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Chairman: Mr. da COSTA LOBO (Portugal)
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

- Reduction of military budgets: report of the Secretary-General [34]
- Incendiary and other specific conventional weapons which may be the subject of prohibitions of restrictions of use for humanitarian reasons: report of the Secretary-General [35]
- Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament [36]
- Urgent need for cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests and conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive test ban: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament [37]
- Implementation of General Assembly resolution 3467 (XXX) concerning the signature and ratification of Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) [38]
- Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean [39]
- World Disarmament Conference: report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference [40]
- Effective measures to implement the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade [41]
- Implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa [42]
- Comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects: report of the Secretary-General [43]
- Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East [44]
- Convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament [45]
- Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia [46]

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Distr. GENERAL
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ENGLISH

Conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests /47/

Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament /48/

General and complete disarmament /49/

- (a) Report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament;
- (b) Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency;
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General

Strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament: report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament /50/

Implementation of the conclusions of the first Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons /116/

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

AGENDA ITEMS 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50
AND 116 (continued)

Mr. GUTIERREZ (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to see you presiding over the work of this important Committee. You bring together diplomatic experience, understanding of the problems before us and clarity of mind --- qualities which promise well for the work of the First Committee.

I did not intend to participate this time in the discussion of the disarmament questions. The list of them is long and they are complex. At the last Assembly, I felt it incumbent upon me to speak on the question of denuclearization and on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which were the subject of a draft resolution to which I was able to contribute with certain amendments. However, listening to the distinguished speakers regarding the draft treaty on the prohibition of the development of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, I have understood its meaning and its importance and this has led me to break my self-imposed silence. I must confess that at first sight my initial reaction to the treaty was a negative one. I merely glanced at it through the prism of its first article, which does not show us, clearly and objectively, a total prohibition of the use of environmental modification techniques for aggressive purposes, something we all desire to see included in disarmament documents.

However, reading the text as a whole, as well as the annex, I have realized its enormous importance, its vital feasibility and its value in filling a very deeply felt gap in the juridical aspect of environmental modifications for the benefit of man and nations. These features flow from the fact that the treaty does create an entire institutional framework and not simply a prohibition designed to satisfy a sentimental desire for peace and security. We must stress that there is need for a full treaty covering the use of environmental modification techniques, either for war or peace, causing "destruction, damage or injury" to a State. Hence we may conclude, without fear of misunderstanding, that the international instrument we are studying is intended not only to prevent environmental war but

(Mr. Gutierrez, Bolivia)

also to govern situations in peacetime that might serve "other hostile purposes". Therefore the nature of the treaty is general and legal. It is intended both to avoid war being conducted by altering the environment and to avoid the hostile use of environmental modification techniques in a country's own interest, with consequent grave damage to the victim.

The delegation of Afghanistan considered that the expressions "other environmental modification techniques" and "other hostile use" in articles I and II of the Convention "refer only to military situations and to situations with military objectives". He therefore concluded that, in accordance with article III, "States have the right to use environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes in the context of their own permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, and if other States believe that these actions result in adverse effects on them, no provision in this convention or its annexes would give them, under any circumstance, the right to request the application of the convention."

(A/C.1/31/PV.30, p. 33)

We do not share that interpretation of the substance of that convention. The phrase "other hostile ends" is of a generic nature and that is what gives it its universal value and its practical usefulness when applied to the relations among States and their mutual policies of applying technology to modifications of the geographical environment. Were we to interpret the phrase as specifically referring only to military purposes we would have the absurd situation that, for peaceful purposes the environment could be altered technically even though "its effect were severe, long-lasting and widespread", with consequent "destruction, damage or injury to a State". If such an emergency occurred, the victim State would not have the right to denounce the act and lodge a complaint with the United Nations under the terms of this convention. This is not so, this cannot be so and it must not be so. It must not be forgotten that environmental changes of the magnitude envisaged in our draft convention, even though produced with beneficent ideas of progress, do in fact involve a manifest hostility towards the country suffering them and might lead to war, which is what we are ultimately trying to avoid. Furthermore, the very context of the convention confirms this.

Now, all that I have said -- and in this I do fully agree with the representative of Afghanistan --- does not alter, nor can it alter, the right

(Mr. Gutierrez, Bolivia)

possessed by every State, through its sovereignty, to do whatever it deems appropriate in its own territory in order to make use of its own natural resources -- provided, of course, its actions remain within the framework of the convention we propose to approve. We know that the right of property is limited by the right of the neighbour. There are even servitudes acquired in the course of time that create indisputable rights, the modification of which may cause "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects with obvious destruction, damage or injury" to a country.

With regard to environmental modifications, nothing real and concrete had hitherto been done either from the standpoint of war or of peace, aside from very old principles and specific international declarations to that effect. We were facing a clean slate, without any instances and no courts. There was no one to whom we could turn to seek justice, because of geographical alterations subject always to the law of the strongest, or to avoid a war provoked by such alterations. But today things have changed considerably. A norm is being laid down and machinery for consultation being set up. We can now rely on the services of a committee of experts and all matters are subject to the decision of the Security Council and the sovereign decision of the General Assembly under the dictates of the Charter. All this means that a legal procedure is being set up and a jurisprudence is being established which formerly did not exist. This draft convention has two intrinsic virtues which should be stressed. First of all, it stands as a proof, albeit modest yet significant, that the United States and the Soviet Union can come to an understanding on disarmament and in other aspects of preserving peace. Furthermore, this convention entails a new and necessary legal structure in the field of environmental changes which must be of interest to countries, whether they are predominant or the weaker in the geographical situation in which they find themselves. Perhaps through lack of imagination one might fall into the error of opposing a norm and a system of protection that would be of interest to all of us, and more so to the weak than to the strong, more so to the victim than to those who might victimize him. What is argued against the treaty? That article I does not say that each Party to the convention undertakes "not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques", but rather leaves that possibility open if the effects are not "widespread, long-standing, or severe". In short, what seems to be desired is that there should be a total and absolute

