



FIRST COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Monday, 26 October 1987
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman, **Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)**

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 66

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The First Committee is holding this special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week, which began on 24 October 1987. In so doing, we are continuing a tradition established by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament.

For me it is both a great honour and a great pleasure to welcome to the First Committee Mr. Peter Florin, President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. Allow me to express, on behalf of the First Committee and on my own behalf, our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-second session. This is a tribute to your consummate diplomatic skill and to the great effectiveness with which you are fulfilling the high responsibilities entrusted to you.

I also have the distinct honour and pleasure to welcome to the First Committee Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations. On behalf of the First Committee and on my own behalf, I congratulate you on the effectiveness and devotion which you have shown in carrying out your difficult task of promoting peace and understanding among all peoples. Your unshakable commitment to the noblest ideals are a guarantee of a promising future for the United Nations.

Disarmament Week offers us today an additional opportunity to share our thoughts on the state of the world in which we are living, but also and above all to consider the future in the light of the progress under way in the area of concern to us.

From the very first session of the General Assembly the subject of disarmament has been the object of constant attention by the United Nations, which was created "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . .".

(The Chairman)

In the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament the anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations was proclaimed as the day beginning the annual Disarmament Week, which is intended to promote disarmament year after year.

This year the improvement in the East-West dialogue which we have been following daily is of great help to us in this task. While last year the Reykjavik meeting did not immediately and tangibly respond to the aspirations of many of us, the spirit of Reykjavik did survive and it allowed for an evolution of stunning rapidity in the area of negotiations on disarmament between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

In this Organization the entire international community has constantly expressed its satisfaction at this development and its hope that it would finally see the conclusion of a treaty on the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range nuclear weapons, which will, we hope, constitute a first step along the way to bringing about a safer world, free from all nuclear weapons and from all weapons in general.

Moreover, the international community was not satisfied to play the role of a spectator, merely taking note of the results of the discussions and meetings between the two major Powers. The General Assembly did take action in this area and, in this context, last Wednesday, 21 October, on the eve of the meeting in Moscow between the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz and the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shevardnadze, the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the First Committee, adopted without a vote a decision encouraging the United States and the Soviet Union to conclude a treaty on intermediate and shorter-range nuclear weapons, and also to continue equally intense efforts to bring about the achievement of an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic offensive weapons.

(The Chairman)

The International community **thus** showed **its** interest in contributing to the unfolding of a bilateral negotiating **process** the positive effects of which could not help but strengthen the multilateral disarmament process **in** all areas and to do so both at the **world** level and at the **regional and subregional** levels.

(The Chairman)

I would recall that any undertaking to strengthen world peace and security cannot help but contribute to making the United Nations more effective in fulfilling its fundamental ideals. In this context I express my deep desire to see equivalent progress achieved in the areas of conventional, chemical and space weapons.

We know that the road to general and complete disarmament under effective international control is long and difficult. None the less, recent developments in various areas encourage us to continue down it and to contribute positively to preparations for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The constructive results of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, followed by the encouraging conclusions reached at the Vienna follow-up meeting to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe; the rapid and remarkable progress achieved this year in Geneva in negotiations on a convention for the complete banning of all chemical weapons; the success of multilateralism, marked by the unanimous adoption of the Final Document of the recent International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development; and the prospect of seeing the United States and the Soviet Union soon begin global, stage-by-stage negotiations on the cessation of nuclear testing - all these factors, and yet others, allow us to be full of hope at this time, as we commemorate Disarmament Week.

I now have the pleasure of calling upon the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Florin, to address the First Committee.

Mr. FLORIN (President of the General Assembly) (interpretation from Russian) : It is a great honour and pleasure to address the First Committee at its special meeting on the occasion of the observance of Disarmament Week. During my long-standing association with the work of the United Nations I have always taken a particular interest in the important work of the First Committee in the vital

(The President of the
General Assembly)

fields of disarmament and international security, • o it is a matter of course for me to be with the Committee on this occasion.

The first special session devoted to disarmament in 1979 in recommending the holding of Disarmament Week, did • o with the aim of making the world public aware of the increasing dangers of war and of generating widespread public understanding and support for the objectives of arms limitation and disarmament. Today, the original aims of commemorating Disarmament Week are more timely and relevant than ever because of the growing urgency of genuine disarmament measures for political, economic, • ological and other reasons, and because the survival of mankind as a whole is at stake.

