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Chairman: Mr. BOATEN (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 127 (continued)

DEEPENING AND CONSOLIDATION OF INTERNATIONAL DETENTE AND PREVENTION OF THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR (A/32/242; A/C.1/32/L.1 and L.2)

Mr. DHAZZAR (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic):

I should like to congratulate the Chairman, the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur upon their election.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, the Syrian Arab Republic has always contributed to and supported all efforts to remove the spectre of war and to eliminate the tensions of war which might delay the implementation of plans for progress ensuring for mankind

a secure and prosperous future in which justice and right prevail.

The stockpiling of nuclear and other weapons represents a daily danger for the world involving the risk of a holocaust for mankind, the consequences of which would not be confined to certain regions of our globe. It is inevitable that these weapons of destruction, because of their force and effective destructive power, would jeopardize our entire planet. On this basis, we believe that the initiative of the Soviet Union, which is now the subject of our discussion, is a very timely one, particularly after the encouraging state of international détente in the course of the last few years.

Our contemporary world needs decisive action by the United Nations to adopt and set in motion arrangements and measures to prevent the dangers of a nuclear war. It is normal and appropriate to say that nuclear-weapon countries have a special responsibility in this respect because these countries are all permanent members of the Security Council and because of the level they have reached in terms of economic and technological advancement.

Syria, as in the past, will continue to co-ordinate its action with non-aligned countries and will support all efforts by this Organization towards general and complete disarmament, the strengthening of international security

(Mr. Djazzar, Syrian
Arab Republic)

and the prevention of nuclear wars, and all agreements intended to prohibit all nuclear-weapons tests and to bring about the total destruction of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, we maintain our firm view that international détente will remain unstable and precarious as long as it is not based on the following essential principles: first, the total commitment of States to comply with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations; secondly, the elimination of all hotbeds of tension throughout the world represented, as we all know, by the of racist régimes and foreign occupation; thirdly, the need to exercise strict international control over the nuclear and military activities of fascist régimes, because the nuclear progress achieved by these régimes represents a great threat to international peace and security.

The question of the deepening and consolidation of international détente and the prevention of the danger of nuclear war are indivisible and requires that all of us make sincere and intense efforts to implement a series of principles and measures which are basic and agreed to internationally, intended to prevent the risk of a catastrophic nuclear confrontation. It is only in this way that we can claim to have made any major advance toward the consolidation of peace and stability.

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): May I impinge upon the rules of procedure for a few words of congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the other officers, on your election. We are indeed fortunate in this Committee to be guided in our deliberations on important matters by your wisdom, diplomatic suavity and skill.

The item before us is of particular importance in its wider implications. We are therefore grateful to the Soviet Union for having introduced it and to its representative for having placed the item in its proper setting and framework.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

Every initiative aimed at creating amicable and peaceful relations among nations is to be appreciated and welcomed. In this sense, particularly commendable are all initiatives directed towards deepening and broadening an atmosphere of détente. They are thus intended to promote the conditions necessary for harmonizing the action of nations for the effective functioning of the United Nations as an instrument of international peace and security in the world.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

Measures advanced as contributory to the avoidance of conflict and helpful to the climate of détente should be carefully considered on their merits and given all possible support. Every avenue which leads to increasing understanding and trust among nations and peoples should be followed, more especially where it offers the possibility of concrete progress towards mutual security.

It is in this light that my delegation views the item before us on "deepening and consolidation of international détente and prevention of the danger of nuclear war", which has been submitted by the Soviet delegation in a draft declaration and a draft resolution.

Cyprus, as a small, non-aligned country, has all along stood for conditions of international understanding and co-operation and, therefore, for all efforts towards détente.

Détente is by definition "the easing of discord between nations". It is therefore located somewhere between confrontation, on the one hand, and co-operation, on the other. Détente must be seen as a stepping-stone from a state of conflict to more harmonious relations in which security and peace should be the norm. Détente is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. The goal to be attained is effective co-operation between nations in order to give to the United Nations the means required under the Charter for establishing international legal order, security and peace in the world.

We recognize that the United Nations has rendered eminent services to the world community. Through the United Nations there has been a very considerable improvement in respect of East-West relations and situations of confrontation with all the dangers involved. We can see how far we have travelled since the time of the cold war, and particularly the unforgettable Cuban crisis when the two major Powers came so alarmingly close to a nuclear war. The war was averted through a last-minute initiative in the United Nations by the non-aligned nations and the wise action that followed by the then Secretary-General, U Thant.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

Increased activities in all fields by the Organization have greatly improved world conditions in larger freedom due to decolonization and have brought about the present near-universality of the United Nations. The rights of man, individually and collectively as nations, have increasingly become the dominant theme of international conferences through the United Nations resulting in regional or universal agreements or declarations. In the economic field too there have been very constructive activities. The prospect of a new economic order is before us. Indeed, not even for one day can the international community function without the United Nations. The indispensability of the world Organization in all world developments is therefore a reality that cannot be ignored and is with us to stay.

However, the problem is how to render the United Nations practically useful and effective, not on peripheral matters, but on matters pertaining to the central and primary responsibility of the Organization and its *raison d'être*, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. The regrettable failures so far of the United Nations in this most basic and essential function, namely, that of providing security for nations other than through armaments to retain a supposed balance of power - or really a balance of weapons - in an ever-escalating arms race, are always with us in effect.

The problem is how to overcome that failure from which flow all the developments in our present-day world of anarchy and insecurity internationally and now creeping into the domestic sphere - insecurity not only in the acts of aggression by nations remaining unrestrained by any effective action of the Security Council but also acts in acts within the domestic jurisdiction of States by individuals resorting to collective violence through terrorism, hijacking and the taking of hostages.

If we look at the newspapers every day we can see in what world we are now. According to the estimate made by a group appointed by the United States to look into those dangers and seek a way of countering them - terrorism, hijacking and taking hostages - we see, in The New York Times of 9 October, that the prospects are very gloomy, that those terrorist actions will increase, and that any measures taken will not be sufficiently effective to curb these abhorrent practices.

That is the situation in the world resulting from anarchy and insecurity among States; a situation that permits aggression to go unhindered; a situation that allows the Security Council to adopt mandatory resolutions endorsing unanimous resolutions of the General Assembly, which call on the aggressor to withdraw his forces, desist from further interference in the affairs of another Member State and let the refugees return to their homes. Yet they remain ineffective as a dead letter. Thus the aggressor continues able, unrestrained, to carry out his aggression, although for three consecutive years those General Assembly and Security Council resolutions have been constantly reaffirmed in more imperative terms.

Such a United Nations world could be understood at the height of the cold war when it was difficult for the Security Council to adopt resolutions because, through the veto, they would be nullified. But now at a time of détente - and we are grateful for this détente - the Security Council should not be allowed to remain as inoperative as it was during the time of the cold war. The ineffectiveness of the Security Council is thus revealed, in stark reality, before the eyes of the world.

This subject is of particular importance and it should be developed and appropriately studied as going to the very root of the function of the United Nations as an instrument of security and peace in the world.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

The preamble to the Charter shows the determined purpose of the peoples of the United Nations, as embodied therein - namely, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" - as the first objective in the preamble. And Article 1 of the Charter states more concretely the purpose as being "to maintain international peace and security, and to that end to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace ...". That is the primary purpose of the United Nations.

Article 2, paragraph 4, provides that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force." There is, therefore, a prohibition, under the Charter, of any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. And the following paragraph - paragraph 5 of Article 2 - speaks about enforcement action. So in the Charter all the ideas of peace and security are linked with enforcement action. This is developed further in Articles 39 to 43, which provide for the forms of enforcement action fully.

As I said, détente is very welcome because now we ought to be able to see light in respect of the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council, because the Charter provides for international security through the implementation of Security Council resolutions; and that implementation is provided by the aforesaid articles.

Now, why have not these Articles been applied? Because, it had been said, there could not be agreement between the big Powers with respect to the proportion of forces to be apportioned for the purpose in question. But now that there is no cold war, now that we are in a period of détente, I believe it the duty of the Security Council, and particularly of the big Powers, to take the measures necessary for the implementation of Security Council resolutions so that détente will become meaningfully effective, because only then can the arms race be curbed.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

We speak about disarmament and we all praise disarmament efforts. But we know - or we ought to know - that unless the arms race is halted there can be no effective disarmament. What would be the meaning of destroying armaments when new and more effective and more perfected armaments are continually being built as a result of the arms race? Therefore, if we want disarmament, the first step is to stop the arms race. And in order to stop the arms race, the international community must cease to depend for its security on armaments and the balance of power - which really is the balance of armaments - and turn to international security through the United Nations. This would be the effective meaning of détente as a stepping-stone to collective co-operative actions for the enforcement of Security Council resolutions and, thereby, the achievement of direly needed international security.

As I said, this fundamental action of the United Nations has been grossly neglected so far. We express the hope, however, that in the present world situation of détente steps will be taken by the Security Council to adopt the necessary measures for the implementation of its resolutions.

Now I should like to turn, on a more hopeful note, to the present session of the General Assembly.

The statements in the general debate by the representatives of the two major Powers have left their impact as constructive suggestions from both sides for containing antagonism in nuclear weapons and for a better understanding. An element of earnest concern - the sincerity in the statements of both President Carter and Foreign Minister Gromyko - was generally felt. This is not unrelated to the breath of fresh air brought into the field of international relations by the signal event of the leader of a great nation having been elected on the basis of his dedication to moral principles and to ethical tenets for which he stood.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

We are looking forward hopefully to the threshold of open diplomacy and the adherence to ethical values in the relations of men and nations as the true realism of our time and age. This seems to be the only way for mankind to get out of its present complexities and confusions, resulting from the sharp and ominous contrast between a technological break-through unprecedented in the annals of history and the moral retardation in the actions of nations, still operating from the momentum of an out-dated past of power and domination so unadjusted to the interdependent world of a nuclear age.

