



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 34TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CARIAS (Honduras)  
(Vice-Chairman)

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DISARMAMENT ITEMS

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A draft resolution was introduced by:

Mr. Anderson (Australia) - A/C.1/36/L.31

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 39 TO 56, 128 AND 135 (continued)

Mr. MEGALOKONOMOS (Greece) (interpretation from French): I wish to speak on agenda item 39, concerning the second special session devoted to disarmament, as referred to in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.5.

One of the main considerations in dealing with questions of disarmament is that we must at all costs avoid being negative. We all know that the results that have been achieved in the years that have passed since the first special session on disarmament have not lived up to our expectations. At the same time, we know that, if there were only one problem left in the world to be resolved, it would be a problem linked to disarmament: it would be a problem of verification and security. Security is what is most cherished by the entire world and by every country. That must be borne in mind when we speak of disarmament or make any proposals concerning disarmament. Any other approach would lead to proposals that would remain dead letters.

In spite of the difficulties inherent in the disarmament process, we must recognize the value of the appreciable work that has been done, especially in the Committee on Disarmament, in certain areas such as in that of chemical weapons. Awareness of the difficulties is, we believe, one more reason for national delegations to avoid certain repetitions and commonplaces which have frequently marked our work. On every occasion we tend to speak about the evils of armaments and to say what a boon it would be for mankind if the means were found to abolish weapons, avoid a holocaust and prevent a world cataclysm. While no one has any doubt about these great objectives, the problem is what means are to be used to achieve them.

The second special session on disarmament will, we believe, provide an opportunity for us all to try not to repeat ourselves, not to beat on open doors and to be negative. If I might draw a parallel, good medicine is not medicine that sets forth the principles of hygiene or describes diseases but it is that which offers the necessary remedies and practical treatment.

My delegation believes that the second special session devoted to disarmament will give us an opportunity to find new momentum in this field.

(Mr. Megalokonomos, Greece)

Indeed, all possible generalities have already been stated, and now we need practical and feasible proposals.

Between now and the second special session we should like to see some progress being made in bilateral, regional or multilateral negotiations on disarmament questions.

(Mr. Megalokonomos, Greece)

In that context, much will depend on the negotiations which are to commence at the end of this month. The atmosphere prevailing in the special session will have a great deal to do with the general political climate and the degree to which we shall have been able to eliminate distrust and the trend towards rhetorical posturing.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that disarmament can be achieved only through serious and hard-working negotiations, negotiations resulting in specific agreements on measures aimed at limiting and reducing armaments, bearing in mind the principles of parity, equality and balance. This is the only way to build confidence and to ensure trust among all States; ultimately, it is the only way to ensure the survival of our peoples.

In our opinion, the debate which will take place at the second special session should be detailed and should focus on all forms of disarmament and on concrete proposals to ensure their verification. At the same time, all possible efforts should be made to implement the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session. The whole credibility of the disarmament process depends on the implementation of the decisions in the Final Document. Regrettably, too many resolutions have not been acted upon. The fault sometimes lies in the origin of the proposals; there is much too much rhetoric, or too many lofty pronouncements. In other cases, the administrations of the States concerned are to be blamed for what they have or have not done. It is in that direction that our attention should be fixed.

Before concluding this statement, I should like to list a few areas in which my delegation would be gratified to see some decisive progress made during the second special session devoted to disarmament. These areas are, especially, the conclusion of a multilateral treaty on the cessation of nuclear tests, the conclusion of a multilateral treaty on the prohibition of chemical weapons and on their destruction, the creation of an effective régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the adoption of effective measures to limit conventional weapons and forces, and progress towards the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

(Mr. Megalokonomos, Greece)

We shall once again be called upon during the second special session devoted to disarmament to fight with words against weapons and all the power which stems from them and accompanies them. It will be an unequal battle if we are not armed with some sincerity, with our best determination and with the support of our peoples. If we could acquire these additional diplomatic weapons, then the battle might prove to be not so unequal or so desperate.

Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Since this is the first time I have spoken, I should like to join the previous speakers in expressing our sincerest congratulations to the Chairman and to the other officers of the Committee on their election to their important posts, particularly at the present juncture, when international relations are dominated by the spectre of cold war and when there is an intensification of the arms race and two thirds of humanity are suffering from poverty, hunger and disease. I also hope that the Chairman is going to extend to his President our sincere congratulations in full appreciation of the policy of his country, the Federative Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, which is based on peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and of its persistent efforts for the establishment of democracy in international relations - principles which have been consecrated by the late President, Josip Broz Tito, and which will continue to set an example to be followed by all countries which cherish freedom, peace and progress.

In my statement I am going to deal with item 49 of the agenda of our Committee, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace". That Declaration as the Committee knows, was proclaimed in the resolution of the General Assembly 2832 (XXVI). In adopting that resolution, the General Assembly was aware of the great importance of the Indian Ocean and its natural extensions for the international economic situation. The Indian Ocean and its natural extensions are regarded as the main sources for providing the whole world with some vital products, on which the economies of most countries of the world are based. We therefore consider that keeping this area free from military rivalry must represent the necessary course for meeting the basic requirements of humanity.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has since its inception tried to implement the Declaration of the General Assembly, while being fully aware of the sensitivity of the area and the importance of the Declaration and it has recommended to the General Assembly the expansion of its membership.

The General Assembly adopted at its thirty-fourth session resolution 34/80 B to enlarge the membership of the Committee and to involve the permanent members of the Security Council and the main maritime users of the Indian Ocean. The aim of that expansion was that the major Powers which had a military presence in the area should take up their responsibilities for the implementation of the Declaration since they bear the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In spite of the intensive efforts exerted within the Committee, particularly during the two preparatory sessions which have taken place this year in order to reach a consensus on the calling of a Conference on the Indian Ocean this year, no progress, unfortunately, has been achieved. Some countries are still maintaining their inflexible positions, stating that the conditions in the area are not favourable to the calling of the Conference and they sometimes cite the necessity of reaching consensus as a precondition for the calling of the Conference.

In this context, our delegation would like to recall that resolution 2832 (XXVI) clearly indicates that military rivalry among the great Powers is the main cause of the increased tension in the area. Therefore, it is the countries of the area which best know the conditions of that area and the way to maintain their security. It is imperative that the Conference on the Indian Ocean should be held in order to maintain the stability and security of the area. We believe that achieving consensus should not be viewed in isolation from continuous dialogue and exchange of views. In fact we consider that the Conference would be one link in a chain of continuing efforts aimed at the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

The preconditions set by certain countries for the convocation of the Conference are an attempt to impose a fait accompli, i.e., a policy which strives to make the area a field for military rivalry and tries to impose hegemony on the countries of the area. This is firmly rejected by my country, because we consider that this is a threat to the peace and security of the area and hence a threat to the peace and safety of our country, especially as we are engaged in a development process and trying to bring about social and economic changes in Yemen, a country which lived for many years in a state of underdevelopment and reactionary rule.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

We therefore believe that the maintenance of peace and security in the Indian Ocean and its natural extensions is necessary for the achievement of the social aspirations of our country and for the realization of its prosperity. We believe that the escalation of international tension has a direct impact on the Middle East and on the Indian Ocean. We are witnessing aggressive activities in that area. Air, naval and land forces have been stationed in the Indian Ocean and its natural extensions. The base at Diego Garcia has been expanded and rapid-deployment forces have been formed, all within the context of achieving military superiority in the area and of making the area a hotbed of tension and an arena for the military presence of the super-Powers. We believe that the special interests of certain countries in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean are counter to and in defiance of the will of the peoples of the areas. The Zionist entity and its aggressive racist nature is a destabilizing factor in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. The Israeli raid against the peaceful Iraqi nuclear plant shows that that entity was not carrying out a defensive operation but that it was in fact implementing the orders of its masters in order to maintain their interests and establish their hegemony over the countries in the area.

Instead of that entity's being condemned, it has been rewarded with the conclusion of a strategic co-operation agreement in order that it can continue to become an arsenal of aggression against the Arab peoples and the African liberation movement.