(Mr. Gutierrez, Bolivia)

prohibition to modify the environment, not only for military purposes but for other purposes that are hostile to peace. The leitmotiv of that objection rests on the second of these contentions, rather than on the first. Were we to eliminate the second part of the prohibition, we would allow nations to undertake at will and with impunity activities that could modify the human habitat or to oppose them, such activities, without cause or reason, thereby paralysing the development of countries.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Bolivia)

The convention before us represents a positive contribution to disarmament policy and to the preservation of peace. It is a tribute to those Powers which, in order to draw it up, have practised great intellectual gymnastics to compose their views, as well as compromises, and it is to the credit of those countries which have firmly supported it and yielded on many points for the common cause of peace and respect of the rights of others which we all desire.

If article I of the convention were to prohibit purely and simply any environmental modification for military or other hostile purposes, it could end there. No further articles would be needed. The prohibition would suffice, but it would be a convention that would be obsolescent from birth. A mere prohibition would be a commandment but not a rule in law. Moses' commandment is, "thou shalt not kill", but crime and death are rife and have been so through the centuries. Let us not go back in history. The past still has and will continue to have a great and vital ethical meaning, but it has no operative effect. More than moral adages and maxims, what are needed are rules and regulations that would govern the rights of everyone, in every respect. We want universal laws, strict compliance with which can be sought before the United Nations.

It is stated that the convention would institutionalize environmental war, but that possibility disappears if we consider what the treaty means. The limitations on carrying out environmental war are such that such environmental war cannot take place if the treaty is complied with. Nobody makes small wars; nobody declares a war in order to lose it, and therefore, why a partial prohibition argument when war is not a half-way measure? Wars are waged to be won, by every means and every recourse.

It is inconceivable that a military Power would use environmental modification techniques to produce transitory effects that are not extensive and serious, that is, that are to cause only minor "destruction, damage or injury". Who is going to wage war with weaklings and wooden swords? Environmental war, in my humble opinion, is abolished by the convention that we have before us.

A very different matter is the fact that this convention, like others intended to humanize war or at least prevent it, may at a given moment be disregarded, set at nought. Should this occur, it would be useless for us to try to prepare provisions

(Mr. Gutierrez, Bolivia)

and establish machinery and courts to which we could appeal. It would be better, then, to go home and stop playing with the hope of all mankind to live in a better world, in peace and justice.

We may be told that although we may set up a limitative and reasonable line beyond which environmental war cannot be waged, and if under this threshold we cannot as yet conceive of such war being waged, then we still have to contend with the inventiveness of man -- an inventiveness which will develop new techniques that will escape the established limitation, that will allow great damage, militarily speaking, to be caused. But with this type of hypothesis, which might become reality, we will never come to any agreement whatsoever. In the meantime, let us consider that it is better to do something rather to agree on nothing. Let us at least set down a rule, even though tomorrow it may be flouted, just as the pocket warships evaded the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It would be very grave if we were to evade adopting preventive legislation for which there is a real need. We cannot and we must not do so. We cannot sit back with our arms crossed, hoping for universal consensus at which we might, with the passage of time, arrive before doing anything.

Furthermore, we do have the possibility of amendments. The convention allows any State Party to propose amendments to it. This is natural, and quite usual, with all treaties, laws, and constitutions. To amend a code is a right and must be a healthy practice in the laudable effort to perfect human institutions. Therefore, I would consider it advisable to have something which could be amended rather than to remain in the labyrinth of endless discussion which will lead nowhere if hard and fast, polarized criteria and views are adopted.

Nor is it a valid argument against the convention that some delegations have changed their opinion with the passage of days. I do not know whether there have been any substantive changes -- I do not dare to assume so. At any rate to change one's mind is a proof of intelligence, when it is done under the spur of reason. Democracy rests on the unshakable pedestal of the right to dissent, and the consequent political mutability is due to the constant change of the convictions of peoples. If this were not the case, if this phenomenon were not a distinguishing feature of man, history would become stratified and progress frozen.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Bolivia)

What we must be aware of is that we are breaking new ground. We are living in a time of flux -- of structural changes -- of new concepts in law, in society and in life. We too must transform ourselves, if we do not wish to wreck our ship in the ocean of misunderstanding and in the turbulent seas of intransigent positions.

This, for the moment, is all I wanted to say, stressing the fact that the delegation of Bolivia supports the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1 submitted by the delegation of Finland and other countries, which we should also like to co-sponsor.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Bolivia for his kind words addressed to the Chair. Note has been taken of his intention of sponsoring the draft resolution concerning the environment.

The next name on the list of speakers is that of the representative of the Observer delegation of the Holy See. I have pleasure in calling on Mrs. Molly Boucher.

Mrs. BOUCHER (Holy See): On this occasion when the Holy See addresses the First Committee for the first time this year, I would like on behalf of my delegation to add our congratulations to the many that have been extended to the officers of the Committee on their unanimous election, and to express our appreciation for the gracious and efficient handling of the Committee's meetings.

