disarmament conference as a matter of urgency. In doing so, my delegation does not underestimate the value of the existing machinery for disarmament negotiations. The work carried out so far in more than a decade by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, in spite of non-co-operation from all quarters, under the aegis of the United Nations, has been appreciated by my delegation. Bilateral arms negotiations between the USSR and the United States also, resulting in small parallel reductions in their military budgets, as well as the individual efforts of those two super-Powers, have, none of them, gone unheeded by my delegation. But it would seem that this is not enough. Not even the many treaties or agreements, both bilateral and multilateral, have successfully arrested the arms race.

(Mrs. Gbuajama, Sierra Leone)

It is not enough for the major world military Powers to pay lip service to disarmament and carry the banner for strategic arms limitation as a start in the right direction while they continue to amass military wealth through the production of new and more sophisticated destructive weapons, the latest being the neutron bomb. The neutron bomb can be said to be more merciful than its predecessors in that it will have mercy on infrastructure, though not on humans. What is worse is that they continue this race for supremacy in the art of destruction, through technology and a startling amount of resources that can be constructively used to eradicate poverty and disease. Of course, they labour to justify this wanton waste of limited world resources which continues to be incomprehensible to my delegation. How can we consciously justify that half a billion people on this earth live in a state of deprivation and despair, severely malnourished with no education, health or social services while world military expenditure climbs to the \$6,000 billion mark, or that millions of children in developing countries like mine are hampered and stunted in their physical and mental development while the world spends \$350 billion a year to arm itself against itself - and this in peace time?

(Mrs. Gbujama, Sierra Leone)

In the report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security, we read the following paragraph:

"The World Health Organization (WHO) spent around \$83 million over 10 years to eradicate smallpox in the world. That amount would not even suffice to buy a single modern strategic bomber. The WHO programme to eradicate malaria in the world, estimated at a cost of some \$450 million, is dragging on owing to lack of funds. Yet its total cost over the years is only half of what is spent every day for military purposes, and only a third of what will be spent... for each of the new "Trident" nuclear missile submarines". (A/32/88, para. 66)

Since my delegation comes from a part of the world that has suffered immensely from smallpox and malaria as well as from under-development, its concern about our distorted priorities will be understood. This concern was expressed in the statement of my Minister during the general debate as follows:

"When the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe convened in Helsinki in the summer of 1975, my country, and I believe many others in this august Assembly, expressed the hope that that event marked the beginning of a general period of stability. We took the optimistic view that military empires belong to the past, and that thenceforth science, technology and productivity would determine the ranks of individuals and nations, and we looked forward to sharing as beneficiaries of this great accord. In other words, détente meant, to us, a general lull in confrontation and a guarantee of our security, and that, indeed, it created an atmosphere in which our economic well-being would be catered to. We entertained the hope, expressed by many speakers before me from this podium, that the enormous resources, both material and human, now devoted to armaments would be diverted to development". (A/32/PV.17, p. 53-55)

But diverting resources now spent on arms build-up for the purpose of development is not our only concern. More important is the creation of an atmosphere of peace and security that is congenial to that development. Such peace and security must not be affected by the creation of areas of super-Power

(Mrs. Gbujama, Sierra Leone)

influence on the African continent or the aiding and abetting of the madmen of Africa, namely, the apartheid regime of South Africa, in their quest for a nuclear arms build-up. Again, during the general debate, my Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed his concern over that serious development in the following words:

"... we have been disappointed in the fact that the events that have been unfolding in Africa since the Helsinki Conference bear all the marks of a shift of the theatre of confrontation from the European continent. We cannot remain indifferent to the proxy wars being fought on the African continent. We therefore appeal to those Powers that have influence to take joint action with us to avert the disasters attendant on those confrontations. For us there is no substitute for peace". (Ibid.)

He also said:

"It is a disturbing fact that South Africa has acquired nuclear capability, in spite of its shameless denial that it has done so. Already the regime is steeped the blood of innocent African schoolchildren whose only crime... is to have dared to question the way they are taught and governed. With its acquisition of nuclear technology, South Africa's aims must be ominously clear to all of us. It is quite conceivable that either through desperation or by a deliberate act of aggression, or a combination of both, it may embark on the dangerous adventurism of the total annihilation of all Africans from the African continent in order to preserve it for its so-called white civilization and against the 'spread of communism' for which the principles of apartheid, we are told, have become the holy scripture. The responsibility for this criminal intention is as much South Africa's as, indeed, it is of those who by their complicity, silence or indifference have encouraged it". (Ibid., p. 47)

As far back as 1964, the summit meeting of African Heads of State and Government foresaw this threat to their continent, and their first contribution therefore to general and complete world disarmament at that first meeting after the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa the

(Mrs. Gbujama, Sierra Leone)

year before was a declaration on the denuclearization of Africa. In fact, the first call by Africa was made by the African Members of the United Nations in 1960 following the nuclear test explosion in the Sahara desert by France. That declaration by Africa's leaders that the continent should be a nuclear-weapon-free zone is now being disregarded by South Africa, which has rushed to acquire nuclear weapons in order to fortify itself against any opposition to its racial policies and which has been able to do this through Western technology.

