Verbatim Record of the Ninety-Fourth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 May 1985, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan)

- Curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CURBING THE NAVAL ARMS RACE: LIMITATION AND REDUCTION OF NAVAL ARMAMENTS AND EXTENSION OF CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES TO SEAS AND OCEANS (continued)

Mr. EDIS (United Kingdom): There are some delegations which seem to share the view of a character in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. I am sure many representatives will be familiar with that work. There was a character in Alice in Wonderland who said, "what I say three times is true". In this case, it seems to be what I say 11 times is true. These delegations seem to believe that the constant repetition of distortion and half-truths, even untruths, irrelevant, historical allusions, will in some way replace objective facts. And such delegations also seem to buy their speeches by the yard, or even by the mile, and we seem to be on the receiving end of such an exercise at the moment.

That the item which we are considering today is on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission is not of the choosing of my delegation. In company with many countries we voted against General Assembly resolution 39/151 I, and its predecessor, 38/188 F, and I note that another sizeable slice of States showed their feelings and good sense by abstaining on those resolutions. This item is not the sort of issue that the Disarmament Commission was established to consider, as the Final Document and General Assembly resolution 37/78 H make clear. The former established the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body, the function of which is to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament. It made clear that it should work as far as possible by consensus. The latter resolution asked the Commission to concentrate on specific subjects on its agenda on which concrete recommendations to the General Assembly could be made.

Now it is quite clear that there can be no consensus on this item and that no useful recommendations can be made on the subject. Why, there is not even agreement on the existence or the nature of the subject which the item purports to address. In addition, the General Assembly has already established an expert group to study naval issues. While the United Kingdom has some reservations about the amended title of this study, it is our expectation that the final report of the Group will be factual and balanced. We intend to make a national submission to contribute towards its work. This study is absorbing a considerable amount of scarce United Nations resources. It would be wasteful, as well as illogical, for the Commission to attempt to duplicate its deliberations, to pre-empt its conclusions, to devalue its final report, but this is what we are being asked to do.
It is interesting to note that despite their supposed interest in and concern about naval activities, the Soviet Union and Bulgaria both withdrew their experts from the United Nations study group after initially indicating a willingness to take part. This suggests that they are more interested in propaganda than in facts. The working paper (A/CN.10/73) that these two countries, along with the German Democratic Republic, have chosen to present to the Commission suggests the same. This document appears to follow up the letter sent on 9 April 1984 to the Secretary-General by Mr. Cromyko. The proposals made in these documents are highly discriminatory and contain too many of the usual propaganda points to be treated as a serious proposal on which the Governments concerned wish to begin substantive negotiations.

For example, they are designed, apparently, to limit naval developments only in the areas which are extensively used by Western navies, whilst areas which are used by the Soviet navy are not mentioned. Limits on particular types of naval vessels concentrate exclusively on types in which Western countries currently hold the advantage, while types in which the Soviet Union has numerical superiority, such as submarines designed to attack surface vessels, including merchant vessels, are excluded.

The rhetoric in these papers - and it can only be characterized as rhetoric - as in the speeches already heard today, and we shall hear many more in the same vein this afternoon, place all the blame on Western countries. This is the height of hypocrisy coming from a country like the Soviet Union which has the world's largest naval building programme, and one which cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be justified by security needs. It is an expansion which has profound implications for an island and maritime nation, such as my own, which depends vitally on maritime communications for our economic well-being and, indeed, our very survival as a nation. My country would be extremely vulnerable, as two world wars have shown, to just the sort of naval capacity which the Soviet Union is developing.

We are ready to discuss naval issues at an appropriate time and on the basis of objective data, but the current session of the Disarmament Commission is clearly not that time, and we regret that the Commission's time is being wasted in this way on an item whose formulation could only be characterized as blatant propaganda.
Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): My delegation did not speak during our brief general debate, partly because it feels that in the Commission's work, designed as it is to promote the consideration of specific items, general exchanges of view should be kept to the minimum, and partly because its positions were appropriately expressed by our colleague from Italy, who spoke for the 10 member countries of the European Community. Also, I had already acquitted myself of the pleasant task of welcoming you to your present position, having been among the first to congratulate you on the very day of your election in December of last year. Even now, my delegation is reluctant to speak, since it would have wished to avoid a substantive consideration of agenda item 8 at our present session, not merely the establishment of a separate Working Group - which happily could be averted on the strength of the views held by a large majority of delegations - but even a more limited treatment in plenary meeting.
My delegation's reasons for this are evident. They have been voiced by others, and with particular brilliance by my colleagues from Australia and Belgium, but I consider it useful to express them unequivocally myself.

Under the relevant paragraph of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, this Commission is to work substantively on the basis of consensus. This consensus requirement is the very essence of our work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. It gives our Commission its specificity and provides our raison d'être for the coming years.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is to assist the General Assembly by an in-depth consideration of and specific recommendations on a limited number of disarmament subjects that cannot be treated in detail during the hectic weeks of the General Assembly itself. The challenge of the Commissions's work is the patient establishment and development of shared perceptions. He who deliberately injects controversy into the Commission's work can therefore expect to reap only controversy and may, if such bad precedents exercise their effect, inflict long-term damage on the Disarmament Commission as an institution.

On 3 December 1984, during the Commission's organizational session, I said: "Only when non-controversial items are entrusted to the Commission can we hope to have purposeful and fruitful work leading to draft recommendations to the General Assembly." (A/CN.10/PV.82, p. 11)

I still believe this to be true. In this particular instance, the controversial nature of General Assembly resolution 151 I, on which agenda item 8 is based, is compounded by the fact that the resolution, on its adoption, obtained fewer votes in favour than votes withholding approval - a voting result normally considered a blatant non-success for a draft resolution in the General Assembly. That poor showing for resolution 39/151 I undoubtedly reflects an insight by most delegations into its particularly partisan nature. I will revert to the deficiencies of the resolution and, consequently, of the terms of reference of agenda item 8, in a moment.

First, however, I should like to give my delegation's second reason for feeling that the agenda item should not be substantively considered at this time. As we all know, a comprehensive United Nations study on the issue of naval armament and disarmament in the broad sense is at present being undertaken under the chairmanship of our colleague from Indonesia. Any attempt to undercut that ongoing
effort - which, incidentally, was initially supported by the very proponents of resolution 39/151 I - demonstrates a surprising contempt both for the experts and for the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who appointed them. Given the substantial cost of United Nations disarmament studies, such attempts are also uneconomical. As the Government of the Netherlands so ably expressed it in its communication to the Secretary-General of 25 March 1985:

"Studies requested by the General Assembly and still under way would have no practical usefulness if recommendations were adopted encouraging Member States to ignore those studies." (A/CN.10/70, p.4)

As I said earlier, my delegation joins in this debate with reluctance; it has not asked for it. There is, however, an unfortunate logic involved in conferences that result in written records. In order to make sure that such records are balanced and do not reflect only the one-sided views of the proponents of resolution 39/151 I, I am compelled to inject into the debate a number of basic facts and views.

In deference to the authors of the impending study my presentation will be brief, especially since I am convinced that the points I am intending to make have not escaped the attention of the experts. My delegation expects to give its views in more detail once the study is before us for in-depth consideration.

I have already given my view that the underlying resolution is a particularly partisan one. That partisan quality is already evident in the preamble, which attempts to set the stage in a particularly alarmist way. The preamble is intended to convey the impression that we are in the midst of a dangerous escalation of a naval arms race, that naval forces are being used increasingly and dangerously to foment conflict or to intimidate sovereign States and that, in short, the oceans, in an unprecedented development, have now become the arena of a new form of military confrontation that carries the risk of war, even nuclear war.

As so often in resolutions drafted by members of the group of socialist States, by a subtle choice of words the impression is conveyed that this alleged situation is predominantly the result of unbridled naval armament on the part of the maritime Powers of the Western Alliance, above all the United States of America. By the intention of the authors, behind the wording lurks the ugly face of a threatening, ever-more-powerful America ready to strike innocent countries of the third world with a naval capability not needed for any other purpose.
To make sure that the text of the resolution carries these connotations, countries closely associated with the Soviet Union, in their replies to the Secretary-General on resolution 39/151 I, have worded their accusations against the United States plainly. In their statements this morning, three socialist delegations in the same manner used the resolution to sharpen such attacks, mixing misinformation and insults in an unacceptable manner. Particularly in the light of these interpretations, the resolution displays its true face as a model exercise in anti-Western propaganda, intended to capture the goodwill of an unsuspecting audience insufficiently acquainted with the functions and development of naval armament and a number of basic security concepts.

Certainly, armament at sea is important and deserves close observation as part of the generally preoccupying arms build-up in many parts of the world. Our efforts directed at arms control and arms reduction and at establishing a safer, more stable world cannot exclude the naval component. This is particularly true since the nuclear-weapon States have for many years diversified their strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals by including sea-based systems. This, at the same time, adds a complicating factor to the assessment of the naval arms situation and to its inclusion in disarmament efforts. By their nuclear mission and payload, ships carrying nuclear weapons are in a way set off from the traditional fleet and traditional naval tasks. Their contribution to stability — or their potential destabilizing influence — and their contribution to disarmament must be regarded in connection with the central survival mechanisms of nuclear Powers. They must play a role in the context of nuclear disarmament.

To the extent that resolution 39/151 I wishes to contribute to our awareness of the importance of disarmament in its naval aspects and to the complex role of naval forces in the nuclear age, I would be prepared to give its authors the benefit of the doubt. In the interests of truth, however, one should categorically oppose their alarmist scenario and their attempted attribution of blame to the Western sea-going nations. Responsibility for the present situation of world-wide naval armament can in reality only attach to the Soviet Union's dramatic build-up of naval forces over the past 15 to 20 years.
The naval Powers of the Atlantic Alliance have, in the past years - especially since the end of the Viet Nam war - gone through a phase of rapid build-down of their naval forces. In this process, the overall number of Alliance naval units has been decreased by 50 per cent, with the United States alone now attaining a level of only 450 naval units - considerably less than at the time of the Korean war or at any other time since the Second World War. The number of aircraft carriers has, in the process, been reduced from 24 to 12.

