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Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 33 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY:
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr. GAUCI (Malta): On the 25th anniversary of the United Nations we all solemnly recognized our duty

"to examine in depth the present international situation and to study the means and recourses provided by the relevant provisions of the Charter in order to build peace, security and co-operation in the world."

(Resolution 2734 (XXV))

In one of the operative paragraphs we stressed the apparently startling consideration

"that the promotion of international co-operation, including regional, subregional and bilateral co-operation among States, in keeping with the provisions of the Charter and based on the principle of equal rights and on strict respect for the sovereignty and independence of States, can contribute to the strengthening of international security."

(Ibid., para. 24)

The declaration of course carried several other operative provisions, too numerous to quote, stressing the principles of international law.

And so we all felt on that occasion, after two sessions of debate and one year of careful study by Governments, that we had successfully done our duty by reaching agreement on the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security. It seems that while on previous occasions we had referred to the maintenance, or the preservation, or the building of peace and security, we had at that session progressed to agree on the need for strengthening peace and security. That was a magnificent achievement worthy of the special occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of our Organization. After that, we could really afford to relax and to forget all we had undertaken. We did not question at the time what kind of peace we were supposed to strengthen. Perhaps we suspected -- but would not admit --

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that the word strengthening meant different things to different delegations. Our suspicions were soon put at rest; we subsequently had it confirmed that some of us contend that peace is strengthened by continuing the quantitative and qualitative increase in over-abundant lethal armaments -- this is called deterrence -- while at the same time, without batting an eyelid, pledging our commitment to general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In these halls, we annually make our absent-minded genuflections before these noble ideals, while we continue our indefatigable search for compromise formulations to gloss over our differences.

But the cause of peace is compelling, and so subsequently Malta joined the countries of Europe and the United States and Canada in two years of intense effort to improve the political climate in our region. By their signatures at the highest level in Helsinki in the summer of last year the participating countries solemnly adopted the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). In doing so, they declared that they were

"motivated by the political will, in the interests of peoples, to improve and intensify their relations and to contribute in Europe to peace, security, justice and co-operation as well as to rapprochement among themselves and with the other States of the world."

They also expressed their determination, "in consequence, to give full effect to the results of the Conference." (Final Act, p. 103)

The discussions of CSCE followed the traditional pattern. The emerging outlines of the Final Document appeared likely to run into several thousand high-sounding words, but only constituting in essence a repetition -- at best a more detailed elaboration -- of principles to which the participating States had already subscribed, and laying guidelines for co-operation in the economic, scientific, cultural and humanitarian fields. As befits a small country, Malta stood modestly aside and initially left it to the bigger countries to propose the modalities for change. But when we realized that no real change was contemplated we insisted that two years of effort could not result only in a repetition, more or less, of similar declarations made elsewhere -- in the United Nations, UNCTAD, UNESCO and other forums. The only new feature was the set of confidence building measures meant to prevent mishap on the ground through possible misunderstanding or suspicion arising from troop movements or manoeuvres.

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The smaller countries of Europe pointed out that these confidence building measures were not only incomplete but were obviously also predicated on a maintenance of the status quo. The level at which agreement was reached undoubtedly had some value for the big, heavily armed countries or for members of military alliances, but were of purely theoretical value for the small unarmed countries of Europe, and of its neighbouring States. At the CSCE Malta welcomed those measures but also pointed out their limited value. We also strongly stressed that new approaches were necessary, and that the security of Europe and its neighbours need not necessarily or permanently rely on a mere continuation of the processes that have maintained an unstable balance in the past.

And so the participating States, in a separate document on the Mediterranean were finally persuaded to declare their intention

"to seek, by further improving their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States, to increase mutual confidence, so as to promote security and stability in the Mediterranean area as a whole." (Final Act)

In order to advance these and other objectives, the participating States also declared their intention

"...of contributing to peace, reducing armed forces in the region, strengthening security, lessening tension, and widening the scope of co-operation, ends in which all share a common interest, as well as with the purpose of defining further common objective." (Ibid.)