Peace. Is not this the universal longing of all humanity, a yearning that finds political expression in the Charter by which the United Nations was founded? The lofty ideals that motivated the formation of this body led to the practical institutionalization of humanity's craving for a peace not characterized by a mere absence of war -- an armed truce -- but a dynamic peace in which the development of peoples, the achievement of liberation from hunger, illiteracy, disease and oppression is possible.

But disarmament is a necessary prerequisite to such a genuine peace. And those who work in this Committee do not need to be reminded of the awesome responsibility that rests with them. They of all people are perhaps most acutely aware that the ultimate destiny of mankind, and indeed the very preservation of our common global

(Mrs. Boucher, Holy See)

home, may rest in their hands. Should this body fail to find just and viable solutions to the complex problems of disarmament and should the Governments concerned fail to implement these solutions, it would be difficult to find a more striking application of the biblical text "The sins of the father ...".

In narrow, self-seeking nationalism, or even in procedural bottle-necks, the very ideals that gave birth to the United Nations may tend to be subverted. But nationalistic policies must be sublimated for the common good, and procedure must serve, not hinder. The task to which Member nations gave their mutual pledge by virtue of their membership of the United Nations grows ever more urgent with each passing day and every opportunity must be seized upon to achieve even one small step in the pilgrimage to peace.

The views of the Holy See on the futility, danger, injustice and immorality of the arms race are well known. These views are synthesized by six words that form the opening sentence of a text submitted by the Holy See in response to an invitation contained in resolution 3484 B (XXX) of the General Assembly:

"It (the arms race) is to be condemned unreservedly."

The full text, published in document A/AC/181, details the views of the Holy See and it is not my intention to repeat them now, but merely to correlate these ethical principles to practical matters currently at hand in the deliberations of this Committee.

(Mrs. Boucher, Holy See)

The proposal to hold a special session of the General Assembly in 1978, devoted to disarmament, presently the subject of a draft resolution, is an interesting initiative -- especially if it is viewed as a vehicle for the achievement of substantive progress in disarmament prior to the conclusion of the Disarmament Decade. This could be one significant step towards the universally desired goal of general and complete disarmament under rigorous and effective international control.

The role of non-governmental organizations in meaningfully interpreting technical disarmament matters to the wider community and in forming enlightened public opinion should not be overlooked in the planning of all international disarmament initiatives, and appropriate representation of such organizations should be encouraged.

Adequate preparation and sufficient flexibility of the agenda for such initiatives is however indispensable to concrete results.

One important necessary task is to assess the reality of the world situation and to elaborate a comprehensive disarmament policy reflecting this reality. In its submission to the Secretary-General, referred to earlier, the Holy See made a number of suggestions towards such a policy, including the necessity of strengthening the international policing role of the United Nations, and access by the developing countries to negotiations on disarmament as "partners" in any de-escalation moves.

Some method of providing impetus is necessary towards the finalization or implementation of items that appear with discouraging regularity on the agenda of the General Assembly and the First Committee. These include such top priority issues as the conclusion of a comprehensive ban on nuclear and thermonuclear tests, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of incendiary and other specific conventional weapons, for humanitarian reasons.

When enough arms already exist to destroy the whole of humanity 25 times, it seems the worst kind of madness to continue their production, testing and proliferation. The arms race kills whether its weapons are actually used or merely stockpiled. It immorally misuses intellectual and economic resources that are absolutely indispensable for the liberation of the world's people from hunger, disease, illiteracy and powerlessness.

(Mrs. Boucher, Holy See)

The integral relationship between arms expenditures and lack of resources to meet universal basic human needs has long been recognized. In a press interview in Bombay in 1964, Pope Paul VI called upon the nations to cease the armaments race and devote part of the expenditure for arms to a "great world fund for the relief of the many problems of nutrition, clothing, shelter and medical care which affect so many peoples". Speaking to the United Nations on 4 October 1965, he asserted: "Disarmament is inseparable from the other goals of unity, justice, harmony, and development of the whole 'human family'". In his encyclical "The Progress of Peoples" three years later he called development "the new name for peace".

The "intolerable scandal" of the arms race is emphasized by the comparison, as reported in the 1971 Report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and of military expenditures, that military spending equals two and one half times what all Governments are spending on health, one and a half times what they spend on education, and 30 times more than the total of all official economic aid granted by developed to developing countries.

How many, even of the wealthiest and most industrialized countries can state categorically that their people are universally free from hunger, illiteracy and disease? This question takes on the most tragic significance in the developing countries whose meagre resources, because of the chain reaction of the arms race, have increasingly been used for the weapons of war, rather than the tools of peace.

In June 1968, Pope Paul VI welcomed the adoption by the United Nations of the Geneva Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a "first step" in the direction of a "total ban on nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament". The Holy See signed the Treaty in 1971.

However, to date the Treaty has fallen far short of expectations. The Review Conference held in May 1975, declares that article I and article II of the Treaty, committing nuclear-weapon States not to transfer and non-nuclear-weapon States not to acquire nuclear weapons, have been observed by the 96 signatory States, but the dismal fact remains that unless all States subscribe to it the Treaty cannot hope to achieve its purpose of non-proliferation on the horizontal level. Furthermore, article VI calls for effective measures for cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and for nuclear disarmament.

(Mrs. Boucher, Holy See)

The Holy See is vitally interested in the dialogue presently taking place towards the conclusion of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) and expresses its fervent hope that a satisfactory agreement will soon result thus permanently removing universal fear and concern regarding the vertical proliferation of deadly weapons.

