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1. Mr. RAJASOMBAT (Laos) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. Chairman, in compliance with your instructions, to my great regret I am bound to refrain from offering you the customary congratulations. However, I would certainly be remiss if I did not associate myself with the speakers who have preceded me in expressing to you, as well as to the other officers of the Committee, our great satisfaction at your election and to offer you our co-operation in this debate on the control of armaments and on disarmament under your chairmanship, which is bound to be competent, diligent and courteous.

2. This year the First Committee has attributed particular importance to the debate on the control of armaments and on disarmament, since it is a preparatory step towards the convening of an international forum which will study the relevant questions in depth.

3. My delegation, while fully aware of the place it will occupy in that great world forum—which, in my humble opinion, will fall more within the competence of the nuclear Powers than that of the non-nuclear countries—has no hesitation in making its modest contribution to that undertaking, encouraged as we are by the idea accepted here that the cause in question is of the utmost interest to all States Members of our Organization. It is indeed one of the most serious and urgent problems of our time. Small countries, such as my own, are particularly gratified to note that considerable progress has already been achieved in this field, and that for this purpose several international agreements have been concluded; my country has subscribed to them in the hope that thereby partial measures will gradually be implemented by the Powers concerned. Accordingly, we are more than ever convinced that it is both necessary and urgent to establish all the conditions favourable to the institution of adequate and expanded international control over armaments and disarmament.

4. We also welcome the bilateral agreement concluded between the great Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, on the prevention of nuclear war, and we await the positive results which will emerge from the negotiations on the limitation of strategic arms and from other talks, either in progress or about to begin, on such matters as the

prohibition of nuclear tests and the limitation of chemical weapons. In this context we consider that the strengthening of the Treaty of Tlatelolco,¹ through the addition of new and important signatures, and the creation of so-called peace zones similar to that envisaged for the Indian Ocean are all sure ways of progressing towards our goals of peace, peaceful coexistence and international security.

5. It is therefore in the hope of witnessing the concrete and progressive realization of these goals that the non-nuclear world has warmly welcomed the numerous summit meetings between the great Powers—meetings which, for example, have made it possible to maintain and develop a good climate of understanding and détente in international relations. It is also to that end that we sincerely hope that an international forum, larger than the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, can, in spite of the signs of hesitation and opposition that are still evident in our Organization, be convened at the appropriate time with the active and generous participation of all.

6. My delegation has, over the past few days, followed with considerable attention and interest the debates that have taken place on arms control and disarmament, and has noted with genuine satisfaction the statements made by various speakers, in particular the representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States of America. We have all unanimously acknowledged their beneficial effects and noted how helpful they have been in improving the international climate and promoting the ensuing détente, which has made possible the solution of numerous problems, despite the continued presence of areas of tension and conflict in many parts of the world. It is thanks to recourse to multilateral diplomacy and to the good offices exercised at the highest international level that we have been able to witness during this past year a progressive movement towards genuine political and military détente. It is generally accepted that this détente is what has made it possible, through the recent conclusion of the agreements on Viet-Nam and on my own country, Laos, to reduce the extent of the conflict which for more than two decades has been tearing South-East Asia apart.

7. May I take this opportunity to express from the bottom of my heart my Government's feelings of gratitude and appreciation to the representatives of Governments present at this session who have shown us their great sympathy and friendship by hailing, in their statements, the Paris and Vientiane Agreements, as a just and realistic basis for the peaceful settlement of the Viet-Name and Laotian problems—a basis on which peace could, in their unanimous opinion, be extended to the other countries of South-East Asia. However, as regards Laos, in spite of the conclusion of those Agreements, my country is not yet, at the present time, fully free from the fear of a war of attrition, an apprehension motivated and justified by the occupation of our territory by foreign troops maintained and directed by our neighbours. Under the terms of the Agreements concluded in Paris and Vientiane, all foreign troops would have to be withdrawn from Laos within 60 days following the formation of a government of national union, and this, according to the information received by my Government,

could occur during the first half of this month of November. The present developments give us good reason to hope that the formation of a government of national union could be achieved by the anticipated date, although a certain number of fundamental political, constitutional and humanitarian points still need to be settled. My country, which since 1945 has known war and all its attendant hardship, humiliation and destruction, seeks genuine peace—not a mere armistice but the sort of peace that formally implies the rule of law and respect for rights between men and between peoples.

