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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 5TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GBEHO (Ghana)

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DISARMAMENT ITEMS

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General debate

Statements were made by:

Mr. Kekeh (Togo)  
Mr. Romulo (Philippines)  
Mr. Ott (German Democratic Republic)  
Mr. Marinescu (Romania)

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

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

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. KEKEH (Togo) (interpretation from French): At the beginning of our work it was agreed that delegations would refrain from congratulating the officers of the Committee in their statements. However, Togo cannot let pass this opportunity to express its pleasure at the election of a brother from Ghana to the chairmanship of this Committee. We would therefore like to extend our heartiest and warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. The unanimous support you command is in itself so eloquent and significant that there is no need for further praise of your personal merits. We are convinced that your competence and dynamism will enable us to work in circumstances that are truly ideal.

We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau of this Committee. We assure you all of the willing and forthright co-operation of the delegation of Togo in the course of our work.

I join the earlier speakers in extending warm congratulations to the two laureates of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, Mrs. Alva Myrdal and Mr. Alfonso Garcia Robles.

The world is under an ever more poignant fear of a nuclear war. The failure of the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament only served to increase our concern with regard to the situation prevailing in today's world.

In Togo, we are profoundly convinced that the halting of the arms race, and above all the nuclear arms race, depends on the will of the two major Powers. When they are willing to sit down to serious negotiations on this burning issue and to speak the same language, a new era for mankind, one filled with hope, will unfold. We say this because on the day the White House and the Kremlin decided to co-operate in connection with space they launched the Apollo-Soyuz project. Why could not that perfect example of co-operation be extended to other

(Mr. Kekeh, Togo)

areas and lead the super-Powers to realize the danger to which they are exposing millions of human beings who wish only to live in peace?

One of the main reasons for this mad race is that each of the two parties wants both quantitative and qualitative superiority over the other. Each of the parties has set itself the goal of being in the stronger position before going to the negotiating table, reasoning that this should enable it to be more demanding and to obtain greater concessions from the other.

Thus millions and millions of dollars are being poured every day into research into and the invention, production and improvement of increasingly sophisticated weapons, while two thirds of mankind are languishing in poverty and utter destitution. And today even worse things are happening, for the great Powers are not only arming themselves to excess but, by giving massive and unlimited military assistance to some of their allies, creating areas of insecurity throughout the world and a constant risk of conflagration. That state of affairs further complicates an already complex situation. The military escalation and the escalation of the arms race seem to have begun to influence the thinking of a number of leaders of developing countries. Indeed, in the light of the military assistance being provided by the great Powers to some of their protégés in the third world, other States, feeling their security threatened, are in turn engaging in the spiralling arms race, to the detriment of the urgent and pressing problems of economic and social development that confront them. The arms race thus destabilizes the world economy by putting a brake on the harmonious economic growth of the nations.

Togo, an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement is ready, at any time and anywhere, to make its modest contribution to the safeguarding and maintenance of international peace and security. The President of the Republic of Togo, General Gnassingbe Eyadema, has always preached the non-use of force in international relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes among nations. He has made this the cornerstone of his foreign policy. International peace and security is the most precious gift that the great Powers, by reaching agreement on a disarmament programme, can offer to mankind, which today lives in fear of the

(Mr. Kekeh, Togo)

threat of a nuclear war. It is for that reason that the delegation of Togo is today making a solemn appeal to the two super-Powers, and to all countries that are exerting every effort in building up weapons stockpiles and providing themselves with nuclear weapons, to put an end to the dangerous escalation of the arms race.

While calling upon the two great Powers to begin genuine negotiations on reducing their nuclear armaments, my delegation believes that increasing the number of denuclearized or nuclear-weapon-free zones is one way of limiting the spreading of the nuclear arms race. In this connection, my delegation would like to reaffirm its support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and for the denuclearization of Latin America, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East and Africa.

With regard to the African continent, my delegation strongly condemns the nuclear co-operation between Israel and South Africa. We denounce those countries that are collaborating with South Africa in the nuclear field, and we stress the imperative need for military respect for the general embargo on the supply of weapons and related material to South Africa, in keeping with Security Council resolutions 418 (1977) and 421 (1977).

International co-operation for development should be the major concern of all peace-loving nations. The world needs a dynamic peace that can open the way to the promotion of the socio-economic development of the third world through a harmonious exchange of technologies and a more equitable redistribution of the wealth of our planet.

A distinguished African Head of State said recently that if the great Powers could agree to reduce their military expenditure and make the sums thus saved available to the developing countries mankind would be freed from the scourge of hunger, which is shameful and intolerable in the middle of the twentieth century.

(Mr. Kekeh, Togo)

Indeed there is a link between disarmament in the industrialized countries and the development of the less prosperous countries. The huge resources that could be released by stopping the unbridled arms race should make it possible for the industrialized countries to establish and maintain with the developing countries, which have most of the world's raw materials, more equitable and more honest trade relations through fairer and more remunerative prices. These huge resources should also make it possible for the industrialized countries to give more massive and more consistent financial aid to the international organizations charged with the implementation of development aid programmes. Malnutrition would disappear as if by magic from our world.

