



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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- General debate on all disarmament items (continued)

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

AGENDA ITEMS 52 TO 69, 139, 141 AND 145

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

Mr. ESSY (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): Sir, allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, to congratulate you most sincerely on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee, which has an exceedingly important role in today's international relations. I also congratulate your fellow officers, who will be assisting you in your difficult task.

Let me take this opportunity also to express to our friend and brother Ambassador Bagbeni Adéito of Zaire our great appreciation for his outstanding performance as Chairman of the Committee at the last session, during which remarkable results were achieved in that a record number of resolutions were adopted by consensus.

The cold war of some years ago was followed by détente, confrontation and now a substantial improvement in East-West relations which has sent a wave of optimism through the world. This situation is all the more welcome in that it was most unexpected after a lengthy period throughout which the leaders of the two super-Powers had avoided meeting each other. Then, since November 1985, four successive summit meetings produced great expectations, so that the world is now almost enabled to dream of universal and enduring peace through general and complete disarmament under permanent international control.

The evolution of the new political thinking in the Soviet Union, endorsed in February 1986 by the twenty-seventh Congress and bearing the imprint of Secretary-General Mikhail Gorbachev, had much to do with that fortunate development of international relations, which may provide mankind with a chance to build a new, more reliable and effective system of international security.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

The political climate is a primary condition, though not necessarily sufficient to halt the arms race. A suitable world environment would make success in disarmament matters much more likely. For that reason, many delegations, including mine, had hoped that the third special session devoted to disarmament, in the midst of the euphoria brought about by the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the INF Treaty, would do much to place mankind on the path to a more secure future.

Unfortunately, the outcome of that session fell short of the great hopes placed in it by the international community. Nevertheless, the quality and the impressive number of participants - both official delegations and representatives of non-governmental organizations - demonstrated the existence of a solid common conscience of men and women in all parts of the world, who are prepared to face up to the arms race, which seemed to have become almost inevitable and impossible to halt.

As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out in his report on the work of the Organization, that session brought to light some convergent views on disarmament and confirmed a certain number of important elements accepted by all parties which provide a basis for the discussions, which we hope will be fruitful, at this session of the Committee.

Because of the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, we have witnessed at last for the first time an actual process of disarmament, with the elimination of between 4 and 5 per cent of nuclear weapons, which is quite impressive. However, as Napoleon said, "Nothing is done as long as it still remains to be done." This is precisely the time to recall those words, because we have a long road ahead in the achievement of more substantial disarmament which would bring greater security for all on earth. According to the statements made by the nuclear Powers, a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

strategic arms can now be expected in the near future. Such an event would even more meaningfully reconfirm this trend towards a reduction of armaments and further improve the prospects for the future. However, this hope may prove to be illusory unless account is taken of the experiences of the past, when we witnessed unexpected shifts and changes of allegiance on the part of adversaries.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

The history of international relations is a tissue of such crises, which sometimes provide the psychological momentum for generating a new type of coexistence. From the Berlin crisis to the crisis of the Euro-missiles, from the 1953 thaw after the death of Stalin to the advent of perestroika, the prospects for change were still open. But nuclear weapons, the terrible possibility of nuclear war with its incalculable consequences for the survival of mankind, enable us to hope that the present trends, the result of the thinking of all the leaders in the world, is a sui generis development, different from developments in the past, and one which cannot leave any room for erratic behaviour because of the grave consequences for mankind.

The Côte d'Ivoire, which wishes to continue to work with the forces that seek the triumph of peace and not those that work for war, will bring to the subject of nuclear disarmament its firm support for all proposals which will further remove the sword of Damocles constituted by nuclear armaments.

When thinking about armaments, we must always remember the Roman dictum, "If you wish peace, prepare for war."

Security is fundamentally relative. For the developed countries, for which recent forecasts indicate a growth rate of 3 per cent for 1988-1989, the notion of security is seen in terms of comparisons of military potential, and the developed world, in the context of the present world order, has succeeded in attaining to unthinkable objectives, that is, peace and growth.

When it comes, by comparison, to the countries of the south, which are choked and crushed under the weight of their debt and the structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), how can one talk of peace, growth and

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

development for countries which know only squalor and desolation? The spirit of speculation now presiding over the commodity trade which opposes just remuneration for our products, combined with the deterioration of the terms of trade, now blocks our development efforts. The erratic fluctuations of exchange rates and the annual fluctuations of commodities prices during the crop year - usually downwards - have the same effect on our economies as Pershing-2 or SS-20 missiles, in the sense that they can destabilize our States and threaten their very existence as sovereign States.

It has been well demonstrated, with the experience which we now have in the south, that security cannot be defined in purely military terms, and cannot be guaranteed by purely military means. Over-armament, just like underdevelopment, has become - in varying degrees, it must be admitted - a threat to international security.

Security in the complex world of today is not above all a military concept; it is also economic, ecological and social.

This demonstrates the extent to which France was right at quite an early stage when it proposed the establishment of an International Disarmament Fund for Development, a proposal which was later elaborated and led to the holding of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development. My delegation hopes that the international community will give concrete support to the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference and that General Assembly resolution 42/45, adopted without a vote at the forty-second session, will this year provide more specific guidance to the relevant organs of the United Nations system, because the third special session devoted to disarmament failed to achieve the desired results.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

Recent events have shown the horror that can be caused by chemical weapons. There is an urgent need for action to be taken along the lines of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, in other words for an agreement which would provide a similar prohibition of chemical weapons. The need for such a document is urgent. In this field we have taken note of the concrete proposals of President Mitterrand and the willingness expressed by certain Powers to conclude such an agreement promptly. We hope that the problem of the appraisal of stocks can be resolved quickly and that a multilateral treaty, eliminating chemical weapons, can be concluded this year in Geneva.

It is morality, rather than a restrictive text, which should serve as a basis, for expressing the disapproval by the conscience of the world of any possible use of such weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons recognizes the right of all countries to have access to the progress provided by the atom, while at the same time preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. The Côte d'Ivoire, which signed that Treaty, supports the organization in 1990 of the fourth Review Conference which will review the Treaty and gauge its impact on the cessation of the nuclear arms race. In this respect, we feel that everything should be done to encourage certain countries to accede to that Treaty, despite the repudiation of their national policies by the international community.

Current trends in international relations allow us to better grasp the prime place and potential of our Organization in the quest for solutions to conflicts in the world.

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

We hope that the renewed confidence manifested in the United Nations by one of the great Powers and its desire to see it play a central role in disarmament questions will gain further ground. In this regard, my country favours all those efforts which, without jeopardizing the institutional structure of the Charter, will help to enable States to take advantage of it to the fullest possible extent. We shall take a positive view of any proposal along those lines.

The Côte d'Ivoire today in its international relations is a country favouring dialogue, perpetual dialogue, both in the framework of its internal policy of strengthening national unity, and also in its foreign policy with regard to all situations of conflict. We are pleased with the discovery which is currently being made by many leaders of this concept of dialogue which, in the view of my President, is not the weapon of the weak, but rather the weapon of the strong.

We welcome the dialogue which has been set in motion by the two super-Powers, and we hope that those Powers will rapidly spread the virus of peace throughout the world.

The quest for lasting peace in the framework of the regional conflicts we see today should take account of the fact that each of those conflicts has its own dynamism, its own internal reasons rooted in history.

Possible arrangements between external Powers which would be addressed to the protection of the short-term geo-political interests of those Powers in the region cannot on their own provide a radical solution for those conflicts.

The Côte d'Ivoire, which has made peace its second religion, is aware that human beings themselves forge their own future of peace or totter into the disorder of war. As stated in the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." It is in order to contribute further to the strengthening of peace, true peace, the peace of hearts and minds, that the International Foundation for Peace will organize in Yamoussoukro in 1989, in collaboration with UNESCO, a conference which will be attended by distinguished figures, on the subject "Peace in the minds of men".

(Mr. Essy, Côte d'Ivoire)

We hope that our deliberations at that conference will enable us to attain a fuller grasp of all the components of genuine peace so we can equip ourselves with the best possible tools with which to consolidate a lasting peace among men.

Mr. MOREL (France) (interpretation from French): I wish first of all, Sir, to say how pleased we are to see presiding over our work this year. In addition to the close, rich ties of alliance and friendship between France and Canada, in recent years our delegation has come to value your authority and vast experience.

Speaking on behalf of the European Twelve, the representative of Greece has set forth our common viewpoint on the general position of the countries of the European Community with respect to security. In the Europe we are building, we want our positions to grow ever closer on essential questions, including those of security and disarmament, but without any country having to renounce its own identity. For that reason I wish today to complement that earlier statement by stating the views of France.

I shall begin with the recent experience of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and shall then discuss the three major areas of disarmament: nuclear, outer space and conventional. Finally, because of its timeliness, I shall deal more specifically with chemical disarmament.

As to the third special session devoted to disarmament, this is not the time to look backward and hold forth at length. The intervening summer has given us time better to assess the results and to begin to reach a common understanding - though there are subtle differences between those who think it would be difficult to do better and those who consider it best to admit the reality of defeat. For our part, we wish to stress the ambivalent character of the session, which was both disappointing and encouraging.

(Mr. Morel, France)

The lack of a final result did not erase the progress made at the session. The mobilization of the international community; the intensification of the debate on disarmament concepts, without exclusive emphasis on nuclear disarmament; and the rapid development of horizontal topics such as verification, confidence-building measures, assistance, transparency, survey procedures and even mastery of sensitive technologies, the complex relationship between disarmament and development - in short, the consolidation of the institutional machinery of multilateral disarmament, including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research: all are reasons to reactivate and intensify our work.

