DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 22 May 1981, at 3.15 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MICHAELSEN (Denmark)
later: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

- Organization of work
- General exchange of views (continued)

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81-61144
The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: A meeting of the Bureau has taken place to review the situation in regard to the organization of work.

There was agreement in the Bureau on the necessity for further consultations on this matter. There was also agreement that this matter should be discussed at the conclusion, on Tuesday, of the general exchange of views. A meeting of the Bureau will be convened at that time to consider the situation.

In the meantime, I intend to continue consultations with various countries and groups of countries. At the same time, I appeal to members to conduct similar consultations among themselves.

There was a reluctance to close the list of speakers earlier. However, at this point, with the large number of names of delegations remaining on the list of speakers and with little time left to consider the substantive aspects of our work, I find it necessary to close the list of speakers at 5 o'clock this afternoon.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. PEPEZ NOVOA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): When we look at the number and variety of disarmament activities that the international community has before it this year and will have before it next year, we understand the need to reduce the usual time - that is, four weeks - set aside for the Commission's meetings. This time-limit means that in organizing our work we must bear very much in mind the appropriate priorities on which there is a consensus by the international community.
All the various items on our agenda deal with important matters. None the less, it is quite clear that among all the questions before us for consideration, the aspects relating to the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament stand out. Regardless of how well we remember the historical fact that in all the wars waged thus far by mankind conventional weapons have been used almost exclusively, the qualitatively new dimension opened by nuclear weaponry brings with it the unprecedented prospect that a single conflagration of a few minutes could result not only in the disappearance of enormous quantities of weapons, nuclear and conventional, that have been stockpiled in recent years, not only in the disappearance of the benefits of progress achieved in other areas by the world, but indeed in the end of life itself. The spectre of Hiroshima would pale in comparison with what today's nuclear weapons could achieve in apocalyptic force.
It is an undeniable fact that regional initiatives for conventional disarmament cannot be seriously considered as long as substantial progress has not been made in reducing the terrifying world-range weaponry now concentrated in but a few hands.

All that leads us to the conclusion that we would be well-advised to focus our attention on item 4 of our agenda, particularly if we consider the fact that for the past few months the international community has been viewing with utter consternation the spectacle of one party continuing to put forward initiatives and unilateral measures to reduce troops and weapons while the other has confined itself to words and deeds far removed from the road mankind wishes to take towards complete disarmament but, rather, dangerously close to a warlike atmosphere.

The present session we are holding coincides with the beginning of the United Nations Second Disarmament Decade; however, it also coincides with the greatest threat of war that mankind has faced since the so-called 1962 Cuban missile crisis -- hence the importance of our deliberations. Today as in 1962 it is the aggressive policy of imperialism that is bringing the world to the brink of war. Many factors have contributed to curbing the process of détente and to befogging the international atmosphere in which the disarmament organs, including this Commission, are doing their work. To illustrate that harsh truth -- which we mention so that the efforts of the progressive and peace-loving forces throughout the world can be shown in their true light both within and outside the United Nations -- suffice it to mention postponement of the ratification of the SALT II agreements, a postponement designed to cast aside seven long years of negotiations; the decision to emplace 572 medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, which would give further impetus to the arms race; the stationing of interventionist rapid deployment forces in various parts of the world, an obvious act of power-play and hegemonism; and the maintenance of 2,500 military bases throughout the world, from which every kind of crime and acts of aggression are being perpetrated. That is the reality which cannot be disguised or evaded. It is solely the desire of a few to prolong that state of affairs that is preventing the achievement of agreements on disarmament, primarily on nuclear disarmament.
The present international situation is clearly going through a particularly complex and tense stage. We know that no progress can be made in obtaining agreements or effective disarmament measures without the essential determination and political will of States to maintain co-operation, dialogue, negotiation and the conclusion of agreements.

If, far from that, the main imperialist Power steps up its cold-war talk and schemes, intensifies the arms race, makes even more obvious its abandonment of the positions of détente and tries to intimidate small States by force, including threats of aggression, very little or practically nothing can be done to move disarmament forward. The arms race is leading inevitably to war, and war in the present circumstances means a holocaust. The way those groups of imperialist power juggle with the survival of mankind is absolutely criminal and irresponsible. It is today more important and urgent than ever to obtain a practical programme guaranteeing the progress already made towards peace, and curbing and turning back the warlike and cold-war trends they are trying to impose in international relations.

This Commission and all other disarmament organs cannot overlook the fact that policy is the greatest enemy of peace and of success for any disarmament measure. We must combine all our efforts to curb that irresponsible policy, there lies our responsibility towards history and towards our peoples.

Furthermore, we wish to point out that our agenda includes an item that has appeared before among those which the Commission should have dealt with and regarding which, in our opinion, every effort must be made to conclude its consideration and to make relevant recommendations at this session. We refer to the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid. The threat of South Africa's nuclear capability has recently become more obvious and the nuclear co-operation of various Western countries with the apartheid régime has been systematically condemned in numerous forums. Those who have thus armed this reprehensible and illegal régime endangering the peace of an entire continent, are the very same who today threaten the world with the illusory theory of "limited warfare", which can hardly be confined if a nuclear war should break out. If a solution to the problem posed by the well-known nuclear capability of South Africa
continues to be delayed, we shall run the risk of witnessing events of deplorable and irreparable consequences which recent history has clearly predicted.

With regard to the reduction of military budgets, it is commonplace in disarmament bodies to make reference to the enormous figures reached by such expenditures. If today they amount to some $500 billion, one must wonder how far the war hawks and the military-industrial complex will take mankind.

In spite of the endeavours made in the United Nations in the past few years, it is clear that one of the main obstacles to the adoption of measures to reduce military expenditures is the lack of political will on the part of certain States and their intention to set themselves up as the policemen of the world.

There are States that have decided to increase their military expenditures on a continuing basis until the end of this century, in open defiance of international security, détente and peace, despite the fact that a reduction in military budgets must be acknowledged as one of the most effective ways to curb and even reverse the arms race.

In considering the item on the reduction of military budgets, the Commission must bear in mind in its discussions the need to maintain the existing military balance, as has been recognized on more than one occasion, as well as the need to put an end to attempts to obtain unilateral advantages at the expense of the national security of other States, something which, far from serving the attainment of any agreement, promotes intrigue and mistrust.

The reduction of military budgets has been the subject of long years of study and analysis; however, the figures continue to rise to giddy heights. Everything indicates that it is not studies but practical measures that are called for. There are various proposals and various possibilities. Why is there no response? Why are talks not undertaken? Why are there no counter-proposals to facilitate reduction? Do we perhaps have to continue with time-wasting studies just to recognize the new dimension of the danger? No it is our duty to call for practical steps, effective measures and political goodwill on the part of all States to reduce their military budgets.
Closely linked to the reduction of military budgets is the question of the use of the funds that would thus be released. It is essential to guarantee their use solely for peaceful purposes.

We cannot forget that the existence of minimal conditions for development is a very important prerequisite for the consolidation of a worthy and lasting peace, a peace with sovereignty, independence and security.

Any multilateral agreement on the reduction of military expenditures must envisage the reallocation of the funds thus released for the benefit of the developing countries; furthermore, it should be guaranteed that the resources thus released by disarmament measures or arms control would solely be set aside for development purposes and could not be used under other headings in the military budgets of States.
My delegation considers that agreements to reduce military budgets must of necessity be accompanied by an end to the policy of hostility and aggression against States, whether it be military, political or economic in nature, and should also be accompanied by the recognition of the principles of non-interference and non-intervention and of the right of peoples to self-determination.

Those are a few of the remarks which we made in our reply to the Secretary-General and which my delegation would seek to emphasize at this stage.

Furthermore, my delegation has taken note of document A/CN.10/26, submitted by the delegations of Romania and Sweden. To our mind it represents a praiseworthy effort to identify principles which should govern our work, of which there is still much to be done. As a preliminary comment on that paper, we would say that it sets forth some principles which, to our way of thinking, are highly important and which we should therefore like to see further highlighted. There is, for example, stress on the nuclear dimension of the most massive military budgets, from which flows the particular responsibility of nuclear-weapon States together with other militarily significant States for beginning the process of freezing and reducing military expenditures. Another aspect is that of the reallocation of funds released to the basic economic and social development of the developing countries, along with the recognition of practical initiatives already enunciated which await the agreement of some nuclear Powers.

Our Commission also has on its agenda this year the question of a general approach to the study on all aspects of conventional disarmament. The discussion of the item on this study did not meet with the support of all delegations last year, as is reflected in our report.