If we pause a moment for reflection at this point, and look back over our performance in the past, it would appear that 30 years of constant endeavour at universal and regional forums to define and re-define principles should be quite enough, at least for the present. We must allocate time to concentrate on more efficient ways and means for promoting in concrete terms our oft-stated objective. We do not lack norms of international relations; what seems to be lacking is the will to apply them in all cases, and playing to the gallery in rhetorical performance is no good substitute for action. It is essential for us now to determine future priorities. One priority is to concentrate more effort on concrete measures and, temporarily at least, to postpone further concentration on the elaboration of theory. A second priority is to determine areas of

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co-operation where concerted political action is likely to produce effective results. A third priority is to set up appropriate machinery to give effect to decisions, as otherwise the best blue-prints for action will remain dead letters.

It is only natural that Malta's main interest should be in the Mediterranean region, for our future well-being is at stake; it is in this area that we wish to turn away from the confrontation of the past and to strive to build new relations between the two shores of the sea that unites Europe and Africa. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to dwell briefly on this region, leaving it to others to deal with their own priorities. It is undoubtedly a strategic area; it still carries an inheritance of mistrust from local rivalries of the recent past and present. Because of the reliance for security on the super-Powers, it has become a critical area for USA-Soviet military relations. Local conflicts have consequently tended to become polarized along East-West lines. The Mediterranean is still the one region in the world where the super-Powers deploy the biggest array of deadly armaments, including large and powerful fleets which cast a menacing shadow over the prospects of peace. It is both a highly illogical and an extremely dangerous situation. It would be of benefit to all to strive strenuously to defuse this situation, or it might explode beyond the uneasy tension at which it has been maintained so far.

I have already indicated in my intervention before this Committee last year, and in the General Debate this year, the broad outlines of the new political horizons that are open to the Euro-Mediterranean region. I will not repeat them now. I have also indicated under specific items how Malta feels that progress can be brought about in an attempt to resolve two of the most enduring problems in our region. These political perspectives will necessarily take time for realization. But this does not mean that no determined attempt should be made simultaneously to diminish and to eliminate the danger of outright conflict in our region by removing the most obvious elements that can bring about a flash-point.

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The same political climate that suggests reduction of forces on land should equally stimulate reduction of naval forces at sea. Malta does not accept as permanent or inevitable the presence of the fleets of the super-Powers in the Mediterranean; their presence is a constant reminder of the division which we seek to overcome. Reduction of forces is in fact what has actually happened spontaneously over the past decade to the fleets of all the Mediterranean military strong nations; the fleets of the super-Powers are the exception -- their strength has almost doubled over the past decade, either quantitatively or qualitatively

The result has followed the predictable path. Inevitably, as one side or the other tries to build up its force levels, there is a counter-reaction, and the danger of confrontation, present on a daily basis, increases to dangerous frequency of incidence, especially during periods of tension. This is a real danger. These units operate in a volatile region, where opposing interests of the super-Powers could easily overlap. The danger of the situation has been recognized by the super-Powers themselves, so that an agreement was entered into in 1972 on the prevention of incidents involving warships. But this agreement is essentially a traffic code of conduct designed to prevent harassment activities by one side or the other; it does not go into the heart of the problem, which is involvement, either accidental or through miscalculation, on opposing sides of local conflict. This has in fact happened in the past; luckily there were no more severe repercussions beyond a world-wide nuclear alert. But, for the second time, the entire world trembled with fear. No one can predict what will be the outcome of a third or subsequent confrontation. What is evident is that the presence of excessive naval forces has manifestly not prevented several instances of aggression from taking place over the past few years.

In these circumstances, it is difficult to determine a valid argument for the maintenance of this dangerous situation.

The need for improvement is obvious, yet the situation remains uneasy and unrelieved. One possible reason for this lack of progress is the inertia of the status quo. The major Powers are too preoccupied and too set in their approaches to promote significant change. As was pointed out some weeks ago in the disarmament debate:

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"We face the tragic paradox that the nations of the world, in the pursuit of their national security, take actions which result in fact in more insecurity, both for individual nations as well as for the world as a whole."

But surely we have now reached a point where we must recognize the imperatives of change. What was good for the past is not necessarily the best prescription for the future. Alternative courses are called for.