We are now in an era where interdependence is a reality, where the dangers of nuclear war are threatening humanity in its very existence. And it is not only the danger of major war, but even the preparations for such a war, that bring a moral and physical destruction to the world by the attendant activities related to such preparations.

We, therefore, express the hope that this détente will be strengthened and solidified in the sense that progress is made towards effective international security through the United Nations reducing dependence on armaments and making the arms race an unnecessary and useless exercise.

Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): Beloved African brother, over the nine years that I have been participating in the work of successive sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, nothing has pleased my eyes more, or warmed my heart so intensely, than to see an African in the Chair. To preside over a main Committee of the General Assembly, especially of the Political and Security Committee, is indeed a great honour and privilege. Such duties, however, impose great responsibilities on the individual. What has always impressed me is that whenever Africans agree to be nominated by their regional group and assume their duties after due elections, they do so with a sense of humility rather than of doubtful pride. They do so in a spirit of self-sacrifice and selflessness and expect no reward; they do so to assert the will of their continent and of their people, cruelly down-trodden for so long. I am proud, Sir, that you are keeping the African flag flying high and straight, thus projecting the post-war image of our great continent, whose just cause we Africans are all in duty bound to advance.

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

My beloved African brother, occupying the high post of Chairman of this Committee, you symbolize the just and noble aspirations of the peoples of our continent and its islands. I feel certain that it is in this spirit that you have, like your African brothers who have preceded you, assumed your heavy responsibilities. I extend to you my heartfelt expressions of good wishes for courage, good health and success in your worthwhile endeavours. I am convinced that your long and wide experience at the United Nations, your quick grasp of political and security issues, your sincerity of purpose and your determination to do well, combined with your high sense of fairness, will stand you in good stead. I pledge to you the full co-operation of the delegation of Mauritius which I have the honour to lead.

I express also my warm congratulations to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Pastinen of Finland and Ambassador Hollai of Hungary, as well as to the Rapporteur, Mr. Correa of Mexico.

From my personal past experience I am confident also that you will receive the full co-operation of the indefatigable members of the Secretariat under the eminent leadership of my colleague, comrade and friend, Mr. Shevchenko, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs.

To turn to the substance of the item we are considering, I should like at the very outset to express the satisfaction of my delegation at the initiative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in inscribing on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly the item we are now examining dealing with détente. Of course, a discussion on this subject could be extremely wide. It could include reference to present international relations and to the conflicts prevailing now in the world, as well as to the challenges and opportunities which the present international situation offers.

I must confess, however, that there are times when I feel rather amused by the post-Helsinki slogan, "détente", which reminds one of the First World War slogan, "entente" - that is, "entente cordiale". I am amused because the slogan is used mostly by those who originally dispensed to themselves a "patente" - the French word for "licence" - to build and

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

stockpile nuclear warheads. Of course, I have nothing against this beautiful French word, but, in my view, as well as in the view of most representatives of the non-aligned group of nations, in spite of the fact that the word has received wide publicity and acceptance, the real spirit behind it springs from the principles of peaceful coexistence laid down at the Bandung Conference. Perhaps, in the spirit of that epoch-making Conference, those who have felt it necessary to allocate to themselves the licence to pollute an otherwise naturally healthy world will now begin, after sincere and purposeful negotiations, to start considering relinquishing their "patentes", Such a meaningful action would add credibility to "détente".

When the Prime Minister of my country addressed the General Assembly on 27 September, he stated that we were witnessing the break-down of the old world order, which was a world system of inequality. While noting this, he also stated that the privileged and the powerful were seeking to preserve what they had, to keep intact the world system which had made development almost impossible for the poor countries. My Prime Minister concluded that the present world system of world inequality could not continue, because it condemned the mass of the world's peoples to a life of brutal poverty and suffering, and the General Assembly agenda was what it was because the voices of the world's peoples were beginning to be heard in this forum. My delegation considers that the process of détente is part of our general efforts to establish a new and more equitable world order.

In the introduction to his report on the work of the Organization for 1972, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Waldheim, while considering that détente among the great Powers was a historical development of the highest importance, stressed that we should not be too euphoric about this development, since previous post-war indications of détente failed to materialize into durable relaxation of international tensions. The new and positive relationship of the great Powers, he said, will certainly be reflected in other relationships and situations. But the Secretary-General immediately stressed that the idea of maintaining peace and security in the world through a concert of great Powers, although these Powers obviously

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

have special responsibilities in matters of peace and security, would seem to belong to the nineteenth rather than the twentieth century, where the process of technological advance and democratization was producing a new form of world society. The Secretary-General further stressed that the interest, the wisdom and the importance of the vast majority of medium and smaller Powers could not at this point in history be ignored in any durable system of world order. This year, in a statement before the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, the Secretary-General stressed again that détente had not extended to all areas of the world and it had not yet been able to lead to a real break-through in the process of disarmament.

Against this background, I am convinced that a serious discussion on the question of détente would be extremely useful. This is particularly so in view of the fact that during last year in some quarters even the use of the word "détente" was considered undesirable. In such circumstances one of the first tasks before us is to define the meaning of détente in the spirit of the requirements of the contemporary world, of the new trends towards democratization in international relations and of the need to establish a new international economic and political order.

The two draft papers submitted by the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, namely, the draft declaration on the deepening and consolidation of international détente and the draft resolution on the prevention of nuclear war, as well as other drafts and suggestions put forward in written form or presented orally in this Committee, might generate interesting and useful discussions and bring about a consensus on the action to be taken by the General Assembly on this item. Already some extremely relevant aspects have been raised by the speakers from non-aligned countries. The following comments on the text submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics should be considered as a modest contribution to that discussion.

First, there should be a strong recognition of our adherence to the principles which should govern relations among States, such as observance of the principles of national independence and sovereignty, of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States, of full equality of rights, of the

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

non-resort to force or to the threat of force and of the right of all peoples to decide their own destiny. Secondly, there should be a clear-cut statement that the arms race and bloc politics, together with the existence of under-development and exploitation, are incompatible with a policy aiming at the relaxation of international tensions. With this in mind, my delegation will support the adoption by the General Assembly of such a declaration.

In connexion with the draft resolution on the prevention of the danger of nuclear war, we should like to note that a resolution on such a theme should stress both the danger represented by the continuation of the nuclear arms race and the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States for the elimination of that danger through nuclear disarmament. The statement made by President Carter in the General Assembly that the number of nuclear warheads in the arsenals of the two super-Powers - and I say "super-Powers" with an apology to the representative of the Soviet Union - has increased fivefold in the last eight years and that the risk of war has actually increased too is still vivid in our minds. It is only natural that the General Assembly should express again its regret and concern, as it did previously in the face of an absence of meaningful progress towards nuclear disarmament. From this point of view, I believe that the preambular part of the draft resolution should be very substantially improved and that the operative part should reflect the true requirements of the imperative of preventing nuclear war. In particular, it seems to me that the first operative paragraph should urge the nuclear-weapon States to proceed to nuclear disarmament, and I mean real measures of nuclear disarmament, not other confidence-building measures which have little significance as long as the nuclear arms race continues unabated.

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

Of course, we should like to see a solemn undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to renounce the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons pending the elimination of those weapons from arsenals.

The draft resolution should be drafted in such a way as to contribute to the elimination of the danger of war and not antagonize one or other of the nuclear-weapon States, the support of which is essential for the success of our efforts.

These were the several **very** preliminary and general remarks which I wanted to make at this juncture of our debate. My delegation will of course contribute further to both the examination in more detail of the subject before us and the drafting of documents on it, if necessary, for adoption by the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on the two representatives who have asked to exercise their right of reply.

Mr. EILAN (Israel): Item 127 is entitled "Deepening and consolidation of international détente", etc. I repeat that the item deals with international détente, not just détente between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. One could expect therefore that parties to regional disputes who participate in this debate would contribute to the atmosphere of détente by suggesting measures to reduce regional tensions. Above all, one could expect representatives of countries which see themselves involved in such disputes to give an earnest of their peaceful intentions by ceasing their verbal warfare in this Committee.

The statement made today by the representative of Iraq makes it abundantly clear that in his view détente is a desirable aim to be applied to all disputes the world over, except that of the Middle East, where, if one is to judge by the tone of his statement, hostility remains the order of the day.

A representative of Israel has no wish to exacerbate a debate in this Committee which has hitherto been constructive by responding in kind to charges which some Arab delegations raise in this Committee with monotonous

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

regularity, year in, year out. However détente, like charity, should begin at home. While the representative of Iraq pays pious lip service to the spirit of détente the Commission on Human Rights is seized with a complaint about the merciless slaughter of Kurdish men, women and children and the bombing of Kurdish villages by units of the Iraqi air force. An undeclared war has been conducted for over a decade by Iraq against the Middle Eastern people whose only crime is a desire for self-determination - a right which the majority of the Members of the United Nations so vociferously demand for other people under foreign domination in other parts of the world.

The representative of Iraq mentioned immigration into Israel. This immigration is the sole and sovereign concern of the Government of Israel. However, the hundreds of people of Kurdish extraction who demonstrated in front of this building only yesterday were not worried by immigration into Israel; they were worried about deportation, the deportation of tens of thousands of Kurds from their homeland.

