

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**
THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION
*Official Records**



FIRST COMMITTEE
27th meeting
held on
Friday, 5 November 1982
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

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VERBATIM RECORD OF ~~THE~~ 27TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GBEHO (Ghana)
later: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)
(Vice-Chairman)

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DISARMAMENT ITEMS

AGENDA ITEMS 39 TO 57, 133, 136, 138 AND 139 (continued)

General debate,

Statements were made by:

Mr. Mufareh (Yemen)
Mr. Garcia Robles (Mexico)
Mr. Carasales (Argentina)
Mr. Ott (German Democratic Republic)
Mr. Hlaing (Burma)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/37/PV.27
12 November 1982

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 39 to 57, 133, 136, 138 and 139 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MUFAREH (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation is happy to be able to convey our most sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We are convinced that your competence in the political field will enable you to perform successfully the tasks entrusted to our Committee, in spite of the world-wide crisis at the present time. We would also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

Similarly, my delegation would like to express our best wishes to Mr. Garcia Robles, the representative of Mexico, and Mrs. Alva Myrdal, who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in appreciation of their constructive work in the field of disarmament. Their devotion to the cause of humanity, to which they have continuously given their best efforts over so many years, is truly laudable.

Without any doubt, promoting progress in the field of disarmament, the principle task entrusted to this Committee for some years now, is a difficult one, because it is a matter of concern to the international community as a whole and relates to the preservation of humanity. It would appear, however, that the atmosphere in which this Committee is working is hardly encouraging, given present-day circumstances, and the deterioration of international relations, particularly between the major nuclear Powers. This clearly has repercussions on disarmament negotiations. Although bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on medium-range nuclear weapons are in progress and have been since November 1981, and negotiations on strategic nuclear weapons began in June 1982, the results show no concrete progress.

(Mr. Mufareh, Yemen)

Therefore, the international community feels that world peace and security is in greater jeopardy today than ever before. The rise in expenditures for the production of new and more destructive weapons than those existing in present arsenals, which in themselves are enough to destroy the whole world, confirm this danger and bring it closer to reality. Military expenditures have risen drastically. They have exceeded \$5 billion a year and continue to increase.

The conclusion to be drawn from the second special session on disarmament, and the proposals to strengthen the efforts of the United Nations in the realm of disarmament by the creation of a disarmament agency which would monitor the implementation of concluded agreements have not aroused any great interest or any serious consideration because the countries concerned have shown no interest in the opinions of non-nuclear Powers.

(Mr. Mufareh, Yemen)

Those countries are continuing to carry out their programmes of weapon development, and the statements they make here in this Committee are merely an attempt to throw dust in our eyes. The work of this Committee has become a matter of mere routine; that is shown by the fate which befell the second special session devoted to disarmament and by the fact that the resolutions which have been adopted have remained dead letters.

It must be recognized that it is impossible to deal with the question of disarmament without taking into account the needs of international security, for international security is one of the major reasons for the establishment of the United Nations; specifically, the Charter makes provision for the maintenance of international peace and security, the strengthening of friendly relations among States, and co-operation among States to solve international economic, cultural, social and humanitarian questions. The tension which exists at present in several regions of the world should be dispelled by peaceful means; recourse to war as a normal means of settling conflict is unacceptable if we want to maintain the prestige of our international Organization.

This year we have seen bloody conflicts in various parts of the world. The Secretary-General has drawn our attention to the danger this entails and has indicated in his report that our most urgent goal is to reconstruct the Charter concept of collective action for peace and security so as to render the United Nations more capable of carrying out its primary function. Governments must respect their commitments under the Charter and take the measures necessary to ensure collective security. Collective measures must also be taken to eliminate all factors that threaten peace or lead to aggression.

But how can our Organization, whose Charter provides for a system of collective security, ensure international security? The United Nations made the mistake of failing to take the measures necessary to establish an international force that would make it possible to implement the resolutions of the Security Council?

Certain major Powers are not content with arming themselves. They are giving military assistance to certain countries they want to protect. Thus, other neighbouring countries feel threatened and embark in their turn on an uncontrolled

arms race at the expense of their economic and social development programmes. The result of all this is poverty and underdevelopment.