If the arms race constitutes, as it undeniably does, a threat to international peace and security, we must realize that hunger in the world, because of its extent and its impact, also represents a threat to international peace and security. Therefore there must be shown, at the highest level, the necessary political will to take appropriate action, before it is too late, to make international development co-operation a priority objective - a programme based on a noble ideal, an ambitious programme worthy of the civilizations of the twentieth century.

What we ardently desire, then, is universal détente, so that all the nations of the world can carry out the exalting task of international co-operation for the greater benefit of mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure I speak for every member of this Committee when I bid welcome to the Foreign Minister of the Philippines, General Romulo. We are privileged to have him among us this morning, especially as he is one of the most senior diplomats, if not the senior diplomat, in these halls. As he was one of the signatories of our Charter, we are always fortunate to have him among us, to benefit from his wisdom and to receive his guidance. It is my honour and privilege to invite him to make a statement.

Mr. ROMULO (Philippines): Mr. Chairman, we are fortunate indeed that you are presiding over this important Committee. Because of your diplomatic skill and experience as one of the foremost citizens of Ghana and because you represent one of the most important African countries, in the forefront of African progress, I congratulate you and I congratulate this Committee on the fact that you have accepted the important position of Chairman of the First Committee.

Allow me also to express our gratification and extend our congratulations to my esteemed friend and colleague and a former counterpart of mine, Mr. Garcia Robles, former Foreign Minister of Mexico, on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for this year in recognition of his assiduous efforts on behalf of disarmament; and the same applies to Mrs. Myrdal. This is recognition of the fact that disarmament is one of the critical issues facing the world today and that to work for its achievement in a manner that directs world attention to this important problem is indeed a service to humanity. We are proud that one who has been a member of this Committee and whose statements on disarmament in the records of the United Nations are among its important documents has been justifiably acclaimed as a worthy Nobel laureate.

It is difficult this year to find rays of light in the darkening clouds of military preparedness. With more than \$600 billion per annum being expended on arms, it is difficult to believe that mankind will not achieve the goal upon which it seems set, namely, the launching of a global war of catastrophic dimensions. Unfortunately, preparation for war in the name of defence remains preparation for war - creating a momentum that subsumes and overcomes the intended purposes as suspicion, mistrust and division mount. It appears that we are prisoners of our own creations, being led along a path we certainly do not desire.

That, unfortunately, is the main conclusion one must draw from the second special session on disarmament. The hopes for the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the hopes for completion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, the hopes for achievement of an interim

(Mr. Romulo, Philippines)

"nuclear freeze" - all were dashed. Also receiving short shrift were renewed proposals for upgrading the United Nations disarmament efforts through the establishment of a department or agency capable of overseeing present arms agreements. Such an agency would be essential in monitoring and ensuring compliance with any substantial disarmament steps. Unfortunately, the list could be continued at great length.

In normal years the United Nations proposes, and the major Powers dispose. This year the United Nations was not even able to propose. The efforts of the international community to assist the major Powers in extricating themselves from the deep and dangerous impasse in which they find themselves have not been welcome. International security, however, is not the property of a few nations but is the domain and concern of the international community as a whole. We welcome, of course, efforts on the part of the super-Powers and their allies to temper the arms race, if nothing else, although the record can hardly be called encouraging. However, any notion of lasting security or of far-reaching disarmament can be entertained only within the context of global response and global agreements. I tend to feel that this self-evident truth is substantially overlooked by the major Powers and remains one of the salient facts behind their self-defeating exercise.

There was real value in the defeats of the special session in the sense that they illustrated the full dimension of our peril and also weaknesses in the approaches we have thus far made to the issues before us.

(Mr. Romulo, Philippines)

What are the weaknesses of the efforts? Very simply, we have divorced the question of the arms race from that of global security. It is axiomatic that the world will continue to arm in the absence of an effective approach to global security. For this reason, we are unable to register clear gains in our efforts to control the arms race and to disarm. We have educated ourselves very substantially. We know a great deal more about the processes of arms limitation and arms control than in earlier years. Yet disarmament remains and will remain unachievable until the root cause is dealt with. While there are many contributing factors, the root cause can be seen as continued and chaotic anarchy in a world become too small to sustain it. Arms, then, are seen as the only resort. This is a time-honoured reflex, but it now provides only the illusion of security while in fact constructing the conditions of certain disaster in the long run.

We are living with a partially constructed edifice. We ask of the United Nations what we have not equipped it to deliver - international security. In its state of incompleteness it provides no shelter against anarchy and war and thus States feel duty-bound to arm for their protection, bringing about even worse conditions. The nuclear weapon, it is said, is the great equaliser. A small Power becomes as dangerous as a large one as it acquires nuclear weapons. In the absence of an over-arching system of international security, the pressure for the small States to "go nuclear" will continue to increase. This would also lead to disaster.

