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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. ALLAGHANY (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): Sir, on behalf of my delegation I should like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I wish also to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and to wish them every success in the conduct of the Committee's work during this session of the General Assembly. I wish to emphasize our sincere desire to co-operate with you in order to discharge the noble tasks with which you have been entrusted.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the positive developments in East-West relations. The beginning of those developments were clear enough in the meetings of this Committee during the last session. Later, they became more pronounced in the wake of the important political changes in Eastern and Central Europe that have led recently to the reunification of Germany. No doubt, this will pave the way towards more stability and co-operation in the European continent.

Mention should be made here of the other positive developments in other regions of the world, notably the release of Nelson Mandela and indications of a willingness to bring to an end the system of apartheid and the abominable racial discrimination in South Africa. Positive developments have also taken place in Central America, Cambodia and other areas of tension. In all this, the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General, which we value very highly, played an important and commendable role.

(Mr. Allaghany, Saudi Arabia)

Regrettably however, this positive tendency in international relations has not been all-embracing. There have remained some serious regional problems, such as the brutal Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and the plundering of a whole people and an entire country in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It is also a crime against humanity. Moreover, it poses a threat to the peace and security of Saudi Arabia that has prompted Saudi Arabia to take legitimate measures to ensure the rule of law. In addition, we have committed ourselves completely to the implementation of Security Council resolutions in order to settle this crisis in conformity with the provisions of the Charter.

The question of Palestine continues to be an item on the agenda of the Organization after all these years. The blood of the sons of Palestine is spilled daily in the occupied territories, which the forces of occupation refuse to relinquish, despite all the accumulated resolutions which have been adopted for decades now.

We believe - and this is undoubtedly the unanimous belief of us all - that international peace and security cannot be established without full and complete adherence to the provisions of the Charter - and all the other documents which have come to be part of international law - and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions.

Noticeable progress has been made recently in disarmament negotiations. That progress has been reflected in the détente which we witness in the international arena. However, there are still some Member States which insist on non-accession to the non-proliferation Treaty without any acceptable justification. Those States deny that they possess such weapons. However, all the evidence points to the fact that they do. Particular mention is made here of Israel, which, in addition to its possession of those weapons, possesses both chemical and bacteriological weapons.

(Mr. Allaghany, Saudi Arabia)

All the peoples of the world call for a comprehensive ban on all such overkill weapons thereby bringing to an end the era of their threatened use. We hope that all necessary measures will be taken to prevent the applications of science and use of the materials utilized in the production of weapons of mass destruction. We hope that such weapons will be monitored and that international trafficking in those materials which are used to threaten others will be prohibited.

There are various items on the agenda of the Committee relating to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. Considerable progress has been made towards the establishment of such zones, except in the Middle East region where Israel denies that it possesses nuclear weapons, or insists on pre-conditions which it knows will not be acceptable to the countries of the region.

The establishment of such zones is bound to contribute to stability and nuclear non-proliferation in the region, and, in general, to complete and comprehensive disarmament. Mention should be made here of the effective and vital role played by the Conference on Disarmament, which, we hope, will enjoy the necessary support from all the States participating in its work.

In addition to the need to conclude an international convention banning the production, use and stockpiling of nuclear and chemical weapons, there is also an urgent need to further the effectiveness of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and upon their Destruction. We hope that this will be accomplished during the Review Conference of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty which will be held in the summer of 1991. Furthermore, we hope that the exchange of information referred to in the Final Act of the 1986 Review Conference will take place. This will undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

(Mr. Allaghany, Saudi Arabia)

My delegation welcomes the agreement by the United States Senate and the Supreme Soviet Council on the ratification of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water and of the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes. We hope that negotiations will continue between the two Powers in order for them to reach an agreement banning all forms of nuclear tests, whether in the atmosphere or underground.

What is really disturbing is the problem of the militarization of outer space. We support every effort aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. We hope that the relevant committee of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva will be able to resolve the differences existing between some States in this connection.

The Committee has before it 27 items relating to disarmament in all its forms, some of which include sub-items that sometimes deal with as many as 10 other subjects. Therefore, in order that the time the Committee devotes to these items may be used to the full, the Committee should concentrate on the items that can be agreed upon easily, or, at least, those on which there is a large majority in favour, or make certain recommendations to the Conference on Disarmament, taking into account the interests and concerns of the countries concerned.

In conclusion, I should like to commend the efforts of the Secretariat, particularly the Department of Disarmament Affairs, for its work on the question of disarmament since the beginning of its discussion in the United Nations. I refer particularly to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Disarmament Affairs and his colleagues who have made great efforts in this connection.

Mr. SINGH (India): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation extends its warm felicitations to you and to the other officers of the Committee on your election. It is indeed heartening to see a distinguished representative of our close and friendly neighbour, Nepal, presiding over our deliberations. We have full confidence that this session will achieve fruitful results under your able guidance. We should like to assure you of our full co-operation as you discharge your responsibility.