8. Speaking to the press of his trip to Middle East capitals this past September, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, expressed the opinion, among other things, that while détente between the great Powers was eminently positive, it nevertheless had to be supplemented by more active and wider participation by the small countries in the consolidation of world peace. I am happy to note here that this appeal has been well received by all States Members of the United Nations, judging by the satisfaction and unanimous sympathy expressed in their statements hailing the conclusion of the Paris and Vientiane Agreements, as I mentioned earlier. All, moreover, have placed special emphasis on their own determination to make every effort to ensure that the peoples of that region can devote themselves to the reconstruction of their countries. As I understand it, they are firmly determined to make this process of the restoration of peace in Indo-China final and irreversible. It might also be necessary to study and undertake, on the initiative of our Organization, measures to prevent the return to our region of a cold war and all its ensuing confrontations. Such an initiative on the part of the United Nations, similar to those taken in the Middle East or on the Indian subcontinent, would definitely reassure the peoples of our region and would, by the same token, help to strengthen the Organization's universal authority and to demonstrate its solicitude for these peoples which are stoically suffering as a result of the problem of international insecurity, among others. In order to restore peace and stability, our region needs also to be able to benefit from the principle of the equal right to protection and international security.

9. That is the situation which prevails at present in my country.

10. Before concluding my statement, I should like to say a few words about some of the other advantages deriving from arms control and disarmament. We are now discussing a Soviet proposal whose purpose is to achieve a 10 per cent reduction in the military budgets of the permanent members of the Security Council and to use part of the resources thus released to help the developing countries.² Without in any way wishing to prejudge the results of the discussions on this subject, one is inclined at this stage to wonder whether disarmament, freely accepted and properly controlled, might not produce a similar effect. To illustrate what I have just suggested, may I cite a highly significant and convincing figure which I happened to notice as I was reading a newspaper article which stated that our Organization, in the period 1960-1970, spent \$3,500 million on

¹ Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 634, No. 9068, p. 283).

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 102, document A/9191.

so-called pre-investment activities in the third world, and indicated that that figure was lower than that for world expenditure on armaments in a single week. Here again one is inclined to wonder whether the savings derived from freely accepted disarmament might not yield resources greater than those that would come from a 10 per cent reduction in the military budgets of the countries that are permanent members of the Security Council, as proposed by the Soviet Union. Since I am only a layman in these matters, I shall leave it to the experts of the States concerned and to our Secretary, should any need to check the facts arise.

11. Another fortunate consequence that would flow from arms control and disarmament is that, if properly verified, it could, it seems to me, help to dissipate the political, economic and social clouds that at present hang over the world. The political, economic and social crises that are disturbing our cities and our homes in the form of revolutions, coups d'état, strikes, youthful rebellions and the harm done as a result of all kinds of acts of violence, such as piracy in the air, on land, or on the sea, individual or collective vendettas, guerrilla fighting in the jungles and in the cities and the international traffic in arms—all this is largely the result of poorly controlled arming. How will matters end in this uncontrollable and uncontrolled climate of violence in which force takes the place of justice to the point where it becomes the law? Would not all this disappear, partly or even entirely, on the day when rational control of disarmament is accepted by the countries in question?

12. We see clearly now that all this derives to a great extent from the arms race. It is probable that a disarmament race could well bring about welcome changes in the lives of peoples, who would consequently find themselves called upon to define new legal, economic and social rules that could be harmonized and made applicable and profitable to all States of the world.

13. I would not wish to conclude without casting a brotherly glance at the Middle East. It is indeed most distressing, just as the war in our region is drawing to a close, to witness the outbreak of another war in the Middle East. There again, arms control and disarmament would seem to be the best panacea for that chronic disease referred to by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his report [A/9001/Add.1]. To cure that disease once and for all, a large dose of love—the great love preached by the Apostle Paul—must necessarily be prescribed and included in that panacea. The Laotian people, having experienced the nameless horrors of a long and painful war, can only hope from the bottom of their hearts that this love may be reborn in that part of the world, that it may bloom again like the beautiful date-palms that line the desert and the streets of the white cities, and that it may grow stronger and more beautiful and more expensive than ever, like the cedars of Lebanon in the days of Solomon.

14. Mr. BEAVOGUI (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): Once again the First Committee is engaged in its annual discussion of the crucial question of disarmament. There has hardly been any subject of such great concern to mankind as a whole, any subject so dramatic on the international level, as the question of disarmament since the

Second World War. The considerable time and effort devoted to this question at different levels in the world attest to its importance. And yet, unfortunately, disarmament still remains a field where there has been very little headway and where achievements have been rather disappointing.

15. Year after year voices are raised in this forum in support of disarmament, thoughtful statements point to the difficulties involved in the situation, and declarations of good intentions for the future are renewed. But year after year, mankind, in consternation, sees armaments multiply, military expenditures increase, new weapons of mass destruction come into being, ever more menacing and more diabolical.