But, as in other fields of military endeavour, the Soviet Union has used this very same period, the years of détente, for a naval build-up unmatched in the military history of any other country. In one huge operation, the Soviet Union has overcome its geographical limitations as a country not directly bordering on the great oceans and has equipped itself with a fleet enabling it to be present on the world's oceans.

The fleet of the Soviet Union comprises at this time 900 surface ships, of which 140 units are above the size of frigates, and more than 1,000 supply ships; 1,500 naval aircraft are capable of performing surveillance and attack missions over large sea areas, including the oceans. The focal point of this effort has been the build-up of a large ocean-going submarine fleet. With 330 such units, the most modern nuclear-powered submarines having a range of 9,000 to 12,000 kilometres, the Soviet Union is now undisputedly the largest operator of submarines on the world's oceans. Soviet fleets are omnipresent on the oceans. The Soviet Union is eagerly acquiring naval bases and supply facilities all over the world; the most formidable bases are now in the process of completion in Viet Nam.

I have the material before me, but I do not wish to prolong this list by going beyond the few cited examples. Indeed, long references to the arsenals of only one side in a United Nations statement - a favorite practice of socialist delegations - serve no useful purpose. In the final analysis, we are not interested in numbers; we are interested in the political functions of armed forces, their contribution to security, and the degree of balance that might exist as a prerequisite for a stable relationship between military adversaries; and as an incentive for disarmament, leading to equilibriums at lower levels of weapons. Based on that logic, I should like to dwell briefly upon the functions of naval forces and security, subsequently applying my insights to the two major military alliances.
The traditional task of naval forces is twofold: first, to protect and guarantee the freedom of the sea lanes for one's commerce and the free intercourse of one's own country with others; secondly, particularly in conflict, to maintain the supply lines and the maritime communications between the individual parts of the area to be defended.

One crucial characteristic of the Western alliance system, both in its Atlantic and in its Pacific component, is its dependence on the sea. The countries participating in the system are responsible for roughly 75 per cent of the world trading volume - much, if not most, of it going overseas. For a country like the Federal Republic of Germany, which earns 25 per cent of its gross national product from foreign trade, it is of obvious importance that the sea lanes through which its merchandise passes remain under the control of friendly forces. By the same token, the Atlantic alliance - as its very name indicates - is a defensive alliance characterized by maritime interests. The conventional defence capability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe is inextricably linked with intact sea communications over the Atlantic and the inner-European waterways. The Atlantic Ocean separates the two parts of the Atlantic Alliance. The political and military unity of the Alliance territory depends on the Alliance's capability of bridging this ocean unencumbered. The functions of the naval forces of the Atlantic Alliance derive from these economic and geographical facts.

The geographical and structural asymmetry with the countries of the Warsaw Pact is immediately apparent. The Warsaw Pact is a contiguous land mass. No sea has to be crossed for internal communication. The Soviet Union is traditionally a continental country, with the possibility of almost complete economic autarky. The role of the group of socialist countries in world trade is small. Its overall percentage is little more than 5, of which roughly two thirds is intra-bloc trade. The remaining sea-going trade of the Eastern bloc countries, if compared with the overseas trade of the Western nations, is thus almost infinitesimal, and, militarily speaking, all problems of logistics within the Warsaw Pact can be solved overnight.

It is evident that these fundamental differences between the two alliances must be factored into the military equation and into any assessment of the force relationship and the legitimacy of naval activities of either side. Again, I am confident that the experts on the United Nations study group will take these basic differences into account.
If one looks at the considerable differences of security requirements and, specifically, defensive needs between the two major alliances, it must become apparent that the Soviet Union, with the tremendous dynamics of its naval build-up and its rapid thrust into the world's oceans - far beyond the peripheral seas on which it borders and where its immediate national interests are at stake - has created a new and destabilizing situation, threatening the traditional patterns of control over the sea lanes on which Western countries, but also most countries of the third world, vitally depend.

The Soviet Union has violated and continues to violate one of the basic tenets of security: that military capabilities must be commensurate with one's own security needs. The disproportion between these needs and the Soviet naval posture, the aggressive ambition to project power in all regions of the world, regardless of legitimacy of interest, are the truly destabilizing facts of naval armament in our time.

The attempt of resolution 39/151 I to mask these preoccupying realities, or even to reverse the responsibility for them, makes for its bias and unacceptability. This situation and the cause-effect links that have led to it should have been suitably addressed in an unbiased United Nations resolution. And these facts will certainly preoccupy the experts in the course of their comprehensive analysis.

While I do not wish to pursue further the global aspects of naval armament in the perspective I have sketched out, I owe it to myself as the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to make a brief reference to the preoccupying situation in the Baltic Sea, an area of immediate security significance for my country.

From a strategic viewpoint, it is evident that in case of a conflict a rapid thrust of the Warsaw Pact forces through the Baltic and the seizure of the Baltic Straits would imperil NATO's northern flank, open a wide new front in Central Europe and allow the Warsaw Pact to intervene forcefully, and even stronger than otherwise, in the Atlantic sea communications. In this context, the dramatic build-up of amphibious forces of the Warsaw Pact in the Baltic causes grave concern. The piling up of amphibious craft in Warsaw Pact ports in the Eastern Baltic cannot possibly serve defensive purposes. These craft are obviously designed to transport troops to somebody else's shores.
However, their numbers have been rising constantly at a vertiginous rate. Only recently the personnel strength of the Soviet naval infantry in that region has again been raised by 30 per cent, so that now at least two divisions of the Soviet armed forces and one other Warsaw Pact division have an amphibious role. Maneuvers concentrate upon the amphibious deployment of marines and advance army units.

In line with the close integration of all Soviet ships into the military setup for various purposes, the large roll-on-roll-off capacity of the Soviet merchant fleet in the Baltic must also be considered in this context.

Other delegations in this room are better qualified, on the basis of their national experience, to speak about the functions of Soviet submarines in the Baltic and the activities they incessantly pursue. In view of these considerable military capabilities and their obvious lack of any defensive mission, it is a significant omission that the Soviet Union, in the various papers we have before us, has excluded the Baltic Sea from the list of sea areas in which, in its view, confidence-building measures should obtain.

Resolution 39/151 I clearly purports to accuse the Western maritime Powers of an overbearing use of their naval capabilities. I have attempted to broaden our vision and to demonstrate on the one hand how complex the area of naval armament is and on the other that Warsaw Pact activities in this sphere merit a particularly close analytical examination by the United Nations experts and later on also by the wider assembly of States. The sum of my remarks is, in reality, that resolution 39/151 I, certain replies of States based on it and the statements we have heard today from socialist delegations are disingenuous and hypocritical, to say the least.

In order to sharpen the perception of colleagues when reading these documents, I should like to conclude with a number of citations from the basic writings of Admiral Serge Gorshkov, the founder of the new-style Soviet Navy. My citations are taken from the English-language version of his book "The Sea Power of the State", which has been published in this country.

Admiral Gorshkov writes:

"Among the many factors characterizing the economic and military might of our country, an ever-growing role is being played by its sea power, expressing the real ability of the State to make effective use of the world's oceans in the interest of communist construction ..."
"The mobility of the fleet and its flexibility where limited military conflicts come to a head enable it to exert an influence on coastal countries and employ and extend a military threat at any level, starting from a show of military force and ending with the mounting of landings ... Our fleet is an integral part of the armed forces of the country ... Already in the mid-fifties, it was planned to build in the first place powerful submarine forces in sea aviation, fit the fleet with nuclear missile weapons and use atomic power in submarine shipbuilding ... The naval forces are gradually becoming the main carrier of nuclear weapons capable of striking at the enemy in all continents and seas ... The sea power of our country is directed at ensuring favourable conditions for building communism ... The merchant fleet must be regarded as a universal component of the sea power of a country which has a most important role in war and peacetime ... not only as an important means of economics but also an important reserve of the navy in the event of war ... The navy as a constituent part of the armed forces of the State has a further distinctive feature, namely the ability to demonstrate geographically the real fighting power of one's State in the international arena."

On his own achievements, the Admiral had the following to say:

"Within the briefest time a qualitatively new fleet was built capable of fulfilling tasks of a strategic character in waging a successful struggle with a powerful sea adversary."

Colleagues will judge to what extent, in the view of that high-ranking Soviet military leader, the new Soviet fleet is compatible with defensive needs, international peace and security and global stability. They will also judge the merits of the many proposals so eloquently submitted by the Soviet Union and its allies during this morning's plenary meeting.

Mr. KORNEENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Foremost among the problems of arms reduction and disarmament the solution of which would contribute to a sounder international climate and to the lessening of the danger of war is the problem of curbing the naval arms race, the limitation and reduction of naval armaments and the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans. This is particularly timely in the present tense international climate because of the increasing role of navies and naval armaments and the frequent resort by some Powers to the use of their navies.
We believe that the Disarmament Commission took a responsible approach by deciding to consider this problem in plenary meetings and by not supporting the position of those delegations which would have preferred not to have any discussion of the question of curbing naval activities at the present session.

The clear desire not even to discuss this very important item on our agenda obviously inspired the statements of the previous speakers this afternoon, from which a constructive approach was conspicuously absent. The pretexts adduced therein are totally unfounded and testify to one thing only - an obstinate refusal to take practical measures to curb the naval arms race. This characterizes their approach to other key disarmament problems also. We hope that the group with which you will be consulting, Mr. Chairman, on item 8 of the agenda will carry out its tasks and that the Disarmament Commission will be able to submit a report to the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 39/151 I. The working document (A/CN.10/73) submitted to the Commission by the delegations of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union, provides a solid basis for that.

The history of international relations is replete with examples of the constant threat posed to peace and security by naval forces in the service of reactionary imperialist circles. Not so long ago in our history our country, too, fell victim to naval intervention and blockade.
Immediately after the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution the navies of several imperialist Powers entered the Black Sea, landed on the territory of the Ukraine and attempted to stifle the revolution, to restore the defeated anti-popular régime and to transform our country into their colony.

In present conditions the illegal activities on the world's oceans are particularly threatening. Hoping to achieve overall military preponderance and the possibility of using massed military force in even the most remote regions, the United States has now begun a new round of the naval arms race. New ships, equipped with the most modern weapons, are being launched and old ships are being taken out of mothballs and equipped with the same weaponry. The United States is increasing its permanent naval presence in various parts of the world's oceans and the infrastructure needed to service it.