For many years now our Arab region has been faced with a threat to its security and its existence because of Israel's continued aggression against its territories and Israel's annexation of some of those territories. The existence of the racist Zionist régime, founded on domination and expansion, and the fact that this régime relies on its armed might, impel the countries of our region to participate in the arms race, which limits the chances for peace in the region. One of the greatest obstacles to the denuclearization of the Middle East region is Israel's activities in the nuclear field. Israel has acquired a nuclear capacity over the last few years; what will happen if Israel decides to use nuclear weapons, or even threatens to use them?

What would protect the Arab countries faced with such a decision? We may well ask, in view of Israel's attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which was built for peaceful purposes, as has been confirmed by a report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In spite of these facts, the United Nations has taken no enforcement measures against Israel to prevent it from repeating its aggression and to put an end to its cynicism and criminal behaviour. We know that Israel disregards all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations. That disregard has been manifested in an aggression which went as far as indiscriminate annihilation, as demonstrated by the events in Lebanon. In the full view of the whole world, Israel invaded a Member State of the international community. The Israeli army penetrated Lebanese territory, using the most destructive weapons, weapons whose use is internationally prohibited, in an attempt to wipe out the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, with the support of the United States, which provided the weapons of mass destruction employed.

Not content with sowing death and panic in Lebanon, Israel prepared the way for massacres which were loudly condemned by the whole of mankind, the massacres which took place in the Palestinian camps. Israel believed that in this way it would prevent the Palestinian people from recovering its legitimate

rights and its homeland, and from creating its own independent State under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

My country, which is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, made clear its position with regard to disarmament and the arms race in the statement made by its Foreign Minister in the General Assembly on 8 October 1982.

(Mr. Mufareh, Yemen)

I should like to quote from his statement:

"The super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, are called upon to renew their talks for limiting nuclear weapons and to eliminate all obstacles that are impeding the pursuit of these negotiations. Complete disarmament and the cessation of the nuclear arms race have become two vital prerequisites for all the peoples of the world that are looking forward to the day when this feverish race towards destructive arms will come to an end so that mankind may feel secure about its existence and future and so that the efforts and money wasted on the manufacture, purchase, and stockpiling of weapons can be diverted to solving the crushing economic crisis from which many peoples of the world are suffering, and to meeting the material and spiritual needs of men and women everywhere. The special session devoted to disarmament was a golden opportunity to hear all the opinions and concepts on which future negotiations should be based. For us, this is an essential and noble objective.

"We must exert maximum efforts to promote peace everywhere in the world, for there is nothing more precious and more important to all the peoples than peace." (A/37/PV.24, pp. 43-45)

We hope to see the day when an agreement will be reached, declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. We are against any military presence in that region or the creation of military bases in the Indian Ocean, because the security of that area is the responsibility of the countries of that region. We support all efforts made to convene a conference on the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, to eliminate tension so that peace and stability may prevail there.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Ambassador of Mexico, Mr. Garcia Robles, whose statement, I have been informed, will contain an outline of a forthcoming draft resolution.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish):

As those who attended the inaugural meeting this year of the debate in the First Committee held on 18 October last may remember, in the course of my intervention I took the liberty of recalling that the General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to disarmament, adopted by consensus a Declaration which forms part of the Final Document wherein, inter alia, it proclaimed that:

"In accordance with the Charter, the United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. In order effectively to discharge this role and facilitate and encourage all measures in this field, the United Nations should be kept appropriately informed of all steps in this field, whether unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral, without prejudice to the progress of negotiations." (resolution S-10/2, para. 27)

In that same intervention I also recalled that at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, Member States reiterated their solemn undertaking to comply with the 1978 Final Document, the validity of which was unanimously and categorically reaffirmed. These words are based on the Concluding Document of the second special session devoted to disarmament.

Bearing in mind what I stated at the time and which I have just recalled, and the fact that to date the Assembly has received no authentically official information of the kind we requested therein the most courteous terms - because of this, my delegation, together with a few other delegations, thought that it might be desirable to submit a draft resolution on the subject. I hope to be able to hand that draft to the Secretariat this afternoon for reproduction and in order that it may be distributed in the form of a document next Monday, 8 November. The reason why we believe it is desirable to distribute it no later than that date is clear, given the content of the two operative parts of that draft resolution.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

In the first of those paragraphs, the United States of America and the Soviet Union will be urged, in compliance with the provisions of the Final Document to which I have referred, to transmit to the General Assembly no later than 22 November 1982 official and authentic information concerning the proposals that they may have submitted respectively, as well as about the scope and meaning they give to such proposals in the talks relating to medium-range nuclear weapons, which began in Geneva on 30 November 1981 and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) which have also been taking place there since 29 June 1982.