Besides the fact that any country that acquires nuclear weapons automatically becomes a nuclear target, South Africa must know that there are many other resource-rich nations in Africa which could very well take up the challenge that it is now posing. But because it will not be in Africa's best interests to "go nuclear" and to neglect its all-important development while reducing its own security, we can only call upon all States concerned to respect Africa's wish to remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone by desisting from any co-operation with the apartheid regime, and we call for world action to prevent any further violation of the continent's wishes by South Africa.

Finally, without attempting for one moment to discuss Second Committee matters in the First Committee, my delegation wishes to emphasize that, while disarmament remains crucial to human survival, economic development, within the new international economic order, is just as vital to the maintenance of that peace. Within this context, also, it can be seen that the armaments race is having harmful effects on world peace and security. Thus, budget savings on military expenditures would not only limit arms but could be used for practical measures towards a just international economic order if there is the will on the part of the big military spenders to do so.

While I reserve my right to intervene during the examination of any specific resolution on the items now under discussion, my delegation wishes to end with the plea to the big Powers and the rest of the developed world, which together account for 80 per cent of the world's military expenditures, to examine each of the several avenues open for a reduction in their unnecessary military spending, in order to maintain a world of peace not only for the third world or the non-aligned countries but for all mankind, including themselves. The paradox of the whole thing is that it is they who have more to lose at this stage in the event of total world destruction.

Mr. BENKHAYAL (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic):

May I violate the rules of procedure and disregard the appeal which the Chairman made at the first meeting of this Committee by expressing to him through you, Sir, our warm congratulations on his election. It is a great honour for Africa that one of its sons should occupy a position of such international importance. We are sure that his exceptional qualities will enable him to conduct the proceedings of this Committee successfully. I should like to take this opportunity also to congratulate, on behalf of my delegation, the other officers of the Committee on the confidence which has been placed in them. I am sure that they will perform their important task well and contribute to the success of our work.

It has become the custom of this Committee to discuss every year a certain number of agenda items relating to disarmament. This Committee hears the statements of representatives of Member States which reflect the concerns of their peoples in the face of the arms race and the production and stockpiling of new weapons of destruction. This Committee has also developed the practice of adopting recommendations condemning the proliferation of weapons and inviting States to limit their armaments in order to promote international peace and security and to make our goals more attainable, particularly that of general and complete disarmament. Normally, we learn that talks are under way on disarmament and that there is some hope of achieving a limitation of armaments. We also learn that there are agreements with regard to the use of weapons. Promises are made, but the question that arises is whether we have been able to attain our goal; have we ourselves taken the first steps at the international or bilateral level to justify our hopes of achieving general and complete disarmament?

The phenomena we observe are far from encouraging. Studies which have been undertaken by experts appointed by the Secretary-General to report on the economic and social implications of the arms race have surprised us. We have also been surprised by the content of the studies prepared by the specialized agencies, which contain information and data indicating that we have not taken a single step forward in spite of the efforts which have been made during the last 30 years in the United Nations and elsewhere. All those efforts have yielded only very discouraging results. We have learned that the missiles in the possession of the two great Powers have a destructive

(Mr. Benkhaya , Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

power equal to that of 1.3 million atomic bombs of the type dropped on Hiroshima. Between 1970 and 1977 the number of multiple warhead missiles increased from 3,700 to 12,000. A total of \$350 billion is spent every year on armaments and 25 per cent of the human resources of the entire world are being wasted. Half the children of school age in the world have received no education. Half the people of the world do not enjoy health services. We know that now a new lethal weapon, the neutron bomb, has been invented; it is supposed to be a miracle bomb that kills human beings but spares buildings.

That is the state we have reached in the field of disarmament. I must say that it is a far from encouraging picture. My delegation wishes to express its deep concern at the development of new armaments, and particularly at the information given by the United States recently about the neutron bomb. We call upon this Committee to spare no effort to prevail upon the United States not to manufacture that weapon which threatens the human race with annihilation. This Organization will collapse one day if we do not take specific steps in the field of disarmament. As the Secretary-General said in his report to the General Assembly:

"... if we stumble once again into a world conflagration, no matter what its cause, all our other hopes and dreams would be in vain."