Shows of force, intended to bring brutal pressure to bear on coastal States, are becoming more frequent - for example in the Caribbean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the eastern Mediterranean. In addition to posing a threat to international peace and security and undermining stability throughout the world, the naval arms race has a negative impact on research and development in the sphere of marine resources and diverts important resources from efforts to achieve positive goals.

These threatening trends and this new round of the naval arms race make it urgently necessary to adopt concrete measures aimed at the mutual limitation of nuclear activities and the limitation and reduction of naval armaments, as well as confidence-building measures, both in general and as regards various parts of the world's oceans. The importance and urgency of these measures has been stressed in General Assembly resolutions 38/188 F and 39/151 I. Those resolutions ask that negotiations be started, set out the goal of such negotiations and contain specific proposals regarding participation in the negotiations and other important factors.

The socialist countries, along with many other States, reacted positively to the General Assembly's appeal that negotiations be started on the limitation of naval activities, the limitation and reduction of naval armaments and the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans, especially to regions with the busiest sea lanes or regions where the probability of conflict situations is high. The position of principle of the USSR on the question of curbing naval activities and naval armaments and on practical proposals concerning future negotiations has been set out in a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR,
Andrei A. Gromyko, dated 9 August 1984. The content of those proposals is well known; therefore, we shall not dwell on them now. I should like to stress only that if other States with major naval capabilities were to demonstrate the political will, a constructive spirit and a desire to reach agreement there is no doubt that there would be movement towards a solution of this pressing problem.

The consistent approach of the socialist countries to the question of curbing naval armaments has been demonstrated also during the present session of the Disarmament Commission. The working paper submitted by the delegations of Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics invites the Commission to consider some initial steps which would contribute to a significant reduction in naval confrontation and in the threat of an outbreak of conflict on the world's oceans. States possessing major naval fleets are invited, as a matter of priority, to abstain from further actions leading to the acceleration of the naval arms race and to an increase in their naval activity in areas far from their own shores. It is also very important to limit and reduce the level of naval presence and naval activity in areas of conflict or tension, and particular attention should be given to ships armed with nuclear weapons.

Further proposals concern the withdrawal of nuclear-weapon ships from certain areas of the seas and oceans and the withdrawal of nuclear-missile submarines from broad areas of combat patrol and the restriction of their cruising to mutually agreed limits. In response to statements by certain representatives, I stress that these limits would be mutually agreed.

The achievement of the purposes of resolutions 38/188 F and 39/151 I would be furthered by consideration of measures relating to naval bases in foreign territories, agreed measures to build confidence concerning the world's seas and oceans and various regional measures.

The working paper also pays due attention to the question of control. It stresses that control measures should guarantee mutual confidence that States would comply with the obligations they had assumed; that the scope and forms of the control should correspond to the scope and nature of the obligations assumed by States, and that the control should be exercised simultaneously with the fulfilment of the obligations.

It goes without saying that all measures should be worked out and implemented in accordance with the principle of not impairing the security of any State.
(Mr. Korneenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR shares the view that discussion of those constructive proposals and of all other views and proposals that may be presented in the Disarmament Commission should be aimed at achieving the main task of preparing the conditions for negotiations with a view to arriving at agreement on specific measures concerning the mutual limitation of naval activities. It is on this that the work of the group of experts in this field should be focused. Their study certainly should not be used as a pretext for delaying practical negotiations, nor should it replace them. We can see from the work of this Commission that such attempts are being made. The opponents of disarmament have tried for the umpteenth time to substitute discussion of disarmament for practical disarmament measures and to use that discussion, like the study as a pretext for not taking action.

We hope that the Commission's consideration of all matters related to limiting naval activities and naval armaments will play a positive role in making it possible to present to the General Assembly practical recommendations on this matter. For its part, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is prepared to contribute to that end.

Mr. Grundmann (German Democratic Republic): The Government of the German Democratic Republic considers measures aimed at limiting and reducing naval armaments and extending confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans to be necessary steps to avert the growing danger of war. The build-up of naval fleets and forces and the increase in naval activities have resulted in greater global and regional instability, causing great harm to the economic and social development of nations and posing a mounting threat to the security of peaceful navigation and the exploration and exploitation of marine resources.
Ensuring the peaceful uses of the oceans and the international sea lanes would be in the interests of all States and peoples. The growing international economic integration and the dependence of many countries on reliable supplies of raw materials and commodities by sea-borne transportation make practical measures guaranteeing the conditions for peaceful co-operation in the uses of the seas and oceans an indispensable requirement which would benefit all States, irrespective of their social system. This presupposes that the maritime activities of States would be carried out in accordance with such principles as respect for independence and sovereignty, renunciation of the use or threat of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and equality, as well as all other fundamental principles governing relations between States.

It is irreconcilable with those principles that one nuclear-weapon State, supported by its closest allies, has initiated a new lap of the naval arms race in its attempt to achieve military superiority. The broad range of their military naval activities creates permanent sources of danger in many regions of the world. This cannot be legitimized by involving alleged national security interests. Rather, the security interests of States call for dialogue and negotiation in a constructive spirit and with the political will to achieve positive results on steps designed to reduce military confrontation in the seas and oceans. A number of proposals have been put forward in this regard by the Warsaw Treaty States - for instance in their Warsaw Declaration of 15 May 1980 and their Prague Declaration of 5 January 1983.

Proceeding from this line, the German Democratic Republic emphatically supports an early commencement of negotiations on curbing the naval arms race by limiting naval activities, limiting and reducing naval armaments, and extending confidence-building measures to seas and oceans.

It is therefore commendable that resolution 39/151 I, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session with the German Democratic Republic as a sponsor, should be geared towards the practical preparation of such negotiations. By inviting Member States, particularly the major naval Powers, to consider the possibility of holding direct consultations with a view to preparing the opening at an early date of such negotiations, the resolution suggests a viable procedure to start negotiations.
If, as the resolution requests, the Disarmament Commission considered this question, an opportunity would be provided for an initial broad exchange of views on the format and the subject of such negotiations. In this respect, the working paper submitted by the USSR, Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic, contained in document A/CN.10/73, should be seen as an active contribution to our deliberations. My delegation hopes that that working paper will receive a broad positive response.

As a result of our deliberations, it should be recommended to the fortieth session of the General Assembly should be recommended to open consultations concerning the direct preparation of negotiations. In the view of the German Democratic Republic, in those consultations agreement should be reached on the purpose and subject of future negotiations, as well as on the scope of participants, the date and the venue. Such consultations could be held within the framework of the United Nations Disarmament Commission or the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, since all nuclear-weapon States and major naval Powers are represented in these forums.

The German Democratic Republic considers that agreement on measures aimed at limiting and reducing naval armaments and extending confidence-building measures to seas and oceans is a task of global significance. Therefore, the joint efforts of a wide range of States are urgently needed. My country welcomes in this respect the far-reaching constructive proposals by the Soviet Union for a halt to the naval arms race contained in the letter of 9 April 1984 by the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. A. Gromyko, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

My delegation expresses the hope that those States that have so far not been prepared to enter into constructive discussion on measures to curb the naval arms race, particularly some nuclear-weapon States, will reconsider their position.

The German Democratic Republic, which is a small country, is prepared to participate actively in the discussions on curbing the naval arms race. In the view of my delegation, the following points are especially urgent: first, not to step up naval activities of States in regions of conflict and tension; secondly, to agree on and implement confidence-building measures which aim at preventing situations of conflict and at strengthening the security of maritime shipping; and, thirdly, to use all potentialities of a regional approach for the limitation of naval activities and naval armaments, among other places, at the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.
As far as regional measures are concerned, we have also in mind the conversion of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, including the limitation of the level of naval presence in the area, the implementation of measures aimed at strengthening peace and security in the Persian Gulf area, and the conversion of the Mediterranean area into a zone of stable peace and co-operation.

It appears indispensable to elaborate all those and other relevant measures in accordance with the principle of undiminished security for the parties involved, with due account taken of all factors which determine the relationship of forces at sea and of other types of armaments which have an impact on naval forces.

During our deliberations in the United Nations Disarmament Commission we have read and heard the argument that the replies of Member States and discussions in this body on curbing the naval arms race, in accordance with resolution 39/151 I, would be premature and prejudge the results of the study on the naval arms race that is still under way. My delegation cannot share that view. It is hard to understand in what way an exchange of views in the United Nations Disarmament Commission on curbing the naval arms race could hamper the outcome of that study. We could find many examples where one issue is under discussion in various United Nations forums at the same time. Moreover, this study should clarify questions concerning the naval arms race but not prevent deliberations and negotiations on the subject.

Concerning the elaboration of a study on the naval arms race, the German Democratic Republic holds the view that the value of such a study would be the greater the more it went beyond technical and legal issues and a mere comparison of data. Such a study should not only seek to reveal the dangers that emanate from the naval arms race but also clearly identify those main aspects on which urgent measures must be agreed on a priority basis. The study should be conducive to the earliest possible start of negotiations on the limitation of naval activities and naval armaments.

Let me conclude by reaffirming the considered view of my country which was only recently emphasized in its second reply on the subject "Curbing the naval arms race":

"International security, the security of peaceful navigation on the oceans and seas, as well as the exploration and exploitation of marine resources require resolute and urgent action towards halting the naval arms race."

(A/CN.10/70/Add.1, p. 4)
Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, my delegation did not participate in the general debate at the beginning of this session of the Disarmament Commission. Therefore please allow me on this occasion to welcome you to the Chair and to pledge to you our full co-operation. We are confident that your skill and ability, which we know very well from the Conference on Disarmament, will bring our work in the Commission to a very successful conclusion.

I should like now to make a few brief comments, for the record, on the current stage of the consideration of the item on the naval arms race. As members know, my delegation abstained in the vote on resolution 39/151 I at the last session of the General Assembly. This should not be construed in any way as lack of interest in this item. We believe, however, that the request that this Commission should consider the question was not opportune. We are all aware of the time constraints under which the United Nations Disarmament Commission operates, and which are aggravated by the scarcity of material resources at its disposal. Three years ago, the General Assembly resolution 37/78 H set guidelines for the work of this Commission with a view to avoiding the crowding of its agenda and to allow for a more orderly consideration of the many subjects in the field of disarmament that could be usefully looked at by this body. My delegation continues to believe that it is counterproductive to enlarge the current agenda, and that the Commission should conclude the consideration of some of the items before it starts substantive work on new ones.