My delegation is concerned that such a study could mean a delay in the discussion of the most pressing priority aspects of nuclear disarmament. Consequently the first premise which should be established before any study of this kind is begun is the renewed recognition of the priority that the international community accords to every aspect of nuclear disarmament, a priority from which it should not deviate.
On the other hand, we remember that in Geneva given spheres of common interest among States were identified in the area of excessively injurious conventional weapons, in respect to which further work is needed in order to increase the scope of the prohibition or restriction that could be achieved. In that regard, a convention has been opened for signature.

The carrying out of studies on new items on which no clear consensus exists could become an obstacle which could even affect the progress made and that which could still be made in the field of disarmament and, in this instance, conventional disarmament.

The delicate task entrusted to the Commission, consisting in determining the limits, substance and scope of the study, can be fulfilled only with reference to these facts, including in the substance of the study fundamental issues closely related to all the matters covered by the study, such as the dismantling of foreign military bases, the provocation of local conflicts, the use of mercenaries in aggression against sovereign States, the destabilization of established Governments and the carrying out of military manoeuvres which threaten and intimidate neighbouring States. It cannot be denied that there is a close link between the subject proposed for study and those questions, which cannot be disregarded when it is dealt with.

We are studying with close attention document A/Ch.10/25 submitted by the delegation of Denmark with reference to this item and, although we should like later to make more specific comments, we should like to say now that some of the concerns previously expressed cannot be dissipated with just a glance at that document, particularly the concern we were stressing about the vital priority we attach to matters of nuclear disarmament. We note that some of those issues are dealt with in document A/Ch.10/27 submitted by the delegation of India, and we are sure that they will be taken into account.

Finally, one of the agenda items to which my delegation attaches particular importance is that concerning the preparation of the report of the Commission to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

As we understand it, it is necessary clearly to define when and how our Commission will work on that report, since it is clear from the outset that, given such a short session, it will not be easy to draft. However,
the pressure of time in relation to disarmament activities for 1982, when the second special session is to be held, make it essential to predetermine the course of our meeting in that year. A clear augury of that future situation has been the fact that this year we reduced our working period. To our mind, this important report should be drafted with sufficient time for the proper evaluation of the completion of the task as it is set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document, making it clear that, although not all the agenda items have been exhausted, the discussions have been fruitful and that major recommendations have been put to the General Assembly. As we see it the report should show the positive balance of the way in which this body has worked thus far and as we trust it will continue to work.

We have set forth briefly some comments which my delegation wanted to make about the agenda, and we hope to be able to speak again later when the various issues are discussed in detail.

My delegation, like the delegations of other non-aligned countries, maintains that item 4 of our agenda must be accorded the importance it deserves within the work of our Commission. Hence we could not agree that it should be excluded or made subordinate if the Commission should decide to set up working groups. With that in mind, and faithful to the priorities set down in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we shall put forward specific constructive proposals about the organization of our later work when we have completed this general exchange of views. Bearing in mind the tradition of concessions and the search for consensus established in our Commission during its short lifetime, we are sure that, as in the past, we shall be able to satisfy the main concerns of each and every delegation and, again this year, achieve positive results.

Once again warlike voices are being raised against my country. Cuba is fighting for peace and sees therein a possible context for peaceful co-existence and a way for continuing the development and scope of our economic, political and social achievements. Ours is a country that lived through the tense and difficult days of the so-called missile crisis. We have experienced long years of aggression and blockades and we accord a high value, therefore, to peace.
But we are also ready to defend our conquests at any price.

Today, more than ever, the work of our Commission and of all the disarmament forums are of the highest importance. Mankind expects peace of us; let us do everything in our power not to disappoint it. Let us see that the interests of mankind prevail and let us foil the plans of the hawks of war.
Mr. Chairman, first of all allow me to welcome you and the other members of the Bureau to your posts and to wish you success in your work. The importance of the tasks facing the Disarmament Commission is defined by the nature of the questions discussed therein and also by the international situation.

Now, in circumstances of a serious heightening of international tension and an intensification of the arms race, that is the fault of the imperialist forces, the task of reducing the threat of war and curbing the arms race has taken on particular importance and urgency. The arms race is becoming ever more dangerous. The continuing accumulation of armaments, including nuclear ones, outstrips efforts to restrain the arms race and thus bring about disarmament.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is thus at this session beginning its work in conditions in which all States are demanding new, additional and energetic efforts to implement practical measures of disarmament. A real way out of the present complicated and dangerous international situation is clearly and precisely indicated in the foreign policy programme of the twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union put forward in the report of Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev. That programme has but one goal: to do everything possible to deliver people from the threat of nuclear war. This confirms the constancy of the peace-loving Leninist foreign policy of the Soviet State. A new broad set of initiatives on questions relating to limiting the arms race put forward at the Congress refers both to nuclear missiles and to conventional types of weapons, as well as to specific measures for military détente in Europe and in other regions of the world. Their speedy implementation would serve the interests of peoples and the goals of peace, security and disarmament. The only way to solve the questions of disarmament is the way of constructive negotiations on the basis of equality and equal security. For that we need the goodwill and fruitful co-operation of all States.

As was stressed at the twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union is ready to hold negotiations on the limitation of any kinds of weapons. Unfortunately, as is clear from
the communique of the NATO Council adopted in May of this year, the Governments of the Western Powers have so far shown no particular desire for businesslike negotiations. They put forth various reservations, postpone deadlines, and so on, write declaratory statements in favour of limiting the arms race are in fact cancelled out by decisions on stationing new nuclear-missiles in Western Europe. The question of continuing negotiations on strategic arms limitation is quite simply passed over. At the same time they pursue the line of stepping up the arms race, of a long-term increase in military budgets, of the disruption of the military balance in the world and the achievement of military superiority, which undermines the principle of equality and equal security.

As was stressed by the members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Comrade Shcherbitsky, in his speech to the twelfth Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party of 31 March of this year, said:

"Now, when a military and strategic balance exists between the Soviet Union and the United States, between the States of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, we need without disturbing the balance to reduce its level consistently. We also need to develop a continuing dialogue on all explosive international problems. We are convinced that that is the only rational way."

We consider that the United Nations can and must intensify its efforts to achieve specific results in disarmament. A central place among the problems of disarmament is occupied by the question of halting the nuclear arms race, which is the most dangerous for mankind. The socialist countries are in favour of a radical solution to this question, namely halting the production of nuclear weapons and reducing the stockpiles to the point of total elimination. Relevant specific proposals of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have been submitted to the United Nations and other Disarmament Commission.

We are in favour of the speedy commencement of negotiations on this question, and we can in no way agree with the well-known assertions that the time
is not ripe for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. In an address to the
participants at the first international conference of physicians of the world for
the prevention of nuclear war, which took place in March of this year, it
was said, in particular, that:

The accumulation of vast stocks of nuclear weapons makes the
world ever less secure. Nuclear conflict attacks life on earth.
The prevention of nuclear war requires a continuation of negotiations
between nuclear powers and other countries in order to achieve the
speedy halting of the race in the production of these means of mass
destruction, the prevention of their proliferation, and ultimately their
elimination."

The halting of the arms race is vital to the fate of all of mankind, and
commencement of negotiations on this question will brook no delay. The
Ukrainian SSR also attaches great importance to efforts in other
areas aimed at halting the nuclear arms race and is in favour of the
speedy conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty and of
the strengthening of the régime of the non-proliferation of
nuclear weapons. It is also in favour of solving the problem of strengthening
security guarantees for non-nuclear States. An effective solution to
that problem would be the conclusion of a relevant international
convention.

Important too is a solution of the question of the non-deployment of
nuclear weapons on the territories of those States where they do not now
exist and the speedy implementation of resolution 35/156 C.
of the General Assembly, in which the Assembly appeals for urgent
commencement of the negotiations on this question in order to work out
the relevant international agreement.

I share the concern expressed by delegations of African countries in
connexion with the attempts of the racist régime of Pretoria to acquire nuclear
weapons. Such acquisition would immeasurably increase the threat to international
peace and security, and we support the demand of those States that any
co-operation with the racists in the nuclear field be halted.
Last month the Ukraine signed the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Decreed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. The drafting of that Convention shows that even in the present complicated international situation we can find a way to adopt practical measures in the field of disarmament. The socialist countries have frequently taken initiatives on limiting and reducing conventional weapons. In this connexion I should like to recall the proposal on the halting of the production of new types of conventional weapons of great destructive force, the proposal to have the countries permanent members of the Security Council and countries linked with them through military agreements refrain from expanding their armies or increasing their conventional weapons, and the well-known proposals by the member countries of the Warsaw Pact on military détente in Europe. At the same time our delegation considers that, particularly given the present international situation, all efforts should be aimed at working out practical measures and agreements on limiting the arms race and on disarmament and the speedy commencement of negotiations on these questions.

