DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 20 May 1961, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:        Mr. MICH-AELSEN (Denmark)

- Statement by the Chairman
- General exchange of views

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81-61112
The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: At yesterday's meeting we adopted the agenda amid a debate that might have given the impression that the Chair took a decision before the conclusion of discussions. I wish to recall that, although a decision was taken, I put myself in the hands of the Commission, seeking any comments on some questions raised. In the absence of any suggestions to the contrary, I adjourned the meeting.

In that connexion, I should like to assure members of the Commission that they have my full co-operation. As I said in my opening statement, I am at the disposal of delegations to consult with them in private and in all meetings. My main concern, and I am certain it is the concern of all delegations, is to ensure that our work proceeds as smoothly as possible in an atmosphere of co-operation and understanding.

Having said that, and with the consent of the Commission, I should like to turn to the business of today and begin the general exchange of views.
GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): The session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place at a time when the uninterrupted accumulation of weapons and the race to produce new types of increasingly more destructive weapons, primarily nuclear weapons, have reached unprecedented levels. At the same time the tremendous waste of material and human resources implied by the arms race is an increasingly unbearable burden for all the peoples of the world. The importance of this session derives also from the fact that it falls within the framework of United Nations activities in preparation for the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

During the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the second special session which has just ended, many delegations expressed the concern of their countries at the situation with regard to weapons and drew attention, in all its immensity, to the alarming scale of the arms race. The essential need, to our mind, to which all other efforts should be subordinated in the present circumstances, is urgently to undertake effective negotiations to reduce the arms race and to achieve disarmament, in the first instance in the nuclear field; to promote a sound policy of contacts and negotiations to increase mutual trust; and to find better ways to achieve détente, disarmament and the strengthening of international co-operation and peace.
In this context it is more than ever necessary for the Commission to play its full part as a deliberative body of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and for it to contribute effectively to the initiation of a real disarmament process.

The Commission's agenda covers very important issues concerning the many essential aspects of the arms race and disarmament, consideration of which is of necessity in the foreground of general attention because they affect the fundamental interests of all States.

Of course, our initial remarks are made in the framework of the general exchange of views, special attention being paid to the first item on the agenda - that concerning the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament - consideration of which the Commission is resuming this year.

Any consideration of the pattern of the arms race must reveal the serious dangers caused by the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the qualitative developments taking place in the field and what they mean for international peace and security and the very existence of humanity. We continue to maintain that any action decided on in the field of disarmament must constantly maintain the priority of the nuclear field in efforts to halt the arms race. It is deeply disquieting to see that, despite the demand for real measures to promote nuclear disarmament expressed in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, no progress has been noted in the reduction or indeed limitation of nuclear stockpiles, while the arms race continues at an alarming rate.

It is true that in Geneva the Disarmament Committee managed to have a comprehensive discussion on nuclear disarmament, but it must be openly recognized that we are still far from any real negotiating process to arrive at disarmament agreements, which is the very reason for the existence of that multilateral body.

In that field, more than in any other aspect of disarmament, the central problem, to which all efforts should be turned, is the commencement and continuance of effective negotiations. Romania continues to support any proposal aimed at attaining that objective.
We express the hope that the consideration of this agenda item will help to bring forth ideas on ways in which immediate action can be taken in order to give impetus to negotiations aimed at eliminating the risk of nuclear war and promoting nuclear disarmament.

We are also dealing with the problem of arriving at a general approach to the study covering all aspects of conventional armaments and disarmament in that field. We have noted the document submitted by the Danish delegation in this regard, and we will give it close attention.

Constantly emphasizing the priority of nuclear disarmament among all the disarmament measures - an idea clearly reflected in the Romanian proposals on this point - we feel that such a study must be conceived of as a measure to create the necessary circumstances for the commencement of real disarmament negotiations. In order to meet that objective the study must justly and correctly correlate conventional and nuclear disarmament measures.

My delegation would like to concentrate on a problem that has for several years engaged my country's attention and that we have dealt with in a number of proposals, as, indeed, have other States: the freezing and reduction of military budgets. For the third year running, this matter of freezing and reducing military budgets appears on the Commission's agenda as one of its essential concerns. We cannot sufficiently stress the great urgency of this problem and the tragic and disquieting dimensions of the escalation of military expenditures.

Looked at from the military, political or economic points of view, military expenditures - particularly those of the most heavily armed States - are a sombre reflection of a situation that is characterized by increased general insecurity whose cost in the end none can support.

At the same time, if we wish to halt and reverse this arms race, it must be done as part of a process in which all military expenditures move in the same direction.

Discussions at recent sessions of the General Assembly have shown the urgent need for measures to freeze and reduce military budgets and the positive influence that that could have on the economic situation throughout the world, increasing trust among States and improving the international political climate.
The terms of reference of the Disarmament Commission at this session were clearly set forth by the General Assembly pursuant to a recommendation of the Commission itself. By General Assembly resolution 35/142 A, adopted by consensus, the Assembly called on the Commission to continue considering the question entitled "Reduction of military budgets" and, in particular, to define and clarify those principles that should govern the further action of States in the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, keeping in mind the possibility of embodying such principles in a suitable document at an appropriate stage.

To my delegation this is a very specific activity that has been well determined and defined within the framework of efforts to promote genuine negotiations and to arrive at agreements on the freezing and reduction of military budgets.

As is emphasized in the response to the question of the reduction of military budgets, as contained in document A/CN.10/23, in the opinion of the Romanian Government the drafting of generally acceptable principles to reduce military budgets would help to create a common framework for action that would further the convergence of different ways of viewing this issue, lead to growing trust and confidence and to the creation and strengthening of political will on the part of States to get down to negotiating agreements in this field.

In pursuing their initiative of previous years, the delegations of Romania and Sweden have seen fit to submit to the Commission a joint working paper (A/CN.10/26), giving a number of ideas to assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate of identifying and elaborating the principles which could guide the efforts of States in freezing and reducing military expenditures. Because of its specific substance and its general tone, it seems to us that the joint paper makes sufficiently clear the ideas that the sponsors wish to put before the Disarmament Commission.

First of all, it is a matter of setting forth the basic requirement for joint efforts by States in the field of military expenditures, the aim of which must be clearly defined - that is, to arrive at international agreements to freeze and reduce military budgets. The proposals and
initiatives of States and the negotiations and discussions to be held in the future on this matter must consequently be geared to the attainment of that objective.