To be sure, we did not finish our work, and perhaps we feel we did not accomplish our mission. Lingering rigidity hampered the emergence of a realistic concept of multilateral disarmament. But we believe none the less that a renewal was begun, and that we must continue working accordingly. In this connection, the success enjoyed this year by the United Nations, and in particular by the Secretary-General, in the settlement or calming of several major regional conflicts shows that this is not the time for disappointment; on the contrary, we must affirm the role multilateral disarmament must play in international security arrangements.

We must not resort again to ready-made formulas or to well-known stereotypes. Let us start out with the facts. In both the bilateral and the multilateral spheres, the results are clear.

The conclusion of a Treaty on Soviet and United States intermediate-range nuclear forces - the INF Treaty - was a very important step. Its implementation and the beginning of actual destruction of weapons make the process difficult to reverse. But at the same time we must note that while the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in United States and Soviet strategic forces remains unfulfilled, there is less reason for failure. The scope of the reductions is becoming less certain:

(Mr. Morel, France)

indeed, there is no assurance that a future treaty will cover all United States and Soviet strategic weapons. Active negotiations are under way, and everyone understands the extreme difficulty of some of the unresolved points. But it is still indispensable to call on the two greatest Powers to remain strictly within the framework they themselves defined.

We regret too that there has been insufficient progress in multilateral disarmament. But progress made at Vienna - in a framework that may be regional but is decisive for the development of East-West relations and for international security - shows clearly that conventional disarmament has finally found an appropriate negotiating forum. Likewise, in the area of chemical weapons recent experience shows that the international community possesses the legal instruments and means of negotiation to make progress towards a total ban. I shall come back to this subject.

The relationship between the bilateral, the regional and the multilateral cannot be defined, much less decreed, once and for all. If everyone thought that a disarmament effort in any sphere could improve security, no hierarchy, no exclusivity, no priority could block it.

There is no better example of this than verification, which has benefited from a general agreement in principle. After the first step taken in the 1986 Stockholm document, the impressive architecture of the INF Treaty machinery, the progress made for over a year in the chemical weapons negotiations at Geneva, and the work of the Disarmament Commission last May ensured that the basic rules of verification would be the object of very wide and increasing consensus. We must, of course, ensure the specificity of agreed measures. What is good for verification of a Soviet-United States agreement on a specific category of weapons is not necessarily

(Mr. Morel, France)

good for other negotiations, or even transferable to them. Nevertheless, every negotiation draws directly or indirectly on experience gained in other negotiations.

We are all interested in maintaining openness in our work at the United Nations with respect to verification. For that reason, we have decided to join Canada in submitting a draft resolution on a study by the Secretary-General on verification. We hope that text, which takes up the results we nearly achieved at the end of the third special session on disarmament, will remain what it was at the outset and is now: a compromise text that can be supported by all delegations.

(Mr. Morel, France)

With regard to the major areas of multilateral negotiation, beginning with the nuclear weapon, I wish to reiterate the importance that France attaches to nuclear deterrence, which continues to be the basis of its own security, the security of Europe and, in more general terms, the balance in East-West relations. We all know that the nuclear weapon is at the centre of a great debate. But we should not mistake our target. It is not deterrence per se, the purpose of which is to prevent war, that is absurd, harmful and dangerous; but, rather, the quest for absolute security, at the expense of the security of another, and the pointless, costly and destabilizing accumulation of weapons.

As for our participation, in due time, in nuclear disarmament, the President of France reiterated here in New York on 29 September the three conditions he had already defined in 1983 in the General Assembly: a drastic reduction in the arsenals of the two major Powers; the ending of the anti-missile, anti-satellite and anti-submarine escalation; and the correction of conventional imbalances and elimination of the chemical threat.

With regard to nuclear tests, I remind members of the decision, announced by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs on 2 June at the third special session on disarmament, to proceed to annual notification of the number of tests undertaken in the previous calendar year. This is what we intend to do for the year 1988.

I need not remind the Committee that transparency and objectivity have always motivated our action with regard to the South Pacific States. We hope that objectivity will be the rule for everyone in this matter. That does not seem always to be the case, because the note by the Secretary-General (A/43/625), based on resolution 42/38 C, makes reference to facts about French tests furnished by certain States which, strangely enough, have not done the same in the case of other nuclear Powers. Does this mean that these are double standards?

(Mr. Morel, France)

In the debate in the Special Political Committee on the effects of ionizing radiation, certain people expressed regret that France had not adhered to the protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. At the third special session on disarmament, last June, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs set forth our country's position. I remind the Committee that the establishment of a nuclear-free zone must, in our view, meet three criteria. First, there must be unanimous consent by States. That condition is not met; it cannot be met, since, clearly, the Treaty of Rarotonga covers one State of the region that conducts nuclear tests. The second criterion is geographical relevance. We feel that this condition has not been met either, given the strategic context in the Pacific Ocean, which in our view, should be considered as a whole. The third criterion is military relevance. That does not apply in this case given the complete absence of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the area covered by the Treaty.

I wish to refer now to the prevention of an arms race in space - something to which France has long attached special importance. Recent developments in the debates between the United States and the Soviet Union should lead us, first, to reaffirm the crucial, indeed increasing, importance - of full respect for the provisions of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM), which although concluded between two countries, is generally regarded as playing an essential role in the maintenance of strategic stability and, therefore, of international security.

However, the prevention of an arms race in space cannot be the concern of two States alone. Increasingly, the international community should be in a position to prevent and correct threatening situations to take account of normal - even useful, stabilizing - developments in non-offensive military space activities and in research in the interest of greater compatibility between the various space systems.

(Mr. Morel, France)

In June we submitted three closely interrelated concepts: non-interference with peaceful space activities; the strengthening of the procedure for registration of objects in space devices; and framing a code of conduct in space - in other words, rules of behaviour concerning space objects.

Some people have proposed regrouping all activities relating to space under the auspices of a single world organization. Perhaps we shall get to that stage some day, but on such an important matter institutions must not precede needs. In any case, that would distract us from what is essential today - that is, the stage-by-stage strengthening of the international space régime by means of a number of specific measures.

Since 1978 France has proposed the creation of an international agency for monitoring by satellite. Our experience and the ensuing debates have led us to focus for the moment on the first stage proposed in the 1983 United Nations report and to suggest here, last June, the creation of an agency for the processing and interpretation of space images. As I have just said, we must improve the registration system and define the rules of behaviour. France, at an appropriate time, will make specific proposals to that end.

Concerning conventional disarmament, attention is centred on Vienna, and we can say that the mandate for new negotiations on conventional stability and confidence-building measures is almost a reality. We therefore continue to hope that the adoption of the substantive, balanced final document of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) at its meeting in Vienna will provide for new negotiations by the end of the year or, at the latest, early next year. France, in consultation with its partners and allies, is already actively preparing for the opening of those negotiations, and the President of the Republic confirmed here the importance that we attach to them.

(Mr. Morel, France)

Unlike the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions, these will not be alliance-to-alliance negotiations; each country will speak for itself. France intends to be active and constructive. It believes that there is now the possibility of arriving through negotiations at greater stability at lower levels of forces.

We are well aware of the historic nature of the task of gradually, but very specifically, reducing one of the essential elements in East-West confrontation. That is why we intend to submit to the First Committee a draft resolution emphasizing the importance of the stage that is nearing completion.

With regard to conventional weapons, we have noted recently, particularly during the third special session, a renewed interest in the question of transfers of weapons. This gave rise to a number of proposals, especially one concerning the establishment of a register. I cannot deny that my country has questions about this flood of suggestions.

(Mr. Morel; France)

We are all aware of the extreme difficulty we will face in this area. In more precise terms, what criteria would we use for dealing with questions of transfers within alliances and of weapons that are produced in co-operation?

Let us not be mistaken. We are quite ready to discuss, for example in the framework of the Disarmament Commission, the question of transfers of weapons. But we wish to sound a word of warning against the risk of a serious error in method. Before the international community is in a position to define concrete guidelines in this field, we must begin at the beginning, that is to say, we must have a thorough familiarity with the problem in all its aspects. We should therefore first of all study the possibility and the modalities for evaluation of international weapons transfers, and we all know that data and opinions differ considerably on this matter.

France has always favoured an exchange of objective data on military potential. This effort at transparency could be usefully applied, not only to national military expenses but also to the international weapons trade.

Now I wish to refer to the question of chemical disarmament. The President of France approved President Reagan's idea of an international conference devoted to the prohibition of chemical weapons. France today, as a depositary of the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925, wishes to invite all States parties and other interested countries participating in the work of the United Nations as members or observers to take part in an ad hoc conference to be held in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989.

The first goal of the conference would naturally be a formal confirmation by all parties of their full adherence to the Geneva Protocol. This is of course a political act intended to prevent any diminution of the strength of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons contained in the 1925 Protocol. In this connection the conference will not entail any legal changes in the Protocol since the Protocol does not envisage any amendment procedures.

(Mr. Morel, France)

However this confirmation will be made all the stronger if, at the Paris Conference, we can also register the adherence of new States parties. We would obviously want this to be the largest possible number.

At the same time, reaffirmation of the commitment entered into should be coupled with recognition of the urgent and priority nature of the negotiations on a Convention on total banning under way in Geneva in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. These two political steps can and should complement rather than detract from each other.

We are all at a crossroads: either we do nothing about the risk of further extension of the use of chemical weapons which would jeopardize any prohibition régime in advance, or we would fully restore the authority of the Protocol, and that would give the essential political momentum to bring to a close negotiations on a Convention ensuring universal, credible and lasting prohibition. The Paris Conference offers all States the opportunity to make that choice quite clearly.