Is it not more advantageous to make a new assessment of where we find ourselves and to plot now a new course of action, not responding merely or only to the race for ever more deadly hardware? It is not surprising perhaps that the world seems transfixed by the technological achievements and possibilities of the arms race and has become preoccupied with trying to stem the flood of new and deadly hardware. This preoccupation, understandable as it is, has caused us to misplace our emphasis.

(Mr. Romulo, Philippines)

I have said that the United Nations is a partially constructed edifice and that its incompleteness has caused States to take refuge in arming. If this is true, and I fully believe it is, then we must begin to give equal emphasis to the completion of the structure and the evolution of a system that will provide global security in which States have confidence, upon which they can rely and in which they can take refuge. It is becoming patently clear that these needs are the same for the major Powers as for the small. At present the nuclear States are guaranteeing their own eventual extinction, not their security.

In the study on the relationship between disarmament and international security we have only begun to address ourselves to this question. Additional and substantial effort is urgently required. We can, of course, address ourselves to the minutiae of the arms race for ever and can perhaps derive some sense of accomplishment. That, indeed, may be the best we can do, in which case we are writing off the future for ourselves and for the world. If we want peace, then the edifice of peace must be completed. Do we understand that the world has become too small and too dangerous for anything else to succeed?

The Philippine delegation has no illusions about the difficulty of the task I have outlined in the most general terms. If it had, it would mean that my 83 years, nearly half of them related to the United Nations, had taught me nothing.

Nor am I alone in calling attention to the incomplete edifice. The Secretary-General, in his remarkable report to the General Assembly, points out 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". (A/37/1, p. 5)

I will go a step further and state that until the United Nations is so endowed there can be and there will be no disarmament. Arms limitations agreements may come and go, depending upon the state of international tension at any given time, but disarmament will remain unachievable in the circumstances of the present lack of commitment by Member States to the elaboration of an effective system of international security.

(Mr. Romulo, Philippines)

This is a new circumstance in global history and this fact may account for the inability of States thus far to respond fully and effectively.

A parallel effort is required on disarmament on the one hand and on implementing international security on the other, if either is to succeed. This was the finding of the Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and International Security. My chairmanship of that Group convinced me that a major task lies before us, the dim outlines of which are only now becoming apparent. The gravity of the international situation illuminated this task and calls the international community to account for the tardy response it has made to this issue in the past 37 years. The response to that issue contains the answer to the question of human survival.

I have dealt at some length with the broader picture of our efforts. This does not mean that my Government does not support of shorter-term efforts and goals. We continue to support proposals for strengthening the work of the United Nations in the fields of disarmament. We continue to support the completion of a Comprehensive Programme of disarmament. We urge completion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban for all time and of a treaty banning the production, stockpiling and use of deadly chemical weapons. We support a standstill in the nuclear arms race while reductions are negotiated, including in particular the non-deployment of any new strategic nuclear weapons system by any side.

Additionally, we continue to urge a programme of psychological disarmament, by which I mean steps taken by any party in moderating the arms race, thereby helping to restore confidence and trust to the level at which negotiations on major reductions can take place. Among these are traditionally listed a cut-off in the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes, a moratorium on all nuclear tests in every environment pending completion of a treaty, and a moratorium on the further production or deployment of nerve gas as an earnest of good intent pending the completion of the chemical weapons treaty.

(Mr. Romulo, Philippines)

We continue to believe that these steps are likely to be reciprocated in appropriate ways and can lead to more fruitful negotiations than those we have thus far witnessed.

We remain very interested in the results of the study on a United Nations satellite monitoring agency. In our view, the United Nations should not be the last - but rather, the first - to acquire the capability effectively to monitor arms deployment and troop movements. This need should be remedied at the earliest possible time.

We are gratified by the manner in which the United Nations Secretariat supported the second special session and developed substantial quantities of educational materials, which received wide distribution. We have some, if small, hopes for the world-wide Disarmament Campaign.

I would hope, however, that the work of this Committee would not be merely routine this year, in light of the fate of the special session and of the deteriorating world situation facing us.

In my view, the time has clearly come to adopt what I shall call an integral approach to the problem of disarmament. By integral, I mean that it has become patently impossible to deal effectively with the question of disarmament without at the same time considering the legitimate security requirements of States and the neglected task of completing an effective system of global security. I believe that in time the integral approach will come to characterize our continuing efforts to achieve a warless world. In his report, the Secretary-General enumerated a number of major requirements for an effective United Nations system of international security. In the light of the 37 years experience of the United Nations as an incomplete but hopeful edifice, these recommendations by the Secretary-General deserve most careful consideration.

(Mr. Romulo, Philippines)

I believe that the First Committee should begin to formalize the integral approach to disarmament and security as defined above. This may be done in collaboration with other existing Committees or groups, or it may be necessary to establish a new umbrella organization for the integral approach. It may also be possible to commend it to the Disarmament Commission for early recommendations on how to inaugurate that approach.