(Mr. Singh, India)

The First Committee is meeting at a significant moment in the sphere of disarmament negotiations. New opportunities have been created for the success of disarmament efforts by the sweeping political changes in Europe and in East-West relations. Mankind, however, continues to be confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of nuclear weapons. We therefore welcome the bilateral initiatives taken by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics towards nuclear disarmament, which are concrete steps in the right direction. In this context, we warmly welcome the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to President Mikhail Gorbachev and take this opportunity to pay a tribute to him for the eminent role he has played in the area of disarmament and in promoting world peace and security. We look forward to the conclusion of a treaty on strategic arms reductions (START) and an agreement on conventional forces in Europe by the end of the year, as promised. However, these agreements would not justify complacency on the part of the United Nations or the international public, as huge arsenals would still remain. Concrete disarmament measures adopted so far have been confined to only two of the five nuclear-weapon States; and even these measures - which are incorporated in the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) - account for a miniscule part of the nuclear arsenals of the two countries. There is no underlying commitment to give up the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. Moreover, avenues for the qualitative upgrading of nuclear weapons and the possibility of putting the fissionable material left over after the destruction of delivery vehicles to military use remain open. This drawback also looms large over the proposed START agreement, which has lowered its sights from a 50 per cent cut in strategic arsenals. It has been estimated that the START agreement would only reduce the stockpiles of the United States and the Union of

(Mr. Singh, India)

Soviet Socialist Republics from their present level of 95 per cent of the world's total to a little over 92 per cent. Even though we acknowledge that the INF and the proposed START agreement are a good beginning and the world looks forward to further and deeper cuts in the context of START II, these facts give some idea of how far we are from our ultimate goal.

With the end of the cold war we feel that this is a most opportune time for the international community to question once again the validity of theories that justify the perpetuation of a strategy based on nuclear weapons. Inter-State relations should be based on co-operation and dialogue instead of on mutual fears and frozen hostility. A new international security order needs to be created to prepare us to move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Lasting peace and security can be achieved only with the participation of the international community, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. Nothing less than a time-bound programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons would sustain a continuous process of substantial reductions until we get rid of the nuclear menace. We also need clear guarantees that the nuclear weapons which are phased out will not be replaced by new and more advanced weapons.

The action plan put forward by India at the third special session devoted to disarmament as an outline for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order outlined a systematic, rational and practicable time-frame to achieve those objectives. The plan calls upon the international community to negotiate a binding commitment to general and complete disarmament. The core of our proposed action plan is the elimination of all nuclear weapons in three stages over 22 years. While nuclear disarmament constitutes the essence of each stage of the plan, it also provides for collateral measures like the banning of chemical or radiological weapons, a moratorium on developing, testing and deploying weapons in space,

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development of a method which fosters technological development but interdicts its application to military purposes, development of a single, integrated, multilateral verification system, and reduction of conventional armaments and forces to levels dictated by minimum needs of defence. These measures will have to be accompanied by a search for an alternative approach to security without nuclear weapons which provides for the legitimate needs of all States and at the same time enhances mutual trust and co-operation.

The positive developments during the past three years since the United Nations Conference on Disarmament and Development have only further vindicated the essential premises of that Conference. The world economy continues to be in the grip of a crisis of a structural nature. The recent events in the Gulf region have imposed extraordinary burdens on many developing countries, including my own. In sombre contrast to the paucity of resources for activating growth in the developing countries, a staggering amount, close to a trillion dollars, is being diverted for military purposes every year. The developing countries are doubly affected: first, through the direct adverse effect of the military expenditure that they themselves incur on having to raise the thresholds of their defences to respond to the nature and sophistication of threats to their security globally; and, secondly, through the adverse effect on the global economy of the military expenditures of the high military spenders. Now is the time for seriously exploring ways and means of channelling the peace dividend to the development of the countries of the South, which have had to face the adverse economic consequences of the unprecedented arms build-up of the past decade. The linkage between disarmament and development should remain in the focus of our deliberations during the current session.

The root causes of global insecurity lie far deeper than the calculus of military parity alone. They are related to the instability spawned by widespread

(Mr. Singh, India)

poverty, squalor, population growth, hunger, disease and illiteracy. They are connected to the degradation of the environment. They are enmeshed in the inequity and injustice of the present world order. The effort to achieve security for all must be underpinned by the effort to promote opportunities for all and the equitable access to achievement. Only an enlightened global approach can provide the answer; and our future approach has to be directed by the full weight of multilateral endeavour. Bilateralism and multilateralism cannot be mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they must complement, facilitate and reinforce each other. In the field of nuclear disarmament, the impact of bilateral progress should be felt in the multilateral field. However, it has yet to be registered in concrete terms in the multilateral forums.

The General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament declared that the removal of the danger of nuclear war was the most important and urgent task of the present day. In subsequent years the General Assembly has adopted resolutions with overwhelming majorities on the most pressing areas relating to nuclear disarmament, such as the prevention of nuclear war, a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons and a ban on nuclear-weapon testing. Despite the very clear mandate given by the General Assembly to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference has been denied the possibility of commencing actual negotiations on any of these crucial issues.

For many years India has proposed, both at the Conference on Disarmament and at the General Assembly, that the negotiations on a convention outlawing the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the necessary first step for the elimination of these weapons and for the prevention of nuclear war. Today it is accepted that a

(Mr. Singh, India)

nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The need for a commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons is now also generally recognized. These positions are incompatible with a security doctrine that reserves the right to resort to nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Singh, India)

A nuclear war cannot de-escalate into a conventional war. It is a dangerous delusion to believe that nuclear weapons have brought us peace. There can be no iron-clad guarantee against the use of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear-weapon States themselves have visualized the possible failure of deterrence and have taken steps to prevent an outbreak of accidental nuclear war. Human beings are imperfect and prone to panic and folly. The technological systems on which they rely are far from immune to error. Our institutional and interactive mechanisms are imperfect. Moreover, the doctrine of deterrence is based on the erroneous assumption that international relations are frozen on a permanently hostile basis.

The convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons will not only remove the threat of a nuclear holocaust that looms over our planet but will also remove the totally untenable legitimacy sought to be accorded nuclear weapons as a currency of power. In the face of the danger of common annihilation the distinction between the powerful and the weak has become meaningless. Thus, we are convinced that countries that possess no nuclear arsenals also have a responsibility in determining the fate of such arsenals and are determined to exercise it. The sentiment that a nuclear war must not be fought needs, therefore, to be formalized as a multilateral commitment.

Closely linked to the idea of a convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the appeal to nuclear-weapon States to apply an immediate freeze on the production of these weapons and of fissile material intended for weapons purposes. The fissile material to be released by the dismantling of nuclear warheads should be placed under international supervision and not recycled into more advanced weapons systems. The argument that a freeze would perpetuate existing imbalances cannot be sustained. The concept of parity is used sometimes as a pre-condition and sometimes as a goal. The dilemma of parity can be resolved

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only by accepting its total irrelevance to the nuclear issue, whether politically, militarily or operationally. The political momentum that will be generated by a successful strategic arms reduction talks (START) agreement can be carried to its logical conclusion by multilateralizing the negotiations to bring in other nuclear-weapon States which have so far remained outside the process. In such a setting, and in the aftermath of a START agreement, the concept of a freeze on nuclear weapons and the related fissile material would become all the more relevant.

Another related issue is a nuclear-weapon-test ban. For many decades the nuclear-weapon States have ignored the appeal of the world community to end nuclear-weapon testing and to halt the ongoing process of development and refinement of the lethality of nuclear weapons. The Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban of the Conference on Disarmament was re-established late in this year's summer session without a fully fledged mandate to negotiate a nuclear-test-ban treaty. We went along with that decision in the sincere hope that it would mark the beginning of efforts to conclude such a treaty. However, even before the Ad Hoc Committee could adopt a programme of work, doubts were cast upon its re-establishment at the very beginning of the 1991 session.

For a long time the inadequacy of verification was put forward as a justification for not undertaking such a commitment. This has now proved to be unfounded. Developments in seismic monitoring, the proposal made in the six-nation initiative to verify a moratorium on nuclear testing, the results of the deliberations of the Group of Scientific Experts under the aegis of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, the possibilities of establishing an international seismic network and the verification protocols for the bilateral agreements between the United States and the USSR on a total test-ban treaty and a treaty on peaceful

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nuclear explosions all clearly indicate that verification can no longer be an obstacle to the commencement of negotiations on a nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The Group of Scientific Experts in Geneva have begun their experiment on the collection and exchange of seismic data at the global level. One step that could be examined for testing the effectiveness of this experiment is the declaration by all nuclear-weapon States of a moratorium on testing to coincide with the experiment. The infrastructure for the experiment could then be made permanent.

The nuclear-test-ban treaty, when it comes, should be consistent with what the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty seeks to achieve and should ensure that the majority of nations are not denied the full benefits of the technological developments in the nuclear field while a handful of States are left free to so benefit. The aim of the treaty should be to prevent the testing of nuclear weapons and thereby to inhibit in a non-discriminatory way the proliferation of nuclear weapons in both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. It cannot be conceived as an instrument designed to curtail technological progress or to perpetuate the division of the world into two categories of nations. The treaty should be compatible with all existing international instruments dealing with nuclear tests which contain separate provisions for peaceful nuclear explosions, thus taking into account on a basis of complete equality the interests of the nuclear-weapon States as well as those of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The amendment Conference to convert the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty will be held in New York in January of next year. We hope that that Conference will make a significant contribution towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty - a goal widely supported by the member States and by the world community. India has lent its full support to this proposal, initiated by Mexico, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Peru, Venezuela and Sri Lanka, because of our

(Mr. Singh, India)

long-held conviction that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is an essential step towards the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Clear proof of the adequacy of existing verification techniques would go a long way in providing for a successful amendment Conference.

The Fourth Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) concluded its deliberations at Geneva last month. Although India has taken a principled stand against the NPT's discriminatory approach, it is useful to recall that India played a pioneering role in placing the issue of non-proliferation on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. Unfortunately, the 1968 NPT failed to provide for an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations as between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers. India continues to stand for a genuine, comprehensive and broad-based non-proliferation régime as part of a system of international peace and security in which all countries participate on an equal footing and which is designed to rid our world altogether of nuclear weapons.

Outer space has been recognized by the international community as the common heritage of mankind. Developments in space research and technology offer a glimpse of possible benefits for all countries in the fields of communications, meteorology and remote sensing but, for this, outer space has to be kept free of all weapons. Space, the new frontier, should not be allowed to become an area for the application of the doctrine that long-term security is to be based on weapons. Since 1985 the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake concrete negotiations that could strengthen the international legal régime pertaining to outer space.

The existing régime imposes some legal restraints on the placement of certain types of weapons in outer space. However, those restraints are not comprehensive

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in scope, nor do they apply to all kinds of weapons systems. Directed energy weapons, as well as weapons that can be placed in the lofted mode without entering the Earth's orbit, are not covered by the scope of the existing outer space Treaty. Other limitations of the existing legal régime and such bilateral agreements as the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems have become more evident in the light of technological developments.