It will help all the more in the work of preserving the authority of the Protocol and giving the necessary impetus to negotiations on the future convention that here in New York we have made our views clear on the indispensable role the United Nations should play.

In this context, why an ad hoc conference and not a United Nations conference? The answer to this question is first of all of a practical nature. We think that we should act quickly and United Nations procedures inevitably entail considerable delays. But there would also be political risk in establishing, without even wanting to, a parallel negotiating forum that would hamper the work in Geneva.

Quite obviously we count heavily on the active participation of the Secretary-General and the co-operation of the Secretariat.

(Mr. Morel; France)

In addition to this we would ask the General Assembly to lend its support to the conference, and, together with Canada and Poland, which are the sponsors of the general resolution on chemical weapons, we shall offer a specific proposal to that end.

The specific role to be played by the United Nations in the field of chemical weapons is that of demonstrating, encouraging and, to a certain extent, directly exercising the vigilance of the international community. Five years ago, France proposed that that essential role should be enhanced when it submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session resolution 37/98 D, and proposed establishing inquiry procedures for the Secretary-General in cases of allegations of use of chemical weapons. That procedure has demonstrated its usefulness and since last year enjoyed unanimous support, thanks to resolution 42/37 C. It should be further improved. In our view this is the task, which has now clearly become urgent, of the study group, which was created last year under the same resolution. In this connection we regret that it was not possible to finish the group's work and we hope that in the coming months its work will be completed so that the Secretary-General, with his own powers in this field, can submit better provisions to the forty-fourth session.

Flexibility is very important in the circumstances since it is important to avoid any specific legal mechanism which would conflict in any way with the one being negotiated in Geneva.

Finally there are the sanction powers of the Security Council, which bases its action on its own assessments. In order to avoid confusion we must rely on self-discipline and the judgement of States.

(Mr. Morel, France)

If we thus try to follow an overall approach, the task that lies before us in the coming weeks here in New York, and later at Geneva and Paris, consists in defining the appropriate balance between the vigilance of the international community, a reaffirmation of the prohibition of use, and the negotiation of the Convention.

(Mr. Morel, France)

As for the preparations for the Paris conference, it is clear from what I have said that it should be relatively free and easy and informal. We propose that the meeting be held at a high political level, and therefore be relatively brief, that it conclude with a short, concise document, and that it not spend time on technical negotiations.

My delegation will take part in the Committee's work after holding consultations with all interested delegations. At the same time my country will make known through diplomatic channels to States parties to the Protocol and other interested States the practical provisions that we have in mind. Then in mid-November, after our Committee has voted on the draft resolution on chemical disarmament, our delegation intends to organize here several informal meetings, open to all delegations, to arrange a preliminary exchange of views on the Paris conference.

That is the framework we propose. We do not conceal the complexity of the exercise, but we are very aware of the importance of the issue, and that concern should prevail. At such historic moments the international community must not be found wanting.

Mr. KRAVETS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman. Your knowledge of and wealth of experience in disarmament affairs will be of tremendous benefit to the Committee in its work. I wish you every success in your endeavours.

We are grateful to the delegations that supported the nomination of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic for the vice-chairmanship. I assure everyone that the representatives of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the First Committee will do their utmost to justify the confidence that has been placed in them and the honour done to their delegation.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

The discussion taking place in the Committee confirms the idea that dominated the general debate at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the recent discussions in the plenary meetings of the forty-third session: that mankind has entered upon a very important period in his history, which opens up new prospects of a nuclear-weapon-free, non-violent world, without intimidation, mutual threats or mistrust.

However, a radical turn for the better in this area has yet to be achieved. There are still huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons capable of destroying all living things on Earth many times over. The technological sophistication of weapons continues to increase and new types of weapons are being developed, while persistent attempts are made to take them into outer space.

All of these matters make increased efforts by the world community to develop and expand the disarmament process and make it irreversible urgently necessary.

A first practical step towards this objective was taken with the Treaty between the and the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty. The agreement was reached on the basis of a balance of interests, with each side, guided by common sense, making concessions. The result was beneficial for all and marked another step towards stronger universal security.

The INF Treaty provides an example of new political thinking in action. It represents the first measure of actual nuclear disarmament, which should be followed by other measures - above all those designed substantially to reduce nuclear weapons and, eventually, ensure their complete elimination. The negotiation of 50 per cent cuts in the strategic offensive arms of the Soviet Union and the United States in the context of compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile System (ABM) should undoubtedly have the highest priority. The results of the summit meeting in Moscow prove that this objective is realistic and feasible.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

The Ukrainian SSR, together with all the socialist countries, and many others, has firmly insisted on compliance with the ABM Treaty in the form in which it was signed in 1972, because partial nuclear disarmament measures will not yield the expected results if nuclear weapons are not barred from outer space. This is the responsibility of all States, without exception. Our Organization has an important role to play in this area. International mechanisms to prevent an arms race in outer space could be set up under United Nations auspices.

The Soviet Union has proposed that an international space inspectorate be established to bar weapons from outer space. The idea of establishing an international agency for monitoring by satellite is worth considering. The representative of France has just drawn our attention again to that initiative by his country. There are also other constructive proposals. We believe that the current session of the General Assembly will make a substantial contribution to their practical realization. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should be given a mandate enabling it to begin working without delay specifically to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The full potential of multilateral mechanisms has yet to be used to resolve the long-standing issue of a complete and comprehensive nuclear-test ban. The early preparation by the Conference of a multilateral draft treaty would be in keeping with the interests of all States and would constitute a major joint contribution to nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

We are convinced that all the necessary conditions already exist for reaching agreement at the Conference on the basic elements of an international mechanism to verify that nuclear tests are not conducted and on establishing a global radiation safety monitoring system, using space communications.

Bilateral Soviet/United States talks have an important role to play in multilateral efforts to find a radical solution to the nuclear-test-ban problem. In view of the present situation and the level of readiness of other nuclear States, the objective of the talks is to resolve the problem on a stage-by-stage basis through such intermediate phases as the limitation of the number and yield of nuclear tests. It is our view that this approach, too, is acceptable and should be supported by the world community.

Reduction of the yield and number of nuclear explosions, agreement on improved measures to verify compliance with the 1974 and 1976 Treaties and joint Soviet/United States experiments are all good and useful developments. However, the General Assembly should explicitly reiterate that a complete and comprehensive nuclear-test ban is the final objective of bilateral and multilateral efforts.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

This is a realistic and feasible goal. Valuable experience has been gained by the world community in the effective prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. Joint efforts should be made now to ban underground nuclear tests also.

The new situation provides better opportunities for implementing many ideas proposed by States towards the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various regions of the world. There can be no doubt that such zones strengthen the non-proliferation régime. That is why we believe that those who truly advocate the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should contribute to the creation of zones free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The world community is about to make another breakthrough in disarmament. I have in mind the sphere of chemical weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has done much to draft a text of a global convention on the comprehensive prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. The special importance of this document is already evident. The convention would be a symbol of how the extremely complex problem of disarmament can be successfully resolved by methods of multilateral diplomacy and would reflect the balance of interests of all States. We are aware that several provisions still have to be finalized in the talks. As in other cases, there is a need here for a scrupulous, thorough and balanced approach consistent with the interests of all sides. I should like to invite the participants in the talks to compare what has been done with what remains to be done, and I express the hope that this comparison will give them an impetus towards the early and successful completion of their work. That is what the whole of mankind expects.

While making head way in nuclear disarmament and outer space and in the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, it is important to begin without delay radical reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

The Ukrainian SSR is convinced that nuclear-free security based on conventional armaments sufficient for defensive, but not offensive, purposes is realistic and feasible. The concept of defensive sufficiency and non-offensive strategy requires a balance of forces at lower levels and a gradual change in military structures, with a view to eliminating the potential for a surprise attack and offensive operations.

Those questions have particular urgency for the European continent, where the concentration of armed forces and conventional armaments has reached a critical level. The fundamental position of the socialist countries on the reduction of conventional armaments in Europe was reiterated and elaborated in the documents adopted at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member States held last July in Warsaw. The Ukrainian SSR supports the early conclusion of work to finalize the mandate of the talks on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals and the reconvening of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament on that continent. In order to make head way in the talks and remove mutual suspicions, the Warsaw Treaty member States have proposed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries an exchange of data on armed forces and conventional armaments, to be verified through on-site inspections.

The time has come now to address the issue of the dismantling of all military bases in foreign territories. Any military presence should be confined to the area within national borders. As a first step towards resolving that problem, we feel that the proposal that United Nations Member States should submit to the Secretary-General on a regular basis data concerning foreign military presence on their territory is a timely one.

Equal, universal security for all requires the limitation and reduction of naval activities as well as intense military activities in various regions of the

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

world's oceans. That is a major global problem. However, a stage-by-stage approach can be used to start resolving this problem, including agreements on the simplest measures where a degree of understanding exists. Such measures should include, first of all, guarantees of the security of sea lanes and the extension of confidence-building measures to cover naval forces. The regional approach is also, in our view, effective.

Naturally, measures to limit naval activities should be applied first of all to countries having the biggest fleets in the world. More vigorous multilateral efforts are needed in the United Nations to draw up such measures. In view of its growing importance, the naval component of national military potentials should become the subject of most serious discussion at the talks to curb the arms race, rather than being excluded from the overall disarmament effort.

The Ukrainian SSR supports the proposal to convene a special international conference to discuss the limitation and reduction of naval forces as well as confidence-building measures, security and freedom of navigation on the high seas. It would be advisable to hold a special Security Council meeting to discuss these matters.