In this connexion we should like to emphasize that focusing our attention, as was suggested by certain delegations, mainly on the preparation of various types of studies, can only divert attention, time and resources from the basic goals, thus substituting matters of detail for the main task which is the consideration and adoption of concrete practical measures for disarmament.
Thus, for example, abstract studies on the comparisons of military budgets tend to work out a system for monitoring them and a machinery for standardization and accounting; however, these activities bring us not a whit closer to a practical solution of the problem of reducing military budgets and are used as a pretext for delaying such a solution.

The Ukrainian SSR which has constantly and consistently been in favour of halting the arms race, of a transition to disarmament considers that one of the simplest and most effective ways of achieving this goal is the reduction of military expenditures. The Soviet Union and the socialist countries expressed themselves a long time ago in favour of the reduction of military budgets of all States and, above all, of the major Powers. This position of principle has frequently been confirmed by the representatives of the Ukrainian SSR at sessions of the General Assembly and at other international forums. Basing itself on this position, the Ukrainian delegation at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly supported resolution 35/142 A on the question of the reduction of military budgets.

As is well known, the United Nations has frequently expressed support for this initiative. It is quite proper, for mankind cannot reconcile itself to an uninterrupted growth in military expenditures. Owing to the arms race, vast material resources are diverted from solving the urgent economic and social problems confronting the peoples of the world. However, leading figures in a number of countries are supporting increased appropriations for military needs and are adopting decisions for an annual automatic increase in military appropriations for many years ahead. Such a course is profoundly alien to the socialist world. This is confirmed by the resolutions of the recent Twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, which envisaged a more radical redirection of the national economy towards solving the multiple tasks connected with improving the people's well-being.

The Ukrainian SSR considers that States which have great economic and military potential, primarily the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, ought to start talks on the specific scale of reductions by each of them in their military budgets, expressed either as a percentage or in absolute figures. Agreements on the freezing or reduction of military
expenditures can also be reached on a regional or some other basis. Of course, this means that reductions in military budgets by some States must not be accompanied by increases in expenditures by their allies in blocs. The time has long been ripe for beginning the process towards the reduction of military expenditures of States, and a certain part of the savings made by reducing military appropriations should be used to give assistance to developing countries, taking due account of their urgent needs and requirements.

In that case, agreement might be reached on the specific size of the sum which will be set aside for aid to developing countries by each State reducing military appropriations and also to envisage machinery within the United Nations for allocating fairly the funds set aside for such aid.

If States Members of the United Nations show the political will and desire to attain concrete results in solving the pressing problem, it will be possible to bring about a reduction of military appropriations fairly soon. It has been the lack of such a will that has so far been the main obstacle to solving this question.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to call on the members of the Commission for a business-like and constructive discussion of the questions on the agenda with emphasis on finding a practical way to limit the arms race.

Mr. RACZ (Hungary): On behalf of the Hungarian delegation, I should like to join in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Commission on your election to your respective posts and to wish you every success in your work.

When we want to consider various aspects of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, we have to do it in the context of the present international situation. We are meeting at a time when tensions in the world have increased and we are witnessing attempts made by those circles which are interested in the production of arms and armaments, in the starting of a new spiral of the arms race representing a growing danger to world peace. They saw no gain in détente for themselves. Instead, they see advantages in increased tension and make attempts directed at upsetting the existing military balance with the openly declared aim of achieving military superiority.
This tendency does not date from yesterday. Without going back too far in history, I should like to recall the year 1978, when the first special session devoted to disarmament was held. In the very same year, the Washington NATO meeting decided on a long-term regular increase in military expenditures. The following year, the Brussels NATO meeting decided on the production and deployment in Western Europe of new, medium-range nuclear missiles, a decision that was reaffirmed this month at the NATO foreign ministers' meeting held in Rome, in spite of the fact that the Soviet Union stated its readiness to begin negotiations and offered a moratorium on those weapons.

Various efforts aimed at increasing the foreign military presence in different parts of the world, deploying new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, creating special rapid deployment forces to threaten various regions of the world and constructing new military bases in the territory of other States constitute a growing danger to peace and international security. These measures are accompanied by new, dangerous ideologies about the possibility of a so-called limited nuclear war. The continuation of this process may lead to a situation that may develop into an armed conflict and bring the peoples of the world to the brink of a new world war.

The socialist countries are consistent advocates of the process of disarmament and have submitted a series of realistic and concrete proposals on practical and genuine measures for ending the arms race. It is more than regrettable that a number of those proposals are not given the consideration they deserve.

In spite of the present situation, my Government considers that by collective efforts and action by peace-loving forces, it may be possible to prevent the starting of a new, dangerous wave of the arms race, to prevent a new world war that in the age of weapons of mass destruction can threaten the very existence of the human race. This is the common interest of all countries, regardless of their respective social systems, because there is no viable alternative to peaceful coexistence in our age. Governments should act responsibly in order to lessen international tension, contribute to peaceful coexistence among countries with different social systems and strengthen international security. These foreign
Policy goals were stressed by the resolution adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, held last year, and it is against this background that, together with the other socialist countries, we wholeheartedly and fully support the realistic and constructive proposals made at the Twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Regrettably, part of these proposals have remained unanswered so far and another part has been rejected for no good reason.
To contribute to the halting of the arms race, and especially the nuclear arms race, is a task more pressing and urgent than ever. In these efforts we attach primary importance to the continuation of the SALT process. In Europe, the real interests of peoples demand the start of talks, without delay and preconditions, on the basis of the existing balance and of mutual security, regarding the prevention of the deployment of new nuclear weapons; the cause of a European conference on military détente and disarmament should also be brought to success.

Hungary is a staunch advocate of the reduction of military expenditures and, together with the other socialist countries, has a practical approach to that question. We consider that the funds saved by the reduction of military appropriations should be reallocated to economic and social development and that a part should be used to give assistance to developing countries, taking account of their urgent needs and requirements.

The reduction of military budgets has been on the agenda of the United Nations for several years. From the very beginning we supported the proposal made by the Soviet Union in 1973 and adopted by the General Assembly on the reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and the utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries. We also support the proposal made by the Soviet Union at the first special session devoted to disarmament, providing that States with a large economic and military potential, including all States permanent members of the Security Council, should agree on the specific amounts by which each of them would reduce its military budget, not in terms of percentage points but in absolute terms.

In spite of their clear-cut and constructive nature, these proposals have not been implemented and no progress has been made so far in the real reduction of military budgets. A number of States, including some permanent members of the Security Council, are refusing to reach a practical understanding and, disguising their unwillingness, are making demands regarding the prior solution of what they call the problem of monitoring and comparing military budgets and the mechanism for the standardized accountability of military
expenditures. The abstract, irrelevant studies on these questions carried out in recent years cannot contribute to the reduction of military expenditures; instead, they divert attention from the substance of the matter.

In our view, the adoption and implementation of measures for the real reduction of military expenditures could significantly contribute to efforts undertaken in other areas of disarmament. The achievement of a practical understanding on the reduction of military budgets requires that States demonstrate the political will and determination to find a solution to this pressing problem. In that way, it would be possible to bring about a reduction on a voluntary basis.

Mr. ANDRESEN (Portugal): The need to achieve significant progress in the field of disarmament has been made even more urgent by the tensions that have recently affected international relations and by the growing distrust that characterizes them. If we hope to achieve some progress, all States - and particularly the major military Powers - must make a firm commitment to respect and implement the principles and objectives embodied in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

We share the fears of the international community and also dread the thought of having to live in the shadow of annihilation, permanently faced with the destructive power of the existing nuclear arsenals. My delegation understands those who would want to place at the top of the list of priorities the problem of nuclear disarmament. However, we should not forget the other aspects of the question of disarmament. We must take into account the structural differences between the armed forces of different countries. For historical reasons, because of their economic potential, taking into consideration their social problems, and certainly on the basis of their stages of technological development, different States have found different ways of addressing themselves to one of their main functions, that of guaranteeing the security of their countrymen. As a result, some States base the strength of their defence on nuclear weapons, while others concentrate on conventional forces.
We should never lose sight of the fact that the final objective of disarmament is the reinforcement of international security. The need to accelerate the pace of negotiations for the elimination of the danger of nuclear war is obvious, but we cannot think that it is possible to try and attain this goal if, at the same time, we do not address ourselves to the other problems that affect it. That is why we are of the opinion that all negotiations should be subordinated to the principles outlined in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly.

My delegation attributes special importance to the principles contained in paragraphs 29 and 30 of the Final Document. We must keep in mind, as is stated in paragraph 29, that disarmament measures must be applied in a balanced and equitable manner so as to guarantee the right of every State to security, and remember that it defines the objective of each phase of the negotiations as:

"undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces". (resolution S-10/2, para. 29)

In the opinion of my delegation, the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session made a very positive decision in adopting resolution 35/156 A, which assigns to this Commission the task of elaborating the general approach to the study on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces, as well as its structure and scope.