(Mr. Singh, India)

New legal instruments that would reflect the political reality as well as technological developments must be developed. Proposals have been put forward to provide immunity to satellites, especially those that generate opportunities for economic growth and international security. There is need to amend the 1967 outer space Treaty or to add a protocol to it.

While supporting different proposals for negotiating concrete measures aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, India has placed particular emphasis on a comprehensive agreement that would prohibit the development of anti-satellite weapons and provide for the dismantling of all existing systems. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems places restrictions on the testing of weapons in an anti-ballistic-missile mode, but permits weapons to be tested in an anti-satellite mode. A moratorium on the testing of the existing dedicated anti-satellite weapons needs to be formalized through multilateral negotiations. Confidence-building measures such as "rules of the road", "keep-out zones" and so on will provide only a limited immunity to satellites, the use of which is becoming increasingly important. Full immunity can only be provided by a verifiable, comprehensive anti-satellite-weapon ban. That must be done on an urgent basis before problems of verification in outer space become intractable.

More than a decade has elapsed since the adoption of the Final Document at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which brought out the fact that qualitative and quantitative disarmament measures are both important. Yet at no stage have the qualitative aspects been addressed seriously. Since 1988, India, along with other like-minded delegations, has been submitting a draft resolution entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" in order to draw the attention of the world community to that important aspect of disarmament.

(Mr. Singh, India)

Expenditure on military research and development today accounts for 25 per cent of the total expenditure on research and development, and the pace of technological change in the military sector is historically unprecedented. New scientific and technological developments making use of miniaturization and large-scale computing capabilities are taking place in the fields of nuclear weapons, ballistic-missile defence, directed-energy weapons, kinetic-energy weapons, artificial intelligence, conventional weapons, chemical and biological weapons and super-conductivity, to name but a few.. The deployment of these weapons will have a cumulative impact, adversely affecting the international security environment. Complex technical problems will make the search for verification even more elusive. It is therefore important that such trends be monitored in the interests of the collective security of the global community.

Given the fact that there are no barriers to human knowledge, what is achieved by a handful of States today can be adopted by many more in the future. It will be prudent, therefore, to agree collectively on the non-pursuit of certain paths that could have a destabilizing impact on the global security situation in the future, rendering existing arms limitations meaningless. Developments in the areas of frontier technology need to be continually assessed. A number of these developments, such as sensor development, communications and computing capabilities can have implications that can prove to be greatly beneficial in the verification of disarmament agreements. Scientific and technological developments must be channelled decisively in favour of peaceful uses.

In our working paper on new technologies and the qualitative arms race presented at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we outlined our suggestions in concrete terms. In this connection, we commend the work done by the Department of Disarmament Affairs in organizing a conference last April in Sendai, Japan, for an in-depth consideration of this

(Mr. Singh, India)

topic, and the thought-provoking report of the Secretary-General that resulted from the process. We hope the draft resolution on this subject will gather support at the present session.

In the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, concerted attention continues to be focussed on the ongoing chemical-weapons negotiations. We must redouble our efforts to reach an early agreement on a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons and the elimination of existing stockpiles and production facilities. Some basic provisions of the bilateral agreement signed this year between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the destruction of their chemical-weapons stocks and production facilities have helped to maintain the momentum of the multilateral negotiations.

However, interim measures designed to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons, apart from not being effective, also run the risk of opening up a parallel track that could easily derail ongoing negotiations and confuse the objective towards which we are working. Political reality dictates that the risk does not come merely from the possible use of chemical weapons but from their very existence. The only way to address this reality is to find a politically viable solution. A convention that can enjoy universal adherence must be non-discriminatory and provide for equal rights and obligations of all States, whether or not they possess chemical weapons and whether or not they have a large chemical industry. It must contain an effective system of verification that reassures all States parties about compliance. It should ensure the unimpeded right of States parties to develop, produce, use, exchange and transfer chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes, and should not hinder or impede international co-operation in areas of peaceful chemical-industry development.

(Mr. Singh, India)

The ideal way to ensure universality is to make the convention attractive to those who join it. An assessment of the total destruction of chemical-weapons stocks must be made at the beginning of the convention's entry into force by all States who subscribe to it, on an equal footing. Any mid-term assessment by those who possess chemical weapons can deter States from joining a convention whose future is uncertain. Finally, taking the priority of nuclear issues into account, the Conference on Disarmament can set itself a time frame within which to conclude its negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention. Negotiations towards a chemical-weapons convention is a pioneering exercise that could become the model for future multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament.

In 1988, we mandated the Secretary-General to undertake an in-depth study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. That was based on, among other suggestions, the proposal by the leaders of the Six-Nation Initiative to establish a multilateral verification system within the United Nations as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security during the process of disarmament and in a nuclear-weapon-free world - a point that was also elaborated in our Action Plan.

The verification of compliance is an integral and important element of any disarmament agreement, even more so in a multilateral context in which all States, big and small, have an equal right to be reassured that treaty obligations are being complied with. We are confident that the world community will show an interest in that study, which will further efforts to strengthen multilateralization of the disarmament process.

In an increasingly interdependent world, the structure of international security must be comprehensive, its components supportive of each other, and participation in it universal. A world order crafted out of the outmoded concepts of balance of power, dominance by power blocs, spheres of influence and special

(Mr. Singh, India)

rights and privileges for a select group of nations is an unacceptable anachronism in today's age. The new structure of international relations must be based on scrupulous adherence to the principles of peaceful co-existence and the Charter of the United Nations. Given the positive international climate and with the necessary political will, it is our hope that we will be able to reach consensus in more areas and on a larger number of resolutions. India will work closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and with other delegations towards our common objectives.