Current efforts to reduce armaments will yield concrete results only if there is more trust, more openness and more glasnost in the military sphere. These elements are a kind of driving force in the disarmament mechanism which should be given special attention. The Soviet-United States Treaty on the elimination of their intermediate- and shorter-range missiles provides an example of a sober-minded and rational approach to these matters.

Verification is an integral part of arms reduction and disarmament efforts and a most important means of building confidence and ensuring national security. Verification and compliance with disarmament agreements cannot be the exclusive prerogative of a few States. Mankind as a whole is interested in disarmament, and

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

that requires greater involvement by the United Nations in verification issues. We view as timely the proposal made by the Soviet Union at the third special session devoted to disarmament on the establishment under United Nations auspices of an international verification agency as a mechanism for broad international verification. The purpose of international verification is served also by proposals to establish a data bank and a mechanism to verify that nuclear tests are not being conducted. The Ukrainian SSR believes that the time has come to discuss these ideas seriously with a view to translating them gradually into practice, beginning with the simple co-ordinated measures.

The Ukrainian SSR is convinced that today as never before the United Nations can and should confirm its authority as a genuine centre for co-ordinating the efforts of all States to save the present and succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Two or three States, even the most powerful ones, cannot ensure peace, law and order. That is why the effectiveness of United Nations activities should be enhanced.

The increased moral and political importance of the disarmament documents adopted by consensus and a better use of the Security Council's potential as the body responsible under Article 26 of the United Nations Charter for "formulating ... plans ... for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments" could become major areas for the joint efforts of States in this regard.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Ideas put forward by the Ukrainian SSR and by the Mongolian People's Republic, the Polish People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic concerning ways and means of enhancing the role and efficiency of the Security Council in a search for short-term and long-term solutions to disarmament problems are contained in a joint document submitted to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/S-15/AC.1/2).

We also want to see the authority of the Secretary-General further strengthened. Everything should be done to help him to fulfil his responsibilities under the Charter as effectively as possible. We also think it important to do more to streamline the functioning of the First Committee on the basis of General Assembly resolution 42/42 N of 30 November 1987, to make the Conference on Disarmament more productive and to strengthen links between the United Nations and disarmament talks conducted outside the Organization.

Greater United Nations efficiency in disarmament should, we feel, be used to find feasible solutions, binding upon all, to the most urgent problems. Today, there is an urgent need to move away from the adoption of resolutions reflecting different positions in favour of consensus decisions leading to joint actions.

The broad involvement of world public opinion in disarmament problems is an important feature of contemporary international relations. That was amply demonstrated at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We are moved when we recall the atmosphere that prevailed in this room when representatives of non-governmental organizations spoke. As professional diplomats we should be self-critical and admit that in many cases the representatives of the public tend to show greater dynamism and stronger determination to achieve practical results.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

All of us should do our utmost to help the world peace movement. We should closely study and translate into action the many original ideas and opinions expressed by the participants in that movement. There is nothing wrong with that at all, since the security of all nations through disarmament should, in the final analysis, be the shared goal of both professional and non-professional diplomacy.

We are convinced that the internationalization of the efforts of States and multilateral co-operation in resolving the problems common to all mankind constitute the most important condition for the survival and progress of humanity. The current session of the General Assembly must make a substantive contribution to the solution of that vital problem.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): This year's session of the First Committee is convened against the backdrop of some encouraging developments in arms limitation and disarmament. However, welcome such developments are, ambivalence and mistrust - although they are showing signs of receding - continue to characterize both bilateral and multilateral negotiations in this field.

The convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has again rightly reaffirmed that disarmament is a common concern in which all nations have a legitimate role to play. The need for multilateral deliberations and multilateral agreements, and, thus, the indispensable role of the United Nations, were explicitly recognized. New disarmament initiatives were advanced, and there was a growing understanding of new concepts and approaches to security and disarmament. Although the special session did not adopt a consensus final declaration, it provided a global forum where the international community as a whole was able to devote its full attention to a comprehensive review and reassessment of the wide range of disarmament measures.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

The significant change in the international political climate, as evidenced in particular by the movement towards improving relations between the two super-Powers, has generated a more constructive atmosphere. Among the noteworthy developments are the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and the Moscow summit meeting of last June at which accords were reached on advance notification of ballistic-missile tests and the yield of each other's nuclear explosions. An agreement in principle was also reached on procedures restricting ground-based nuclear missiles to designated areas and on regulations limiting their movement. We hope that these measures will lead to more determined and decisive efforts on the core issue of strategic arms.

In addition, multilateral negotiations have made some modest progress in narrowing the differences on a chemical-weapons convention. Furthermore, the advances made in resolving various regional conflicts cannot but have beneficial effects on the field of disarmament as well. It is to be hoped that this new spirit of accommodation will contribute to the strengthening of co-operation among Member States and lead to substantive progress in disarmament.

None the less, it bears reiterating that the acquisition of armaments, both nuclear and conventional, has hardly shown any tangible sign of abatement. The grim reality is that weapons with incalculable consequences continue to be added to the arsenals of nations at an accelerated pace. Similarly, inexorable advances in research and development have led to new weapons systems and doctrines to justify their development and deployment. Overhanging all of that is the unimaginable yet real threat of nuclear war. Therefore, the challenge before us is to adopt

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effective strategies and measures to eliminate this pervasive threat to mankind. We need a fundamental reorientation of our thinking on disarmament and security in all its aspects, one involving, inter alia, a clear definition of the stages of nuclear disarmament, including the responsibilities of the nuclear Powers and the role of the non-nuclear States; the search for alternatives to reliance on nuclear weapons; and the conclusion of binding commitments by the nuclear States to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to the prevention of nuclear war.

With those overriding objectives in mind I should now like to turn to some of the priority items under consideration.

As we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water - the partial test-ban Treaty - we should recall that at the time of its signature the nuclear Powers solemnly undertook on the obligation to negotiate expeditiously a comprehensive test ban. Since then, however, efforts have proved a dismal failure. This is especially regrettable in that such a ban would have made a singular contribution to a deep reduction of strategic and other nuclear armaments by placing effective constraints on the qualitative development of ever-more potent and sophisticated weapons and weapons systems.

Under these circumstances various non-nuclear States have in recent years taken the lead in advancing viable proposals, especially in the field of verification. For its part, Indonesia, together with Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia, has submitted a proposal to convene a conference at the earliest possible date to consider an amendment to the partial test-ban Treaty that would convert it into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We hope that the Committee will act positively on this initiative, since we continue to believe that it would

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constitute a major turning-point in the long and arduous road towards a total ban on nuclear tests and contribute significantly to the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime.

As delegations are also aware, it has been two decades since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was offered for signature and ratification. As a party to that Treaty, Indonesia continues to regard it as a vital instrument among the body of treaties governing nuclear arms. At the same time, however, my Government shares the serious misgivings of other non-nuclear States over the discriminatory and selective application of its main provisions.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

In order to overcome this anomalous situation, my delegation will extend its support for the inclusion on the agenda of the next Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference the question of the establishment of regional fuel-cycle centres, an international fuel bank and a special fund for nuclear assistance. In this, the International Atomic Energy Agency should become an instrument in building a framework for multilateral co-operation in non-military applications of nuclear energy by expanding its technical assistance programme, support for regional co-operative agreements and projects based on regionally agreed priorities. What is necessary is the emergence of a global consensus on equitable and long-term arrangements that apply equally to all States.

As a further reflection of Indonesia's commitment to the non-proliferation régime and to its strengthening, my delegation has consistently sought to promote South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This and similar initiatives in other regions stem largely from a determination to enhance regional security by removing ourselves from great-Power rivalry and their strategic competition. It is also a consequence of the threat posed to the environment by future nuclear testing and the dumping of nuclear waste. It is to be underscored that a treaty, freely arrived at among the regional States themselves to ban nuclear weapons from their territories, is a right stipulated in article VII of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Therefore, the nuclear Powers are obligated to respect the expressed will of non-nuclear States and to facilitate the creation of such zones rather than to oppose them.

A growing threat with incalculable consequences for disarmament is the extension of the arms race into outer space. Indeed, the development of strategic defence capabilities and the refinement of anti-satellite weapons has introduced destabilizing elements into an already precarious strategic environment. These

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ominous developments cannot but lead to a quantum leap in vertical proliferation and thereby seriously undermine the viability of existing agreements on arms limitation.

My Government has additional reasons to oppose strongly the militarization of outer space, deriving from Indonesia's geographic location and configuration. For a nation consisting of thousands of islands girding the equator across 3,000 miles contiguous to the geostationary orbit, the unhindered functioning of our communications satellites is vital to our domestic telecommunications systems. The negative implications of space-based defence systems for peaceful satellite communications, therefore, cannot but be disquieting to my delegation. Consequently, we believe that urgent action should be initiated, including the strengthening of the current legal régime and the banning of anti-satellite weapons in order to ensure that the last frontier of mankind will be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

When the Indian Ocean was declared a zone of peace nearly two decades ago, there was a palpable sense of expectation of the self-evident benefits its implementation would bring to regional security and global peace. Indeed, with its strategic location, major sea lanes vital for international commerce and communications, vast amounts of mineral and other natural resources, the littoral and hinterland States have long sought to develop their nations in an atmosphere of stability and harmony.

