General Assembly

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 8 May 1985, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I am happy to report that after informal consultations the representative of the Bahamas has agreed to take up the chairmanship of Working Group II dealing with agenda item 6, on South Africa's nuclear capability, which was established by the Commission at its 84th meeting, on Monday, 6 May 1985. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission appoints Ambassador Davidson Hepburn Chairman of Working Group II.

It was so decided.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand): I would like first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for this year. As Pakistan's ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament you have earned an enviable reputation as a knowledgeable and capable practitioner of diplomacy in the field of disarmament and arms control. Those skills will be of great assistance to us in the Commission at this session. I should also like to offer my congratulations to the other officers of the Commission on their election.

If I may be permitted a personal note, 40 years ago this morning, as a schoolboy in New Zealand, I joined my fellow countrymen in celebrating the end of the Second World War. New Zealand was deeply involved in that war and many New Zealanders lost their lives. It was a great relief to me and all my fellow countrymen when that war came to an end. Forty years on, it is high time that the wounds left by that war were finally healed and that we all got on with the job of carrying out the fundamental task for which the United Nations was founded: the maintenance of international peace and security.

This annual session of the Disarmament Commission provides a valuable opportunity for all Members of the United Nations to contribute to multilateral discussions on disarmament. Coming as it does at the midpoint between the regular sessions of the General Assembly and at the recess of the Conference on Disarmament, the Commission's session gives us a chance to assess the state of disarmament negotiations and to see where we are going.

When we compare the situation at the time of last year's session with that before us now we cannot help seeing some improvement. The most significant
development this year has clearly been the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. My Government welcomed the resumption of those talks and the agreement reached on their objectives. As the joint communiqué of 8 January stated:

"The objective of the negotiations will be to work out effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms and at strengthening strategic stability."

My Government particularly welcomes the statement in the communiqué that the negotiations "should lead to the complete elimination of nuclear arms everywhere."

In the past few weeks we have heard dissatisfaction expressed by both sides, but particularly by the Soviet Union, over the progress made in the first round of negotiations in Geneva. We trust that neither party will shrink from its obligation to pursue the negotiations with the utmost vigour. We appreciate the extraordinary difficulties they face in attempting to reach agreements that will promote mutual, balanced and verifiable reductions in the existing levels of nuclear weapons and also ensure that any innovations in weaponry are not of the kind that will cause instability. But such difficulties pale into insignificance beside the risks involved in an unlimited and uncontrolled nuclear arms race. Both parties to the negotiations must remember that through their decisions to acquire the massive nuclear arsenals that could destroy the world many times over they have acquired a responsibility to all mankind. The capacity and the responsibility for reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons rest primarily with the nuclear Powers, and particularly the United States and the Soviet Union. New Zealand, with all other non-nuclear countries, must call on them to make full use of the opportunity they have given themselves for working out agreements to reverse the menacing process of nuclear escalation.

There has also been some movement this year in the multilateral disarmament negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The Conference has resumed detailed consideration of the radiological weapons item and the comprehensive programme for disarmament. It has taken up again its negotiations on a convention to eliminate chemical weapons, although the progress made in those negotiations has been less than we had hoped for. The urgency of the Conference's work on chemical weapons was again brought home by the recent finding that chemical weapons have been used against Iranian soldiers in the Iran-Iraq conflict. New
New Zealand condemns all use of chemical weapons. We strongly endorse the statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 25 April calling for strict observance of the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of chemical weapons in wartime. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to speed up its work on a convention that will rid the world of these weapons altogether.

A welcome development at the first part of the session of the Conference on Disarmament has been the agreement reached on a mandate for an ad hoc committee to consider the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We congratulate the members of the Conference on their efforts and look forward to the commencement of substantive discussions when the Conference on Disarmament reconvenes in June.

Unhappily, the progress made on the outer-space item has not been matched on other items on the agenda of the Conference. My Government is disturbed that the Conference has still not reached agreement on a mandate for the ad hoc committee on the nuclear-test-ban item. At its last session, the General Assembly adopted the resolution put forward by Australia and New Zealand stressing the urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Three-quarters of the membership of the United Nations voted in favour of that resolution and no Member voted against it. We are, to say the least, disappointed at the failure so far of the Conference to respond to the injunction contained in that resolution.

Nuclear testing is of particular concern to New Zealand and to other countries in the South Pacific because of France's continuing refusal to halt its nuclear testing programme at Mururoa Atoll. Another nuclear device was exploded at the atoll on 1 May. Referring to that explosion, the Prime Minister of New Zealand said:

"I am appalled at this further evidence of France's total disregard of regional opinion. France knows full well that all States in the South Pacific are unanimous in their firm and total opposition to nuclear testing in the region. They have said so repeatedly and I call on France to acknowledge the strength of their views. The tests must stop."