Among the many issues that need to be resolved through unrelenting efforts by all States, the issues of arms limitation and disarmament and the maintenance and preservation of peace and security are of particular importance. These issues continue to be of utmost concern to the international community. The need to end the arms race in both the conventional and the nuclear fields and to prevent its expansion into outer space is recognized as a global problem. The United Nations, and in particular this Committee, has striven vigorously to find constructive solutions to these pressing issues. The responsibilities of and the challenges to the First Committee are growing, and I am confident that under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, the Committee will exhaust all possibilities to achieve understanding and agreement.

On the occasion of Disarmament Week we should rededicate ourselves to our common responsibility and commitment to enhance the unique role of the United Nations in preserving peace, ending the arms race and promoting disarmament. In doing so, we shall help to create conditions for lasting and comprehensive international security in accordance with the objectives of the Charter and the realities of the nuclear and space age.

(The President of the
General Assembly)

In the past weeks we have been witnessing significant developments, in a turn for the better in the international situation, which will certainly have a decisive impact on the process of arms limitation and disarmament. The agreement reached, in principle, between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to conclude a treaty on the global elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles opens up a clear possibility of achieving measures for nuclear disarmament. It would involve for the first time the destruction of nuclear weapons and would thus move towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The importance of that agreement has been strongly underlined during the general debate. For this reason the decision adopted by the General Assembly on 21 October upon the recommendation of the First Committee was a very timely one. It reflected the aspirations of 811 peoples. The conclusion of a treaty on the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles at the present moment would indeed be a signal to the world. The negotiations which have just taken place in Moscow should give reason for hope.

It is desirable that the positive news that has reached us from Moscow help intensify the work of the First Committee. I have to note, however, that the danger of the extension of the arms race to outer space has not yet decreased; it is still, like the sword of Damocles, hanging over the heads of mankind. It is to be hoped that we can improve the situation through bilateral and multilateral efforts.

The road to agreement on arms limitation and disarmament certainly is not like a four-lane highway; it rather appears to be a narrow and winding mountain path. But when one reaches the mountain-top, the view should be beautiful.

The announcement by the Soviet Union and the United States of their intention to begin full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing is another most encouraging development which could have a considerable impact on the process in the multilateral field, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament.

(The President of the
General Assembly)

I share the view that progress in the bilateral negotiation@ will have a subetantial influence on the achievement of progress in multilateral negotiations. Considerable hopes are also placed in the increasingly realistic prospects of the conclusion of a convention on the world-wide prohibition of chemic.1 weapons. At the same time efforts should be increased to bring about progress in other fields, in particular in the field of conventional disarmament and the implementation of regional disarmament measurer.

Much has been gained in recent montne and the momentum should not be lost. Only a few weeks ago the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development successfully concluded its work. It emphasized the need to put an end to the arms race, to proceed to disarmament and thus to release additional resources for development purposes. What is necessary now is a sincere effort by all countries toward8 the implementation of the Final Document adopted at that Conference, in particular the programme of action.

The successful outcome of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Euildiny Measures and Disarmament last year showed clearly tne possibility of achieving agreements if the necessary political will prevails. Great hopes are now being placed in the continuation of this process.

The issue of verification is gaining more and more importance. It is well understood that appropriate verification mechanisms will have to be established to ensure the full implementation of disarmament agreements. Recent developments and recent proposals show that we should go forward in that direction, not backwards, in order to eetablieh an atmophere of confidence and trust. I fully endorse the idea expressed by the Secretary-General in his report to the forty-econd session of the General Assembly regarding the signif icant contribution that the United Nations could make in this area. What the world needs is more confidence, wider disarmamont and strengthened common security.

(The President of the
General Assembly)

This Committee will again this year have to tackle a large number of important issues during the coming weeks. In this connection, I call upon the Committee to sustain this improved atmosphere, so conducive to disarmament, and to step up its efforts to attain the important objectives of disarmament.

At this session the General Assembly will have, among many issues, to decide upon the date for the convening in 1988 of a third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is to be hoped that such a special session would reinforce the conclusions of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. In so doing it would strengthen its position as a universal forum for a comprehensive dialogue on the basic issues of our time and be able to reach agreement on the means necessary for achieving real progress in arms limitation and disarmament.

I thank the Committee for its attention and wish it all the best in its important work.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call upon the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from French): The observance of Disarmament Week is as always an occasion for reflection and rededication - reflection on the current state of disarmament negotiations and rededication of our efforts towards the attainment of meaningful arms limitation and disarmament measures.

