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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 7 May 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. SUTRESNA

(Indonesia)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 143rd meeting, the first of the 1990 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

It is a privilege for me to extend to representatives a warm welcome to the 1990 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. May I express my sincere appreciation to all members for the honour conferred upon me and my country through my election as Chairman of this important forum, and for the confidence reposed in me.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express gratitude for the exemplary manner in which Ambassador Baqbeni Adeito Nzengeva presided over the Commission's deliberations during its last session.

As I undertake my duties for the current session, I wish to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, whose personal initiatives and contributions in the cause of disarmament have set a singular example. It is gratifying for me to know also that I can count on the expertise and experience of the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-chung, and his dedicated staff.

We are particularly fortunate to have in our midst the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Komatina, with whom many of us have had the privilege of being associated both at Geneva and at New York.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is meeting on the threshold of a new decade and in a world caught up in fundamental transition and transformation. The global political climate is rapidly changing towards new patterns of international relationships, foreshadowing new opportunities and challenges in our common search

(The Chairman)

for a more secure and peaceful world. The continuing trend towards rapprochement and mutual accommodation among the major Powers has led to the easing of international tensions. On the continent of Europe especially, political and even physical barriers have crumbled in the face of the dramatic changes that have taken place in Eastern and Central Europe.

(The Chairman)

These historic developments have instilled a new sense of hope and give promise of accelerating all ongoing disarmament negotiations, and these in turn should spur our own efforts and enhance the prospects of our specific contributions to the disarmament process.

At this stage I deem it essential to reflect on the role and significance of our Commission, in order to enable us to focus better on the task ahead of us. As members may recall, since its reconstitution more than a decade ago, the Commission has played a notable role in giving an impetus to negotiations on disarmament. By adopting a selective agenda, by engaging in in-depth deliberations and by elaborating specific recommendations to the General Assembly, the Commission has made unique contributions to the process of multilateral disarmament endeavours. In my view, the most tangible contribution its members can make is in marshalling political will and exerting untiring efforts in the adoption of specific consensus recommendations on the various disarmament issues on our agenda, thereby bringing this annual session of the Disarmament Commission to an optimum result.

The General Assembly has mandated us to consider, and to make specific recommendations on, a number of agenda items. These include both relatively new and perennial ones. At this juncture in our common efforts to limit and reduce armaments, I should like to express my hope that we shall finalize the consideration of all the agenda items, with the exception of item 10, concerning objective information on military matters. As we are aware, some of these have remained for too long before the Commission. We should therefore ensure that our work is item-specific and geared towards the formulation of recommendations. That is what the General Assembly expects from our endeavours.

The key to progress is to free ourselves from the over-complicated and controversial draft texts of earlier sessions and to search for a fresh approach.

(The Chairman)

This calls for the adoption of policies and strategies that are broadly acceptable to the majority of members. Indeed, a fundamental reorientation has become necessary in our thinking on disarmament in its multifaceted aspects. Scientific and technological developments have brought out one indisputable reality: the interdependence of States and the interrelated nature of global issues. Not only has the world shrunk to a global village, but the multidimensional nature of peace, security and economic well-being has become self-evident. As we enter the 1990s, these realities should be reflected in our policies towards disarmament. Only then is it possible to develop new thinking.

In concluding, I wish to state that I shall endeavour to perform the tasks of the chairmanship of the Commission to the best of my ability. In undertaking my duties, I am gratified to know that I can count on the co-operation and support of all members.

It is now my privilege to wish all representatives a productive and result-oriented session, marked by harmony, co-operation and a sense of common destiny, which the subject matter of our endeavours demands.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, at our organizational session last year we tentatively approved the provisional agenda before the Commission.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.26/Rev.1.

The agenda was adopted.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States): I wish to state with regard to item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament", that the position of the United States is, I believe, well known and that there is no need to repeat it.

The CHAIRMAN: I take note of the position of the United States on agenda item 7.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to come to the question of organization of work for the session. However, before we consider the specific matters relating to the organization of work, I wish to take up an important subject concerning the Disarmament Commission. As members of the Commission may recall, during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly a series of consultations were held under the chairmanship of Ambassador Baqbeni Adeito Nzengeya with regard to the reform measures for the Commission's work. The consultations ended successfully with an agreed text on the reform measures, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was contained in the annex of resolution 44/119 C, adopted by consensus. Since then, a large number of delegations have proposed that the text of the annex should be formally adopted by the Commission.