Pending the successful conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty and the strategic arms limitation talks, the Holy See calls upon the nuclear Powers to declare a moratorium on further development and production of nuclear arms. This most urgent appeal is made in the firm conviction that such a moratorium would not affect the legitimate demands of self-defence.

My delegation has studied document A/31/146, Report of the Secretary-General, regarding item 35 of the agenda, "Incendiary and other specific conventional weapons which may be the subject of prohibition or restrictions of use for humanitarian reasons."

In the view of my delegation the principles of international law applying to "dubious weapons" that are "morally repulsive and contrary to traditional principles including the laws of humanity and the demands of public conscience" should certainly be seen as applying to the use of the inhumanly cruel and indiscriminate weapons considered in this report, including napalm and other incendiary weapons, delayed action and treacherous weapons, small calibre projectiles, and blast and fragmentation weapons.

The need to study and adopt methods of outright prohibition, or at least of severe limitation of weapons causing disproportionate suffering to either combatants or civilians, or which do not discriminate between combatants and civilians, cannot be too strongly urged. These diabolical weapons by reason of their indiscriminate nature and pernicious effects approach the destructiveness commonly attributed to nuclear warfare. To them must be applied the condemnation of the Vatican Council:

"Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities ... and their inhabitants, is a crime against God and against man himself, which must be condemned firmly and without hesitation."

(Mrs. Boucher, Holy See)

In concluding my remarks I wish to assure this distinguished assembly that the Holy See is well aware that the problems of disarmament are complex and technical, defying any simplistic solution. So is man's conquest of outer space. Surely no more universally urgent task commands our intellectual and economic resources than the achievement of genuine and lasting peace.

Mr. MUGANDA (United Republic of Tanzania): Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in this Committee, I wish to take the opportunity to congratulate you and the other officers upon your election to your respective posts in this important Committee. I might add that my delegation has already been highly impressed by the way you have so far been conducting the business of this Committee. Your strict adherence to punctuality and to the estimated time of our speeches is but one of the demonstrations of your skills in leadership. I will endeavour to finish my speech within the allocated time, if only in order to demonstrate our spirit of co-operation in the efficient discharge of the responsibilities of this Committee.

To describe the ongoing negotiations in disarmament as disarmament efforts is to take part in a seriously dangerous cover-up. Perhaps it is not fair to state sweepingly that there have been no efforts at all in the problem of armaments. There have indeed been such efforts but these have been efforts toward non-armament by the unarmed. This must be distinguished from the so-called efforts in disarmament. But there has been no need for any effort to prevent those who are unable to arm themselves from arming themselves. Efforts are required on the part of those who are already armed, and these, we have yet to see. There is indeed a lot of activity going on in the name of disarmament. Ever since the United Nations was created, a lot of diplomatic hustling has been going on; many meetings, conferences and public pronouncements have taken place. The United Nations has been subjected to an ever-growing avalanche of proposals, some short-lived, some perennial. There is also an impressive list of the so-called disarmament treaties. We are then persuaded to think that the world is safer, thanks to these documents and comforting public pronouncements, than it would otherwise have been. One wonders how many of us will buy that suggestion.

The most serious threat to the survival of life in this planet is posed by nuclear weapons. But there are only a handful of States at this moment who possess and continue to manufacture these weapons. Any serious attention to disarmament must first and foremost be directed to the disarming of these nuclear-weapon States. While we are often directed to look at the list of agreements dealing with these weapons we are comforted neither by the even more conspicuous practical developments in the field of nuclear weapons nor by the serious failure

(Mr. Muganda, Tanzania)

in these agreements themselves to deal with the real problem of disarmaments today. The concern of most if not all existing disarmament treaties is not so much to do away with the nuclear weapons in the world but rather to create and maintain a monopoly of destructive power. It is the more disillusioning to hear from the defence policies of some of the nuclear States the often repeated belief that international peace and security will be maintained by the so-called balance of military power or superiority. Such pronouncements backed by the growing nuclear weapons build-up only serve to confirm our belief that talk by these Powers about disarmament is only lip-service.

The Tanzania delegation like many others in the non-aligned group hopes for the realization of disarmament. But we cannot afford to pretend that this hope will come true if the trend of things remains as it now exists. We are duty-bound to point out the danger of deceiving ourselves.

My President once said the following with regard to the often talked about Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):

"We have opposed this treaty not because we want to reserve our right to make or receive nuclear weapons. We have neither the ability nor the wish to do so. We have opposed it because it is an unequal treaty, which cannot even contribute to the cause of peace. A monopoly of weapons cannot produce real peace. It could only produce so-called peace, like Pax Romana or Pax Britannica."

Much the same could be said about the entire body of disarmament treaties. Meaningful disarmament can only take place when each and every State is subjected to the same measures aimed at the total elimination of weapons. Selective or discriminatory measures can only generate suspicion and reverse progress. In any case the limitation to a few States of the ownership of these weapons is not enough to provide the world with the security it seeks. Less still does disarmament consist of simply proliferating words and documents about it. In fact the reality is, to quote the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Dr. Peter H. Kooijmans, Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs.

"The rate of progress in disarmament negotiations seems to be inversely proportional to the amount of words and documents spent on them."

(Mr. Muganda, Tanzania)

Those who are responsible for the existing weapons of mass destruction should not be permitted to hide their failure to respond to world opinion behind the existing treaties as if they too have contributed to disarmament by simply agreeing to others' undertaking not to follow their example. We have had enough platitudes but no action is discernible so far. And the more time and efforts are spent on peripheral, inconsequential problems with such increasing fanfare as is demonstrated for example by the list of items and lengthy discussions in this Committee, the more we lose sight of the real problem and the more time is bought to allow stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the closer we are led to the doorstep of world disaster.