Those who believe that it is possible to return to the days of geographical conquest and domination over oceans and seas in order to find new markets and to continue to plunder and exploit the resources of our peoples are misguided for ours is an era of liberation and self-determination. The General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has become the model for the kind of international relations that should exist, based on mutual respect and on the maintenance of security and stability in the Indian Ocean and its natural extensions. It has become an integral factor in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. ANDERSON (Australia): On behalf of the sponsors, I have pleasure in introducing the draft resolution dealing with "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 35/145 B," as contained in document A/C.1/36/L.31. This draft resolution deals with the question of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

In resolution 35/145 B, the General Assembly last year reaffirmed its conviction that a treaty to achieve the prohibition of all nuclear test explosions by all States for all time was a matter of the highest priority. It was also agreed that positive progress by the Committee on Disarmament in the negotiation of a comprehensive test ban treaty capable of attracting the widest possible international support and adherence was vital to the success of efforts to prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and would contribute towards an end to the arms race and the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

Resolution 35/145 B also called upon the three negotiating nuclear-weapon States to extend their best efforts to bring their negotiations to a successful conclusion in time for consideration during the next session of the Committee on Disarmament. Such a result, coupled with their co-operation on this matter in the Committee on Disarmament, would have permitted the Committee to proceed swiftly with the negotiation of a treaty.

We are deeply disappointed that the Committee on Disarmament will not have begun consideration of this question in 1981, and we are concerned that the three negotiating nuclear-weapon States have not resumed their negotiations. It is therefore necessary that this important issue be again addressed by the General Assembly, this time with even greater urgency.

We are looking to a treaty which would lead to the cessation of all nuclear test explosions for all time. Such a treaty would cover explosions for both military and peaceful purposes and would thereby limit and perhaps even stop vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons by the parties to the treaty. Added to this, such a treaty would make the development of new nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing ones more difficult. The implementation of and wide adherence to such a treaty would considerably strengthen the Treaty on the Non-

(Mr. Anderson, Australia)

Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by leading to its fuller implementation and by helping to overcome the objections of those States which see the Non-Proliferation Treaty as discriminating in favour of existing nuclear-weapon States. Certainly the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty would be seen as a major demonstration by the nuclear-weapon States of their intention to work for measures of nuclear disarmament which are fundamental to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

As I mentioned, the conclusion of such a treaty would also contribute to limiting or even preventing horizontal proliferation. In this respect, it is relevant that States not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty could become parties to a comprehensive test ban treaty and thus provide assurances that they would not become nuclear-weapon States.

The effective implementation of a comprehensive test ban treaty is, of course, dependent on effective verification. In this regard, the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Establish an International Seismic Data-Exchange System is of the first importance. We hope that States will continue to co-operate with that Group. We also hope that work can begin in the Committee on Disarmament, as a matter of priority, on the institutional and administrative arrangements necessary for establishing, testing and operating an international seismic monitoring network and effective verification system.

I turn now to the draft resolution before this Committee. The sponsoring delegations have had foremost in their minds the urgent need for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

(Mr. Anderson, Australia)

The draft resolution expresses deep concern that the three negotiating nuclear-weapon States have not resumed their negotiations and calls upon them to exert their best efforts to bring those negotiations to an early successful conclusion. In addition, it invites them to prepare a report on the state of negotiations in good time for submission to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The draft resolution further recognizes the indispensable role of the Committee on Disarmament in achieving a comprehensive test-ban treaty and requests it, as a matter of the highest priority, to take the necessary steps at the beginning of its 1982 session, including the establishment of a working group, to initiate substantive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It further requests the Committee on Disarmament to determine, in the context of its negotiations, the institutional and administrative arrangements necessary for establishing, testing and operating an international seismic monitoring network and effective verification system.

The sponsors of this draft resolution are of the view that the Committee on Disarmament should exert all efforts in order that a draft of such a treaty may be submitted to the General Assembly at the earliest possible date. In order to achieve that, the sponsors urge all members of the Committee to co-operate with it in fulfilling its mandate.