In the light of the content of the reports that may be received from those two States - and this is what will appear in the second operative paragraph of the draft resolution - the General Assembly will take a decision on the treatment it feels would be most desirable to give to those two reports.

To mention possible hypotheses as to that treatment, I would say that the General Assembly might decide that it is desirable this year to adopt a resolution of the same kind as many of the resolutions it has adopted in the past in connection with the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

It may also decide, if it sees fit, to refer those reports to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva - which is, after all, the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament - so that that Committee may be in a better position to discharge its functions, with a full knowledge of the situation and of what is being done in the field of disarmament outside the Committee. Of course, this will be open to decision by the General Assembly, since the second paragraph of the resolution will state only what I have just said - in other words, that the Assembly will take the decision or decisions that it deems fit in the light of the reports that it may receive from the two States to which I referred.

It is necessary to set a date, a date in the not too distant future, for the receipt of those reports, so that the Assembly may take a decision, and the date that we have set is 22 November. Therefore, this Committee must adopt a draft resolution for transmission to the plenary session of the General Assembly, preferably not later than next Wednesday. I think that that is not only feasible but easy, given the clear content of this concise resolution. I hope that the President of the General Assembly will find an appropriate moment in one of next week's plenary meetings - either Thursday or Friday - for the adoption of the resolution, so that the two States to which the request is addressed may have a full week, from 15 to 22 November, to prepare the reports requested of them. When the time comes, my delegation will make an express request to the President on the subject.

That is all that I have to say. I have taken advantage of this opportunity to give these explanations of the draft resolution because, to my regret, I shall be absent from New York next week.

Mr. CARASALES (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): In my statement today I shall refer to the item relating to the report of the Committee on Disarmament, document A/37/27.

I need hardly re-emphasize the importance of the task of the Committee on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to quote the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The deliberative bodies of the United Nations - the Disarmament Commission, this First Committee, and the General Assembly at its special sessions, when they take place, - unquestionably have a fundamental role to play in this field. The whole complex range of questions and items which may be encompassed within the term "disarmament" are discussed and considered, virtually without exception, in the above-mentioned forums, which produce resolutions and measures that, whatever their intrinsic merit, in general promote progress in disarmament. The views of the many non-governmental organizations that, increasingly and with a wider scope, deal with these questions are publicized and disseminated during those meetings, and they represent a thoughtful and welcome contribution to the consideration of items of concern to the whole world.

But, however important discussions and recommendations, in those forums and in others, may be, it is undoubtedly the treaties and agreements resulting from the negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva that have a practical effect and constitute concrete steps towards disarmament. What is or is not achieved there is the key to the state of disarmament and makes it possible to judge it - all of this, of course, without disregarding the overriding importance of the bilateral negotiations which are also held in Geneva and which, we firmly believe, should not be carried out in an atmosphere of complete secrecy. The Committee on Disarmament should periodically receive official information from the bilateral negotiators, information which, while preserving the necessary confidence, will enable the Committee on Disarmament to do its work with some knowledge of what is going on in respect of questions so closely connected with its own area of competence.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

It is paradoxical that the Committee on Disarmament, as the representative body of the international community, should have to consider the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, the subject at the top of its agenda, in complete ignorance of what the two super-Powers are discussing in that respect only a short distance from where it meets, and therefore have to base itself on press reports, which are, at best, incomplete and fragmentary.

No one questions the fact that the leading Powers of the two great military alliances bear a special responsibility in the matter of nuclear disarmament, but that responsibility is not theirs exclusively. The least to which the international community is entitled is to know the true essence of what is happening behind closed doors. It is to be hoped that a way will be found for that basic information to be provided without detriment to the necessary security in this delicate field.

In this connection, we have just listened with keen interest to the statement of the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Garcia Robles, and his announcement on the submission of a draft resolution aimed precisely at achieving the objectives that I have just outlined - that is, obtaining some basic information about what is going on in the bilateral negotiations in Geneva.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

Over and above what may be happening at the bilateral level - and of course it is to be hoped that concrete and positive events are taking place -- the attention of this Assembly should, as is only logical, be focused on the activities of the multilateral negotiating body, the Committee on Disarmament.