Members of the Commission will recall that paragraph 118 (b) of the Final Document of the tenth special session states:

"The Disarmament Commission shall function under the rules of procedure relating to the committees of the General Assembly with such modifications as the Commission may deem necessary and shall make every effort to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on substantive issues be adopted by consensus." (resolution A/S-10/2, para. 118 (b))

In this regard, the adoption of the annex of resolution 44/119 C by the Commission is in conformity with the provisions of the Final Document. The text of the annex is now reproduced in document A/CN.10/137, which has been distributed.

If I hear no comments, I shall take it that the Disarmament Commission adopts the text contained in document A/CN.10/137.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: For the purpose of record, I shall now read out the adopted text, contained in document A/CN.10/137, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission":

"1. Mandate

"The Disarmament Commission reaffirms its mandate contained in paragraph 118 (a) of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament (hereinafter referred to as the "Final Document").

"2. Decision-making method

"The decision-making method described in paragraph 118 (b) of the Final Document should be maintained.

"3. Agenda items

"1. The Disarmament Commission could have a general agenda and a working agenda for each substantive session. The working agenda should be agreed at the Commission's organizational session.

"2. For each session, the working agenda should be limited to a maximum of four substantive items for in-depth consideration.

"3. From 1991, no subject should, in principle, be maintained on the working agenda for more than three consecutive years. At each session, the Commission should review, for possible reconsideration, any subject that had been suspended.

"4. If no agreement can be reached on a specific agenda item, the report of the Commission should contain a joint statement or a Chairman's summary of the proceedings to reflect views or positions of different delegations, particularly in the case of those agenda items to be suspended for a period of time.

(The Chairman)

"5. At its 1990 session, the Commission should make every effort to conclude all its agenda items, except the new substantive items.

"4. Subsidiary bodies

"1. At each annual session, the Disarmament Commission should not establish more than four subsidiary bodies for its substantive agenda items. The allocation of the agenda items to the four subsidiary bodies and the appointment of chairmen for these subsidiary bodies should be decided at the organizational session of the Commission, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

"2. The chairmanship of subsidiary bodies should, in principle, be rotated each year; however, at its organizational session, the Commission may decide to extend the term of office of any chairman in the interest of effective work and the speedy conclusion of an item.

"5. Duration of the substantive session

"1. The Disarmament Commission should meet for a period not exceeding four weeks for in-depth deliberations on substantive items.

"2. The duration of each substantive session, in accordance with the established practice, should be flexible and could be shortened. In order to utilize efficiently the conference-servicing resources available, the Commission should decide the duration of each substantive session at its organizational session.

"6. Organization of work of the session

"1. Each session may have a general debate on agenda items in the plenary meetings, not exceeding three days' duration.

"2. Except in the case of new items, there should be no general exchange of views in the subsidiary bodies. The general exchange of views on new items should not exceed two meetings.

(The Chairman)

"3. Subsidiary bodies could begin their work in parallel with the general exchange of views in the plenary meetings.

"4. No more than two official meetings should be held simultaneously. This restriction, however, would not apply to informal consultations.

"5. The meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies should be provided with full meetings services.

"6. All the officers of the Commission should be elected at its organizational session.

"7. Consultations

"The Chairman of the Disarmament Commission should conduct consultations on matters relating to the work of the Commission, in particular on its working agenda, year round, especially during the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly."

The adoption of the above-mentioned ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission, I trust, could be a milestone for the future work of the Commission and the revitalization of its entrusted role in the field of disarmament, as provided in the Final Document. It demonstrated the concerted efforts of all delegations for the effective functioning of the Commission.

Now I should like to turn to the specific organization of work for the current session. In this connection members of the Commission may recall that we have conducted a series of open-ended consultations during the past few months both in Geneva and in New York. During the course of consultations we reached agreements on a number of issues regarding the organization of work for the session. I wish now to put the following arrangements to the Commission for consideration and adoption.

(The Chairman)

First, on the general exchange of views, in view of the limited time available to the Commission, it was the general understanding that there should be a limited general exchange of views, allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. Four meetings have been allocated to such purposes, as indicated in the general programme of work which has been circulated. I should like to urge those delegations wishing to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the Secretariat as soon as possible. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today. In addition, 25 copies of statements should be provided to the Secretariat.

Is there any comment on this question?