As for the substantive aspects of the item, my delegation also has a few misgivings about the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 39/151 I. We believe that the nuclear aspects of the naval arms race must receive particular attention, if consideration of the item by this Commission is to have any significance. The continuing proliferation of nuclear weapons in the seas and oceans by the nuclear-weapon Powers, and particularly by the super-Powers, gives rise to justified concern in many parts of the world, and especially among non-nuclear-weapon nations not parties to either of the two military alliances. These countries, many of which have renounced the nuclear military option through binding international commitments, are increasingly threatened by the expansion of the nuclear naval arms race, in the form of nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed fleets and submarines, the nature of whose armaments is shrouded in secrecy and the whereabouts of which cannot be ascertained. In many cases the presence or absence of nuclear weapons cannot be verified, for lack of adequate mechanisms in
international agreements providing for nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation, therefore, believes that in any serious consideration of the curbing of the naval arms race priority attention must be given to the ongoing proliferation of nuclear weapons in the geographic dimension of the seas and oceans. The curbing of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in that environment is an important element for the achievement of effective measures for the prevention of nuclear war. As long as the nuclear-weapon Powers, and particularly the super-Powers, feel entitled to disseminate weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons, throughout the world, on board their ships and submarines, escaping detection and subject to no restraints, no nation on earth can feel secure from pressure and intimidation, and the world at large cannot be said to have become any safer. Quite the contrary, the geographic proliferation of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon Powers has made the danger of nuclear war an ever-present reality even to nations situated very far away from their territories.

My delegation hopes that, when this Commission is able to devote adequate time and resources to the consideration of the naval arms race, the aspects related to the current proliferation of nuclear weapons in the seas and oceans will receive priority attention and that recommendations will be formulated to promote the adoption of effective verification procedures to ensure respect for existing agreements which prohibit the presence of nuclear-armed vessels in waters enjoying denuclearized status. We are convinced that the establishment of such procedures and their implementation would constitute a significant contribution to the credibility and durability of those agreements and would enhance international security by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in one important geographic dimension.

We are also confident that the experts who are currently preparing the study requested by the General Assembly will take these factors into consideration when addressing the question of the naval arms race.

Mr. LE KIM CHUNG (Viet Nam): My delegation welcomes and regards as very useful our discussion today in the Disarmament Commission on the question of curbing the naval arms race. It is useful since it provides an opportunity for all countries to exchange views on this subject, thereby laying the initial basis for subsequent negotiations.
Historically, at the very time when scientific discoveries in the maritime field opened up to mankind the utilization of sea waters for peaceful benefits, bellicose and expansionist forces took advantage of those discoveries to serve their selfish interests. Since then those forces have been bent on using their naval strength to subject other countries to their rule. By dint of their predominant naval strength, the Western European countries managed to establish and preserve their vast colonies almost throughout the world for four centuries, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Immediately after the First World War the imperialist countries resorted to their naval forces, with their well-known gunboat diplomacy, to repress national liberation movements in their colonies. After the Second World War, making use of their scientific, technological and economic edge, the imperialist forces, led by the United States, in order to further their strategies of countering the emerging national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and of encircling the socialist countries, rapidly increased their naval armaments and presence in all the oceans, thus provoking a continued naval arms race. Their aggressive naval activities range from show-of-force manoeuvres to naval encirclement, blockade and direct military intervention against sovereign States. Let me recall here only the cases of Guatemala, Lebanon, Cuba and my own country, Viet Nam, and the recent mining of Nicaragua's ports.
As naval power has had an increased adverse effect on international peace and security, it has also acquired increased attention from world public opinion. There had been some activities related to the limitation of naval power as early as the first three decades of the twentieth century. But the limitation of naval power during that period of time solely constituted part of the strategies of the Western Powers to restrain each other from achieving such a superior position as to control entirely the world colonial system. As the Second World War was coming to an end, an unprecedented danger emerged as a consequence of the discovery of nuclear weapons. Therefore, since then the question of preventing a nuclear war and the cessation of the nuclear-arms race has become the most acute and urgent task before mankind. At the same time, the realities of the last 40 years demonstrate the need for prompt and effective measures to curb the naval arms race. Most important among those realities are:

First, all countries, especially the developing countries, are confronted with an increasingly dangerous threat posed by the naval forces of the imperialist countries. The economies of the developing countries cannot afford an adequate defence against that threat. The use of naval forces as an instrument of military action and political coercion, even though it might be regional, can lead to confrontation between the nuclear-weapon States.

Secondly, the naval arms race seriously impedes the joint exploitation of the natural resources of the oceans and the use of international sea lanes, which play a more and more significant role in the development of the economies of all countries, especially those of the developing countries.

Thirdly, there is the quantitative and qualitative escalation of the naval arms race.

On the basis of the aforementioned analysis, Viet Nam attaches great importance to the question of curbing the naval arms race - one of the most dangerous channels of the arms race. Now the most effective way to deal with the naval arms race is to open negotiations. That is the purport of General Assembly resolutions 38/188 F and 39/151 I. At present, in the field of naval disarmament, measures aimed at holding early negotiations must be given the highest priority.

All countries concerned, especially the major naval Powers, should participate in the negotiations to curb the naval arms race and limit naval activities. Such negotiations can be bilateral, multilateral or regional. It is essential that such negotiations lead to the limitation and reduction of naval armaments, with naval nuclear armaments accorded priority.
As an urgent step, the major naval Powers, either through their unilateral measures or negotiations, should stop increasing their naval armaments both quantitatively and qualitatively. They should refrain from and subsequently reduce their naval activities in regions of tension or conflict. The establishment of zones of peace or of zones free from nuclear weapons is of great importance. There should be concrete action to create a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, as demanded by the overwhelming majority of the international community. The Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam supports the efforts being made by Australia, New Zealand and the other countries in the South Pacific Forum towards turning the South Pacific into a nuclear-free zone.

For the past 40 years in the South-East Asian region, Viet Nam has always been a victim of the imperialist aggressive naval activities. Now we are once again faced with a threat from the sea as a consequence of the collusion between the international and regional reactionary forces and United States imperialism. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, in his statement only a few minutes ago, proved either to be unaware of or to ignore history when he uttered contemptible fabrications against my country. The new serious threat facing Viet Nam now demands that it develop its relations with its friends inside and outside the region so as to strengthen its capability to defend itself and its security, which it has the legitimate right to do. As stated by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, there are no foreign military bases on the soil of Viet Nam. In this connection, it should be emphasized that more than 40 years have elapsed since the end of the Second World War, but foreign military bases still exist on the soil of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Returning now to the situation in my region, what the outside hegemonist and expansionist Power wants is confrontation among the regional countries. Viet Nam is prepared for any situation, as it has been for the past 40 years, but it is in the interests of all countries in this region to live in peace, free from interference from outside, and we highly appreciate the far-sighted policies of some countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations to this end. The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam supports the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and is willing, together with the other countries in the region, to build South-East Asia into a region of peace, stability and co-operation.
Mr. MIGLIORINI (Italy): Italy, like many other Member States, voted against General Assembly resolution 39/151 I. In fact, that resolution was adopted with 70 votes in favour, but 72 countries voted against or abstained, which clearly proves its controversial character.

My delegation regrets that a debate on curbing the naval arms race should be held on the basis of that resolution, when a study is being conducted within the framework of the United Nations by a group of experts established for that purpose on the basis of General Assembly resolution 38/188 G.

Italy believes that United Nations studies in the field of disarmament are meaningful and important. In our view they can and must make a serious contribution to a wider and clearer comprehension of the problems of disarmament. They should constitute a serious basis on which to build, in our common endeavours aimed at increased international security at the lowest level of armaments.

Given its geographical situation, Italy is obviously very interested in a constructive consideration of the problems concerning the security of sea areas in general and of the international sea lanes in particular. Italy is therefore hopeful that the Group of Experts established by the Secretary-General will make all possible efforts to carry out an exhaustive and objective examination of these problems. However, my delegation is concerned that the results of this particular study might be prejudged and their usefulness pre-empted by a premature debate and search for solutions on the issue of curbing the naval arms race.

From a substantive point of view, Italy believes that disarmament negotiations in this, as in other fields of arms control, should be aimed at balanced reductions of the level of armaments and at the same time at increased stability.

Naval disarmament, in the Italian view, should be pursued through a consideration of all the elements of the existing equilibriums. In the present political and strategic situation, in fact, naval forces represent only an element, although important, of a wider balance of forces.

Other important factors come into play when considering the issue of curbing the naval arms race. In particular, my delegation wishes to refer to considerations concerning geographical disparities and military asymmetries.

It is obvious that some countries are more dependent on freedom of the high seas and on the security of the international sea lanes than are others, both for their vital supplies and for support in crisis situations. It is also obvious that some countries have to rely more on their naval forces than do others to protect their security interests.
(Mr. Migliorini, Italy)

Therefore, a reduction of naval forces and a limitation of naval activities can hardly be promoted in isolation from other problems of disarmament, but should instead be seen, in a context of stability, in their interrelationship with other elements of the military balance.

Italy, which is a case in point, is in favour of naval disarmament in principle, but certainly is not in favour of measures such as those indicated in paragraphs 1 and 2 of General Assembly resolution 39/151 I. These are incompatible with the existing geographical disparities, run counter to the principles of stability and equilibrium, and would seriously affect - if implemented - the legitimate security interests of a certain number of countries. In this context, my delegation wishes to draw attention to the replies that the Italian Government has addressed to the Secretary-General both on the problem of the naval arms race and on the issue of strengthening Mediterranean security and co-operation.

Very briefly, Italy is convinced that an examination of the problems concerning the security of that region must realistically take into account all the complexities of the political situation of the area and the strict relationship between the security of the Mediterranean and that of the European continent as a whole. It would seem unrealistic, indeed, to search for a strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean while ignoring such realities and ignoring the specific characteristics of the political and military equilibriums of the continent.