Let me now very briefly set out the views of my Government on the three items of disarmament which we think call for our immediate observation.

My Government, like many of the non-aligned nations, believes that we should convene a special session of the United Nations General Assembly for the purpose of discussing disarmament issues and all other issues related to disarmament. We hope that a special session devoted strictly to disarmament could probably produce some important results which we have failed to achieve in three decades since the issues of disarmament were first discussed in the United Nations. But the prerequisite for the success of such a session is not just the hope, but also the will of the big Powers genuinely to come to terms with disarmament. In our humble opinion, it is this will to really disarm which has been absent among the big Powers. We believe that the proposed special session could come up with a strategy to exert influence on the attitudes of nations and bring about this will. The negotiations on the establishment of a new international economic order, though still facing problems, are an example of the kind of popular awareness and momentum which a special session devoted to an issue can bring about in such an otherwise seemingly helpless situation.

My Government has consistently supported the idea of establishing peace zones and nuclear-weapon-free zones. We have expressed our strong desire to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. We have supported all United Nations resolutions aimed at the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South Asia, Africa and Latin America and other parts of the globe.

(Mr. Muganda, Tanzania)

We fail to understand, therefore, why the United States, the strongest nation in the world, one of the advocates of the NPT, an adamant believer in détente, a signatory to the so-called Helsinki Accord of the Conference on European Security and Co-operation, could disregard world opinion and go ahead in establishing a military base on Diego Garcia -- thousands of miles away from its shores! For that matter we are equally unimpressed by excuses advanced by any country that engages in the race for military advantage in our region. For these arguments amount to asserting that evil can be undone by more evil. My delegation supports the idea of convening a conference on the Indian Ocean as proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

(Mr. Muganda, Tanzania)

Lastly on the two draft resolutions dealing with the subject of the use of environmental modification techniques for military or other hostile purposes, I wish to say the following.

My delegation has studied the draft convention presented by the CCD and the two draft resolutions in documents A/C.1/31/L.4 and L.5. We have serious misgivings on the formulation of article I of that draft convention. As it now reads it would prohibit not every kind of military or other hostile use of environmental modification but only that kind of military or hostile use having, to use its wording, "having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects". By implication the use of the environmental modification techniques for military or other hostile purposes not falling within any one of the three qualifications is not prohibited.

Firstly such a provision can only generate confusion in the interpretation of what is in fact prohibited and what is not. We would have thought that once the use of environmental modification was considered militarily or otherwise hostile, it would be considered an offensive weapon and should therefore be outlawed. To qualify it in terms of the degree of destructiveness can only introduce vagueness and therefore a loop-hole which can give rise to unnecessary dispute.

Secondly the tendency in disarmament efforts to be contented with partial prohibition of arms and armament seems to be now a permanent feature. We would like to repeat what we have always said that the effect of such half measures can only be to deceive ourselves that we have accomplished something simply because we have adopted a disarmament instrument while in fact such complacency is not only unjustified but a dangerous sign of slackness.

How long can we afford to continue with half measures while the problem is allowed to continue to exist?

We believe it is high time we became more serious in our approach to disarmament measures. We therefore wish to associate ourselves with the view that this draft convention, if it is to be meaningful, must be reconsidered by Member States and appropriate improvements should be made to it, particularly on article I.

My delegation therefore is in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/31/L.4 which seeks to refer the draft convention to the CCD for further study. We believe that the draft convention should also be sent to Member States for their observations before a decision is made in the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for his kind words addressed to the Chairman and to the other officers of the Committee.

Mr. JAMAL (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): Since the delegation of my country is speaking for the first time in this Committee, I think it is my duty, however late in the day, to extend to you our warm congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. I am also happy to take this opportunity to congratulate the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur and the other officers. My delegation is entirely convinced that your election to the chairmanship of this Committee is a demonstration of how much we appreciate your competence, quality and long experience in matters of disarmament. I am sure these qualities will ensure the success of our work.

My delegation has taken part in the work of this Committee and has followed with great interest the discussion of questions relating to the arms race and disarmament. We have also followed the ideas put forward in the discussion, ideas which we consider to be a new contribution to the achievement of our high objectives and which should enable us to make concrete progress. Today, more than ever, we need collective action to create together an atmosphere which would be satisfactory to the peoples of the whole world, and particularly to the small nations, so that we can achieve the objectives of limiting the arms race and ensuring complete and general disarmament.

My country -- which is a small country -- is very concerned to see the dangers which threaten all small countries because of the arms race and the continuation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We are now at the end of the first Disarmament Decade. Each year we see that the disarmament items on the agenda become more and more numerous, in spite of the many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the specialized agencies with the purpose of achieving concrete progress in the field of general and complete disarmament. This is something to which my country attaches the greatest importance.

In spite of the efforts made by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, in spite of the great dimensions of this problem, what has been done in this area remains very little, if we compare the results achieved with the proliferation of

(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

destructive arms and the development and production of biological and nuclear weapons particularly. This can lead only to a reduction in confidence and an increase in tension among peoples of the world, particularly among countries producing these weapons. This, in its turn, engenders reactions incompatible with the objectives of arms limitation and the curbing of the arms race.

