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Chairman: Mr. BOATEN (Ghana)
(Vice-Chairman)

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

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Mr. HUSSEN (Somalia): The most important of the many weighty questions before the General Assembly is, in the opinion of my delegation, the question of general and complete disarmament and, in particular, nuclear disarmament. As we have remarked on many occasions, the work of the United Nations in promoting the enjoyment of human rights and better standards of living for the world's peoples, is overshadowed by the constant threat of nuclear war or accident, and by the arms race in sophisticated conventional weapons. In fact, the constantly accelerating arms race in weapons of all kinds frustrates both the aims of the disarmament decade -- which have never come near to realization -- and the hope of peoples for the establishment of a new world economic order.

My delegation is particularly concerned at the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament. What was once described as the slow pace of progress in this field must now be called a backward slide. It is 13 years since a limited test ban agreement was reached but there is still no evidence of further progress towards a comprehensive test ban treaty.

There was once hope that the SALT talks between the United States and the Soviet Union would produce significant limitations in the offensive and defensive strategic nuclear-weapon systems of these Powers. The chilling reality is that the last ceiling placed on these systems was well above, rather than below, the level of nuclear armament already reached by both States, and the jockeying for nuclear advantage by the production of newer and more destructive models of their nuclear weapons continues unabated.

The hopes raised six years ago by the coming into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty can hardly be sustained today. The nuclear Powers have failed to give the necessary leadership in the vertical reduction of their nuclear arsenals and have not taken steps to conclude the special basic

(Mr. Hussen, Somalia)

international agreement on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes envisaged in article V of the Treaty. Furthermore, horizontal proliferation, which once seemed unlikely, presents a new threat to world peace and security. This threat lies, first of all, in the wish of a number of States to acquire the facilities and technology for reprocessing nuclear fuel, and in the willingness of certain States to supply these facilities which could easily produce atomic weapons. The irresponsibility of the would-be suppliers is emphasized by the fact that they would carry out this dangerous trade in areas where regional conflicts and rivalries are all too evident.

(Mr. Hussen, Somalia)

But the supply of facilities obviously capable of producing nuclear weapons is not the only threat to the principle of non-proliferation. The international community must now come to grips with the inescapable fact that there is a clear link between the acquisition of nuclear technology and facilities for peaceful purposes and the possible spread of nuclear weapons. We have entered on a new and perilous phase in the development of nuclear power, and if the opportunities it presents are to be beneficial, the dangers of this phase must be squarely faced. In this new situation, all nations which supply nuclear materials and technology have a grave responsibility to impose stringent safeguards against the diversion of this technology from peaceful to military purposes. My delegation also believes that the International Atomic Energy Agency must be strengthened so that it can perform the increasingly important and active role it must play in the field of non-proliferation.

The arms race in sophisticated conventional weapons is scarcely less alarming than the race in nuclear armaments. Nations which on the one hand appear interested in promoting the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts are engaged, on the other hand, in the indiscriminate and unlimited supply of arms to one side or another. States which should be applying their resources to the needs of development often adopt instead militaristic poses beyond the normal needs of self-defence. Such attitudes in turn give rise to further militaristic responses. These activities seriously inhibit the efforts of peoples to achieve peace and progress.

My delegation shares the concern of the majority of Member States over the slow progress towards agreement on a ban on chemical warfare and on the prohibition of the use of napalm and other weapons which cause unnecessary and indiscriminate suffering. We hope that any differences in these areas will continue to be narrowed. We look forward also to the day when all States will accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and will ratify the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Poison or Other Gases and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare.

The disarmament picture is not, of course, an entirely gloomy one. If there has been unsatisfactory progress towards curbing existing forms of armaments and

(Mr. Hussen, Somalia)

warfare, there has been significant progress towards outlawing new methods of destruction before they can be established. My delegation welcomes the degree of unanimity so far reached on proposals for prohibiting environmental warfare and the development of new weapons of mass destruction. Agreements on the exclusion of nuclear weapons from outer space and the sea-bed are further examples of constructive disarmaments efforts.

Also encouraging is the fact that the question of the reduction of military budgets, particularly those of the super-Powers, continues to be pursued. We hope, however, that technical considerations will not long delay the implementation of this valuable initiative which underscores the link between disarmament and development.

The concept of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones is a constructive response by peace-loving States to the dangers of the armaments race in nuclear and conventional weapons. The Expert Study of the Question of these zones, which the General Assembly has recommended for wide international distribution, is an important contribution to the work of disarmament. By its solemn declaration on the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Thirtieth Session of the General Assembly gave a weighty endorsement to the development of this concept. Of paramount importance, however, will be the willingness of the big Powers to carry out their internationally defined obligations towards nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Already we have had an example of the refusal of some States to respect the efforts of peoples to be free from all aspects of great Power rivalry. I refer, of course, to the expansion of the American naval base on the British-owned island of Diego Garcia. Another disturbing development in the Indian Ocean, is the increased integration of South Africa into the strategic plans of the Western Powers. These and other unwelcome developments have taken place in spite of the support given to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace by the General Assembly, and in spite of the strongly expressed wishes of the majority of the States of the area.

In this situation, my delegation believes that the convening of a conference of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean is urgently necessary. It would provide a strong impetus for the practical application of the Indian Ocean

(Mr. Hussen, Somalia)

Declaration. We will continue to support the efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to arrange for consultations on the preparation of this conference. We urge the great Powers and the chief maritime users of the Indian Ocean to co-operate with the Committee in its task.

My final remarks will be directed towards the question of strengthening the influence and the role of the United Nations in disarmament issues. Let me say first of all that my delegation believes the essential factor for progress in disarmament to be the political will of those States which have the highest responsibility in this area. But we also believe that the United Nations can do more than it is doing at present to improve the climate for progress on disarmament issues.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his Introduction on the work of the Organization, the mobilization of public opinion has shown itself increasingly effective on a number of important issues in recent years. We strongly support his suggestion that the United Nations could play a major role in focusing world public opinion on this problem and in generating a new approach to questions of disarmament.

(Mr. Hussen, Somalia)

However, in the opinion of my delegation, the most important action which the United Nations could take to enable it to contribute to the solution of disarmament issues would be the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on this question, as proposed by the Non-Aligned Group of States during its last conference in Sri Lanka. Such a conference would determine disarmament priorities and would be an important preparation for the world disarmament conference that has long been called for by a majority of Member States.

A special session devoted to disarmament would be able to give this vital question, involving the very survival of mankind, the time and attention it deserves. With this kind of preparation, a world disarmament conference could be expected to produce significant and authoritative measures. The world's peoples have waited too long for such measures. It is time for their aspirations for peace, security and progress to be fulfilled.

Mr. LIKHACHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The statements of a number of delegations in our discussion have shown the progress achieved in the work of the Committee on Disarmament over the last year. We share the feeling of satisfaction expressed in this regard by the delegations. Indeed, the work of the Committee on Disarmament in 1976, particularly in its summer session, was marked by its intensiveness and was of a businesslike and purposeful nature. The activity and productivity of the work of the Committee in some questions confirmed once again that when there exists the necessary political will, then no matter how complicated and difficult the problems may be, the final results of talks on these questions can be positive.

In its statement today, the Soviet delegation feels it necessary to say something about the following three questions which, inter alia, were also actively considered by the Disarmament Committee this year, namely, the prohibition of military or any other hostile environmental modification techniques, the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction and the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

We have before us a draft convention prohibiting the military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques which was agreed on in the Committee on Disarmament. The Soviet Union, as the initiator of the proposal at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly and as one of the active participants in the preparation of this international agreement, does have in this connexion, a feeling of satisfaction.

The convention opens up a new avenue in the disarmament field. It includes the prohibition of the use of natural forces for military purposes and of any activities which have formerly not been the subject of any disarmament talks. In connexion with the expanding of the opportunities for mankind to control powerful natural processes, it is easy to foresee how destructive would be the consequences of activities undertaken for military or other hostile purposes.

In the light of this, the urgent need for an international agreement which would ban any environmental modification techniques, incompatible with peaceful purposes, becomes quite understandable. In the view of the Soviet Union, the draft convention submitted by the Disarmament Committee is entirely in keeping with these purposes.

The preparation of the draft convention was no easy matter and required considerable effort, not only on the part of the Soviet Union and the United States as authors of identical drafts tabled in August 1975, but also on the part of other States members of the Disarmament Committee. The hard work of preparing and carefully drafting the text of the convention took place at the numerous official and unofficial plenary meetings of the Committee and in a working group especially established for that purpose, composed of all members of the Committee and also in the course of the work of so-called contact groups. The Committee also had the highly qualified assistance of outstanding scientists in the field of geophysics and hydrometeorology, in their capacity as experts from various countries. In other words, the preparation of the text of the convention was something that took place on a broad democratic basis of constructive examination by the Committee of what were at times extremely complicated political, juridical and technical problems.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

As a result, a draft international agreement was produced, a carefully weighed and balanced compromise document which takes into account the positions of a broad range of countries.

The content of the convention is something about which I do not think I have to go into any detail since delegations have had an opportunity to study the text in its totality and in connexion with the provisions set out in the preamble in the 10 articles of the convention, in the annex to it and in the agreed understandings of the Committee on articles I, II, III, and VIII. I should like to stress here the importance of seeing the matter precisely in the light of the whole complex or as it has become customary to call it, the package, since taken as a whole, it does represent an understanding, an agreement which takes into account the various interests and positions of different States.