Proceeding from the idea that real security must be based not on increased military expenditures or the escalating arms race resulting therefrom but their reduction, it seems particularly important to us that measures to freeze and reduce military budgets should lead to the attainment of a balance of forces internationally or regionally at ever lower levels of troops and weapons.
In that context, it is also necessary for measures to freeze and reduce military budgets to be implemented in a balanced and equitable way, in order to guarantee the right of all States to equal and undiminished security.

To be effective, the measures to freeze and reduce military budgets, taken pursuant to bilateral or international agreements, should take practical form in specific actions towards the genuine reduction of the armaments and armed forces of the States parties. Obviously, it is up to each State party to identify the armaments and military activities to be reduced within the limits provided for under the agreements. However, in the opinion of the Romanian delegation, the reductions of military expenditures should first and foremost take the form of reductions in nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

One important idea that the joint working paper reaffirms is that of moderation in the establishment of States' military expenditures, until the agreements on freezing and reducing military budgets have been concluded. That idea, which was expressed in General Assembly resolutions 34/83 P and 35/142 A, adopted by consensus, would have a clearly positive effect not only on progress in the endeavours to reduce military expenditures, but also on improving the international political climate and increasing confidence among States.

Taking into account the real situation concerning armaments, as well as the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States and other heavily armed States and of their decisive role in regard to the proportions and pace of the arms race, the joint Romanian-Swedish document expresses the principle that the freezing and reduction of military budgets should begin with those States. We believe that that idea, which appears in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, meets the true requirements of a process designed to halt and turn back the arms race.

Another central idea, which appears in many important United Nations documents and which is indispensable in view of the economic situation and social problems confronting most of the countries of the world, is the reallocation for economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, of the human and material resources released through these reductions.
As is known, Romania, with other countries, has proposed that one part of the resources released through reductions in military budgets should go towards the financing of economic and social programmes of the countries carrying out the reductions, and the other part should go towards supporting the efforts of the developing countries.

The joint document also sets forth the idea that unilateral measures concerning the freezing and reduction of military expenditures could, on the basis of mutual example, contribute to the establishment of conditions favourable to the negotiation and conclusion of international agreements in this field. The importance that Romania attaches to such unilateral measures is well known; it is reflected in the repeated statement of that principle as well as in the genuine measures to reduce my country's military expenditures, measures that the Romanian Government has been applying for three successive years.

In view of the efforts made within the framework of the United Nations to solve certain technical aspects, including the drawing up of agreed methods to compare military expenditures at different periods of time and between different countries, we have also included the idea that the success of those efforts could facilitate the conclusion of such agreements. In fact, what is involved is efforts complementing the drawing up of principles to govern the reduction of military budgets.

Finally, the document stresses the principle that the United Nations plays a central role in the negotiations on freezing and reducing military expenditures, and that all Member States should co-operate with a view to solving the problems implied by this process.

The co-sponsors of the document also envisage that the adoption of these principles should be regarded as a political commitment to start negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military expenditures as soon as possible. In the opinion of those two countries, such a document could take the form of a declaration.
The principles and ideas that it has been my honour to put before the Commission derive, for the most part, from the Final Document adopted by the first special session devoted to disarmament.

We hope that the proposals that we have just submitted, together with Sweden, will be considered in a constructive way, in an open-minded spirit, taking into account the points of view and suggestions that will be put forward during our discussion, so that generally acceptable solutions and formulas may be found; at the same time, we hope that exclusive approaches and provisos will be avoided, since that could only hamper our carrying out of the mandate entrusted to us by the General Assembly.

My delegation feels that the conditions are ripe for proceeding to the practical consideration and the drafting of principles to govern the reduction of military budgets, in accordance with the Commission's mandate. The establishment of a working group open to all delegations, which should begin its work as soon as possible, seems to us the procedure most appropriate to the fulfilment of our mandate. It is, moreover, in accordance with the Commission's practice: such a group worked during the 1980 session.

In conclusion, we believe that the Commission should spare no effort to carry out the tasks entrusted to it.

We view the present session of the Commission as an integral part of the preparations for the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament; hence, we consider it necessary that the Commission continue its activities in 1982, in order to be able to achieve substantial progress in its work and to submit a report on it to that second special session.

In our opinion, it is logical that, during the preparations preceding the second special session, all the bodies dealing with disarmament problems, and first and foremost the Geneva Committee on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, should increase their efforts and organize their time in the best way. Thus, bearing in mind also the progress that may be recorded at the end of this session and the Commission's role as the deliberative body
of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, we must provide for a substantive session of the Commission in 1982, and make the appropriate recommendations to that effect to the General Assembly.

For its part, the Romanian delegation is prepared to participate actively in this work, side by side with other delegations, in order to ensure the fulfilment of the Commission's mandate.
Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): Sir, speaking for the first time in the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission I take great pleasure in extending to you my sincere congratulations on your election to the Chair. Indeed, it is inspiring to see our deliberations being conducted under your able guidance. Your great gifts of heart and head, together with your professional talents developed during a long diplomatic career, warrant a successful session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are sure that under your dynamic leadership our deliberations in these weeks stand a good chance of contributing in a meaningful way to the cause of disarmament.

I should now like to make a statement on behalf of the ten member States of the European Communities.

With respect to the agenda we should like to restate that it is the understanding of the Ten that this session of the Disarmament Commission should focus its attention mainly on two specific items, namely, the elaboration of the general approach to and the structure and scope of the study on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces; and, on the other hand, the question of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures.

In the view of the Ten, emphasis on these two items stems logically from the 1980 report of the Disarmament Commission, which was subsequently endorsed by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly at its last session.

What do we in fact find in those resolutions?

In operative paragraph 2 of resolution 35/156 A, the General Assembly decided that the Disarmament Commission, at its forthcoming substantive session, should work out the general approach to and the structure and scope of the study on conventional disarmament.

In operative paragraph 3 of resolution 35/142 A, the General Assembly requested

"the Disarmament Commission to continue at its session to be held in 1981 the consideration of the item 'entitled 'Reduction of military budgets', taking into account the provisions of General Assembly resolution 34/83 F, as well as those of the present resolution, and, in particular, to identify
and elaborate on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, keeping in mind the possibility of embodying such principles into a suitable document at an appropriate stage."

It is our view that General Assembly resolutions 35/142 A and 35/142 B are complementary and therefore should be dealt with together in order that they may be implemented in close conjunction.

In the light of this approach, I now wish to make some observations of a general character on those two items. At a later stage of our work, the member States of the European Communities will certainly come back to these subjects in more detail. In this connexion, the Ten feel that an effective and appropriate forum to deal with detailed comments would be provided through the establishment of working groups on agenda items 5 and 6.