Let me make it clear also, however, that New Zealand's advocacy of a comprehensive test ban is not motivated simply by the testing that takes place in our own region. We share the widely-held view that a comprehensive test ban is a most practical and immediate way of halting the development and further spread of
nuclear weapons. We acknowledge the differences of position that have contributed to the stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament on a nuclear-test ban: we do not accept that those differences should prevent any work from being done. As my Prime Minister said when he addressed the Conference on Disarmament in March of this year:

"If members of the Conference on Disarmament are serious in their commitment to a nuclear-test ban and if they want to contribute to solving one of the most significant problems facing all of mankind, they cannot let intransigence or excessive conviction frustrate the reaching of a consensus."

Where there is incompatibility between positions of principle, the only productive course is to concentrate on areas where practical progress can be made. One such area is the scope of the proposed test ban. Another is that of verification. The recent test conducted by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to determine the verification capabilities of a full-scale seismological network should provide a good scientific basis for the Conference on Disarmament to further its work on verification. We call on the Conference to find a way to surmount the procedural difficulties that have held up work for the past one and a half years and to get down to serious discussions on a nuclear-test ban.

The Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is to be held in September this year, is another event on the disarmament and arms control agenda. The final preparatory meeting for the Conference concluded last week. We welcome the constructive spirit evident at that meeting and the outcome of the preparatory process. These augur well for the Review Conference itself, which we hope will result in an agreed reaffirmation of commitments to all aspects of the Treaty. There can be no doubt that the Treaty and its safeguards system, together with the forbearance of its non-nuclear parties, have provided the major bulwark against the further spread of nuclear weapons. New Zealand intends to participate actively in the Review Conference and to support all efforts to preserve and strengthen the non-proliferation régime.

The adoption and reinforcement of global measures of disarmament and arms control will be the principal means for ending the arms race, but regional measures can be important stepping-stones. As a member of the South Pacific Forum, New Zealand has given strong support to the proposal adopted last year by the Forum, on
the initiative of Australia, for a South Pacific nuclear-free zone. The Working Group set up by the Forum last year to elaborate the framework and elements of the zone has made good progress and it is expected that a draft treaty will be ready for consideration by the full Forum when it meets in Rarotonga in the Cook Islands later this year.

New Zealand, as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has long eschewed the possession of nuclear weapons. The policy of the Government that won the elections in my country last year is that no nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered ship may enter a New Zealand port. This policy applies to all such ships, whatever country they come from. Our Government's policy reflects widespread public concern about the nuclear-arms race, but it is a policy that is related to New Zealand's own situation in a part of the world that has so far been free from nuclear competition.

New Zealand is not setting itself up as an example to any other country. Our Prime Minister has publicly acknowledged that European countries in particular are in a different situation from New Zealand and must act in accordance with their own interests as they perceive them. New Zealand has long been and remains deeply committed to the Western concepts of freedom and democracy and we continue to support the Western alliance in upholding those values. Our Government has recently reaffirmed its intention of maintaining New Zealand's various contributions to international peace and security, particularly in the South Pacific and in South-East Asia.

I should now like briefly to address some of the specific items on our agenda for this session. Many of the issues I have already referred to arise under item 4, the general item dealing with the arms race. For the past few years, the discussions on that item in the contact group of the Committee of the Whole have focused on an attempt to draft a comprehensive set of recommendations for halting and reversing the arms race. It has been a difficult task and one that has not so far met with much success. We wonder whether the Commission could not try to find some other way of dealing with the item while at the same time adhering to the principle accepted in 1978 that the Commission should, where possible, take decisions by consensus.

Item 5, "Reduction of military budgets", and item 6, on South Africa's nuclear capability, have also been on our agenda for some time. On occasion it has
appeared that final agreement could be reached on those items, but this has so far eluded us. We can only hope that this year the Commission will be able finally to adopt concrete and meaningful recommendations on these two subjects.

Items 7, 8 and 9 are new to us this year. We look forward to considering the proposals of the sponsors of resolution 39/151 G, who referred item 7, on strengthening the role of the the United Nations in the field of disarmament, to this Commission. It bears recalling that in its resolution 31/90 the Assembly endorsed the agreed proposals contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. Many of those proposals have since been implemented through decisions taken at the two special sessions on disarmament and at regular sessions of the General Assembly. But one section of that report that has not been fully implemented concerns efforts to improve the working methods of the First Committee. At the last two sessions of the General Assembly the Chairmen of the First Committee have encouraged a welcome rationalization of the First Committee's working procedures. In considering this item the Commission could assist the Assembly by building on those efforts, perhaps taking as its starting-point the proposals put forward by the Chairman of the First Committee last year.