Yet from the very beginning the objective of zonal peace has been beset by the ever-increasing number and size of naval manoeuvres, and other manifestations of military power projection by external States. The principle of freedom of the high seas was often used as a pretext for the ever-growing military activities in the Indian Ocean. Likewise, the security and political climate in the region has been

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invoked as the primary reason for the postponement of the long-pending international conference on the Indian Ocean. However, with the advances made in the settlement of conflicts in regions contiguous to the Indian Ocean, Indonesia calls upon those who have opposed the conference proposal in the past to reconsider their position and join with the international consensus calling for its early convening in order to attain the objectives of the Declaration.

In the same context, the threat posed to global peace by the ever-increasing naval forces, especially in their nuclear dimension, has in recent sessions become a focus of our attention. We have all become aware that among the dangerously neglected aspects of the naval arms race are the ability of sea-based nuclear forces, including tactical nuclear weapons, deployed throughout the world and along any coastal point which can place any State in serious jeopardy.

As a maritime nation, Indonesia is deeply concerned by the horizontal and vertical proliferation of sea-based strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. We strongly believe, therefore, that it is essential to build on the progress already made by the Disarmament Commission in defining certain principles and establishing guidelines on measures to limit naval armaments as well as confidence-building at sea. This question should also be approached in the context of the feasibility of negotiating a multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents on and over the high seas, the updating of the existing laws on sea warfare as well as a possible role of naval organizations for ocean management and the peaceful uses of the world's seas in the interest of all mankind.

The inordinate lethal effects of chemical weapons led to their categorization as early as 1948 as weapons of mass destruction. The search for an international instrument to ban these weapons has been spurred by their spread and by evidence of their use in recent conflict situations.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

As a result, the dedicated and determined work of the Conference on Disarmament has over the years led to considerable progress. It is therefore a matter of deep regret to my delegation that the Conference on Disarmament was able to resolve only partially the remaining outstanding issues. Indeed, many delegations in that forum, including my own, were disappointed that a finalized draft convention could not be presented to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We none the less believe that a chemical-weapons convention is of such importance to all States that the remaining areas of disagreement, especially those concerning legal and technical areas as well as technological and economic co-operation, can and should be overcome. Hence, negotiations should be pursued within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament as a matter of urgency. Any other course of action would only retard the present negotiations and thereby undermine the ongoing process of the early finalization of a convention.

The global prevalence and extensive use of conventional weapons as well as their ever greater sophistication and lethality have profoundly changed our understanding of conventional weapons and have transformed our traditional views on conventional warfare. Moreover, their astronomical costs, pressures towards acquisition and the potential for conflicts waged with conventional weapons escalating into nuclear confrontation have rightly convinced many States of the need to control and curb the development, production and transfer of conventional armaments.

In identifying possible concrete measures, it is incumbent on those States which already possess the largest military arsenals and which produce, sell, acquire and deploy the largest share of these armaments, to cease their untenable assertions that conventional arms in the possession of developing countries can

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threaten international peace and security more than the nuclear and conventional weapons of the major Powers and their blocs. The task of halting and reversing the conventional arms race must also be perceived in the context of both supplier and recipient countries and undertaken as an integrated process rather than an aggregate of isolated and unrelated measures.

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In today's complex and increasingly insecure world, there is no practical alternative to meaningful international co-operation if there is to be hope for our common future. For we have reached a stage where interdependence in the field of peace and security has become a reality. The path towards global survival is through productive multilateral negotiations and not through competition in armaments. Yet there has been no movement away from the bilateralization of disarmament negotiations; they continue to be conducted within the context of strategic competition. Thus, important and urgent questions, especially with regard to nuclear arms, have been arbitrarily removed from the jurisdiction of the Conference on Disarmament. Consequently, since its reconstitution nearly a decade ago, no agreed framework has been found for genuine negotiations on issues of such vital concern to humanity. The role of the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating body, must be strengthened and not weakened, if the problem of nuclear armaments is to be dealt with as a global question. It should be emphasized that bilateral negotiations should complement and reinforce the quest for disarmament at the multilateral level. It is therefore essential to reaffirm the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in disarmament and to rededicate ourselves to the enhancement of the effectiveness of the machinery and procedures of the multilateral disarmament process.

Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan): May I begin by extending to you, Sir our sincere felicitations on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee. I assure you of our fullest co-operation in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities. Your election is not only a recognition of your personal qualities but also a tribute to the great country which you represent. It is reassuring to know that, under your capable stewardship, our deliberations will be marked with success.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

Ten years ago, the General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to disarmament, adopted, by consensus, its Final Document which enshrined the commitment of the international community to halt and reverse the arms race. It was an historic water-shed in a long and often frustrating quest for an international order that would enable nations to ensure their security, not through more, but through fewer, weapons.

This year again, the General Assembly has been devoting its endeavours to promoting the goals of general and complete disarmament against the background of an intensified debate on global disarmament issues and the salutary developments in the disarmament negotiations between the super-Powers, negotiations which have produced encouraging results, including the unprecedented agreement to eliminate an entire class of intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear missiles.

The third special session witnessed an extensive and comprehensive debate on the fundamental issues of security and survival in the nuclear age. The close relationship between disarmament, development and security and the concern for progress on these issues was made manifestly clear in the deliberations. Equal stress was laid on the need to reinforce the multilateral disarmament process with a view to addressing, not individual, but rather the collective concerns of the international community.

The absence of a concluding document at the third special session should not, however, divert attention from the gains which resulted from this session. While there were obvious differences on certain key issues, the discussions on the Chairman's paper revealed agreement on many important subjects and an emerging consensus on others. As the Secretary-General describes it in his report on the work of the Organization for 1988:

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"... the bulk of the text proposed for adoption was generally agreed upon."

(A/43/1, p. 13)

The gains were real and to quote the Secretary-General again:

"... the emergence of a better-focused outlook on disarmament was confirmed by a shared acceptance of some important propositions". (A/43/1, p. 13)

We believe that preserving these gains would advance the process of building a transparent edifice of disarmament, at a time when propitious conditions prevail in the global arena.

The present arms race, particularly in its nuclear dimensions, seems to be propelled by a volition of its own and does not make sense even in the context of mutual deterrence with which the great Powers threaten not only each other but also our planetary existence. Over-insurance with over-kill is not the answer either from the political or from the military point of view. Every day mankind has to live with the horror of 50,000 nuclear warheads poised for total catastrophe, not to mention the overflowing inventories of conventional weapons with which the major military alliances, as well as major Powers, have laced themselves. The continuing build-up of nuclear-weapon systems of ever-increasing sophistication and lethality is justified by the argument that nuclear deterrence has effectively served to prevent conflict in Europe for the past 43 years. This is an atavistic, not a rational, argument.

The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Missiles and the negotiations on the reduction of strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent highlight two fundamental lessons: first, that the elimination of nuclear weapons is a realistic objective which can be achieved in a manner that enhances the security of all concerned; secondly, that when the necessary political will exists, problems of a technical nature do not present insurmountable

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obstacles. Therefore, we were heartened by the statement made by the President of the United States in the plenary Assembly, when, referring to the ongoing negotiations within the framework of the strategic arms reduction talks and the finalization of a treaty, he said:

"I can tell you that a year from now [it] is a possibility - more than a possibility." (A/43/PV.4, p. 32)

Our inter-independent existence admits of no alternative to a world of peace.

Man's mastery over science and technology has left us with no alternative.

Avoidance of nuclear catastrophe, a fundamental moral imperative of our age, must remain our foremost priority.

The non-nuclear-weapon States, on their part, have made a signal contribution to the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons by voluntarily renouncing the nuclear option in the expectation that States possessing nuclear weapons would also renounce those weapons. They are, therefore, legitimately entitled to legally binding guarantees from the nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons. The unilateral declarations made in this regard have, however, fallen short of the credible assurances sought by the non-nuclear-weapon States. It is essential that the nuclear-weapon States concerned pay heed to the repeated calls of the non-nuclear-weapon States for security assurances which are necessary for an effective non-proliferation régime.

For more than 25 years, the importance of a nuclear-test ban has been fully recognized as central to the process of nuclear disarmament. A treaty prohibiting all nuclear-test explosions by all countries in all environments for all times is long overdue. It must not be delayed any further. It would make a unique contribution to ending the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and preventing their proliferation. In the past, this issue was complicated by the spectre of technical difficulties which was raised by some to justify the need for

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

their continuing programmes of nuclear testing. In recent times, developments in the field of seismic monitoring have made it abundantly clear that verification does not pose any problem and cannot be used as an excuse to stall negotiations. The sophistication of seismic instruments required to detect explosions has reached a stage where, according to experts, a yield of one kiloton can now be identified. Such detection would preclude the possibility of clandestine military tests.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

On earlier occasions my delegation has, in this Committee, declared the unwavering commitment of Pakistan to nuclear non-proliferation. We believe that the spread of nuclear weapons to more than the present five nuclear-weapon States will only make our world feel more insecure. It is therefore important to preserve and strengthen the existing non-proliferation régime and to supplement it with other measures, at the global and regional levels, such as the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace to allay the security concerns of non-nuclear States.

We are firm in our resolve to keep our region free from nuclear weapons. Pakistan does not possess nuclear weapons, nor does it have any intention of acquiring them. In South Asia, nuclear proliferation concerns reflect a history of past tensions and mistrust. In order to allay misunderstanding or suspicions, the effective solution lies in a regional approach, with each State accepting equal and non-discriminatory obligations. We see merit in this regional approach, which holds increasing promise the world over.