At this juncture and in the context of this item the representative of Israel can only reiterate the willingness of the Government of Israel to extend détente to the Middle East by its preparedness to discuss directly any and all disputes with each and all of its Arab neighbours without any prior conditions in Geneva or any other mutually acceptable venue.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq): I am not really surprised at the statement in exercise of the right of reply that we have just listened to from the representative of the Zionist entity. As a matter of fact, I expected it and that is why I asked to be permitted to take a few minutes of the Committee's valuable time to reply to him.

The statement I made this morning contained two main points regarding our area, the Arab area of the Middle East. One was that, in speaking on the heart of the matter of détente, I said that there are certain circles in the West and especially in the United States which distort détente, try to use détente by exerting all kinds of economic, political and information pressure on other countries, primarily the Soviet Union and the East European countries, in order to force them to increase immigration into occupied Palestine.

(Mr. Kittani, Iraq)

The other matter I mentioned was a call for the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

I shall not give the representative of the Zionist entity the satisfaction of my going outside the subject, as he has done, and talking about the internal affairs of other countries. What I want to emphasize is simply this: apparently, whatever the subject under discussion there are to be, if we are to believe the representative of the Zionist movement, two sets of rules of conduct - one for the rest of the Member States of the United Nations, the rest of the international community, and one to be applied to the Zionist entity. In short, what they would like us to believe is that Israel, the Zionist entity, will continue to occupy territories by force, to deny wholesale the inalienable rights of an entire people; that they will follow a policy of constant expansion based on military might which, referring to the subject under discussion, now includes nuclear blackmail, and that no one should even speak out against this constant, flagrant violation of every principle of the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of this Organization - principles which are indeed essential to the subject under discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus concluded its preliminary consideration of agenda item 127, entitled "Deepening and consolidation of international détente and prevention of the danger of nuclear war". The Committee will consider this item again together with items 35 and 50 of the agenda, as indicated in the programme of work approved by the Committee.

AGENDA ITEMS 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45
46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52 and 53

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the programme of work approved by the Committee, we shall begin this afternoon our consideration of the disarmament items. The Committee will have to deal with 17 such items. The substantial list of items shows the importance attached to the problems of disarmament by the international community.

Though the problems of disarmament persist, we take note of the multilateral and bilateral efforts to overcome the difficulties and to make progress. In this connexion, we note with interest the new developments that have occurred in 1977, in particular in relation to a solution of the problem of a complete ban on the testing of nuclear weapons and to a ban on chemical weapons.

The debate which we are now about to start should provide Member States with a new opportunity of removing at least some of the obstacles in the way of long-awaited progress towards disarmament. I am sure that all Members will renew and intensify their efforts to ensure the successful conclusion of our work.

All the disarmament items on the agenda this year have been carried over from the previous session or even earlier sessions. They cover a variety of disarmament aspects, both substantive and procedural, such as the prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests; nuclear weapon-free zones in various parts of the world; a ban on chemical weapons, incendiary and other specific conventional weapons; prohibition of the development and manufacture of new weapons of mass destruction; effective measures to implement the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade; the economic and social consequences of the arms race; reduction of military budgets; the question of a world disarmament conference, the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and a number of other subjects which come under the comprehensive item of general and complete disarmament.

In keeping with the practice followed in the past by the First Committee, which proved to be useful, I now propose that in the general debate delegations may refer to all, some or only one of the items appearing in the agenda, in the

(The Chairman)

order in which they choose. Subsequently, we shall consider the proposals or draft resolutions in the order in which they are submitted on each particular item, unless the Committee decides otherwise. Naturally, as we come to each particular item, delegations will have an opportunity to speak on that item.

I would also suggest to the Committee that the first three weeks of our work - that is, from 18 October to 4 November - be devoted to a general debate. We would therefore, after the general debate, have 14 meetings to discuss draft resolutions, with the understanding that if some of the drafts are submitted sooner, the Committee may decide to deal with them without delay.

If I hear no objection to the method of work that I have outlined, I shall take it that the Committee decides to follow it.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to suggest to the Committee that we close the list of speakers in the general debate on Tuesday, 25 October, at 5 p.m. The general debate itself, as we decided, will end on Friday, 4 November.

If I hear no objection, I take it that the Committee agrees.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the representatives whose names are inscribed on the list of speakers for this meeting, I should like to welcome the members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) who have come from Geneva to participate in our work. I wish also to extend a cordial welcome to Mr. Hyvarinen, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the CCD, who is attending our meetings on disarmament items.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Contemporary international life is extremely complex and diverse. Questions of economic, political, cultural, scientific and technical co-operation are extensively discussed in the course of various bilateral and multilateral talks, and more countries are becoming involved in these talks. With each passing day the mosaic of international life becomes increasingly polychromatic. Yet if we try to single out, of the entire diversity of world politics, the most important and

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burning problem, it will indubitably be that of limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament. It affects all States without exception, whatever their potential may be, whatever continent they may be located on, whatever social or economic system they may belong to.

The recently concluded general debate provides new evidence of the tremendous importance attached by States to the problem of disarmament. There is hardly anyone today who doubts that without limiting the arms race and without achieving disarmament it is difficult to achieve serious progress in economic and social development, in strengthening peace and international security, and in spreading and deepening international détente.

The problem of disarmament is not only the most urgent one but also, as historical experience shows, an extremely complex and, I would say, delicate problem. This is understandable, for it bears directly on the interests of State national security. Nevertheless, we are deeply convinced that the task of curbing the arms race is quite feasible provided, of course, that all States show goodwill and willingness to reach agreement. This is indicated by the following fact. In the past 10 to 15 years it has been possible to conclude some 20 - and I would like to repeat this, some 20 - bilateral and multilateral agreements in the field of limiting the arms race and of achieving disarmament.

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True, those agreements have not stopped the arms race or reversed it, but they have placed certain limits on it, put up barriers in certain areas of its development and narrowed down its scope. At the same time, they have refuted the sceptics who regarded and continue to regard the struggle for disarmament as a hopeless cause.

The recent intensification of various bilateral and multilateral talks on those questions reflects the increasing importance of disarmament questions in current world politics. For example, the conference to review the Treaty banning the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof, was held in Geneva last June. The conference gave priority attention to questions of the further limitation of the arms race on the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

The work of the Preparatory Committee for the special session on disarmament, which held three sessions this year, has been to a significant extent conducive to an intensified search for solutions to various problems of limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament. Within the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference - and not only in that forum - consultations have continued on the question of convening such a conference.

Along with the existing disarmament negotiation mechanisms such as - and primarily - the Soviet-United States Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, the talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and some others, important questions of arms limitation have been under consideration lately in the course of trilateral Soviet-British-American talks on general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and at various bilateral Soviet-American consultations.

It should also be noted that in the course of many bilateral negotiations, including talks at the highest level, questions of limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament have been the centrepiece and, in a number of instances, were concluded with the adoption of important documents. We should like to refer in the first place to the Soviet-French declaration on the

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non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, adopted during the talks between Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, President of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and Giscard d'Estaing, President of France, as well as to the agreement between the Governments of the USSR and the United Kingdom on the prevention of an accidental outbreak of nuclear war, concluded in Moscow a few days ago on 10 October during the visit of the British Foreign Secretary to the Soviet Union.

A major event in the efforts to limit the arms race was the signing last May of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, which has now been signed by more than 35 States.

It may be noted that some progress has been achieved in the course of those talks and negotiations. The views of States on a number of disarmament questions have emerged more clearly, there has been some further narrowing of the positions between the parties, and it can be boldly asserted that today, with respect to many questions, the situation is better than it was yesterday.

However, the state of disarmament talks as a whole cannot satisfy us. As we all know, the arms race is continuing. A sizable proportion of the world's material and human resources, which could be channelled towards the elimination of poverty, disease and hunger, that is, towards establishing better living conditions, is being used to manufacture arms. The statements by representatives of many countries in the general debate at the thirty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly have expressed deep concern on this score, and we share that concern. After all, in the past year alone some \$350 billion have been spent in the world for the purpose of manufacturing arms. Certain militaristic circles, acting on the false pretext of a so-called "Soviet threat" are making desperate efforts to cover up their policy of starting a new round of the arms race. Let us speak frankly and say that, representing as they do an aggressive line in international politics, they are seeking to halt the process of détente.

Particular concern is aroused by the continuing production of new types of weapons of mass destruction. A great deal has already been said, inter alia at this session of the General Assembly, about the development of the cruise missile and the neutron bomb, with the neutron bomb being extolled as a "miracle weapon". It is stressed that this bomb leaves intact buildings and equipment, while killing every living thing. There have been attempts to advertise this weapon as "humane", although the very use of the concept "humane" in connexion with the neutron bomb seems monstrous, against the background of the destructive effects of its radiation on living organisms.

So sometimes a rather strange picture seems to emerge. It is proposed that the disarmament talks should be stepped up and agreements reached on a number of arms limitation questions, while on the other hand attempts are made to support and encourage not only the build-up of nuclear capability, but also development of new types of weapons of mass destruction. This may lead to a situation where such a new generation of nuclear weapons will be impossible to control. Such a prospect runs totally counter to the interests of peace and international security.

The policy of building up military arsenals and the gap between words and deeds in politics create, as many politicians acknowledge, considerable difficulties at the talks on questions of limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament. Only constructive proposals based on a realistic approach will contribute to solving the complex problems of limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, our position is well known. It is consistent and based on principle. During the 60 years of the existence of the Soviet State, its foreign policy has been oriented towards ensuring peace and security for our country and for all countries and peoples. We should like to recall that, more than 50 years ago, in November 1927, the USSR, for the first time in the history of mankind, put forward a concrete programme of general and complete disarmament, and it is not our fault that this programme has not been implemented.