With respect to item 8, on curbing the naval arms race, it should be borne in mind that the General Assembly will at its next session have the opportunity to consider the outcome of the comprehensive study on the naval arms race undertaken pursuant to resolution 38/188 G. The Disarmament Commission will undoubtedly be in a better position to address that subject when it has had a chance to consider the comprehensive study and any recommendations made on it by the General Assembly.

On item 9, concerning a review and appraisal of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, the Commission has an obvious focus for its work in the terms of the Declaration itself attached to resolution 35/46. Given the evident lack of progress towards disarmament in the last five years, such a review and appraisal may not be a happy task, but it is one that must be undertaken.

The Commission has a very full agenda to deal with. Under it, and particularly under items 4 and 9, arise most of the major problems in the field of disarmament. We know, of course, that it will not be any easier to resolve those issues here than it has been in other forums, but we, as Members of the United Nations and of the Disarmament Commission, have a responsibility to work hard for
Mr. Harland, New Zealand

the concrete and useful results that we hope will come out of this session. For its part, the New Zealand delegation will do its best to contribute to such an outcome.

Mr. Qian Jiadong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): At the outset, Sir, please allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the Chinese delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The great country you represent, Pakistan, has always been in favour of preserving world peace and promoting disarmament, and you yourself are also well known for your ability and rich experience. It is the hope of the Chinese delegation that under your guidance this session will produce satisfactory results; in this you can count on the full co-operation of the Chinese delegation.

There are all together six substantive items on the agenda to be considered at the current session. On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations it is of particular significance that the United Nations Disarmament Commission should consider these items relating to disarmament, especially the two new items concerning the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and the implementation of the Second Disarmament Decade.

The Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, which was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 1980 at its thirty-fifth session, provides a sound basis and the guidelines for the Second Disarmament Decade.

We are now right at the mid-point of the Second Disarmament Decade. An appropriate assessment of its implementation at this juncture will help people better realize the achievements and deficiencies of the past five years and chart a correct course for the work in the next five years.

Responding to the solemn call of the Declaration, and greatly inspired by the two special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Governments and the peoples of many countries have made unremitting efforts in the last five years in opposing war and safeguarding peace, efforts which have a positive impact. The question of disarmament has attracted world-wide attention. The Non-Aligned Movement, which has become well established, has played a significant role in promoting disarmament. A massive peace movement against the nuclear arms race has emerged in Europe, Japan and many other countries, with the participation of people from almost all social strata. Today, while the danger of war still exists, the forces checking war are growing. In the final analysis, the
awakening of the people and their actions are the real motive force behind progress in disarmament. In that sense, the Second Disarmament Decade has already made remarkable achievements.

On the other hand, however, with regard to the primary objective of the Decade, namely disarmament itself, what has happened in these five years has been both disappointing and disquieting. During this period, the arms race between the two super-Powers with the largest arsenals has further intensified instead of being halted. The quantity of their weaponry keeps increasing, and the quality is improving. Nuclear weapons have been deployed in places which used to be free of them. Furthermore, the arms race is being hastened into a new domain, outer space, bringing about new factors destabilizing the world situation. Needless to say, such a tendency runs diametrically counter to the purpose and objective of the Second Disarmament Decade. To check this development is an important task for people throughout the world in the next five years.

According to the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, the first goal of the Second Disarmament Decade is "Halting and reversing the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race" (resolution 35/46, annex, para. 7). To achieve this goal it is imperative that the two major Powers possessing the largest arsenals truly undertake their special responsibilities. Earlier this year they resumed their bilateral negotiations, and it is hoped that this time they will demonstrate genuine political will and come up with results which will be really conducive to international peace and not detrimental to the interests of any other country. In the nuclear field these two countries should take the lead in halting the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and in drastically cutting down their nuclear stockpiles. Only in this way can the nuclear arms race be really reversed and the danger of a nuclear war reduced.

In the field of outer space, in view of the complexities of the issue, efforts should be focused at present on the "deweaponization" of outer space - that is, the prohibition of research on and the development, testing, production, deployment and use of any kind of space weaponry and the thorough destruction of all such weapons. In order to create a favourable atmosphere and facilitate negotiations, the super-Powers should, as a first step, stop deploying new intermediate nuclear missiles in Europe and Asia and halt the development, testing and deployment of outer-space weapons.
Disarmament has all along been a key issue in the United Nations. Particularly since 1978, this world organization has been playing an increasingly important role in the field of disarmament. Under the auspices of the United Nations, two special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament have been held, with the adoption of the Final Document of the first special session, which is of guiding significance. In the Secretariat of the United Nations the offices in charge of disarmament affairs have been strengthened step by step and have made tremendous efforts towards the realization of disarmament. Mandated by General Assembly resolutions, the Secretary-General has asked experts to conduct a series of studies on different disarmament issues. The World Disarmament Campaign and the disarmament fellowships Programme, organized by the United Nations have won the praise of the Member States. These are but some of the outstanding instances of the important and useful endeavours by the United Nations to promote disarmament.