It is for the countries of a particular region to advocate change. Without going into detail, which I could provide if necessary, the conclusion I have reached from my analysis of recent trends is that the excessive naval concentration of the super-Powers in the Mediterranean has little or no effect on over-all stability, and is furthermore politically unproductive, highly dangerous and detrimental to peaceful maritime traffic and to the preservation of the marine environment. Disengagement would be in conformity with the undertakings of the European Security Council and of the Moscow summit between the two super-Powers, where it was stated that:

"They will seek to promote conditions in which all countries will live in peace and security and will not be subject to outside interference in their internal affairs."

The leader of the delegation of Malta at the signing of the Helsinki Final Act stated:

"A failure to pursue with earnestness and in good faith the objectives set forth in the Final Act would be catastrophic for us all."

We regret to note in particular that there has been no disengagement of naval forces of the super-Powers in the Mediterranean. On the contrary they have increased. In the circumstances, and for the reasons I have outlined, Malta calls on the super-Powers to honour their obligations. Our purpose is not to point the finger of blame, but if possible to repair damage when we find it and to point out common objectives of regional and universal benefit. The Mediterranean provides a suitable location for practical action. The situation brooks no delay.

As I said last year, and repeat again, we live in an age when no two nations, however powerful, can build the structure of peace on their own. The super-Powers must realize this and should encourage political concertation between all the

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interested States of a particular region. Division does not promote success; it only produces a stalemate. When interests converge, unity is attainable. Notwithstanding the conflicting historical background and the recent divisive differences, the States on both shores of the Mediterranean can seek common ground for co-operation to reach a common objective, a new independence which will not need the support of any of the super-Powers for their security. Only then can we look forward to peace, progress and security which would defuse the existing problems in our region. The scope for co-operation is mutually advantageous in a genuine partnership between equals offering tremendous opportunities for positive change.

Mr. PAWLAK (Poland): The First Committee has taken up discussion on an item of extreme importance. It is in the competence of this important Political Committee to review the current world situation and try to see to it that peace be preserved and international security strengthened. It is, therefore, only natural that, within the last six years, a practice has been established to review systematically the implementation of the historic Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security. Every passing year brings important world events which have their direct impact on the state of international security. Indeed, no effort should be spared, all ways and means ought to be employed to ensure that this impact upon the international security be a positive one. This is where we see the lasting, practical usefulness of the discussion on the item before us.

During the time which has elapsed since last year's discussion of the subject of international security, many a world problem has remained unresolved, yet some encouraging signs of further easing of international tensions have emerged and they should be encouraged.

As the Declaration of States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty of last month rightly stipulates:

"There is no reasonable alternative to the policy of détente which is indispensable to all States in equal measure, irrespective of their social systems. This is the firm and invariable guiding consideration of States parties to the Warsaw Treaty in all their actions on the international forum."

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International détente exerts its vital influence upon the situation of all States without exception. It is so because it creates favourable conditions for the best protection of national interests, for all-round development and a successful struggle to bring about truly equitable political and economic international relations. Hence, all States should be interested in turning détente into a permanent factor of the international situation. This can, and, in fact, should be achieved through further promotion of relaxation of international tensions, by extending these positive tendencies to the military sphere and to all regions of the world.

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That is why, last September, Poland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stefan Olszowski, in the General Assembly, stressed so emphatically that the progress of détente in the world is not automatic. It does not depend on objective conditions alone, but on specific political actions by the forces which are jointly shaping international relations.

The efforts of the Government of the Polish People's Republic are meant to contribute, according to its possibilities, precisely towards that end. Strengthening of international peace and security has always been one of the priority objectives of the foreign policy of People's Poland. This was again firmly reflected in the resolution of the Seventh Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party held a year ago this month:

"The Congress reaffirms the unshaken resolve and determination of the Polish United Workers' Party and the Polish People's Republic to continue, together with the fraternal parties and the fraternal socialist States, the persistent struggle for peace, security, international co-operation and social progress" (A/31/49, page 5).

It was once more reaffirmed by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, Edward Gierak, at the Committee's Plenary Meeting, a few days ago.