As regards the main characteristics of the draft convention, I should like to mention the following: firstly, the scope of the prohibition of the use of environmental modification techniques for military or other hostile purposes; secondly, concern for the preservation of the human environment and international co-operation in the field of the peaceful use of these techniques for the good of mankind; and thirdly, the carefully prepared system of control over the implementation of the convention.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

The scope of the prohibition envisaged in the draft convention is not only broad but -- and this is the main thing -- the prohibition applies to all the most dangerous forms of military techniques for modifying the natural environment. It applies to any manipulation technique of the environment that would produce any changes whatsoever in the dynamics, composition or structure of the earth, including its biota, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, as well as in outer space. More specifically, it applies to the use for military or any other hostile purposes of changes in the elements of the weather: clouds, precipitation, cyclones, storms and so on; to artificially induced earthquakes, tidal waves and changes in the climatic elements, in ocean currents, and in the ozone layer, and to any violation of the ecological balance of any part of the world.

It should be observed that the scope of the prohibition provided for in the draft convention does not exclude any means of affecting the natural environment which could in practice have harmful consequences.

The system of control provided for in the draft convention is sufficiently flexible and effective. Article V, and also the provision on the Consultative Committee of Experts contained in the addendum to the draft convention, lays down significant conditions that would ensure the settlement of possible conflicts of opinion relating to the implementation of the convention by the parties thereto. It is designed to give the parties to the convention not only appropriate rights but also assistance in this matter. If need be, a State would have a sufficiently broad range of action, including bilateral consultations and co-operation, appeals to appropriate international organizations for consultation, the convening of the Consultative Committee of Experts and, finally, reference to the Security Council. The State would itself determine which of these courses of action it should take in any given circumstances.

The Soviet delegation believes that the draft convention prepared by the CCD is entirely in keeping with the purpose of prohibiting environmental modification techniques incompatible with peaceful purposes. Therefore we support the draft resolution proposed by Finland, which already has some 25 co-sponsors -- Austria, Zaire, Iran, India, Guinea, Mozambique, Brazil, Poland, Bulgaria, Canada, Norway, Netherlands and others (A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1) -- that is, the representatives of all the main groups of States Members of the United Nations. As we know, the Soviet Union is also a co-sponsor.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

We call on everyone to support this draft resolution so that we can approve the convention and open it for signature as soon as possible.

We cannot agree with the position of the delegation of Mexico, which proposes that we should not approve the draft convention, but rather return it to the CCD on the grounds that the text does not provide for a comprehensive prohibition. As has been indicated above, the prohibition laid down in the draft convention in practice embraces all possible ways of affecting the natural environment for military purposes. In these circumstances, any delay in approving the draft convention would in fact serve only to delay the adoption of a major step towards blocking of a new avenue in the arms race. It would be a flagrant contradiction of an approach which has stood the test of time, namely, the conclusion of a number of international agreements on disarmament. We cannot but express surprise at the assertion that, with the threshold prohibition of any weapon, that part of it is permitted which has not been prohibited. To accept this assumption would mean that there was really no point in talking about adopting any partial measures of disarmament, since, according to the proponents of this argument, everything that is not excluded from the prohibition would be permitted.

But life fortunately develops in a rather different way, and mankind has in its possession such important international agreements as the Treaty prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons in the three spheres, the Treaty prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons on the sea-bed, the agreement prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons in outer space, the Moscow Treaty of 1974 limiting underground nuclear tests, and a number of other important international agreements on disarmament.

Nor can we agree that because the prohibition is not fully comprehensive, it is not in keeping with the interests of small countries. Let me ask you this: if the convention is not concluded, and all means of affecting the natural environment are not prohibited, including those that may cause irreversible damage to any country, and especially to small countries, would this be in the interests of small countries?

Those who propose that the draft convention should be referred back to the CCD argue that agreement could easily and rapidly be achieved. We cannot agree with

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

this. It is not a matter of drafting or clarifying formulations. As has already been demonstrated, the present draft convention was prepared in the course of long and difficult discussions. It is a sensible compromise and a balanced outcome of the discussions, which takes into account the positions of many countries.

In the course of the discussion some doubts were expressed as to the extent to which the draft convention met the interests of the developing countries.

The Soviet Union, which initiated the idea of preparing this agreement, had and has one aim in mind: to erect a barrier against the use of environmental modification techniques for military and other hostile purposes, with a view to closing off new avenues in the arms race. This is obviously in the interests of all nations and States, including, of course, the developing countries. On the basis of this initiative, and as a result of difficult and complex talks, agreement was achieved among a considerable number of States, including the more highly developed from a scientific and technological point of view, which voluntarily agreed to renounce the use of environmental modification techniques for military or other hostile purposes although some of these States actually possess such techniques. So the question arises whether or not it is to the advantage of developing countries that do not possess such techniques for other countries, which do possess them, voluntarily to give up their use? There can be only one answer to that question.

Furthermore, the draft convention provides for the fullest possible exchange of scientific and technological information regarding environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes. Article III, paragraph 2 of the draft convention states that "States parties ... shall contribute ... to international economic and scientific co-operation in the preservation, improvement and peaceful utilization of the environment, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world" (A/31/27, p. 87). This provision takes into account the interests of the developing countries, and even anticipates them.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

To sum up what I said on the question of the convention, I can say that the purposes of strengthening peace, of restraining the arms race, the interests of all States would be served by the approval by the thirty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations of the convention on the prohibition of military or other hostile environmental modification techniques, as would the opening of such a convention for signature as soon as possible.

The positive results which have been achieved in the preparation of this convention confirm that agreement on preventing the emergence of new possible trends or avenues in the arms race is something that comes about more easily and sooner than attempts to prohibit or remove already existing forms of weaponry which are to be found in arsenals. This, in our view, should be borne in mind in our approach to another question which I shall refer to later.

A year ago here, at the General Assembly, the Soviet Union made a proposal to prohibit the development and production of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, and introduced an appropriate draft international treaty. Subsequent courses of events have confirmed the timeliness of resolution 3479 (XXX) of the General Assembly which approved the Soviet initiative. The discussion of this proposal which was held that year in the Disarmament Committee with the participation of highly qualified experts showed that there was a certain amount of progress. Typically, a number of countries, which adopted a waiting and passive stand at the spring session of the Committee, did express their views on the substance of the problem in the summer session and sent their own experts. And we noted with satisfaction that in the discussion of this subject, representatives of 11 States took part. A beginning was made in a business-like and constructive discussion of the problem, the importance and complexity of which it would be difficult to overestimate.

Indeed, any limitations on the use of science and technology for the creation of new, even more fearful forms of weapons of mass destruction do not exist, at the moment with the exception of biological weapons. And this means that any time discoveries and inventions of science and technology may be used for military purposes with consequent catastrophic effects.

Sometimes we hear people saying that such weapons have not yet been invented and should we really be bothering about banning them right now? Yes, we should;

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

and this is why: there is one incontrovertible fact we are all aware of, namely that scientific progress is constantly accelerating, as is the sophistication and perfection of weapons. The existing prototypes of weapons are growing old in their very stockpiles today and even on their testing grounds. And who can swear that new forms of weapons of mass destruction will not appear in the conceivable future? We can say right now with considerable confidence that in their staggering effects they would be comparable to the existing forms of such weapons and maybe even outstrip them. Furthermore, in recent years, there has been an ever more discernible tendency to go over to an arms race in weapons of a new qualitatively higher degree. And if we do not do something to stop this process right now -- if we do not erect a barrier to the creation of new forms and systems of weapons of mass destruction -- then the task of disarmament in the future would become much more complex and difficult than it is now.

The memorandum of the Soviet Union on questions of ending the arms race and disarmament stresses that this danger is extremely great and that we must find ways of stopping it.

It is precisely from this standpoint that the Soviet Union approaches the talks on this question of the Committee on Disarmament. And, as we know, the Soviet delegation, in order to clarify the scope of the prohibition in the draft agreement, has tabled a working document on defining concepts of new forms of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. It gives examples of the definition of such concepts and illustrative examples. The USSR proposed an approach whereby new forms of weaponry of mass destruction would include among them any forms of weapons based on qualitatively new principles of operation -- in terms of method of use, target and the nature of the effect. These would include, for example, say weapons with a broad range of selectivity of targets, which affect cells, and various systems of the human organism and even whole peoples; infra-sound weapons which affect internal organs, the psyche and conduct of peoples; genetic weapons which destroy the genetic processes and affect heredity both of man and plants and animals necessary for his existence, and which, in the final analysis, would lead to decline and even extinction; ethnic weapons based on the use of natural biochemical distinctions between various groups of the population,

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

depending on skin colour, blood group, which would strike selectively by means of special chemical agents. There are also a number of other possibilities we could mention, from which as a result of scientific and technological advances and even experiments, new types of terrifying weapons might be developed.

In so far as new systems of weapons of mass destruction are concerned, they should not, in the view of the Soviet Union, be created either in terms of new types or of types already based on existing scientific principles which new technical elements of combat or support means could make even more dangerous. As an example we could mention aero-space systems of nuclear weapons on the basis of space craft transporters, air-fueled projectiles and a number of others.

The question of prohibition of the creation of new weapons and new systems of weapons of mass destruction is an important and topical one and embraces the substantial aspect of the whole problem of disarmament and the prevention of war. Talks on this question should be given high-priority attention. We believe that the Committee on Disarmament should step up its work in this field and accelerate the preparation of a new important international agreement. The Soviet delegation on the basis of this, on 10 November, tabled a draft resolution (A/C.1/31/L.10/Rev.1) for this purpose, in accordance with the decision of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations contained in resolution 3479 (XXX) and also with the results of the consideration in 1976 of the question of preparing an agreement in the Disarmament Committee. In presenting this draft to the Committee, we call upon all delegations to support it.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

The General Assembly of the United Nations and the Committee on Disarmament have had on their agenda for more than one year now the question of prohibition of the development, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and the destruction of such stockpiles. Although the General Assembly regularly adopts resolutions calling on all countries as a matter of urgency to solve this problem, there has so far been no perceptible progress. Meanwhile, the problem of destroying this type of weapon has become even more pressing than before. If not today, then tomorrow, the world may see the development of new and even more effective types of chemical weapons, which would threaten us with mass destruction and also with irreversible consequences for the environment. The Western press has already published information on so-called binary mixtures -- two harmless components which together form a highly toxic substance. Specialists see a particular danger in binary mixtures, in that they open up the way for the production of chemical weapons in factories which produce chemicals for peaceful purposes. And we cannot fail to be concerned by the fact that along with the ever-accelerating process of the proliferation of new chemical technology, there can be also proliferation of chemical weapons which can be adopted for use by the armed forces by new countries.