As with the implementation of the Second Disarmament Decade, the United Nations has, regrettably, not been able to produce anything concrete and tangible in disarmament itself. Of course, this failure cannot be attributed to lack of efforts by the United Nations. Nevertheless, while we consider how to strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament, efforts should be made to alleviate this situation. In this regard, it is worth mentioning here the relationship between bilateral talks and multilateral disarmament negotiations and deliberations. As the question of peace and war is the concern of all countries, the United Nations, having universal representation, is both entitled and obliged to play its due role in the sphere of disarmament. Multilateral negotiations and bilateral negotiations should be complementary to each other and closely co-ordinated. Ongoing bilateral talks should not be used as a pretext to procrastinate or even to obstruct multilateral negotiations. It is fully justified that many countries have asked the United States and the Soviet Union to keep the international community informed of the progress of their bilateral talks. As always, China will continue to support the efforts to enhance the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

There is yet another new item on the agenda of this session, namely, the question of the naval arms race. In the world today the naval arms race has indeed become an important aspect of the global arms race between the two super-Powers. Their powerful naval forces are not only being used for activities of interference and aggression and even the occupation of small and weak countries, but also being
turned increasingly into a component part of their overall nuclear striking force in the quest for strategic nuclear supremacy. The intensification of their naval arms race seriously jeopardizes international security, freedom of passage on the high seas and the exploitation of maritime resources. A study is being made on this question by an expert group appointed by the Secretary-General, to which China has also sent an expert. We are looking forward to receiving a report by this study group during the coming session of the General Assembly.

Items 4, 5 and 6 are not new. They have been discussed for years, and we can proceed in our work from the relevant documents of last year. Regarding items 4 and 5, I wish only to stress that the following basic principle must be reflected in the papers to be adopted: countries possessing the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals and having the biggest military expenditures should take the lead both in disarmament and in reducing military budgets. Without the inclusion of this basic point, the practical significance of the documents will be greatly weakened.

The sixth item concerns South Africa's nuclear capability. An agreement on this question could have been reached last year but for the obstacles that appeared at the last moment. China supports the just struggle against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the South African racist authorities and also supports the just demand that economic sanctions and a ban on arms transactions, and particularly on nuclear collaboration with the South African authorities, be imposed. We appeal to all parties concerned to act positively on the basis of human conscience and justice and in a spirit of cooperation so that the work under this item can be concluded at the present session.

The Chinese Government and people have been working consistently for the maintenance of world peace and the realization of disarmament. In a speech on 16 April during his visit to Australia, Mr. Hu Yaobang, General-Secretary of the Communist Party of China, clearly stated:

"China's socialist construction needs a lasting environment of international peace. We do not want war, and we hope that there will be no war in this century; even better, no war in the next century; and of course still better, no war for good. China's basic foreign policy is to help maintain world peace and develop friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual
non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence."

Guided by this policy, the Chinese Government, apart from actively participating in the endeavours for disarmament at the international level, has in recent years taken a series of measures to cut its military expenditures and reduce its armaments. Since 1979 China has been tightening its military spending, and the percentage it occupies in the total budgets of the Government has been dwindling. The size of the Chinese military forces has been cut and will continue to be cut drastically. Efforts are being made to turn some of the military installations, such as airports, piers and barracks, to civilian use. Certain sectors of our military industry have been, and will continue to be, converted to civilian production. Stress is being laid on training vocational technicians in the armed forces who can serve both the military and civilian departments, and some of them will be transferred to civilian production departments of all kinds. China is determined to work for world peace and international security. This is the course we shall firmly stay on and never depart from.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. Your valuable work for disarmament has deservedly earned you the respect that this body accords you, and I can assure you of Canada's support for your chairmanship.

A central task before us as we begin the 1985 session of the Disarmament Commission is to appraise the progress made during the Second Disarmament Decade. That question is at once easy and agonizing, for we must say in all honesty that at the midway point of the decade achievement has been zero.

The military have more arms, the Governments have more rhetoric, people everywhere have more frustration, and the world feels more insecure. Those Governments that use confrontation rather than co-operation are failing in their responsibilities to mankind.