Italy believes that issues concerning security and co-operation in the Mediterranean should be considered and solved in the context of a reinforced stability and of significant and verifiable reductions in other fields of armaments in the European continent, where the largest accumulation of conventional weapons is concentrated.

Any kind of military power, of course, can have its political projections, as is proved by many examples from the distant and recent past. That is why Italy looks with great concern at the risks connected with attempts to change the balance of forces in the Mediterranean through a naval buildup which is not justified by security needs. It is also why Italy is very interested in, and is eager to make its utmost contribution to, negotiations in Vienna on the balanced reduction of armed forces in Central Europe.
(Mr. Migliorini, Italy)

Italy will continue to strive for peace and real, verifiable disarmament. It has no territorial claims on neighbouring countries, nor any desire for superior military strength.

In conclusion, Italy believes that we should all strive to curb military confrontation on land and at sea at the same time. The Italian Government reaffirms its willingness consistently to pursue the quickest and most decisive progress towards general and complete disarmament, including naval disarmament, under effective international control.

Mr. Tomaszewski (Poland) (interpretation from French): Since I am speaking in the Commission for the first time, may I begin, Mr. Chairman, by saying how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the work of this important Commission and by expressing our confidence in you. I assure you of my delegation's sincere desire to co-operate with you in carrying out your difficult task.

The General Assembly has asked us to study the question of curbing the naval arms race, in particular the limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans. That request was not made to us by chance. The Polish delegation would therefore like to take this opportunity to make a few comments on the subject before us.

Naval armaments constitute, first, an important element of the arms race as a whole, one element among those where there is the most intense development. They are a component not only of the strategic and nuclear arms race, but also of conventional armaments and of regional arms races.

Therefore, we may consider the naval arms race as a global phenomenon demanding an universal approach. However, the specific nature of certain aspects of that race - for example, maritime nuclear armaments - shows us the need to deal with it not only here, within the United Nations, but also separately, with the direct participation of the countries concerned.

Of all types of weapons, whether on the earth, in the skies or in outer space, naval armaments are, from the military technology point of view, the most complex, because of the very nature of the naval arm, operating on or under the water and using artillery, missiles, aircraft, the most modern electronic equipment and so on. Because of this complexity, naval weapons are very costly. The buildup of naval armaments, which we are all witnessing, therefore means an increase in military budgets, already excessive to an irrational degree.
Naval armaments have become an increasingly important factor in the existing strategic balance. This is due to the increase in the number of nuclear warheads on submarine missiles in comparison with the number of warheads on land-based missiles.

In recent years the strike capability of naval forces, both nuclear and conventional, has increased rapidly. This is the result of the introduction of new types of sophisticated missiles, as well as other achievements of modern military technology, which make it possible to co-ordinate more precisely naval and land-based operations. This is why the balance of naval forces has a greater influence than in the past over the overall armed force balance.

Another dangerous aspect of the naval arms race to which my delegation would like to draw attention is the increase in the operational mobility and flexibility of forces used for disembarkment operations and back-up for interventionist forces transported by aircraft. We have in mind, above all, the so-called United States Rapid Deployment Force which gives the United States the capability of using military force in cases of local conflicts. Naval armaments, including aircraft and helicopters based on aircraft carriers, clearly provide the basis for such plans.

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative build-up of naval armaments, proper, other events in recent years point to the urgent need to curb the naval arms race. The increase in the economic significance of the oceans and sea-beds, and the subsoil thereof, the significance of maritime transport in international trade, the creation of maritime economic zones, and with them the appearance of new international conflicts, the lack of universal acceptance of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the use of large naval forces in the Falkland-Malvinas conflict, as well as during the invasion of Grenada and the blockade of Nicaragua, and so on, all led to the adoption of resolutions by the General Assembly, as we all know. It is now important to implement those resolutions.

Of course, among those resolutions there is one that asks that a group of international experts prepare a comprehensive study on the naval arms race. My delegation, for its part, is convinced that such a study could contribute to a better understanding of the very nature of the naval arms race, as well as its implications for international security, for the freedom of the high seas and for the exploitation for peaceful purposes of marine resource deposits on the sea-bed.
and the ocean floor of all seas and oceans. None the less, as my Government indicated in its response dated 24 May 1984:

"... it must be underlined that the preparation of the said study would not at this time constitute the most effective way of seeking to curb the naval arms race." (A/39/419, p. 13, para. 6)

Let us not, therefore, wait, as some delegations have just requested, until the group of experts has completed its work. On the contrary, let us embark without delay on careful preparation for negotiations, either bilateral or multilateral, which alone can give tangible results in this respect. As far as Poland is concerned, once again I should like to quote from the document that I mentioned a moment ago:

"Any initiative paving the way to such negotiations, on the basis of equality and equal security, is sure to be accorded Poland's full support." (Ibid., para. 7)

Before concluding, I should like to express my delegation's profound conviction that termination of the naval arms race would contribute greatly to the strengthening of international peace and security. As to the means of achieving this, it seems to us that negotiations on the limitation of naval activities and the reduction of naval armaments, starting with nuclear armaments, could take place in the framework of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, on the one hand. In parallel with that Conference, it would be useful to conduct, under the auspices of the United Nations, regional or subregional negotiations, with the participation of all States concerned. In this respect, my delegation would also like to recall and reaffirm the validity of the relevant proposals made by the members of the Warsaw Treaty, to which Poland is a party, formulated in the interests of peace, stabilization of the international situation, and freedom of navigation in international waterways, contained in the Declarations of the Consultative Political Committee of the Treaty, dated 15 May 1980 and 5 January 1983.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Poland for his kind words addressed to the Chair.

MR. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The question under discussion today, curbing the naval arms race, is, without exaggeration, of global importance. On the oceans and seas of the world there are growing stockpiles of weapons in such numbers and of such nature
that they become a significant component of the danger threatening peace and security and the very existence of mankind. According to some data, the destructive power of just one missile fired by a modern nuclear submarine is greater than that of all explosions in the history of all the wars of mankind.

Some delegations refer to some kind of study as a pretext for not considering the substance of item 8. This is particularly strange, since many of them voted against the General Assembly resolution on that study. It would be interesting to know what arguments they would resort to if they had succeeded in preventing the study. We are being told that without that study, which has not yet been completed, there are no facts about the danger of the naval arms race. However, here is one well-known, simple and very threatening fact: the world's oceans account for two thirds of the earth's surface. Can the United Nations and the Disarmament Commission ignore the danger emanating from two thirds of our environment? The answer is obvious.

Let us take another fact: if we take into account the range of modern means of delivery of nuclear weapons deployed on the seas and oceans of the world, all States, without exception, whether they be islands, coastal States, close to or far removed from the sea, or even land-locked, all, without exception, would become vulnerable to the threat from the sea. In this sense, all of them are becoming coastal States.

Further, all States are no further than a hand reaching for the launch button from these naval missiles. Are we also supposed to ignore that? And it is from the seas that certain Western Powers threaten the massive use of force in any part of the world, which they arbitrarily proclaim to be spheres of their vital interests. These Powers directly use their naval forces for acts of aggression against sovereign States, for pressure, interference in internal affairs of sovereign States, and maintenance of the vestiges of colonialism, the main objectives of which are the non-aligned and developing countries.
This is also irrefutably proved by the history of the past decades. When considering the question of naval threats we cannot forget that the longest coastlines in areas of year-round navigation belong to developing countries.

Some delegations sedulously pretend that there is nothing to discuss here. To convince others of that, they act like characters in *Alice in Wonderland*. If there are no other arguments, even tales are fine. We are being asked to act like ostriches, hiding our heads in the sand when danger is sensed. We must remember that in the history of mankind there are many sorry examples of action of this kind and that these had the most dire consequences.

It is no good simply closing one’s eyes to danger; that will not make it disappear. Mankind has emerged from that age at which one could believe in that. On the contrary, if we all pretend to be blind, the danger will develop until it is beyond our control.

Resolutions 38/188 F and 39/151, adopted pursuant to the initiative of Bulgaria and other socialist countries, mobilize us to fight against that danger. And it is against that danger that the effective measures for the limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans proposed by Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the USSR are directed.

Developments in the Disarmament Commission under this heading raise questions in our minds as the motives of delegations opposing its consideration. Could it be that throughout all these years those States have been transforming their warships into pleasure yachts? If we look at the real state of affairs we see that the contrary is true. This proves convincingly that the reasons for opposing consideration of the question of curbing the naval arms race are far from noble.

Already in the 1950s it was the United States that unleashed the naval arms race. The first airplanes with atomic and nuclear bombs deployed on aircraft carriers had American identification marks. The first submarines carrying ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads entered the world's oceans from American harbours. And now those countries oppose not only negotiations but even consideration of this question because they are starting a new round in the naval arms race.

In today's statements several delegations have adduced convincing confirmation of the material aspect of this policy and its dangerous sequels. Therefore, we
shall not dwell on that. Some quotations were heard in this room. Let us, too, present a few quotations.

Suffice it to remind the Commission that in a speech made in Long Beach, California, in 1983, the United States Secretary of Defense described the objectives of American sea policy as follows:

"To obtain access to all the oceans of the world and control over the airspace above them, their surface and the depths of the ocean."

It would be difficult to be clearer than that.

In the light of all this it is clearly necessary to start negotiations on curbing naval activities, limiting and reducing naval armaments and extending confidence-building measures to seas and oceans. The position of principle of the Byelorussian SSR in the matter of negotiations and possible measures was set forth in the notes of the Permanent Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 25 April 1984 and 26 April of this year.

In conclusion, our delegation would like to note that it is an extremely positive factor with regard to curbing the naval arms race that one of the great naval powers, the Soviet Union, has expressed readiness for negotiations. That readiness is not just a statement; the USSR has confirmed it and borne it out with concrete measures which could be adopted either immediately or at a later stage.

With determination worthy of a better cause, some delegations have tried to prove to us that the USSR has tremendous naval potential. That has already been indicated, however, in the statement of the Soviet delegation. Thus, no secret has been revealed. The difference of principle consists in the fact that the Soviet Union, in contradistinction to the West, is prepared to allow its naval potential and activities become the subject of negotiations. Secondly, if those States are really so worried about these activities and that potential, they should, to be logical, grasp the opportunity provided by the Soviet Union. But I am afraid that here again their delegations resort to the logic of the protagonists in Alice in Wonderland.