(A/32/1, p. 5)

And in another part of his report he said:

"... the United Nations cannot hope to function effectively on basis of the Charter unless there is major progress in the field of disarmament." (ibid., p. 12)

The group of non-aligned countries appreciates the seriousness of the situation. The non-aligned countries advocated the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament to attempt to find the proper course to follow. That proposal was approved and the special session will be held next year. My country has the honour of being a member of the Preparatory Committee for the special session under the leadership of Mr. Ortiz de Rozas of Argentina, whose successful efforts deserve our appreciation. The Preparatory Committee held two official meetings and submitted recommendations on preparations for the special session. Those recommendations have the wholehearted support of my delegation in the hope

(Mr. Benkhayat, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

that at its meetings next year the Preparatory Committee will succeed in adopting resolutions and conclusions which will guarantee the success of the special session, in which we place all our hopes. We hope that the special session will not be a mere international demonstration but an historic meeting which will achieve concrete results so that the international community may attain its goal of general and complete disarmament.

My country had the honour of playing host to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Tripoli from 16 to 22 May 1977. That Conference adopted a number of important resolutions and recommendations, some of which concerned disarmament since the participants, in that meeting attach the greatest possible importance to that question. I should like to refer to United Nations document A/32/235 dated 7 October 1977. It contains the recommendations and resolutions of the Islamic Conference and I wish to refer in particular to resolution 12/8-P on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the regions of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. That resolution calls upon States which have opposed the establishment of such zones to reconsider their position and to undertake not to acquire nuclear weapons, so as to begin to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Indian Ocean area.

(Mr. Benkhayal, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

This resolution further calls upon the nuclear Powers to honour their obligations on nuclear disarmament in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia and the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

I should like to refer also to resolution 13/8-S on strengthening the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. This resolution calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to respond positively to the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States and to agree, as a first step, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is obvious that the arms race represents a squandering of human resources and a threat from the powerful countries against the weaker ones. The arms race prevents the implementation of development projects. What can we expect from a small country like Benin, the victim of barbarous aggression committed by mercenaries in the pay of imperialism and colonialism, which wanted to strike against a small country whose sole crime was to have wished to remain a small independent and free country, a country which expresses its opinions courageously and seeks to implement the principle of the struggle against colonialism and racism? What can we expect from a small country like Benin with limited natural resources which must, however, devote some its resources to defend itself and safeguard its security and independence?

Our objective, the objective of us all, is general and complete disarmament so that we can all live in peace. But this objective cannot be achieved as long as colonialism and the racist régimes in South Africa and Palestine continue to exist, régimes which have succeeded in obtaining nuclear arms by methods contrary to morality and with the support of Western imperialism.

What is happening today and what has been said about the nuclear capacity newly acquired by South Africa, is undoubtedly a threat to peace and security not only in Africa but in the world at large. The statements of American leaders on boycotting this régime and applying nuclear sanctions against it, namely that to do so would be to encourage it to continue its efforts to acquire a nuclear capacity, relate to an erroneous concept because we know that the racist régime of South Africa already possesses nuclear weapons thanks to the help of the United States. This was confirmed by a professor of political science at Howard University, when he spoke to a Congressional Committee on 21 June and said:

(Mr. Benkhayal, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

(spoke in English)

"The nuclear capability of South Africa is the product of scientific exchange of technology with the United States beginning shortly after World War II and is highlighted by the agreement for co-operation signed in 1957. This agreement, amended in 1962, 1965, 1967 and 1974, allows South Africa to benefit from the fruits of the United States scientific progress in this field."

(continued in Arabic)

Why then try to distort the truth when we have the evidence of someone who is supposed to be on the side of the accused party? Is this in keeping with the agreements which have been reached on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons? Is it in accordance with the statements of President Carter in his electoral campaign?*

The racist régime of South Africa is attempting to hamper the efforts of the people of our continent to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. Its position is contrary to the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, the resolution which calls for immediate measures to prevent this régime alien to Africa from taking measures allowing it to threaten the security of the African peoples.

It has become obvious that the vast military expenditures are an impediment to efforts aimed at creating a new international economic order. The great Powers must evince goodwill and reduce their military budgets and take concrete measures so that their military establishments can serve peaceful purposes. We will thus be able to find the necessary funds to help the developing countries and this will enable us to create this new international economic order which we all look forward to.

My delegation is one of those which calls for a time-table to be worked out for the reduction of military budgets. The funds which would be saved in this way could be devoted to peaceful ends and to economic and social development.

* Mr. Hollai (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Benkhayal, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

I think that this is a practical idea which will contribute to the achievement of our ultimate goal, namely, disarmament. My delegation is in favour of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes so that we can raise the economic and social standards of the peoples of the world, but this should be done under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and with its help, so that we can enjoy the benefits of the developments of science and technology and so that all countries can discharge their responsibilities.

My delegation is one of those which supports the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We support the measures taken by the Secretary-General to set up a disarmament centre within the framework of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. We are ready to support any proposal designed to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to enable the Secretary-General to play an effective and active part in the field of disarmament and the control of armaments.

These are the observations we felt it advisable to make at this time, while reserving our right to speak again if necessary.