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The struggle to stop the arms race and to achieve disarmament, up to and including general and complete disarmament, was and remains one of the major guidelines in the foreign policy activities of the Soviet Government. "To work to stop the growing arms race so dangerous to peace, to start reducing the stockpiles of weapons and to begin disarmament" - this is how the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union formulated one of the fundamental goals of our State in international relations. If we put together all the proposals made by the Soviet Union in the post-war period on questions of strengthening international security and achieving disarmament, they will make up more than one bulky volume.

In the new Constitution adopted on 7 October 1977, the peaceful foreign policy course of the Soviet Union is laid down in clear terms in a chapter on foreign policy. It states directly that the Soviet Union seeks to achieve general and complete disarmament. In other words, the struggle for general and complete disarmament is enshrined in the fundamental law of the Soviet State.

The Soviet Union is ready, as before, to agree on the most drastic disarmament measures. Of course, universal peace and security can best be guaranteed only by general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control for this is the paramount and the ultimate goal of all the efforts of States. It is to be regretted that so far it has not been possible to achieve this because of the opposition of the enemies of détente and disarmament. No one will deny, however, that progress in this direction must be made.

The Soviet Union, without losing sight of the main task, constantly advocates partial measures to limit the arms race. Sometimes, certain measures of this kind become the object of skeptical utterances to the effect that they allegedly lead away from the main goal. We do not share this scepticism, although we are second to no one in wishing to achieve more. Partial measures are quite important per se in their own right. It is necessary to ensure, however, that their implementation pushes back the danger of war, alleviates the burden of the arms race and leads to reduction of the military arsenals of States.

The centrepiece among these measures is unquestionably the cessation of the arms race and prevention of the danger of nuclear war. The head of the

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Soviet delegation, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Andrei A. Gromyko, speaking from the high rostrum of the General Assembly at its current session, reaffirmed the readiness of the Soviet Union to sit down at any time at the negotiating table with all the other nuclear Powers in order to consider the problem of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects and jointly to elaborate concrete ways and means of its practical solution. On the question of preventing the danger of nuclear war, the Soviet Union has submitted a draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/32/L.2, which is to be considered by the First Committee under the item "Deepening and Consolidation of International Détente and Prevention of the Danger of Nuclear War". We express the hope that that document will be carefully studied by delegations and that it will receive broad support.

One of the most important moves in reducing the threat of nuclear war is that of strengthening the regime of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The spread of nuclear weapons from country to country will not strengthen the security of any one of them but will merely generate illusions and increase the likelihood of an outbreak of nuclear conflict, albeit an accidental one. That is why further efforts are required to find a universal solution to this problem.

The Soviet Union attaches exceptional importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and more than 100 States are already parties to it. The seven years during which the Treaty has been in force show that it is an effective instrument in strengthening the security of peoples and preventing the further spread of the nuclear threat. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is, at the same time, a solid foundation for the development of international co-operation in the nuclear field and serves the interests of economic development of States. The countries that sincerely desire to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes have no grounds whatsoever - and, indeed, cannot have any - to refuse to accede to the Treaty.

It should not be overlooked, however, that not all the nuclear Powers have yet become parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Some non-nuclear States capable of developing their own nuclear weapons owing to their

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scientific, technological and industrial potential, are also avoiding participation in it. The threat of nuclear war would immeasurably increase if such States were to involve themselves in the process of developing these weapons, and this possibility does exist. It is evidenced by the preparations for nuclear-weapon tests now under way in South Africa. It is the duty of all States and of the United Nations to take effective steps to prevent that country from developing nuclear weapons. Atomic weapons in the hands of the racist régime of Pretoria would create a direct threat to the security of African States and would result in a sharp escalation of instability and tension in southern Africa. It would be a direct to African countries whose desire to make their continent a non-nuclear zone has been supported by the United Nations on more than one occasion.

At present, peaceful uses of nuclear energy are rapidly developing throughout the world. Many States underscore their interest in ensuring broad international co-operation in this field. This is a legitimate demand, and we support it. The Soviet Union is an advocate of developing such co-operation and is prepared to share its experience as well as its scientific and technical knowledge in the field of modern nuclear technology. At the same time, we realize that the accumulation of plutonium in the process of operating nuclear power stations, as well as the expansion of international exchange in nuclear materials, equipment and technology - particularly in view of the fact that countries that have not assumed obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty are also taking part in such exchanges - create possibilities for the development of nuclear weapons by those that do not have them. This is far from being a commercial question. It is above all a political one, a question of international security.

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Nuclear exports must not become a channel for proliferation of nuclear weapons. Special responsibility rests, of course, with those States which are nuclear suppliers. They have already taken certain steps to reinforce nuclear export controls. These measures are not in the least discriminatory and do not impede the development of co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. On the contrary, they open up new possibilities for such co-operation since compliance with such measures will dispel the fears of supplier States that their supplies will be used for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union considers the adoption of further effective measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to be one of the most important international tasks. Controls by the so-called "London Club" over nuclear exports must be strengthened and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) systems of guarantees must be further consolidated and improved.

General and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests is another pressing task which is ripe for solution in all of its aspects, including that of effective control. If qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons is to be stopped and the arms race slowed down, nuclear-weapons tests must be ended as soon as possible. The problem of a test ban has been a prominent subject for a long time at the arms limitation talks, in the United Nations General Assembly where it is discussed every year, in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and, quite recently, in the trilateral talks among the USSR, the United States and Great Britain, which began in Geneva in July of this year. Lately the discussion of this problem has markedly intensified, and this we welcome.

The Soviet Union is doing everything in its power to achieve a complete test ban and is showing a flexible approach in overcoming the obstacles which existed for many years. We all know that in 1975 the Soviet Union drew up and submitted to the United Nations for discussion a draft treaty on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear weapons tests. The resolution adopted by the thirtieth session of the General Assembly called on all the nuclear Powers to proceed without delay to negotiations on the conclusion of such a treaty. It is to be regretted that, despite the consent of the USSR and a representative group of

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non-nuclear countries to take part in the negotiations, they have not yet started because of lack of enthusiasm on the part of the other nuclear Powers. At present three nuclear Powers are, in effect, conducting talks on the prohibition of nuclear weapons tests. Of course, this problem can be dealt with most effectively only with the participation of all the nuclear Powers.

In our view, the Soviet draft treaty is a good basis for the preparation of a relevant agreement. Taking into consideration the wishes expressed by a number of countries, the thirty-first session of the General Assembly amended this draft so as to make possible a compromise on the question of verifying compliance with treaty provisions on the basis of voluntary on-site inspection. As we understand it, this proposal has been widely acclaimed.

Today we are taking another major step. We are declaring our readiness to have the future treaty signed initially by three nuclear Powers only: the USSR, the United States and Great Britain. In so doing, they would announce a moratorium on nuclear weapons tests for a specified period as agreed among themselves.

We sometimes hear the view expressed that agreement on ending nuclear weapons tests will be effective only if peaceful nuclear explosions are banned at the same time. In our view peaceful nuclear explosions, because of their great economic importance, should not be dealt with in the same category as nuclear weapons tests; a nuclear test-ban treaty should allow for peaceful underground nuclear explosions, of course in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We are convinced that it is possible to rule out safely the possibility of peaceful nuclear explosions being used for the development, improvement or testing of nuclear weapons. This problem has been effectively solved, as is known, in the Soviet-American treaty on peaceful underground nuclear explosions.

The Soviet Union is convinced that new efforts are needed to achieve an international agreement on the prohibition of all types of nuclear weapons tests. In our view this question can be most successfully dealt with in accordance with resolution 3478 (XXX) with the participation of all the nuclear Powers in the framework of the United Nations. We expect

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that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament will deal with it with renewed effort in general, and also when it takes up the study of international co-operation in detecting and identifying seismic phenomena in which Soviet experts, along with those from other countries, are taking an active part.

The debate at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly and the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in 1977 indicate that the prohibition of the development, production and stock-piling of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stocks continues to be one of the pressing issues related to curbing the arms race and disarmament. Agreement on the destruction of chemical weapons would become an important new measure of real disarmament.

For many years now the Soviet Union has been seeking a radical solution to the question of banning this extremely dangerous type of weapon of mass destruction. In 1972 a group of Socialist countries submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament a draft international convention dealing with this problem. At that time many Western countries were opposed to the draft. Yet as delegates and experts go deeper and in greater detail into the question of prohibiting chemical weapons, the approach of the Socialist countries, which from the very beginning have advocated a comprehensive ban on this type of weapon, appears to be more and more justified. In our view, the 1972 draft convention remains the most acceptable basis for future work, particularly with regard to the scope of the prohibition. In circumstances where some of our partners to the negotiations did not agree to an extensive ban of chemical weapons, the Soviet Union expressed its readiness to seek, as a first step, agreement on the prohibition and destruction of the most dangerous and lethal types of such weapons. In the matter of chemical weapons, the Soviet Union is prepared to go as far as the other participants in the negotiations are willing to go.

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As regards verification of compliance with the possible agreement, the Soviet Union regards as necessary the observance of such conditions whereby verification measures would not infringe the sovereign rights of participating States and would not result in a disclosure of commercial secrets among others. To meet those requirements control must obviously be based on national means of verification in combination with some additional international procedures.

As we know, the issue of banning chemical weapons has been the subject of intensive negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament as well as in the bilateral talks between the USSR and the United States in Geneva where they discussed a possible joint initiative on the conclusion of an international convention on this subject. In 1977 alone several rounds of bilateral talks were held. The exchange of views on all aspects of a possible joint initiative has been useful; the two sides now have a fuller understanding of the possible scope of the prohibition to be included in the convention and also of procedural aspects of implementation, including the question of verification.

We should like to express the hope that discussion at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly of the question of banning chemical weapons will give fresh impetus to the talks on the subject. For its part the Soviet Union will do its utmost to speed up agreement on this new important international convention.