While the proclamation of Disarmament Week was a product of the successful first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the years that followed saw little or no progress in that field. Despite the terrible danger for humanity posed by nuclear weapons and the harmful effects of ever-growing military expenditures, no reduction either in arms or in their lethal quality could be agreed upon. During those years, therefore, it was in an atmosphere of deep

(The Secretary-General)

concern and frustration on the part of an international community faced with an apparent impasse in disarmament negotiations that Disarmament Week was often observed.

This year developments in the various bilateral and multilateral forums for disarmament negotiations provide a more positive backdrop for the observance of Disarmament Week. At the bilateral level the first disarmament agreement which actually eliminates certain classes of nuclear weapons from the arsenals of the two major Powers is likely to be signed soon. While an agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States on intermediate-range and shorter-range weapons would reduce the world's nuclear arsenals by only a small percentage, the political significance of such a move should not be underestimated. Such a step could pave the way for additional disarmament measures in other important fields. In this context I am particularly gratified to see the bilateral announcement of full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing, and also that efforts are going forward to achieve a treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons.

At the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, as the negotiating parties have resolutely applied themselves to eliminating the remaining obstacles, hope has grown for the conclusion of a treaty banning the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Notwithstanding the complex work that remains to be done, there is solid reason to expect agreement in the foreseeable future.

The positive results of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development also represent a significant achievement for multilateralism, made possible by a pragmatic approach.

(The Secretary-General)

The growing recognition that both overarmement and underdevelopment constitute threats to international peace and security is a compelling factor for the vigorous pursuit of undiminished security at lower levels of armament. Resources now utilized for arms could then be put to better use in addressing economic, social, and humanitarian needs and thus contribute to overall security.

These developments, taken together, reflect a more constructive approach towards disarmament. Despite these reassuring signs, however, we must still realistically recognize and seek to overcome the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation) the daily tragedy of the armed conflicts taking place in various parts of the world) and the unabated growth of conventional weapons arsenals, with the enormous squandering of badly needed resources that this entails. These remain a burden on the present and a threat to the future peace and security of the world.

Bilateral disarmament measures coupled with multilateral agreements can reinforce the Process of strengthening international peace and security. An agreement between the two major Powers on intermediate-range and shorter-range weapons would do much to improve the broader outlook for arms limitation and disarmament negotiations. Progress towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and the prevention of an arms race in outer space would be especially significant and valuable achievements in enhancing international confidence. The forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to be held shortly can, after adequate preparation, constitute a catalyst for further progress and provide an opportunity to review the work of the United Nations in the disarmament field. Thus, I am convinced that verification is one area in which the United Nations could make a significant contribution in the future.

The international community has the task of seizing the momentum created by the various positive developments of the past year and carrying it forward. The

(The Secretary-General)

absence of polemics and the greater pragmatism which have been evident in arms control deliberations in the recent past must continue to inspire and guide our actions. Substantial disarmament agreements are needed in the interest of development, security and peace. There are opportunities for new ideas and innovative approaches to be applied. For our words and intentions to retain their credibility, the time to act is now.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French) : I call on the representative of Madagascar, Mr. Rakotondramboa, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of African States.

Mr. RAKOTONDRA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French) : Sir, it is a great honour to express to you, on behalf of the Group of African States as a whole, and of my delegation in particular, great pleasure at seeing you preside over the work of the First Committee at the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

In nominating you to this delicate post, the African group was well aware of your capacity for work, your intelligence, your experience and your skill as a seasoned diplomat. By unanimously endorsing the choice of the Group to which you belong, the international community has paid high tribute to you and to your great country, Zaire. The African Group reiterates its confidence in you and assures you of its full support. We would ask the other members of the Bureau to accept our heartfelt congratulations and wish to assure them also of our fullest co-operation.

By proclaiming as "Disarmament Week" the week beginning 24 October, the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the tenth special session of the General Assembly could not better emphasize the central role and fundamental responsibility of our Organization in the field of disarmament.

The United Nations remains, in fact, the appropriate forum to undertake joint efforts aimed at building a world free of war, a better world. And in that

(Mt. Hakotondamboa, Madagascar)

context, the negotiations on disarmament are vital for all the peoples of the world, which have the right to participate on an equal footing in those negotiations when they affect their national security and an inherent right to contribute to the success of such negotiations. Bilateral and multilateral negotiations on disarmament should benefit from each other's progress and should complement each other rather than one hindering or precluding the other.