Mr. GAFOOR (Singapore): I am addressing this Committee for the first time. I want to take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election. My delegation is happy that a fellow member of the non-aligned group has been elected to chair the work of this distinguished Committee. I assure you and the Bureau of the support and co-operation of my delegation.

I have been listening to the statements made in this Committee with great interest. Many representatives have declared that the cold war has ended. I do not dispute their declarations. However, the relevant question is not whether the cold war has ended. What we must all ask is: What will the end of the cold war lead to? What is going to replace the rigid bloc politics of the cold war era? Has the end of the cold war increased the level of regional and global security? The answers to these questions, if indeed they can be found, will shape the future of our international system.

The end of the cold war has not enhanced the security of small and weak States like Singapore. It has, in fact, introduced greater uncertainties into the international system. The significant progress in super-Power nuclear disarmament has had no effect on the ambitions of or the level of armaments possessed by regional Powers like Iraq. Iraq's huge arsenals of chemical and conventional weapons enabled it and emboldened it to overrun its small and vulnerable neighbour. The end of the cold war should not be replaced by a period of regional insecurity. However, the Gulf crisis has led to precisely such a situation. Not only has Iraq's aggression led to a new period of insecurity at the regional level, but it has also led to a massive build-up in the Gulf and surrounding regions.

The mere absence of the cold war does not imply peace. Our approach to international security in the post-cold war era must therefore be based on two important factors. The first is disarmament. The second, and more important factor, is international law. In our view, disarmament and international law are

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

very closely related. They are both part of the general process of building confidence and security in the international system.

To understand the fundamental relationship between disarmament and international law, we must first understand the root problem of our international system. Nations arm mainly because they feel vulnerable to external attacks. This vulnerability is inherent in a system of sovereign and competing States. However, this sense of vulnerability is reinforced when there is a perceived absence of respect for the principles of the rule of law. States also feel insecure when international organizations like the United Nations are ineffective in enforcing the principles of international law.

States arm when they feel insecure. Insecurity is heightened by lawless behaviour. Therefore, to persuade States to disarm, we must first ensure security on the basis of the rule of law. Disarmament can only succeed when the principles of international law, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, are firmly established. The rule of law must also be enforced collectively by the United Nations. Otherwise, every country will arm itself at the highest possible level to protect its territorial integrity. This will trigger an arms race. Every country will seek to ensure its own security by arming at higher and higher levels. Such an environment will not be conducive to disarmament.

It is clear that a sense of security based firmly on the principle of the rule of law is necessary for progress in the field of disarmament. It is for this reason that we consider the violation of international law by Iraq as a major setback to regional disarmament. The invasion of Kuwait has reinforced the feeling of vulnerability of many States, in particular those that are small and weak. The crisis has already led to massive transfers of arms from the West to neighbouring countries in the Gulf region. We understand that these arms are necessary to deter

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

further aggression by Iraq. However, we are concerned that the crisis will escalate the regional and international arms race in the long term.

It is important that the Gulf crisis is resolved in a manner that makes it clear to the aggressor that the rule of law will prevail. We must send a clear signal that armed intervention will neither be tolerated nor rewarded by the world community. Such a signal will help to strengthen confidence in the ability of the United Nations to enforce international law. In this regard, I should like to quote from the statement of President Mitterrand of France to the General Assembly at its current session on 24 September 1990. President Mitterrand eloquently summarized the views of many small countries like Singapore when he said:

"To prevent anarchy, disprove the theory that might makes right ... We must all understand that the dawning of the rule of law concerns us all. What country can feel safe from violence, high-handedness and domination by others? The time has come for international law to reign." (A/45/PV.4, p. 36)

The time has indeed come for international law to reign. The United Nations must assume a special responsibility to enforce the principles of international law, because the United Nations Charter forms the foundation of contemporary international law. In this regard, we welcome the new era of super-Power co-operation within the framework of the United Nations. We believe that this new phase in super-Power co-operation, if responsibly carried out by both sides, can allow the United Nations to initiate collective security measures. However, at the same time, the interpretation and enforcement of international law should not become the exclusive prerogative of the super-Powers.

Respect for international law and effective international organizations are handmaidens of disarmament. All three reinforce each other. Disarmament will be strengthened when there is respect for international law. When international law

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

is respected, international organizations like the United Nations can play a greater role in multilateral disarmament. This troika of linkages between disarmament, international law and international organizations leads me to my next subject: the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

The end of cold-war hostilities offers both opportunities and challenges for disarmament. There is opportunity because, in an atmosphere of reduced tension and greater confidence, there can be more meaningful and substantive negotiations. However, there is also the possibility that the great Powers might see less urgency in negotiating disarmament in an environment of relaxed tension. The United Nations should therefore continue to push negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on important issues like a global convention on chemical weapons, nuclear non-proliferation and cessation of nuclear testing.

The reduction in East-West tension offers an important opportunity to strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament affairs. It is timely to expand the responsibilities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

For instance, the United Nations has played a very successful role in the field of international peace-keeping. It can play a similar role in the field of disarmament by undertaking responsibilities for verification of multilateral, and even regional and bilateral, agreements.