Mr. HUSSAIN (Sri Lanka): The Sri Lanka delegation would like to begin its contribution to this general debate by making some observations on a matter in which it has particular interest, namely, the special session on disarmament. In the view of Sri Lanka, the special session should be regarded in the perspective of widespread disillusionment about the meagre achievements in the field of disarmament. The basic purpose of the special session is to provide a momentum in the field of disarmament as it seems so important to prevent the further spread of disillusionment to which I refer. The special session might be compared to the sixth and seventh special sessions which have been so notable for providing a momentum towards achievement in the field of international economic relations, and it is to be hoped that the special session on disarmament will come to have a similar significance.

However, it has to be emphasized that the purpose of the special session is not merely to provide a momentum for future achievements, but also to achieve as much as possible in the field of disarmament. In other words, the special session does not merely have an instrumental function in relation to other disarmament conferences, but has also an autonomous character of its own.

Sri Lanka, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned group, has a particular commitment to the preparations for the special session, as the General Assembly's decision on the special session was in consequence of a resolution adopted at the Non-Aligned Summit Conference held in Colombo in August 1976. The Sri Lanka delegation wishes to express satisfaction with the work of the Preparatory Committee for the special session.

It has seemed appropriate to the Sri Lanka delegation to begin by referring to the considerable measure of disillusionment over disarmament. As a useful illustration of what we have in mind, I should like next to make some observations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

It will be recalled that when the Treaty was originally discussed at the United Nations, the point was made by several delegations that while it was obviously sought to prevent a horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, the possibility of a vertical proliferation was not adequately dealt with. In the intervening period it has been shown only too clearly that the misgivings expressed were entirely justified, as what we have witnessed is a notable measure of success in preventing nuclear weapons proliferation, while

(Mr. Hussain, Sri Lanka)

those who had already been established as nuclear-weapon Powers have engaged in a vertical proliferation through the further sophistication of nuclear weapons and an astounding rate of increase of their nuclear arsenals.

It has to be recognized that there is increasingly a danger that a horizontal proliferation will become unavoidable. The responsibility for a horizontal proliferation taking place some time in the future will be to a great extent that of the great Powers. It has seemed to Sri Lanka and others that there might be certain assumptions behind the unrealistic expectation that proliferation can be avoided while there is a nuclear monopoly or duopoly, or nuclear weapons are restricted to five Powers. It is hardly to be expected that the rest of the international community will be satisfied always to allow a position of overwhelming military superiority to some Powers, while others are potentially at the mercy of those Powers. It has to be emphasized therefore that the grave danger of nuclear weapons proliferation requires that the great Powers themselves engage as soon as possible in significant measures of nuclear disarmament as a step towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

As the Committee is aware, Sri Lanka has a special interest in working towards the implementation of the Indian Ocean peace zone Declaration as it was originally adopted by the United Nations on the initiative of Sri Lanka. My delegation has to express dissatisfaction with the rate of progress towards implementation since that time, primarily because of what appear to be misunderstandings on the part of some of the great Powers and some of the major maritime users. As present, we are working towards the holding of a conference on the Indian Ocean. As a preliminary measure, we hope to hold a meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean regarding which a sufficient consensus has already been established, a meeting which we hope will promote the holding of the conference on the Indian Ocean and also promote a momentum to bring about the eventual implementation of the Indian Ocean peace zone Declaration.

(Mr. Hussain, Sri Lanka)

In the meanwhile, it has been noted that the great Powers have been engaged in discussions regarding their military presence in the Indian Ocean. It appears that certain proposals made earlier this year regarding the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean have been abandoned, and one gets the impression that the great Powers wish to discuss only the limitation of some of their activities in the Indian Ocean. The view of Sri Lanka is that in so far as their negotiations lead to a reduction of great-Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, such negotiations could have a beneficial influence, but we have misgivings that their purpose might be to achieve no more than a balance of power of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean, which in our view can only be provisional and precarious and cannot be reconciled with the fundamental purposes of the Indian Ocean peace zone Declaration.

Sri Lanka accepts the widespread view that the major responsibility for disarmament rests with the great Powers as their capacity for destruction is infinitely greater than that of the smaller Powers, but we have to insist at the same time that the responsibility for disarmament is not theirs alone, a point to which I will revert in this statement. We note that SALT I has lapsed and there seems to be some measure of optimism about progress on SALT II. It has to be noted, however, that the purpose of SALT seems to be to reduce the capacity to destroy the globe only 10 times over rather than 50 times over. However, considering the bleak record of disarmament any reduction in the capacity to destroy the globe has to be welcomed, particularly as it will lead to a relaxation of tension.