I shall start with the item on the elaboration of the guidelines for the study on conventional disarmament. The Ten hope that the overwhelming support shown for General Assembly resolution 35/156 A will enable the Disarmament Commission to reach agreement on its guidelines for the study as called for in this resolution. Indeed, it is gratifying to note that the United Nations has decided to take up the problem of conventional weapons.

All wars in the last 30 years have been waged with conventional weapons. Large numbers of people have lost their lives in these conflicts. Furthermore, there is today an ever increasing arms race in the conventional field, affecting all regions in varying degrees. This situation inspires the greatest anxiety and calls for a determined response from the international community.

In this respect, we consider that a regional approach could make a valuable contribution to progress in the field of conventional disarmament. Initiatives for such regional endeavours should come from the countries directly concerned.

Expenditures for conventional weapons represent a heavy burden on the budgets of most countries. It is necessary to ease the strain that expenditures for conventional weapons place on the budgets of countries so
that resources thus released could become available for such purposes as economic and social development, in particular that of the developing countries. Our discussions under this item should be held with a view to providing the Secretary-General with guidelines for the study, on which he is to submit a progress report to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament. This would also be in full compliance with the spirit and letter of operative paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 35/156 A. Given the need for a comprehensive assessment of and a general approach to the question of conventional disarmament, the guidelines for the experts should indeed be guidelines and not a strait-jacket into which they are forced. The experts must be left sufficient discretion in the carrying out of their task. In this connexion, the Ten support the approach reflected in the working paper circulated by the delegation of Denmark (A/CN.10/25).

In connexion with the agenda item on the question of military budgets, the Ten believe it necessary to explain their general position on the matter.

On many occasions the member States of the European Communities have stressed the importance they attach to the question of military budgets and have consequently supported the ongoing search for ways and means that would allow a comparison of military expenditures of States.

The Ten consider that transparency and comparability of military expenditures, as well as their verifiability, are a necessary prerequisite for agreements in the field of the reduction of military budgets and for a meaningful analysis of other related proposals, such as the freezing of defence expenditures. This viewpoint, we feel, was reflected also in General Assembly resolution 35/142 B.

The Ten therefore attach great importance to the current study conducted by a group of experts which has been requested by the General Assembly to refine further the reporting instrument, to examine and suggest solutions for the question of comparing military expenditures among different States as well as for the problems of verification. Progress in the resolution of the questions of comparability and verification is fundamental to the achievement of substantive results.
It goes without saying that this expert group could only acquit itself of this task, as recommended by the General Assembly, if more States were prepared to make contributions, including States with socio-economic systems different from the majority of those in States which have already used the reporting instrument.

The Ten continue to emphasize the importance of the satisfactory progress of this work for fruitful discussions on the freezing and reduction of military budgets.

Those are the general observations I wished to make at this stage on behalf of the Ten. As the Ten are fully aware of the importance of our work with a view to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament next year, the Ten feel themselves all the more committed to contributing actively and constructively to the successful outcome of our deliberations. In particular, the Ten look forward to contributing to the formulation of the report of the Disarmament Commission to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as required by agenda item 7.

Mr. NORDEN (Sweden): At this stage of our discussion the Swedish delegation would like to offer some comments in relation to item 5 of our agenda, "Reduction of military budgets". In that context I wish to make some introductory remarks concerning the working paper (A/CN.12/26) on principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures. This working paper has been submitted to the Commission jointly by the delegations of Romania and Sweden.

Before dealing with the main subject of this intervention I will briefly touch upon another matter of great importance to my Government, namely the question of conventional disarmament. With the tremendous and senseless build-up of nuclear weapons, it goes without saying that the disarmament negotiations in general must give the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. It can, however, not be disregarded that some four fifths of the world's military expenditures are now being devoted to conventional armaments. One
particularly alarming aspect of the conventional arms build-up is that its pace has been greatly increased by the rapid advancement of military technology. Increasingly sophisticated weapons, apart from raising the risk of armed conflicts, have contributed to the soaring costs of the acquisition of arms. In view of the important impact of conventional armaments on national and international life, we think that this pattern must now be given greater attention than it has received in the past. It is therefore encouraging that an increasing number of countries have expressed their concern over the conventional arms race and that this trend is reflected in the Final Document of the First special session devoted to disarmament.

It is a matter of satisfaction to my delegation that the Disarmament Commission is continuing its consideration of this question. In that context we welcome the Danish working paper (A/CN.12/25) on the study on conventional disarmament which the General Assembly in principle has decided to carry out. We are confident that this working paper will constitute a valuable contribution to the efforts to work out the general approach, structure and scope of this study. We hope that in the course of our discussion on this subject we will have the opportunity to comment in more detail on the working paper submitted by Denmark.

Now turning to the question of military expenditures, I wish to state that the Swedish Government is convinced that it is in the interest of all countries to arrive at agreements that would bring about a halt to further increases in such expenditures. This could be done without affecting the military balance to the detriment of any State. On the contrary, it is our conviction that a halt to further increases in military expenditures would strengthen the security of nations on both global and regional levels. Such reductions, furthermore, could release resources from military purposes to economic and social development for the benefit, in particular, of the developing countries.

There is broad consensus on the general principle that effective measures need to be taken in this field. As a matter of practical national policy, however, most States feel compelled to strengthen their defence capabilities, with the result that ever-increasing economic resources are diverted to
military purposes. In an atmosphere of diminished confidence between nations, decisions taken by States in the interest of national security add up to the collective folly of an accelerated arms race. We are all aware that in the present political situation the prospects are anything but bright for immediate measures to halt and reverse this trend.

We cannot, however, allow ourselves to despair. The immediate task is to look for ways of promoting an atmosphere of greater confidence between States that will be conducive to concrete agreements on arms control and disarmament.

Agreements to freeze and eventually to reduce the military expenditures of all countries, especially those most heavily armed, have been advocated by Sweden for some time. Agreements on such measures would have the advantage of exerting constraints not only on certain, often substitutable, kinds of weapons but on all types of military activities. They would probably also lead to actual reductions in such fields where it is difficult to arrive at restrictions in physical terms.