Reviewing rapidly the development and the arms race, the development of new armaments and also military expenditures since the Second World War, we realize that there are frightening and troublesome facts in evidence. Since the Second World War the countries in the arms race have spent about \$6,000 billion on military preparations. Furthermore, more than \$300 million are spent every year in order to multiply, improve and maintain destructive arms. More than 500 million human beings are suffering from hunger and malnutrition in the world at this time. According to the last report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, it seems that \$300 billion is spent yearly, which is equivalent to about all of the gross national product of 1975 and is more than five times the gross national product of all developing countries, representing an investment of \$1,500 per capita of all the inhabitants in the world.

(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

The disarmament negotiations undertaken by CCD have yielded no results of any appreciable scope, in spite of the fact that General Assembly resolution 3466 (XXX), adopted on 11 December 1975, requested that priority be given to this question in 1976. Furthermore, the General Assembly laid particular stress on the fact that the continuation of nuclear tests would accelerate the arms race and increase the constantly growing dangers of nuclear war. The delegation of my country is convinced that if priority is not given to the problem of disarmament and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in this area, the use of destructive weapons will inevitably lead to the extinction of the human race and human civilization. We are all aware that the growth of the destructive capacity of these weapons has assumed inconceivable proportions and this gives us cause for concern regarding the possibility of establishing peace and security in the world, something we need more than ever today. My country welcomes efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and the recommendations in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. We call on all countries to put these recommendations into effect as soon as possible. As we said in our previous statement and as we have so often repeated, my country welcomes the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as one of the most important agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament and the establishment of world peace and security.

We believe it is necessary to hold a world disarmament conference, an idea supported by many speakers before me, who said that all nuclear and non-nuclear countries should participate on an equal footing in this conference in accordance with the ideas of the Disarmament Decade. We hope that this in turn will give rise to positive measures of disarmament. The Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Colombo, Sri Lanka, in August last, issued a Political Declaration requesting the holding of a special session of the General Assembly as early as possible if it were to prove from the discussions at this session that no progress is achieved towards the convening of a world disarmament conference.

We must also attach due importance in our discussions, to another aspect of disarmament, namely the question of chemical, biological and incendiary weapons and napalm and the use of these weapons, which is growing. In our view, these weapons

(Mr. Jumaal, Qatar)

are as dangerous as nuclear weapons -- I would even say that these are arms of mass destruction of a kind which the world contemplates with horror. We hope that there can be some limitation of the arms race in this field and that we can achieve a prohibition of the manufacture of these dangerous weapons. The use of this type of weapon has been condemned and prohibited by international agreements, particularly by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Resolutions of the General Assembly adopted every year leave no doubt that the prospects for peace in the world will decrease if we do not put an end to the production and stockpiling of chemical and biological weapons which would be used for military purposes and if these arms are not removed from all military arsenals.

My country attaches great importance to the question of the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We regard this as a major issue, and States Members of the United Nations must put this idea into effect by creating nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world. This result would have a good effect on the prohibition of the manufacture of nuclear arms and would lay the foundations for international peace and security.

In this connexion, I should like to comment particularly on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and in the Indian Ocean. With regard to the Middle East, of which my country is a part, the refinement of destructive weapons by the great Powers has had repercussions in the Middle East. For today, in our region, we are witnessing an unbridled arms race and this exposes us to the danger of war. Without any doubt, today more than ever before, our region needs to be freed from the spectre of nuclear war. My country supports the idea of achieving this objective, but there is an obstacle which impedes the establishment of lasting peace in the area, namely the refusal of Israel to sign or adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which raises some doubts regarding its expansionist designs. The international Organization and the international community is duty bound to exert all possible pressure on Israel to prevail upon it to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. General Assembly resolution 3263 (XXIX), after commending the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, states that, in order to advance that idea, it is indispensable that all parties concerned in the area proclaim solemnly and immediately their intention to refrain from producing, testing, obtaining, acquiring or in any other way possessing

(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

nuclear weapons, and calls upon the parties concerned in the area to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Israel is aggressive by its very nature, and it continues to acquire new sophisticated weapons. Israel is engaged in abnormal development of military techniques and is preparing to launch a new war of aggression in the area. Israel, since the cease-fire, has been able to acquire new weapons which it did not possess before the war of October 1973. Pentagon experts have stated in this regard that the quantity of arms which Israel possesses today exceeds what is possessed by all other countries with the exception of the great Powers. With this frightening accumulation of new destructive weapons in Israel, we can see how difficult it is to achieve the objective we all seek. News reports indicate that Israel possesses nuclear arms, encouraged in this by Western great Powers; it has been confirmed that Israel now possesses nuclear warheads, which shows that Israel attaches no importance to arresting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and reveals the extent to which Israel is defying the principles of international peace and security. The uncontrolled arms race in the Middle East, even if limited to sophisticated conventional weapons, has no other purpose but that of unleashing a new war which would doubtless generate international tension that could bring the world to a bloody confrontation.

(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

With regard to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, we have repeatedly stated our whole-hearted support for this Declaration. We have supported the idea that all foreign military bases, whether air or naval bases, situated in the territory of the littoral countries or islands of the Indian Ocean should be immediately eliminated, so that the Indian Ocean can become a zone of peace and thus contribute to the security of the whole world. This would also make it possible to exercise some control with regard to nuclear arms. For the same reasons, my country whole-heartedly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South Asia, the South Pacific and Latin America.