I do not wish to go into details on the subject of the economic and social benefits for mankind as a whole should there be worth-while measures of disarmament, as the details are only too well-known by now. My delegation has examined the report in document A/32/194, and has noted that the experts consider that a satisfactory instrument for the effective reporting of military expenditure by States is essential for the reduction of military budgets. In our view, the special session on disarmament should be able to give adequate attention to this and other matters relating to the question of reducing military budgets for the purpose of freeing resources for social and economic development, particularly of the developing countries.

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54-55

(Mr. Hussain, Sri Lanka)

As I am participating in this general debate at a fairly late stage, I feel it will be appropriate to refer only briefly to certain issues as they have been covered adequately by the speakers preceding me and, I must say, more expertly than is within my capacity. This is merely to save time and the brevity of some of my references to certain matters is not meant to decry their importance in any way.

(Mr. Hussain, Sri Lanka)

It seems to the Sri Lanka delegation that the next major step in disarmament should be the comprehensive test-ban treaty, as it is surely shocking that so many years after the partial test-ban Treaty there has been no reasonable progress towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

There has also to be progress towards the elimination of chemical weapons, as well as responsible action for the prevention of new weapons of mass slaughter, as it seems to us that mankind's capacity for slaughter is already adequate for any purpose and is alarming enough at present.

Sri Lanka would be interested in a movement towards the control and limitation of conventional weapons as the goal of general and complete disarmament requires restraint in the acquisition and production of conventional weapons, which now tend to acquire an exponential rate of growth.

Sri Lanka is also interested in the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South Asia and elsewhere.

When we come to discuss those matters in detail in the Committee, the Sri Lanka delegation hopes to make its further contribution on those and other matters.

I should like to make some general observations on the question of disarmament before concluding. We will be less than honest if we do not face up to the fact that there is widespread and increasing disillusionment - even cynicism - about disarmament, which is perhaps understandable as over the decades there have been only derisory achievements in the field of disarmament and, unfortunately, infinitely greater achievements in the field of verbiage about disarmament. Furthermore, nowadays disarmament requires expertise that is not always available to the under-developed countries and, consequently, there has been a view that disarmament is basically a matter for the more advanced countries. My delegation considers that those views are harmful as they do not give sufficient weight to the immense potential benefits which could accrue, particularly to the under-developed countries, through the economic consequences of worth-while measures of disarmament.

(Mr. Hussain, Sri Lanka)

A further point that has to be made is that even though the actual disarmament measures may be derisory they could have, we must acknowledge, a very significant impact on reducing tensions and rivalry between the great Powers - a matter in which the rest of humanity has a stake, as conflict between them can destroy everyone else.

What I am trying to say is that the question of disarmament must be considered in all its aspects as a matter involving all humanity all over the globe. It has been said that war is too serious a business to be left to the generals. It should be obvious also that disarmament is too serious a business to be left to the great Powers in the century of total war. It is our hope that the consciousness of disarmament as a matter equally important for the whole of humanity will grow significantly with the holding of the special session on disarmament next year.

Mr. EILAN (Israel): Since this is the first substantive statement by my delegation, I wish to congratulate the Chairman and the rest of the officers of the Committee on their deserved elections to conduct the deliberations of this important Committee.

The debate on disarmament in this Committee is not really a debate at all in the proper sense of the word. The word "debate" denotes an exchange of conflicting opinions. However, no delegation in the United Nations has ever been known to oppose disarmament or to extol the benefits of the armaments race. Whatever differences there may exist are in emphasizing this or that solution or method of controlling the armaments race. Whatever the differences, there exists complete unanimity among the 149 nations represented here regarding the mortal danger to humanity as a whole if the present tempo of the armaments race is allowed to continue for another decade or more.

A visitor from another planet listening to the statements of the representatives assembled here may be led to pose the following simplistic question: if the Governments of the vast majority of the peoples of the world so ardently oppose the arms race, why does the threat not only remain but even expand with ever-increasing momentum?

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

I think the time has come, after three decades and more than 200 resolutions on disarmament in 31 sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to face the truth concerning the inherent limitations of a body such as ours, functioning according to newly-established rules of parliamentary diplomacy, to evolve universally acceptable rules of arms control, not to speak of disarmament.

It is indisputable that most international tensions that spawn an arms race are invariably the result of bilateral rivalries or regional conflicts. The element of prestige accounts these days for a relatively small percentage of the phenomenal growth of armaments since the Second World War. It would therefore be naive to suppose that resolutions on disarmament, arrived at by counting votes at a multinational gathering of sovereign States, could be anything but declaratory, or that such resolutions could provide specific remedies for controlling the growth of armaments arising out of the conflicts of interest among Member States. The natural corollary of that situation is that resolutions on disarmament adopted at sessions of the General Assembly are invariably couched in a phraseology that pretends that the problems of disarmament facing all Member States are essentially similar. Those resolutions would lead one to believe that appeals of the General Assembly to reduce armaments could similarly be executed by each and all of the Member States with uniform ease. Unfortunately, this semantic pretence serves only to divorce United Nations resolutions even further from the political reality which governs the relations between States, and therefore contributes very little to the cause of disarmament.