The Soviet Union has constantly favoured the total prohibition and destruction of all chemical means of waging war. We believe that the approach which forms the basis of the draft convention of the socialist countries presented in the Disarmament Committee in 1972 ensures a radical and simultaneous solution of the problem of chemical weapons also, as was the case with bacteriological weapons. The socialist countries have proposed a much more far-reaching plan of chemical disarmament.

Nevertheless, the talks on the subject which have been going on for some years now have not yet opened up prospects for such a comprehensive solution. In that connexion the question has arisen of beginning with an agreement on prohibiting and eliminating the most dangerous, deadly types of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union has expressed its readiness to agree to this as a first step.

In the Disarmament Committee in 1976 the problem of chemical weapons was subjected to further, more profound study by experts from many countries. This

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

work was useful. We would like to highlight in particular a narrowing of differences on such questions as the definition of chemical agents which would be subject to prohibition on the basis of the criterion of the common goal. Also there emerged a general view with regard to take toxicity as an additional criterion. In our view, the Soviet and American talks held in Geneva in August this year for the purpose of preparing new steps towards the prohibition of chemical weapons, that is, towards the conclusion of an international convention, have proved useful. Problems were considered at these consultations connected with the definition of the scope of prohibition and control measures. The consultations will continue.

In the talks regarding the banning of chemical weapons, certain States have tended to refer to control difficulties. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries believe that national control, in combination with certain international procedures, is a sufficient guarantee of the observance of the relevant agreement by all the parties to it. The possibilities of national control have grown considerably in recent years. The effectiveness of physical, chemical and biological methods is now such that the presence of minute quantities of substances can be detected, even by remote sensing devices situated outside the territory concerned. The possibilities of using statistical methods of control have also grown, on the basis of new generations of computers. The Soviet Union, as it stressed in its memorandum on questions of ending the arms race and disarmament presented for consideration by the Assembly, is at the same time ready to consider the possibility of using additional control procedures and in particular to discuss methods of verifying the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons required to be removed from the arsenals of States.

The Disarmament Committee is now in a position to carry the problem of prohibiting chemical weapons and the elimination of stockpiles of such weapons forward from the stage of technical research to the practical stage of actually preparing an international agreement. The USSR delegation believes that the General Assembly should call on all States to demonstrate their political will to reach a universally acceptable agreement and recommend to the Disarmament Committee to speed up its talks on this problem. For its part, the Soviet Union intends to take a very active part in the talks aimed at eliminating chemical means of waging war.

(Mr. Likhachev, USSR)

The representatives of a number of States who have spoken in the discussion in the First Committee have said that the Disarmament Committee has always been the most appropriate and competent international body for talks on specific questions of disarmament. The Soviet delegation shares this view and believes that the Disarmament Committee in its future work should confirm this high assessment of its attributes by practically facilitating the solution of the urgent problems of disarmament.

Mr. HARRY (Australia): The annual debate on disarmament in this First Committee offers an opportunity not only to review negotiations towards agreement on recognized disarmament objectives and the implementation of existing agreements, but to consider new lines of advance towards our common goal.

This year's debate has already been enlivened by focus on the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. Discussion of this draft convention in the Committee has so far been pertinent and informative. We are, in fact, participating in a process which we think should be more the rule than is the case. Following detailed discussion and negotiation within the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), a proposal has been brought forward to this Political and Security Affairs Committee of the General Assembly so that our Committee can decide whether to recommend that convention to the plenary of the General Assembly. Detailed comments by my delegation may be made on this draft later in the debate. However, I should like to make now a broader comment. My delegation does not underrate the value of a draft convention prohibiting the hostile or military use of certain environmental modification techniques. But I cannot help making an observation on the nature of the subjects to which the CCD has been addressing itself recently. The Australian Government, like most others, considers agreement on effective steps to guarantee the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to curb the nuclear arms race as a priority item of business. The Biological Weapons Convention, a convention on modification of the environment for military purposes, a convention on chemical weapons, or consideration of the question of weapons of mass destruction are not unimportant issues. But an issue centrally related to the question of nuclear non-proliferation -- the conclusion of a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon testing -- continues to receive scant attention from the CCD. My delegation hopes that this state of affairs will be altered in the near future.

In his statement in plenary, the Australian Foreign Minister said the three fundamental areas where Australia looks and hopes for progress in disarmament are: first, the strengthening of measures to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons; second, the termination of nuclear-weapon testing in all environments; and third, further progress in strategic arms limitations agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union.

These three areas are of course interrelated. We cannot hope to see

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

significant progress towards the achievement of an international order in which the risk of nuclear war is eliminated unless measures designed to contribute to the elimination of that risk are agreed upon in all three areas.

Since the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, the number of States adhering to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has reached 100. The Australian Government regards the accession of Japan, a State with highly developed nuclear technology, as of great importance and warmly welcomes its ratification of the Treaty.

The NPT is the most important instrument we have for restraining the spread of nuclear weapons. But it is, as we all know, imperfect. It is a matter of great regret that a number of countries with advanced nuclear industries remain unwilling to demonstrate to the international community their commitment not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons. My Government does not presume to judge what other countries deem to be in their own national interests. But it considers that all States are entitled to judge what is in the international interest.

The Australian Government appreciates that the lack of universality of the NPT is not its only, or necessarily its most important flaw. Effective operation of the Treaty as a complete instrument for restricting the proliferation of nuclear weapons also requires full implementation of the articles of the Treaty. Those non-nuclear-weapon States which ratified the Treaty placed reliance on the goodwill of the nuclear-weapon States. In return, they made an historic surrender of significant sovereign rights. That trust has been partly honoured. The nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty have not passed nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon States; the United States and the Soviet Union have taken some steps in accordance with their obligation under the Treaty "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament" -- they have agreed to certain limitations on their strategic arms, and they have agreed to lower the threshold of underground nuclear-weapon tests. But they have not yet taken the most important step -- negotiation of a comprehensive test ban agreement.

The Australian Government remains firmly opposed to the continuation of any form of nuclear-weapon testing and looks forward to the early negotiation of an agreement to that end. We do not underrate the difficulties inherent in the

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negotiation of a comprehensive test ban agreement (CTB). We recognize that States parties to any such treaty must have confidence in the efficacy of any agreement and that they must feel that appropriate arrangements exist to ensure compliance with the agreement, including arrangements to ensure that peaceful nuclear explosions are not used as a cloak for weapon development.

However, the Australian Government has always felt that these technical problems are not insoluble. For that reason it was happy to provide the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has made available an expert to serve on the Group established by the CCD to examine seismic monitoring. It also welcomes the possibility of progress on the question of verification to which the Soviet Foreign Minister Mr. Gromyko referred in his speech in plenary.

But the Australian Government considers a greater obstacle in the path of the early negotiation of a CTB lies in the notion given prominence in the General Assembly last year that the idea of a CTB should not be entertained unless it will be a universal treaty -- one negotiated by all nuclear-weapon States.

No one can of course deny that universal arms control measures are always to be preferred to selective ones.

But decisions have constantly to be made whether or not to endorse arms control measures which either suffer from lack of universality in adherence or lack of comprehensiveness in scope. These are often the most difficult questions we face. The judgement we always have to make is whether a non-comprehensive measure will contribute to international security. Provided we do not set aside the ultimate goal of comprehensive application and universal adherence, partial measures can contribute to international security. If this approach had not been followed by the international community, we should not have had those limited measures imposing restraint on nuclear armaments which exist today.

There is no good reason why those same States which were prepared to apply this approach in the past should not again apply this approach to the question of negotiation of a CTB. I note that the same approach is being adopted as an argument in support of endorsement of the draft convention on environmental modification.

In fact, there are some very good reasons why this approach should be adopted.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

The first lies in treaty obligations accepted by the nuclear States parties to the Partial Test Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The second lies in the beneficial demonstration effect which would derive from negotiation of a CTB by those two nuclear Powers whose level of nuclear-weapon technology is far in excess of any other nuclear-weapon States. The other nuclear Powers could not but be influenced by their example combined with the force of world opinion. I need hardly remind the Committee that one nuclear-weapon State which is not an adherent to the Partial Test Ban Treaty has taken the welcome step of ceasing nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere. We look forward to further steps, including adherence to the NPT and eventually to a CTB.

The Australian Government, like other Governments, is concerned to see the recommendations of the NPT Review Conference implemented. An integral part of the Declaration of the Conference was the language emphasizing the nexus between the containment of "vertical" and the containment of "horizontal" proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the related language reaffirming the essential compact of the NPT, that is "an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of all States Party to the Treaty, nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear weapon States". As will be appreciated from the foregoing, the Australian Government listens intently, and not without some sympathy, to those States not parties to the NPT when they comment that the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty have not fully honoured their contractual obligations. It agrees with Dr. Eklund, Director-General of the IAEA when he says, as he did in a speech he made at a conference held at the United Nations in May this year:

"The single step that would do more than any other to buttress the Treaty would be a complete ban on the testing of nuclear weapons in all environments, replacing the Partial Test Ban Treaty in force today."