16. As a matter of fact, a great deal has been said about disarmament in a long series of international gatherings, and very often the problem of the arms race has been mentioned, yet no one has sufficiently dwelt on the basic divergences involved in this problem. But if we carefully analyse the whole problem of disarmament, one fundamental question comes to mind, and that is, why do countries arm? And when we ponder the answer to this question, another question inevitably arises, namely, who it is that should be disarmed? The answers to these questions are not hard to find. It is not hard to see, for example, that the motives leading countries, great or small, to arm tend to differ. There can be no doubt that it is not the same aims, or the same needs, that force countries to arm.

17. Peace-loving countries, countries that do not wage wars of aggression anywhere in the world and have no ambition to seize the wealth of other peoples or to force other countries into economic and political dependence upon them, countries that disinterestedly assist the developing countries and respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other States, arm for purposes of defence, to protect their own security and national sovereignty and to strengthen their policy of peace and friendship toward other countries of the world. But the imperialist Powers do not arm for the same reason. Each one of them wishes to appear stronger and more fearsome in the eyes of the world.

18. At the start, the United Nations was born as a group of nations that, together, had won the war. The United Nations carried with it the hope for peace and the desire to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. But at the same time, the United Nations was born with a guilt complex, for a few days after the signing of the Charter, the unfortunate cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced the atomic terror of bombs of a mere 20 kilotons, a strength now regarded as almost insignificant in comparison with the megaton strength that prevails in the world of the super-Powers.

19. Thus, the first concern of the United Nations had to be a dual one: on the one hand, it had to strive for disarmament, while, on the other, it had to prevent this new form of energy from being used for the cruel purposes of death. The Charter, which makes very little mention of disarmament, is a document which predates the nuclear age, and thus could not foresee the breakneck speed of technological development devoted to perfecting instru-

ments of war, or the advent of military blocs or great-Power rivalries. But today, we are caught in a vicious circle. Powers have armed because of their conflicting interests, some pursuing imperialist policies while others are forced to organize a suitable defence. From an official American report we read that world trade in armaments during the 10-year period from 1961 to 1971 amounted to the breath-taking figure of \$48,400 million. But rearmament has been so intensive that it is no longer the effect of a cause but is in itself, because of its awesome technical perfection, a danger not only to peace, but to the survival of the human race. The latest developments in the Middle East conflict have just shown how mankind as a whole can be quickly brought to the brink of destruction, and be entirely at the mercy of the pride of the Powers equipped with weapons of mass destruction. My delegation therefore considers that the problem of general and complete disarmament must be uppermost in the mind of the international community, and that nothing should divert it from that course.

20. My country is one of those that wish to approach disarmament not as an unreal and Utopian dream but as a realistic and positive fact. While it is true that the arms race can lead to war, it is equally true that we cannot consolidate progress towards effective and fruitful peace if the forces of imperialism, of colonialism, of neo-colonialism and of racism continue to subjugate peoples, if even more territory is acquired by force, if foreign military bases are still maintained in different parts of the world, if struggles for national independence are brutally repressed, if recourse is had to interference, provocations, blockades and economic strangulation against countries which nationalize their natural resources, if discrimination is practised against countries because of their régimes and if misleading propaganda and incitement to hatred are resorted to. As long as imperialism exists, war will remain a possibility. Furthermore, in view of the different forms of aggression to which they are subjected, the developing, colonial or dependent countries must do all they can to strengthen their national defences. It would have been ironical to ask the Viet-Nameese to disarm when they were still the victims of the most terrible destruction history has ever known, by the most powerful nation of our times. It would be nonsensical to call for the disarmament of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and other colonialist strongholds, who are struggling for their freedom and national independence.

21. The Government of the Republic of Guinea has always spoken out in favour of general and complete disarmament because the need to arm in order to defend the sovereignty of a people is not incompatible with the fact of proclaiming the need for a genuine general disarmament which will ensure international peace and security for all time. It is interested in the question at every level. At all international meetings, at all meetings of non-aligned nations where the problem of disarmament is discussed, we, like many other nations, have always taken a stand in favour of the convening of a World Disarmament Conference. At the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, our Minister for Foreign Affairs said:

"Turning to the problem of disarmament and the possible convening of a world disarmament conference,

all countries must be associated in the various discussions. The problem of peace and other major international issues are of concern to the entire world. Peace must belong to everyone: two, three or four countries cannot take decisions on behalf of all continents; hence the problem of disarmament and, particularly, the problem of peace are not the exclusive concern of one nation, however great or strong it may be. All these matters, which are connected with the prohibition of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, are of concern to the Republic of Guinea, but we wish to discuss them together with all other countries, without having piecemeal, biased or false solutions imposed upon us." [2049th plenary meeting, para. 215.]