I should like to state that my delegation is convinced that the time has come to convene a world disarmament conference. The convening of such a conference has become a necessity in view of our wish to see disarmament come about and peace established everywhere in the world. I should like to state that my country supports any arrangements or decisions with a view to taking effective measures to bring about complete and general disarmament under effective international control and with a view to the creation of a world where understanding, friendship and peace among nations will prevail.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Qatar for the congratulations he addressed to the Chairman and to the other officers of this Committee.

Mr. EILAN (Israel): The vision of a world living in peace was first given to the world by the prophets of Israel, and one of the most famous of their proclamations is inscribed in stone across the road from this building. The ideal of universal peace was first proclaimed not only by Isaiah, but also by other Jewish prophets, continued to be pursued by Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages, and is a recurrent theme of contemporary Hebrew literature in Israel. Peace and disarmament is for every Israeli not an abstract notion but an urgent need, a tangible necessity understood by Israelis of all political persuasions.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

Mankind has become consciously aware of the need for disarmament ever since the industrial revolution, which made it possible for weapons to be produced on a previously unimaginable scale. One can say that disarmament has been publicly discussed intermittently since the beginning of this century.-- thus, the discussion on disarmament in this General Assembly falls on the seventieth anniversary of the Second Hague Conference on Disarmament.

In the seven decades that have since elapsed, tens of millions of people the world over, both soldiers and civilians, have been killed in wars that became known as world wars, and also as total wars. Attacks on the enemy's civilian population and the destruction of its industrial potential became an openly proclaimed target in aerial warfare. The Second World War ended by the introduction of the thermonuclear weapon; thus both armament and disarmament acquired respectively an awesome proportion and an impelling urgency unknown to past generations.

In the 30 years since the last World War, at least 10 regional armed conflicts have erupted on the Eurasian continent. Each one of them involved the employment of weapons of such growing sophistication that victory in the field became directly related to the availability, indigenous or acquired, to each side of the conflict, of enormous scientific and industrial capacities.

The constant production of novel weapons, however, could be achieved only by the diversion of a growing proportion of the gross national product into arms production. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute gives the following estimate of the world's military expenditure since the failure of the Second Hague Conference of 1907: using constant 1970 prices in United States dollars, total world expenditure on armaments in 1908 was \$900 million as compared to \$213.8 billion in 1975.

The Handbook of this Institute states the following:

"In the period since the Second World War, the world has given over to military uses much more of its output than it did either before the First World War or in the inter-War period. The quantity of resources devoted annually to armaments has, on the average, been more than five times as large since World War Two than over the period 1925-1938, ...

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

"In 1913, even after three years of a competitive arms race among the big Powers, probably no more than 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of world output was going to the military ... The average over 1950-1970, on the other hand, has been 7 to 8 per cent -- more than double the 1913 figure. It is now over 6 per cent of the gross national product of the countries of the world, and equal to the total income of countries whose population comprises more than half of mankind."

If this trend in arms expenditure continues, the general estimate seems to indicate that military spending on a world-wide basis will continue to double every 15 years, and that by the beginning of the next century the world will be devoting to military uses a quantum of resources which is equal to the whole world's present output. This is not as preposterous as it sounds. The world is now devoting solely to military purposes an amount of resources which exceeds the world's total output of goods and services in the year 1900.

The tragic spiral of armaments before, and especially after, the Second World War has been accompanied by continuous, prolonged and highly intricate efforts by the world community, within the framework of the League of Nations and the United Nations, to find internationally agreed methods to curb the arms race. As we are now, in this Committee, considering the advisability of convening a world disarmament conference, it is worth recalling that this would be the second world disarmament conference, the first having begun its sessions in 1932 and ended its deliberations some three years later in utter failure.

Although the United Nations has been more effective in promoting certain international covenants in the field of disarmament, it is nevertheless true to say, in the words of the representative of the Netherlands, that:

"The rate of progress in disarmament negotiations seems to be inversely proportionate to the amount of words and documents spent on them. This lack of progress seems to have created a feeling of apathy and helplessness among the peoples of the world." (A/C.1/31/PV.26, pp. 13-15)

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

The time has come for all of us to realize that the failure of the international community to find an effective way to stop world armament is not due to any lack of adequate legal machinery or organizational expertise. A solution to the problem of disarmament depends on the existence of a minimum amount of mutual confidence.

Before disarmament can relax world tensions, world tensions will have to be relaxed to provide a propitious setting for disarmament.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

Israel, although aware that tensions in the Middle East do not provide a propitious setting for disarmament, is nevertheless prepared to play her part in the general effort to seek disarmament.

At this present session of the General Assembly, my Minister stated:

"In the past three years the value of arms supplies delivered by both East and West to the Arab countries in the vicinity of Israel is estimated at \$7.5 billion; a further approximately \$22 billion-worth is contracted for delivery from the end of 1976 onwards, making a total of nearly \$30 billion invested in weaponry. This is an utterly staggering sum which is difficult for the human mind to take in. If, instead of being spent on means of destruction, most of this sum was invested in the economic and social development of the area, the Middle East would be transformed and restored to its ancient glory.

"However, as long as the Arab States continue to arm themselves with highly sophisticated modern weaponry on this vast scale, Israel is compelled to keep up, and will keep up. But we repeat emphatically that we are prepared now, even before peace is made, to negotiate with our neighbours for a balanced limitation of the inflow of arms into the area in such a manner that the burden will be lightened for all without adversely affecting the security and the defence capacity of any." (A/31/PV.22, p. 62)

I should like to remind this Committee of the importance of the second part of Isaiah's vision, namely that: "They shall learn war no more." In modern terms these words are particularly apposite to at least two aspects of international life.