But the Australian Government remains of the view that immediate universal accession to the Treaty would be a major development that would advance the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and would contribute significantly to the enhancement of international security.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

The International Atomic Energy Agency is currently working on the technical aspects of two areas that were recognized as important elements of the NPT régime at the Review Conference. The Director-General has established the Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation which is examining means by which the IAEA secretariat can report to Member States on the implementation and effectiveness of safeguards. And the Board of Governors established the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions. The Australian Government considers these enterprises important to the more effective operation of the NPT régime and supports them strongly.

I mentioned earlier the third important area in which the Australian Government hopes to see early progress -- the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union of Strategic Arms Limitations Agreements. It is an historic process when the two most powerful nations on the globe agree to discuss possible limitations on their respective armaments systems upon which each considers that its own fundamental national security depends. The Australian Government looks to an early conclusion of the SALT II agreement, and looks to further agreements placing restraints on nuclear armaments.

For the sake of brevity, I have restricted my comments in this statement to the issue of non-proliferation and important related matters which are, in the opinion of the Australian Government, the principal issues to be addressed when considering the problem of international security. My delegation may make specific comments on some of the items on the agenda when these items are discussed later.

But before concluding, I should like to comment on the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the United Nations Role in Disarmament and the proposal for a special session on disarmament. Both concern the way in which we go about our business in dealing with disarmament questions. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee were modest and realistic. They should lead to an enhanced role for the United Nations Secretariat in the disarmament area, and my delegation looks forward to rationalization of the work procedures of this Committee as suggested.

Finally, my delegation supports the proposal to convene a special session of the Assembly on disarmament. We hope that the forum it will provide for the discussion of disarmament issues will encourage active participation by all of the States Members of the United Nations and that all States will approach it with

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a common resolve to use fully the opportunity provided in order to achieve significant progress towards the goal of international security. Detailed discussion of the agenda for the special session should in our view be reserved for the Preparatory Committee envisaged. We hope that differences of attitude which exist on other issues are not permitted to bedevil the special session proposal. To ensure the success of the session, my delegation hopes that the widest opportunity will exist for interested States to participate in the preparations for the session. Its work will have a profound influence on our work in the field, which is so important for the achievement of an international society freed from the incubus of an arms race that diminishes the quality of human life and imperils its future.

Mr. TÜRKMEN (Turkey) (interpretation from French): Any discussion on disarmament reveals how closely the hopes and fears of mankind for its future are linked to the outcome of this crucial problem. General and complete disarmament under international strict and effective control still remains the principal objective, even though we are all aware of the fact that the circumstances now prevailing in international relations do not warrant the hope that we shall achieve more than partial progress in the near future. But even this partial progress can only see the light of day if world public opinion continues to exercise growing pressure for disarmament so as to prompt all countries, first and foremost the nuclear countries, to undertake substantial and fruitful negotiations.

The present period is characterized by the contrast between the process of détente and the lack of real and significant progress in the field of disarmament. It is the incompatibility between an atmosphere propitious to the consolidation of peace and the headlong arms race which yearly absorbs \$US 300 billion and which, because of the constant developments of technology, runs the risk of absorbing even larger resources in the years to come unless military rivalry is eliminated. We cannot lose sight of the fact that the Disarmament Decade may end with a better disappointment with nefarious consequences for international security. My delegation therefore wishes to subscribe to all the appeals which have been made to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and to redouble efforts aimed at negotiations which are under way or envisaged, so as to ensure progress at least on priority problems.

(Mr. Türkmen, Turkey)

Nothing can be more important than to preserve mankind from nuclear destruction. No problem can be more important than the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms, the prohibition of all nuclear tests and a strengthening and broadening of the system of non-proliferation. In the field of strategic weapons we are still not at a stage where we can envisage a reduction of these weapons. However SALT I constituted an unquestionable important turning point in regard to limitations. This accord was to be followed by SALT II, which, despite the hopes aroused by the Vladivostok meeting in 1974, has not yet been concluded. We hope that the difficulties encountered in the negotiations on this question will be overcome in the near future, and that SALT II will be able to be signed and implemented before the expiration of SALT I.

In the course of recent years, rapid and numerous developments in strategic weapons have surely complicated negotiations on measures to limit nuclear weapons. While realizing the complexity of the problems which the Soviet Union and the United States must face, we nevertheless consider it our duty to urge them to undertake new efforts so as to conclude SALT II and thus open the way for subsequent negotiations, this time no longer on limitations, but on an effective reduction. The success of the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union, apart from immediate consequences that would lessen the nuclear danger, will also give new impetus to efforts made to solve the other aspects of the problem of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

The need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and the role of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation in this respect have been repeatedly emphasized in the course of this debate. To be sure, this Treaty is fundamental to the system of non-proliferation at present; but, under the very terms of this Treaty, the commitments of the non-nuclear States not to acquire nuclear weapons are counterbalanced by the commitments of the nuclear States to promote nuclear disarmament. Obviously the effectiveness of this system depends on the capacity to restrict nuclear proliferation, both vertically and horizontally.

The importance of measures to strengthen the application of nuclear safeguards within the framework of international co-operation in regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is undeniable. Nevertheless a solution to this problem requires, on the one hand, more strict controls on the use of the elements of the nuclear fuel cycle and, on the other hand, the development of international co-operation which will enable all countries fully to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, without hampering their plans and efforts in this field by unilateral decisions prompted by political or commercial purposes.

The question of peaceful nuclear explosions is another crucial aspect of the problem of non-proliferation. The advantages of these explosions should be accessible to all States on a non-discriminatory basis. But at the same time it is becoming increasingly obvious that it is impossible to separate the technology of nuclear devices for peaceful purposes from the technology of nuclear weapons. An effective non-proliferation system should therefore include measures which could eliminate or lessen the danger of having the technology of peaceful nuclear devices engender a military nuclear capacity. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be ensured without the conclusion of a treaty for the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. The progress accomplished in the course of these last years in this field has been disappointing. All the nuclear-weapon States have not yet signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963. The USA/USSR Threshold Test Ban Treaty together with the related Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes have the merit of being important steps in the direction of a complete prohibition of tests. These treaties are also likely to contribute to a solution of the problem of verification within the framework of a future complete prohibition. The work of scientific experts of the CCD on the question of identifying underground

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seismic events should be evaluated in the same context. Whatever might be the difficulties due to political, technical or security considerations, all nuclear-weapon States should make greater efforts to halt their tests in all the environments. We subscribe to the views which have been expressed here in advocating other alternatives to a treaty of complete prohibition, such as an agreement for a provisional period between all or some of the nuclear States, or a reduction of the threshold of nuclear tests under the American-Soviet Treaty.

Nuclear-free zones, which are recognized internationally, are in general considered a complementary means to the system of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In principle, we believe that the establishment of these zones in various parts of the world could be useful if certain fundamental conditions are met. We consider in fact that any arrangement concerning a nuclear-free zone should come about as the result of the conclusion of negotiations between all the countries concerned. The initiative must come from the region itself and the participation of all the main military Powers of the region should be assured. The establishment of such zones should take into account the geographic, strategic and political characteristics of each region and of the countries in that region. It is also indispensable that the definition of the zone in question be adequate and precise and that the establishment of any given zone should not confer military superiority on any State or group of States.

The priority given to nuclear disarmament should not make us lose sight of the dangers for international peace and security inherent in the increase and proliferation of conventional weapons. Since the end of the Second World War, these weapons, which are becoming more and more sophisticated and destructive, have been used extensively in several local conflicts. Besides motives which are not always justified, the acquisition of conventional weapons in many cases is explained by legitimate considerations of defence and of military balance, the rupture of which would adversely affect the maintenance of peace and the security of the countries concerned. This problem will ultimately be solved only within the framework of complete and general disarmament, but a partial approach to this problem at a regional level might prove useful. In this regard the Vienna negotiations on the mutual and balanced reduction of armed forces represents a very significant example of a regional approach to the problem of disarmament and

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military security. While it is regrettable that these negotiations have so far not led to any concrete results, we believe that, despite the complexity of the subject, progress will be possible in the months to come.

The record of the work of the CCD has to its credit the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. This draft, even though limited in scope, makes it illegal to use weapons likely to cause mass destruction, the use of which could engender effects impossible to foresee and evaluate in advance. This is why, despite the imperfections and gaps which have been indicated, the general trend is in favour of a recommendation to the General Assembly to States for the conclusion of a convention.

Prohibition of chemical weapons may be considered as another field where new efforts by the CCD may lead to important results. Recent discussions on this question have shown that after years of immobility there seems to be a possibility to draft a complete treaty taking into account all forms of chemical warfare. The draft submitted by the United Kingdom to prohibit all lethal chemical agents and other toxic chemical agents which may cause physiological damage clearly represents a valuable contribution for new and thorough discussions on the subject.

We believe that the role of the United Nations in disarmament should be strengthened. On the whole we agree with the proposals made in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. We support the initiative of the non-aligned countries to convene another special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We have added our name to the list of co-sponsors of the draft resolution on the subject. We hope that such a special session like the seventh special session on Development and Economic Co-operation may give a new and strong impetus to future negotiations. Our position of principle regarding the idea of convening a world disarmament conference remains unchanged. We continue to support the proposal to convene that conference.