In a year that has been described as particularly unfortunate in the field of disarmament, the work of the Disarmament Committee could be no exception. That is not because the Committee has failed as a negotiating body. The fact is that the very negative situation that prevails in the field of disarmament has left the Committee very little to negotiate.

Only in the field of chemical weapons are real negotiations taking place, and such negotiations should be the general feature of the activities of the Committee on Disarmament. Unfortunately, what should be the rule is barely the exception.

On the various questions to be embodied in a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons there are divergent positions, and there is still much to be done to bring positions closer. I shall not on this occasion enter into an analysis of the various positions, although I cannot fail to say that to the delegation of Argentina it is still incomprehensible that there should be reluctance to include the use of chemical weapons among the prohibitions to be covered by the convention. Many other delegations share that point of view.

But over and above the preferences a country may have for any of the positions under discussion, we must recognize that the Committee on Disarmament is fully carrying out its functions in respect of this question, and it is to be hoped that the day is not far off when it may satisfactorily conclude its work and submit for consideration by Member States a draft treaty on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which will be its most worthy achievement and will meet a need on which the most varied speakers of the international community have spoken out.

During 1982 considerable progress has been made in the elaboration of the various elements of that draft convention, and that gives us a reason for satisfaction - of which there are so few - and at the same time represents an incentive to intensify efforts in our quest for the successful conclusion of an adequate international instrument.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

In the case of radiological weapons the picture is not so favourable. Last year we appeared to be close to the formulation of a draft convention, but the emergence of a new aspect of the question - attacks upon nuclear installations - introduced an additional element that had to be considered and resolved, and so far we have not been able to find a solution that would meet the wishes of all delegations. Approaches remain incompatible, and it will be necessary to continue our efforts in search of acceptable formulas.

As regards the remaining agenda items of the Committee on Disarmament, there is very little progress to report. A treaty on the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests is a priority objective achievement of which appears to have become more remote. For one of the nuclear-weapon Powers it has become a distant goal having no priority and subject to a whole series of requirements difficult of compliance with which makes it almost certain that it can hardly be reached in the near future.

It is true that the Committee on Disarmament has at long last established a working group to deal with this subject, but its mandate is so limited that the possibility of significant progress is very remote. It may be worthwhile to recall that that very limited mandate was not the one preferred by the overwhelming majority of the members of the Committee on Disarmament but rather the only mandate agreeable to the two nuclear Powers, which had until then blocked any attempt to set up a working group.

Despite that very modest mandate, which to some extent guarantees near-stagnation or in any event very slow progress in the discussion of this item, two nuclear-weapon States have declined - temporarily, it is to be hoped - to participate in its work. If to that we add the attitude of two other nuclear-weapon States that have in past years been protagonists in the trilateral negotiations on this same question, we have no alternative but to acknowledge that a question that is regarded as indispensable to any attempt to halt the arms race, a problem in respect of which it may be said that with very rare exceptions there is true consensus in the international community, appears to be more remote and distant than ever as we come to the end of 1982.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

When there is a pronouncement on the subject as categorical as that in paragraph 51 of the Final Document, the text of which I need not recall because it is far too well known, and when almost a decade ago the Secretary-General of the United Nations asserted that in his view there were no technical difficulties preventing satisfactory verification of a possible agreement on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the present situation with respect to this item provides very eloquent testimony of the present state of affairs in the field of nuclear disarmament.

At the same time it may be worthwhile now to recall that the possibility of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the realization to that effect of nuclear engineering projects must be preserved and allowed.

With respect to the cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament, it is still impossible to undertake concrete negotiations. That has been true of the Committee of Disarmament since it was set up. The refusal of a certain group of countries to deal with this question in a working group has not changed, and there is no hope that it will change in the near future.

I need hardly recall what happened with the comprehensive programme of disarmament at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The differences of approach in the Committee not only could not be reconciled at the special session but in certain respects became aggravated. Next year the Committee on Disarmament is to resume consideration of this item. There is nothing to lead us to believe that there will be a substantial change in the situation.