The Disarmament Commission would be doing its duty if it appealed to other powers to follow the example of the USSR in its desire to curb the nuclear-arms race and if it devoted its efforts at this stage to working out recommendations on concrete measures.
Mr. CAMPOZA (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): The Argentine delegation must state most clearly its opinion that the naval arms race has acquired singular importance in recent years. This is due mainly to the fact that the ocean depths have proven to be an appropriate area for the concealment of nuclear weapons.

The permanent mobility of a submarine carrying nuclear warheads, the deployment of nuclear-powered warships carrying nuclear weapons throughout the oceans, on the surface or in the depths, is now the daily military practice of the nuclear-weapon Powers used by them to carry out their mutually deterrent designs or to threaten non-nuclear-weapon Powers.
As a result of this situation, which should be considered by the United Nations organs dealing with disarmament questions, it can be said that the naval arms race has been the cause of the broadest geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons. The ocean spaces that make up two thirds of the surface of our world are today infested with ships and submarines bearing nuclear weapons. That is an international fact, of which international public opinion is fully aware. Therefore, the United Nations - and by "the United Nations" we mean the countries Members of the Organization - should devote attention to this question, should study it and should find a way to curb the naval arms race.

It has been repeatedly stated - and the relevant General Assembly resolutions themselves state this - that the naval arms race affects international security, freedom of navigation on the high seas, international maritime routes, and the exploitation of marine resources. None the less, during this session of the Disarmament Commission we have seen how difficult it has been to enable this item to be considered. You yourself, Mr. Chairman, have had to use the utmost skill to make possible agreement on a procedure for dealing with the question of the naval arms race.

I must confess how surprised I have been at the situation which has arisen in respect of this item. I would recall that General Assembly resolution 38/188 G, which established the group of experts to study this question, was adopted by a far from unanimous vote. I wonder how it was possible not to recognize unanimously the need to deal with this issue?

This explains to some extent the difficulty that the Disarmament Commission has encountered in reaching agreement on the consideration of this item now. If there were Member countries at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly that did not vote in favour of the establishment of a group of experts to carry out a study, then it is understandable that there are countries here that do not want the item to be dealt with now.

I very much fear that this item may be the object of a rule rigidly applied in the consideration of disarmament questions: Apparently, the more serious an issue is, the more imperative the need to consider it is, the more urgently an agreement is required, the less likely it is that progress will be achieved. It would seem that consideration of disarmament questions falls under a rule of inverse proportionality: the more serious the issue is, the less likely it is to be considered constructively.
By way of example I need only mention the situation in respect of agenda item 4. We do not want the question of the naval arms race to face the same situation. We firmly believe that the naval arms race and its nuclear component is a serious issue. We believe that the proliferation of nuclear weapons has reached an intolerable level in the world, with the perfecting of marine-based nuclear weapon systems. Today, all the oceans and seas contain fleets of the nuclear-weapon Powers. I wonder if it is possible to accept statements by those Powers that they are in favour of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, when we see that their own territories are saturated with nuclear weapons of infinite destructive power and also that they have spread those weapons across the seas and oceans of the five continents, across the seas and oceans surrounding the coasts of non-nuclear-weapon countries.

It is well known that international tension is a direct source of the arms race. It might be thought that our Commission would have fewer concerns if the hot-beds of international tension did not exist, for States would not be inclined to build up their arsenals in an atmosphere of détente. Détente, in other words, is a necessary pre-condition for negotiations on disarmament.

In this respect, we would point out that new hot-beds of international tension are being generated by the present naval arms race, in particular because the marine scenario chosen by the nuclear-weapon Powers for the deployment of their naval units on the ocean surfaces or of their submarines requires naval bases and military installations on the seas and oceans. Hence, they have naval bases abroad, some of which are colonial naval bases. The military fortification of a port creates an instant atmosphere of insecurity in the respective geographical area, since anyone can guess the final objective of militarization.

There are maritime areas with military installations at various points considered to be of the greatest strategic importance. But this is not the case only at the focal points of confrontation between the major military blocs. These bases extend also to maritime areas far from those focal points of confrontation. That is true of the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific. The Southern Hemisphere - the hemisphere of the seas - where the land mass is much smaller than in the Northern Hemisphere, is today immersed in the global confrontation of the big military blocs because of the installation of naval bases by nuclear-weapon Powers near the territory of non-nuclear-weapon countries.
To draw attention to a case that seriously affects the security of the South Atlantic, and in particular that of my own country, a note was submitted on the occasion of the inauguration of the strategic airport constructed by the United Kingdom in the Malvinas Islands. That note (A/40/317), dated 17 May 1985 and addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Argentina, has been circulated as a General Assembly and a Security Council document.

We wish to take this opportunity to mention the attitude taken by a country which like ours, is located in the southern hemisphere, in the hemisphere of the seas. I wish to refer to the statement that was made by the representative of New Zealand on his Government's decision not to allow nuclear-weapon-bearing ships access to New Zealand's ports. In our view, that decision should be welcomed by non-nuclear-weapon countries. To prohibit access to ports of nuclear-weapon-bearing ships is one means of obstructing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in maritime spaces.

The position of Argentina on this subject has been clearly expressed in its note dated 16 April 1984 (A/39/419). We do not intend to repeat what is said in that note at this time, but we do wish to express our confidence that the committee of experts will carry out its task and that it will take into account the comments expressed in the debate in this Commission.

We also hope that the subject of the naval arms race will be debated at the forthcoming General Assembly and at the Disarmament Commission's session next year.

I should, therefore, like to say that my delegation is prepared to support the preparation of a report to the General Assembly containing the opinions expressed in this debate.

Mrs. NAVCHAA (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time that I have spoken before this Commission, I should like to welcome you and to congratulate you as Chairman of this important body of the General Assembly, and I wish you much success.

The Disarmament Commission is considering a very important question today, the curbing of naval armaments. The Mongolian People's Republic considers that the limitation and halting of the arms race, especially the nuclear-arms race, is a very important condition for preventing a nuclear catastrophe and for the
maintenance of international peace and security. This is why we have always been in favour of urgent and effective measures aimed at halting the arms race in all areas.

Because of this position, Mongolia attaches great importance to curbing and reducing naval armaments. The growth of naval activity on the part of the imperialist Powers in various parts of the world's oceans is a source of tension in those areas. This situation, in the general context of an increasing military confrontation in the world, constitutes a threat to international peace.

This applies particularly to areas where there are hotbeds of tension and conflict. The imperialist Powers have always used their naval forces in their policy of interference, diktat, blackmail and aggression against independent States and for repressing national liberation movements of peoples.

I could quote such provocative manoeuvres as the setting up of naval blockades and the organization of direct military intervention. It suffices, in this connection, to recall recent events. I have in mind the intervention of the United States against Grenada and its provocative actions against the Republic of Nicaragua. There is also a growing military presence of imperialist Powers in seas far removed from their shores, thus threatening international ways of communication, maritime ways of communication, and creating obstacles to free trade between States and the peaceful use of marine resources.

Under such conditions, we consider it urgent to take measures to limit the naval activities and naval armaments of the important sea Powers and to extend confidence-building measures to seas and oceans.

It should be remembered that we welcomed the proposal of the Warsaw Treaty countries that negotiations be started in this field. This is contained in the Political Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of 5 January 1983. We also voted in favour of resolution 39/151 I, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

Important naval Powers and other countries concerned should start negotiations with a view to agreeing on measures to curb and reduce naval armaments, and full account must be taken of the need not to impair the security interests of any State.
Top priority must be given in these negotiations to such important and timely issues as the need not to expand naval activities in areas of conflict and the withdrawal of nuclear-weapon ships from certain areas of the seas and oceans, especially areas of conflict.

Attention must be paid to limiting the activities of naval forces which cruise for long periods in waters far from their own shores.

In order to adopt practical measures to limit and reduce naval activities and naval armaments, it is necessary to extend confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans. This question must therefore be given an important place in the proposed negotiations.

The Mongolian People's Republic considers that the establishment of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world's oceans would help to strengthen trust in this field. We have proposed the conclusion of a convention on non-aggression and the non-use of force in relations among States of Asia and the Pacific and we have welcomed the idea of converting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, as well as the initiatives relating to the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf regions. My country fully supports the proposal that the southern Pacific should be declared a nuclear-free zone.

Mongolia considers that the proposed talks must devote careful attention to measures aimed at a qualitative and quantitative freeze on the principal types of warships, the limitation and reduction of naval manoeuvres intended as a show of force or as a threat, the abandonment of the policy of declaring naval blockades and the elimination of naval bases in foreign territories.

The Mongolian delegation is convinced that the present discussion of this important item in the Disarmament Commission can provide an excellent basis for progress towards talks on limiting and reducing naval activities and naval armaments and on the extension of confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans. All major naval States and other concerned countries must take part in these negotiations, which could be carried out on a bilateral, regional or multilateral basis. The Soviet Union, for instance, has expressed readiness to consider specific measures to curb and limit naval armaments within the framework of bilateral talks with the United States. We sincerely welcome that constructive approach to these important matters. We share the view of certain other States that the Conference on Disarmament is the proper forum for multilateral negotiations.
In order to achieve concrete results in arms limitation and disarmament, of course, the political will must exist. Therefore, my delegation calls on Western countries to show the necessary political will, along with a constructive approach to this important problem. It is by adopting concrete measures in the field of limiting and reducing naval activities and naval armaments that States will be able truly to safeguard their legitimate trading interests and their security.

With regard to the study being carried out, my delegation hopes that it will help to throw light on specific areas of possible agreement and ways to reach such agreement. Together with recommendations adopted by the Disarmament Commission on the basis of this debate, the study could make a worthy contribution to the work of limiting and reducing naval armaments and extending confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans.

My delegation is convinced that this discussion of this important problem will result in specific recommendations on future negotiations. The important working paper submitted on this item by the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union certainly merits careful attention, and my delegation fully supports it.