Mr. HAMZA (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Growing importance is being attached throughout the world to the question of disarmament and the sessions of the General Assembly have seen an increase in the number of disarmament items on the agenda and growing participation in discussions on disarmament questions. This implies international unanimity with regard to the need for complete and general disarmament in spite of differences of opinion as to the ways and means of realizing this great objective. In the discussion in this Committee in previous years and on other occasions too, we have stressed the fact that the cessation of the arms race and the acquisition and improvement of arms should be closely linked with the efforts of large and small countries to produce a formula acceptable to everyone which would make it possible to put an end to the arms race, devote the vast sums of money involved or at least some of it, to economic and social development, particularly in developing countries, and raise the standard of living of man in an atmosphere of peace and security, thus enabling him to produce and to create his future for the good of the whole of mankind.

We have also said, in relation to the question of disarmament, that we should not overlook the need to ensure justice in the distribution of international economic resources or the right of peoples to self-determination, their right to reaffirm their national sovereignty and the legitimacy of their opposition to aggression and foreign intervention in their internal affairs, and their inalienable right to choose ways and means and even the appropriate weapons to achieve this noble goal. On this basis we condemn aggression based on the acquisition and possession of sophisticated weapons to threaten the security of neighbouring countries and small nations which in many cases, particularly in our part of the world, has given rise not only to intervention in the internal affairs of small countries but also to direct occupation of strategic areas of their territory on unconvincing pretexts which make it possible to realize certain ambitions and expansionist designs which serve the cause of imperialism and colonialism. It is difficult to talk of general and complete disarmament at a time when aggression and expansion are being manifested in the conduct of certain countries. International efforts aimed at ensuring the security, future and well-being of man through the cessation of the arms race and the destruction of arms

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should not be viewed as being of lesser importance than opposition to aggression and expansion which is being manifested in the conduct of certain States in the form of the improvement and acquisition of arms designed to threaten peace and stability and the security of peace-loving peoples. On several occasions we have highlighted the relationship between disarmament and the principles and objectives contained in several declarations, international pacts, bilateral and multilateral, adopted within the United Nations or outside it aimed at strengthening international peace and security. We have constantly repeated our conviction on the basis of the fact that stressing the close relationship between all these questions will have an influence on the conduct of all States, great or small, and will encourage them to take appropriate measures for bringing about total and general disarmament and the destruction of arms and realizing the aspirations of peoples to peace, security and well-being.

In the last few years of the world's history we have witnessed an intensification of the arms race which is in conflict with the interests and wishes of the peoples and gives rise to problems and tensions; the enormous resources of the peoples of the world are only profiting arms manufacturers. If we take a rapid look at statistics with regard to military expenditures, we see how difficult it is to solve all these problems, particularly because certain countries are preparing for war, and we note that new large-scale wars could lead to the destruction of the human race and our civilization.

My delegation has heard the views which have been expressed in the discussion in this Committee. We can say with satisfaction as we come to the end of our debate that all countries hope that progress will be made in the field of disarmament. We must implement the provisions of United Nations resolutions in order to achieve our goal in the light of changes on the international scene. My country, which is a small developing country, hopes that we will see the establishment of security and stability so that we can carry out our development in various areas. We believe in the goodwill of States, as manifested in their statements, and we view with optimism the fact that countries which possess arms can reconcile their disarmament practices with what they say, namely that they view favourably new proposals for general and complete disarmament.

My country continues to support the idea of convening a world disarmament

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conference in which all countries would participate. We believe that the date and conclusion of this conference would be defined in accordance with our sense of responsibility. Such a conference should be preceded by appropriate preparations conducted by all countries; whatever ideas may be advanced concerning the date of such a conference, like most States represented here, we would like appropriate preparations to be undertaken in order to ensure its success.

The appeal made by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to questions of disarmament has our whole-hearted support provided that preparatory work is done to guarantee the success of the session, so that we can properly prepare the world disarmament conference at a subsequent stage. In stressing the importance of guaranteeing the success of the special session of the General Assembly, we declare our readiness to participate in the preparatory work in co-operation with other countries if it is required of us. The importance of this special session is not confined to the adoption of measures within the framework of the consideration of the various items on the agenda; the session should make it possible to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Hamza, Democratic Yemen)

We would therefore like to mention the initiative taken by the Secretary-General, an initiative mentioned in his report, on the reasons why it is necessary to strengthen the role of the United Nations in this field. In the course of this session, we have been able to study the report of the Ad Hoc Committee set up in accordance with a decision adopted by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session. This report contains several proposals designed to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We welcome the conclusions of this Committee but will call upon it to continue its efforts so as to make possible the strengthening of the humanitarian role of this international Organization.

Differing views have been expressed about the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. Some delegations have called for consideration of this draft convention to be deferred and for the draft convention to be referred to the CCD so that certain gaps may be filled. Others have praised the text and have considered it to be a step forward. I shall not dwell at length on our views on this subject. I shall confine myself to saying that these criticisms in fact make it possible for us to devise better criteria and bases which would help us in arriving at decisions which we may take. But it would be difficult to forget that those who possess advanced techniques are the first to understand the danger they imply. The text before us, although not ideal, does represent a convergence of opinions of the United States and the USSR. This in itself is a good result and we should not minimize the importance of it. That is why, in spite of our great regret at the fact that the text could have been improved on the basis of the discussions held at the last two sessions of the General Assembly, we support the draft convention in the hope that goodwill will make it possible to fill in the gaps, particularly with regard to article I.

It remains to say a few words about the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which we have consistently supported at all international meetings. We learned of the efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee in the light of the report and it only remains for us to express our gratitude and appreciation to that Committee for its preparatory work for the convening of a Conference on the Indian Ocean. The importance of this Declaration is very great for countries in the Indian Ocean

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area. The exchange of views was conducted in parallel with the meetings and conferences organized by various international organizations. The Political Declaration of the Fifth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo, a declaration contained in document A/31/197, contains positive new elements regarding the Indian Ocean which do not necessarily have to be mentioned in the discussion at this session. Paragraphs 131, 134 and others in this Declaration are considered as improvements of the concept contained in the first-mentioned Declaration. These new elements, in the view of the non-aligned countries, warrant the attention of the General Assembly and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, because they make it possible for us to achieve the peace we all yearn for in the Indian Ocean area.

Permit me, before concluding my statement, to raise a question about the possibilities of participating in the work of this Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. We hope that we will have an opportunity to participate in the work of this Ad Hoc Committee in view of the importance we attach to this item of the agenda.

In conclusion, I should like to say that these were the comments my delegation wanted to make in the general discussion. We were not able to explain our views on all the questions under consideration now. That is why we reserve our right to speak later in order to explain our views better as the various draft resolutions come before us.

Mr. KENNEDY (Ireland): May I first of all extend to you, Sir, and to the other officers of the First Committee the sincere congratulations and good wishes of the Irish delegation on your unanimous election. I would be especially grateful if you would also convey my good wishes to Ambassador Jaroszek, of Poland, the Committee Chairman. He and I have recently been able to play a useful and constructive role in strengthening the relations between our two countries.

In recent years my delegation has felt in duty bound to express in this Committee its sense of disappointment and impatience at the continuing failure of the international community to face up to the dangerous and awesome problems that confront us under the disarmament items of our agenda. It is therefore with regret that we still have to voice our concern and to re-echo the dissatisfaction expressed by the Secretary-General in his reports to the present and to the last General Assemblies regarding "the slowness of progress in the vital field of disarmament" and the "dangers of present developments in the armaments field".

This is not to deny that the United Nations has to its credit many notable achievements in arms control and disarmament, in some of which, indeed, Ireland has been able to play a helpful role. As the distinguished State Secretary of the Netherlands reminded us last week, the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967, the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, the Sea-Bed Treaty of 1971 and the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons of 1972, all represent solid accomplishments by our Organization of which we can be justly proud. Nor, as our Chairman, Ambassador Jaroszek, in his introduction to the disarmament items on 1 November reminded us, should we lose sight of the fact that the First Committee is not, of course, the only forum for disarmament discussions and negotiations and that other constructive dialogues and meetings are taking place outside the framework of this Organization.

But the hard fact remains, I regret to say, that the pace of United Nations activity in disarmament in the 1970s seems to have slackened and seems concerned less with real disarmament than with control and limitation. It is almost ironic to recall that we are now in the middle of the Disarmament Decade, first proposed by former Secretary-General U Thant, and that we are also in a period of welcome and perceptible political détente. And yet the competition in armaments, including the dangerous nuclear arms race, has continued unabated, while the transfer of arms

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and the technology to produce them, has accelerated at a disturbing pace. It is impossible, in our view, not to link this grave situation, as the Secretary-General does in the introduction to his annual report to this year's General Assembly, with "... the eloquent fact, that, while the world spends approximately \$300 billion a year on armaments, the net flow of official development assistance amounts to some \$15 billion a year. Resources devoted to the arms race since the end of the Second World War have exceeded \$6,000 billion which is roughly equivalent to the 1976 gross national product of the entire world" (A/31/1/Add.1, p. 12-13).

Ireland would like to join its voice with those of many other delegations which have spoken before us on this theme in insisting that the reversal of this trend is an idea whose time has come and that public opinion must be made aware, not only of the dangers, but of the tragic waste inherent in the present situation.

The central issue we have to face is firstly the control and then the genuine reduction of nuclear armaments, and when my Foreign Minister, Mr. Garret Fitzgerald, spoke in the general debate in the plenary on 29 September he brought out the interrelation between the horizontal and vertical elements in the situation. If I may first speak of horizontal proliferation, I should at once like to express how much my Government has been encouraged by the recent ratification in June of this year of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by Japan, which is, I understand, the 100th nation to adhere. Japan has, as we are all aware, an extensive and advanced civil nuclear industry, and we noted with respect the statement by Ambassador Ogiso on 2 November that Japan's sole reason for ratification was its whole-hearted support for the determination of the international community to prevent nuclear proliferation of all kinds. May I express the hope, on behalf of my Government, that more countries will follow the example of Japan, and of course especially those nuclear Powers which have not yet done so.