The Working Group on Negative Security Assurances has been in deadlock for a long time now, and that deadlock cannot be broken because there have been no significant changes in the policies of the nuclear Powers.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

I venture to state that the confidence that the non-nuclear-weapon States might have had concerning unilateral declarations of this kind - and it was never very great - was certainly not strengthened when one of the countries that should provide such guarantees stated at the recent special session of the General Assembly, through its own Head of Government, that that kind of unilateral declaration was not trustworthy in the midst of the tensions of a war.

In 1982 the Committee on Disarmament took up a new item, in conformity with a request by the General Assembly: the prevention of an arms race in outer space. No one doubts that outer space has already been militarized, and my country has unfortunately suffered the consequences of the military use of that environment by means of satellites. The possibility that this process might be continued and intensified until it reaches irreversible levels is obvious and undeniable. Reports that appeared in the press a few weeks ago give a clear idea of what might be expected in that environment in the coming years.

It is perhaps already too late to stop this race, but in any event any efforts to that end should begin immediately. Otherwise it will undoubtedly be too late. Despite this view, from which no one can dissent, the eternal obstructionism in the Committee on Disarmament has also been witnessed with regard to this item.

Confronted with this panorama which I have briefly described and which is no novelty for the members of this Committee, one can readily understand the frustration and the disappointment of many of those who take part in the work of the Committee on Disarmament and all those who follow its work in the hope that from it there will emerge significant agreements which will, step by step, weapon by weapon, environment by environment, dispel the justified fears of mankind for its own survival.

It appears that in the Committee on Disarmament there is a majority of States desirous of making every possible effort to advance towards real and specific disarmament measures and ready to explore every course and

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

to deal with every subject, however difficult or complex. At the same time, there is a minority of States that customarily refuses to engage in specific negotiations, in accordance with the legal mandate of the Committee on Disarmament, on a sizeable part of the questions constituting the whole spectrum of fundamental disarmament questions, preferring rather to maintain discussions at the deliberative level, something which in the last analysis merely reproduces the work of existing deliberative bodies such as the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission.

I am by no means saying that all the words of those who always speak out in favour of open and broad negotiations on any disarmament question are at all times and on every occasion sincere, disinterested or inspired by altruistic motives. Nor can it be said that the arguments of those who object to dealing with a subject are always unreasonable or always inspired by warlike motives or that those who put them forward are not prompted by sincere desires for the achievement of progress in the field of disarmament.

It is well known that disarmament is a complicated matter and that the balance between security and disarmament is never simple or mathematical, but the least one can aspire to is that a will to negotiate should always be present. It should not always be said that the time is inopportune or premature or that the situation is not ripe or that it is too complex or that the international circumstances are not propitious for beginning negotiations on the most important items. The negotiations may be slow and difficult - experience will tell - but at least they should begin somewhere, and then we shall see the sincerity of the parties. The international community cannot demand that the negotiations necessarily be successful but it is entitled to have the negotiations carried out, without indefinite postponements, when there is awareness that we are involved in a race against time.

The Committee on Disarmament has been in existence for almost four years. We still have not seen the first agreement or convention resulting from its work. The delegations and the Secretariat have not spared time or energy. On the contrary, the number of meetings and the volume of documents continue to increase. We cannot blame the Committee on Disarmament as a collective body, or its individual representatives, for inactivity or reluctance to discuss the most varied items. Efforts in every direction have certainly not been lacking. Precisely for that reason, the meagreness of the results of its work is disappointing. In 1983 it will be faced with another year of activities. There will be at least six months of daily meetings and perhaps more if certain proposals are brought to fruition. The picture at the present time does not give much ground for optimism; but, on the other hand, we have no alternative but to pursue the efforts with renewed energy, to attempt again and again to carry out productive negotiations, and not to be discouraged even though negative approaches may be preponderant.

What is at stake is far too important to cease the quest for solutions and realities. Disappointment and disinterest are never justified - less so in matters of this nature. The positions of Governments may change, and what appeared impossible at one point in time may yet become feasible later. This General Assembly is in a position to reaffirm its support for the work of the Committee on Disarmament, to reiterate the guidelines and positions that the Committee should take into account and to call again for the realization of specific negotiations on the items on its agenda and others that may be added, such as the prevention of nuclear war, a fundamental question of our time.