The question of restricting military expenditure has been discussed for a long time. Some progress has been made towards a solution of the technical problems involved. Since the subject was introduced on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1973, a number of resolutions have been adopted and some studies have been carried out, concerning mainly the problems of defining and reporting military expenditures. The need to reduce military expenditures was furthermore stressed in the Final Document adopted by the first special session devoted to disarmament. The efforts to study further the problems of comparability and verification are being continued at present by a special group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/142 B. Sweden attaches great importance to the outcome of this study, which will be of great value in determining the possibilities of reaching agreements on restrictions of military expenditures.
In parallel to the ongoing efforts to study problems related to comparability and verification, Sweden considers it also important to elaborate and eventually adopt a joint political document by which Member States would express their firm intention to freeze and subsequently to reduce their military expenditures. This expression of intent should be regarded as a strong political commitment to take part in future international agreements and to exercise self-restraint in military expenditures pending the conclusion of such agreements.

In General Assembly resolution 35/142 A, adopted last year, the Disarmament Commission was requested to identify and elaborate on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures, keeping in mind the possibility of embodying such principles in a suitable document at an appropriate stage. In pursuance of that resolution, Romania and Sweden have submitted to the Commission a joint working paper on this subject in document A/CN.10/26. The purpose of this working paper is to contribute to the process of identification and elaboration of the principles which should govern the activities of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures. In this context, I wish to state that my delegation shares the view expressed a moment ago by the representative of Romania that a working group open to all delegations would constitute the most appropriate framework for our discussions on this subject.

We trust that the discussion in the Commission will result in some general agreement on the substantive content of such principles. As to the nature of the document, Sweden and Romania have suggested that it could take the form of a United Nations declaration; but this question of form should be resolved at an appropriate moment with the consent of all States.

It should also be stressed that it is important to exert every effort to arrive at an early agreement on this subject, especially in view of the ever-increasing economic resources wasted on the arms race and the growing threat to mankind that this development constitutes. Concrete
results relating to military expenditures at the forthcoming second special
session devoted to disarmament would no doubt constitute an important
achievement.

A moment ago the representative of Romania gave a fairly detailed
description of the joint Swedish-Romanian working paper, and there is no need
now for me to go into all the issues contained in that document. However, I
should like briefly to touch upon some problems of particular importance to
many States, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report in document A/CN.10/23.
That report contains the replies received in response to his note verbale
of 20 January 1981, pursuant to operative paragraph 4 of General Assembly
resolution 35/142 A. We have noted that in their replies several countries
have referred to the problems of comparability and verification. We share
the view expressed in many of those replies that it will not be possible to
arrive at any substantive agreements concerning freezing or reductions of
military expenditures unless the problem of verification has been settled
in a way satisfactory to all parties.

With regard to the reporting instrument referred to in General Assembly
resolution 35/142 B, it would, properly implemented, help to create the
basis needed for negotiations on reduction of military expenditures.
Without clear definitions and a forthcoming attitude from all parties
concerned, there will be little hope for fruitful negotiations. However,
that is not enough. Without generally accepted procedures for comparing the
military expenditures of different countries and at different periods of time,
it would probably be very difficult to arrive at any long-lasting or
substantial agreements to restrain or reduce such expenditures. That is
why it is so important to deal with the problems of comparability and to
find acceptable and practical solutions to them.

In conclusion, the Swedish Government, which is seriously concerned at
the present international situation, would like to express its firm opinion
that new strong efforts are needed to halt the increase in military expenditures
and to reduce them. Against this background it is suggested that in parallel
to the elaboration of a joint commitment on the problems of comparability and
verification be examined further before the second special session
devoted to disarmament. It is, furthermore, my Government's hope that the working paper that we have presented together with Romania will provide a good basis for our deliberations.

Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (interpretation from Russian): On behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the post of Chairman and to express the hope that under your leadership at this session of the Disarmament Commission there will be constructive dialogue on the items on our agenda. At the same time, I should like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The exacerbation of the international situation has raised the question of the fate of disarmament talks. Unlike those who have been holding up the continuation of these negotiations and have even tried to block them, my Government is of the view that the disarmament talks must be strengthened and that new agreements on the limitation of armaments and disarmament must be concluded as soon as possible. The continuing intensification of the arms race—which can be observed, for example, by looking at the 1978 long-term armaments programme of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the NATO decision of December 1979 on the deployment of new medium-range missiles in Western Europe, and the sharp increase in the military budgets of the United States and other members of NATO—has increased the threat of war and confronted mankind with new dangers, new social problems and a continuing lag in development.

That is not the path towards the solution of any of the problems facing mankind. Therefore what we need to do now is put an end to the arms race, prevent a new wave in the arms race and adopt measures and agreements designed to reduce armaments and bring about disarmament. That is something which is more urgent than ever before. That is the official State policy of the German Democratic Republic, and the Chairman of the State Council of the German Democratic Republic recently described it in the following way:

"If we want to preserve the longest lasting period of peace in Europe in this century, we must in the course of the 1980s make a start on disarmament."
Now, if we want to make a start on disarmament, that must also become
the goal of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Through a discussion
of the fundamental issues of disarmament, the Commission could promote an
awareness of the extreme urgency of disarmament and encourage a search for
ways of solving this problem.

I should like to state the views of my Government on some of the major
items on the agenda. Together with other friendly socialist States, and in
accordance with the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament,
the German Democratic Republic has been considering measures to limit and reduce
nuclear armaments as being particularly urgent. It is precisely nuclear weapons
which at the present time pose the greatest threat to mankind. The danger
has now arisen of the development and introduction of new and dangerous
nuclear-missile systems, and this makes it even harder to arrive at measures
to limit armaments and bring about disarmament itself. Thus the distance
between the heavily armed States and other countries would grow even larger.
The threat to international peace and to all States and peoples would be increased.

The German Democratic Republic welcomes the fact that the Twenty-Sixth
Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stated that the fundamental
task at the present time was the prevention of this kind of development and
made multifaceted concrete proposals designed to prevent such a development.
The German Democratic Republic supports these proposals.

Everyone knows that the parties to the Warsaw Treaty have been most
insistently urging comprehensive nuclear disarmament and effective partial
measures aimed at limiting nuclear weapons and they have repeatedly stressed that
they have no ambitions for military superiority. They ensure their defence
capability: they are preserving a relative military strategic balance; and
there are no justified hopes of eliminating this balance and achieving any
one-sided advantages. All attempts of this kind could only lead to an increase
in the level of this balance and thus to a senseless intensification of the
arms race.
In contradistinction to that, what we propose is a constant lowering of the level of this balance by limiting armaments and bringing about disarmament and, in this regard, by indicating concrete measures designed to bring about nuclear disarmament and also to reduce armed forces and conventional weapons.

I should like to point out that a particular danger derives from the nuclear ambitions of those States which have already been condemned because of violations of the United Nations Charter. A cessation of nuclear co-operation with them and, above all, with the racist régime in South Africa is a requirement of the greatest significance and my Government whole-heartedly supports it.