The initiative of concluding an international agreement prohibiting the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, advanced by the Soviet Union at the thirtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, has for two years now been under active discussion in various international forums. In summing up the results of those discussions it can be said that some headway has been made, although not as rapidly as might be expected in view of the importance and urgency of the problem. And the fact that its solution brooks no delay is becoming increasingly clear.

This year's consideration of the Soviet proposal by the Committee on Disarmament, in which government experts took part, demonstrates that a lot has been done in the study of substantive aspects of the problem and possible approaches to its solution.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Soviet Union regards the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement as the most effective way of eliminating the danger of developing new types of weapons of mass destruction. Given the history of the evolution of science in the world - which attests to the impossibility of sometimes predicting scientific discoveries, especially those that bear on the fundamental laws of nature - we believe that appropriate steps must be taken now so as to make sure that new and more dangerous means of mass destruction will not emerge.

In view of the need to reach agreement without delay, the Soviet Union, on 9 August 1977, submitted to the Committee on Disarmament an amended draft agreement on the prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. That draft took into account the wishes expressed by a number of participants in the talks. We suggested, inter alia, new language for the general definition of the subject of the ban based on the 1948 formula of the United Nations Commission on Conventional Armaments. Moreover, to make more concrete the subject of the ban a supplement has been added to the text of the agreement containing a specific list of types of weapons to be banned; it is envisaged that the list may be expanded in future if necessary. A special provision has been included to the effect that along with the general agreement prohibiting the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, separate agreements banning specific types of such weapons may also be concluded.

Simultaneously, the question of prohibiting the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction has been examined in the Soviet-American consultations, which dealt inter alia with drafting a separate agreement to ban radiological weapons.

I should like to express the hope that agreement will be reached as soon as possible with respect to the problem of prohibiting new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. It would, we believe, be appropriate for the General Assembly to urge the reactivation of the talks on this subject.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The work of the Preparatory Committee to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, created in accordance with a decision of the thirty-first session, is an impressive indication of the lively interest of States in the question of disarmament. The Soviet Union reacted with understanding to the proposal to convene a special session of the General Assembly and took a most active part in the work of the Preparatory Committee. It was the first to reply to the questionnaire of the United Nations Secretary-General, and submitted its views on the purposes and objectives of the forthcoming special session in a letter from Andrei Gromyko, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR. In our view that session must become an important international forum for extensive discussion of fundamental approaches to the solution of the problems of disarmament as well as of main guidelines for the priority efforts of States in this field.

Together with a number of socialist countries, the Soviet Union submitted to the Preparatory Committee for consideration drafts of final documents to be adopted by the special session: the declaration on disarmament and the programme of action. In drawing up those documents it was the view of the socialist countries that the States Members of the United Nations are called upon to show greater responsibility and to exert consistent and purposeful efforts to solve the problem of ensuring lasting peace and achieving disarmament.

In an effort to work in co-operation with other delegations, the sponsors also took into account proposals and views contained in the replies of a large number of States to the questionnaire of the United Nations Secretary-General on the matter of the special session, as well as working papers distributed during the work of the Preparatory Committee. We take the view that the drafting of an agreement on the basic documents of the forthcoming session, within the framework of the Preparatory Committee, will contribute to the success of the special session. It is our view that those documents should represent the outcome of the collective efforts of all those participating in the preparatory work. Guided by the aforementioned considerations, the sponsors from the socialist countries are prepared for a constructive discussion of the concrete proposals with other delegations.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

We note with satisfaction that during the work of the Preparatory Committee agreement was reached on recommendations covering practically all organizational and procedural aspects of the special session. These recommendations are contained in its report. We should like to stress that in the Preparatory Committee - which worked under the chairmanship of our friend Mr. Carlos de Rozas, whom I welcome here on behalf of the Soviet delegation - all members of that body in general worked constructively and in a business-like fashion, and that all its recommendations were arrived at on the basis of consensus. It is noteworthy that the Committee recommended the same decision-taking procedure for the special session itself.

A major result of the work of the Preparatory Committee is the preparation of an agenda for the special session, which, as we know, provides, among other things, for the consideration of the question of convening a world disarmament conference. The attitude of the USSR to the world disarmament conference is well known: we have been consistently in favour of considering the problem of disarmament in its entirety, in the broadest and most authoritative forum, such as the world disarmament conference would be. Such a forum would be truly world-wide and could consider expertly and in the necessary depth the entire range of disarmament problems and take effective action thereon. The proposal to convene a world disarmament conference has enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, the support of the overwhelming majority of States, and this demonstrates the growing realization in the world of the need to convene such a Conference.

The agenda of the First Committee contains some 20 items dealing with limitation of the arms race and with disarmament. Many of them are highly complex, while on many of them there exist a great variety of views on the part of States. Nevertheless, we must make every effort to narrow the differences and to take realistic decisions. It is only through the joint efforts of all States and of all peoples that it will be possible to put an end to the continuing arms race, to proceed with a genuine reduction of the stockpiled arsenals of the engines of destruction and to begin disarmament. As far as the Soviet delegation is concerned, it is prepared to co-operate constructively with all other delegations to that end.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): I wish to extend to you, on behalf of Ambassador Young and the entire United States delegation, Mr. Chairman, our warm congratulations on your election to preside over the First Committee. We also wish to congratulate your colleagues on the Bureau - Ambassador Hollai of Hungary, Ambassador Pastinen of Finland, and Mr. Correa of Mexico - and we note with pleasure the presence of the Secretary-General's representative, Ambassador Hyvarinen, with whom we have had the opportunity of working closely in Geneva at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. We look forward to working with all of you in a constructive and positive spirit in the weeks ahead.

I also wish to express our appreciation to the members of the Secretariat, and particularly of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament for their dedication and invaluable assistance to the work of the Committee.

May I also extend to Mr. Bjornstedt, through you, Mr. Chairman, my best wishes for his speedy recovery.

It is a very great personal pleasure for me to appear before this body. As some of you in the group may recall, during the 1960s I had the privilege of representing the United States both here in the United Nations on disarmament issues and at what was then the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee Conference in Geneva. I have been delighted to renew my acquaintance with a number of old friends from that period and to make a great many new friends since I have returned to Government service.

In the months to come, I look forward to working with all of you in solving common problems - in gaining ground towards significant disarmament. Let me just mention here one of the things that have always struck me in the past about working with other officials on disarmament. It has struck me again in the last few months.

It has always seemed to me that a rather special quality unites those who work on disarmament: the quality of striving to achieve results against very difficult odds; of knowing that the cause of disarmament transcends matters of personal convenience and the like. This situation of knowing that we are together out on the frontier, perhaps a little exposed but confident that what we are doing serves very large and worthwhile purposes, leads, in my opinion, to the friendships and professional relationships which are so special.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

That is why I feel such great personal satisfaction at being back with you. That is why I expect to learn a great deal from you, as I have in the past. And that is why you can be certain that I will do everything in my power to make our work mutually productive.

The circumstances under which we begin the consideration of disarmament issues this year contrast sharply with those that have prevailed throughout most of recent history. There is a sense of expectation that after many years of talking and nibbling around the edges, real arms control and arms reductions are in the offing. This is not to denigrate the importance of such relatively recent agreements as the Sea-Bed Arms Control Treaty or the Environmental Modification Treaty, but they were primarily preventive medicine aimed at killing the virus before it could spread, so to speak. Now the prospects are growing in our arms control work for progress on the hard issues of curbing important weapons that already exist - of limiting them or of outlawing them altogether.

I can note with considerable satisfaction that what President Carter said in his inaugural address about the arms control objective of the United States, and what he said here at the United Nations in March, and again here at the United Nations just two weeks ago, was not rhetoric. Things are happening across the entire range of disarmament issues. Having come here directly from ongoing negotiations on two arms-control issues - chemical weapons and radiological weapons - I am keenly aware of the vigour and urgency with which these initiatives are being pursued. There are also, of course, other negotiations in progress on other subjects which are of great interest to this body, about which I will have more to say later in this statement.

While as an American I am understandably proud of what my Government has been doing to advance the cause of disarmament during the past year, as a citizen of this small planet I am pleased that more countries than ever before are making positive contributions to our shared objectives.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

Many countries from different areas of the world have had a hand in such actions as inspiring and organizing the special session on disarmament, in seeking solutions to the special difficulties of non-proliferation, and in promoting regional arms control approaches which could reduce tensions and increase stability.

In short, we are in a period of ferment of a very hopeful sort. For it is not a ferment based on overheated rhetoric or on unrealistic proposals. Rather, it is a ferment based on a new drive towards realization of many long-held hopes. It is based on the belief that we can harness the experience and imagination displayed in grappling with current problems to make even greater progress in the future - progress towards the ultimate goal of genuine disarmament and lasting peace.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

The list of current items on the arms control agenda is long and extraordinarily far-reaching in its scope. Let me set out some thoughts on the ones that have been at the forefront of our concerns. I shall first deal with the nuclear issues, and, first among the nuclear issues, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).

Turning back the strategic arms race is at once the paramount arms control enterprise and also a task of staggering difficulty. It is important not only to the United States and the Soviet Union but to all countries, because of the high levels of nuclear weapons and delivery systems maintained by the two leading nuclear Powers and because of the urgent need to decrease the risks and costs of competition in strategic arms. It is difficult because strategic arms limitations deal with weapon systems to which both nations have attached the most fundamental security significance - but systems which have diverged widely because of differing perspectives and capabilities. The resulting complex of technical issues in working out equitable and effective restraints is certainly unprecedented in any sustained negotiation among sovereign States.