Instead of making concrete progress, we are slipping away from the goal to which all countries subscribed when they gave a consensus agreement to the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. It is as though we have forgotten the ringing call to sanity that we flashed around the world in 1978, when we said:

"Mankind is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation." (resolution S-10/2, para. 18)
(Mr. Roche, Canada)

What has been accomplished, as we look at the multilateral forums - 11 years of talks in Vienna on mutual and balanced force reduction; seven years of talks at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva; more than a year of talks at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament? Not a single substantive agreement has come out of the multilateral processes.

As for the First Committee's work at the annual session of the General Assembly, the plethora of disarmament resolutions, which reached a record 64 last fall, has become a smoke-screen concealing the intellectual obfuscation that prevents meaningful steps forward. As the Secretary-General observed in his warning to the General Assembly on 12 December, the discussions have taken on a life of their own. Mr. Perez de Cuellar said:

"All too often it seems as if the players are only moving their lethal pawns in a global chess game." (A/39/PV.97, p. 123-125)

Of course, the resumed bilateral negotiating process in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union offers renewed hope for substantial cuts in nuclear arms. But, as the first round showed, this process will be long and difficult. As the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, has noted,

"What we are witnessing now is the beginning of a long and sensitive process. Nothing is more urgent than the two nuclear super-Powers agreeing on a means to end the arms race."

These bilateral negotiations on strategic, intermediate and space weapons must not be allowed to fail, for all humanity could stand imperilled if the Geneva process should break down. Therefore every step possible must be taken in the multilateral forums to reinforce the bilateral process. Progress in the multilateral forums is necessary in its own right and has the added benefit of helping the bilateral process. And, as you, Mr. Chairman, observed in your opening remarks two days ago, we must find a way to break out of the present impasse on arms control and disarmament issues if the multilateral process is not to lose all credibility.

So our job here in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and indeed in all the other multilateral forums, is clear: we have to cut out the dithering and get down to work. Can we not at this session of the Disarmament Commission at least agree on the role we want to see the United Nations play in disarmament in the years ahead?
In 1978 we claimed that the United Nations had a central role and a primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament and that there was an urgent need to utilize more effectively and to improve and revitalize existing disarmament machinery.

Some steps were taken at the time to improve the United Nations machinery, but obviously more needs to be done.

The essential fact remains that the United Nations depends on international good-will and trust in achieving its objective of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The development of this atmosphere of trust is an absolute prerequisite for progress. The most effective contribution to arms control and disarmament is made through sustained consensus. But we are moving away from consensus. At the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly only 25 out of 72 First Committee resolutions on arms control, disarmament and international security issues achieved a consensus.

I realize that consensus-building in large multilateral forums can be a prescription for slowing down the pace of progress. Nevertheless, decisions taken by straight majority votes without regard to the views of a minority whose support may be essential for their implementation may lose their credibility. The spirit of consensus is fundamental in strengthening the voice of the United Nations in arms control and disarmament issues. The search for a consensus need not be daunting provided we build on those elements on which there is common agreement. So we should concentrate first on determining the common ground on difficult issues and then seek to expand it, rather than focus on the questions which divide us. And, of course, greater efforts at early consultation between all groups are necessary.

The Prime Minister of Canada, the Rt.Hon. Brian Mulroney, has frequently said that Canada gives the highest priority to this multilateral work for peace. Canada's priorities are clearly set out and stem directly from the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament: first, to contribute to progress in the nuclear arms talks between the United States and the Soviet Union; secondly, to work for a comprehensive test-ban treaty; thirdly, to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In the field of non-nuclear weapons, Canadian priorities include, first, the early conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons and, secondly, the prevention of an arms race in outer space.
(Mr. Roche, Canada)

In no other area is the need for a jolt of political energy as pressing as it is in that of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. For Canada, the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty remains a fundamental objective. We believe that a comprehensive test ban would be a concrete and realistic measure which would constitute a major step in curbing the development of new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons.

It is Canada's firm view that, with a willingness to accept sensible accommodations of interests, it should be possible for the Conference on Disarmament, which is grappling with this problem, to agree to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban with a realistic and practical mandate. We are in fact greatly disappointed that the sensible and sustained efforts of many in the Conference on Disarmament who have been working towards the establishment of a mechanism to make possible discussion on a comprehensive test ban have led to so little.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament should examine the issue of scope as well as the issues of verification and compliance with a view to the actual negotiation of a treaty. Apart from the intrinsic merit of progress towards a comprehensive test ban, there is also the positive effect it would have on efforts to ensure the continued integrity of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which, as the Commission knows, is to be reviewed this fall. The Non-Proliferation Treaty, with 127 adherents, enjoys the widest international support of any arms control treaty. Here indeed is something in the field of disarmament for which we can be grateful, for the Non-Proliferation Treaty provides a legal framework as well as the comprehensive political and technical commitment to horizontal and vertical non-proliferation which underpins the international non-proliferation régime.