The German Democratic Republic opposes all theories and practices which make of nuclear weapons a necessity as well as the policy based thereon - the policy of deterrence, as it is called. Can we permit a situation where the basis of peace on earth continues to be the philosophy of the possible destruction of mankind - the idea of brinkmanship, brinkmanship on the edge of an inferno? In the place of so-called nuclear deterrence, what we propose is the dynamic principle of equal security, which makes nuclear disarmament not only a necessity but also a possibility.

An objection is often made to the demand for nuclear disarmament in the following terms: that it allegedly would lead to new dangers and an imbalance in the field of conventional weapons. States parties to the Warsaw Treaty have repeatedly stressed that they pay due attention to agreements on limiting conventional weapons and armed forces. That end is promoted, for example, by resolution 35/152 C, adopted at the last session of the General Assembly on the initiative of the German Democratic Republic. It stresses that "nuclear disarmament is a task of the first and highest priority" and, at the same time, the need for "parallel... measures... to strengthen the security of States" and the dissolution of existing military alliances and the freezing of the level of "armed forces and conventional armaments ... as a first step towards a subsequent reduction."
This position of principle establishes a proper relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons. It stresses that the German Democratic Republic in no way minimizes the great importance of measures in the field of conventional weapons. That also determines its constructive statements at the Vienna negotiations and its support in principle for proposals to broaden confidence-building measures in Europe and other parts of the world.

The seriousness of the position of the socialist countries is demonstrated also by the withdrawal from the territory of the German Democratic Republic of 20,000 Soviet military personnel, 1,000 tanks and a certain amount of other military hardware in 1979 and 1980, which took place upon the decision of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as agreed with my Government.

Since the resumption of its work the Disarmament Commission has also been dealing with the problems of reducing military budgets. In connexion with the conspicuous sharp increase of the military budgets of a certain group of countries, particular importance attaches to measures aimed at preventing the further growth of military budgets of all States, particularly States with the highest military budgets, and providing for their subsequent reduction. The view of the German Democratic Republic on this subject is entirely clear. Major goals in respect of the economy and social policy set recently by our country at the Tenth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which is the governing authority in our State, require a guaranteed peace. The Congress of the Party noted that:

"In our country no one grows rich on armaments; no one has any vested interest in enriching himself at the cost of others' territories and sources of raw materials and in violation of the sovereign rights of other peoples."
But if our State has to increase its efforts to maintain its defence capability, inasmuch as the continued arming of other States forces it to do so, that is something we profoundly regret. International agreements on the freezing and the lowering of military budgets are in keeping with the vital interests of our people and undoubtedly with the interests of all peoples. The German Democratic Republic is therefore ready to take those measures. Meanwhile, in our view it is important to adopt, as soon as possible, immediate and extremely simple measures that would lead to the ending of the arms race. Members of the Commission are aware that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has repeatedly made constructive proposals on this question, providing also for the use of funds freed as a result for the purposes of development. However, since the time those proposals were made military expenditures in the world have more than doubled.

In our view it is useless to try to establish a principle of comparison between systems of accounting and with regard to military budgets since such comparisons will not lead to results that will be accepted by all States and since they will not promote the ending of the arms race. The best accounting of military budgets will not lead to their reduction by a single dollar if there is no will to end the arms race. Now the search for a system of accounting is simply serving the goal of complicating matters and delaying the adoption of measures to reduce military budgets: until the adoption of such measures, this system remains more than doubtful. Nor can we fail to see that this approach is supported precisely by those States that in recent years have made persistent and significant increases in their military budgets.

It would be much simpler to adopt the proposal for the reduction of certain military budgets in absolute or percentage terms, pursuant to agreements. That could be done without any major technical expenditures and it would thus be possible to avoid unnecessary complications.

The fundamental problem in reducing military expenditures is therefore the attitude of States to the arms race in general. The demands and the expectations of world public opinion would be fully satisfied if
measures to that end were swiftly taken and if those burdens on the shoulders of mankind were reduced. The German Democratic Republic is ready to make its own contribution in that regard. The continuation of disarmament talks with a view to the early conclusion of agreements on the limitation of armaments and on disarmament is basically to put an end to the arms race and to continue the process of disarmament. Therefore the implementation of the demand, adopted by consensus in General Assembly resolution 35/152 E, for the continuation, resumption and intensification of negotiations, should be the focus of the attention of the Disarmament Commission in its work. Negotiations and the search for a compromise are important at all stages, particularly, however, in a period when we are witnessing an intensification of the threat of war.

The German Democratic Republic therefore supports the proposals of the Soviet Union with regard to continuing negotiations with the United States on the limitation of strategic weapons, while preserving all those positive results which have so far been achieved. My Government would stress the need for solving the problem of the deployment in Europe of medium-range missiles and it believes that a moratorium and an early resumption of negotiations without preconditions and without a package with regard to other politically controversial issues could make an important contribution.

The German Democratic Republic favours a stepping up of the work of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva and the conclusion, as swiftly as possible, of agreements on all the particularly urgent measures discussed in its framework. Our country is in favour of the consistent implementation of the Programme of Action of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, that is, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The principles of the Final Document of that session, which laid a firm foundation for disarmament negotiations, should be defended against all assaults.

The second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament next year should take decisions which will promote the implementation of the decisions of the first session.
Here I should like to point out that we most vigorously oppose all attempts at a kind of psychological preparation for war. That is something we have come up against, for example, in reading the communiqué of the Foreign Ministers of the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Rome and also in the statements of officials in this country. While calling for moderation on the part of others they are far from being restrained themselves. Quite the contrary: there are some people who believe that by intervening in the internal affairs of the socialist countries they will succeed in forcing them to give way on their sovereign rights.

That is entirely misguided and is something which has been harmful in the past, as the evidence of history is sufficient to indicate. Neither today nor in the future will it be any different.

The German Democratic Republic, of course, has a particular interest in the process of military détente and disarmament in Europe. Together with fraternal States we support the idea of convening a European conference that would discuss specific measures of military détente in Europe, with the subsequent adoption of agreements. It would be in the interests of all members of the United Nations if the Madrid Conference were to give a mandate for the convening of such a conference.

All these and other actions and proposals of the German Democratic Republic demonstrate that the foreign policy of our country is consistently aimed at the implementation of the principle formulated by the Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which I have mentioned. That principle proclaims:

"Unswerving, stubborn struggle for the preservation of peace, for the ending of the arms race, so as to defend and expand political détente and to supplement it primarily by measures of military détente and disarmament and to make it irreversible".
Mr. ADEMIJI (Nigeria): Mr. Chairman, first of all let me extend to you the warmest congratulations of my delegation on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are certain that you will bring the wealth of your experience to bear on the work of our Commission during this current session. I also avail myself of the opportunity to convey to the other members of the Bureau our congratulations and best wishes.