Yet, if we are to pause and reflect on the direction which the ever-increasing momentum of the world's armaments race is leading humanity, we are overwhelmed with cataclysmic forebodings for the future of the human race.

Much has been said in this Committee in this and previous years about the growth of arms as compared to the gross national product of developed or developing countries, of the waste it entails in terms of the expenditure of human and material resources, and so on. There is no need to go into it again, but there are one or two aspects of the role of modern armaments in the general setting of recent global developments that have to be mentioned. I could do

no better than quote from the excellent statement made this morning by the representative of Sweden who said:

"The main reason for this feeling of immense urgency is ... the great speed at which military technology is moving far ahead of any progress that we may be able to make in arms control and arms limitation. The unrestrained development of military research and development is ... one of the main roots of our present deeply felt and well-founded concern at the slow pace so far of progress in international disarmament talks. We shall have to bridge the gap between the speed of research and development advance and that of reaching arms limitation agreements, if prospects of human survival are to have a fair chance of success." (A/C.1/32/PV.19, pp. 28 and 29-30)

(Mr. Bilan, Israel)

Whether we like it or not, all of us have to face the frightening prospect of military science let loose by "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" developing a momentum entirely its own, not necessarily geared to the degree of international tension prevailing at a given time. On the contrary, we have all witnessed in the last decade or so situations where it was a scientific break-through in military science that would renew insecurity at a time of relative reduction of tension.

If one were to sum up what has been said in this Committee, year in and year out, one might perhaps come to the following conclusion. On the one hand, the United Nations, though a useful forum for exchange of opinion and maintenance of international contacts, has, because of its inherent limitations, been able to achieve relatively little to control the armaments race. On the other hand, the armaments race has and is acquiring a momentum unknown to any age, and is becoming, per se, an additional independent and apparently uncontrollable factor of international insecurity.

Hunger, inflation, the arms race, even population explosions, are not peculiar to this century. All of them have existed at different places and in different periods of human history. What characterizes the second half of this century are two aspects of these phenomena: for the first time they are world-wide, that is, there is world inflation and not just inflation taking place in one particular country; and there is a world-wide spread of the production of arms and not just an arms race between two States or alliances. The second aspect is that all these world-wide developments are happening at the same time. The arms race is not only world-wide but is occurring simultaneously with a world-wide inflation a world wide energy crisis and a world-wide depletion of finite natural resources.

The Secretariat is to be congratulated for providing a wealth of publications on disarmament matters. I should like particularly to express my appreciation for the thought and research that went into the publication of the report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security, contained in document A/32/88, and I will, as have so many speakers before me, make free use of the material provided in it by so many distinguished experts.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

Even so, it is doubtful whether any assembly of experts, however distinguished, can even begin to estimate the cumulative effect on the future of all or even only some of the world-wide phenomena I have described. Since we are dealing in this Committee with only one of them, namely disarmament, we have to remind ourselves afresh that most of the well-worn clichés about the perils of the world armaments build-up are indeed true, and unequivocal in their dire portent.*

Whilst the world's military expenditure is about \$350 billion per year, the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency estimated the total value of goods and services delivered in 1975 at \$13 billion.

One-third of these goods and services is made up of exports to oil-exporting countries in the Middle East. We are thus facing the appalling spectacle of a world held to ransom by having to pay inflationary prices for energy while a good proportion of this ransom money is spent on the acquisition of instruments of devastation and death. In purely economic terms the arms race fuelled by petrodollars may indeed guarantee employment in certain narrow industrial segments of some industrialized countries. However, it does not generate further growth. The end product of the arms race, if all goes well, can perhaps be recycled as scrap. If it is used for its sole purpose it can guarantee only ruin on an unimaginable scale.

The time has come to pause and think beyond the well-trodden paths of United Nations resolutions on disarmament, and to address ourselves in a pragmatic way to possible step-by-step methods designed at least to control the arms race.

What is clearly required is a method of reducing the arms race slowly and in such a way that foreign policy and related attitudes associated with the arms race can change and adjust.

In a report prepared especially for the United Nations Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament by the Peace Research Institute-Dundas, a technique is proposed called Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT). This method was used centuries ago by the Chinese to reduce hostility and tension between themselves and the Tibetan Empire.

* Mr. Pastinen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

The GRIT technique involves a unilateral declaration by a nation that at a specific time, without any negotiation, it will do something which it believes will be perceived by other nations as a friendly act - an implicit invitation to the other nations to make a similar move.

The Middle East is today one of the most tension-ridden areas in the world. Israel, though outnumbered and outgunned by its Arab opponents has, nevertheless, very recently undertaken a significant and practical step to reduce tension in the area. The Government of Israel has announced publicly that it has decided to reduce its military budget by 1.4 billion Israeli pounds, that is, about 3 to 4 per cent. This is being done at a time when the military budgets of most Arab countries, fed by petrodollars, are skyrocketing in proportions previously unknown in the world except in periods of war.