We welcome the report of the Group of Qualified Governmental Experts to Undertake a Study on the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification submitted to the General Assembly on 28 August 1990. The report recognized that:

"The United Nations may wish to address the multilateral aspects of effective verification measures with increasing attention, particularly as multilateral negotiations become more important." (A/45/372, para. 167)

We wish to record our appreciation of the work of Mr. Fred Bild of Canada, who successfully presided over the study.

There has been encouraging progress in the field of disarmament. The super-Powers have made important progress in their ongoing negotiations on nuclear disarmament since the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - was concluded in 1988. We welcome the determination of the United States and the Soviet Union to conclude a strategic arms reduction agreement in the near future. Such an agreement will make an important contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament. It will also create conditions for peace and security in Europe and beyond. We also welcome the breakthrough agreement on the reduction of conventional arms in Europe, which is to be signed at the summit meeting, in Paris next month, of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Although it is restricted to Europe, we are confident that this agreement will contribute to global confidence- and security-building.

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

The progress made in the field of bilateral and regional disarmament has not been matched in the area of multilateral disarmament, especially in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and conventional weapons. However, we are encouraged by the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in pursuing negotiations in this field. The last session of the Disarmament Commission, held in May 1990 under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Nana Sutresna of Indonesia, produced several important agreements and conclusions on some long-standing items of the agenda.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is a key disarmament objective for the United Nations. The comprehensive study on nuclear weapons, submitted to the Secretary-General in September 1990, has made an important contribution to understanding of the main issues involved in nuclear disarmament. As a small delegation with limited expertise in the field of disarmament, we have benefited greatly from this report. Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin of Sweden presided over the expert group very successfully. We congratulate her on a job well done.

The Theorin report notes that the quantitative growth of nuclear weapons has been stopped. However, it states that the question of the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests remains highly divisive. We are disturbed that the issue of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has now become entangled with the question of the test ban. We hope the respective parties will continue their negotiations in good faith. However, such negotiations must be based on the understanding that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is related to the question of nuclear non-proliferation. The two issues cannot be isolated.

There have been important developments in multilateral disarmament negotiations in Geneva and New York. However, let us not ignore the broader picture. Disarmament is ultimately a political process. It can only move in tandem with general confidence- and security-building measures. International law

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

is the most important measure that can enhance security and strengthen confidence in international organizations such as the United Nations. Only when we have established respect for the principles of international law can we pursue disarmament meaningfully. If we allow the rule of law to be replaced by the law of the jungle, we cannot hope to prevent countries from arming to the teeth in self-defence. International law is a basic pre-condition of disarmament. For small countries like Singapore, international law is also the only way to ensure our security and sovereignty.

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand): It would be remiss of me not to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this very important Committee. As a very respected colleague and friend you can count on my full co-operation, if that can make your task any easier. My congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

We are meeting at a time of great changes and expectations. Everywhere we look positive developments are taking place, as witnessed by the momentous changes which have taken place in Eastern Europe. East-West relations have greatly improved. Regional conflicts, including those in Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq and Namibia, have finally abated, after a decade of strife which caused great suffering to the peoples of those countries. In Cambodia, also, there have been encouraging developments and we have reason to believe that a settlement is not too far off. In the field of disarmament, progress has been made on the issue of nuclear disarmament, particularly between the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. They have now signed protocols on verification of the threshold test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes. It was also encouraging that for the first time at the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the remaining two major nuclear-weapon States - China and France - were present.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

My delegation welcomes the results in the field of disarmament of the summit meeting between President Bush and President Gorbachev, particularly their commitment to prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and missiles capable of carrying such weapons. Most encouraging was the reaffirmation of their desire that the strategic arms reduction treaty be signed by the end of the year. My delegation feels that the achievements in the super-Powers' arms talks should add fresh momentum to the multilateral negotiations on these issues.

On conventional weapons and forces, my Government welcomes the breakthrough achieved in the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States that it is hoped will lead to the reduction of conventional arms in Europe and the agreement expected to be signed in Paris in November by the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

Other regions of the world could also benefit from the discussions and implementation of confidence-building measures. For this reason, my delegation heartily commends the initiative taken by the United Nations recently in organizing the regional meeting in Kathmandu on confidence-building measures in Asia. Thailand believes that the time is now ripe for the countries of South-East Asia to turn their attention to these questions, now that the atmosphere of confrontation is dissipating. The meeting at Kathmandu served in a real sense as an important step in the direction of co-operation and reconciliation.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

On chemical weapons there is now a heightened awareness of the human devastation that can be inflicted by such weapons. Dangerous developments are gaining critical momentum in the world and make negotiations for the comprehensive convention on chemical weapons a matter of the utmost urgency. The current crisis in the Gulf reaffirms the importance of the task that we in this forum are undertaking. The risk of conventional and, worse, chemical warfare in the Gulf are of great concern to all of us. Thailand calls for restraint by every party concerned and hopes that peace will soon be restored to that region through non-violent means.

Although the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in Geneva recently, did not produce a final document, it should nevertheless be noted that 95 per cent of the text of a final document was tentatively agreed upon. Included in this are measures to make the implementation of the Treaty more effective. Thailand considers that the NPT is one of the most important international agreements in the field of disarmament and that it has served well as a deterrent against further proliferation of nuclear weapons. I should like once again to reiterate my country's commitment to the Treaty and reaffirm our full support for it. We wish to see universal participation and full adherence to this Treaty. We feel that the approach cannot be partial; the Treaty must be implemented in its entirety. We urge every State not yet a party to the NPT to make an urgent effort to become one.