To inform, to educate and to ensure that the public at large understands better and gives greater support to the aims of the United Nations in the field of disarmament are the three objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign.

In that context, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, in its resolution AHG/Res.164 (XXIII), adopted at its twenty-third regular session in Addis Ababa, from 27 to 29 July 1987, requested all States members of the Organization of African Unity to pay special attention to the question of disarmament and to ensure that it is better understood by the public through school and other educational programmes undertaken in the context of the World Disarmament Campaign.

In that same resolution, the leaders of the African continent expressed their gratitude to the United Nations, in particular its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, for its invaluable co-operation in the elaboration of the final version of the Lomé declaration and programme of action.

Inaugurated barely one year ago, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, with headquarters in Lomé, Togo, is extremely active. However, its financial difficulties jeopardize the proper fulfilment of its mandate and prompt us to extend to the international community the appeal of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity for the provision of substantial assistance.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

In this connection, we express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for convening this afternoon the fifth United Nations Pledging Conference for the world Disarmament Campaign, and we thank past and future contributors for their generosity.

The year 1986 was commemorated as the International Year of Peace. An International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was held in New York from 24 August to 11 September 1987. Its outcome was the adoption of a final document by consensus. Next year, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is scheduled to be held. This shows the vitality of multilateralism in the dynamics of peace.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

The threats created by the policy of oppression, aggression and destabilization pursued by the racist régime of Pretoria, added to its capability, maintain a climate of permanent insecurity over the African continent and compel the front-line States to divert to defence the very limited resources they need to promote their economic and social development.

Faced with the major problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, drought, external debt and the slow pace of economic growth, Africa stands speechless at the knowledge that nearly \$1,000 billion are annually spent throughout the world for military purposes, whereas more than 800 million human beings are living below the poverty threshold.

May the future prove the Secretary-General of the United Nations correct when, in his address on 15 September 1987, on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, he stated:

“There are hopeful signs that indicate a growing awareness that fewer weapons and greater development may mean greater security. People are perhaps beginning to understand that there can be neither stability nor balance in a world where abundance coexists with hunger, where freedom and dignity coexist with poverty.”

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French) : The Secretary-General has duties that oblige him to leave the Committee room at this time. Before he goes, I should like to express to him, on behalf of the First Committee, our thanks and gratitude for having taken the time to be present at this opening ceremony in observance of Disarmament Week.

The next speaker is the Permanent Representative of Turkey, Ambassador Iltis Turkmen, Chairman of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. TURKMEN (Turkey) : It is an honour for me to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Asian States on the occasion of Disarmament

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

Week. Today, as we begin the commemoration, it is fitting to recall that at the first special session of the general Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, the Assembly decided to designate the week of 24 October, the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, as Disarmament week. Its dual purpose is, on the one hand, to create an atmosphere conducive to progress towards disarmament and, on the other hand, to increase public awareness of the dangers of the arms race.

For the past 9 years that Disarmament Week has been observed, the arms race in both the nuclear and the conventional fields has continued unabated. However, we should note that world public opinion is conscious, more than ever before, of the dangers inherent in the arms race and its adverse consequences on the economic and social progress of all nations, and that its calls for disarmament are growing louder and more unified. The countries of the Asian Group value highly the efforts of the United Nations for disarmament, including those made in the First Committee, at the two special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva and in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We also believe that Disarmament Week is serving a useful purpose by providing international public opinion with a forum where it can make itself felt in the disarmament efforts within the United Nations framework.

This year the observance of Disarmament Week is taking place against a background of some encouraging developments in the field of disarmament. The finalisation of an agreement which is under way between the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles will be a particularly welcome development. This accord will mark for the first time in nuclear history the elimination of an entire category of nuclear weapons, rather than setting ceilings for them, through the global application of the so-called double-zero option. It will contribute positively to the stability and security of Europe, as well as of Asia. Nevertheless, the elimination of the

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles will reduce only a small portion of the nuclear weapons of the two countries. Therefore we earnestly hope that the conclusion of the treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces will be followed by substantial reductions in the category of strategic nuclear arms.

The convening of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was, in many respects, a turning point in our long and determined efforts to deal with all aspects of that relationship. The Final Document adopted by consensus by the Conference will provide the international community with a viable framework for achieving our dual objective of disarmament and development in the years to come.