Israel's step is exactly what the so-called GRIT technique prescribes - it is an implicit invitation by Israel to its Arab neighbours similarly to reduce their budgets. If they do so they will be making a real contribution to the cause of world peace, certainly more convincing than the lip service of preaching of disarmament in the United Nations and their automatic support of uncontroversial resolutions in this Committee.

There would be no purpose for a representative of Israel to participate in the deliberations of this Committee on disarmament without reference to the Middle East - the scene of five wars in the last three decades. I have, however, no wish to follow the example of some Arab representatives who have already spoken in this Committee, even today, and to misuse the discussion on disarmament as a procedural opportunity for the conduct of verbal warfare.

It is Israel's opinion that if a representative of a Middle Eastern country seriously wishes to discuss disarmament in the United Nations, he can do so only by applying its general principles to the particular problems of the region.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Moshe Dayan, did so in his address to the General Assembly on 10 October. He said:

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

"Ever since it joined the United Nations some 28 years ago, Israel has steadily supported all significant moves by this Organization to promote and to propagate the limitation of armaments on a global scale. Although disarmament has always been closely linked with security, Israel is prepared to play its part in the reduction of the arms race in the Middle East.

"In the past three years, an estimated \$US 7.5 billion in arms supplies have been delivered by East and West to Arab countries in the vicinity of Israel. In addition, about \$US 22 billion worth of arms was contracted for by Arab States for delivery from the end of 1976 onwards. Israel is ready to enter into an agreement on arms limitation with all the States in the Middle East.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

"With regard to another crucial aspect of disarmament, Israel has frequently called on its Arab neighbours to join it in direct negotiations with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. ... Israel firmly believes that such negotiations should lead to the conclusion of a formal, contractual, multilateral convention between all the States of the region, on the lines of such notable precedents as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the proposals for similar agreements in the areas of south Asia and the south Pacific. Unfortunately, the Arab States have totally rejected this call by Israel which, after all, is in the interests of all the people of the Middle East. On this occasion I repeat our proposal". (A/32/PV.27, pp. 68-71)

To sum up, Israel has acted on three levels to reduce tension, control the arms race, and bring peace to the Middle East.

On the unilateral level, Israel has deposited, so to speak, an earnest of its sincere desire to bring about the reduction of armaments in the Middle East by reducing its military budget in spite of the unprecedented increase in the military budgets of its Arab neighbours.

On the multilateral level, Israel has proposed this year from the rostrum of the United Nations two separate initiatives in the field of arms control. First, Israel is prepared to discuss an agreement on arms limitation with all States in the Middle East. Secondly, Israel has repeated its invitation to its Arab neighbours to join in direct negotiations with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

On a wider diplomatic level, Israel has agreed to negotiate peace agreements with each and all its Arab neighbours, without prior conditions, in Geneva or any other mutually acceptable venue. The ball is, as the saying goes, in the Arab court. I can only hope that our Arab neighbours will respond to Israel's initiatives by similarly reducing their military budgets, by agreeing to discuss directly with Israel an agreement on the limitation of arms, and that they will enter into negotiations with Israel with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East on the pattern, perhaps, of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

Instead of involving this Committee in the futile rhetoric of recriminations, we should like to hear from the Arab representatives a clear answer to Israel's proposals - a clear "yes" or "no".

Israel is acutely aware of the tragic futility of an armaments race which is turning the Middle East into a laboratory for the world to experiment with novel methods of destruction. Israel does not feel that the Middle East is under an obligation to provide the world's armament industry with constant profits, nor to guarantee them a market for weapons for years to come. We would prefer to boost the import into the Middle East of the modern equivalent of "plowshares" and "pruning hooks", and we call on our Arab neighbours to join us in a common regional effort to make Isaiah's vision a living reality.

Israel welcomes the holding of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Although, as has been pointed out by the representative of the Netherlands, the session itself is not a suitable forum for conducting concrete disarmament negotiations, the convening of a special session will, nevertheless, serve notice to the world of the importance that the United Nations attaches to an urgent solution of the various aspects of arms control and disarmament. We wish to congratulate the Preparatory Committee for the exemplary way in which it has laid the ground for the holding of the session. We have, however, to sound a note of warning. If the session is going to be exploited for the conduct of partisan political aims by certain blocs of Member States, this special session is going to go the way of so many United Nations gatherings, and humanity will register yet another failure of this Organization to cope with the real problems for which it was created.

Israel has followed with interest the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and reports of bilateral talks on the subject by the United States and the Soviet Union. As a country that maintains vital maritime routes in the approaches of the Indian Ocean, Israel is interested in the maintenance of peace and freedom of navigation in that region.