If we are to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons and contribute towards an end to the arms race and the achievement of nuclear disarmament, a comprehensive test ban treaty will be a vital element in action towards those objectives. On behalf of its sponsors I therefore commend this draft resolution to the Committee.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic attaches great importance to the need to conclude an international convention to prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and the destruction of their stocks. We believe that would be an important step towards general and complete disarmament. That problem is particularly acute because of a number of factors.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

Chemical weapons, together with nuclear and bacteriological weapons, are one means of mass destruction. Furthermore, chemical methods of waging war are accessible to a broad range of States, which makes them extremely dangerous. Recent events in this area have further served to emphasize the vital need for chemical weapons to be prohibited. Reactionary and militaristic forces have started large-scale preparations for waging chemical warfare with the aid of a new generation of nerve gases, the so-called binary weapon. Their desire to achieve military superiority at all costs has motivated the ruling circles of some countries to start a new round in the spiralling arms race in this particularly inhuman area.

The sinister plans for the chemical rearmament of the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is not something which is imminent but which is indeed upon us. The militaristic forces are bringing everything to bear in order to convince public opinion in their countries that such a step is necessary, making nebulous references to information about the alleged use of chemical weapons and routine assertions about having to overtake someone in the name of national security as well as using similar ploys. That is by no means a new tactic. Those who are making use of it are faithfully following the instructions of John Foster Dulles, who many years ago stated:

"In order to force a country to shoulder the burden involved in the upkeep of powerful armed forces, it is essential to create an emotional atmosphere which is analogous to a war-time psychosis. It is essential to create the image of some threat from outside."

And the disciples of Dulles are unhesitatingly doing that.

With respect specifically to chemical weapons, as early as 1 November 1974, the Washington Post referred, in its leading article, to:

"... a monopoly which for an entire generation now had been made by special interests in the Pentagon the basis of the policy of the country" - that is, the United States - "on the questions of chemical warfare. This small chemical warfare lobby inside the Pentagon is pretending to see a growing Soviet threat in the nature of aggressive forms of chemical weapons". That quotation from a newspaper which is rather well-informed about Washington

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

affairs clearly shows the source of the fiction which the representative of the United States, unfortunately, did not hesitate to use in his statement in the First Committee on 13 November. In attempting to do everything he could to justify the programme for intensifying the new generation of chemical weapons which is being developed by the United States, he even went so far as to make the hypocritical and cynical statement that:

"Binary weapons are designed specifically to protect the personnel handling them ...". (A/C.1/36/PV.30, p. 28-30)

However, the purpose of that weapon is not to protect military personnel but rather to destroy people on a mass scale. It is a weapon intended for use not so much against armed forces, which are prepared for it and are equipped with the means of defence, but rather against the civilian population. There can be no possible doubt about that.

By whipping up an atmosphere of militaristic psychosis, the reactionary military circles are preparing to give a new fillip to the chemical arms race by preparing for the use of chemical weapons. The danger inherent in such plans is quite obvious. If they were implemented it would represent a serious obstacle to drawing up an international convention to prohibit chemical weapons.

In this connexion, it is particularly timely to consider the appeal to all States which is contained in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.36, "to refrain from production and deployment of new types of chemical weapons, including binary weapons". That appeal reflects the concern of peace-loving forces at the prospects of a new and even more dangerous round in the chemical arms race.

As members know, the Soviet Union, in close co-operation with a number of other States, has put forward a proposal to conclude a convention to prohibit chemical weapons, and that was done as early as the beginning of the 1970s. Since 1972, the Committee on Disarmament has had before it a draft convention on this subject which was presented by the Soviet Union and other States belonging to the socialist community, including the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. That draft envisages the complete prohibition and elimination of all chemical agents in warfare.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

For a number of years now the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic has sponsored a series of draft resolutions in the General Assembly which contain appeals for the immediate and complete prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and the destruction of their stocks. In this connexion, talks are going on, albeit at an intolerably slow pace. However, agreement has not as yet been reached.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

There can be no doubt that problems connected with the full and effective prohibition of chemical weapons are extremely complicated. The drawing up of an international convention, the purpose of which would be to eliminate an entire class of weaponry of mass destruction and which affects one of the main branches of the industry of many countries - the chemical industry - is obviously a task which requires tremendous care and considerable effort. But however complex the prohibition of chemical weapons may be, its discussion and solution is something which has been dragging on for some time. Meanwhile, the danger continues to grow and has taken on new dimensions.