Viewed from this perspective, progress made thus far can be said to be remarkable. While talks on strategic arms limitations were slow to start, by 1972 two significant agreements had been reached.

The Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty, banning nation-wide missile defence systems, is a milestone in curbing nuclear competition. It removed the very real prospect of a costly and destabilizing race to deploy anti-missile systems. It was a major accomplishment in its own right and a prerequisite for serious efforts to impose limits on offensive arms. Recently, in connexion with the five-year review of that Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union jointly reaffirmed their vigorous support of that accord.

The Interim Agreement, or SALT I accord, also signed in 1972, served the essential purpose of limiting strategic competition while both sides sought a more meaningful and durable agreement limiting offensive nuclear forces. Both sides have indicated that, pending further agreement, their conduct will continue to be guided by the limitations contained in this agreement.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

The new American Administration entered office determined to replace the SALT I interim accord with a new SALT II treaty which would be a more meaningful and durable agreement. We wished to see if, together with the Soviet Union, we could negotiate a treaty which would go further than the 1974 Vladivostok understanding in prescribing reductions in present strategic systems and restricting the development of some new systems. We pursued this approach at high levels when Secretary Vance visited Moscow last March and in the discussions between Foreign Ministers in Geneva last May.

As a result of the recent meetings in Washington between Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and President Carter and Secretary Vance, we now see a SALT II agreement taking shape. If such an agreement is concluded, as we hope it will be, it will lower the level of strategic arms on both sides, impose certain qualitative constraints on potentially destabilizing weapon developments and set the stage for even more substantial limitations in SALT III. A new SALT II agreement would benefit the security interests of the United States and the Soviet Union, it would contribute to world security, and it would provide further stimulus for rapid progress in other areas of arms control.

Let me stress that what we are seeking are not agreements which merely channel competition in convenient directions. This has sometimes been alleged, but nothing could be further from the truth. We seek significant disarmament. As President Carter has said, referring to nuclear weapons, "On a reciprocal basis we are willing now to reduce them by 10 per cent, 20 per cent or even 50 per cent." (A/32/PV.18, p. 6). Much time and dedicated effort will be needed to achieve reductions of this magnitude. But it should not be forgotten that already steps towards real disarmament have been achieved in SALT. The Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty required dismantling of actual weapon systems then being deployed; and there is little doubt that a new SALT II agreement will involve cutbacks in present, as well as planned, weapon programmes.

SALT I led to SALT II. SALT II will lead to SALT III. We want SALT to be an irreversible process in the cause of peace.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

I turn now to the question of a comprehensive test ban.

Twenty-three years have passed since Prime Minister Nehru voiced his concern over the development of nuclear weapons and called upon the nuclear-weapon Powers of the world to cease their nuclear experiments. Citing the "disastrous and horrible consequences" from the "new weapons of unprecedented power", he told the Indian Parliament in 1954:

"I have stated publicly as our view that these experiments, which ... expose the nature of the horror and the tragedy ... should cease."

He continued:

"I repeat that to be our considered position and it is our hope this view and the great concern it reflects, and which is world-wide, will evoke adequate and timely responses."

The entire world was heartened when the test ban on nuclear explosions in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space was achieved in 1963 in the Treaty of Moscow, and several years ago the United States and the Soviet Union were able to negotiate a threshold test ban prohibiting large underground tests. But the goal of a comprehensive test ban has continued to elude us.

Now, today, we are perhaps nearer to achieving a complete halt in these experiments than at any time since Prime Minister Nehru issued his eloquent plea. Three of the world's nuclear-weapon States - the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States - are now engaged in serious negotiations directed towards achieving a comprehensive test ban.

The issues involved in these negotiations are complex and difficult. They have repeatedly thwarted earlier efforts to achieve a negotiated test ban. We are, nevertheless, cautiously optimistic that they can be resolved. The participants in these negotiations are proceeding with a heightened sense of urgency and purpose. We hope that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament will be able in the near future to begin consideration of the results of these trilateral negotiations.

The goal of a comprehensive test ban is to halt completely any testing which serves to advance nuclear weapon development anywhere in the world. As President Carter recently stated before the United Nations, "... the time has come to end all explosions of nuclear devices, no matter what their claimed justification - peaceful or military" (ibid).

A comprehensive test ban would impose limitations on nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. It would contribute in a very substantial way to reducing incentives for non-nuclear-weapon States to pursue development of the technology leading to a nuclear explosive capability.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

It will lead inevitably to reduced dependence on nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States.

Through these efforts, taken together, a comprehensive test ban will represent an important step toward the eventual complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Even in the near term, achievement of a comprehensive test ban should add immeasurably to the stability and well-being of the world, encouraging and augmenting other important arms-control efforts. It is our confident hope that we are at last about to realize fully the goal first set for us by Prime Minister Nehru and supported by people all over the world - the halting of these experiments.

I should like to refer now to the subject of non-proliferation in the nuclear field. The past year has been one of great activity and renewed debate, as well as progress, on the problem of nuclear non-proliferation. Long-held assumptions about the next generation of nuclear technology have been challenged. New questions about the proliferation consequences of moving towards a plutonium economy have been raised. Concern over access by sub-national groups to material usable in weapons has heightened. Debates have raged over the adequacy of nuclear fuel supplies, the economic advantages and disadvantages of recycling plutonium and the relevance of reprocessing to nuclear waste disposal.

While my country has been among those raising these issues, we have also moved promptly to meet the challenges they present. I am very pleased to note the opening tomorrow in Washington of the initial meeting to conduct an international fuel cycle evaluation, a meeting designed to examine all these questions in depth and to find ways of meeting the world's nuclear power needs surely and economically while reducing proliferation risks. This is an undertaking to which interested nations from both the developed and the developing world will contribute, and its product will be openly available to all.

The prevention of the further spread of nuclear explosive capabilities is a goal from the achievement of which all nations would benefit. Uncontrolled proliferation, far from enhancing any nation's security, would jeopardize the security of all nations by increasing the risk of nuclear conflict. It would also make immensely more difficult the task of nuclear disarmament.

There are both existing institutions and new initiatives which, working

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

together, can help us build a fair and effective structure of non-proliferation. The 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the corner-stone of world-wide non-proliferation efforts. Still wider adherence to that Treaty must be a goal for the entire international community.

Among international institutions, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is vital to the world community's co-operation in sharing the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology while safeguarding against the dangers of nuclear proliferation. The IAEA is assuming even more critical responsibilities and it is incumbent on all of its members to give the fullest possible support to its activities, particularly those involving safeguards.

Valuable work has been accomplished in formulating standards and procedures for maintaining the physical security of the ever-enlarging quantities of sensitive nuclear materials, including work on an international convention on physical security. These efforts also warrant wide international support.

In his recent address before the General Assembly President Carter called attention to the necessity of establishing full-scope comprehensive safeguards. The achievement of this goal would unquestionably be one of the most important contributions that could be made towards an effective non-proliferation régime.

Our non-proliferation efforts, which must succeed if the atom is to continue to serve peaceful scientific and energy needs in an expanding world, demonstrate that arms control is indissolubly linked with efforts to achieve economic progress. Success in non-proliferation can only be conducive to wider peaceful co-operation, to the benefit of many nations.

Let me turn next to arms control subjects not involving nuclear weapons or explosives. The first of these is chemical weapons, which we have heard discussed earlier this afternoon. After years of much talk and study but little concrete action there has been important movement in the last few months towards a comprehensive convention prohibiting chemical weapons. I have already mentioned the bilateral discussions on chemical weapons between the United States and Soviet delegations in Geneva, from which I have just come and to which I will be returning this very evening. Those negotiations are proceeding in a very serious and detailed way and we are making measurable progress towards the formulation of a joint initiative to present to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). The elaboration of an international convention prohibiting chemical weapons would be an achievement of historic proportion.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

It would be a genuine disarmament measure requiring the destruction of all existing stocks and prohibiting any further production of these terrible weapons. Because of the extreme toxicity of the chemicals involved and the complexity of the technical problems, the destruction of chemical warfare agents and munitions would take several years and would involve substantial costs. But this process would demonstrate the willingness of participating States to incur real costs to achieve real disarmament.

A chemical weapons convention will directly engage any country with a modern chemical industry. It will pose new challenges in the area of verification. But these challenges also create an opportunity to work out innovative forms of international co-operation, and these in turn can build the experience and the confidence for broader disarmament efforts in the years ahead.

In dealing with chemical agents we are operating in the forefront of a technology which has potentiality for creating weapons even more terrible than existing ones. This potentiality is not confined to a few advanced States but is a force with which all industrialized societies will have to cope. And if we can safeguard this technology through effective arms control we shall be contributing to the kind of world order which all of us surely seek not only for ourselves but for coming generations.

These are some of the considerations which lead us to believe that the chemical weapons negotiations are of far-reaching significance. We are giving them extremely high priority. We hope for early concrete results in our negotiations with the Soviet Union leading then to productive negotiations in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

As I indicated earlier, I have briefly absented myself from negotiations in Geneva not only on chemical weapons but also on radiological weapons. Many of you will recall that at last year's session of the General Assembly the United States suggested the possibility of an international convention which would deal with this subject. I am pleased to report that negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on this subject in Geneva had been proceeding alongside the chemical weapons negotiations. Our objective, as with chemical weapons, is to prepare an initiative which could be submitted to the CCD for multilateral consideration and negotiations.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

Let me explain why a convention on radiological weapons would be a valuable step. The convention would prohibit the use in warfare of radioactive material, which is becoming increasingly plentiful - if one may use that friendly word; is becoming increasingly available as the use of research and power reactors grows throughout the world. It would also prevent the development and stockpiling of weapons designed to utilize radiation produced by the decay of radioactive materials. Although of relatively less significance when compared with a comprehensive test ban or a chemical-weapons convention, the prohibition of radiological weapons and their use would fill a gap in the panoply of arms-control measures and would serve to head off the possible development of a hitherto untried weapon of mass destruction specifically mentioned in the 1948 United Nations definition. The relatively wide availability of radioactive material creates a potential threat which we should not ignore, one which we can easily and effectively guard against through arms control providing we act promptly at this early stage.