22. It is with this concern in mind that, in the course of the same session of the Assembly, my country became a sponsor, with other non-aligned nations, of the draft resolution adopted by a large majority, which became resolution 2930 (XXVII) concerning the establishment of the Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference.

23. On reading the report of the Secretary-General my delegation was disappointed to note the stalemate in which that Committee has found itself since its establishment. We were also disappointed after reading document A/9141 which deals with the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. Such discouraging results diminish the hopes of those who, like us, trusted that these bodies would enable us progressively to emerge from the state of lethargy in which we find ourselves and which is not conducive to the immediate convening of the World Conference.

24. All bodies, all organs, and all people who are engaged collectively or individually in the quest for understanding to achieve disarmament should be encouraged and should benefit from our co-operation. It is for this reason that, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to pay a sincere tribute to our colleague from Iran, Mr. Hoveyda, for the efforts he has made and also for the important results he obtained in his informal contacts on the subject.

25. The need for a World Disarmament Conference is becoming greater than ever. But to avoid failure, much must still be done and many conditions will have to be met.

26. While holding on to what we have achieved, our Committee must nevertheless press for an expansion of the Special Committee, the extension of its mandate, and a definition of the tasks to be done. All countries, bar none, and particularly the five nuclear Powers, must make a greater contribution to the work of the Committee in a spirit of sincere co-operation. The results obtained at the Committee level will, to a large extent, determine the success of an international conference on general and complete disarmament. And nothing must be overlooked, nothing must be underestimated in the establishment of the general guidelines for the negotiations on criteria generally acceptable to all countries, great or small. And thus, the documents adopted at the latest summit conference of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa in May, supplemented and brought up to date by those of the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-

Aligned Countries held at Algiers in September on the problem of disarmament, as well as the results of other international organs, plus the disarmament resolutions adopted as a result of negotiations held at the bilateral or multilateral level, must all contribute to the preparation of the guidelines for a convention that could be adopted at the proposed World Conference as a synthesis of world public opinion.

27. Since we have to examine the specific conditions required to create an atmosphere conducive to the convening of the world conference, my delegation wishes once again to stress the basically universal nature of such a conference, the main objective of which must be to bring together all countries of the world so that each one can make its views known. This condition is absolutely necessary if the problem is to be approached from a realistic standpoint, and if we truly wish to deal with all the problems of disarmament and in order to bring about the total destruction of nuclear weapons and cessation of the armaments race, since all States must be required to respect and guarantee the independence, security and territorial integrity of all countries. The final settlement of local conflicts, the end of foreign intervention, whether political, economic or military, the elimination of military bases, renunciation of the policy of zones of influence and hegemony, the extension of the denuclearization of the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, are all preliminary conditions for true disarmament efforts. Without those, we shall inevitably fail in our endeavours. That is why the conference must be attended not only by the nuclear Powers but by all countries without exception, and each one must be allowed equal access to the discussions and decisions, as well as equal participation in the supervision of their implementation. Whether they be strong or weak, whether or not they possess nuclear weapons, all countries should be placed on an equal footing and should be able to

approach the problem as a whole, with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament.

28. My delegation has no hesitation in supporting draft resolution A/C.1/L.650, which deals with napalm and other incendiary weapons and all aspects of their possible use, although our country does not entirely agree on some of the partial aspects of disarmament, which tend to make a distinction between some weapons and others, when all of them are lethal. We shall vote in favour of that draft in the hope that efforts will be made, as a matter of urgency, by Governments to find ways of prohibiting, by legal means, the use of new methods of warfare that cause useless suffering and have indiscriminate effects. It is in fact an open secret that Portugal, for one, is using napalm, defoliants and other incendiary weapons in the Territories that it illegally occupies in Africa in its genocidal war against the populations of those Territories. The effects of napalm, defoliants and other incendiary weapons are not comparable with the effects of radioactive fall-out from nuclear tests, but are no less harmful.

29. In summing up the situation as a whole, it seems that the international community is becoming more aware of its errors. There is every reason to believe that a new tendency will prevail and that the United Nations, through the unanimous will of its Member States, can become more effective. A further disappointment in a field such as disarmament, which so vitally affects the security, development and very survival of all peoples, would be even more disastrous today than ever before. A concrete and positive step forward, by holding a World Disarmament Conference for example, would be of great encouragement to peoples. The Republic of Guinea is ready, as always, to shoulder its part of the responsibility.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.