The Soviet Union, as has been stated by its representatives frequently and at various levels, favours the speedy prohibition of chemical weapons and supports active talks to that end, both bilateral and multilateral. Unfortunately, the United States has been reluctant.

In this connexion, it would be very timely for the General Assembly to appeal to the United States and the Soviet Union to resume their talks on this topic and to submit their joint initiative to the Committee on Disarmament. This is precisely the appeal which appears in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.36.

Our delegation also believes it necessary to emphasize that an important factor in the process of achieving the prohibition of chemical weapons is to create a propitious atmosphere for this to be done. And here a considerable part can be played by the positive response of States to the appeal in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.36 not to deploy chemical weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, which, in view of its consistent and fundamental position, has co-sponsored this draft resolution emphasizing the urgent need to prohibit chemical weapons, would voice the hope that a sober and well-considered realistic approach will win the day over purely adventurist and transient concerns, and that a convention will be concluded as soon as possible. Such a convention would indeed be a substantial contribution to restraining the arms race, bringing about genuine disarmament and strengthening international security.

Mr. KONISHI (Japan): As one of the sponsors, my delegation worked intensively with the other delegations of sponsoring countries to try to reflect the various views in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.31, which was introduced by the representative of Australia, Ambassador Anderson.

I should like to take this opportunity to state once again the position of my delegation on the issue of a comprehensive test ban.

As was expressed by Ambassador Okawa's statement on 20 October 1981 in the general debate, my country regards a comprehensive test ban, among other arms control and disarmament measures in the nuclear weapon field, as one of the most effective measures, not only for preventing the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also for preventing the appearance on the scene of additional nuclear-weapon States, thus contributing to the international efforts for the maintenance and strengthening of a non-proliferation régime as represented by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the same time, we have been grappling with the comprehensive test ban problem as a matter of the highest priority in the field of nuclear disarmament because we think it will provide a realistic basis for efforts towards the reduction and eventual complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In other words, a comprehensive test ban would indeed be an important first step in the direction of nuclear disarmament.

From this viewpoint, my delegation is very much concerned about the suspension of the tripartite comprehensive test ban negotiations and the fact that no progress has been made because of this unfortunate situation.

My delegation therefore hopes that the three negotiating countries - the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States - will take into account the wishes of the international community expressed in this draft resolution, resume their negotiations at an early date and exert their best efforts to bring them to an early successful conclusion.

At the same time, my Government strongly hopes that the Committee on Disarmament will set up an ad hoc working group on a comprehensive test ban which would take up such matters as the modalities of the international seismic detection network and the verification system in general, as well as other questions related to a comprehensive test ban, in a manner and to the extent

(Mr. Konishi, Japan)

that its work would supplement the parallel tripartite negotiations. The setting up of such a working group would be meaningful in the sense that it would enable those countries which are not participating in the tripartite negotiations to join in the efforts to achieve a comprehensive test ban - which could be useful in expediting the negotiations and also allow such countries to make their own concrete contributions in the quest for a comprehensive test ban. It was based upon this assessment that the Government of Japan proposed at the Committee on Disarmament, in February of this year, the establishment of such a working group, and I cannot but express my Government's great disappointment that it has still not materialized. Japan strongly hopes that such a working group, with a mandate agreed upon by consensus, including all the nuclear-weapon States, will be set up at the earliest possible date to initiate substantive negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty as a matter of the highest priority at the beginning of the session of the Committee on Disarmament in 1982.

Finally, although it was not reflected in the present draft resolution, my delegation would like to urge once again that all countries refrain from any nuclear explosion tests, including those for peaceful purposes, even in the period prior to conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

Mr. SUMMERHAYES (United Kingdom): On behalf of the 10 member States of the European Community, of which the United Kingdom is the current President, I should like to make some remarks on draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3, which is sponsored by a member of the European Community, Denmark, and which deals with the proposal for a study on conventional disarmament.