I should like to deal now with the problem of conventional arms.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

One aspect of the wider problem of conventional arms control is that of arms transfers. As a major supplier, the United States has taken a strong interest in this problem. We have earlier this year enunciated a policy which will guide our own actions. It is a policy of restraining the flow of unnecessary, expensive and destabilizing weapons while recognizing the legitimate defence needs of others.

We do not seek to impose these views on other suppliers or recipients. And we are not now proposing any ready-made solution to this world-wide problem. We fully accept the fact that this problem cannot be solved by any single State or group of States. Our view is that the process of seeking a solution must be guided by two broad principles: all States have legitimate security requirements and these must be met; progress on this important issue should be a mutual concern to both producer and consumer nations, and a successful solution must reflect the ideas and interests of both.

But let me stress one underlying point: we will apply the same central standard to this area of arms control as we, and other nations, apply to every serious subject for international co-operation. By this I mean that we will seek to ascertain in discussions with others how common interests can be advanced, how mutual gain can be attained. That is fundamental. We know as well as anyone that unless sovereign nations perceive a possibility of achieving some desirable goal through co-operation, there is simply no basis for co-operation.

I stress the point because, speaking candidly, achieving restraints on conventional arms transfers has been an extremely sensitive and difficult subject for international discussions. But surely the time has come for us to recognize that, given the realities of today's world, no nation can by itself achieve all the security it may ideally want. There is today no such thing as total independence: there is none for the strongest; there is none for the weakest. It must certainly be in the interest of a great many States to explore, frankly and co-operatively, whether they might achieve arrangements, together, to protect them from the effects of undesirable and uncontrollable actions by others.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

So, in the coming months, we intend to carry out a dialogue with others to explore whether there are ways to achieve genuine mutual advantage in this field. That will be the spirit that guides us.

I should like to deal now briefly with progress towards regional arms control. The issues that I have just cited do not by any means exhaust the current arms control agenda. There are other developments which are impressive and encouraging. I should like particularly to take note of efforts that have been or are being made in the area of regional arms control.

The pathbreaking project initiated by Mexican statesmen to create a nuclear weapons-free zone throughout Latin America has advanced another notch closer to realization during the past year. The signature of Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco by the United States is a move which we hope will inspire other nations to take those remaining actions necessary to bring this Treaty into full force.

There has also been positive movement on the question of reducing tensions in the Indian Ocean with the beginnings of bilateral discussions between the Soviet Union and the United States aimed at stabilizing the level of military activity in the Indian Ocean area. We are seeking to achieve practical results in the talks which would promote the strengthening of peace in the Indian Ocean area and contribute to the lessening of international tension. Moreover, both sides regard with understanding and respect the desire of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean area to bring about the strengthening of security and the development of co-operation in the area. We will continue to take this desire into account in our bilateral discussions. We are also informing the United Nations Special Committee on the Indian Ocean, through its Chairman, about the progress of the talks.

Negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe go to the heart of many nations' security. It is understandable that it has not been easy to overcome obstacles deriving from confrontation across a continent that has persisted for so many years. But because the stakes are high, and progress in this negotiation would have far-reaching, positive effects for global peace as well as for the security of the participants on both sides, we are determined to press for the resolution of the problems that have stymied mutual and balanced force reductions progress up to now.

But despite this evidence of activity, the regional approach to arms control is still in its infancy. Yet a regional approach to restraining the growth of conventional arms capabilities could have considerable merit. Then, too, under proper conditions, it might be possible to create nuclear weapon-free zones in additional areas. The opportunities are numerous, and regional disarmament can be a fertile field for innovative efforts.

Let us consider the future agenda for arms control, because it is not only the present activity which provides the basis for ferment and excitement in the arms control field. The future offers us greater challenges and opportunities. Over the horizon is the special session on disarmament. We should seize on this event as an opportunity to widen our horizons, to free ourselves from preoccupations with only the most pressing issues of the moment, and to try to build for the future. We believe the success of the special session in stimulating, broadening and accelerating disarmament negotiations will depend principally on the ideas and attitudes that countries develop for, and bring to, the session.

In this regard I am happy to note that some nations are indeed thinking along similar lines. To note this is not, of course, to say that the United States is necessarily prepared to embrace all the proposals which have been made thus far. But it does mean we intend to examine carefully and discuss with others any serious proposals which may be put forward for consideration at the special session on disarmament. We are, in short, ready to test the boundaries of the possible.

Here are some recent examples of what I have in mind. At the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament this summer, several nations gave thoughtful presentations on how to tackle some difficult problems. I am thinking in particular of the suggestion made by my Japanese colleague at the CCD; the course of an important examination of how the non-proliferation régime might be strengthened, that we take up again the long dormant idea of a cut off of the production of fissionable materials for weapons use and a transfer of that fissionable material to peaceful purposes.

Also, we all welcome the information that the Government of France is giving new consideration to the problem of disarmament on a broad and comprehensive basis. I am sure all of us look forward to receiving the benefits of French ideas.

Italy and Belgium have both been giving thought to how regional arms control might be advanced through the efforts of groups of countries under United Nations auspices.

Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have called for a thorough study of many of the fundamental aspects of the relationship between disarmament and development, the so-called Nordic Proposal.

This call for a study leads me into a subject which is becoming increasingly important and which will clearly be vital in the future. I refer to the relationship between arms control and disarmament on the one hand, and development on the other.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

Everyone is aware, of course, that in recent years the challenges of development, and of North-South relationships, have been paramount in the work of the United Nations. And I understand that the world community has made some important progress in framing new co-operative approaches to the most pressing problems of international economic life.

At the same time, there has only been a limited amount of concerted and productive attention devoted to the arms control and disarmament dimensions of North-South issues. This is not to say that the problem has not been of concern to many countries. Indeed, many developing countries have suggested that there be a link between disarmament savings by the major Powers and development.

This linkage, however, has been rather hard to make concrete. For one thing, it has been very difficult to identify in monetary terms the substantial savings from disarmament. And even if a more precise monetary link could be established, the idea of a direct link between disarmament savings and development contributions raises for a number of countries, including my own, constitutional questions about the feasibility of automatic transfers of resources. On this I have in mind our own constitutional requirement that Congress legislate the appropriation of United States funds for development. But over the long run, of course, we all hope and believe that large-scale reductions in armaments by major Powers will be possible and that there will be widespread benefits from the consequent saving of resources.

I have raised these issues of disarmament and development - even some faintly negative ones - not for the purpose of introducing negative elements into our discussion. On the contrary, I believe that the time has come for all of us, for the entire international community, to focus new creative intellectual efforts on this subject. Indeed, in recent times, fundamental new factors have emerged which we may not yet fully understand but which clearly give a new urgency to a fresh look.

The interdependence of nations and the interdependence of human enterprises - food, energy, development, technology, security - have borne down on us as never before. And that interdependence, which becomes more pervasive every year, will surely create ever more pressing questions about the interdependence

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

of economic well-being and development, on the one hand, and security and expenditures for armaments, on the other.

Resources become scarcer all the time. Not even the richest countries can spend any amount whatever for new weapons. For many developing countries, economic pressures are especially severe. Resources are desperately short for schools, for shelter, for basic health.

And finally, there is a growing awareness everywhere of new values, new goals, to advance the welfare of individual human beings. Various bodies of the United Nations have intensified their work on strategies to meet basic human needs, a goal which my Government whole-heartedly supports. In the future, when decisions are made regarding the expenditure of resources for new weapons systems, a growing number of Governments will undoubtedly be giving increasing consideration not only to their security needs in the traditional sense, but also to whether they are using their resources over all in the best way to advance the basic human needs of their peoples.

These are some of the reasons why we feel that the entire subject of the relationship between arms expenditure and development warrants new consideration. The subject is enormously complex. No one can seriously offer simple prescriptions but, none the less, we need to come to grips with it.

In our opinion, the forthcoming special session offers us a welcome stimulus for new studies, like the important Nordic proposal I have already referred to. It offers us a welcome stimulus for international discussions about the nature of the problems posed by the choice between arms and development; and I can assure all of you that we will engage in an exploration of this problem, not only with an open mind, but also with the purpose of advancing fundamental goals which the entire community shares: disarmament, security and development.

I know that what I have said will strike some people as an over-optimistic assessment of the present prospects for disarmament. However, I believe that this would be essentially a misinterpretation of my remarks.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

The theme of my statement is that we are in a period of ferment and this means that there could be great opportunities ahead. It does not mean that it will be easy to realize all those opportunities. In fact, any one who has had the privilege of working for many years on disarmament knows that, even under the best of circumstances, opportunities may prove fleeting and that it may prove to be extremely difficult to realize substantial and concrete achievements.

But still, the fact of the present ferment can only be viewed, in my opinion, as exceptional and promising. It was not so long ago - less than two decades - that officials responsible for disarmament felt that there was an extraordinarily favourable opportunity if it were possible to pass from abstract debate to actual negotiation of a single specific disarmament measure. I well remember the excitement when, about 15 years ago, there suddenly emerged a real possibility of achieving an atmospheric test ban.

Now, however, we are engaged in concurrent negotiations on many diverse fronts, to achieve significant and practical measures of arms control and disarmament.