Mr. Stanica (Romania) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish at the outset to say how much the Romanian delegation appreciates Bulgaria's initiative in bringing before the United Nations the item on curbing the naval arms race and the limitation of naval armaments. We also welcome the Swedish initiative regarding a United Nations study on the same subject.

There is no doubt that our planet's seas and oceans have not escaped the feverish and irrational arms race. Other speakers - and the literature in the field - have given telling proof of the build-up of naval activities and armaments. Therefore we cannot conceal our deep concern at the present situation in this regard.

We believe that, like other components of the complex subject of disarmament, the question of naval armaments and the naval arms race should be studied by all States with a vital interest in putting an end to the arms race and limiting armaments. That is why we welcome the discussion which has begun today in the Disarmament Commission and in which every delegation has the opportunity to state its views. We also support the preparation of a study on this subject.

We hope that, following its deliberations and, of course, taking into account the conclusions of that study, the Commission will arrive at specific
recommendations which could facilitate the beginning of substantive negotiations in
the Geneva Conference on Disarmament or in other forums on limiting naval
activities and naval armaments.

In our view, the subject before us should be considered in close relation to
disarmament efforts in other fields and in the light of present priorities. As
stated by the head of my delegation during the general exchange of views,
consideration of this issue should focus on the principles and objectives set out
in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted
to disarmament. It seems to us to be fundamental in this respect that the balance
of forces - whether land, air or sea forces - be based not on arms build-ups, which
cannot lead to improved security, but rather on the gradual and, if possible,
substantial reduction of military activities and of weapons of all kinds.
(Mr. Stanica, Romania)

In this respect Romania supports the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and the reduction and eventual elimination of foreign forces. We are in favour of any other proposal that can lead to wider zones of the world's oceans being placed outside the rivalry of Powers, outside the arms race.

The present debate can be very instructive, we believe, to many delegations. The substantive nature of the problem and its importance to virtually all States throughout the world are a sure basis for useful activity by the Commission. That is why the present debates and the Commission's future action on this issue should take place in a calm atmosphere, with understanding of the security interests of all States and of the international community in general, with flexibility and in a constructive spirit. We hope that at this session the Commission will arrive at recommendations in keeping with the importance of the issue and the status of our consideration of this agenda item.

Mr. de La BAUME (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation expressed its views at the beginning of the session in the framework of a statement made on behalf of the European Community. That is why today we take this opportunity to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, our congratulations and most heartfelt best wishes for success in a very difficult endeavour. We thank you in particular for having proposed a satisfactory method for the appropriate consideration of agenda item 8.

France, a traditional naval Power, attaches particular importance to all questions involving the seas. It is thus naturally interested in the study on naval armaments requested of the Secretary-General and that is why the French Government was wished to be represented in the group of governmental experts entrusted with helping the Secretary-General in the preparation of the study which will be submitted to the fortieth session of the General Assembly, in pursuance of resolution 38/188 G. On the other hand, the French delegation voted against resolution 39/151 I, which invites Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views concerning the curbing of the naval arms race and the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans.

As far as the first point is concerned - the limitation of naval armaments - this proposal prejudges the results of the study taking place in accordance with resolution 38/188 G and therefore constitutes a precedent that we believe to be unfortunate. There are two possibilities here. The first is that the study
requested by the General Assembly can make a contribution to consideration by States of the problems in question - which is what France believes - in which case it would be advisable to await the completion of the study. The second is that the question is not yet ripe or is too complex for governmental experts to be able to discuss them usefully at this stage, in which case we fail to see how the objective of the sponsors of resolution 39/151 could be more easily achieved by dispensing with a serious preliminary study by experts.

Furthermore, resolution 39/151 I does not mention the need to take into account existing situations and balances in the naval sphere or to preserve the legitimate security or commercial interests of the States concerned. In this connection, any serious consideration of naval armaments must take into account geographical factors. The naval needs of countries whose security depends on their maritime communications are obviously different from those of continental Powers. We need not emphasize the comparative situation of the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact in this respect.

On the substantive issues and in the light of the proposals of certain delegations, the French delegation would like to recall some essential facts that must guide any serious study on the naval arms race, and in particular the diversity of matériel, which makes it difficult to evaluate forces and therefore complicates all attempts to arrive at negotiated, verifiable limitation in this field.

A certain number of measures were adopted in the period between the two wars, the most important of them resulting from the Washington and London treaties. At that time fleets were basically composed of ships whose performance was broadly comparable from one country to another. The limitation of the overall tonnage of fleets, the displacement of certain types of ships and the calibre of the guns that they could carry were all effective, balanced and verifiable limitation measures. That is no longer the case today. Tonnage and the calibre of artillery are no longer the essential criteria for gauging naval power. Surface missiles can be carried on light craft, aircraft or submarines. Their performance varies considerably depending on their electronic equipment. Any evaluation of capacity is therefore difficult, if not impossible.

At the global level we must not only consider naval forces in the strict sense but also bear in mind the air forces and merchant marine units that could be used
together with naval deployment. Furthermore, the structure of naval forces differs greatly from one country to another, so that two marine forces of comparable size could be classed differently depending on the criteria used: the numbers and characteristics of the units, tonnages, armaments and so on. Because of the complexity of these technical data, it is impossible at this stage to make an assessment based on the state of naval armaments or on proposals aimed at limiting or reducing them.

Agenda item 8 also concerns confidence-building measures. In this connection, a number of proposals are listed in section II of document A/CN.10/73 which do not seem to us to serve the objective sought, much less promote security. Those proposals do not take into account the security needs of certain States, be they naval Powers or countries which had threatened and for which the support of the naval Powers offers security when they are in areas of conflict or tension.
The proposals in the document in fact are aimed at limiting the right of legitimate self-defence, whether collective or individual. They disregard the principle of freedom of the seas and are based on an idea which we question—an idea disproved by the facts—that is, that the presence of naval forces is in itself a threat to the freedom and the security of maritime communications.

Therefore the French delegation believes that the question of naval armaments should be the subject of another study on the basis of the experts' report which will be submitted this year to the General Assembly.

Mr. SIPOS (Hungary): Mr. Chairman, my delegation has congratulated you on your election already, but, as I am speaking in the Disarmament Commission for the first time, I cannot refrain from expressing my pleasure at seeing you in the Chair and my conviction that the Commission under your able leadership will achieve results during the current session.

The position of the Hungarian delegation on some agenda items was set out in detail on 9 May. At this time I wish to deal only with agenda item 8. Although Hungary is a land-locked country and is not among the major maritime users, it has a merchant fleet which transports freight on a year-round basis; in addition my country is taking part in operating scientific research vessels along with other socialist countries.

My delegation is concerned at seeing that the arms race, and especially the nuclear-arms race, is being pursued in the naval field also, owing to the naval armament of the United States and some of its allies. Particularly perilous is the continuing increase in the number of naval units carrying nuclear arms, stationed in crisis areas, with attendant threats of interference. By deploying new naval units and building a whole series of naval bases, those countries have perpetuated the military threat and have increased tension in new areas. All these activities jeopardize the security not only of littoral but also of land-locked countries.

We are convinced that these negative tendencies can be halted and reversed by the adoption of concrete measures such as the concluding of an agreement on the limitation of naval armaments in certain regions, such as the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Another significant step could be to prohibit the enlarging of naval activities in areas of conflict. It would also be appropriate to prohibit certain types of ships, such as aircraft carriers, from entering specific regions. All these steps could be combined with various confidence-building measures, with due regard for the need to ensure the safety of international sea lanes and prevent conflict situations.
Regarding the aforementioned possible measures, the Hungarian Government considers it necessary for all significant naval powers to adopt them and to participate in their elaboration, the governing principle being that such measures must not diminish the security of any State.

As regards the study on the naval arms race, my delegation is awaiting its recommendations with interest. At the same time I should like to emphasize that the study must not be a pretext for preventing substantive discussion on this subject during our current session.

Aware of the threat posed by the naval arms race to the peace of the world, my Government welcomed the adoption of resolutions 38/188 F and 39/151 I and wishes to promote their implementation by its political activities.

Operative paragraph 5 of resolution 39/151 I requests our Commission to consider the question of the naval arms race and to report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

The Hungarian delegation is of the view that the working paper (A/CN.10/73) introduced by Bulgaria and co-sponsored by the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union is a solid basis for our considerations in this Commission and for that reason my delegation fully supports it.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Sir, since my delegation is speaking for the first time this year at a plenary meeting of the Disarmament Commission, I should like to extend to you our perhaps belated but nevertheless most warm welcome as our Chairman. The Netherlands delegation has always enjoyed working with you personally and with the other members of your delegation, and this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is certainly no exception.

Today I wish to outline briefly the Netherlands position on the approach to be taken with regard to item 8 of the agenda of this Commission, entitled "Curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans".

In doing so let me step back for a moment and trace the recent history of the United Nations involvement with the subject of the naval arms race. As delegations will recall, at its thirty-eighth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 38/188 G, which requested the Secretary-General to carry out, with the assistance of governmental experts, a comprehensive study on the naval arms race, on naval armed forces and arms systems with a view to analysing their possible implications for a wide spectrum of issues. Since then this study has been taken up. A number
of eminent experts from Indonesia, Gabon, Peru, Sweden, France and China are taking part in it. In view of the importance that the Netherlands attaches to this study, a Netherlands naval expert is also participating in the study. From what we learn, it can safely be said that this study is well under way, and it can be expected that the report of the expert group can be presented to the fortieth session of the General Assembly a few months from now.

Much to the regret of my delegation, while this study was under way another resolution on the subject was put to the vote last year during the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Resolution 39/151 I, entitled "Curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans", turned out to be a rather controversial one, as was shown from the vote: 70 delegations voted in favour, whereas 72 voted against or abstained in the voting. The Netherlands delegation was amongst those that voted against. A number of reasons prompted my delegation to do so.