Apart from all other reasons, the undertaking of this study is well justified in our view, by the aforementioned principles. We are convinced that this study will also have a positive effect in focusing attention on one of the areas of disarmament that have somehow been neglected. I refer to conventional armament and armed forces. We strongly hope this Commission will be successful in the fulfilment of this task.
My delegation views with concern the present trend of military expenditures, which everywhere show a strong tendency to increase. Like many others, we sincerely believe that at least a part of the resources annually spent on armaments could easily be diverted and applied to the economic and social development of the world's population, thus certainly achieving more beneficial results for the whole of humanity. That is why we support the efforts that have been made to try and change that growing tendency. But we cannot forget that the growth of military budgets did not happen suddenly, without rhyme or reason, as if by chance or because of the perversity of a few political leaders. These expenditures result from a conjugation of causes and circumstances that, left to themselves, will always produce the same effect - that is, in the permanent growth of military budgets.

In the opinion of my delegation, the best way to obtain the desired reduction in military budgets would be by firm and decisive action to try to annul these causes. Once the causes cease to exert their pressure, their effects will certainly disappear. That is why it is our firm conviction that the creation of a climate of solid trust in international relations, together with the adoption of measures of disarmament and disarmament control under effective international verification would have a stabilizing and lasting effect on military expenditures.

Having said that, I must make it clear that the objectives behind item 5 of the agenda have our full support. My delegation hopes to be able to contribute in a positive way to the work of the Commission and that practical results will be reached. But we do not favour the adoption of declaratory measures that do not contribute to the workable results we all want to attain.
That is why we consider that practical solutions, acceptable to all parties, must be found to the practical problems that will be raised by the eventual adoption of principles on the reduction of military budgets. We have especially in mind the problems resulting from the comparability of military budgets, the transparency of military expenditures and the verification of the agreements. Any declaration of principles, no matter how well drawn-up, will not produce the significant results we all hope for if practical solutions to all these questions have not been found and precisely defined.

In our opinion, any document containing the principles that should guide States on their decisions on the freezing and the reduction of military budgets must also show the ways and means to solve the practical problems that will result from their adoption.

The General Assembly made an important first step in this direction when it approved the use of the reporting instrument to test its efficiency as a document for publicizing military expenditures.

This experience, and its careful evaluation, is extremely useful and will greatly facilitate the negotiation of agreements on the reduction of military budgets.

That is why we think that the main effort of the international community in this area should be to try to make this experiment a successful one.

The issues that we are dealing with here are among those that most deeply concern world opinion, which we here ultimately represent.

We all wish that this Commission could come up with the solution to all the problems that we face. But if our pride makes us aim too high we might completely miss the target, if I may use a military expression in this forum. Let us be more modest and patient and strive to obtain gradual and realistic results which have the great advantage of being within the realm of the possible.
Mrs. SZOKOLOCZI DE ALCALA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Venezuela wishes to associate itself with the congratulations conveyed to the President on his election and to the other members of the Bureau. I wish to assure him of the co-operation of my delegation in conducting the business of the Commission to a successful outcome.

Item 4 of the agenda focusses our attention on the matter of most concern to the international community: the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. In 1978 the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was adopted by consensus and there was recognition of the need to adopt urgent measures to halt and reverse the arms race, particularly the race in nuclear weapons, since it threatened to international peace and security. It was also recognized that international peace and security could not be based on the stockpiling of weapons by military pacts, nor be preserved by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority. It was consequently established that nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war were of the highest priority. All nuclear-weapon States have a responsibility in the attainment of nuclear disarmament. It is up to the two great Powers to recognize their main responsibility.

However, since 1978, in none of the bodies discussing disarmament matters, either negotiating or deliberative bodies, have measures been discussed which would effectively eliminate the threat of nuclear war, nor has an effort been made to draft a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament. Quite the contrary; the military budgets of the two alliances have been increased in substantial proportion, with the clear purpose of improving upon and increasing their existing stockpiles of nuclear and conventional weapons.
This leads us to make a few remarks about item 5, which refers to the reduction of military budgets. This year the Disarmament Commission will have to decide on and draw up principles to govern the new measures that States will take in freezing and reducing military expenditure. Without a doubt, efforts have to be made to reduce military expenditure, but initiatives in this regard are merely one aspect of general and complete disarmament, whose most urgent priorities and goals have been assembled and recognized in very many documents, and particularly the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly.

World military expenditure is increasing substantially day by day. This significant increase can be noted particularly in the military budgets of nuclear-weapon States and their allies. It is, therefore, up to those States to be the first to reduce their military budgets, particularly under the headings set aside for nuclear expenditure. That is their responsibility. A disarmament measure of this kind would help to check the arms race and would be of help to other countries in saving themselves from increasing expenditure by non-proliferation and would allow for the release of huge amounts of resources which could then be given over to economic and social development of peoples, particularly in the developing countries.

The reduction of military budgets must take into account the principle of the security of States, which is to be understood as being the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

The Final Document and report of the United Nations on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditure, a report which will again be updated this year, set forth that the economic and social effects of the arms race are so detrimental that for it to continue is clearly incompatible with the establishment of a New International Economic Order. Hence, the close link between disarmament and development has been recognized and, as is pointed out in the Final Document, the resources released pursuant to the implementation of disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development of all nations and serve to eliminate the economic gap between the developed and developing countries.
The acknowledgement of the seriousness and urgent nature of the problems caused by nuclear weapons should in no wise be a factor preventing simultaneous consideration of matters relating to conventional weapons which, although certainly not as weighty nor of the same order of magnitude as nuclear weapons, have been and are a cause of many conflicts and hence do violate international peace and security. Consideration of aspects related to the conventional arms race can in no way undermine the priority that must be given to nuclear weapons.

As was rightly said by the delegation of Denmark on page 2 of document A/CN.10/25: "It is evident that conventional disarmament efforts should not be allowed to detract attention from nuclear disarmament", and "It is equally important that the urgency of nuclear disarmament should not cause the conventional aspect of disarmament to be neglected.

It is also clear that progress in nuclear disarmament would stimulate progress in conventional disarmament. The adoption of effective measures in negotiations on the control and reduction of nuclear weaponry would have a favourable effect on bringing about an international climate with less tension and fewer points of conflict which would promote in its turn a reduction in conventional arms traffic.

States with the biggest stockpiles of conventional weapons, which are also those which have the biggest nuclear arsenals, have the fundamental responsibility of limiting and controlling conventional weaponry both quantitatively and qualitatively, as a necessary and appropriate step to generate and give impetus to a process of armaments reduction throughout the world.
Within the consideration of various aspects linked to the conventional arms race and conventional disarmament, it is essential to stress the serious responsibility of those States which supply this kind of weaponry. They are precisely those industrialized and militarily significant powerful countries which benefit to the highest degree from the trade and transfer of conventional weapons. Countries which supply conventional arms, therefore, must contribute to efforts to achieve conventional disarmament bilaterally, regionally or multilaterally.
When it comes to regional and conventional disarmament, central Europe is the region where the largest number of conventional weapons are stockpiled. The factors relevant to regional disarmament find their best expression in areas such as Europe, which, in terms of nuclear and conventional weapons is the focus of greatest attention in East-West relations. Any progress in the reduction of armed forces or weapons in that region would certainly have a favourable effect throughout the world.

In any case a balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons must be achieved on the basis of the principle that the security of States should in no way be diminished and that as far as possible the availability of conventional weapons should be limited to the essential minimum for the internal security and defence of each State.

These are some of the considerations the delegation of Venezuela wished to put forward with regard to agenda item 6, which refers to the general approach, structure and scope of the study on conventional disarmament to be begun this year by a group of experts.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian):
Mr. Chairman, the Mongolian delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election to your post and expresses the hope that under your guidance the Commission will carry out a constructive and business-like exchange of views on the questions on the agenda. We also congratulate the other officers of the Commission on their election.

The Government of the Mongolian People's Republic considers that, at this time of serious deterioration in the international situation, an intensification of the efforts of the international community to halt the arms race and for complete disarmament becomes particularly important. The need for constructive dialogue in various forums, both bilateral and multilateral, at the present time is becoming more and more urgent. This is proved, in particular, by the actions of the imperialist circles, which in fact have followed the course of blocking negotiations on the vital questions of disarmament and delaying their resumption. In order to justify somehow such a course, they use
a wide variety of pretexts and put forward various prior conditions, linkages and reservations. It is not difficult to see that behind the screen of this campaign there is hidden nothing other than a desire for the further escalation of the arms race, with the unrealistic goal -- one that is very dangerous to peace and security -- of changing the military and strategic balance between East and West, in conditions where vast arsenals of nuclear weapons continue to be stockpiled, rapidly changing the traditional ideas of warfare. As a new world war, if we do not prevent it, will bring with it the threat of destruction of everything living on earth, the adventurism and recklessness of those who persistently attempt to achieve a one-sided superiority become all the clearer.