The Second World War, through which I fought, together with so many other millions on both sides in many countries, and in which millions died, was, in the light of what is to come, only a minor war.

I wish to challenge my colleagues here and our Governments to think boldly and in large terms. We need a fresh start on the whole issue of disarmament and security and we need it urgently. The Committee may be assured that the Philippine delegation will contribute whatever it can to the definition and initiation of the fresh start which is necessary in order to provide an avenue of hope for the future of this world of ours.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, I wish to convey most cordial congratulations to you, the representative of a non-aligned country of the African continent, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. The wealth of your diplomatic experience gives us full confidence that you will successfully guide the proceedings of this Committee. At the same time, allow me also to extend my best wishes to the other officers of the Committee.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic would also like to congratulate the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles, on his having been awarded the 1982 Nobel Peace Prize.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The general debate of the current, thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly has borne out once again that the prevention of nuclear war has become the first priority of our time. The threat to man's existence which is implicit in the danger of a global nuclear war has never been greater than today. While this danger is apparent from the mere existence of a nuclear-weapon potential already beyond imagination, it is still more strikingly evidence by plans to use that potential.

The root causes of this peril are well known. They lie in the intensified arms build-up and confrontation course which has for some considerable time now been followed by the most aggressive forces of imperialism.

They are in the process of implementing an arms-building programme that is without parallel in the history of mankind. Ever-new doctrines are being proclaimed with a view to securing the possibility of using nuclear weapons in a preventive, selective or demonstrative manner.

In pursuance of those plans, preparations for limited as well as protracted nuclear wars are in progress. This inhuman strategy anticipates the annihilation of entire peoples, States and even continents.

There is a general awareness today that the first use of nuclear weapons - the outbreak of a nuclear war, no matter in which region of the globe - would result in an unimaginable catastrophe for all mankind. Mere declarations of peace no longer suffice; concrete and resolute action is necessary in order to eliminate the danger of a nuclear war. Such action was urged by the overwhelming majority of States at the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament. Such action continues to be urged by the peoples at large rallies, marches and other demonstrations organized in many forms on all continents.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

In the understanding of my delegation, the unilateral pledge of the Soviet Union not to be the first to use nuclear weapons is just such an action. The importance of this historic initiative for international peace and security is comprehensible and clear: If all other nuclear-weapon Powers agreed to make analogous pledges, this would practically mean a general renunciation of the use of nuclear arms. It would in fact constitute a sign of genuine readiness to avert the danger of a nuclear war and clear the road for effective measures of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, my delegation advocates that an appeal be addressed at this thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly to all nuclear-weapon Powers to make such a binding declaration.

In trying to justify the refusal of that commitment so far, it has frequently been argued that such a pledge should cover not only nuclear weapons but conventional ones as well. In accordance with the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, which was reaffirmed at the second special session, the German Democratic Republic delegation attaches high priority to nuclear disarmament. At the same time, it advocates disarmament measures in the field of conventional weapons. The only prerequisites for making progress in this area is the necessary political will and that the demand for conventional disarmament be taken seriously.

Moreover, the German Democratic Republic continues to support a general renunciation of the use of force in international relations. It has been six years since a corresponding draft world treaty was proposed by the Soviet Union. The worsened international situation, and wars and tensions in various world regions, highlight the continuing validity of that initiative today. Similarly, there are on record the socialist countries' numerous other proposals aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating any kind of weapon on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The immediate cessation of nuclear-weapon tests and a comprehensive ban on all such tests are, in the view of the German Democratic Republic, among the most important measures to remove the existing nuclear threat. Such a ban would be an effective barrier against the further improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types and systems of such weapons. At the same time, it would strengthen the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

My delegation, therefore, fully supports the Soviet proposal that talks on concluding a corresponding treaty be commenced without delay. The proposed basic provisions of such a treaty are based on the results of many years of deliberations in the Committee on Disarmament and those of the trilateral negotiations.

The discussions held on this matter so far, and the pertinent practical experience, show very clearly that the whole subject of the envisaged treaty, including the question of verification, has been clarified sufficiently to proceed now to action, that is, to the conclusion of the treaty. As a member of the Committee on Disarmament, the German Democratic Republic is playing an active part in the consideration of substantive issues concerning the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and in this way also underlines its firm determination to achieve the speediest possible conclusion of such a treaty.

The German Democratic Republic also agrees with the demand of a large number of States that the treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear-weapon tests and on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, signed by the Soviet Union and the United States, now be ratified. My delegation also shares the surprise and disappointment of the world public at the recent decision of the United States not to resume trilateral negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. It remains to be hoped that wise and responsible statesmanship will prevail.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

As do many States, my country also pays much attention to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in its economy as well as in science and technology. It operates several nuclear installations designed for peaceful purposes and has been meeting its power supply needs increasingly from energy produced by such installations. Therefore, the safe development of nuclear energy is of vital importance for the German Democratic Republic.