The vital importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as an essential instrument of international security cannot be over-emphasized. In this regard we urge its detractors to review their positions and, even if they cannot become signatories at this stage, at least to do nothing that would undermine the Treaty.

Canada had hoped that early and significant progress on a chemical weapons convention would be made at the 1985 session of the Conference on Disarmament. However, the pace has been much slower than expected. We are convinced, however, that a good deal could still be accomplished after the current recess, for much of the groundwork has already been laid.
Continued reports of the actual use of chemical weapons in war situations highlight the real urgency of achieving the objective of a total prohibition of chemical weapons as a concrete achievement of the Second Disarmament Decade. The danger of the proliferation of chemical weapons is now a fact and no longer a theory. This proliferation will inevitably exacerbate regional tensions and lead to a new dimension in regional arms competition. These weapons must be prohibited before they irrevocably add another dimension to the arms race.

We are encouraged by the most recent developments in the multilateral efforts to move the outer space issue forward. After two years of discussion, the Conference on Disarmament has finally agreed on a mandate for an ad hoc committee on outer space. This mandate provides the basis for immediate concrete work and we expect the Conference on Disarmament to take full advantage of it in order to complete the necessary exploratory work that is required on this issue.

Let us make some progress on the agenda items at this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Last year the United Nations Disarmament Commission continued its effort to elaborate the principles that should govern States in freezing and reducing military budgets, but could not reach final agreement on a set of guidelines. The Canadian delegation has supported the idea of reducing military expenditures. In our view, the reporting exercise which the United Nations has devised is a prerequisite for progress on this issue, and we have given it our support by annually completing the standardized reporting instrument. We urge States which have not yet completed the standardized reporting instrument to do so as soon as possible to enable real progress to be made in reducing military spending levels globally. Without such a data base any attempt to reduce military budgets will remain but a pious profession of intent.

There is currently under way a comprehensive study on the naval arms race by a group of governmental experts established by the thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 38/188 G. Their study is to cover naval forces and naval arms systems and the development, deployment and mode of operation of such forces and systems. Consequently, we believe the Disarmament Commission would be advised to consider this item substantively only after completion of the study which is to be submitted to the fortieth session of the General Assembly.
It is our hope that a consensus can be reached at this session on the item relating to South Africa's nuclear capability. Canada's position is one of clear and consistent opposition to the repugnant apartheid policies of South Africa. We have also consistently attempted to strengthen the international non-proliferation régime. Therefore, we support calls for all States, including South Africa, to make an internationally binding non-proliferation commitment and to place all their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. So far, South Africa has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but informed IAEA on 31 January 1984 that it would "administer its nuclear affairs in a manner which is in line with the spirit, principles and goals of the ... NPT and the Nuclear Suppliers Group Guidelines" and, accordingly, would subject the export of items identified in the Nuclear Suppliers Group's "trigger list" to IAEA safeguards. Canada welcomes this decision, but South Africa must obviously go further. States must agree to open all their facilities to international inspection if they wish to be seen as helpful participants in the international safeguards system.

Canada will persist in urging South Africa to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Indeed, our latest diplomatic effort to encourage South Africa to become a signatory occurred only a matter of a few weeks ago.

Finally, as we begin our work in the Disarmament Commission, I believe it is important for us to recall the events of 40 years ago. As we remember the horrors of the Second World War, we should bear in mind the very real relationship between that war and the urgent need for progress today in disarmament - for there is a relationship between the tragic events of the war and the reconciliation it led to, including the establishment of the United Nations.

This theme of reconciliation is fundamentally important in our commemoration of the events of the Second World War. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, noted in his statement to the United Nations General Assembly last fall:

"The present moment, the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, is a fitting one for each Member State to examine its commitment to the United Nations Charter. This anniversary must mark a renewal for the future, not just a celebration of the past." (A/39/PV.7, p. 23)

It is not enough to have reconciliations of the past while allowing
antagonisms of the present to continue. We must all realize that, in the nuclear age, we must survive together or we will die together. As global citizens, we must recognize that we live in an interdependent world. Whatever our differences, we will always share the common ground as inhabitants of this fragile planet.

It is this new recognition of the possibilities ahead for the world by building a process of collective security that gives us hope for the future. We have an immense challenge before us: we must make the disarmament process respond to the most urgent needs of the human family.

Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway): First, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. My delegation is confident that this session of the Disarmament Commission will benefit from your able guidance and, on behalf of my delegation, I express our readiness to co-operate with you for the successful conclusion of the current session.