This proposal is one which has been before this Committee now for two years. Delegations will, I am sure, be aware that it had also hovered in the wings of our Committee for some time before that, but it was only last year that it was decided that we should move forward on this important item of business and initiate a study of all aspects of the conventional side of disarmament.

(Mr. Summerhayes, United Kingdom)

The long-standing interest of the international community in conventional disarmament was reflected in the Final Document of the first special session. Paragraph 81 in particular states:

"Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. States with the largest military arsenals have a special responsibility in pursuing the process of conventional armaments reductions." (S-10/2, para. 81)

The member States of the European Community have always fully supported work in this field. We know from the experiences of the years since the United Nations was established that millions of people have suffered and died as a result of wars fought entirely with conventional weapons. Modern conventional weapons are of great and growing destructive power and, as we have clearly seen in recent years, they pose a threat to the security of many States around the world. They also account for the vast proportion of global military expenditure.

It is therefore surprising and, in our view, regrettable that among the many studies conducted by the United Nations in the field of disarmament in recent years, none has dealt in depth with the question of how to lower the level of conventional armament and how to integrate measures of disarmament in the conventional field with other aspects of international security, including nuclear disarmament.

Of course, the range of questions which arise when considering conventional disarmament is very complex. It is for this reason that the member States of the European Community consider it useful in the first instance for a study to be conducted on these issues by qualified experts under the supervision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and we therefore welcomed the decision on such a study taken by the General Assembly last year when it adopted resolution 35/156.

We would have liked that study to have begun immediately, so that by the time of the second special session in 1982 the study would have been either completed, or at least well under way. We nevertheless readily accepted the view of some of the Member States that the terms of reference in the study should be discussed in the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 1981 session. We

(Mr. Summerhayes, United Kingdom)

are all aware that the Disarmament Commission did indeed examine the general approach to the study, the structure of the study and its scope during its meeting in May and June this year.

As pointed out by Ambassador Michaelsen of the Danish delegation when he introduced draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3 last week, the member States of the European Community believe that the discussions which the Disarmament Commission held were thorough and useful. They ranged widely, indicating the sometimes very different views of Member States of the United Nations on this issue. Those views are recorded in the verbatim records of the Disarmament Commission and in the working papers submitted. In addition, the Chairman of the Working Group of the Disarmament Commission which dealt with this item, Ambassador Hepburn of the Bahamas, prepared a very useful paper in which he summarized what he saw to be the main trends of opinions in the discussions. The member States of the European Community believe that all these various records, and in particular the paper prepared by Ambassador Hepburn, provide a very good basis on which the study could now begin. As paragraph 21 of the report of the Disarmament Commission indicates, the Commission itself left it to Member States to decide what further action should be taken. We believe that the time has come to take that action.

Last week we heard one delegation express surprise that we should want to push ahead with the study when differing views existed on the parameters for it. The proposition was put forward that those who wished to put emphasis on measures of conventional disarmament would wish to forge a broad consensus of views on such questions. This is indeed the case, but the forging of that broad consensus on the substance of the item is a task for Governments at a later stage in the process. The preparation of a study by qualified experts, appointed of course on a balanced geographical basis, would make a contribution to the policy decisions which have to be taken by Governments by setting out the different aspects of a particular problem. But we should therefore first allow the experts to tell us how they see the situation, taking as their starting point the views already expressed by Member States, and not try to impose upon the experts detailed guidelines on every aspect of their future work. If the attempt had been made to do this on other important studies, such as those on disarmament and development,

(Mr. Summerhayes, United Kingdom)

and on nuclear weapons it is quite likely that neither of those studies would yet have been completed. We do not therefore understand why a more rigid approach to the establishment of a study needs to be taken in the case of conventional disarmament, particularly when such a study would be a complement to the study on nuclear weapons and in no way attempt to challenge that important study.

A good piece of work by experts in this area would help Member States in their further consideration of this important topic. No United Nations study to date has attempted to lay down rigorous guidelines for action by the international community; these are a matter for decision by Member States of the United Nations after deliberation and negotiation, and there is no reason to fear that the study on conventional disarmament would be any different in this respect.