And yet, having noted this welcome and positive element, I feel in duty bound to say that the whole basis on which the Non-Proliferation Treaty was so carefully constructed in 1968 seems now to be in danger of collapse. It is surely appropriate that in this debate of ours in the First Committee we should, as it were, pause and take stock of how many of the hopes of 1968 have not yet been realized, since we have before us on our agenda the outcome of the first NPT

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Review Conference of May 1975 in Geneva. I may wish, later on in our debate, to take this matter up in greater detail.

The basic problem, as we see it, is the chilling menace inherent in the global spread of nuclear technology, and the risk that nuclear energy, developed for peaceful purposes, will be converted in secret into the manufacture of nuclear weapons. That danger has, of course, been with us for years but it has been accentuated lately by a development which is causing widespread concern. I refer to an increasingly irresponsible readiness, and indeed, rivalry, among suppliers of nuclear technology to equip recipient countries not only with the means of generating nuclear energy but with the essential enrichment and reprocessing plants which can be used to produce nuclear explosives. As my Foreign Minister warned in the plenary Assembly, in this scramble for lucrative new markets "there is a growing danger that supplying countries may place their own short-term economic interests before the wider interests of international security". Indeed, as you know, it has been recently calculated that in the next decade enough plutonium will be in existence to make 3,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs every year in the third world alone. Perhaps we would be right in sensing that mankind on this planet may soon become an endangered species.

For this reason my Government has noted with close attention the announcement by President Ford on 28 October of a broad new government plan to prevent fissionable materials intended for peaceful purposes from being used for nuclear weapons. My Government has also taken careful note of the important speech by President-elect Carter made in this room on 13 May under the auspices of the Stanley Foundation and dealing with the same issues of nuclear energy and world order. Both of these significant initiatives underline the urgent necessity for an agreed and comprehensive moratorium on the export of enrichment and reprocessing equipment and they also emphasize the need to develop improved international controls. These initiatives also reflect a growing concern felt by nuclear suppliers themselves as evidenced by the establishment of the Nuclear Suppliers' Conference based in London. We welcome the understandings this group has been able to reach as representing encouraging progress towards improving safeguards. But we feel that another constructive step would be the creation of

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closer working links between the IAEA in Vienna and the Nuclear Suppliers' Conference . London. We noted that the Director-General of the IAEA, speaking recently at the Agency's annual conference in Rio de Janeiro in September, felt that it would be helpful if the Agency could be kept informed of the Suppliers' Conference decisions. We are of the view that a practical and flexible system of co-operation between the two organizations would be in the interests of both and, indeed, of world security itself. In this connexion my Government wishes to reiterate its support for the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency to increase the effectiveness of its own safeguards and we feel, in this connexion, that the constructive suggestion which the Government of Finland has submitted in its paper A/C.1/31/6 of 28 October regarding the application of safeguards over the whole nuclear fuel cycle merits the attention of this Committee. As the Finnish paper points out, the crucial problem is that adequate safeguards are not applied universally to the whole cycle in all the non-nuclear-weapon States. As long as that situation is allowed to continue the present safeguards have only a limited effectiveness in guarding against nuclear spread. There is, therefore, a rising tide of opinion, with which we agree, that the only effective solution is to apply the Agency's safeguards to all nuclear activities in all the non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

Since an essential element in the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the undertaking by the nuclear Powers to cease the nuclear arms race under article VI, it is clear that progress in preventing horizontal spread is essentially related to the problem of vertical proliferation. And as Mrs. Thorsson of Sweden stated on 8 November, the key element here is the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty. We continue to believe that the responsibility for intensified efforts to reach agreement on a comprehensive test ban (CTB) rests with the two super-Powers and that further constructive action by them is indispensable if the necessary political will for the creation of an acceptable CTB is to be generated by the rest of the world. As a means towards that end, a suspension of testing by nuclear-weapon States by agreement, subject to review after a specified period, could be a major influence in creating a suitable climate for a CTB treaty. And while we see the obvious desirability of all nuclear Powers becoming Parties to that treaty, my Government does not regard the participation of all nuclear States as a necessary pre-condition for the entry into force of a CTB treaty. Indeed, the Moscow Treaty of 1963 and the Threshold Treaty between the United States and the USSR, which is about to enter into force, clearly indicated that it is not absolutely indispensable for all nuclear Powers to take part in the negotiation process for concrete results to be achieved. A necessary element in a CTB is the solution of the problem posed by peaceful nuclear explosions. In this connexion we remain of the view that, pending the results of a thorough international examination of the real potential benefits of peaceful nuclear explosions, including that currently being undertaken by the IAEA, there should be a moratorium on all such explosions. We therefore note certain positive elements in the recent bilateral Treaty of 28 May governing peaceful nuclear explosions concluded between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, limiting such explosions to 150 kilotons with important provisions for on-site inspection. And we also noted with interest the statement of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR on 1 November which suggested that a possibility exists of a compromise on the difficult question of on-site inspection of seismic events and we hope for progress in the CCD in this direction. But as the representative of the United Kingdom said here on 2 November, in offering our congratulations to the two Governments on the progress they have achieved so far, and may yet, we hope,

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

achieve in the future, we have to recognize that those who have formally undertaken not to develop nuclear weapons naturally feel that such partial agreements should only be regarded as stages on the way towards the real goal: namely, a CTB treaty leading the way towards effective nuclear disarmament.

And here we would be much more encouraged if there were more substantial progress in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). I am sure that all of us in this room have no illusions about the extreme complexity and difficulty of the problems which the United States and the Soviet Union face in striving for even partial and gradual measures of strategic arms limitation. But I feel, too, that we would all like to see more substantial progress not only towards the conclusion of SALT II, but towards the opening of SALT III, which should follow it. In other words, we should like to see the beginning of real and effective reductions below the level of agreed thresholds and limitations. What we all surely want to see is genuine disarmament, and controlled armament is by no means an acceptable substitute for it. Indeed, as we had occasion to mention in last year's debate, the danger seems to be that the SALT negotiations may only serve to replace the quantitative arms race with an even more dangerous qualitative one. What we fear is that the agreements already concluded may serve in the end not to halt and reverse the arms race but to regulate it and to institutionalize it within an agreed legal framework. And the difficulty in achieving genuine disarmament is made more difficult all the time by the leading role of military technology in this qualitative arms race. Just as the developments in multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) in 1969 seriously complicated subsequent negotiations, so today are the new technologies such as the cruise missile and the back-fire bomber frustrating the attempts to control strategic armaments. Delay and lost momentum are not on the side of progress. For, as experience has shown, the new technologies are less likely to be bargained away than to be embedded in the force structures of both sides, making real progress that much more difficult. The "tyranny of technology" is again delaying progress, and the attempt to control strategic armaments seems to be losing the race against technological advances in the field.

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

But in emphasizing the growing danger of strategic arms, let us not, at the same time, lose sight of another parallel problem, the extraordinary growth in recent years of sales of conventional weapons. We have to bear in mind, I feel, that the armed struggles which have broken out in the 31 years of the United Nations existence have all been fought with conventional weapons. Neither in this First Committee debate nor in the CCD does this issue figure as a specific agenda item, but I fully agree with Mr. Tan, the representative of Singapore, that we should begin to discuss the arms race in conventional weapons. I am sure we all recall the striking statement which his Foreign Minister, His Excellency Mr. S. Rajaratnam, made in this connexion in the plenary on 29 September when he informed us that

"consumption of arms by the third world has shot up from a modest 3.2 per cent in 1955 to an alarming 12.3 per cent in 1975. Presumably this does not take into account the unofficial flow of weapons sold or given under the counter. In fact, the third world's consumption of the world's arms output now exceeds the combined purchases of China, western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Their share of the world's arms output in 1975 was only 9.5 per cent as compared with the third world's 12.3 per cent". (A/31/PV.10, p. 41)

In addition, of course, the conventional arms race continues unabated among the developed countries. As the handbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) says: "Indeed, so hectic has been the international market for arms over the past two years that all appearances of control, whether supposed or real, have vanished". We would therefore support any reasonable proposal, such as that suggested by Japan in this Committee, for a factual study on the transfer of arms between States which could provide us with a basis for an informed discussion at future sessions of the General Assembly on what the Secretary-General has rightly referred to in his annual report as an arms build-up taking place in many particularly sensitive areas of the world.

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

This widespread and continuous use of conventional weapons renders it, in our view, essential to intensify efforts to regulate their use on humanitarian grounds. Last year we stated that the stage had been reached where specific proposals could be made for prohibitions and restrictions on certain weapons on a case-by-case basis at the resumed Diplomatic Conference in Geneva. In the light of developments we are more than ever concerned that efforts must be redoubled so as to ensure that concrete results are achieved before the Conference comes to an end.

If I might move now from the field of conventional arms to that of chemical weapons, I should like to re-echo a hope which seems to be widely felt in this Committee: that the time is now ripe for further progress in this important and complex area to complement the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Convention banning bacteriological weapons. We have noted with interest that, on the basis of proposals and suggestions made in recent years by members of the CCD and following an encouraging statement made by the United States delegate at the spring session of the CCD, the United Kingdom submitted a draft convention on 12 August providing for a ban on the production of chemical weapons and for a phased destruction of existing stockpiles. We also note with encouragement that joint consultations between the United States and the Soviet Union took place on this issue in Geneva this August and that the communiqué issued on 30 August noted that useful results had been achieved and that the consultations would continue. I am sure I would reflect a feeling prevalent in this Committee in expressing the hope that a joint initiative by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may soon take shape which would propose a ban on the most lethal chemical weapons on the understanding that this would be only a first step towards a ban on chemical weapons of all kinds. We would, therefore, support a call from this Committee to the CCD, requesting it to continue negotiations as a matter of highest priority to reach early agreement in effective measures against the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We very much hope that when we meet here again next year in the First Committee the outcome of next year's session of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament will provide us with the basis for further constructive progress.