The socialist countries have always proceeded on the basis that the existing military and strategic equality must be maintained by a steady reduction in the levels of the arsenals of States. This is what is aimed at in the many constructive initiatives of the socialist countries. They have been recently developed and continued in a broad set of initiatives put forward at the twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Taking into account the primary importance of halting the nuclear arms race, Mongolia consistently supports the adoption of specific practical measures in that vital area. There is broad support in the United Nations for the initiatives of the socialist countries with regard to the holding of negotiations -- with the participation of all nuclear Powers and also some non-nuclear States -- relating to the halting of production of nuclear weapons of all types and the gradual reduction of stockpiles of such weapons to the point where they are eliminated. It is important now that the Disarmament Commission, under the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, should proceed to the holding of consultations with a view to an early commencement of negotiations on the essence of the question.

Of importance in limiting the arms race, particularly in its qualitative aspect, would be the early achievement of an agreement on the complete banning of nuclear weapon testing. The proposal made at the last session
by the Soviet Union for an annual moratorium on nuclear explosions could be an important intermediate step that would help to achieve the final goal.

An acute and burning problem that still remains is that of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The situation is further aggravated by the actions of those who themselves not only fail to abide by the non-proliferation treaty but by every available means incite others to acquire nuclear weapons. We also share the serious concern of the majority of States with regard to the actions of the racist régime in South Africa aimed at obtaining the nuclear weapon. The strengthening of the non-proliferation régime is inseparably linked to the question of strengthening guarantees for the security of non-nuclear States and the non-deployment of nuclear weapons in the territories of those States where they do not exist at present. The early formulation of international agreements on these questions would essentially narrow the geographical range of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and would serve as an important contribution to the cause of reducing the threat of a nuclear war.

Taking note of the reluctance of one group of States to try to achieve further progress in solving this problem, the Soviet Union has proposed to all nuclear Powers, as a first step towards concluding an international convention, that they make solemn declarations similar in content not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States not having them in their territory. The General Assembly has recommended that the Security Council should consider declarations that might be made by nuclear States and, if those declarations were regarded as serving the aforementioned goals, it should then adopt the relevant resolutions approving them.

Mongolia attaches extreme importance to the negotiations on strategic arms limitation between the Soviet Union and the United States and, together with the peoples of other countries, is profoundly concerned that one well known party, despite the demands of the world community, continues to block the entry into force of the SALT II treaty. When we talk about the limitation of nuclear weapons in the context of regional distribution, we cannot fail to see that it is particularly in the European continent that there is the
largest concentration of armed forces and armaments, particularly nuclear weapons, belonging to two opposed military-political groups of States. It is on that continent now that the serious danger of an escalation of the nuclear arms race exists. This is confirmed by the communiqué of the Foreign Ministers of the NATO countries adopted recently in Rome. My delegation considers it important that negotiations on limitation of medium-range nuclear weapons be immediately resumed without any prior conditions. A solution of this problem, in our view, could promote a timely proposal on the establishment of a moratorium on the deployment in Europe of new medium-range nuclear missiles.

Together with the question of nuclear disarmament, the question of the limitation and reduction of armed forces and so-called conventional weapons is more urgent and topical. Technological progress not only affects the nuclear sphere. New types of conventional weapons of great destructive force have been created. The efforts to limit conventional weapons are having certain positive results. In April this year an international convention to ban or limit the use of certain extremely cruel types of conventional weapons was opened for signature by States.
We also consider important in the context of the aforementioned matter that the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/152 G, called on existing military alliances, as a first step, not to expand their groupings. It is quite clear that States with major military arsenals bear a particular responsibility for carrying out the process of reduction of conventional weapons, and it is no accident that in that resolution there is also an appeal to States which are permanent members of the Security Council and countries linked to them by military agreements to exercise restraint both in the nuclear and conventional weapon spheres and to agree not to increase their armed forces and conventional armaments, with effect from an agreed date as a first step towards a subsequent reduction of their armed forces and conventional armaments. In our view, those steps and the practical implementation of that paragraph of the resolution would greatly assist in improving the international atmosphere as a whole, in particular on the European continent.

The position of the Mongolian People's Republic on the question of the reduction of the military budgets of States has frequently been set forth here in the United Nations. We are in favour of measures being taken that are aimed at the specific and practical reduction of military budgets. This task is in line with resolution 3093 (XXVIII) A, adopted in 1973, on the reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus released to provide assistance to developing countries. It can only be regretted that that General Assembly resolution has not been implemented. On the contrary, over the last few years a trend has emerged of carrying out various kinds of technological research on machinery for standardizing the accounting of military expenditure, the comparability of military budgets and systems for monitoring them. Practical experience shows that they cannot help to promote progress on this question and only divert attention from the substance of the problem.
The socialist countries have shown a flexible, constructive approach in order to find a mutually acceptable solution. They have suggested that there be an agreement on specific measures for the reduction of military budgets, not in percentage but in absolute terms. Such a step could, in our view, significantly help the adoption of political decisions. We need only the will and the readiness to take such a decision.

The Mongolian delegation is also in favour of reducing military budgets on a regional basis. Of course, there must be strict observance of the principle of equal security, that is to say, we cannot allow reduction in the military budgets of some States to be compensated by an increase in expenditures by their allies.

I should like now to refer to the question of the degree of participation of nuclear States in negotiations on disarmament, which has been mentioned here by some delegations. We consider that the participation of all nuclear Powers in negotiations on the question of disarmament is one of the most important prerequisites for achieving significant progress in this sector. Although we have bilateral and trilateral negotiations on disarmament, we feel that that does not give anyone the right to be judge of where and when one State or another – all the more so permanent members of the Security Council – should agree to enter into negotiations on disarmament. We must remind those people of the important fact that, of the five permanent members of the Security Council, three States are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and one State is well known for its negative position on questions of disarmament. Therefore the grounds put forward by some delegations are not in fact borne out by the real state of affairs.

Those are the comments of a general nature that my delegation wished to make at this stage of the Commission's work.
Mr. KRYSTOSIK (Poland): Allow me at the outset to congratulate sincerely Ambassador Michelsen on his election to this important post. We are convinced that under his leadership the Commission will be able to make considerable progress in its work. We attach importance to the results that can be achieved, particularly in connexion with the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We wish also to congratulate the other officers of the Commission.

As we have stated in the past, the danger of the arms race is that it engulfs more and more States, that it is turning into a technological race, that it involves more and more people and absorbs constantly and rapidly growing material resources so badly needed elsewhere and, consequently, that instead of strengthening international security and the security of individual countries -- as some would like to make us believe -- it leads to seriously undermining both of them.

All our initiatives, proposals and activities in the field of disarmament and halting the arms race have been motivated by this realistic assessment, and we have it very much in mind today when some recent developments have once again confirmed its full validity.

The most important and most urgent of the numerous disarmament issues is the question of nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the nuclear arms race which, as the Commission is aware, corresponds to the priorities set forth in the Final Document of the tenth special session, inter alia, in its paragraphs 18, 20, 45 and 47. It is also an area where Poland has always attached great importance to early and meaningful progress that would eventually result in lessening and ultimately eliminating once and for all the menace of nuclear conflict.

Seeking to contribute to the attainment of that objective, the socialist countries, Poland included, came forward in the Committee on Disarmament with a proposal to undertake negotiations on ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed.
The underlying premise of the initiative taken by the socialist countries has been their conviction that the only workable alternative to the unrestrained build-up of nuclear arsenals is the determined quest by the international community for security based on a lower level of nuclear arms. In our considered view, such a lower level can and should be reached through gradual and balanced steps, with due respect for the principle of undiminished security of all parties.
All States having nuclear weapons at their disposal should, without exception, participate both in the negotiations and in the process of reduction and destruction of nuclear weapons. It is also advisable that States having a considerable conventional military potential take part in these negotiations. The conclusion of treaties on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, a ban on the production, deployment and use of neutron weapons, a ban on the development of other weapons of mass destruction and the systems of such weapons is of the greatest importance in this context.

Adherence by all States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is of the utmost necessity. We should further strengthen the non-proliferation régime.

While attaching the highest importance to the question of nuclear disarmament, we are aware that other weapons of mass destruction may be in the arsenals of States and that other still more lethal types of such weapons can be developed. We have therefore been constantly advocating the urgent undertaking of determined efforts with a view to preventing this from happening.

There is also an urgent need to take proper steps in the field of conventional disarmament.

The well-known proposal of the Soviet Union addressed to the permanent members of the Security Council and other States to agree to an early cut-off beyond which they would commit themselves not to expand their armed forces and conventional weapons as a first step to their subsequent reduction would be more than a mere confidence-building measure. As stated in paragraph 5 of the Final Document of the tenth special session, an international agreement on the limitation of conventional armed forces and armaments would stimulate progress in the nuclear field. It would go a long way towards releasing important human and material resources and diverting them to development purposes. Those two possible effects of the proposal, apart from its intrinsic value, fully justify constructive and careful examination of the concept of non-increase of the conventional military potential of States.