It is therefore the sincere hope of member States of the European Community that there will be no further delay in setting in hand the study on conventional disarmament, on the basis set out in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3.

I should like also to refer briefly to some comments made earlier in our discussions in this Committee on the subject, to the effect that the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3 would seriously detract from the standing of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The member States of the European Community do not share this judgement. On the contrary, as I have already said, we believe that the work carried out this year by the Disarmament Commission on this item will form a valuable contribution to the preparation of the study on conventional disarmament, and thus make clear the value which the General Assembly attaches to the Disarmament Commission. We consider, moreover, that to delay action on the study now and simply to refer the matter back to the Disarmament Commission could in itself detract from the standing of the Commission. Furthermore, there is the practical point that next year, in addition to the other items on which the United Nations Disarmament Commission is currently working, it must also prepare its report to the second special session. Adequate time should be allowed to ensure that this report is a proper reflection of the work of the Commission since its rejuvenation at the first special session. We would therefore hope that this explanation will meet the concerns I mentioned earlier.

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): I also should like to make a few remarks concerning draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3, which is sponsored by Denmark and entitled "Study on conventional disarmament". I am speaking in full support of the statement just made by the current chairman of the Group of Countries of the European Community.

Several delegations have already spoken on the subject. Some have given the draft resolution the credit it deserves in view of the important role which conventional weapons play in the arsenals of States. Others, however, have criticized it because of alleged flaws which in our opinion do not exist. In particular, it has been stated that draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3 would, by requesting the Secretary-General to initiate the work of an expert group to carry out a study on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons, impair the standing of the Disarmament Commission, which dealt with the question of conventional weapons this spring. It is my intention to prove that that is not the case.

I need not dwell upon the importance of the conventional aspect of disarmament in this Committee. All of us are aware that paragraph 45 of the Final Document of the first special session listed conventional weapons as one of the priorities of disarmament negotiations. This question is all the more important as conventional weapons account for a large proportion of over-all military expenditure. Particularly in view of the results of the recently submitted study on the relationship between disarmament and development, it is quite pertinent to look at the opportunities and possibilities of conventional disarmament in a more detailed manner.

Since the Second World War, all wars have been fought with conventional weapons. At the very moment at which I speak a small non-aligned country is being occupied by means of conventional weapons. It is not surprising therefore that many third-world States have during our general debate voiced their concerns about the increased build-up of conventional weapons at this time. In view of those facts the First Committee, and for that matter the multilateral disarmament dialogue as a whole, would clearly suffer a severe loss of credibility if we proved unable to get a study on this important question under way and thereby disrupted the balance of the major items on the agenda of the multilateral disarmament process.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal  
Republic of Germany)

Let me now look more closely at the relationship between the proposed study and the role of the Disarmament Commission. Last year, in its resolution 35/156 A, the General Assembly approved in principle the carrying out of a study on conventional disarmament and agreed that the Disarmament Commission should "at its forthcoming substantive session" work out the general approach to the study, its structure and scope. In fulfilment of that mandate the Commission had a useful exchange of views and as a result of the deliberations some working papers were submitted, in particular two papers prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group on this item, Ambassador Hepburn of the Bahamas, whom we should commend for his efforts.

I feel that, while it is true that no final consensus could be reached on the substantive questions under consideration, the records of the Commission and the working papers just mentioned provide a good basis from which experts could draw in their work on the study. As I have said, a complete consensus could not be achieved on all the issues dealt with in the working papers that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has produced. Yet substantial guidance can be derived from the list of topics contained in those documents. The problems are quite clearly and comprehensively circumscribed. When deciding upon the organization of work and mode of operation, the experts will find this guidance useful. They will also find it sufficient. Certainly a later substantive input into their work by the United Nations Disarmament Commission should not be ruled out. I am aware that some thought is at present being given to how this could be achieved in a rational manner.