We have also witnessed progress in some other fields during the course of 1987. We note with satisfaction the progress made by the Conference on Disarmament on a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. We should also note in this connection the long-awaited announcement by the Soviet Union and the United States that they were resuming their bilateral negotiations on a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

The developments of the past 9 years have confirmed and highlighted the validity of the principles and goals set forth in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As we are now in the process of preparing for the third special session devoted to disarmament, it is high time for all of us to reflect on those principles and on how to further our common cause for general and complete disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French) : I now call upon the Permanent Representative of Hungary, Mr. Ferenc Esztergalyos, who will make a statement as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. SZTERGAIYOS (Hungary): Today, as we observe Disarmament Week, I have the honour and pleasure of speaking as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

The observance of Disarmament Week affords all of us the opportunity to reflect on the most basic aspirations of mankind, which are peace, disarmament and security, and on how the international community has striven to achieve those goals.

Now we are pleased to see that new attitudes have emerged, bringing new life to the long-sterile disarmament scene. For the first time there appears to be a good prospect for a net reduction in nuclear weapons. The agreement in principle between the USSR and the United States on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles can encourage progress in other negotiations, including those on nuclear and space weapons, and can give impetus to other disarmament negotiations now in progress. Moreover, it can be seen as constituting a first step towards the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. The same ideas were also expressed by the Secretary-General in his annual report.

An agreement between the two great Powers on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive weapons and on strict compliance with the 1978 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems would be major steps towards strengthening strategic stability. Here too, the Reykjavik summit meeting last year laid the groundwork for bringing closer together positions that still differ on several issues. The range of problems that continue to impede the successful conclusion of the multilateral negotiations that have been going on for over 10 years on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons is also being reduced, and that work should be concluded as soon as possible.

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

In our view, nothing could justify efforts to downgrade the role of multilateral disarmament forums; on the contrary, the United Nations and all other multilateral negotiating bodies - be they of a global or a regional character - still have considerable possibilities yet to be explored and a great potential yet to be mobilized for implementing the noble objectives and principles of the Charter. To avert and eliminate the danger of a nuclear catastrophe, to halt the arms race and adopt effective disarmament measures are tasks for nations and for the international community, tasks in the evolution of which the United Nations and its agencies should take more initiative and play a more active and pioneering role. We must all, jointly, seek ways and means of bringing about a solution. An excellent opportunity for this will be provided by the forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That special session should map the way to security through disarmament.

Events of recent years have reinforced the conclusion that national and international security can no longer be separated and that neither can be preserved in a lauding way to the detriment of, or in subordination to, the other. Given the realities of our age, no one country can rely exclusively on military-technical means for guaranteeing its security. This can be achieved only through political means and joint actions. The creation of a new structure of security policies presupposes the active participation of all States, whatever their size, political and social system. In our day and age it is impossible to remove the threats to common security except by comprehensive management of the various problems, whether they emerge separately or together in the political, military, economic, ecological, human rights and humanitarian fields.

Last year the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/86 D, in the operative part of which it, inter alia, requested Governments to continue to inform the Secretary-General of activities undertaken to promote the objectives of Disarmament

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

Week. I am pleased to report that the countries of the Group of Eastern European States are in compliance with the aforementioned resolution. We are also satisfied that Disarmament Week is widely observed at United Nations Headquarters and elsewhere in the world by the organisations of the United Nations system. The Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Public Information have endeavoured to involve as many segments of the public as possible in the observance of Disarmament Week. The network of United Nations Information Centres plays an essential role in stimulating and supporting activities undertaken by concerned constituencies around the world.

The events of Disarmament Week organized in the countries for which I speak have contributed effectively to acquainting broad segments of public opinion with questions of international peace and security and of disarmament, to a fuller development of related activities by the general public, and to a manifestation of mass support for increasing the role of the United Nations in this field.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French) : I call on Mr. Lloydstone Jacobs, the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of the Group of Latin American States.

Mr. JACOBS (Antigua and Barbuda) : I wish to express the sentiments of the Latin American and Caribbean Group in recognizing your distinct qualifications, Sir, as Chairman of the First Committee. I am sure that your country, Zaire, is proud of your contribution towards making this world in which we live a more peaceful and equitable place.

Latin America and the Caribbean wish to place on record the fact that we welcome the progress in the Geneva talks on reducing intermediate-range nuclear weapons, but we stress that for us the progress made at Geneva is only a very small first step.