~~If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed~~
in this manner.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: On the establishment of subsidiary bodies, the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session requested the Disarmament Commission to consider various questions in its resolutions 44/113 B, 44/116 Q, 44/116 M, 44/116 C, 44/119 H and 44/116 E, regarding respectively the nuclear capability of South Africa, item 5; review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, item 6; naval armaments and disarmament, item 7; conventional disarmament, item 8; declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, item 9; and objective information on military matters, item 10. Furthermore, with regard to the question concerning various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, as contained in agenda item 4 (a) and (b), the Commission at its last session agreed to continue consideration of this item.

(The Chairman)

As a result of consultations, the following subsidiary bodies of the Commission could be established to deal with various substantive agenda items, with the flexibility of allocating time to groups during the course of their deliberations.

First, the Committee of the Whole would in its initial stage deal with item 4 (a) and (b), regarding the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, and a contact group would be set up on this subject. The Committee would also consider the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as appropriate, as well as other business deemed necessary. Secondly, Working Group I would deal with item 5, on the nuclear capability of South Africa. Thirdly, Working Group II would deal with item 6, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Fourthly, Working Group III would deal with item 8, regarding the question of conventional disarmament. Fifthly, Working Group IV would deal with item 9, regarding the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

I come now to the question of the equitable distribution of chairmanships among subsidiary bodies. As to the chairmanships of those subsidiary bodies, I should like to announce that, in accordance with the results of our meetings of consultation, the following arrangements could be made, taking into account equitable geographical distribution of the chairmanships of the subsidiary bodies.

Working Group I, on item 5, regarding South Africa's nuclear capability, would be chaired by the representative of Nepal, Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana. Working Group II, on item 6, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, would be chaired by the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan. Working Group III, on item 8, regarding conventional disarmament, would be chaired by the representative of Denmark, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin. Working Group IV, on item 9, regarding the Third

(The Chairman)

Disarmament Decade, would be chaired by the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Emeka Ayo Azikiwe.

Regarding the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole, I understand that, as was the case in previous years, the Chairman of the Commission would take that chairmanship. In this connection, I wish to designate a friend of the Chairman, Mr. Sergei Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, to be Chairman of the Contact Group to deal with item 4 (a) and (b).

I wish to point out that in the course of consultations there has been general agreement on such arrangements. Is there any comment on those arrangements? If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission so decides.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to extend my warm congratulations to the Chairmen of the various subsidiary bodies on their appointments.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): It gives me great pleasure to extend the warmest felicitations of my delegation to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. Having had the privilege of working closely with you, we are well acquainted with your knowledge, ability and diplomatic skill. We look forward to working under your guidance for the success of our work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

As you have pointed out, the current session is being held at a particularly propitious stage in international relations. With the steady movement towards relationships of understanding and co-operation between the major Powers and their alliances, the prospects for arms control and disarmament have never been better. We earnestly hope that the deliberations in this forum will serve to quicken the pace of meaningful multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

Allow me to express my deep appreciation to the members of the Disarmament Commission for entrusting me with the task of co-ordinating the deliberations of

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Working Group I, on the nuclear capability of South Africa. It is a matter of great importance, with a direct bearing on the implementation of the Declaration of the Organization of African Unity on the Denuclearization of Africa. The Disarmament Commission is expected to complete its deliberations on this important item this year.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my appreciation to my colleague, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, under whose guidance the Working Group has covered a lot of ground.

I look forward to being guided by my colleagues in the Working Group and to benefiting from the close co-operation and expertise of the Secretariat in carrying out this task.

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to draw the attention of members to two items that I have not addressed, namely, agenda item 7, entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament", and agenda item 10, entitled "Objective information on military matters". Members may recall that extensive and intensive consultations on these two items have been carried out, as I stated earlier, both at Geneva and at New York. To date, we have practically reached agreement on all their aspects except on one aspect of item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament". During the 1990 substantive session, as in the year 1989, substantive and open-ended consultations will be held under the responsibility of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission regarding item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament". The Chairman of the Commission will designate a friend of the Chairman to co-ordinate the consultations. In this case, I intend to designate the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti. I wish to repeat that the consultations to be held on item 7 will continue to be under the responsibility of the Chairman of the Commission. Consultations will have to be continued regarding the placement in the Commission's report of the outcome of the deliberations on the subject. That will appear as an annex in the report of the Commission.