"Learning war", these days also means the setting aside for military scientific research enormous financial resources which otherwise could be spent not only to help the developing countries, but also to fight the poverty which still exists in some developed countries. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimates that about 20 billion dollars per year is being spent on military research and development, or about one third of the entire world's expenditure on all research and development.

With it goes the frightening prospect of military science let loose by the "sorcerer's apprentice", developing a momentum entirely its own producing novel

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

means of destruction which, in turn, demand research in new methods of defence against the newly-designed weapons. The totality of research and development in military science is sending humanity further and further into a self-impelled deathly spiral of annihilation.

The only way of putting a halt to the employment of science in the service of war, as I said at the beginning of my statement, is to reduce world tension to provide a propitious setting for real disarmament. This demands also an end to the incitement of the young to make war. What are the chances of an end of tension in the Middle East, for instance, if Arab school children are taught arithmetic from textbooks which ask: "If I kill two Jews and you kill three Jews, how many Jews have been killed altogether?"

Thus we come to the second contemporary aspect of "learning-war-no-more" -- which really is a search for a way to make world public opinion fully cognizant of the dangers that the modern arms race entails for the future of this planet. We, therefore, welcome the Swedish initiative for publishing a disarmament periodical for popular distribution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. Needless to say the dissemination of information on disarmament would be effective only if the distribution of this periodical were freely permitted in every country, and not just in certain Member States of the United Nations.

The picture is clear and tragic. The Middle East has become one of the focal points of a world armament race. Since 1961, the average annual rate of increase of financial resources devoted to armament in the Middle East has been 19.5 per cent, nearly seven times the world average for the same period.

Israel is acutely aware of the tragic futility of an armament race which is turning the Middle East into a laboratory for the world to experiment with novel methods of destruction. So we say to our Arab neighbours: let us sit together without any prior conditions and discuss peace; if this is not acceptable to them we are prepared, as my Minister stated, in this General Assembly and in 1975, to discuss arms control and the proper conditions for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, independent of an immediate settlement. The choice is theirs; but above all let us progress, whatever the method from hostility to dialogue, from armament to peaceful development. Israel does not feel that the

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

Middle East is under an obligation to provide the world's armament industries with constant profits, and to guarantee them a market for weapons for years to come. We would prefer to boost the import into the Middle East of the modern equivalent of "plowshares" and "pruning hooks" and we call on our Arab neighbours to join us in a common regional effort to make Isaiah's vision a living reality.

Now, Mr. Chairman, being the last on the list of speakers, I should also like to take this opportunity to exercise my right of reply.

We believe that disarmament or reduction of armament must go hand in hand with verbal disarmament. We have witnessed in this Committee the utter absurdity of certain representatives using the procedural vehicle of an item on disarmament to make pronouncements which would be more suitable to the atmosphere prevailing in a council of war. It is hardly surprising that the most vicious attack against Israel came from the representative of a country which is not only engaged in a feverish arms race, but which has used these arms in the course of the last year and a half to invade a neighbouring country and to cause the deaths of tens of thousands of Arabs, both Christians and Moslem. By preaching disarmament in the First Committee, and practising murder in Lebanon, Syria has set a record of ghoulisn hypocrisis rarely witnessed in the annals of the United Nations.

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

There exists a prescription for slander which is simple and safe. It is to accuse one's opponents of every possible transgression in complete disregard of truth and then watch him deny these allegations, hopeful of the validity of the French proverb: "Qui s'excuse s'accuse." My delegation has no intention of thus obliging the Syrian representative. Suffice it to say that if there were even a grain of truth in his allegations the world -- and especially the United Nations -- would surely have heard of them from more authoritative sources than the statement of the representative of Syria in this Committee.

Israel has hitherto refrained from responding to the attacks of some Arab representatives in order to avoid unnecessary acrimony in a debate on a subject as serious as disarmament. However, the unbridled attack of the representative of Iraq this morning compels me to pursue the matter further than I had originally intended.

We are witnessing a grotesque situation. Many representatives from different continents have expressed their concern about the great arms race in recent years. Which, then, are the countries that have caused the boom in the sale of merchandise of death? Principally, the Arab countries. In the past three years an estimated \$US 7.5 billion in arms supplies have been delivered by East and West to the Arab countries in the vicinity of Israel. In addition, about \$US 22 billion worth of arms has been contracted for delivery from the end of 1976 and onward. And yet it is the representatives of those same countries who account for so much of the increase in the sale of conventional arms, who come to this Committee and piously deplore the situation they themselves have caused or created. According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the following ratios exist in 1975 as between the confrontation area -- I mean Arab States bordering on Israel, plus other Arab States expected to contribute to those States -- and Israel itself, and I draw the attention of the representative of Qatar to these figures. They are authoritative figures, as representatives know: armed forces, five to one in favour of Arab countries; combat aircraft, three to one in favour of Arab countries; tanks, three to one in favour of Arab countries; artillery, nine to one in favour of Arab countries; surface-to-air missile batteries, 12 to 1 in favour of Arab countries. Is not their existing superiority in matériel and manpower more than sufficient to guarantee their security, if, as they say, they feel threatened by

(Mr. Eilan, Israel)

Israel, a country of three million. We turn to our Arab neighbours and appeal to them to abandon this suicidal pursuit. Again we call on them to join us to make Isaiah's wish a reality in the Middle East.

My delegation may wish to intervene again in this debate on one of the items on our agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: Before adjourning this meeting I should like to announce that Ethiopia has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1 and that Mauritania has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.7/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.