Last year, the Israel representative in this Committee had occasion to welcome the Swedish initiative to publish a disarmament periodical for popular distribution. This year, we should like to congratulate the Secretariat for

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

the publication of the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, 1976, which manages to present the complex problems of disarmament as a whole, and especially the United Nations aspect of it, in an extremely lucid and readable form.

However, this Yearbook makes sad reading. In the words of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Mr. Carlos Romulo, who has witnessed disarmament debates in the United Nations since the very inception of this Organization:

"Another year has gone by without any disarmament. No bombs have been destroyed, no missiles have been dismantled, no planes have been junked, and no warships have been decommissioned, as a result of any agreements to move towards a disarmed world". (A/C.1/32/PV.11, p. 36)

The prophets of Israel foresaw two possible futures for mankind. One is Isaiah's immortal phrase inscribed in stone across the road from this building. But there are also prophecies such as that of Ezekiel, who said:

"On the mountains and in all the valleys, its branches will fall and its boughs will lie broken in all the watercourses of the land; and all the peoples of the earth will go from its shadow and leave it".

The choice is ours. Let us not wait until we have lost the choice forever.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to make a statement in exercise of his right of reply, I should like to remind him, as well as other representatives, that the subject with which the First Committee is at present dealing is that of disarmament.

Mr. JAZZAR (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): I shall be brief and my comments will deal exclusively with items on the agenda.

After listening to the statement of the representative of Israel and the allegations and falsehoods contained in it I feel it is necessary to shed some light on the truth. First of all I should like to refer to an article that appeared in the newspaper Ha'aretz on 2 March 1976 concerning Israel's military expenditure. The article in question stated the following:

"Military expenditures throughout the world have increased to such an extent that it has become necessary to show that hunger and illiteracy have also increased all over the world. In a report drawn up by the American authorities it was said that Israel was second on the list of countries with the highest military expenditures."

The situation in the Middle East region cannot be concealed by the use of incorrect figures such as the ones mentioned by the representative of Israel. The fact is that the Arab States were exposed to Zionist aggression in 1948, when the Palestinians were expelled from their lands and their homeland. Then Israel committed aggression in 1967, and at the present time Israel is occupying a large part of the territory of the Arab States. No one, therefore, can expect the Arab countries ...

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Israel on a point of order.

Mr. EILAN (Israel): It is not a point of order but a request for elucidation. I should like to ask whether the last few words of the statement by the representative of Syria have a direct bearing on our deliberations on the question of disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has not yet concluded his statement in exercise of his right of reply. I therefore ask him to continue.

Mr. JAZZAR (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): As I was saying, it is only normal that no one should expect the Arab States to remain unmoved in the face of Israeli aggression, and when they spend millions of dollars it is only in order to exercise their right to defend themselves and to resist aggression in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. When the Arab States purchase weapons in the exercise of their legitimate right to protect themselves against Israeli aggression they devote a part of their national revenue to those purposes instead of to economic development. Imperialism, as is well known, grants Israel unlimited material and technical assistance and provides it with entire plants and factories for the production of weapons of mass destruction of every kind.

It is quite clear, therefore, that the figures mentioned by the representative of Israel with regard to the armaments of the Arab States are without foundation and are intended only to conceal the truth, especially if account is taken of the fact that the military arsenals of the imperialist countries are always at the disposal of the Zionist State.

The airlift which during the 1973 war made it possible to provide Israel with millions of tons of weapons has meant that the figures representing Israel's weaponry are the highest in the world. Israel, as we know, is a tool in the hands of imperialism. Its force is the very force of imperialism, as events have proved on more than one occasion.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the representative of Jordan also wishes to exercise his right of reply under rule 115 of the rules of procedure. Before calling on him, however, I should like to remind him, as I did previous speakers, that the subject under discussion in this Committee at the present time is the question of disarmament.

Mr. MADADHA (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): I do not wish to take up too much of the time of this Committee because the representative of Syria has already said much of what I intended to say, but in view of the fact that the representative of Israel has spoken of peace and arms limitation I feel it necessary to mention three points only, without dwelling on them at great length.

If, as was said by the representative of Israel in respect of peace, his Government has reduced its military budget - I cannot quote the figure he mentioned from memory - then perhaps we shall have to recommend that the United Nations conduct an inquiry into the military expenditures of Israel and the Arab States in order to get accurate figures and find out the truth.

Secondly, why is it that Israel consistently refuses to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to send representatives to investigate the matter of the nuclear weapons that threaten the region and the world as a whole?

I should like to express my astonishment at the fact that the representative of Israel should say that a precondition of accession to the non-proliferation Treaty is negotiations between the Arab States and Israel. If that is the case, I would say this: if certain countries make negotiations between them and other countries a condition of their accession to these treaties, that is something I do not think we can agree to.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.