Thailand believes in the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes, provided that such use is placed under the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We also call on the developed countries to provide to the developing countries that are signatories of the NPT adequate technical assistance

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

and co-operation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Effective co-operation can help boost economic and social development in these developing countries.

When it comes to nuclear testing, however, my country is clear and consistent. Thailand feels strongly that there is a need for an effective ban on all nuclear testing and believes that it is long overdue for the international community to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In this connection Thailand looks forward to the convening of the amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, to be held in January 1991. As the first multilateral negotiating conference on this issue, it has a special significance to the international community as a whole. We must therefore seek to obtain concrete results at that Conference.

Thailand has long believed that an important contribution to effective disarmament is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the various regions of the world. For this reason Thailand will continue to co-operate with its fellow members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations towards obtaining a draft treaty for a South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. We will also seek to promote this concept with other States, in particular those in the South-East Asian region, for the purpose of obtaining the widest possible support. We hope that this concept and the eventual treaty will enhance the prospects of regional security and of the development of harmonious and neighbourly relations among the countries in the region.

It is a sad reality we are facing today that, despite a general reduction in super-Power arms stockpiling made possible by East-West détente, military expenditures have been growing in many countries, both developed and developing. This military build-up, in particular in the developing countries, adversely

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affects their economic growth and the employment and living standards of their peoples. We have heard a great deal about the "peace dividend" now that the cold war is said to have ended. We should like to see such dividend usefully diverted to scientific and technological developments to improve the quality of life of the peoples in the developing world.

In the face of the development of new technology, outer space is a new arena to be explored. We must work together to ensure that outer space will be forever preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. Thailand believes that the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space deserves the attention and support of all of us.

Thailand has been a firm supporter of United Nations efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament. Today I would like to reiterate Thailand's commitment to co-operating fully with the other Members of the United Nations in the important task before this Committee.

After years of precarious peace between East and West, who could have foreseen the precipitous dismantling of the wall of distrust and hostility that had divided Europe for more than four decades? A new era of hope and reconciliation dawns on that great continent. Yet, war and suffering have at the same time befallen Kuwait and threaten to engulf the entire region of which Kuwait is a small part. Weapons of mass destruction being assembled and deployed bring back recollections of the scourge of war that "has brought untold sorrow to mankind". These developments have made our work here more urgent. Most importantly, these developments teach us once more - and so poignantly - that our hope of ending the scourge of war can come only from our strict adherence to and respect for international law and the United Nations Charter. Only then can we hope to make peace flourish and ensure the survival of our posterity in the manner hoped for by the founding fathers of this Organization.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of Kuwait and on my own behalf, I should like to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your election as Chairman of this important Committee.

You are a noble and sincere friend in your relations with others and in the manner in which you represent your country. You have always stood out in whatever you have done, and I think that is why you have been elected. Last year, you stood out as one of the most distinguished representatives in the United Nations and, as such, you were awarded a certificate of merit.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

It is also my pleasure to congratulate the members of the Bureau. I am convinced that, under your leadership, they will be able to conduct our work to a successful conclusion.

The early part of the 1990s brought with it the raising of the curtain on a new act in international relations. It was an act that gave reason for hope and encouraged optimism. Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union turned from confrontation, rivalry and conflicts of interest to co-operation and co-ordination in facing up to threats. The Berlin Wall has collapsed and with it all the material and psychological barriers which stood in the way of the natural cohesiveness that all peoples and Governments in Europe, both East and West Europe, have hoped for. Today, the world has a unique opportunity before it, one which may make it possible through this détente which brought to an end the cold war, to bring about the realization of the lofty objectives and noble principles of our Organization, and its Charter.

We have witnessed, together with the whole world, concrete and practical steps in that direction in important areas among which have been the two areas of concern to this Committee, namely, disarmament and problems of security and the settlement of regional disputes by peaceful means. There is no doubt that this significant development in the relations of the two super-Powers, which all peoples of the world had hoped for has led to encouraging positive results in the area of conventions on the reduction of strategic and nuclear arsenals as well as conventional forces. Also, the settlement of hotbeds of conflict has been speeded up. At present, both super-Powers are engaged in implementing the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles of 1987. Their two leaders have signed recently in Washington two important protocols on verification measures. That is one more step towards the achievement of the goals of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

In the teeth of all these positive elements which were viewed as the harbingers of the new world order that was so anxiously awaited by everyone, the Iraqi régime, moved by its greed for expansion, armed with an arsenal for the acquisition and stockpiling of which it has squandered the daily bread of its helpless people, has confronted the world with its actions which have been motivated by its envy of the economic, social and political successes of neighbouring States and their ability to serve their peoples. That régime has dealt a kind of death blow to our radiant hopes by its criminal action against Kuwait, a peaceful Muslim country, the generosity of whose people knew no bounds. By military force, it has annexed the country with unprecedented scorn for the tenets of Islam, the Charter of the League of Arab States, the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

Not content with this, the Iraqi régime resorted to systematic operations aimed at destroying the economic, demographic and social infrastructures of Kuwait through pillage and plunder, murder and the displacement of people. International humanitarian organizations have exposed these practices which are a rarity in the realm of the criminality of States and peoples in this day and age. States and peoples of the world have spontaneously expressed solidarity with Kuwait in the conviction that aggression, oppression and tyranny will not be limited to the victims of the moment. In everyone's opinion, this is a threat to all countries and all peoples.