(Mr. Jaoba, Antigua and Barbuda)

As representatives are aware, in Latin America and the Caribbean a number of our countries has declared our region a zone free of nuclear arms. We feel a great deal safer because of the absence of nuclear weapons in our territory and we consider it unlikely that others will feel the need to employ such weapons against us. We have no hesitation in commending our Treaty for the consideration of other regions of the world as a possible model.

At the Geneva talks the agreement to reduce intermediate-range nuclear weapons must not be regarded as a major success. The participants in those talks should view their progress thus far merely as a means of opening the door to agreement on significant reductions in strategic nuclear arms in order to prevent an arms race in outer space and to terminate it on Earth.

I need not reiterate here the fears of the world, but I would be remiss if I did not draw attention to the increasing concern of large numbers of people in Europe and North America for their continued survival in a context of nuclear missiles pointed at the heart of their continent. This fear is engendered by the two super-Powers and their allies, which operate in an environment in which the buildup of nuclear weapons is seen as a deterrent to nuclear war. The argument appears to be that as long as neither side has a superiority in weapons neither side will initiate a conflict. But the argument is based more on calculated risk than on compelling logic, and the danger with taking risk is that they are subject to failure. It is such failure that is feared by those who protest the continued buildup of nuclear arms.

The only sure deterrent to a nuclear war is the abandonment of nuclear weapons. While we cannot hope for this, we can at least urge the cessation of their production and a massive reduction in their deployment.

We in Latin America and the Caribbean also welcome the recent agreement between the United States of America and the Soviet Union to enter into

(Mr. Jaobr, Antigua and Barbuda)

negotiations with a view to agreeing on effective verification measures which would make it possible to ratify the 1974 Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapons Tests and the 1976 Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes. We particularly welcome their declared intention to negotiate further Limitations on nuclear testing.

If no other message goes home to the United States of America and the Soviet Union from this week of deliberations on disarmament, they should hear that the world wishes to see an immediate halt to the testing of nuclear weapons and the achievement of a negotiated and verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty.

(Mr. Jacobs, Antigua and Barbuda)

Most of the world stands on the sidelines of the negotiations on disarmament. We are spectators rather than actors in the drama of discussions. We are spectators because, happily, we do not possess nuclear weapons. But our non-possession of such weapons should not dispossess us of a voice in their limitation. For the use of nuclear weapons will be no less catastrophic for us than for their possessors. Nuclear war cannot be limited; nor can their consequences bypass those who were not participants in their promotion.

Thus, while we in Latin America and the Caribbean sit at no table in Geneva and have no say in the negotiations on reducing nuclear weapons and halting their testing, we urge those who do to take account of our deep concern that the world be made safe and secure through effective and verifiable disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French) : I now call on the representative of Italy, Mr. Aldo Pugliese, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy) : I am honoured to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group Of Western European and Other States on the occasion of the observance of Disarmament Week. It is a particular privilege for me to do so at a time when encouraging signs are emerging from the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of nuclear arms and from their understanding to seek progress on a number of other major disarmament issues.

The last 12 months have been marked by significant achievements at various levels in the field of arms control and disarmament. The positive outcome of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe has stimulated the dialogue on security and disarmament between East and West. Developments such as the acceleration of the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union and the current discussion in Vienna on a mandate for talks

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

on conventional stability in the whole of Europe, as well as the progress achieved in the negotiations on a global ban on chemical weapons, further strengthen the positive trends characterizing the present international situation. It is to be hoped that these developments will rapidly lead to balanced and verifiable disarmament agreements and thus contribute to strengthening international peace and security all over the world.

The observance of Disarmament Week is a major opportunity for all of us to consider effective ways to enhance the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and in support of ongoing disarmament negotiations. It is also an opportunity to increase public awareness of these problems, with the purpose of creating an atmosphere that could promote concrete progress in existing negotiations.

The States members of the Group of Western European and Other States remain committed to looking constructively at all possibilities for promoting progress towards disarmament agreements in conditions that strengthen security and stability and therefore contribute to safeguarding international peace.

It is in that spirit that today we participate in the observance of Disarmament Week.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French) : The First Committee has thus come to the end of this meeting devoted to the observance of Disarmament Week.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish once again to thank the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for honouring and enhancing by their presence this first meeting opening the observance of Disarmament Week.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.