In my country, with its high population density and its geographic and meteorological conditions, any destruction - albeit by conventional weapons - of even one of those nuclear installations would have disastrous consequences, as would be the case in other European countries. With complete justification, the intentional destruction of nuclear installations used for peaceful purposes should therefore be declared equivalent to an explosion set off with the help of nuclear weapons and regarded as one of the gravest crimes against humanity.

Proceeding from this premise, the German Democratic Republic regards the new Soviet proposal calling for multiplied efforts to ensure a safe development of nuclear energy as being of the utmost current interest and deserving of consideration as a matter of the greatest urgency.

Moreover, it is only too understandable that the safe development of nuclear energy includes the cessation of the nuclear arms race. Having this aspect in mind as well, the German Democratic Republic supports a simultaneous freeze by all nuclear-weapon States on the production and development of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, as well as the cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapon purposes, as a first step towards the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear-weapon arsenals.

Among the people of the German Democratic Republic the tragic first-hand experience of two devastating world wars is still alive. My country has taken the historical commitment to do everything to ensure that war will never again originate from German soil. Situated in Europe, on the dividing line between the world's largest military coalitions, the

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

German Democratic Republic is particularly aware of its responsibility for the preservation of peace. West of my country's borders there already exists the highest density of nuclear weapons, and there are plans to build up those nuclear arsenals even further. In fact, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Brussels decision of 1979 foresees the deployment there of the bulk of a new generation of United States medium-range nuclear weapons with a strategic capability, starting as early as next year. Work on the construction of launching-pads and underground shelters has already begun.

In view of the ominous fact that the day is drawing closer when the new deadly weapons are to be stationed in various Western European countries, it is imperative "to renew the warnings", as Bertolt Brecht, the German playwright and poet, wrote, "even if they were already like ashes in our mouths, for mankind is threatened by wars to which those of the past are nothing but paltry attempts..."

The deployment of new United States medium-range missiles in Western Europe is by no means only a regional problem. It concerns the fate of all peoples on earth, and it would put additional strains on international relations. Therefore, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic wishes to call attention to the following considerations:

First, the stationing of these missiles as a potential for a nuclear first strike would increase the danger of global nuclear war. The threshold of the outbreak of nuclear war would be lowered.

Secondly, the existing approximate military parity between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization is to be unilaterally altered by the deployment of the new missiles. The foundations of détente, co-operation and confidence among peoples and States would be undermined.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Thirdly, the arms race would be further escalated, and the resulting burdens for the peoples, along with their grave social consequences, would grow. It is rightly being asked, especially in Western European countries, why peace, security and national interests are to be sacrificed for the sake of imperialist plans for world domination.

Fourthly, the implementation of the Brussels missile decision would inevitably affect the whole political atmosphere and put strains on the relations between States in Europe. No one can expect good-neighbourly relations to prosper in the shadow of new missiles intended for use in a nuclear first strike.

Common sense and political responsibility demand the renunciation of the plans to deploy new United States medium-range missiles and, more than that, to work for the removal of all medium-range and tactical nuclear weapons from European soil.

It is well-known that the USSR has submitted constructive and far-reaching proposals to this end, and has also already taken unilateral steps. The German Democratic Republic, therefore, supports the Soviet Union's numerous initiatives and wide-ranging efforts which aim at producing practical results without delay in the strategic arms limitation and reduction talks as well as in the negotiations on limiting nuclear armaments in Europe, being held with the United States in Geneva. As has been clearly revealed also by the general debate of the General Assembly at its current session, the peoples look to these talks with high expectations. Of course, these expectations can only be fulfilled if both parties to the negotiations are conscious of their high responsibility and are striving for effective agreements.

In its present statement, my delegation has concentrated on the paramount issue facing mankind today - the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe. It also wishes to emphasize the need to prohibit the neutron nuclear weapon. Highly topical, too, is the elimination of chemical weapons.

Another matter to which the German Democratic Republic attaches the utmost importance is the non-stationing of any kinds of weapons in outer space. On these

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

and other subjects, my delegation will state its position later in the debate of this Committee.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to express its readiness to discuss and support all projects and proposals, if only they are conducive to the achievement of one goal: eliminating the danger of nuclear war, ending the arms race and bringing about disarmament.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, first of all allow me to say how pleased the Romanian delegation is to see you in the Chair. You can certainly count on our co-operation in performing the highly responsible tasks which have been entrusted to you. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Committee and the Secretariat, to whom we are grateful for the flawless organization of the work of the Committee.

I also wish to congratulate very sincerely Mrs. Alva Myrdal and Mr. Alfonso Garcia Robles for the great distinction conferred on them recently in the form of the Nobel Peace Prize. This Prize, which is an honour to the prizewinners and to the countries they represent, is also a tribute to the United Nations organs in which they have worked for many years, and are still working, with outstanding distinction and devotion, in the noble cause of peace and disarmament.