I sincerely hope that in the days ahead, perhaps during this week, we can finalize the consultations on this last aspect of the item "Naval armaments and disarmament", which concerns placing the results of the deliberations of the consultations as an annex in the report of the Commission. I take it that the Commission agrees to proceed in this manner on agenda item 7.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Concerning agenda item 10, entitled "Objective information on military matters", consultations to date have resulted in complete agreement on all aspects of how we should deal with this item. For the benefit of those members

(The Chairman)

who have not been familiar with this matter, I shall read out all those aspects regarding item 10, as follows:

"A consultation group will be established for item 10 regarding objective information on military matters during the 1990 substantive session, with the understanding that objective information on military matters, as well as all other substantive issues on the working agenda, should be given in-depth consideration during the 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

"The time-frame for the consideration of item 10 should be in the first half of the 1990 substantive session, which means that the Group should not hold any meetings after Wednesday, 16 May. It is further understood that consideration of item 10 will be at the preliminary stage during the 1990 substantive session, not engaging in any negotiation on a text of the subject."

The candidate for Chairman of the Consultation Group is to be the representative of Austria, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner.

If there is no objection with respect to that procedure on item 10, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now consider the conclusion of substantive agenda items of the current session. Members will note that paragraph 3 (5) of the adopted Annex of resolution 44/119 C states:

"At its 1990 session, the Commission should make every effort to conclude all its agenda items, except the new substantive items."

At the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission held on 1 and 7 December 1989, as well as at the open-ended meetings of consultations since then, there has been a general understanding that the Commission would conclude all its

(The Chairman)

outstanding substantive agenda items during the 1990 session, except the new one, namely, "Objective information on military matters".

In view of the foregoing, it is understood that the Commission should conclude its agenda items with specific recommendations by consensus if possible. However, paragraph 3 (4) of the Annex states:

"If no agreement can be reached on a specific agenda item, the report of the Commission should contain a joint statement or a Chairman's summary of the proceedings to reflect views or positions of different delegations, particularly in the case of those agenda items to be suspended for a period of time."

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: With respect to the allocation of time and resources for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility for practical purposes will be observed, and the Secretariat will issue a weekly timetable on the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body through consultations with the Chairmen of the various groups. However, a general programme of work, as contained in document A/CN.10/1990/CRP.1, for the entire session has been agreed and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment if necessary. It is understood that no more than two simultaneous formal meetings of subsidiary bodies will be held, except the informal consultations. As was pointed out, it was also understood that no meeting will be allocated to the consultation group on item 10 after 16 May.

(The Chairman)

Regarding documentation for the current session, I wish to point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, namely, document A/44/42, and documents A/CN.10/134 and A/CN.10/135, will serve as the basic documents for consideration. These documents contain a number of major proposals on the subjects to be considered this year. Previous reports of the Commission will, of course, also be useful for reference. In addition, document A/CN.10/138 has been issued. It contains a preliminary report of the Secretary-General on the subject of the nuclear capability of South Africa - agenda item 5 - pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/113 B. The Commission will also have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on various agenda items. I should like to urge those delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for further processing.

On the status of non-governmental organizations, as was the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are welcome to participate in the work of the Disarmament Commission as observers in the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole.

Having settled the organization of work, I should now like to call on those delegations that wish to make general statements on the various subjects contained in the agenda at this stage.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): First of all let me congratulate you, Ambassador Sutresna, and congratulate ourselves, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 1990 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. The Swedish delegation looks forward to working under such an experienced, wise and knowledgeable Chairman.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

I should also like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Bagbeni for the skilful manner in which he conducted the 1989 session of the Disarmament Commission. Thanks not least to his personal efforts, it was possible to make progress on some of the issues on last year's agenda. He has also been instrumental in the consultations concerning the future role of the Disarmament Commission. This is also a subject which I should like to touch upon briefly before addressing the substantive issues before us.

Over 10 years have passed since the Disarmament Commission was re-established as a result of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament. It is therefore appropriate to ask whether the Commission has lived up to the expectations of a decade ago. Have we made the best use of this forum? A primary aim of the Disarmament Commission is to be a body for deliberations on international disarmament matters which are not necessarily ripe for formal negotiations. The Commission's deliberations could thereby serve as a preparatory stage before the commencement of formal negotiations.

The Disarmament Commission has undoubtedly proved useful in this respect. It has thus been possible to explore several important areas and reach consensus on these matters, such as basic principles for the international verification of disarmament agreements and fundamental features of confidence-building.

The work performed by the Commission on these issues is in line with the efforts to promote common security. Other important subjects, such as conventional disarmament, or naval armaments and disarmament, have also been thoroughly examined. The discussions have helped clarify the complicated issues involved. Nevertheless, there are reasons for concern.