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

Another issue on which we may be able to register progress is the prohibition of military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. As Ireland is not a member of the CCD, it is only recently that we have been in a position to study the final text of the draft Convention which has emerged. The Irish authorities are considering this draft and the related resolutions with a view to taking a position here in the immediate future. We have noted the hesitations of a number of States regarding the effect of the provisions of the Convention, especially article I, and the related understanding reached in the CCD. On the one hand we can appreciate the nature of these hesitations. But on the other hand, we have noted that, despite the reserves expressed here, many members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament consider it none the less desirable to recommend that the Convention be opened for signature in its present form. We also carefully noted the statements made by Ambassador Pastinen of Finland in this connexion. It is true that the Convention does, despite its limitations, provide encouraging evidence that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States are alert to the hazards inherent in the application to war-like purposes of the fruits of their continually expanding technology, to which I have already referred.

Another cause for satisfaction in this Committee this year is the presentation of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. We all recall the valuable initiative of the Swedish delegation at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly last year which has resulted in the constructive set of recommendations contained in the report, achieved by consensus under the able chairmanship of Mrs. Thorsson. My delegation has been conscious of the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee was not entitled by its mandate to enter into the actual substance of the disarmament issues. But what it could and did do, indeed, was to investigate possible effective procedures and new ways and means for improving existing United Nations facilities, including the dissemination of information. I believe that by improving these procedures and facilities the actual work on the substance of disarmament can be materially assisted and it is in this sense that I feel that the report constitutes a useful link between procedures

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

and substance. We hope that the report will be accepted by consensus by the First Committee although it may be desired to have its financial implications looked at in the Fifth Committee. I think it is only fair to say, however, that in our view the costs involved are extremely small when compared with the vast sums expended annually on the production and development of armaments.

When the distinguished chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mrs. Thorsson, spoke here on 8 November, she mentioned that the recommendations of her Committee should be considered as first steps which in no way prejudge possible decisions by a future special session of the General Assembly. On the contrary, she said, these steps are needed for an adequate preparation of such a special session. We fully agree. We recognize that there is, here at the United Nations in general, and in our Committee in particular, a rising tide of interest and support for the convening of a special session, probably in 1978, and we have also noted that the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Colombo in August last, also called for such a session by consensus. In our view a special session could have useful results if it were carefully prepared with the prior adoption of a detailed agenda, and with the presence and constructive participation of all the nuclear Powers. It could, we feel, give a new impetus to the disarmament debate and we noted the statement of the distinguished representative of Yugoslavia on 8 November when he referred to the possibility of a programme of action emerging from the special session which would serve to halt the arms race. Adequate preparation will be essential, of course, in the preparatory committee and for that reason, like many delegations, including the representative of Australia this afternoon, we would prefer to see it open-ended rather than closed so that every country, including the more important military Powers, and, of course, all of the nuclear Powers, should be in a position to play a role in examining the relevant questions relating to the special session, including its agenda. In that way, we feel, the preparation of the special session on disarmament would be on similar lines to the preparatory committee of the seventh special session on economic development.

(Mr. Kennedy, Ireland)

Indeed, and this is my concluding point, we can see a possible and important link between the seventh and the eighth special sessions. For just as the seventh session was designed to create a new economic order to give hope to the developing world, so can the eighth help to achieve that order by working to remove one of the serious hindrances which are preventing its realization. I speak, of course, of the steadily increasing and indeed intolerable burden of inflationary armaments expenditure which is crippling the efforts of countries to achieve economic development. If we could only reduce that burden substantially, the coming eighth special session could be seen as the logical successor to the seventh. We would, in effect, be helping to achieve the age-old aim of beating mankind's swords into ploughshares or, in the analogy of modern technology, of transmuting the nuclear sword into peaceful nuclear energy.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Ireland for the reference he made to me and to the other officers of the Committee. I should also like to assure him that I shall certainly transmit the sentiments he expressed regarding the relations between him and the Chairman of the Committee and also between their two countries.

Mr. EL HASSEN (Mauritania) (interpretation from French): Allow me, Mr. Chairman, speaking in this Committee for the first time, and at this advanced stage of our work, to extend to you the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Mauritania on your election, which is an expression of confidence in your person and also of honour and esteem for your country. We ask you to convey our warmest congratulations also to the Chairman, to the other Vice-Chairman and to the Rapporteur. You may be assured of the complete understanding and co-operation of our delegation in the exercise of the difficult mission entrusted to you.

The task of this Committee is certainly not easy. I would even say that its ambition, which is that of our Organization, appears at first sight to be unattainable. To police war, as a first stage, before definitely eradicating it and establishing an era of peace and harmony among nations, is a complex and long task, beset with disappointments. War and peace are the concern of our Committee, and also of the Charter, and the very reason for the existence of our Organization, which is to banish the scourge of war. The contradiction between these two words, peace and war -- the thesis and antithesis -- highlights the apprehension, the anguish, the terror and sufferings of mankind since the dawn of time, but also love, happiness, harmony and hope that the morrow will bring a radiant future. Unfortunately, whether in a latent or active manner, war is always present. Nevertheless, for more than 20 years, exactly since its ninth session in 1954, the General Assembly has been dealing with the problem of disarmament in all its forms.

We all know about the stages which have succeeded one another from the time of the establishment in 1962 of the Committee of 18 nations on disarmament to the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) which we now have before us. Far from us to underrate the efforts undertaken by a multitude of organs and committees, but we are nevertheless bound to conclude that the international community has not much to be particularly proud of, and that the picture is not very bright. Indeed, and all the reports of experts and specialized institutes prove it, military arsenals have never been as full as now. Besides the nuclear weapons, which can annihilate every trace of life on earth, we must mention new and terrifying bacteriological weapons, as well as those that modify the environment and the climate. Conventional weapons, for their part, are

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increasingly more sophisticated, more miniaturized and more deadly. A few years after the adoption of resolution 2602 E (XXIV) advocating a disarmament decade, the world has never been as well armed and never have weapons been so deadly. The paradox would be laughable were it not so grave a threat to the future of the human species.

The danger to the future will not come from imaginary martians travelling in flying saucers; the first conclusions of the Viking mission have exculpated Mars of that crime. The danger will come from our own folly -- I would say of our tendency to collective suicide. Many speakers here have pointed out the fallacy of the argument of the balance of terror, of a dissuasion that would protect us from a nuclear war exterminating both the aggressor and the victim of aggression but also the bystanders.

But even if we all hope to be mistaken, mankind must not rely for its survival on an assumption whose invalidity would lead to the final holocaust. The objective must be to establish a framework for universal dialogue, the sole purpose of which would be to seek to complete disarmament by the cessation of all types of nuclear tests and of production of nuclear weapons, the destruction of all existing stockpiles, the prohibition and destruction of all chemical and bacteriological weapons, and the gradual reduction of all conventional weapons.

We realize that no magic wand will lead to this result, but we believe that the first step must be to endorse the resolution adopted by the fifth conference of the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries recommending the convening of a special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations at the latest by 1978, to consider an over-all policy for general, genuine and controlled disarmament. That proposal, and draft resolution A/C.1/31/L.7, which has our complete support, strengthens and perhaps complements General Assembly resolution 3484 B (XXX), establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. It will, we hope, be endorsed at the current session and provide an appropriate framework for the collective work of that Committee.

The objective of disarmament in itself opens up happy prospects for all peoples, which will be still further improved if disarmament is linked with aid to global development. We shall thus be able both to dispel the spectre of war and

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of the extermination of mankind and, through solidarity among the peoples, to establish justice and progress by giving effective aid to the less favoured nations. We could legitimately have hoped for that result, or at least a certain approach to it after the adoption of resolutions 3093 A and B (XXVIII), although we were already sceptical at that time. Unfortunately, events have confirmed the reasons for our lack of enthusiasm in 1973. A mere comparison of figures given by the United Nations and other neutral sources is terrible, shocking. In 1975, \$300 billion, equivalent to the total income of the developing countries of Africa and Asia we are told, were spent for lethal purposes. What is that compared to \$17 billion or even \$20 billion for development? This extraordinary disparity between the continued growth in arms expenditures, which are highly unproductive, and the modest funds for development, must revolt the human conscience, and in any case represents a failure whose consequences for the balance and stability of the world are completely unforeseeable. As we said earlier, we do not minimize the efforts made and the results, however, meagre, achieved in the direction of our final objective -- general and complete disarmament. We therefore welcome as a positive step the nuclear-free zones already established in certain parts of the world, such as Latin America, and we support the idea of considering the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace or creating a nuclear-free zone in southern Asia. We also support the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, as advocated by Iran and Egypt at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. In that connexion, we recall that resolution 3263 (XXIX) provided that "the parties concerned in the area proclaim solemnly and immediately their intention to refrain, on a reciprocal basis, from producing, testing, obtaining, acquiring or in any other way possessing nuclear weapons".

(Mr. El Hassen, Mauritania)

We believe that, given the situation prevailing in the Middle East, the proclamation requested of the States concerned is the only realistic basis to remove this region -- where there are so many contradictions and antagonisms -- from nuclear propagation and contribute to strengthening of policy to pacify feelings in an explosive region which is essential to the peace and security of the world. The fallacious argument requiring bilateral negotiations such as are customary in other regions where there are no major problems is unrealistic and stems from a deliberate will to thwart any possibilities for real peace and a lack of really constructive spirit. We are assured that our Committee is not duped and we will distinguish between those who want peace, prosperity and progress for peoples in the Middle East and those who place their bets on the persistence of tensions and conflicts.