The Committee on Disarmament continues to be a body that has infinite possibilities and is capable of producing important and positive results, provided that there is evidence of the indispensable political will on the part of Governments. It is obvious that this political will is frequently absent, but the need for it is also obvious. To affirm it once more is no doubt redundant, but in any event it is an inescapable reality that we must confront and overcome. There is no other alternative.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): In connection with the consideration of agenda item 54, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic would like to present a few more ideas and suggestions. As early as 27 October my delegation advocated in this Committee the speedy conclusion of an agreement on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. Our discussion has shown that our view is shared by the overwhelming majority of delegations.

This year, the Working Group on chemical weapons of the Committee on Disarmament has activated its work on the basis of a new mandate. This was largely the result of the submission by the USSR at the second special session devoted to disarmament of the basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. At the same time, however, one cannot close one's eyes to the endeavours of one side that seeks to obstruct and ultimately delay the negotiations by raising again and again new questions not necessarily related to the subject-matter of the convention. Obviously, the aim is to keep a free hand for an extension and qualitative renewal of the chemical weapons potential of the United States envisaged for the coming years. There is talk of United States plans to spend \$6 billion to \$10 billion for this purpose over the next five years. There is a considerable contradiction between these plans and activities on the one hand and the declared readiness to negotiate on the other. Regrettably, the statement made by the United States representative on 2 November has furnished no indication that that country would abandon those plans in the interest of a ban on chemical weapons. The core of those programmes is the introduction of a new generation of chemical weapons, especially the binary weapon.

It would certainly have been more conducive to the constructive work of this Committee and to the solution of the problems before us if the delegation of the United States had approached these and other questions with the seriousness they deserve. Instead, all along we have heard its representatives voice slanders and attacks against other States, including the German Democratic Republic. A new example is the statement of the United States delegation yesterday. The dignity of this Committee and the important substantive work we are called upon to do together forbids us to engage in that kind of dispute. I therefore reject the slanderous attacks made against my country and should like to confine myself to stating the following.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Firstly, the powerful peace movements in Western countries have not been created from outside. They have come into being as a response to the course of preparation for war pursued in particular by the United States Administration. One factor triggering off these movements was the fact that aggressive nuclear war doctrines like that of a limited nuclear war and armament programmes in the field of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, became known.

Secondly, it is clear proof of the correctness and viability of the decisions of the United Nations if the peace movements uphold demands which are identical with those decisions. They must also be a guideline for the United Nations Disarmament Campaign. It does not speak for commitment to a free exchange of views that the United States authorities denied visas to representatives of non-governmental organizations who wanted to travel to New York on the occasion of the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is no secret that this measure even led to official protests.

Thirdly, there have been numerous attempts to launch subversive activities by misusing the peoples' desire for peace. Suffice it to recall the conference held in Washington on 19 October, where measures to implement the crusade against socialism and social progress were discussed and adopted. Our citizens are well informed about that.

Fourthly, all along we have witnessed efforts to teach us democracy. So, the question arises: why, then, is the will of the people, including the will of a large majority of the American nation, not respected and urgent measures to reduce the threat of nuclear war, including a freeze on nuclear arms, not adopted?

Fifthly, as far as the German Democratic Republic is concerned, its Government and people are unanimous in the endeavour to make peace more secure. We have learned the lessons of history. The German raison d'état of the German Democratic Republic was and remains: never again must war start from German soil. Slanders cannot divert our attention from the basic question of mankind. Therefore, the German Democratic Republic, like the overwhelming majority of States, advocates concrete measures in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The danger for mankind emanating from chemical weapons is being increased to a particular degree by the fact that such weapons are stationed in foreign countries and are to be deployed there to an increasing extent. Another inevitable source of concern is represented by plans aimed at stationing those new chemical weapons, as is said, "if possible, right near the future battlefield". For that purpose, new stocks of chemical weapons are to be set up in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization States of Central and Western Europe. It is well known that already huge stockpiles of chemical weapons have been accumulated in those countries. These stockpiles in themselves constitute a growing threat to the people there and to their environment, not to mention the consequences of their possible use.

The plans for the further deployment of chemical weapons on foreign territories cover not only Europe; they also have in view other regions of the world. The so-called Rapid Deployment Force of the United States, for example, is being prepared for the use of such weapons. Such a policy not only places a strain on ongoing negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons, but above all increases the level of military confrontation and heightens the danger of chemical warfare.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic wishes to point in particular to the fact that a new round of the chemical arms race will lead to a further spread of those dangerous new weapons of mass destruction.