As we prepare for the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is fitting to note that this year is marked by a number of important events in the field of disarmament.

In the bilateral field, the reopening of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union is most significant and welcome. The Norwegian Government attaches the utmost importance to substantial reductions in the number of nuclear arms and to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In the multilateral field, we attach similar significance to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on questions such as chemical weapons and to the Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is our hope that that Conference will serve as a means to strengthen further the non-proliferation régime.

I note also that in the multilateral field a preparatory committee will meet later this summer to lay the groundwork for an international conference on disarmament and development next year. For our part, we are pleased that important efforts undertaken in the Disarmament Commission last year are thus carried on.

The Norwegian Government attaches particular importance to the work that has been performed during the last few years within the United Nations on questions related to the reduction of military budgets, which should be carried out on a mutually agreed basis without detriment to the national security of any country.
The international system for standardized reporting of military budgets, which was introduced in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/142 B of 12 December 1980, is an essential element in the work in this field. Wider participation in the reporting system by States from different geographic regions and representing different budgeting systems would contribute to increased confidence between States and thus facilitate future negotiations aimed at the conclusion of an international agreement, or international agreements, on the reduction of military expenditures. We note in this regard that the Secretary-General, in pursuance of resolution 37/95 B of 13 December 1982, is to deliver a report to the fortieth session of the General Assembly on the refinement of the reporting system. In this context I would like to stress that agreed methods of measuring and comparing military expenditures constitute a requirement for negotiations on balanced and verifiable reductions of military budgets. Agreements in this area must, in other words, be based on transparency and comparability.

This year also the question of South Africa's nuclear capability is part of our agenda. Since the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly this issue has been the subject of extensive consideration by the Disarmament Commission - and very rightly so.

The Norwegian Government for its part has for a number of years voiced its concern that South Africa may develop a nuclear-weapon capability. This year our concern is all the more timely as we prepare for the Third Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Regrettably, South Africa continues to refuse to place all its nuclear activities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and thereby to accept the requirements of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Discussion of South Africa's nuclear capability this year by this Commission cannot, in our view, avoid being influenced also by the tragic developments inside South Africa involving senseless killings of innocent people opposed to the abhorrent policy of apartheid. Such internal practices must be condemned and must come to an end. Internationally, persistent efforts must also be undertaken to prevent South Africa from developing its nuclear capability in such a way that it would endanger international peace and security, including the security of neighbouring States.

For our part, we are ready to continue to take part in the very fruitful consultations conducted among members of the Disarmament Commission last year with
(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

a view to arriving at conclusions and recommendations that may be presented to this year's General Assembly.

The United Nations has a central role to play in the field of disarmament. It is particularly important to remind ourselves of this aspect this year as disarmament matters constitute an important part of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and of the International Year of Peace.

As will be recalled, institutional issues were thoroughly considered at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and subsequently during the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. During that session my country had the honour to introduce a draft resolution dealing with a great number of issues pertaining to the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. That draft resolution, which became resolution 37/99 K, was adopted without a vote. In our view, we are still in the process of gaining experience with some of the decisions taken during the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

It is proper, however, that we keep the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament under continuous review, and in our view this is a question which the Disarmament Commission may usefully consider in some depth, especially as we get closer to, and eventually start preparing for, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

At that time another fully-fledged review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament will certainly take place. In the meantime, however, we should use our time well. It could be that at this stage we could most usefully look at our procedures and practices with a view to making them more effective, while leaving proposals of an institutional nature for future consideration.

As Chairman of the First Committee during the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, I took some initiatives regarding methods of work in the First Committee. Some of the initiatives were implemented. In my view, improvements could still be made and could be discussed during our present session, as I know that many delegations have been preoccupied by this question.

Questions concerning the curbing of the naval arms race should not, in our view, be dealt with in detail at this session of the Disarmament Commission. Detailed consideration of this item at this session would seem premature in view of the fact that the Secretary-General is to present a comprehensive expert report to the fortieth session of the General Assembly in pursuance of resolution 38/188 G.
Paragraph 25 of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade specifies that the General Assembly, at its fortieth session, is to undertake, subsequent to consideration by the Disarmament Commission, a review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the measures specified in the Declaration.

The Declaration, in the opinion of my Government, is an important document as it specifies areas where progress is desirable over a relatively long period of time. It would seem logical that the Commission, in reviewing the Declaration, should take into consideration the fact that the validity of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was confirmed at the second special session in 1982. The Commission might also make reference to the request of the General Assembly to the Conference on Disarmament in resolution 39/148 I to submit to the Assembly's forty-first session a complete draft of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. In addition, the Commission should formulate an appeal to all Member States of the United Nations to do their utmost to contribute to complete realization of the Declaration's objectives and priorities by the end of the Second Disarmament Decade.