At the end of its substantive session the Commission decided "to recommend Member States to give the matter further consideration". I stress this point because on other items on its agenda, for instance item 5, concerning the reduction of military budgets, the Commission took quite different decisions, recommending:

"that the General Assembly, at its thirty-sixth session ... request the Disarmament Commission to continue at its next substantive session the consideration of this agenda item".

(Mr. Wegener, Federal  
Republic of Germany)

If the two texts I have just quoted are compared it becomes obvious that any suggestions aimed at proving that we would take an item away from the United Nations Disarmament Commission and thus infringe upon its importance if we decided to set up the expert group now, are completely without foundation. Not only was the mandate which the General Assembly gave the Disarmament Commission limited to one session, but furthermore it was the Commission itself which, after having dealt with the matter, explicitly handed it back to its member States and thereby to the Assembly so as to give them the initiative for further action. The time for that action has now come.

Last year, in principle, the General Assembly approved the carrying out of the study on conventional weapons. The Disarmament Commission has had fruitful discussions on this matter and subsequently, as I have said, it has handed it back to the Member States. It is now our task to finally agree on the carrying out of the study, and that is precisely what the draft resolution submitted by Denmark is intended to do.

Some remarks have been made alleging that draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3 is incompatible with draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.4, sponsored by Egypt and entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission". Obviously the proponents of this view refer to the request addressed to the Commission in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.4 "to continue consideration of the items included in its agenda at its 1981 session". I should like to point out that the text I have just quoted does not necessarily recommend consideration of all the items which were on the Commission's 1981 agenda, and indeed time constraints may make it advisable to concentrate work on some items only. But even if the Commission should - and I do not see any objection to this - decide to deal once more with the question of the study on conventional disarmament, among others, that would in no way be in contradiction with the by then we hope ongoing work of the expert group. Quite to the contrary it is perfectly conceivable that on the basis of the working papers submitted this year, the Commission may make a further substantive contribution to the work of the group. Certainly the Group of Experts, were it to receive any suggestions by such a distinguished body as the Disarmament Commission, would take them into account in working out the study.

(Mr. Wegener Federal  
Republic of Germany)

I should like to conclude by summing up the arguments which militate in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3. In view of the proportion for which conventional armament accounts in over-all military expenditure, there is an urgent need for action in this field. This action should be prepared for with a study on conventional weapons. Failure to agree on such a study would cast doubt on the seriousness of the disarmament dialogue as a whole. The United Nations Disarmament Commission has received a one-year mandate only to work out a general approach to such a study. It has been partly successful and has recommended that Member States give the matter further consideration. We now have to take a decision as to whether we want to act, taking into account the results achieved during the session of the Commission, or whether we want to delay action, thus making the United Nations Disarmament Commission a stumbling block rather than a body that promotes work in the disarmament field. As the Commission has a free hand as regards the adoption of its agenda and there is no contradiction in parallel work by the expert group and the Disarmament Commission on this matter, draft resolutions L.3 and L.4 are perfectly compatible with each other.

Bearing those reasons in mind I should like to urge every delegation to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.3.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on the Secretary of the Committee for an announcement concerning the co-sponsors of the draft resolutions,

Mr. RATHORE (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to announce that the following countries have become sponsors of the following draft resolutions: for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.1, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Viet Nam and Congo; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.2, Angola; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.5, Sierra Leone; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.7, Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.9, Belgium; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.11, Romania and Sierra Leone; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.12, Niger and Congo; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.13, Angola and Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.14, Romania; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.15, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mozambique, Qatar, Sierra Leone and Rwanda; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.16, Congo, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Rwanda; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.19, Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.20, Guinea; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.21, Japan, Ivory Coast, Qatar and Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.22, Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.23, Norway; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.26, Qatar and Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.27, Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/26/L.28, Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.29, Qatar, Niger and Guinea; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.30, Chad and Mauritania; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.31, Denmark, Ireland and Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.33, Mongolia and Mozambique; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.35, Ireland and Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.37, Norway and Singapore; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.38, Niger; for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.43, Algeria and Egypt; and for draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.44, Ivory Coast.

Mr. ZAIMI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): I should like to announce that the delegation of Morocco wishes to be considered a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.16.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.