The paramount requirement for the effective strengthening of international security is universal respect by all Governments for the principle of peaceful co-operation between States and renunciation of the from-a-positions-of-strength policy.

That is why all concrete proposals aimed at eliminating the use or threat of use of force in international relations, curbing the arms race and bringing about general and complete disarmament are of such importance. All these timely objectives were broadly reflected in this Committee's debates on the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations and the discussions, completed last Friday, of 18 comprehensive agenda items relating to disarmament.

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In this context the Polish delegation wishes to stress the pertinent need for the full implementation of the existing international agreements, for taking effective practical steps aimed at averting the threat of nuclear war, and for making the world secure for peace, in the interest of all peoples.

Poland is pursuing active efforts in this direction. The basic course of Poland's foreign policy has been in accord with the world's dominating tendency towards consolidation of détente in relations between States, strengthening peace and building up a structure of international security. Together with the other socialist States we contributed our own share to the successful conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the results of which have been the common achievement of all its participants.

Last year, in the debate on this item in the First Committee, the Polish delegation presented its views on the importance of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, rightly termed the great charter of European peace. Today, I should like to expound our position on the progress in the implementation of the Final Act which as such represents one indivisible entity.

In compliance with the resolution of the Diet (Sejm) of the Polish People's Republic of 23 October 1975, the Government of Poland has worked out a comprehensive programme of activities aimed towards full materialization of the principles and provisions of the CSCE on both a multilateral plane as well as in our bilateral relations. After the Helsinki Conference Poland has intensified its efforts in Europe and elsewhere to develop further the network of its relations with other States.

We have thus expanded our political dialogue and broad co-operation in the economic and other fields with States possessing different socio-political systems.

The number of Poland's international contacts, exchange of high-level visits and mutually beneficial agreements, offer clear testimony that the CSCE has created a favourable climate and appropriate conditions for further expansion of all-round relations among States.

In Europe, the constructive nature of the effects of the Helsinki Conference has been proved not only by our own experience, but also by the results of many bilateral meetings held among political leaders and statesmen, as well as by

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bilateral or multilateral talks conducted among representatives of States -- signatories of the Final Act of the CSCE. A very useful practice of political consultations and contacts has been created, one which no doubt contributes to the strengthening of mutual understanding among States. In conformity with the relevant confidence-building provisions of the Final Act, preliminary notification is given by countries concerned on significant military exercises and observers are being invited to some of them.

The CSCE has also influenced disarmament negotiations, especially in Vienna. Poland is taking active part in the Vienna talks on mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Along with Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and the USSR, we submitted new initiatives in the course of last year aimed at overcoming the difficulties which had impeded progress in the negotiations and delayed achievement of a constructive agreement. States members of the Warsaw Treaty attach great importance to these talks and are prepared to make further efforts towards working out an agreement acceptable to all. Such an agreement is possible if all the participants of the talks will act in keeping with the principle of undiminished security of neither party, and due account is taken of the interests of all European States.

The Polish Government is fully cognizant of the importance of all efforts undertaken in Europe in the interest of that continent's security, with which the security of Poland is also linked. But at the same time, we see those efforts as precedent-setting within the framework of all actions aimed at the consolidation of security on a global scale.

Having in mind practical steps leading to the strengthening of détente and broadly conceived relations among States, the Government of Poland lends its full support to such constructive multilateral initiatives as the Soviet proposal to hold three all-European congresses to discuss co-operation in the field of energy, transportation and protection of the environment in Europe. Last month, Poland presented its detailed views on subjects which should be discussed at such congresses to the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

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Also, on the broader scene, we have maintained our consistent support to all constructive international initiatives aimed at the lessening of the threat of war and creating conditions facilitating progress in general and complete disarmament. Our views on these matters have been presented in this Committee during recent debates on the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations and on disarmament. Our statements and voting record in the First Committee show that Poland favours the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations and, along with other socialist States, we advocate putting an end to the nuclear arms race, effecting reduction and liquidation of nuclear weapons, and a complete and general ban on nuclear weapon tests. We declare ourselves in favour of strengthening the safeguards system of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and giving access to all States, without discrimination, to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under international control, according to the rules of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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In the common efforts to strengthen international security, decisive action is necessary to increase confidence among nations, undertake practical steps to reduce the possibility of military confrontation and avert the threat of a nuclear war.