At present my Government is also concentrating particular attention on the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Poland and other nations of that region urgently need progress in the Vienna talks to bring down the dangerously high level of military confrontation which obtains currently in that part of the European continent. Our constructive approach to
these talks has been manifested by, inter alia, our submitting, together with other socialist States, a number of proposals aimed at reaching an equitable agreement in accordance with the principle of undiminished security of all the parties involved. I should like to point, in particular, to the new compromise proposals presented last year.

The arms race is being intensified not only vertically but also horizontally. It is spreading all over the world. It constitutes a constantly growing burden for almost all States and nations. It hinders the implementation of their plans for development.

Disarmament and development are therefore the inseparable objectives of today. Halting the arms race and genuine disarmament would free vast means to be used for development.

At the same time, one must recognize that the freezing and reduction of military budgets would be a meaningful step towards effectively halting the arms race.

If reaching a mutually acceptable comprehensive understanding as to the ways of bringing about an effective freeze and a reduction of military budgets should encounter serious problems - and from the debates conducted on this issue one could infer that this might be the case - we would advocate a search for the least controversial "small-steps" solution. At present, when numerous controversies arise over the publication and comparability of military budgets, conversion rates, definitions, reporting and verification systems, that approach seems to be the most realistic and thus the most effective.

It would therefore appear advisable to leave aside all complicated solutions which would be extremely difficult to negotiate, even if that meant that we had to forgo, for the time being, a more radical and ambitious course of action.

When faced with a choice between solutions based respectively on absolute, value-oriented and relative reductions, our preference would certainly be for the last one. We have presented a detailed exposé of our position in this respect in the reply of the Government of the Polish People's Republic on the question of reduction of military budgets, contained in document A/C.10/23/Add.2.
Before concluding, I should like to assure you, Sir. Chairman, and the members of the Commission that my delegation is willing to undertake every effort for a successful conclusion of our work. At the same time, we wish to reserve our right to speak again in the course of future deliberations during the current session both in the Commission itself and in any of the working groups it might decide to establish.

Sir. RAHMAN (Bangladesh): We are passing through a crucial and critical stage in the evolution of international relations, which have suffered somewhat in recent times as a result of various events that have taken place in different parts of the world. As a direct consequence, the outlook in the field of disarmament is far from encouraging. Also, we recognize that practically all bilateral and multilateral negotiations have almost come to a halt.

The Bangladesh delegation would like to draw the attention of this Commission to the extremely dangerous situation in which the world is poised today. With heightening tension between the two blocs, the Commission must take cognizance of the danger of a military conflict between them. That is why we should like the Commission to make practical and action-oriented recommendations for creating a situation which would ensure the preservation of peace and security in conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States.
In this connexion, reference may be made to the disquiet with which we have noted the gradual erosion of the confidence of the peoples of the world in the Charter of the United Nations because of our inability to give substance and meaning to various resolutions that have been adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly hitherto but have never been implemented: some were ignored, some were flouted with impunity, and still others withered on the vine.

It is against this backdrop that my delegation attaches the utmost importance to this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The agenda is extensive but, given the political will, we can still find ways and means for the preparation of concrete proposals leading to the success of the second special session on disarmament.

While listing the disarmament measures, the state and course of the arms race should be taken into account. Similarly, all the elements necessary for achieving the goal of general and complete disarmament and for the realization of just and lasting international peace and security as well as the New International Economic Order should also be included. The list of disarmament measures should be presented separately for each category of weapons and weapon systems and in accordance with agreed priorities. For example, the following categories and types of weapons, inter alia, must be elaborated: first, nuclear weapons; secondly, other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, thirdly, conventional weapons, including those which may cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects; and fourthly, armed forces and military expenditures, which must be reduced.

In paragraph 31 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly measures of verification were discussed. It was agreed that any disarmament measures, to be effective, must be verifiable. What is needed, however, is the establishment of international machinery for disarmament verification within the United Nations system itself.

At the tenth special session of the General Assembly a close relationship was recognized between disarmament and international security. The special session also recognized the close and indivisible relationship between
disarmament, economic and social development and the establishment of a new international economic order.

Bangladesh believes that peace and prosperity are indivisible. The acceleration of military expenditures not only absorbs considerable resources, it constitutes a basic destabilizing element in the entire world economy. Recurring economic crises in recent years have served to highlight that fact. It is our belief that a viable international system must be based on the establishment of a link between disarmament and development, with particular reference to the serious problems faced by the least developed countries. It is in that context that we commend the Swedish-Romanian working paper. We agree with the principle that the reduction and freezing of military expenditures should begin with the most heavily armed States. We also believe that a proportion of the material and human resources thus released should be diverted to financing economic and social programmes in the countries carrying out those reductions and the rest should be effectively used to assist the developing countries. It bears mentioning, however, that our commitment to the reduction of military budgets does not in any way affect the right of States to undiminished security.

In addition, this Commission must call on the leading nuclear-weapon States to take immediate steps with a view to freezing the nuclear arms race in all its aspects. The Commission should also call on the militarily significant countries to suspend further increases in military budgets and to resume meaningful negotiations on concrete and effective nuclear disarmament measures, in conformity with the resolutions of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, including the continuation of the strategic arms limitation process. The Commission should call on the nuclear Powers to give security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States. Further, this Commission should call upon all concerned actively to pursue the goal of holding the proposed conference on the Indian Ocean as soon as possible. The Disarmament Commission should also call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of other countries, the removal of nuclear weapons from the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States and the elimination
of all foreign military bases. The Commission will fail in its duty if it cannot underscore the fact that our ultimate goal will remain unattained unless we accept the cardinal principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The Commission should also emphasize the urgent 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 and meaningful negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

By delegation wholeheartedly commends the forthcoming study on the conventional arms race but we believe that any work to be undertaken on conventional weapons should not in any way divert attention from nuclear weapons or from the paramount importance of giving maximum attention to negotiations on nuclear weapons.

Finally, we have noted the report of the United Nations Seminar on Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa, contained in document S/13157. This report should be brought to the attention of the Disarmament Commission. As the representatives of Nigeria and Zambia have rightly pointed out, the nuclear capability of South Africa poses a serious threat to international peace and security.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, may I again express the gratification of my delegation at seeing you in the Chair of this Commission. We also express our greetings to the other officers who have been elected. We are confident that, under your leadership, we shall be able successfully to conclude this session.
Mr. VENKATESWARAN (India): It is said that one of the chief values of prayer is its repetitive quality. If the ritual chanting of disarmament concepts and phrases were to possess similar power the world would be a far safer place than it is now. Despite this, however, the collective voices of nations raised in the various disarmament forums of the world are really nothing short of a fervent prayer that the world be spared the insanity and criminality of a nuclear conflict with all its destructive consequences for mankind. Our prayers have to be repeated, if only to remind nations that they should not be tempted to usurp the mantle of the gods in their delusions of grandeur nor be inexorably entrapped by spurious doctrines of the fightability of a nuclear war as a practical way of continuing politics by other means.

The developments in the international situation over the past few years have not been very promising. Indeed, the overall political environment in the world has deteriorated to such a level that there is all-round concern at the possible revival of the suspicions and tensions between the two major military blocs, which could lead to the start of a new cold war. The danger of a sharp escalation of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, has today assumed a new and ominous character, with the possibility of a fresh upsurge in the technological capability for mass destruction of the leading nuclear-weapon States. While it is now sought to give credibility to the oft-repeated rationalization that is the international situation which is responsible for the arms race, and not the other way around, we also find prominent members of the so-called arms-control establishment of important States declaring that whatever the salience of arms control for one group of countries it is unlikely to play a major role in addressing what has been termed the new range of military problems of the 1980s. The re-establishment of a political dialogue, we are told, need not necessarily mean, as it did in the 1970s, a renaissance of arms control; nor is arms control likely to re-emerge as the chief avenue for exploring solutions to international security problems.

What, we would like to ask, would be the impact of such concepts for the strategic and security environment of the world in the 1980s? Just last year a comprehensive study on nuclear weapons prepared by the United
Nations stressed the futility of reliance on nuclear weapons to ensure the security of States in these words:

"The concept of the maintenance of world peace, stability and balance through the process of deterrence is perhaps the most dangerous collective fallacy that exists.\" (A/35/392, para. 519)

Yet we see today a new advocacy of the theories considered and rejected in that study. Earlier doctrines of extended deterrence and of mutually assured destruction are being pushed aside in favour of such new concepts as flexible response, prolonged limited nuclear war, limited active defence strategies, re-opening of an anti-ballistic missile debate, and, indeed, the promotion of the idea of a winnable nuclear conflict.