Multilateral efforts towards disarmament on a global level have had very limited success in the last 10 years, in spite of a more favourable international political climate, which you, Sir, also pointed out in your introduction. After a

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

period of deterioration in the early 1980s, we are now witnessing a distinct improvement in the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United Nations has also been successful in many areas of its activities. It is a matter of concern, however, that so few of these general trends have been reflected in the work of the United Nations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.

According to its mandate, the Disarmament Commission should make every effort to adopt decisions on substantive issues by consensus. It is therefore not surprising that it has proved difficult to make progress on some of the items. Instead, they have remained on the agenda without tangible results. A more efficient approach should be applied. It is essential that the guidelines concerning the functioning of the Disarmament Commission, which are annexed to General Assembly resolution 44/119 C, and which have just been formally adopted, should be implemented. But above all, there must be a greater willingness to seek and contribute to consensus. Otherwise there is a risk that many countries may lose interest in the Commission.

The Disarmament Commission has the potential of being an important forum for a truly international exchange of views on multilateral disarmament. We should all stand to lose if the interest and participation of States in this forum were to diminish. In today's world, it is short-sighted to believe that the views of the international community at large can be ignored. It is necessary to find broad multilateral solutions to security problems and disarmament issues facing us all.

I should now like to turn to some of the substantive issues before us. There is a growing realization of the need for openness and transparency in all military matters. The "open skies" proposal in connection with the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the seminar on

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

military doctrines held at Vienna earlier this year within the framework of the military CSCE negotiations are important examples of the willingness to seek constructive measures in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. My Government is therefore pleased to note that the item "Objective information on military matters" has been introduced on the Commission's agenda for 1990.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

Openness and transparency are prerequisites for successful disarmament measures and for the effective verification of disarmament and arms-limitation agreements. Moreover, openness and transparency may themselves serve significant confidence-building and security-building functions. Thus, the military doctrine seminar in Vienna proved to be a confidence-building measure in itself.

By adopting resolution 44/116 E, the General Assembly expressed the belief that the adoption of confidence-building measures to promote openness and transparency would contribute to the prevention of misperceptions of military capabilities and intentions. The General Assembly also expressed the belief that balanced and objective information on all military matters, in particular from nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, would contribute to the building of confidence among States. Pursuant to that resolution, the five nuclear-weapon States have taken on a responsibility to display openness and transparency in all areas of military activity, regardless of whether the activity takes place on land, in the air or at sea.

There is a need for more openness, transparency and confidence-building with regard to naval nuclear deployments. There is not a priori a greater need for secrecy at sea than on land or in the air. As President Bush stated in the General Assembly in 1989:

"Openness is the enemy of mistrust, and every step towards a more open world is a step towards the new world we seek" (A/44/PV.4, p. 57).

In order to increase openness and transparency concerning the navigation of vessels carrying nuclear and conventional weapons, possibilities for exchange of information and greater openness should be explored concerning all types of military structures and major activities. That includes amphibious operations and joint operations of land, air and naval forces. Experiences gained from the CSCE process may be useful in that context.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

In that connection, the nuclear-weapon States should reconsider their current practice of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board any particular ship at any particular time.

The possibilities of sharing information gathered through observation by satellites or other observation means over international waters should be studied separately, as well as in conjunction with similar projects involving national territories. In that regard, observations drawn from the ongoing United Nations study on verification may provide a useful contribution.

While land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles are in the process of being eliminated, naval disarmament has scarcely begun. That observation is all the more disconcerting because of the flexible and unpredictable deployment of naval forces.

When land and air forces are reduced, the relative significance of conventional and nuclear naval forces increases. As States increasingly rely on agreements on force reductions and associated confidence-building and security-building measures, it is crucial that their overall security situation should be addressed in disarmament negotiations. Naval forces form an integral part of overall military constellations. They must therefore not be excluded from arms limitation and disarmament.

Sea-borne strategic nuclear weapons are the subject of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the short-range and medium-range sea-borne nuclear weapons intended for targets at sea as well as on land are not addressed in current negotiations, nor is the widespread deployment of increasingly sophisticated sea-based nuclear-armed cruise missiles.

Nuclear weapons intended for targets at sea threaten to bring about a lowering of the nuclear threshold and consequently have implications for international security as a whole. The early use of sub-strategic nuclear weapons in a conflict

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

may be encouraged by the theoretical possibility of using such nuclear weapons in a military encounter at sea without causing direct damage to civilian life or property. Against that background, unilateral steps in the direction of reducing the number of tactical nuclear weapons deployed at sea are indeed to be welcomed.