The world is familiar with the record of the Iraqi régime. It is a régime that is hostile to peace and a threat to its neighbours. The armed conflict between Iraq and Iran was a case in point. That was a conflict into which Iraq plunged its people and the whole region. Its losses amounted to more than

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\$400 billion. About a million young people were killed or wounded, not to speak of the destruction of the economy and destabilization of the region for more than eight years.

All this speaks eloquently of the background of the country and the régime which from one day to the next simply turned its back on all the reasons which had been given for its active aggression against its neighbour, Iran. The actions of this régime are but a reckless adventure that will have serious consequences, not only for the Iraqi people, but also for international peace as a whole.

For years, the Iraqi régime has been building up an enormous arsenal of weapons. The Arab peoples had hoped that this arsenal was going to be a shield that would protect their legitimate rights, in keeping with the United Nations Charter and with the Charter of the League of Arab States. But the artillery, tanks, bombs and bullets of that régime have been turned into weapons of treachery and tools of unjustifiable aggression. We have seen this in the case of Iran in 1980 when Saddam Hussein violated a convention that he himself had signed with Tehran. More recently, the same happened in the case of Kuwait.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

As witnessed by international public opinion, the Iraqi régime has amazed everyone and brought down their curses upon its head as it went on stockpiling the banned chemical weapons which in its war against Iran, the Iraqi régime, with unprecedented brutality, used against soldiers and civilians alike. Indeed, more recently, in Halabja, it used those weapons against its own people. The gruesome scenes were shown by the media.

Today, the Iraqi régime threatens everyone, East and West. The threat of the use of illegal chemical weapons is a serious one, now that so many States are helping the Kuwaiti people in the legitimate defence of their territory. These are the friends upon whom Kuwait has called and who have joined in the international effort under the United Nations Charter. Consequently, the international community is fully justified in its concern with regard to the Iraqi régime's attempts to develop its nuclear programme for illegal and prohibited military purposes that contravene the rules and guarantees of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These policies and practices have very serious consequences for peace and security, not only in the region but in the world as a whole. There can be no doubt that these policies and practices now constitute an extremely negative element with regard to the arms race. They reactivate and aggravate that race on an unprecedented scale as witnessed in Iraq's barbaric aggression against Kuwait.

One of the fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter on which all international norms and relevant rules are based is respect for the concept of the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, the non-use of force in the settlement of disputes. Today, in this Committee, which is concerned with questions of security, my delegation asks, "What about the implementation of that principle, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter? How is it being applied to the Iraqi régime? Will the international community allow that régime to concoct crises in its relationship with an independent sovereign country? Will

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that régime be allowed to turn its back on the channels of civilized dialogue, brandish its weapons and kill people in its peaceful neighbour State at will? Will it be allowed to use all kinds of specious arguments that are totally at variance with law and logic?".

The international community as represented by the members of the Security Council and dozens of other international and regional organizations, has answered all these questions, with its unanimously adopted resolutions that show a determination based on the conviction that if ever an aggressive régime such as that in Iraq is allowed to swallow up a sovereign independent country the result will be the collapse of international law and order. Indeed, the result will be the collapse of everything that the countries of the world have worked for through the years. The result will be the end of that striving after long-term stability, and the collapse of the endeavour to replace conflict and confrontation with co-operation and understanding.

The States of the world have been trying to promote peaceful rather than military solutions to conflicts. Hence the firm and unanimous position adopted by the international community against such intolerable and flagrant aggression and oppression.

The world has come far. Today, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, it is proceeding ever more swiftly towards the strengthening of international security, towards disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is therefore important that we reiterate our appeal to all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must all act in such a way as to ensure faster progress towards implementation of that treaty and towards the adoption of conventions and resolutions aimed at the halting and banning of nuclear tests. States that do not possess nuclear weapons must be given effective guarantees against their use or the threatened use.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

In a region where Israel has built its nuclear reactors and developed its nuclear bombs and weapons, in complete defiance of international laws and resolutions and of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in which the Iraqi régime tries to get round the norms of international law, and resorts to all kinds of ploys and unlawful means to develop its nuclear, chemical and biological arsenals, there is an undeniable need to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The creation of such a zone is an absolute priority for the international community. Only in that way can we ensure that that important region - indeed, the peoples of all parts of the world - will not be exposed to a destructive war.

We have seen what an impact the events in the Middle East have had on the entire world. This is an indication of the fact that there are indissoluble links between all regions, that the degree of interdependence is indeed great. Thus there is an overriding need to have a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The creation of such a zone would certainly be in the interest of all States and all peoples.

In this connection, we cannot but condemn the close nuclear co-operation between Israel and South Africa. The unlawful practices of those two countries threaten the security, integrity and stability of the States of both regions. That is why all States, especially nuclear States, and the International Atomic Energy Agency must refrain from providing any assistance or co-operation that might promote the further development of the nuclear capacity of those two countries.

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At the same time, we cannot but urge commitment to the achievement of the objectives of the programme of work of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development and must work for the reduction of military budgets so that the necessary resources can be channelled to the goals of peaceful development.

Finally, we should like to take this opportunity once again to express the deep appreciation of the State of Kuwait for the role that has been played by the United Nations in the area of disarmament and the strengthening of security. We hope that the wave of international support enjoyed by this Organization due to its success and progress in some areas will turn into a great force that will lead to concrete support for the objectives of the Charter and help promote sincere respect for its provisions and for the Organization's resolutions. In that way, the stability, tranquillity and prosperity of all our peoples can be guaranteed for the present and for the future.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m