In concluding I take the opportunity to note that this year marks the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This is not an occasion for recrimination, but on the contrary – and I emphasize this – for the strengthening of efforts towards reconciliation and co-operation.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those delegations that wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. de LA CORCE (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation has listened without surprise and with equanimity to the words of the representative of New Zealand with regard to the nuclear testing France is carrying out in a territory in the South Pacific that is part of the French Republic.

I should like to recall that in this regard my country is acting in exercise of its sovereignty and in order to ensure its own security. In so doing it is not acting counter to any obligation of international law, nor does it infringe the interests of the States in the region, be it with regard to their security, their economy or their environment.

The French Government does not therefore deem the protests we have heard to be justified. It expresses its sincere hope that this question of nuclear tests will not unduly affect the relations of friendship and co-operation that France intends
to pursue and strengthen with New Zealand as well as with all other States in the South Pacific.

Mr. HARLAND (New Zealand): It is with some regret that I have asked to speak again. I do not want to take up the Commission's time by engaging in a debate with the very distinguished representative of France, for whom I and my delegation have the highest regard. But his observation does make it necessary for me to make one particular point.

He says that the actions taken by France in testing nuclear weapons in the South Pacific does not infringe the interests of the other States in that region. I am afraid that I am obliged to differ from that statement. The fact is that, through its testing programme, France has introduced nuclear weapons into a part of the world that had previously been relatively free of them. That does inevitably affect the well-being and the security of the States in that region, and if any evidence were required it is to be found in the fact that all - not just some or a majority, but all - of the independent States in the South Pacific have been unanimous in asking France to desist from its programme of nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

I sincerely and earnestly echo the hope expressed by the representative of France that the difference between us on this issue of nuclear testing will not affect the close and friendly relations between our two countries - which, I may say today on the anniversary of the ending of the Second World War, are particularly present to our minds. We continue to hope that the French Government will take heed of the strongly held views that we in New Zealand share with all our neighbours in the South Pacific on the question of nuclear testing in that area.

Mr. WOOLCOTT (Australia): I feel obliged to speak briefly on the same subject. I do so with a sense of regret. Indeed, it is slightly painful to enter into this debate, especially on this day. Relations between Australia and France are deep and have been of enormous consequence, particularly in the war the end of which we recognize today.

I listened with care to the views expressed by the representative of New Zealand, which included a direct quotation from his Prime Minister, Mr. Lange. I want to record that the Australian Government shares the views that were expressed by the Ambassador of New Zealand with regard to the issue of French nuclear testing in the Pacific.
(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

I want also to record that it is the unanimous view — the unanimously shared policy — of all of the independent States of the Pacific that the testing by France of nuclear weapons in the Pacific harms them. It is not the view, as has been suggested by the Ambassador of France, that those tests are harmless. It is also the unanimously held view of those States that those tests should stop.

May I conclude by saying that this view and this feeling are held very deeply in Australia by a very considerable majority of the people of my country, and the view that they hold of French nuclear testing in the Pacific is summed up by the question that they often pose, and that question is this: If they are so safe, why are they not done in France?

Mr. de la Gorce (France) (interpretation from French): In response to the remarks just made by my colleagues from New Zealand and Australia I should like to add a few words to my earlier statement.

First point of fact: it is not in our view correct to say that France has introduced nuclear weapons into the region of the South Pacific. We do not have weapons in the region of the South Pacific, and the tests are not designed to lead to action of any sort, to any kind of emplacement of nuclear weapons in that region. No weapons are in place there. On the other hand the South Pacific, as part of the high seas, is thereby open to the presence of naval units that can possibly carry nuclear weapons. We all know this, and we know the extent to which controversy has arisen, particularly in the States whose representatives have just spoken. In short, then, we have not introduced nuclear weapons into the South Pacific.

Second point of fact: our colleague from New Zealand has mentioned that such tests endanger the well-being and security of the region. That is a statement that my Government utterly rejects, and I do not believe anyone can maintain that such tests actually have any adverse effect on well-being or security.

We take note of the views expressed by the States of the South Pacific, but we do not believe that they can be set against the sovereignty of my country and its security interests.

Mr. Harland (New Zealand): I do not want to prolong this exchange any further. I would merely like to acknowledge and welcome the statement made by the representative of France that his Government has not deployed any nuclear weapons in the South Pacific. That is a statement which my Government will certainly welcome and take careful note of.
(Mr. Harland, New Zealand)

I think all I need say on his other point is that the unanimous view of the States in the region differs from that of France on the degree of harm done by the nuclear testing, and we can only repeat our appeal to France to take heed of the views of its neighbours in the South Pacific.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.