I have not so far said anything about how the United States believes each of the important topics on our agenda should be handled. That omission has not been accidental. I believe that the most important thing for us to do in this general debate is to exchange ideas on goals and opportunities.

If there is goodwill on all sides, and I believe there can be - indeed, I am hopeful that there will be - then we should be able to find ways in this Assembly and the forthcoming special session to advance our most important goals. Undoubtedly there will be many differences of view about many important details, but this is only natural.

I am reminded of a statement by one of our greatest jurists, our former Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, who said:

"In the highest ranges of thought, in theology, philosophy and science, we find differences of view on the part of the most distinguished experts - theologians, philosophers and scientists. The history of scholarship is a record of disagreements."

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

I hope no one will think too harshly of me if I presume that we here are also capable of "the highest ranges of thought". Let us try to view even our disagreements as part of the valuable ferment from which we can seize opportunities.

I should like to conclude by referring to one of the wisest men of our times, Albert Einstein, who paradoxically was also partly the cause of some of our greatest worries. Professor Einstein said:

"... the unleashed power of the atom has changed everything but our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophes."

I quote this provocative thought, not because I believe it is now true, but because I hope and believe that it is no longer true. It is possible that we may now be experiencing the beginning of a fundamental shift in which we adjust our thinking to accommodate the new scientific realities. No one can be certain. But if the ferment I have described does represent the beginning of a shift, then indeed there are grounds for optimism.

In this hall, in this session of the General Assembly and in the forthcoming special session, we have the opportunity to contribute to such a shift. If we do this, then I am sure that all of us would agree that we will have spent our time in an enterprise of far-reaching significance.

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rozas, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, will introduce the report of that Committee this afternoon. I now call on Ambassador de Rozas.

Mr. ORTIZ DE ROZAS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, before fulfilling my obligation to introduce the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, item 52 on our agenda, I shall depart slightly from the rules of procedure in order to congratulate you most warmly on your more than deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee. Those of us who have had the opportunity and the privilege to share with you many years of continuous labours at the United Nations know all too well your qualifications, experience and permanent concern to find an appropriate solution to the problems debated here. Those qualifications, highlighted throughout a brilliant career in the service of the great African nation you represent, are a guarantee in advance of the fruitful work we shall carry out under your impartial guidance. It is a great pleasure for me, therefore, in renewing the assurance of my friendship to offer you also my most complete co-operation in the discharge of the mandate which has been unanimously entrusted to you.

The same congratulations are to be extended to the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Pastinen of Finland and Mr. Hollai of Hungary, and to the Rapporteur, Mr. Correa of Mexico, our sister republic.

The report I have the honour to submit to the First Committee as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee is contained in document A/32/41 and the corrigendum dated 13 October last. Its 10 pages duly reflect all the matters dealt with by the Committee during the three sessions held since it was established under General Assembly resolution 31/139 B of 21 December 1976.

(Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina)

It is no intention of mine to alter the merit of the brevity of this document with a lengthy introductory statement. However, I believe it is my duty to emphasize before delegations present here some of the most outstanding parts and in particular those aspects which, because of the modalities typical of this kind of report, do not appear in the text.

Among these I should, first and foremost, wish to refer to the praiseworthy spirit of co-operation of all participants, both in the contribution of ideas and constructive suggestions during the general debate, as well as in the process of consultations and negotiations which led to the adoption by consensus of the recommendations contained in section IV of the report.

It was because of this climate of understanding and the flexibility of delegations in their efforts to find compromise solutions that the Committee was able to arrive at a promising stage in its endeavours. It was also this positive attitude which substantially facilitated the work of the Chairman. That is why I now wish to reiterate my appreciation to the 54 members of the Committee and in particular to the members of the bureau and to the Rapporteur for the understanding and support they offered me at all times in the discharge of my functions. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Secretariat staff who so consistently and so effectively contributed to the success of our deliberations.

The considerable interest aroused by the mission assigned to the Committee was emphasized at its inaugural meeting with the important statement made personally by the Secretary-General on questions of disarmament and the importance and significance of the next special session of the General Assembly.

An eloquent indication of that interest was also the valuable opinions of Member States on the agenda and other aspects related to that meeting as well as those which appear in paragraph 3 of the report regarding the composition of the Preparatory Committee and the fact that 16 delegations of non-member States have already participated in the work.

(Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina)

Further, so as to have available the greatest number of facts to make possible a complete and adequate preparation for the special session and as is recorded in paragraphs 11 to 13 of the report, the Secretariat was requested to prepare 13 documents which in practice indicate an efficient bringing up to date of background material on disarmament. Most of this documentation has already been distributed and the rest will be available in a few days.

The Preparatory Committee in the 20 formal meetings and seven informal meetings it has held since it was established, considered three fundamental activities: namely the organization of the work of the special session, the organization of the future work of the Committee, and the main documents to be submitted to the eighth special session.

As regards the first, namely the organization of the work of the special session, this Committee will recall that operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B expressly called on the Preparatory Committee, inter alia, to consider the agenda for the special session. Under the heading "Provisional agenda", paragraph 17 contains the relevant proposal containing 12 items. Each and every one of them was considered in depth. I believe I am interpreting the general feeling of the Committee in affirming that this draft agenda, which was the result of intense consultations, adequately covers the action which will face the special session.

As regards paragraph 18, which is a supplement to the previous one, it refers to the special reports requested of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference on the various items before them, and this is a logical consequence of the need to make available to the special session all documentation which will enable it to evolve fruitfully, as is true of regular sessions.

From paragraphs 19 to 29 inclusive we find a set of additional recommendations under the same heading of section IV A. Although all are important, I should like to make a few brief comments on some.

Among the problems which the Committee had to face there was the concrete possibility that because of the changes to be made in this United Nations

(Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina)

Headquarters building, the hall where plenary meetings are held would not be ready in time for the special session. Unanimous concern was caused by this situation, and that explains the recommendation in paragraph 20. Fortunately, at the 54th plenary meeting of the present session the proposal of our Committee was approved and this difficulty consequently overcome.

(Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina)

The recommendation contained in paragraph 21 took into account not only existing precedents in this Organization on the matter but also, and most particularly, the relevant conditions of the person who was then the candidate for the presidency of the General Assembly and who has now acceded to that lofty post through the unanimous vote of its Members. I am, of course, referring to the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Lazar Mojsov, whose friend I am honoured to be.

Paragraph 26 contains the recommendation of the integral application without amendments, of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, adding that "every effort should be made to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on matters of substance will be adopted by consensus". (A/32/41, para. 26) That very procedure was successfully followed in the Preparatory Committee, where all the recommendations that appear in the report were drafted by consensus and in no case did the Chairman find himself compelled to resort to the rules of procedure.

This is proof of the usefulness of the solution suggested, the more so regarding such delicate matters that affect the security and sovereignty of States. But at the same time it means that, having exhausted every resource to arrive at a consensus, the absence of a consensus cannot have a paralysing effect tantamount to a veto, so as to prevent the majority from pronouncing itself on questions of substance.

Of course, if the same conciliatory spirit that prevailed during the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee is demonstrated in the special session there will be no need to have recourse to the rules of procedure, and consensus will continue to demonstrate the advantages of the method proposed.

The recommendation contained in paragraph 27 is another factor that unequivocally demonstrates the importance and significance which delegations attach to the special session. It stipulates the desirability that Member States be represented "at the highest possible level". (Ibid., para. 27)

Beyond any doubt, this is inspired by the conviction that that General Assembly, the first one dedicated exclusively to the question of disarmament in the entire history of the United Nations, must be carried out in a formal context in accordance with the expectations it has aroused and with the impetus that should be given to measures to solve a problem so vital to mankind.

(Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina)

As regards the organization of the Preparatory Committee's future work, paragraphs 30 and 31 of the report are self-explanatory. They contain a realistic plan of work which will enable the Committee to conclude on time the difficult and complex stages it still has to face.

Along this line of thought, I should like to mention finally the third of the items I described as fundamental that were considered by the Preparatory Committee. These are the main documents for the special session.

In Section III and in paragraph 32, we have the details of the documents so far submitted by Member States, which represent valuable contributions for the work that is to be carried out. But it can be assumed that these will not be the only documents. In the period prior to 24 January 1978, the date scheduled for the beginning of our next session, other documents will take shape and be submitted to the Committee. We already know that many delegations are attempting to arrive at common points of view in order to present more comprehensive documents in accordance with the recommendation in paragraph 33, that is, with the following basic elements: introduction or preamble; declaration on disarmament; programme of action; and machinery for disarmament negotiations.

Experienced and perceptive members in the Committee will realize that the Committee still has its most complicated work ahead of it. In so far as possible, our goal will be to prepare a document or consolidated documents which, without distorting individual or group aspirations and positions, will channel the consensus achieved in several subjects and serve to give fresh impetus to disarmament. To reconcile different points of view will be no easy task, but we must exert our utmost endeavours and goodwill to achieve this. On this, to no negligible extent, will depend the success or failure of the special session, which is tantamount to saying the immediate future of the joint undertaking to proceed to a genuine disarmament and to consolidate peace among peoples.

To live up to such a challenge, I have the firmest conviction that the members of the Preparatory Committee and of this First Committee, which must pronounce itself on the report that I have just introduced, will continue to provide the fullest co-operation.

The CHAIRMAN: So far only two delegations have inscribed their names on the list of speakers for tomorrow, and there is no speaker for the afternoon. Therefore, I strongly appeal to members of the Committee to inscribe their names on the list of speakers for tomorrow's meetings as well as for subsequent meetings of the Committee.

Early adjournment of meetings for lack of speakers causes extra expenditure to the United Nations. It also leads to haste in the final stages of the debate. I hope that members will inscribe their names before tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.