All the States of South Asia have declared, at the highest level, that they will not acquire or develop nuclear weapons. We welcome these statements and hope that others will see the wisdom of converting unilateral professions into treaty obligations. In fact Pakistan has made several proposals in this regard. We remain ready to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons simultaneously with India; to accept full-scope safeguards on our nuclear programme simultaneously with India; to conclude a bilateral agreement with India for the mutual inspection of each other's nuclear facilities; to make a joint declaration with India renouncing nuclear weapons; and to enter into a bilateral nuclear-test-ban agreement with India.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

We are prepared to accept any equitable and non-discriminatory agreement, with effective verification arrangements, that would commit the countries of the region in a legally binding manner not to acquire or produce nuclear weapons. Conscious of the important role that the United Nations has to play in the disarmament field, we have even proposed that, in order to explore the possibilities of such an agreement, a conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia be convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of the regional and other interested States.

The need to limit and reduce conventional weapons, armed forces and military budgets is increasingly coming to the fore. The fact that these issues are now receiving the attention that they merit is to be welcomed. The concern over the escalation of global expenditure on conventional armed forces and weapons, which accounts for four fifths of the total amount spent on armaments, is legitimate.

In the area of conventional disarmament, perhaps even more so than in the case of nuclear disarmament, it is the regional approach which offers the most realistic prospects for success. The impulse for high military spending in a given region derives in large part from local factors, from unresolved territorial disputes, denial of the right of self-determination, ambitions for regional hegemony, foreign occupation or military intervention. The aim of a regional disarmament process should be to establish a mutually acceptable military equilibrium among the regional States and to exclude the military presence of foreign forces. In determining such a balance, the capacity of each State for indigenous production of armaments, acquisitions from external sources and the level of sophistication of arms should be taken into account. Measures to create a regional balance could include the renunciation of certain types of advanced weapons, agreed ceilings on armed forces, elimination of the capability of launching surprise attacks and

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large-scale military manoeuvres, and geographical restrictions on deployment of armed forces.

The arms race, in many regions, is fuelled by the efforts of the militarily most powerful State to attain a position of unchallenged superiority. This can only exacerbate tensions, increase the danger of conflict and thereby condemn the States of the region to a vicious circle of ever increasing levels of forces and armaments and diminished security. States which are in a preponderant military position in a particular region therefore bear a special responsibility to promote and initiate arms limitations and reductions.

It is our conviction that the edifice of global peace and security can be reinforced if countries in various regions of the world undertake to formalize their commitment to restrain the arms race and to promote their own security at the lowest possible level of armaments through solemn regional commitments.

While humankind struggles to bring a runaway arms race on earth under control, it has also to contend with the new threat of the militarization of outer space. There is an imminent danger of the deployment of weapons based in space or directed against other objects in space or on Earth. Such a development, enormously wasteful in resources and costs, would be highly destabilizing. It must be averted before it is too late.

In view of the new possibilities for military uses of outer space opened up by recent and projected scientific and technological advances, the present legal régime, which must be scrupulously observed, will not be adequate to meet the challenge of preventing an arms race in outer space. It is necessary to strengthen existing legal norms and to supplement them with new rules so that outer space will be reserved exclusively for peaceful exploration. In this context, greater

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transparency in the activities of the space Powers would serve an important confidence-building function.

The use of space-based remote-sensing and surveillance techniques today offers a unique opportunity to the international community to monitor compliance with disarmament agreements. This capability has so far remained the monopoly of a few technologically advanced States. We believe that these techniques should be made available to all States on an equal and non-discriminatory basis through an appropriate international institution. Outer space is the province of mankind, and military activities in this environment have a bearing on the security of every nation. Effective disarmament measures in this domain can be negotiated only in a multilateral forum. Pakistan therefore supports the early establishment of an international space monitoring agency. Such an agency could make a positive contribution to verification, confidence-building and transparency.

No one can condone the use, in any circumstances, of chemical weapons. The international community has expressed its horror and sense of outrage at their recent use. But this will not suffice. There is an urgent need to finalize the chemical-weapons convention, under negotiation in Geneva. Pakistan favours a comprehensive, effective, verifiable and equitable ban on these weapons of mass destruction. It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament, with all the earnestness at its command, will approach the remaining outstanding issues in a spirit of compromise and bring to fruition years of labour.

The world has been witnessing an unrestrained escalation in the naval arms race, both in its quantitative and in its qualitative aspects. The expansion and modernization of naval forces by the major naval Powers combined with the increased sophistication of naval-based arms systems, the deployment at sea of nuclear weapons, both strategic and tactical, and the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines have given an awesome capability to the navies of a few States. As a

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result, the security of the small and medium-sized coastal States is now threatened from the sea on an unprecedented scale. The question of naval disarmament and the placing of limits on the military uses of the high seas, therefore, deserve to be addressed without delay.

Adequate verification and complaint procedures are vital to the implementation of disarmament agreements. Effective measures to verify compliance, deter violations and create a climate of confidence. We welcome a growing acceptance of on-site inspection and other intrusive methods of verification. Advances in science and technology have greatly improved the capability of monitoring compliance.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

The use of these techniques, which are at present possessed by a few countries, should be made available to all States on a basis of equality and universality. We therefore support the establishment of a verification system, under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to enable the international community to verify compliance with disarmament agreements.

Verification is not, however, an end in itself. It is equally important for the international community to have at its disposal effective measures to take concerted action to enforce compliance, in case it is established through verification that a violation of an agreed disarmament measure has taken place.

The remorseless pace at which military technology is advancing holds out the grim possibility of the emergence of new weapon systems which are deadlier, more accurate and of greater reach in the shortest time. It is imperative that the temptation to use technological advances to obtain military superiority be resisted. Experience shows that such advantages are short-lived. The quest for new types of weapons at great cost may improve military capability but will not necessarily result in increased security.

It is true that the scientific-technological revolution cannot and must not be controlled, but it should still be possible through agreements to place constraints on its dangerous military applications.

The responsibility we shoulder is heavy. And the answers lie, not in squandering a trillion dollars on armaments every year when a majority of the world's population suffers from economic deprivation, hunger and disease: it is to those problems that our energies should be directed and against them that our wars should be waged.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): This session of the First Committee takes place in the aftermath of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-III), which ended barely three and a half months ago. When we recall that the session was convened in response to the overwhelming desire of the international community that urgent measures be taken to halt and reverse the aimless drift of mankind towards annihilation by the unrestrained arms race, especially the nuclear-arms race, we cannot but conclude that SSOD-III was a lost opportunity. The Nigerian delegation cannot disguise its disappointment over the failure of the session to reach a consensus which would have given the much-needed impetus to the multilateral disarmament process. Even more pathetic was the fact that areas of convergence could not be crystallized into a consensus document, the more so when it is realized that the session took place against the background of highly improved super-Power relations, which had hitherto deteriorated and had provided a ready excuse for the lack of progress on disarmament issues.

The Nigerian delegation does not intend to engage in the futile exercise of conducting a post-mortem examination of SSOD-III in order to determine what went wrong or where to ascribe blame. We must all have made our own assessment of the outcome of the session. Nigeria would prefer at this stage to be optimistic and consider SSOD-III a positive development, in the sense that the moral lessons learnt from its failure will spur us both in this Committee and in other disarmament forums to work in concert for the realization of peace and security.

All States represented here have pledged themselves under the Charter of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Regrettably, the period in which we live has become the most heavily militarized of all time. The qualitative and quantitative development of weapons of warfare, especially nuclear weapons, and the escalating arms race have placed mankind so

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dangerously on the narrow edge between catastrophe and survival that, unless we act now to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race, doomsday may well be on our doorstep.

A change of attitude and the development of new ideas to tackle the problems of disarmament are now imperative. Conflict between people may be inevitable as long as there are differing points of view. This does not however mean that those who differ must resort to armed conflict or, indeed, accumulate arms in constant readiness for war. The resources currently devoted to arms, the level of accumulation and the destructive power and technological sophistication of modern weapons, especially nuclear weapons, call for urgent action to rescue mankind from possible annihilation.

It is against this background that Nigeria welcomed the tremendous improvement in East-West relations, which has already resulted in the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - between the two principal nuclear-weapon States and their pledge to negotiate a 50-per-cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. Nigeria had hoped that the window of opportunity opened before the international community by this Treaty would have provided the opportunity for the commencement of effective multilateral disarmament negotiations. In spite of substantial progress that has been made in the bilateral negotiations between the super-Powers, the positive complementary multilateral efforts should not be relegated to the background.

While welcoming the INF Treaty, the Nigerian delegation would like to sound a note of caution that the general euphoria with which the Treaty was received could very easily become ephemeral if a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is not urgently concluded. In the absence of progress on a nuclear-test ban, the bilateral achievements run the risk of being seen simply as a smokescreen for the replacement of quantity with quality. Indeed, quantitative reductions are not enough, since

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such reductions could easily be offset by qualitative improvements in nuclear weaponry. It is in this regard that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban has become imperative. A test ban would provide an effective means to prevent the arms race from assuming a qualitative dimension and support efforts towards real nuclear disarmament.

The conclusion of such a treaty has for long been considered the most urgent task before the Conference on Disarmament. Yet the work of the Conference on this priority item has not been satisfactory. In an effort to find a possible common denominator for the commencement of substantive work on the item this year, members of the Group of 21 presented a proposal calling for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the item "with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty". The introduction of this proposal was the only major development on the question this year. Regrettably, it did not find favour with some delegations, who evidently preferred the step-by-step approach adopted by the super-Powers in their bilateral talks on the question. This step-by-step approach, which provides for continued testing at an agreed yield and time interval, is unhelpful to speedy negotiations. Nigeria cannot subscribe to a legitimization of tests in any form or for any reason. Such an approach, if condoned, would defer indefinitely the goal of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. The question of a nuclear-test ban has been considered by this forum for almost four decades. We must now live up to our responsibilities and take such actions as would facilitate the urgent conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

A comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty followed by a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, and reductions in existing stockpiles with a view to their ultimate elimination are the outstanding measures the international community must urgently take if mankind is to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war.