Hitherto fashionable ideas of essential equivalence are being supplanted by calls for asymmetrical force structures based on a supposedly dynamic interaction of offensive and defensive techniques and technologies. Obviously a new impetus is sought for the rationalizing sophistry of armchair strategists by the burgeoning chimeras of the research and development divisions of the military establishments of the nuclear-weapon States.

The effect of those developments on the international situation can well be imagined. My delegation is only too painfully aware of the threat of those and related developments to security and peace in the Indian Ocean area and the littoral and hinterland countries. We firmly believe that the security interests of all States, indeed the very survival of mankind, cannot be subject to the whims of a handful of nuclear-weapon States or the vagaries of the fluctuating state of relations among those States and their allies. If the consequences of the arms race, particularly in its nuclear aspect, are not of the utmost relevance to the community of nations, we wonder what else can have the same priority. It is for that reason that my delegation is of the view that this item must continue to occupy the priority attention of a deliberative body such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The experience of the Group of 21 in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva on this question has been quite frustrating. Despite a clear recognition
of the priority of this question the Committee on Disarmament has so far been prevented from initiating a process of substantive discussion, and it was only recently that this matter could be addressed even in informal meetings of the Committee.

We are firmly convinced that however delicate or sensitive the issues pertaining to a comprehensive test-ban treaty are, they should be brought to the multilateral forum and negotiated at an early date so that urgent measures can be initiated to realize a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons applicable to all countries and of unlimited duration. We also believe that it is only by squarely addressing the issue of nuclear disarmament as a whole that the first step in preventing the arms race can be taken. We are convinced that this essential aspect should be taken into account when the United Nations Disarmament Commission addresses the various issues on its agenda in the coming weeks.

Some of the statements that have been made before the Commission in the last few days have conveyed the impression that the Commission should limit itself to the consideration of two specific items only. To our mind such a view would be dangerously myopic and self-defeating. Indeed, my delegation would be willing to address any of the issues contained in the agenda we have adopted. But by the same token we will not be a party to attempts to ignore or to brush aside peremptorily some issues in preference to others. We refer in particular to items 4(a) and (b) of the agenda, which deal with matters that have always been accorded the highest priority in disarmament deliberations.

Coming to the question of the relationship between the arms race and disarmament relating to conventional weapons, we should like to stress first and foremost that this has to be seen in the over-all context of the arms race discussed above, and that only a global approach to the problem can ensure the right direction and correct priorities with respect to this question. A global approach to the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons posit its being pursued within the framework of general and complete disarmament.
Mr. Venkateswaran, India

By delegation has consistently declared that nuclear weapons cannot in any way be equated with conventional weapons; nor, for that matter, can we accept that a reduction in nuclear arms can be related to or made conditional upon a parallel reduction in conventional forces or armaments. Attempts to promote concepts like balance or linkage are at best misleading; at worst they are a dangerous distortion of accepted disarmament priorities. If there is any connexion at all between the two, it arises only from the fact that the vast proportion of conventional weapons, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, are produced, developed, retained and deployed by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies themselves. In fact, it is the adoption of measures for the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons between those States and their alliance arrangements that should constitute the indispensable first step towards strengthening peace and security in the world.

As with nuclear weapons, it is the continuous development and qualitative sophistication of the conventional-weapons arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States that has fuelled the arms race and led to a blurring of the firebreaks between nuclear and conventional weapons as well as occasioned the emergence of strategic theories such as that of flexible response, and so on. Indeed, it is the thrust and displacement of aircraft engines, the microchip behind the guidance systems of tanks and missiles, that today constitute the nuts and bolts of the arms race, and it has become increasingly difficult to draw the line between those armaments that are part of the conventional arsenal and those which, with marginal modifications in the hands of nuclear-weapon States, can be given nuclear-weapon-delivery capability.
We firmly consider that if the general approach, structure and scope of any proposal for a comprehensive study on the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons is to be considered, it should take full account of these qualitative factors.

Another aspect that is relevant in the field of conventional armaments is that of "international trade in conventional weapons". The commonplace connotation of such a term has been, perhaps deliberately, interpreted by some to cover only the transfer of conventional weapons which affect the non-aligned and developing States. It would be incorrect to place a disproportionate emphasis on the acquisition of a rudimentary conventional weapon capability by newly independent States for the clear and legitimate purpose of safeguarding their hard-won sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity from the threat of neo-imperialism and the aggressive forces of intervention and interference. Such a one-sided emphasis would divert attention from the far more important danger posed to the world by the overflowing arsenals of conventional and nuclear arms of the nuclear-weapon States and their allies. These are deployed and strengthened not only in order to demonstrate the determination of these States single-mindedly to pursue their narrow national interests, but often also for the so-called discharge of their self-assumed "world-wide responsibilities" without even a word of consultation with the States that they are allegedly protecting from some imagined external threat.

My delegation would therefore insist that any examination of the question of the question of international trade in conventional weapons should cover the entire gamut of military alliance arrangements pertaining to the transfer of conventional weapons, such as gifts, offsets, deployments, prepositioning, coproduction, standardization and technological co-operation. None of the alliance arrangements pertaining to conventional weapons can be considered as either sacred or beyond the pale of an objective, comprehensive study. We firmly believe that no article of the United Nations Charter can be invoked to prevent a meaningful probe into various military alliance arrangements, including military doctrines regarding conventional weapons, nor for that matter can shelter be taken behind the argument that there is an absence of effective measures to assure verifiability of disarmament or arms control measures in this sphere.
We have heard remarks by some delegations stressing the purely regional aspect of a conventional weapons study. To our mind, this aspect has already been covered in detail in a recent United Nations study on regional disarmament. A comprehensive study such as the one now proposed should therefore be global in character and not concern itself unduly with regional perspectives. It is our understanding that the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies has in the past suggested a similar approach when considering this problem.

My delegation is also steadfast in its view that the aforementioned considerations must be taken fully into account and that otherwise any proposal for an approach to a study will performe be narrow, discriminatory and partial. The eventual approach adopted for the study would naturally decide its very credibility. India has submitted a working paper (A/CH.10/27) on 20 May spelling out the relevant points and we are prepared to discuss both the working paper and the ideas thereon of other delegations at the substantive consideration of this question at a later stage of our deliberations.

Coming now to the question of freezing and reduction of military expenditures, this has been the subject of considerable discussion in the General Assembly over the years, and in particular last year in the Disarmament Commission. The position of my delegation has been amply explained in previous meetings and it is not my intention to go over this familiar ground once again. It is, however, necessary for us to underline our deep concern at the staggering scale of resources that continue to be spent on the production and stockpiling of instruments of mass destruction. A secure world cannot be built on the foundation of human misery. While 40 per cent of the total population of two thirds of the countries represented in this Organization live in a state of absolute poverty, the countries belonging to the upper crust continue to lavish their financial, technical and economic resources, as well as a considerable proportion of their skilled manpower, on strengthening the artifacts of war. We have had occasion in the past to refer to the Brandt report which has stressed the link between the vast spending on arms, on the one hand, and the urgent need for alleviating the misery of the human condition in areas on the world which need urgent attention, on the other. Yet if the existing trend in industrialized countries is any indication, defence spending is
continuously on the upswing. Through a mixture of media pressure and populist clamour, the push for increasing spending on armaments in the most powerful nations of the world is accelerating instead of slowing down. A sensible approach to the question of freezing and reduction of military expenditures should therefore take into consideration the fact that 80 per cent of the entire world military expenditures is made by the nuclear-weapon States and their alliances and that any meaningful reduction will have to commence with these countries. It is for these major Powers first to set an example in self-restraint in military expenditures. In this case, too, an excessive preoccupation with regional perspectives runs the risk of a distortion of the essential perspective. While it is the right of every State to take measures to ensure its security, and measures for the reduction of military expenditures by individual States should be equitable and fair, the major responsibility in this clearly rests with the five or six most heavily armed States of the world.

Before I conclude, I should like to make a brief reference to the organization of the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission over the next two weeks. While we appreciate the fact that the time available to us is limited and that it would therefore be appropriate for us to organize working groups, the setting up of these groups should reflect the interrelationships between the agenda items stressed during our general exchange of views. The salience of item 4 for the consideration of both the question of evolving a general approach to a conventional weapon study, as well as of the question of military budgets, is undeniable. We agree that for reasons of convenience and efficacy two working groups should be set up, provided they do not work concurrently and simultaneously. One working group could deal with items 4 and 5, taking full account of the interrelationship of these two items. The other could deal with item 5, with the clear understanding, of course, that the question of the reduction of military budgets can be realistically considered only in the context of the upward spiral of the arms race and the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States in this regard. This will ensure that the working groups conduct their work in the proper perspective.
One additional point relates to the conduct of consultations on the organization of work. While we realize the usefulness of consultations through the officers of the Commission, it would be appropriate in our view for consultations on these matters to cover a wider spectrum of States and include as many delegations as possible. Such a methodology will ensure that the decisions will reflect a proper consensus.