This current session of the Commission is expected to provide an input into the efforts for the successful holding, in 1982, of the United Nations General Assembly's second special session devoted to disarmament. I believe that that contribution should not be seen only in terms of agenda item 7, "Preparation of a report of the Disarmament Commission on its work to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament". Rather, the Commission should live up to paragraph 118 (a) of the Final Document and make effective recommendations on issues which by consensus are considered most urgent in the field of disarmament. That process would be a logical follow-up to the role played by the Commission in formulating the elements on the basis of which the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session proclaimed the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade. It should be recalled that among the goals set for the Decade were halting and reversing the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, and concluding and implementing effective agreements on disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, which would contribute significantly to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

In the light of the emphasis which these goals placed on nuclear disarmament in particular - emphasis which, it should be recalled, derived from the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament - consideration of the Commission's agenda item 4 (a) and (b) should be more than routine. No progress can be said to have been achieved in disarmament until concrete steps in the form of multilaterally negotiated instruments curbing the nuclear arms race have been successfully concluded. The United Nations Disarmament Commission does not negotiate such instruments. Nevertheless it can through appropriate recommendations stimulate negotiations in the appropriate forum.
Even the most cursory consideration of the arms race, especially the nuclear arms race, will reveal that the danger of nuclear war is never greater than it is at the present time. Nuclear arsenals, which have long been considered to have passed the realm of rational explanation, are continuously being increased. Every year witnesses deployment of or a decision to deploy additional nuclear weapons and new delivery systems, provoking further intensification of the nuclear arms race.

Though only a handful of States are involved in this suicidal race, the security of the entire world is being jeopardized. The nuclear arsenals of that handful of States, in particular the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, contain enough explosive capacity to destroy the whole world - not just their adversaries, but the whole world - several times over. Moreover, the danger is increasing that that handful of countries may resort to the use of nuclear weapons to the detriment of the overwhelming majority of States that will have no part in such a decision.

The doctrine of the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons and its indispensability in preserving the security of the nuclear-weapon States has never been convincing. Even less convincing, but certainly more dangerous, is the theory of a survivable and vincible nuclear war. For one thing, the greater the arsenal of each nuclear-weapon State, the less secure it feels; for another, a nuclear war, whether accidentally or deliberately started, will have neither victor nor vanquished.

The conclusions of the comprehensive study of nuclear weapons undertaken by the United Nations Secretary-General with the assistance of experts, which, inter alia, formed the basis for some discussion in the Committee on Disarmament, provide a vivid clarification of the dangerous fallacy on which accumulation of nuclear weapons is based. The wealth of information contained in the study should further encourage us to undertake urgent steps for nuclear disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission should emphasize the need for all States to abandon any doctrine of reliance on nuclear weapons and urge the nuclear-weapon States to co-operate with the non-nuclear-weapon States in the Committee on Disarmament in undertaking concrete negotiations on
nuclear disarmament. The Commission should emphasize the concern of the international community at the lack of progress in negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Commission should call upon the Committee on Disarmament to submit to the second special session, at the latest, a multilaterally negotiated instrument on a comprehensive test ban, an elementary step to open the way towards nuclear disarmament. Reference should be made to the importance of the continuation of the SALT process as well as the commencement of negotiations on so-called theatre nuclear weapons.

The agenda of the Commission also draws attention to aspects of the conventional arms race. We are to elaborate the general approach to the study which in principle the General Assembly agreed to carry out in resolution 35/156 A. While we are therefore, not called upon to discuss the conventional arms race as such, some comments are pertinent in the context of the study and the work which the Commission will do in elaborating the principles and guidelines. First of all it should be said that any work to be undertaken on conventional weapons should not have the effect of diverting or even diluting attention to the ominous danger posed by nuclear weapons and the urgent necessity to give maximum attention to negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Secondly, it should be said that the same handful of countries that threaten the world with destruction by nuclear weapons are the main repositories of conventional weapons, which they manufacture and stockpile not only for self-defence but for use in the discharge of their self-imposed “world-wide responsibilities” and for the ever widening rivalries between their alliances. It follows therefore that the countries responsible for the nuclear arms race are those that are responsible for the conventional arms race, either through direct competition between their opposing alliances or through interference and intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, or by fomenting regional troubles to provide testing-grounds far away from home for the new generation of conventional weapons while at the same time recouping a substantial amount of the investment on research and development as well as production costs through the sale of those arms. Thirdly, a clear
distinction must be made between the conventional arms requirements of non-producing States for the defence of their sovereignty and territorial integrity and acquisition for purposes of dominating, oppressing and threatening neighbouring States.
The relative ease with which oppressive and racist régimes have been able to acquire conventional weapons - and, what is even more alarming, the relative ease with which they have been able to acquire weapons technology - thus creating an imbalance and posing an ever-growing threat to regional peace, should be carefully studied. The enormous resources wasted on the conventional arms race, mainly by the major military Powers and their opposing alliances, should be carefully documented, as well as the effect which this tie-up of resources in the unproductive sector has on their economic development and that of the world at large.

The concept of freezing and reducing military budgets as a collateral measure of disarmament has figured in our debates for quite some time. It represents one of the ways in which the United Nations has shown its concern at the unjustifiable outlay on armaments. The annual expenditure on arms world-wide is at present above $500 billion, at a time when economic difficulties pervade developed and developing countries alike. Thus resources which could have been used to stimulate world economic recovery are being diverted instead into armaments. Though this process in no way enhances the security of the big spenders, it nevertheless jeopardizes the prospects of their quick economic recovery, and militates against the economic growth of the developing countries.

Several proposals have been made concerning the reduction of military budgets. One such proposal is that the permanent members of the Security Council should reduce their military budgets by 10 per cent and utilize part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries. Another proposal concerns the reduction of the military budgets of the major military Powers by a specific amount and the utilization of the resources thereby saved for economic and social development. Proposals for openness in military budgets, for comparability of national military budgets as a pre-condition for and means of confirming that agreements reached are implemented, have also been the subject of action by the United Nations. In the light of the differences in approach, it is understandable that the General Assembly in its resolution 35/142 A requested the Disarmament Commission to identify and
elaborate on the principles which will govern the action of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets. The representatives of Sweden and Romania have made some detailed comments on these matters.