July 1988 marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and August 1988 the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. Nigeria is a party to both Treaties, and subscribed to them in the belief that they would contribute to international peace and security. Both Treaties have as their major goal the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons. It would be wrong, therefore, to assume that they have so far achieved the desired objectives.

Both Treaties imposed the obligation on nuclear-weapon State parties to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and to continue negotiations to this end. As we are painfully aware, the nuclear-weapon State parties to the two Treaties have not merely continued, but have even intensified, their nuclear-weapon testing in complete disregard of their Treaty obligations. By so doing they have eroded confidence in the Treaties; but more seriously, they have escalated the nuclear-arms race to the detriment of mankind.

The security assurances provided for in the non-proliferation Treaty have been subjected to various interpretations. The refusal of the nuclear-weapon State parties to the non-proliferation Treaty to provide legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon State parties, especially those that do not belong to either of the two military alliances, seriously calls into question the utility of the non-proliferation Treaty. Unless non-nuclear-weapon States that have renounced the

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nuclear option in a legally binding manner under the non-proliferation Treaty obtain legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and unless their rights are recognized within the context of the Treaty, those States will not feel justified in the action they have taken in the interest of humanity. It is for that reason that the Nigerian delegation considers as imperative the conclusion of an additional protocol to the Treaty, to provide such assurances. Until this is done, there may be no incentive for some non-nuclear-weapon States to endorse the extension of the life of the Treaty when it expires in 1995.

My delegation is pleased with the emerging role of verification in disarmament agreements. We share the view that specific verification procedures are paramount in the successful implementation of any disarmament agreement. It must, however, be made clear that verification cannot replace the will of States to reach agreement and to fulfil in good faith their undertakings in such agreements.

The weight of monitoring compliance with the terms of any disarmament agreement will no doubt rest primarily with the parties. However, even in bilateral disarmament agreements that touch on nuclear weapons the universal fear engendered by the existence and possible use of this category of weapons makes it essential to insist on a role for a multilateral verification mechanism under the United Nations. Provision for verification by challenge, which features in the INF Treaty, is likely to recur in many subsequent agreements. This is an appropriate area in which the United Nations can play a role. Obviously, resort to challenge will not be made lightly by either party to the agreement. However, if it arises, a third-party inspector drawn from the United Nations mechanism would be reassuring. This does not demand, particularly at this initial stage of nuclear disarmament, an expensive apparatus in the United Nations, but it does require

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recognition by both super-Powers that the United Nations embodies international interests in nuclear disarmament.

In his statement before the General Assembly at its 10th plenary meeting, on 29 September 1988, my Foreign Minister expressed concern about the possible hostile use of radioactive and toxic wastes and called upon the General Assembly to mandate the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a draft convention on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes for hostile purposes. The call came amidst growing international awareness of the hazardous effects of radioactive and toxic wastes and the overwhelming desire of the international community that urgent steps be taken to protect mankind from the horrors that would result from the use of such lethal wastes for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

The harmful effects of radioactive and toxic wastes on both human life and the environment make such wastes powerful means of conducting warfare. The timely call by my Minister to prevent the possibility of radioactive and toxic wastes being used as weapons was aimed at achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament.

The Nigerian delegation is aware of the efforts being made both by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with regard to the management of nuclear and toxic wastes. My delegation fully endorses the call on the Director-General of IAEA to establish a working group of experts to elaborate a code for international transactions involving nuclear wastes. My delegation equally appreciates the efforts being made by UNEP to elaborate a global convention on the control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. These efforts are very helpful and will complement the international convention proposed by my Minister on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

The Nigerian delegation is pleased with the progress made thus far by the Conference on Disarmament on the elaboration of a draft convention on chemical weapons. At this concluding stage, when attention is being given to some of the details or other aspects of the draft convention which were set aside at earlier stages of the negotiations, my delegation would like to make some pertinent observations.

Chemical weapons are weapons of mass destruction, which are next to nuclear weapons in their lethality. When the convention is concluded it will be the most comprehensive multilateral disarmament instrument ever negotiated. Parties to the convention will be required not only to renounce the chemical weapons option but also effectively to destroy all stocks of chemical weapons under their control, and also their production facilities. Compliance with the convention will be assured under a strict international régime. Non-parties will, however, have no obligations under the convention. Since chemical weapons are relatively easy to acquire, it stands to reason that the parties will suffer an undue military disadvantage if no provision is made in the convention to deter non-parties from waging chemical warfare against parties. That consideration becomes very relevant when we recall the confirmed reports of the use of chemical weapons in warfare in recent times, in violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Unless a mechanism that would deter non-parties from taking advantage of the vulnerability of others is incorporated in the convention, many States which would otherwise become parties to the convention may not consider it expedient to do so if a potential adversary is considered likely to stay out of the convention. This could then turn into a vicious circle which in the final analysis could adversely affect the convention.

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It bears repeating that outer space, our last frontier, is the common heritage of mankind, to which the arms race must not be extended. Activities in the exploration and use of outer space must be carried out in a peaceful manner and in accordance with international law. As is now obvious, the existing legal régime governing States' activities in outer space has been overtaken by developments in science and technology. An urgent need now exists for the régime to be consolidated and reinforced in order to prevent the extension of the arms race there. Mankind stands to benefit if the Conference on Disarmament could mandate the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space to commence effective negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A non-negotiating mandate is no longer helpful.

As Committee members are aware, Nigeria was instrumental in the establishment of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Training and Advisory Services Programme during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Today, that programme has proved to be most useful in that it has succeeded in producing a core of disarmament officials, from developing and developed countries alike, thus creating a vital resource in the promotion of disarmament measures. My delegation takes justifiable satisfaction in this achievement.

In this regard, I wish to place on record our deep appreciation to the Disarmament Fellowship Training and Advisory Services Programme and to the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Japan and Sweden, whose Governments have extended invitations to the Fellows for study visits in their respective countries. Similarly, I am pleased to announce that Nigeria will be hosting the subregional disarmament

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training programme for West Africa early next year. We hope that such constructive disarmament training programmes will be held in other regions soon.

Finally, in declaring the 1970s as the first disarmament decade, the international community had expected that the goal of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the elaboration of a treaty on general and complete disarmament under effective international control, would be attained by the end of the decade. It was gratifying to note that this Organization was not discouraged by the failure to achieve the aims and objectives of the decade as set out in General Assembly resolution 2602 E (XXIV) of 16 December 1969. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Disarmament Commission, in Supplement No. 42 (A/35/42), paragraph 19, elaborated the elements for the declaration of the 1980s as the second disarmament decade. The goals and principles of the decade were largely unimplemented in spite of the glimmer of hope that appeared towards the end.

Considering the current international political climate, occasioned by the improved super-Power relations, which has resulted in arms-reduction talks, my delegation hopes that the momentum in the disarmament process can be maintained. Hence, my delegation wishes to propose that the 1990s be declared the third United Nations disarmament decade. The Nigerian delegation will be prepared to commence consultations with others with a view to arriving at consensus on a draft procedural resolution that will mandate the Disarmament Commission to commence work on the declaration at its 1989 substantive session. We believe that such a declaration would enhance the attainment of international peace and stability.

Mr. FAU (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Uruguay welcomes your chairmanship of this Committee, Sir, which is well deserved recognition of your diplomatic merits and your authority on disarmament questions and on matters of international security. It is also a tribute to the major role

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that Canada, a friendly country, has been playing in areas of growing importance, such as that of verification, whose expansion my country views as essential to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in these fields.

The delegation of Uruguay once again confirms in this forum its staunch position of principle. This should not be mistaken for rhetoric or for political alignment, which might be the expression of ideology or might lead us to take sides in the interational strategic situation. Uruguay's independent position is totally consistent with its unflagging commitment to international law and its traditional interest in expanding the sphere of international relations, which is governed by legal norms and principles in keeping with its pacifist tradition.

My delegation takes pride in reaffirming these historic principles, which have led Uruguay, on the one hand, to take initiatives towards the adoption of instruments on disarmament, and, on the other, to promote ideas to eradicate militarism from international relations. We small States should not consider ourselves to be mere third parties in these questions. We too have a right to bring about conditions conducive to international peace and security.

Until last year the work of the First Committee was carried out under the burden of discouraging international conditions that had existed for many years. The role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as its contribution to the disarmament efforts essential to the consolidation of that process, was small, not to say irrelevant given the immediate reality. This year, however, as we begin our work, there has been a notable change in climate. The step-by-step implementation of the first agreement between the super-Powers on a reduction of intermediate-range strategic weapons has had a decisive influence, as, more recently still, has the effective recourse to the resources and machinery of the United Nations system to promote the solution of some of the most serious regional conflicts on the planet.

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The States involved in these conflicts, including those with the greatest influence, are now opting for the framework of the Security Council as a forum in which to discuss and establish common criteria for settlement. Once again we see highlighted the virtues of the diplomacy appropriate to the functions of the Secretary-General. Troop contingents under the United Nations flag are emerging today as an appropriate means through which to guarantee an end to military confrontation in those conflicts while the search for their solution is the subject of painstaking negotiations.

The fact that these developments have come about simultaneously seems to augur well for a useful rebirth of the Organization's capacity for action with a view to strengthening peace, which is constantly threatened, not to say breached, throughout the world.