All this underlines the urgency of halting the chemical arms race and of concluding a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. All opportunities should be used to promote this process by collateral measures.

The German Democratic Republic therefore suggests at the thirty-seventh session that the United Nations General Assembly should call for the establishment of zones free from chemical weapons. The General Assembly should appeal to all States to consider and to support this proposal. My delegation will submit a relevant draft resolution.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

This proposal of the German Democratic Republic takes account of the views and positions of many States. In the debate in this Committee a number of delegations have already stressed the need to halt the further deployment of such weapons in other States. In this connection, it has also been demanded that States having no chemical weapons should enter into corresponding agreements. The initiative of the German Democratic Republic also takes into account the proposal, contained in the report of the Palme Commission, to establish a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe, beginning with Central Europe.

And last but not least, the proposal of the German Democratic Republic is in line with the views and demands of many outstanding individuals and non-governmental organizations. It is inspired by the determination of broad sections of the populations of many States not to allow the stationing of chemical weapons on their territories.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic wishes to express the hope that the proposal to establish chemical-weapon-free zones will find a positive response and meet with agreement. In this way, conditions for a speedy conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons could be considerably improved, a goal to which all delegations present here have pledged their support.

Mr. HLAING (Burma): In speaking for the first time in this Committee, permit me to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other officers of the Committee, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, the warm congratulations of the delegation of Burma on your unanimous election. We are confident that with such wise and experienced guidance, the Committee will be able to tackle all the tasks assigned to it expeditiously and fruitfully.

We also wish to pay a tribute to Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico and, through the Swedish delegation here, to Mrs. Alva Myrdal, the recipients of the 1982 Nobel Peace Prize, an honour which they fully deserved. The international distinction thus conferred upon them is a measure of the great contributions they have made in the cause of disarmament and world peace, and in which we rejoice.

The quest for disarmament and international security will continue to demand the most serious and urgent attention from the world Organization and given added significance and import to the work of this Committee. The critical world situation of uncertainty and anxiety that now exists in the face of terrifying nuclear armaments and the militantly hard-line pronouncements which emanate from the leading nuclear Powers have worsened the prospects of preventing a nuclear war and have brought about growing concern that the outbreak of such a war is an impending threat.

Strategic doctrines no longer proceed from the idea of preventing or avoiding a nuclear war but are beginning to be based on the idea of waging or "winning" such a war. There is no doubt that the world is today enmeshed in coils of its own creation. It has not yet found the final method by which man's achievements in the field of science and technology could be utilized exclusively for betterment and not be permitted to pose the threat of complete annihilation. Defying both logic and purpose, the world has become the slave of its own creativity.

Of late, fears of the consequences of nuclear war have led to a groundswell of anti-nuclear demonstrations on the national and international level and have become the subject of wide-scale action by concerned personalities and organizations

the world over. We agree with those who hold that this constant pressure exerted by world public opinion should not be underrated. It is imperative that an early agreement be reached to halt the arms race and to embark upon the process of disarmament - the life and death issue of our times for all nations, large or small. Many are aware of this fact; the irony is that we have so far failed to translate that awareness into action - a failure that could ultimately lead to universal disaster. Prompted by this concern, we feel that surely it would not be asking too much to urge the two leading nuclear Powers to co-operate and to halt the nuclear arms race as a matter of urgency. We would urge them to re-examine their relationship and their legitimate interests and commitments and to determine to what extent they can co-operate in the maintenance of international peace and security, rather than persisting in fruitless and costly confrontation.

While the effective responsibility for disarmament and international security may yet continue to rest very largely with the two leading nuclear Powers, in co-operation or in competition or in some ambiguous combination of the two, it is becoming increasingly clear that it is not up to those two Powers alone to bring about, by peaceful means, lasting settlements of international conflicts that lead to a breach of the peace and thus imperil the security of all. While agreement between the leading nuclear Powers on strategic arms is an essential prerequisite for an advance in the entire field of arms control and reduction, other measures require the broader co-operation of the world community of nations, since significant progress towards general and complete disarmament calls for universal application of an arms control system. Disarmament is a concern shared by all nations and is a matter which requires our collective understanding and co-operation in finding the way to a solution.