While my delegation accepts the concept of the reduction of military budgets, and in fact while my Government has participated in some of the studies carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, we believe that since 80 per cent of world military expenditure is made by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, any meaningful reduction will have to start with those countries. Pending multilateral agreement, those countries should exercise self-restraint in military expenditure as a means of improving the international climate. Voluntary reduction by mutual example is a helpful measure. However, the desirable objective should be to achieve internationally verifiable agreements on reduction of military budgets and armed forces. It should be emphasized that measures for the reduction of military budgets should not affect the right of States to undiminished security and should not give advantage to some States over others. Thus, undiminished security at lower levels of armaments implies deeper reduction by the more heavily armed at every stage. Finally, my delegation believes that the requirement of verification satisfactory to all parties should be envisaged in keeping with the specific need of each agreement in the area of freezing and reducing military budgets.

The Commission has had on its agenda in the past two years item 9, which draws the Commission's attention to the danger of nuclear collaboration with South Africa. Since the issuance of the analysis contained in the report brought to the attention of the Commission by the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, the threat to the peace and security of Africa posed by the apartheid régime of South Africa has increased. It should be recalled that the first jolt caused to the international community by South Africa's nuclear ambition was in July 1977, when the apartheid régime was caught red handed making preparations for a nuclear-weapon test in the Kalahari desert. Then occurred the event of 22 September 1979, when, it is widely believed, South Africa actually carried out a nuclear-weapon test in the Indian Ocean. On the initiative of the Nigerian delegation, and following the
relevant General Assembly resolution, the Secretary-General, with the help of
some experts, carried out a study on the nuclear capability of South Africa.
Though the report was inconclusive as to the precise origin of the event of
22 September 1979, it nevertheless confirmed South Africa's capability of
manufacturing nuclear weapons. In its resolution 35/146 A, adopted after the
consideration of the Secretary-General's report, the General Assembly
reaffirmed that the nuclear plans of South Africa constitute a very grave
danger to international peace and security, and in particular jeopardize the
security of African States and increase the danger of the proliferation of
nuclear weapons. It also called upon all States, corporations, institutions
and individuals to terminate forthwith any nuclear co-operation with the racist
régime. The General Assembly then requested the Secretary-General to give
maximum publicity to the report on South Africa's plans and capability in the
nuclear field.

My delegation is therefore surprised that this important report of the
Secretary-General, contained in document A/35/402, has not been brought to the
attention of the Disarmament Commission, in keeping with the General Assembly
resolution to which I have just referred. That report is most relevant, not
only in terms of item 9, but also to our discussion of item 4. We hope,
therefore, that the secretariat will take immediate steps to rectify this
omission.

Finally, I should like to call the attention of the Commission to another
revealing study, entitled "Nuclear South Africa", by Mr. Frank Barnaby,
Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The study
is contained in United Nations document A/CONF.107/2, dated 17 April 1981,
issued in connexion with the International Conference on Sanctions against
South Africa, which started in Paris earlier today. My delegation proposes
that copies of that document also be made available to the Disarmament Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: The desire expressed by the representative of Nigeria
that two documents should be made available to the Disarmament Commission will be
passed on to the secretariat, which will, I am sure, act accordingly.
Mr. de SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): Once again the membership of the United Nations meets to deliberate on disarmament questions, in the framework of the machinery set up by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. My delegation welcomes the opportunity afforded to this body to focus on the priority aspects singled out in the Final Document. The relevance of the principles and priorities established in 1978 cannot be overstressed at a time when the international community must, regretfully, once again register a lack of concrete progress in disarmament negotiations, in particular on the priority questions. This is not due, in the view of my delegation, to a lack of determination on the part of the great majority of the Members of the United Nations to achieve progress. We believe, furthermore, that it is our duty continually to call attention to this unfortunate state of affairs, in the hope that those who bear the major responsibility will find it possible to heed the often-repeated call reflected in a multitude of General Assembly resolutions to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race.

The continuation of the nuclear-arms race and the dangerous trends reflected in the strategic doctrines of the two major nuclear-weapon Powers are, as the Brazilian delegation sees it, the dominant concern of the community of nations. It is not by ignoring the question that we will find lasting and equitable solutions. The United Nations must continue to seek practical means to achieve progress in the solution of the problems posed by the endless accumulation of nuclear weapons and by the continuing improvement of their destructive power, because this situation gravely endangers the security of every nation and adds nothing to the security of the very Powers which are responsible for such endangerment.

It is for those reasons that my delegation believes that the deliberative body established at the first special session should continue to devote its efforts and energy to the questions encompassed by item 4 of its agenda. At its 1980 session, the Disarmament Commission reaffirmed the highest priority of measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war and also recommended that urgent action be taken to prevent the further spiralling of the nuclear-arms race. During the spring session of the Committee on Disarmament, in Geneva, the Group of 21 redoubled its effort to achieve a
procedural agreement that would permit the Committee to discharge its negotiating function with regard to the two top priority items on its agenda, namely, the ban on nuclear-weapon testing and the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. As the Brazilian delegation has stressed, the two questions are intimately linked, since the nuclear-test ban is an important first step on the path of nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, the Committee on Disarmament was unable even to take a procedural decision that would have enabled it to start substantive discussions on either item. The Group of 21 then sought to organize, in the framework of the Committee on Disarmament, a series of meetings to discuss concrete aspects of both questions, in the hope that their clarification might prove instrumental in facilitating progress towards a decision. Again those efforts were thwarted, and the only compromise made was on the holding of two informal meetings of the Committee on Disarmament on each of the two items. Naturally, since the Committee met informally, there are no verbatim records of those meetings, and attempts by the Group of 21 to arrange for the informal distribution of statements made were systematically opposed. At the end of the spring session, the Group of 21 issued joint working papers on each of the two items which have been distributed under document symbols CD/180 and CD/181 respectively. In those two documents, important points relating to the nuclear-test ban and to nuclear disarmament are raised and await adequate response from the nuclear-weapon Powers.

My delegation believes that it is in the light of these recent developments that the deliberative body should organize its work for the 1981 session. We have before us at this session a major United Nations study on nuclear weapons which was not completed at the time we met last year in this Commission. The comprehensive study on nuclear weapons, presented by the Secretary-General to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, has not been substantively considered by the First Committee, although that body did recommend to the Assembly a draft resolution which was adopted with some abstentions and became resolution 35/156 F. A thorough discussion of the study by the Disarmament Commission would certainly help to clarify several issues of central importance to the "consideration of various aspects of the arms race", which constitutes the central matter of item 4 of our agenda. The
Disarmament Commission might even go so far as to envisage the establishment of an open-ended working group at this session which might be charged with the task of evaluating, in the light of the comprehensive study on nuclear weapons, ways and means "to expedite negotiations aimed at effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war" and "of elaborating... a general approach to negotiations on nuclear... disarmament", as contained in agenda item 4 (a) and (b).