The year 1982 was dominated by extensive debates on disarmament topics. Apart from the work of the Geneva Committee on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as well as other bodies, there was the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Demonstrations of unprecedented scope took place throughout the world as an expression of the resolute support of public opinion and of the peoples of many countries for peace and disarmament. This is the natural consequence, clearly, of the profound disquiet felt by all States at the grave tension now prevailing in international relations and the terrifying dimensions assumed by the arms race. One can rightly say that the cessation of the arms race and the shift to disarmament - primarily nuclear disarmament - is the central problem of mankind today. In the opinion of my country and its President, the most pressing need

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

of our age is for all nations to join and work closely together in moving resolutely towards disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, stopping the dangerous drift towards confrontation and war, completely renouncing force and the threat of force in international relations, and pursuing a policy of détente, respect for sovereignty and national independence, and mutual understanding, co-operation and good neighbourliness among States.

Considered in the light of these major objectives, we regret to say that the results of the special session are not very satisfactory. The session was unable to adopt the comprehensive programme of disarmament or any other decision likely to lead to specific disarmament measures, particularly nuclear disarmament.

The large number of proposals made on that occasion and the thorough discussion of the crucial problem of our age - the choice between war and peace - nevertheless showed that nothing and no one can dislodge disarmament problems from the place of precedence they occupy in international affairs today. We attach considerable political significance to the fact that the conclusions adopted by the session unanimously and categorically reaffirmed the value of the Final Document of the first special session of 1978, as well as the solemn endorsement by all Member States of the United Nations of that document and their undertaking to respect, in the context of disarmament negotiations, the priorities drawn up in the Programme of Action. The session agreed that the preparation and adoption of the comprehensive programme of disarmament was among the first steps to be taken to mobilize and co-ordinate the efforts of the international community to bring about general and complete disarmament.

It was the interest and participation of public opinion, of the peoples of the whole world, in the debate on disarmament problems generated by the special session which, in the end, made that session a remarkable event in international affairs.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

The absence of the tangible results demanded by the serious international situation, and which the peoples had a right to expect, makes it all the more urgently necessary for all the decision makers in Governments and States fully to shoulder their responsibilities and continue to work within the United Nations and its bodies to curb the arms race and to begin genuine disarmament negotiations without delay, particularly with respect to nuclear weapons.

We feel that proposals of special importance were made during the special session, which deserve to be considered by the working bodies dealing with disarmament, with a view to identifying common elements in them that could serve as a basis for the elaboration of the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

In our opinion, any proposal from whatever quarter -- East or West, North or South -- contains positive elements which we must take into account. It would be desirable that in our debates we proceed, not from criticism of the ideas and proposals put forward by other parties, but from the consideration of constructive elements and spheres making it possible to bridge the gap between positions and arrive at acceptable formulas, so that it would be possible to reach concrete agreements.

We must not remain captive to the differences existing between various proposals -- differences which, in any case, are only to be expected if one takes into account the fact that, when formulating proposals, each State proceeds from the basis of what it regards as its own security interests. These differences make it all the more necessary for there to be efforts at bridging gaps and accommodation, understanding and mutual concessions, because, in our world of interdependence, the peace and security of each and everyone can be assured only within the framework of collective peace and security based on the full equality of rights between States and on respect for their sovereignty and independence.

The course of events has shown that military superiority as the basis for security is but a delusion which can have tragic consequences for mankind as a whole. In actual fact, a truly sound and stable balance of forces presupposes ever lower levels of armament and requires permanent contact, dialogue and ongoing negotiation based on trust and respect for the legitimate interests of each State.

Therefore, the watchword in our deliberations must be a constructive approach to problems, the desire to arrive at common ground and the search for, and building on, common elements and not confrontation and the aggravation of differences. Only thus can the work of the Committee make a useful contribution to the immense task of disarmament. While it is true that we have various political, philosophical and religious views, we are at the same time bound by a common responsibility for the future of mankind and for the fate of future generations and it is in our power to bequeath to them an even more beautiful and richer planet than we ourselves have inherited.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

On the instructions of President Nicolae Ceausescu, and by virtue of the mandate conferred upon him by the Grand National Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania at the special session on disarmament set forth in some detail the position and concrete proposals of our country on disarmament. My delegation does not intend to restate them now; however, we should like to stress certain basic elements which, in the Romanian Government's opinion, are essential for the proper channelling and development of any process of disarmament.

In view of the current international situation and the danger inherent in the continual intensification of the nuclear arms race, Romania believes that first priority must be given to measures for nuclear disarmament.

We appreciate full well the complexity of problems posed by nuclear disarmament and we harbour no illusion as to achieving it overnight. In short what we are asking for is the start as soon as possible of a process of genuine negotiation on concrete measures in the nuclear field, without which there can be no question of reducing the gravity of the world situation and safeguarding international peace and security. In our opinion, this process should begin by a substantial reduction in nuclear armaments by the two major Powers, for example, going as far as a 50 per cent cut in the first stage as a step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Aware of the crucial importance of this objective, the Romanian Government has, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, emphasized the imperative need to move on to the establishment of a concrete programme of measures leading to the cessation of the production, further development and testing of nuclear weapons and to the gradual reduction of stockpiles of such weapons until their total elimination. Romania has welcomed with interest any proposal likely to remove the danger of nuclear war, halt the nuclear arms race and substantially reduce the number of such weapons.