My country entertains high hopes for the success of these efforts, which now seem to be leading to solutions, within the framework of the United Nations and actively promotes the peace efforts sought by the States involved in these crises. We understand, however, that at the same time lasting international peace and the establishment of stable general conditions for international security require parallel, sustained and effective efforts at arms reduction by all States to a level in keeping with the real needs of their security and defence.

We must therefore promote without further delay a radical turn away from the arms race, that can be seen at all levels, in order to strengthen a world of peace and stability, contribute towards eliminating antagonisms at the international level and encourage the building of the international co-operation that is essential of the deep economic, financial, trade, technological and social imbalances that are disrupting international relations are to be redressed.

(Mr. Fau, Uruguay)

Concern at the magnitude of the arms build-up was quite clearly expressed in the speeches of a large number of statesmen in the General Assembly at the last special session devoted to disarmament, three months ago.

The fact that it was not possible to arrive at a minimum consensus document at that session highlighted the divergent national positions in the area of security and armaments policies. However, the measure of agreement that could be perceived throughout that session seemed to point to possible areas of consensus which might be consolidated in the future by means of patient, persevering and dedicated efforts of multilateral diplomacy.

The improvement in the bilateral relations of the super-Powers was not reflected in progress towards the broad multilateral agreement that we had all hoped would crown that special session. Uruguay, together with the vast majority of delegations here, understands that progress in joint action and multilateral negotiations is essential and complements progress in bilateral negotiations.

Two kinds of fundamental reasoning lead us to insist on the importance of channelling our efforts through the multilateral mechanisms of the Organization in present conditions. The first is related to the right of all States to participate in decisions that affect their own future. Disarmament is a matter of collective responsibility, not just the responsibility of those with greater capacity to make military decision. The second is based on political realism. The very nature of contemporary armaments development means that, for their control or containment, broad agreement is necessary on multilateral action. And, irrespective of whether it be the resurgence of nuclear proliferation, the spread of sophisticated weapons technology, the expansion of the international weapons market and its increasingly clandestine nature or the horrific proliferation of chemical weapons, no policy of containment will be truly effective unless all the States involved in these

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alarming developments make a firm commitment. The containment of conflict through the strength of some or the dominant influence of others is neither sufficient nor desirable.

Turning to specific items on our agenda, in the area of nuclear armament, Uruguay shares the hope that the first strategic reduction agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union and the important political fact of the effective implementation of their provisions with step-by-step verification as stipulated, will create confidence that will lead to substantially greater reductions in their nuclear arsenals - and at least to the reduction by 50 per cent of their nuclear armaments as the next stage, as called for by the international community.

It is a fact that nuclear hegemony, the division of the world into blocs and the growing international insecurity for many long years have stimulated a voracious desire for weapons in the greater part of the planet. This situation seems also to have led to the dangerous illusion that in order carry weight in the contemporary world it is necessary to have nuclear weapons. That is why every effort must now be directed at halting both horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation through the effective implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which has already been signed by 138 States.

(Mr. Fau, Uruguay)

As an active party to that Treaty as well as to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Uruguay reiterates its profound hope that the Treaty's scope will be extended to become universal and that all its provisions will be fully complied with.

No less important today are the collective efforts needed to reduce the conventional weapons with which contemporary war is waged, taking a toll of over 2.2 million deaths a year. One of the main reasons for the excessive increase in such weapons is the existence of regional conflicts, in which their concentration reaches the most dangerous levels.

For that reason, with a clear awareness of the seriousness of the regional crisis affecting our continent, the crisis in Central America, my country has played an active part in the efforts made by eight countries which, through the Contadora Group and the Support Group, have tried through diplomatic means to avoid the spread of violence in that area, to bring the parties closer together and to bring about a peaceful, democratic solution to the conflict.

The States of Latin America agreed that as an essential complement to those efforts there should be a disarmament programme and confidence-building measures for the region, and that programme became an important part of the basis of the proposed permanent solution to the crisis.

Joint diplomatic efforts made an important contribution to the Esquipulas agreements, which were signed by the five Central American countries involved in the crisis. As my country's Foreign Minister said in the General Assembly, complete implementation of that plan is essential to the solution of the regional conflict. In the mean time, the proposed bases for the ultimate pacification and disarmament of the region continue to be necessary for the whole ambit of the crisis.

Uruguay, together with a growing number of Latin American States, has been promoting, within the framework of this Organization, multilateral, bilateral and

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unilateral measures for regional disarmament, to be established and adopted with due account taken of the unique character of the problems of each region. To that same end, my Government supports the activities of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development, which has its headquarters in Lima. Peace, democracy, disarmament and development are not perceived in our continent today as a set of ideals to be promoted independently. On the contrary, they are objectives each of which can be fully realized only if all the others are realized.

Until a short time ago it was thought that chemical weapons had been eliminated, or that only a residue remained, but now we must express the international community's strong concern over their alarming resurgence. We must not be afraid to admit that the horrendous proof of their military effectiveness may provide an incentive for new production and use. There must be increased efforts on the part of the international community as a whole to conclude and immediately implement a multilateral convention on the complete prohibition of the development, stockpiling and proliferation of chemical weapons and the prevention of their use for military purposes.

Small States such as ours are at all times committed to subjecting the conduct of the powerful to the rules of international law. My country regards strict compliance with international legal norms as essential in bringing about disarmament and security. To that end, the provisions of the Charter must be strictly complied with.

In the world of today we must reaffirm the principle that outer space must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It is a principle embodied in existing treaties which we should like to see implemented, specifically through the establishment of a legal régime measuring up to today's situation.

The need for negotiations between the major space Powers is beyond question. But it is also clear to us that the peace of mankind can be assured only through

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the proscription for ever of possible military competition in space by means of an international legal instrument promoted and adopted on a multilateral basis, in the interest of, and with the participation of, all the members of the international community.

I turn to a world-wide problem that continues to have an adverse effect on the international community: the dramatic contrast between the excessive arms build-up and the heavy burden it entails for development. We continue to believe that the true threat to international stability and security lies in the enormous economic, financial, commercial and technological gap separating the industrialized nations from the less powerful, a gap that continues to be one of the main causes of instability, mistrust, tension, and exaggeration of security needs, a breeding-ground of internal conflicts and military confrontation.

Let us tell the major industrial developed nations that it is increasingly in their interests to allot more of their own resources to civilian needs and the modernization of their economies. Let us tell the less developed nations that the greatest challenge to their sovereignty in the twenty-first century will come, not from military threats but, above all, from their economic underdevelopment and their lack of access to the benefits of technology, their lack of preparedness to take part in those processes. All those nations must commit themselves to eliminating those asymmetries, to promoting collective, sustained and effective disarmament efforts and to rebuilding links of co-operation which may result in mutual benefits in an increasingly interdependent world.

(Mr. Fau, Uruguay)

In our view, that effort is essential if we are to achieve a disarmament process that will free resources for the needs of economic, social and technological development.

Everything we do to that end will be a kind of vindication of all those who have in the past made important contributions to the Organization. But, at the same time - and this may be of the greatest importance - we shall give hope to all those in so many parts of the world who expect something of us.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of the United States wishes to speak, and I now call on him.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): I wish to congratulate Ambassador Pierre Morel of France for his statement today containing the announcement that France will serve as host to the International Conference on the Prohibition of the Use of Chemical Weapons, which will be held in Paris from 7 through 11 January 1989.

The United States is pleased that President Reagan's suggestion for such a conference, as set forth in his speech to the General Assembly, has met with a favourable reaction and that the French Government is taking the lead in organizing and serving as host to the Conference.

Organizing on short notice such a conference, involving complex and sensitive issues, will be a difficult and arduous task. However, the United States pledges its complete support and participation and looks forward to a successful reaffirmation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and the reaffirmation of our efforts to halt all use of chemical weapons.

The CHAIRMAN: I have received a request from a representative to be allowed to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before I call on her, I wish to bring the following procedure to the attention of members of the Committee.

In accordance with the relevant decision of the General Assembly and established practice, delegations should speak in exercise of their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item. The number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation and on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes, and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes.

Those are the ground rules. I shall not read them out in detail every time statements are to be made in exercise of the right of reply. I thought it advisable, however, to read them out the first time that a representative has requested to be allowed to speak in exercise of the right of reply at this session.

I now call on the representative of New Zealand, to speak in exercise of her right of reply.

Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand): I wish to speak in exercise of my right of reply in respect of certain remarks made earlier this afternoon by the disarmament Ambassador of France.

In his statement, he referred to the information on nuclear tests provided to the Secretary-General, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 42/38 C. The Ambassador noted that certain States that had provided information on nuclear tests carried out by France had not provided the same information on tests conducted by other nuclear Powers, and he asked if there was a double standard operating in this area.

(Dame Ann Hercus; New Zealand)

New Zealand responded to the invitation in resolution 42/38 C for Member States to provide to the Secretary-General

"any such data on nuclear explosions they may have available". (resolution 42/38 C; para. 3)

We did so in respect of France and the tests it conducts in the South Pacific region - and to date we are the only country to have done so. We did so because New Zealand has a national capacity to monitor nuclear-test explosions in our part of the globe. We do not have a similar capacity to monitor tests conducted anywhere else.

I should therefore like to assure the Ambassador of France that there was no double standard applied in this matter. New Zealand, like France, is of course motivated by objectivity and based its report to the Secretary-General on the information available to it.

The Ambassador may also be assured that New Zealand will be happy to cease its reporting under resolution 42/38 C when France no longer carries out nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

We were of course pleased at the confirmation given this afternoon that France will provide in future certain information on its nuclear tests, as was stated by the Foreign Minister of France at the third special session devoted to disarmament.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.