The lack of tangible results from the recent second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament reminds us that the principle of equality between Members of the United Nations and the concept of multilateral efforts in disarmament

(Mr. Hlaing, Burma)

negotiations have not yet found ready acceptance. The experience of the second special session has shown how firmly questions of disarmament are anchored in the relationship between the leading nuclear Powers and that the United Nations is unable to render a contribution of its own towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control so long as these Powers are unwilling to concede to it the role that the world Organization was intended to perform under the terms of the Charter. As the Secretary-General stated in his annual report:

"Despite present difficulties, it is imperative for the United Nations to dispel that sense of insecurity through joint and agreed action in the field of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament." (A/37/1, p.4)

A view of world affairs that is based on a bipolar balance of power affords too narrow a perspective for comprehending the sweep of history and the forces which have shaped and will continue to shape international political behaviour in our age. The consideration of relations between States would in our view be more meaningful if the focus of attention were not merely on power but also on the sources and well-springs of the values and goals which today unite or divide nations.

Looking dispassionately and objectively at the present world situation, we are increasingly led to believe that mankind has arrived at a crossroads of history, where it must choose between drifting along the same old path or taking a new turn - proceeding, by conscious action and with a sense of purpose and direction, towards a more promising and orderly world. While we would be the last to hold the view that the beginning of the end of the human race is near at hand, we nevertheless consider that the moment of decision is fast approaching. Unless we, the nations of the world, choose the right path and take timely steps to avert the dangers that lie ahead, we may find ourselves being swept inexorably towards disaster by forces which we ourselves have created but which we, through lack of vision, can no longer shape or control.

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(Mr. Hlaing, Burma)

In short, we consider that it is time to heed the warning words of our Secretary-General. We take this opportunity to compliment the Secretary-General on his annual report, contained in document A/37/1, and we concur with his view that it is now a relevant and appropriate time to reappraise the status of the United Nations, whose capacity to act in support of the purposes of the Charter has undergone serious erosion.

(Mr. Hlaing, Burma)

The Organization was founded on the assumption that the war-time coalition of the victorious great Powers would continue to remain united, with the United Nations as the instrument through which these Powers would strive in mutual effort to ensure world peace and contribute to a system of universal collective security. So far this assumption has proved illusory.

At the same time, Member States of the United Nations were committed to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations and treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained. Yet the United Nations system of peace and security, which envisages the collective enforcement of the rules of international law, has never had much of a chance to operate. The result has been that the basic purpose of the world Organization to maintain international peace and security through effective collective measures remains largely unimplemented. In these circumstances it would be easy and tempting to become cynical about the United Nations. To correct the situation calls for the spirit of true internationalism that is related to the principles and purposes of the Charter, not the false internationalism motivated by notions of hegemony and domination.

The yawning gap between existing realities and the promises of the Charter cannot on occasion but make all of us wonder where we are heading and whether there is not some other way out of our dilemma. But calm reflection can only bring us back to the same conclusion, that there is no other way but to seek reassurance in a strengthened United Nations, and with renewed attention to the fundamental importance of the Security Council as the primary instrument for international peace and security, as it was originally intended to be.

What has sometimes been obscured in the nuances of international politics is that the United Nations was founded on a commitment and a hope -- commitment to the maintenance of peace between nations, and hope that the essential community of aspirations, even between States which differ in their political, social and economic structure, will strengthen that commitment through mutual co-operation and mutual endeavour.

(Mr. Hlaing, Burma)

In the thirty-seven years of its life, the United Nations has witnessed many blurrings of hope, but we continue to believe that there has never been any abridgement of the commitment to strive for the maintenance of peace between nations. The nations of the world will, therefore, welcome the fresh vigour with which the United Nations can develop into a really effective instrument for the performance of the functions outlined in the Charter.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the Committee will begin consideration of and action upon draft resolutions under the disarmament items on Monday, 8 November.

Members are aware of the decision of the Committee that a meeting of this Committee will not be convened unless there are at least four speakers inscribed on the list for that meeting. This procedure will certainly enable the Committee to save time and to adequately utilize that available to it. Thus far, there are only a few speakers inscribed on the list for the forthcoming meetings. If Members hesitate to inscribe their names on the list, I have no alternative but to cancel those meetings. Therefore, I urge delegations to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible in order to enable the Committee to meet on Monday and the rest of the week, and to avoid an unnecessary cancellation of the Committee's meetings.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.