An important step towards the complete denuclearization of naval forces would be to prohibit all nuclear weapons on all ships and submarines other than those classes specifically designated by agreement. Such a ban should include all sea-launched cruise missiles with nuclear warheads and could be achieved either through negotiations or through reciprocal unilateral measures.

The high seas are part of our common heritage. Hence, all States, regardless of the size of their navies, have a stake in maintaining an up-to-date and credible international régime of principles and rules guiding the conduct of naval units. The legal régime governing the freedom of the high seas has, however, not kept up with the developments of the twentieth century. Current laws of sea warfare date from the turn of the century and need to be modernized. Sweden has therefore presented a proposal for an updated protocol concerning the use of sea-mines. A revised version of that protocol will be circulated during this session of the Commission. Furthermore, the vulnerability of naval units is enhanced by the lack of an explicit and multilaterally accepted code of conduct for naval forces exercising in close proximity at sea. The need for and the potential of such a multilateral code are demonstrated by the successful implementation of several bilateral agreements on the prevention of incidents at sea.

Recent accidents with nuclear-powered submarines have underlined the increasing ecological hazards to the marine environment connected with the use of sea-borne reactors. The proposal concerning international guidelines for sea-borne nuclear reactors put forth by Iceland during last year's General Assembly session therefore merits close attention.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

By posing a threat to the marine environment, nuclear-powered vessels present particular problems. Several reported accidents with nuclear-propelled submarines underline the need to extend the existing régime concerning the notification of nuclear accidents. Such an extension should include accidents with nuclear-powered military vessels in international waters, even when those accidents do not have transboundary effects. The question of liability for such accidents should also be studied. The ideas regarding naval armaments and disarmament that I have outlined today are contained in a working paper submitted during this session by Finland, Indonesia and Sweden.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) stands out as the most widely endorsed agreement in the field of arms limitation and disarmament, with more than 140 States Parties. It is the corner-stone of the international non-proliferation régime. Although the NPT has been largely successful, the fact that not all States have acceded to it is a cause of concern.

The non-proliferation régime is encountering some disquieting trends. There is proliferation of nuclear-capable missiles, and there are reports that some States may be acquiring nuclear-weapon capabilities. It is clear, therefore, that the world community must make great efforts to ensure the continued viability of the non-proliferation régime.

The fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will take place in a few months' time, is crucial for the future of the NPT and the whole non-proliferation régime. The third and last meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the fourth Review Conference concluded its work successfully last week. That augurs well for the Review Conference.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

With regard to the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself after 1995, when a decision is to be taken concerning its extension, two factors are of particular importance in ensuring that the authority of the Treaty is not eroded. First, all States must accede to the Treaty; secondly, all obligations laid down in the Treaty must be fulfilled.

The obvious way for nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitment under article VI of the Treaty would be to make drastic reductions in their arsenals of nuclear weapons and to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

More than a quarter of a century has gone by since the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty, committed themselves to seeking a stop to all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. They reaffirmed that commitment 20 years ago in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Five years ago the United States and the Soviet Union announced the beginning of bilateral negotiations that should lead "to the complete elimination of nuclear arms everywhere".

If the agreed objective is the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons, it is hard to see any need for continued testing. A tangible measure towards ending all nuclear-weapon tests would be to start negotiations immediately on a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) should be regarded as a major achievement for quantitative nuclear-arms reductions. Symbolically and politically it has had great impact. The elaborate verification provisions contained in the Treaty are unprecedented. At present the United States and the Soviet Union are in the process of negotiating considerable cuts in their strategic nuclear arsenals, expecting an agreement to emerge in the course of this year. That is a significant and welcome development.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

But, considering that the nuclear arsenals are larger today than in 1970, when the Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force, the process of nuclear disarmament must go further.

In this connection, let me express my country's satisfaction at the plans announced recently by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) regarding short-range nuclear weapons in Europe. The Swedish Government welcomes that step as a further contribution towards nuclear reductions in Europe and enhanced security for all European States.

In the field of conventional disarmament and arms limitation the developments at the military negotiations in Vienna give rise to optimism. There are good prospects for an agreement on conventional-force reductions in Europe aiming at a balance of conventional forces at lower levels. Promising work has also been carried out in the negotiations to enhance and develop the confidence-building and security-building measures that were agreed upon at the Stockholm Conference.

In closing, let me say that the ongoing fundamental transformation of the world political order is by far the most profound and comprehensive change since the Second World War. It entails new and unprecedented opportunities for disarmament and arms-limitation measures. Let us not waste those opportunities.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.