In this respect we hail the obligation already assumed by the People's Republic of China and recently at the special session on disarmament by the Soviet Union not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and we believe that the assumption of similar commitments by the other nuclear Powers would be of particular importance. We supported and we continue to support the concrete

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

proposals put forward at the special session by India, Mexico and Sweden with a view to preventing nuclear war, banning the use of nuclear weapons and freezing the production thereof. We believe that the same purposes are served by the latest initiatives of the Soviet Union at this session aimed at bringing about the immediate cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the development in full security of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; these initiatives have our full support.

The particularly grave situation prevailing in Europe is a source of great concern to us. Urgent measures are needed to stop the stationing of new intermediate range missiles on that continent, to withdraw and destroy those already in place and to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the region. We hope that the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America on intermediate range nuclear missiles, as well as those on strategic armaments, will lead to positive results. The question of intermediate-range missiles is of direct interest to European nations as a whole; hence we believe that all States of the continent should participate in the Geneva negotiations in one way or another.

Romania supports the proposals to establish zones of peace free from nuclear weapons in various parts of the world and, together with neighbouring countries, is working for the transformation of the Balkans into a zone of friendship, co-operation, good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence and into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

While insisting on priority for the nuclear sphere, we cannot ever forget the danger inherent in the existence and development of other weapons of mass destruction. In the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, we are working jointly with other States towards the adoption of concrete measures banning chemical and radiological weapons and new weapons and systems of weapons of mass destruction. Romania favours the achievement with the least possible delay of agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space and to promote the use of the achievements of science and technology for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit of the development of all nations.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

The world is passing through a particularly difficult stage when the conclusion of agreements on halting the nuclear arms race and on the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction is of vital importance to all States. Failure in our efforts and the maintenance or aggravation of the present situation in armaments would be a historical error the responsibility for which no one wished to assume, because missing this crucial opportunity would be tantamount to opening a new lengthy stage in military competition with incalculable consequences for all mankind.

Any realistic approach to disarmament problems requires the establishment of an equitable relationship between nuclear disarmament problems and those of conventional disarmament. The proposals made by my Government in the field of disarmament have always proceeded from recognition of the organic link existing between these two categories of arms in the maintenance of equal security for all States and from the fact that weapons, whether nuclear or conventional, are in fact the material support for the policy of force and diktat and of the violation of the independence and sovereignty of peoples and their right freely to decide on their own future.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

As a European country, we naturally attach particular importance to measures to reduce conventional armaments in our region. We therefore advocate the establishment between the two blocs, and in general between the two parties, of as low as possible a ceiling for the main armaments: aircraft, tanks, warships, missiles, heavy artillery and others. We constantly press for security and co-operation in Europe, and we hope that when the Madrid meeting resumes it will be fruitful and constructive, agreeing to convene a conference on confidence-building and on disarmament in Europe, and thus assuring the continuity of the process started in Helsinki.

The general debate in the General Assembly has shown this year more than before the profound disquiet of States over the gravity and proportions of the world economic and financial crisis. Everyday reality shows that the breathless pace of expenditure on arms is becoming ever more difficult to tolerate, even for the most highly developed countries. The new report on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military spending, presented by the Secretary-General to the present session, eloquently describes, with the support of ample documentation, the extremely harmful implications of the unceasing accumulation of weapons and of military expenditures on the economic and social life of all States and on world peace and security. The wholly abnormal level maintained by spending on arms constitutes a major obstacle to the economic and social development of peoples. It perpetuates distrust and international instability and hinders efforts to resolve the central problems for the present and future of mankind.

Romania has reiterated at this session its proposal to freeze military spending at 1982 levels, with a gradual reduction by 10-15 per cent until 1985. Part of the funds thus released would be used to support the efforts of the developing countries, the rest being devoted to the economic and social development of the countries making those reductions.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

We believe that the tempo and effectiveness of action taken within the framework of the United Nations to reduce military budgets has been lagging well behind the present giddy pace of the growth in arms spending. While we intend to deal with this question in a separate statement, we cannot fail to re-emphasize the importance of, and the need for, a restatement of the appeal contained in General Assembly resolutions - adopted by consensus in recent years and addressed to all States, particularly the most heavily armed - to show moderation in their military spending pending the conclusion of agreements on the reduction of such spending, and to reallocate the funds thus saved for economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries. In order to reach such agreements, firm action is needed to create conditions conducive to the negotiations of effective measures to freeze and reduce all military spending. We continue to believe that the conclusion of such agreements would be facilitated by the adoption of principles to govern the actions of States in reducing military budgets. These principles, the elaboration of which has been entrusted to the Disarmament Commission, are obviously not an end in themselves, but they are a way to harmonize different points of view and build trust; they are useful instruments to lead to the conclusion of agreements on the reduction of military budgets.