This is exactly the course of action proposed by the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of States members of the Warsaw Treaty held last month in Bucharest.

Member States of the Warsaw Treaty, desiring to prevent the possibility of war and consolidate international détente, and also to strengthen security and mutual co-operation in Europe, have proposed to the signatories of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe the conclusion of a treaty pledging not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against one another, be it on land, at sea, in the air or in outer space.

This important proposal stems from the positive significance of the results of the Conference in Helsinki and the commitments undertaken by its participants under the Final Act as well as from the encouraging evaluation of the implementation of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.

There is every ground now, and even need, to accelerate further all efforts to strengthen peace in Europe and throughout the world. That is why the States of the socialist community have come forward with the proposal which, if given practical effect, would greatly enhance the cause of peace and strengthening of international security, not in Europe alone but also in the world at large.

We believe that in the circumstances of an improved political climate, it is feasible and indeed necessary to improve bilateral relations on a broader scale and move towards the solution of pending international problems.

Poland especially welcomes the results of the fifth non-aligned summit conference, held last August in Colombo, and the increasing role of the non-aligned countries in international life.

On our part, we are determined to cement further our co-operation with these countries in the political and economic fields, and particularly in combating such evils of mankind as imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism finally to achieve peace and economic and social progress for all developing countries.

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We are, therefore, gratified that the Political Declaration of the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries reaffirmed again that the trend is favourable to international co-operation in accordance with the principle of peaceful coexistence. This shows the reciprocal desire on the part of both the socialist as well as the non-aligned countries further to consolidate and develop their mutual co-operation.

The process of the further strengthening of international security is organically linked with the need to eliminate seedbeds of conflict. Through the joint efforts of the socialist States, the non-aligned and other peace-loving countries, it has proved possible to prevent local conflicts from turning into major armed confrontations. But we have to be aware that flashpoints still exist in the world of today. If we fail to eliminate them, peace and international security will be in constant danger.

The Middle East still remains a highly dangerous area of international peace. Lasting peace can only be achieved there through a comprehensive settlement, based on relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. This makes the need for an immediate resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, a task as urgent as ever.

In the case of Cyprus we have always held the view that due regard should be given to the rights and interests of the two communities. Any settlement must be based upon unconditional respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus.

By the same token, Poland supports the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aimed at a peaceful settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula.

Likewise, we have welcomed the victory of the Vietnamese people and of the peoples of Laos and Kampuchea. It can only be regretted that for artificial reasons the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has not yet become a full-fledged member of the United Nations.

Poland has always identified its freedom with that of other peoples. This is why we are continuing our support for the struggle of the peoples still under the domination of imperialism and colonialism, racism and apartheid. We give

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resolute support to the just struggle of the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, whose rights have been confirmed in numerous United Nations resolutions concerning the liquidation of colonialism and racism.

The Polish Government has also repeatedly stressed the need for reshaping international economic relations. The economic mechanisms following World War II have failed to take due account of the legitimate interests of the developing countries; they have also failed to take due note of the emergence of the socialist States. Recent years alone have demonstrated all the inadequacies which brought about the failure of those mechanisms.

Poland intends to continue its active participation in the efforts undertaken within the United Nations with a view to establishing a new and just world economic order. The elaboration of the principles of such an order within the framework of our Organization should fully reflect the legitimate interests of all countries. They ought to provide for a truly equal treatment of all States in economic co-operation, stimulate socio-economic progress and guarantee the exercise of sovereign rights over their respective economic activities including those in the field of natural resources.

During the disarmament debate we expressed our anxiety over the continuation of the arms race and still limited progress in disarmament. Today I would like to emphasize once again that unless we succeed in arresting the arms race and in stopping the adverse processes in international relations, there will be little progress in strengthening international security.

Now, the most important duty of all Governments, we submit, is to put into effect the existing initiatives in the field of disarmament. Progress in that field is the indispensable basis for the strengthening of international security.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.