Regarding the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, our country reaffirms that it is consistent with the Declaration issued in 1964 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and resolutions 1652 (XVI) and 2033 (XX) calling on all States to consider the African States as a denuclearized zone.

Present events prove that following its Israeli partner in the Middle East, here again a racist and aggressive régime in the southern part of the continent tends to constitute itself as a nuclear Power for purposes of blackmail and intimidation. An illustrious personality recently said here that, paradoxically, nationalism has never been so present in relations among nations. This is true in part. Nevertheless, the concept of universality and an awareness of the unity of the human family have never been more manifest. What better proof could there be of our interdependence than this Assembly of almost 150 nations divided by race, language, religion, social, political systems but united by the same faith in the common destiny of all peoples? Among the subjects which are, at least publicly, unanimously accepted by this conclave of nations is that of the need of disarmament. Nations large and small clearly perceive that, on the one hand, there are terrifying prospects which may, at one extreme, bring to an end hundreds of years of sacrifices, ingenuity and exalting conquests of man, or at the other point to a serene future for dedicated humanity concerned by social progress and the security of its future. For our part we prefer to bet on the wisdom of mankind if not on its instinct for survival.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Mauritania for the kind remarks he addressed to me personally and to the other officers of the Committee. Also, I shall convey to the Chairman, Mr. Jaroszek, his message of congratulation.

Mr. ALGARD (Norway): Our heavily loaded agenda on disarmament and arms control reflects the great importance which the Member States attach to these questions. Disarmament and arms control have taken a prominent place in the discussions of the United Nations since its very inception. We can only regret that over all these years these serious questions have become increasingly more pressing and more difficult to come to grips with.

Whereas progress has been made during the last few years in certain parts of the world towards an improved political climate, these positive developments have not been matched with tangible results in disarmament and arms control. On the contrary, the arms race continues at an accelerated speed. This discrepancy between efforts to promote political détente, on one side, and lack of progress in disarmament and arms control, on the other, is a matter of major and general concern.

Disarmament and arms control are intimately linked with the over-all security policy of nations. We all realize, therefore, the extreme complexity and sensitive nature of these questions, and that solutions cannot be simple. Any steps in these fields must inter alia be based on the requirement of undiminished security for all.

Taking an over-all view, some encouraging progress, although limited, has been made in the field of arms control. It is the hope of my Government that new progress can be registered in the future. But arms control cannot be an end in itself: it can only be an important step in a further process towards meaningful reductions of armaments.

On our agenda our first consideration should be given to the question of proliferation of nuclear weapons, that is, to the proliferation of the capacity to produce nuclear weapons to nations outside the control of the non-proliferation régime. If we fail to halt such a development, it most likely will lead to an ever-accelerating race which might end in nuclear anarchy. It is to the efforts to avert this danger that my Government attaches the highest priority. If we do not succeed in solving this problem, all our efforts in the field of disarmament

(Mr. Algard, Norway)

and arms control will clearly be meaningless. However, time is growing short. Technological and economic barriers to nuclear arms production are being reduced. New barriers of a political nature are essential to avert the threatening spread of nuclear weapons. In the view of my Government, the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is our most important instrument to raise such barriers. In this context, the differentiation between nuclear and non-nuclear States, which is a built-in feature of this Treaty, must be accepted as a necessary starting point. On the other hand, if the nuclear Powers do not halt the increase in their nuclear arsenals, real progress cannot be expected. The nuclear Powers have to demonstrate that they are fully committed to reduce their level of nuclear arms.

We hope that nations not now members, will accept that it is a matter of political necessity to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The parties to the NPT, regardless of size, must, on their side, make their influence felt to this end. The whole NPT régime will be threatened unless we manage to further strengthen this treaty, both by increasing the number of signatories, particularly all nuclear weapon States, and by implementing all the provisions of the treaty. In this connexion, I would like to emphasize the importance of the NPT-Review Conference, and its recommendations. Thus, my delegation believes that a limitation of the number of fuel cycle facilities would be an important step. We therefore give full support to the idea of regional fuel cycle centres under appropriate IAEA safeguards. Improvement of the physical protection of nuclear materials is another important recommendation of the Review Conference, and my delegation considers the action already taken by the IAEA as a commendable step. I would also like to commend IAEA for improving its safeguard standards in conformity with the recommendations of the Review Conference.

Another important initiative designed to curb the spread of the capability to make nuclear weapons, is the Nuclear Suppliers Conference. We strongly support this effort to effectively strengthen the idea of the non-proliferation régime.

My Government has noted with appreciation the efforts undertaken to limit nuclear testing. At the same time, we regret that it has not yet been possible to reach agreement on a comprehensive test ban. The verification and control issue can, in our view, no longer be of decisive importance. We therefore consider the realization of a comprehensive test ban basically as a question of political

(Mr. Algard, Norway)

determination. The efforts to reach an agreement must not be postponed until all nuclear Powers have stated their willingness to observe a complete test ban.

On the verification issue, Norway is, for her part, ready to make active contributions through our seismic array facilities and through our participation in the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts in the CCD.

Our own seismic array -- designated NORSAR -- is available to seismologists from all countries. We hope that NORSAR can play an increasingly active role in the promotion of a complete test ban. When such a test ban treaty enters into force, NORSAR could function as a monitoring and control station.

(Mr. Algard, Norway)

If it is not possible to achieve a complete test ban as a one-step measure, it should be possible to reduce gradually the number and yield of test explosions. Such a reduction would contribute to the de-escalation of the research and development work involved, and thereby inhibit one of the prime motive forces in this field. In this connexion, the step-by-step approach proposed by the Swedish representative to the CCD on 29 July merits special attention.

My Government is regarding the question of so-called peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs) with considerable anxiety. In our view, the economic advantage and practical utility of PNEs are highly questionable. Since there is no real distinction between explosives intended for peaceful and for military purposes, and considering the inherent danger of nuclear proliferation, we have as a first step urged a moratorium on such explosions. If developments prove that PNEs in the future could be of substantial usefulness, such explosions should only be permitted under appropriate international safeguards. The International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system must be broadened and universally accepted, and nuclear technology for peaceful purposes should only be furnished to States which fully accept the safeguards which the Agency deems necessary.

The idea of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones is another measure which has as its objective to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms. The initiative to create such zones should emanate from the States in the region and it should, inter alia, take into account existing alliance systems as well as the need for verification and control measures. Under such conditions, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones could serve as a useful supplement to the Non-Proliferation Treaty régime.

My Government has been following the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic arms. As we stated earlier, we are of the opinion that these two countries have a particular position and responsibility as regards nuclear weapons. We therefore sincerely hope that we shall soon be able to welcome the conclusion of an agreement limiting their strategic armaments. We share the view of other delegations, as expressed during this debate, that such an agreement must not be regarded as a goal in itself, but only as a step in the direction of achieving further limitations and reductions.

(Mr. Algard, Norway)

I should also like to express our hope that we will soon register genuine progress in the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe. In the view of my Government, these negotiations represent a natural continuation of the results achieved at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

It is now time to transform political intentions and commitments into realities. Norway takes part with a special status in these negotiations on force reductions in central Europe, which are of great importance to us because concrete results in this area will also have implications for the security of Norway.

Last year, we were pleased to note that the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons entered into force. There is now an urgent need to achieve a similar ban on chemical weapons. We are aware of the technical problems involved regarding the verification and implementation procedure, but we trust that these problems can be solved if the necessary political will and determination to reach an agreement exists. We have noted the progress that has been made, both within the CCD and during the consultations between the United States and the Soviet Union. We hope that it will now be possible to achieve further progress at the next session of the CCD.

Even if the main attention of this debate, quite naturally, has centred on the question of nuclear arms, we should not forget that conventional arms account for more than 80 per cent of military budgets. Enormous resources are used for the acquisition of such armaments in a large number of countries, making it impossible to perform high-priority tasks of a civilian character. In this connexion, we are particularly disturbed by the large increase in the transfer of conventional arms. The situation calls for international efforts to work out the necessary arrangements and agreements binding on both sides to limit such weapon transfers and sales. While having as our main objective the substantial reduction of such transfers, we could envisage as a starting point seeking agreement on the non-transfer of the more sophisticated weapon systems. In this connexion, we should also consider the question of registration of arms transfers under United Nations auspices.

My delegation has noted the proposals to convene a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We fully support this idea, which would also make it possible for countries not members of the CCD to take a more active and constructive part in the disarmament efforts of the United Nations.

(Mr. Algard, Norway)

We have declared this decade to be the Disarmament Decade, as well as the Development Decade. It seems appropriate that such a special session should reflect this. We should therefore consider including on its agenda the question of the relationship between armaments and resources.

As regards the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament, we fully endorse the recommendations presented, and genuinely hope that it will be possible to have them implemented as soon as possible. Based on our conviction that disarmament is one of the essential tasks of the United Nations, my delegation would have favoured more comprehensive measures. We do, however, support the present recommendations as a first step. We are also of the opinion that this question should be kept under constant review, both by the Secretary-General and by the States Members of the United Nations.

The history of disarmament is long and its path is thorny. We have seen few results, and we have experienced very many disappointments. In the meantime, the arms race has been spiralling to new heights. Each and every year, we must start our discussion from a higher level of armaments. None the less, we have no choice. Slowly, but ardently and laboriously, we have to continue our efforts towards arms control and disarmament. We all share this responsibility. Even if there are only few encouragements, we feel that we are increasingly backed and supported by a public opinion which not only hopes but also demands from us that we achieve real results.

The CHAIRMAN: We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon. Before we adjourn I should like to announce that the Ukrainian SSR has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1, and that Norway has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31.L.11.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.