One field which in our opinion requires firm action is that of confidence-building between States. The adoption of measures to that end, particularly in the military field, would not only help improve the international climate but would create the conditions to make it possible to move on to substantial disarmament measures. In this respect it is of prime importance to conclude agreements providing for the dismantling of military bases and the withdrawal of all foreign troops to within their own national boundaries, as well as a firm commitment by each State not to deploy troops on the territory of other States; the renunciation of military manoeuvres and displays of force, particularly with the participation of several States and near the national frontiers of other countries; the reduction of the military activities of blocs; and the intensification of efforts to bring about their simultaneous dissolution.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

While firmly advocating the achievement of a balance of forces, not through a growth of armaments but through their reduction, we believe that for efforts to that end to succeed it is essential that each State should provide the necessary elements to assess and study the military budgets, armed forces and armaments involved.

Matters that are essential to the security of each State require the implementation of measures to end the arms race and bring about disarmament under appropriate controls. Disarmament agreements must provide for adequate procedures and methods of verification, enabling all the States parties to take part in such control activities and guaranteeing that the obligations assumed are carried out to the letter. In this sense, Romania is in favour of the establishment, within the framework of the United Nations, of an international body given the right to monitor and inspect the implementation of disarmament measures which have been adopted.

I should not like to conclude my delegation's remarks on the essential elements of a coherent disarmament strategy without emphasizing yet again the absolute need to eliminate from international life the use of force and the threat of force and to resolve all conflicts by exclusively peaceful means, with strict respect for the sovereignty and independence of peoples and their right to develop according to their own aspirations and interests.

The expression of public opinion and the participation of the peoples of the whole world has been, in our opinion, a remarkable event in international affairs. Despite the absence of significant results from the second special of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the launching of the World Disarmament Campaign is a major achievement. It provides the framework within which the United Nations can and must act in order to keep public opinion better informed about the present armament situation and the situation with regard to disarmament negotiations. This cannot fail to increase the interest and participation of the masses of the people and their energetic efforts for peace and disarmament, as a new, progressive factor in contemporary international relations.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

We hope that at this session our Committee will succeed in drawing up, on the basis of the guidelines agreed at the second special session devoted to disarmament, a programme of concrete action to stimulate the active participation of all levels of society in bringing about disarmament. We wish to emphasize the special role in the struggle for disarmament, peace and security of the young generation, which has a vital interest in peace and in guarantees of a peaceful, happy future, as well as of scientists, who bear an increasingly heavy responsibility in the historic effort to stop the arms race and bring about disarmament.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

Through studies and research of disarmament, which should be more widely publicized, and through conferences, symposiums and seminars attended by representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, the media and scientists, the United Nations can make an outstanding contribution to winning wide public support for disarmament efforts. The seminar held this year in Mamaia, Romania, by the United Nations Centre for Disarmament, with the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations of most European countries, the United States and Canada, generated a constructive and fruitful exchange of views on the specific modalities for curbing the arms race and bringing about disarmament, and we believe that such meetings should be organized on a regular basis in the years ahead.

Aware of the need to spare no effort to establish a climate of trust, peace and co-operation, we advocate the cessation of war propaganda and the initiation, within the World Disarmament Campaign, of widespread activities designed to promote the ideals of peace, friendship and co-operation among nations. Here too we emphasize the great need to organize, under United Nations auspices, a world media conference, including radio, television and press, to discuss and draw up appropriate measures in that connection.

In order to give effect to disarmament measures the active participation of all States is necessary as is the resolute use of the very democratic framework for debate and negotiations set up by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Geneva Committee on Disarmament, as a body whose members include all the nuclear Powers, must become an authentic forum for negotiations and act in a dynamic manner with a view, in particular, to reaching agreements on nuclear disarmament. We find it quite unacceptable that the activities of that body, whose agenda is headed by the whole range of questions relating to nuclear disarmament, should for years have been confined to a general exchange of views. The special responsibility borne by the great Powers makes it all the more necessary that their political will to undertake disarmament should be demonstrated in a practical way within the multilateral framework of debate and negotiations in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

The United Nations Disarmament Commission has confirmed its important role and its usefulness as a deliberating organ in the disarmament system, drawing on the potential offered by the participation in its work of all States Members of the United Nations. There is an ever-increasing need to take measures to stimulate the Commission's activities and to organize its work to enable it to tackle the items on its agenda in a more concrete way. The Romanian delegation, for its part, will consider with interest any proposal that can lead to the achievement of that aim.

We appreciate the work of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament and we advocate the strengthening of its role. We also appreciate the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, as well as other activities which can help to increase the effectiveness of United Nations organs in the field of disarmament.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that in making these comments the Romanian delegation has been inspired by the pressing need for the current session to contribute to the combined efforts of all States to adopt, in the light of the disquiet generated by the present world situation, decisions that offer a real chance of leading to genuine negotiations on disarmament and, above all, nuclear disarmament. My delegation is prepared to act firmly to that end, in close co-operation with all the other delegations.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.