In conclusion, I should like to state that in the course of our work in this session of the Disarmament Commission it would be important for us not to lose sight of the priorities that should govern our approach to the disarmament process. These priorities have been clearly set out in the Final Document adopted at the first special session devoted to disarmament and which represents a collective commitment by all States Members of the United Nations.

We should not embark on any activity on the basis of loosely formulated ideas, but rather draw out clearly and in a comprehensive manner the contours of our work and place the responsibility for concrete measures squarely on the shoulders of those who bear the main responsibility for the continuing deadlock in disarmament negotiations. Above all, we must remain firm in our determination to summon up the required political will to address the basic problems that concern the security of States and the very survival of mankind.
Mr. de LA GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, the French delegation is pleased to extend to you its warm congratulations and best wishes. We are well aware of the great interest which the Danish Government and nation have in disarmament, and we have appreciated many times your country's contribution to the efforts of the international community. The chairmanship of our Commission, which falls to you this year, in this respect is testimony of deserved recognition. We wish to congratulate also the other members of the Bureau and to express to them all our best wishes in playing their part in conducting our work.

This work has begun in conditions which, clearly, are hardly likely to promote progress towards disarmament. Such progress depends on security and confidence. Both have suffered various attacks, the most serious of which took place in Afghanistan.

The prospects for disarmament will improve only if the fundamental principles of the Charter relating to the conduct of States are fully respected — and, above all, the principles of self-determination and of non-interference in internal affairs.

However, the concerns which the international situation justly inspires in us should not divert us from the tasks undertaken in the disarmament field. Thus my country has made an effort to make as active a contribution as possible to the current negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament and in Madrid during the discussion of the terms of reference of a conference on disarmament in Europe.

We would include the work of our Commission in that effort. The French delegation indeed attaches very great importance to this work. A body with universal membership, the Commission occupies a specific place in the institutional system authorized by the 1978 special session. These two first sessions have resulted in contributions of major political importance: the elements of the comprehensive programme for disarmament whose adoption will, we hope, be a major result of the special session of 1982; and the declaration on the Second Disarmament Decade, the most noteworthy document of principle adopted by the General Assembly on disarmament since 1978.
The task before us this year is also of real importance. The Commission, we have no doubt, will carry it out satisfactorily, for it will be able to preserve the spirit of co-operation which marked its work at the two preceding sessions, together with the methods of work based on the rule of consensus.

For the third consecutive year our agenda includes an item relating to the whole range of aspects of disarmament. The French delegation considers quite appropriate the opportunity thus given to the Commission to study - particularly during our general debate - the state of affairs as regards the questions on it and the negotiations taking place, as well as the prospects opening up for the efforts of the international community.

We have noted the concerns that have been expressed once again during our debate as regards the nuclear arms race and the risks linked with the existence of such weapons. The French delegation gauges those risks and understands these concerns. It would thus like to recall the fundamental conditions of any disarmament undertaking as enunciated in the Final Document adopted in 1978 by the General Assembly, which apply also to nuclear disarmament itself. I would cite in this respect the maintenance of mutual security, the maintenance or re-establishment of balance at a reduced level of armaments, the taking into account of regional data and effective international verification measures.

In the region where France is located security, and hence peace, is based on an over-all balance in which the nuclear element is combined with the conventional element. Progress towards disarmament in that region thus depends on a double effort: on the effort of the two Powers which possess most of the nuclear weapons to come to agreement on the definition of balance, which is the goal of SALT, and then, at a later stage, on a progressive lowering of those defined ceilings; and on the effort to be carried out within the geographic framework of Europe to improve security conditions and then progressively reduce conventional armaments. That is the goal of the proposals submitted by France, and discussed at the Madrid Conference, with a view to convening a conference on disarmament in Europe whose first phase would be aimed at the adoption of militarily significant, obligatory and verifiable confidence-building measures.
The goals sought in both cases are fundamentally linked: global balance cannot be dissociated from balance in the European theatre.

The French delegation does not dispute the limits of a security system based to a great extent on nuclear deterrence. But that system has the merit of existing, and peace has been preserved over long years in the part of the world where it does apply. However, the road to progress remains open: that of the two types of negotiations - nuclear and conventional - which I have just mentioned. Their success is closely linked with that of parallel efforts aimed at reducing tension, removing threats, putting an end to coercive action and restoring confidence and a sense of security.

Two items on our agenda require particular attention this year and should be considered, as has been suggested by the member countries of the European Community, within the framework of the respective working groups that would be devoted to them: the study on conventional weapons, and military budgets.

Item 6 of our agenda, relating to a study on conventional disarmament, is of great importance in my delegation's opinion. The joint views of the countries of the European Community on this subject have been expressed in the statement made before our Commission by the representative of the Netherlands. The proposed study meets a clear need. Conventional weapons and the forces using them absorb by far the bulk of the world's military expenditure, and all the conflicts that have taken place since the last World War have been conventional ones.
The ideas submitted by the Danish delegation in the document which it distributed seem to us to respond appropriately to the goals that we seek. My delegation would like to stress in particular the following conditions which seem to us to be of decisive importance for any conventional disarmament undertaking: the general conditions of disarmament which we recalled just now apply, of course, to conventional disarmament: they are security, balance, verification and the taking into account of regional data; this last condition is clearly called for in the case of conventional disarmament, since problems of security arise for the most part in States within a regional framework; the initiatives to be undertaken are therefore the responsibility of the countries in the same region. If they so wish, they must undertake negotiations among themselves aimed at reducing conventional weapons. I would cite as an example negotiations which are taking place in Europe together with the Ayacucho Declaration. It is also for these States to conclude with countries supplying weapons agreements which they consider appropriate to limit their acquisitions. Of course, such decisions basically fall within the proper responsibility of the countries in the regions concerned. No one would ignore the particular responsibilities of countries possessing the largest arsenals and the major importance of the problems in regions where the largest concentrations of conventional weapons are to be found. From this arise the initiatives and the efforts being made in Europe. Finally, if action in the field of conventional disarmament is a regional responsibility, it would be most desirable for the study which we are to discuss to include recommendations of a general nature on the most appropriate principles, conditions and methods for carrying out conventional disarmament.

The French delegation therefore very much hopes that discussions on this item of the agenda will lead to a positive result.

The question of military budgets under item 5 of the agenda has been the subject of various proposals and decisions in the United Nations. Among these I would mention in particular resolution 33/67 of 14 December 1978 under which a special group on establishing military budgets was set up. The work of this group has seen significant progress which has been sanctioned by resolutions 34/83 F and
35/142 B; the latter, adopted by consensus at the last session of the General Assembly recommends that: "all Member States should make use of the reporting instrument" developed by the working group and "report annually to the Secretary-General their military expenditures". Under the same resolution, the General Assembly declares itself

"Convinced that the systematic reporting of military expenditures

is an important first step in the move towards agreed and balanced reductions

of military expenditure."

For my delegation, these words mean that the agreed assessment of military expenditure is a condition for any specific measures to reduce military budgets. Thus, as was recalled last Wednesday by the delegation of the Netherlands on behalf of the members of the European Communities, this demand for "comparability" is a particular case of the general requirement for adequate verification of disarmament measures in accordance with the principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament.

Progress in reducing military budgets - and, in this respect the French delegation has particularly in mind the provisions of resolution 35/142 A - depends very largely on the application of recommendations of the General Assembly on the publication and the standardized presentation of military expenditure. In this respect some concern is warranted; in fact, only the States of certain regional groups have so far provided data within the framework of the inquiry conducted under the authority of the Secretary-General. We have noted that no member country of one of the major military alliances has given any answers to the question asked by a group of experts who are representative of various geographical and political components of the international community.

Thus it seems to us difficult for decisive progress to be made at this session during consideration of the question entitled "Reduction of Military Budgets" which our Commission must undertake under resolution 35/142 A.

The French delegation certainly notes with interest document A/CN.10/26 put forward by the delegations of Romania and Sweden. However, despite the efforts of the co-sponsors to achieve generally acceptable wording, we have to note that
this text tends to minimize the results reached by the special group. Thus we note with great regret that document A/CN.10/26 does not present as a necessary condition a successfully harmonized presentation of military expenditure.

Consequently, my delegation doubts that a discussion on the basis of the document submitted by the delegations of Romania and Sweden can at this stage lead to a consensus on a draft declaration or a United Nations resolution.

However, we hope that the Commission will continue and deepen the exchange of views begun in 1980 on the conditions and principles applicable to the freezing or reduction of military budgets.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.