It would seem, however, that the same delegations which prevented the Committee on Disarmament from arriving at a consensus decision on how to organize its discussion of the two priority items dealing with nuclear weapons have had second thoughts about the usefulness of engaging, in the deliberative body, in a discussion of matters related to nuclear disarmament. Moreover, it would seem that even the procedures for decision-making by consensus which have thus far prevailed in the multilateral debate on disarmament issues are being circumvented so as to preclude even the possibility of the substantive examination of questions that the nuclear-weapon Powers and their allies deem to be too important and too sensitive to be the subject of the attention of the international community. We have been urged in several forums by those delegations not to emphasize the lack of progress in disarmament negotiations, but rather to concentrate on measures which are described as "realistic" or "possible". This is a recurring theme that was most recently developed in some of the replies to the Secretary-General in connexion with the preparation of the second special session devoted to disarmament. But is it asking too much that such a thing as the ever-increasing danger posed by the accumulation of nuclear weapons be seriously discussed within the machinery set up by the United Nations to deal precisely with these questions? Is it beyond the realm of reality to be concerned with and to seek multilateral solutions for a threat that hangs over mankind as a whole? What are the reasons why progress in nuclear disarmament seems always so distant as to be described as "not possible" by those very Powers which possess such armaments and are engaged in making their weapons increasingly deadlier, more accurate and more formidable?
The nuclear-weapon Powers have accepted both the special responsibility and the commitment to work constructively towards measures that will bring progress on questions which, also by consensus, they have solemnly declared as being "of the highest priority". Have they suddenly reversed their order of priorities? Have they forgotten what they agreed to only four years ago at the first special session?

Reality is what should make us aware of the responsibilities incumbent upon all of us in this Commission. Consensus should not be obtained by disregarding both what has been agreed to in the past and what is constructively proposed in order to further progress and bring about a better understanding of the complexity of issues involved in matters of disarmament. It is not by systematically refusing to engage in serious discussion that a deliberative body can adequately discharge the task for which it was created. The measure of the "possible" should be commensurate with the objectives that we have together set out to achieve: but the insistence on excluding from the agreed subject of discussion matters which the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations has repeatedly declared to be of the utmost priority and concern certainly does not enhance the effectiveness with which we can all strive towards the common objective.

The concern of all nations and peoples of the world for their survival in a situation where nuclear confrontation is attaining its highest level ever is not to be lightly dismissed by a play on words in which "disarmament" is systematically degraded to the level of simple measures designed to "control" armaments. Neither is the concern of delegations for meaningful debate on priority items to be lightly dismissed at the stroke of a gavel.

Besides the priority questions reflected in item 4, this Commission is also seized of two other substantive matters. Item 5 deals with the reduction of military budgets. In the view of my delegation, such a question must be dealt with in its proper perspective—that is, in the context of effective measures aimed at general and complete disarmament— and cannot be pursued as a final objective in itself. Furthermore, action taken as a result of concrete agreements on the reduction of military budgets must be taken first of all by the countries responsible for the highest expenditures in weapons. It is
thus incumbent upon the nuclear-weapon Powers and on the most heavily armed nations to take concrete measures to reduce their military budgets and thus contribute to the creation of a favourable climate for the gradual reduction of such expenditures on a more general basis.

Item 6 deals with the proposed study on conventional weapons. According to the conclusions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 1980 session, and to General Assembly resolution 35/156 A, such a study can only be undertaken after the general approach to it and its structure and scope have been defined by this Commission. My delegation understands that this is the task to which the Commission must now devote its efforts, without prejudging the results of its deliberation on the matter. In our view, such general guidelines must take into account, in particular, the existing stockpiles of conventional armaments in the arsenals of the two main military alliances, and especially the continuing effort by those alliances to improve the quality and the destructive power of such weapons. The study should, furthermore, embrace all aspects of the international transfer of armaments, with emphasis on the special arrangements between the major producers and some of the recipients which are parties to such special arrangements.

Attention should also be given to research and development in the most advanced industrial nations in the field of conventional arms. Finally, the study should be directed at investigating possibilities for reallocating resources now devoted to the production and improvement of conventional weapons to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries.

Let me finish these remarks with a general comment on the conduct of our business. My delegation is fully prepared to contribute the best of its efforts to the successful outcome of our work in this Commission, as I stated yesterday. However, in order to achieve meaningful and substantive progress in our endeavours, all delegations must be entitled to state their views, suggestions and specific proposals, and to have them duly considered by the Commission. The United Nations Disarmament Commission is a collective body, whose membership embraces all Member States of the United Nations, and they all have the same right to equal and fair treatment. This is the only
way in which our work can yield satisfactory results. Otherwise, those results will not reflect the balance of the opinions expressed by the representatives of the community of nations. Therefore, decisions must not be rushed or imposed on delegations, but rather should interpret the common denominator of the positions taken by individual delegations. Hence the importance of the practice of consensus, the overlooking of which should not, and must not, become a precedent in our deliberations. I trust that these considerations, based on the principle of fairness in the conduct of multilateral discussions, will be present in our minds and respected for the remainder of our session.

**Mr. Tuan (Liberia):** Sir, speaking for the first time, on behalf of my delegation I wish to extend to you our congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Commission. Please be assured that we shall give you our fullest co-operation to make the Commission's work a resounding success under your able leadership.

It is the position of the Government of Liberia that concerted efforts should be made by the United Nations and the Commission for the reduction of the arms race, thereby saving mankind from the unpleasant threat of war and destruction. It is the position of my delegation that the tremendous military expenditures of the advanced countries could be better used to help the developing countries to continue to improve the living conditions of their people. It is true that every country has a basic need to maintain a certain degree of security, but the security needs of these advanced countries should not be at the expense of peace and mankind. Let the technological advancement of advanced countries be used to improve further the economic and social conditions of mankind - and not to destroy them overnight.
The CHAIRMAN: As there are no speakers for this afternoon, we will have to cancel the afternoon meeting, as we did yesterday.

The Secretariat informs me that the representatives of only three countries have asked to speak at tomorrow morning's meeting and that at present only one delegation is listed for the meeting tomorrow afternoon. I would therefore urge all representatives wishing to take part in this general exchange of views to inscribe their names on the speakers' list.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.