We felt then and we continue to feel that with this resolution and the item on the Disarmament Commission agenda resulting from it, an unfortunate precedent was set. What is the practical use of studies requested by the General Assembly if at the same time recommendations are sought ignoring those studies? A more substantial objection of my delegation is that in the way both resolution 39/151 I and agenda item 8 are formulated the actual scope of the subject-matter has been considerably narrowed, which prejudges the outcome of the study at present being undertaken.
The Netherlands has informed the Secretary-General of its concerns. The
Netherlands reply to resolution 39/151 I is to be found in document A/CN.10/70 of
30 April last. In that reply the Netherlands indicated furthermore that: it is, in
principle, in favour of negotiations on aspects of naval armaments, and their
possible use, but that it is of the opinion that the measures suggested by the
co-sponsors of resolution 39/151 I, would be incompatible with the existing
geographical disparities concerning the major naval powers and would hence run
counter to the legitimate interests in the field of security and commerce of all
States concerned.

As was mentioned in the Netherlands reply to the Secretary-General, we find it
premature for the Disarmament Commission to consider the question of the naval arms
race at this juncture. Nothing in the present debate in the Commission has
prompted the Netherlands to change its opinion.

Mr. Liebowitz (United States of America): I apologize for speaking so
late in the day. My delegation had not intended to speak on this subject, but in
response to the statements made by several delegations we have asked for the
floor. The majority of statements we have heard only serve to confirm the
assessment, outlined in our statement of 8 May, of this agenda item. It is an item
based on a resolution of the General Assembly which did not receive widespread
support, a fact which underlined its unacceptability to a large number of States.
Statements bear evidence to the fact that it is a controversial subject and,
particularly in light of what we have heard today, the possibility of the
Disarmament Commission reaching a consensus recommendation on this item is
precluded. In fact, after listening to some of the statements, we question whether
the proponents of the item and of the resolution upon which it is based are
genuinely interested in even laying the groundwork for any consensus; the selective
interpretations of history, combined with, in some cases, one-sided and distorted
presentations of so-called facts, give us more than serious doubts.

It is not my intention to recount a series of facts and figures concerning the
naval forces of the United States. It is obvious to a student of geography that
naval forces play a vital role in maintaining the security of the United States as
well as that of our allies. What is not obvious in geographic terms is why the
Soviet Union has engaged, since 1960, in an ambitious and unprecedented development
of its navy, growth which has resulted in a navy that is capable of, and has
demonstrated, world-wide operations and power projection.
Increased technology and sophistication are not limited to United States forces, as has been asserted by some previous speakers. The present trend in Soviet naval ship development has resulted in ships that have larger displacement, greater firepower— including the presence of nuclear weapons—longer-at-sea endurance, and greater sustainability. A significant part of Soviet naval strength lies in its general purpose submarine forces, the largest in the world. And the Soviet Union maintains the world's largest ballistic missile submarine force.

I also wish to point out that naval presence and deployments world-wide are not unique to the United States, as some speakers would have us believe. In the Mediterranean, the Soviet Union maintains some 45 ships and submarines, most nuclear-weapons capable. In the Indian Ocean, most notably since the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union maintains an average of 20 naval units. In the South China Sea, the Soviet Union supports a major naval facility in Viet Nam, at Cam Ranh Bay, where an average of 25 ships and submarines are forward deployed. Off the coast of West Africa, the Soviet Union continues to maintain a naval presence in support of its interests in Angola.

In light of these facts, we question the sincerity behind the calls of some for "curbing the naval arms race", a call which seems to have no foundation in the reality of present-day Soviet naval operations.

Mr. FOSSUNG (Cameroon): As a coastal State, Cameroon attaches great importance to the use to which the seas and the oceans are to be put. Our overall policy is opposed to the use of force in international relations and in favour of friendly and peaceful relations and coexistence among all States. Cameroon insists on restraint and disarmament. Cameroon is, therefore, in principle, in favour of all genuine and balanced efforts to keep the seas and oceans of the world free from weapons of destruction and open for commerce and constructive interchange and co-operation among all peoples of the world.

This constructive approach of peaceful navigation would not be ensured or enhanced in a climate, or under conditions, of the militarization of naval traffic. The naval arms race, like the arms race in general, particularly hurts small developing countries, like Cameroon, which neither have the resources nor the inclination to engage in such a race but which, nevertheless, suffer from its effects.
Cameroon views the subject of the naval arms race as an important issue. That is why we voted in favour of resolution 39/151 I, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. Cameroon also supported resolution 38/188 G, adopted by the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, which requested the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the naval arms race. That study, which is being prepared by a distinguished group of governmental experts that includes the representative of a brotherly African State, Gabon, will be submitted to the Assembly at its fortieth session later this year. Cameroon is anxiously awaiting the conclusions and recommendations of that study.

The Cameroon delegation has listened carefully to the statements already made at the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on this subject. We have also read the views submitted by States pursuant to General Assembly resolution 39/151 I in this connection. Our delegation believes that all the views and statements made, together with the report to be submitted to the General Assembly later this year, will contribute to the further understanding of the various issues concerned with the problem of the naval arms race and the importance of naval arms restraint and disarmament. Cameroon is prepared to consider, therefore, within the United Nations framework, any serious and balanced initiative aimed at promoting peace and security for the benefit of the international community as a whole.
Mr. KISLYAK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to make the following comments on some statements made today, especially those made by the representatives of the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States.

Whether opponents of curbing the naval arms race wish it or not, the debate has shown that that arms race poses a serious threat. I shall not speak in detail about the insinuations that the threat comes from the Soviet navy. When there is an enormous growth of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) navies, which arrogate to themselves the role of world gendarme, we must perfect our own navies. We have heard many times the false allegation about the threat from the Soviet navy and its role. The same was said of bombers, rockets and so on, but such fallacies are always doomed to fail once they are examined.

We must now speak of something else. In the debate today we have witnessed the opposition of two approaches. One is to see the problem and try to solve it through mutual - I stress "mutual" - agreement to reduce the level of the naval arms race. That is the approach of the socialist countries, whose concrete proposal that there be negotiations without any conditions is under discussion today. Sound logic tells us that those who are interested in solving the problem should consider the proposal seriously and put forward their own ideas, taking into account their own security interests, of course. That is the only reasonable way to solve problems in today's world.

However, we saw the opposite trend, which in our view is a reflection of a clear desire of some NATO countries to perpetuate the so-called right - we do not know who gave it to them - to voyage without limitation on the oceans with a big stick, demonstrating a willingness to use force if matters develop in a way that is not to their liking. Attempts are made to settle for others what is or is not essential for security. For instance, we hear ridiculous allegations that would sabotage a businesslike and constructive discussion of the problem.

The idea was even expressed that not everybody really understands the role of navies - of course, "the noble mission" of certain NATO navies. We had a brief lecture about that. But many countries in the Caribbean, the South Atlantic, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and other areas have suffered from that role and their representatives know full well the meaning of gunboat diplomacy.

The thesis we heard most often today was that the study prepared by a group of experts was not completed. In that connection, I should like to ask the Western delegations a question: since when has the existence of a study constituted a
prerequisite for disarmament negotiations? Can those delegations remind us what studies preceded the Treaties banning nuclear tests in three environments, on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, on prohibiting the emplacement on the sea-bed and ocean floor of weapons of mass destruction, and many other international agreements? I should also like to know what study allowed the opening of Soviet-American negotiations on space and nuclear weapons, negotiations that were welcomed by many States, including Western States.

It suffices to pose those questions to understand how unfounded and ludicrous is that thesis.

We do not object in certain cases to studies being made of various aspects of disarmament. Some of them are useful, but they never have been a guarantee of the success of future talks. That can be seen from many studies in the nuclear field, the test ban, military budgets and others. Those studies not only were not conducive to getting rid of misunderstandings between States, but, unfortunately, did not even help the start of negotiations on those problems. That is why we consider that tying, by hook or by crook, the beginning of talks to the results of a study is tantamount to preventing the very possibility of negotiations. It is a matter not of completing a study, but - let us be frank - of the absence of political will, the absence of interest on the part of some States, seriously to deal with the question of curbing the naval arms race.

I must add that, to judge from the statements of some representatives, those countries will never want seriously to deal with that matter and negotiate, even after the study is completed.

Attempts by the Western Powers to sabotage discussion of the item on the basis that they voted against the General Assembly resolution are just as unfounded. They are simply absurd. If the socialist countries were to take the same approach, it would be impossible to consider, for example, the question of the reduction of military budgets, since those countries voted against General Assembly resolution 39/64 B.

At the same time, we note that in the replies of some Western States, including that of the Netherlands, which I shall quote, they are "in favour, in principle, of negotiations on aspects of naval armaments and their possible use". (A/CN.10/70, p. 5)

However, at the same time critical remarks are made about some aspects of General Assembly resolution 39/151 I.
(Mr. Kislyak, USSR)

We do not object to those remarks and reservations being considered during serious - I stress "serious" - debate and businesslike discussion of the curbing of the naval arms race. We again appeal to the Western delegations to adopt a serious attitude towards one of the most urgent present-day policy matters - curbing the naval arms race.

Mr. EDIS (United Kingdom): I apologize for having to speak again at this late hour, but we regret that the Argentine delegation chose to raise the issue of the Mount Pleasant airfield here in the context of this agenda item.

Who can doubt that there would be no new airfield on the Falkland Islands but for the previous Argentine Government's unprovoked aggression and violation of Charter principles?
Prior to 3 April 1982 we had systematically run down our naval presence in the South Atlantic which had historically been a significant one. The Falkland Islands were virtually demilitarized on the day of the Argentine invasion. We have learned, however, by bitter experience, that additional defensive measures are regrettably necessary in order to defend the inhabitants of the Islands. As well as its important defensive function, the airport also is expected to have a major and growing civil and developmental use.

Finally, in our view, the bilateral dispute between the two countries over the Falkland Islands is better addressed by quiet and serious diplomacy rather than by this sort of public rhetoric, which we can only presume is intended for domestic political consumption.

Mr. Le Kim Chung (Viet Nam): My delegation does not intend to take up much time of the Commission at this very late hour. It is, however, ironic, although not at all surprising to my delegation, that the representative of the United States just a moment ago spoke ill of and cooked up fabrications against my country. It is ironic because, as is well known, the United States imperialists launched the most brutal and longest war of aggression since the end of the Second World War against my country. Let me recall just one fact: the amount of explosives used by the United States during its war of aggression against my country from the late 1950s to the early 1970s was about three times greater than the amount of explosives used by all sides during the Second World War. This is but another indication of the fact that the representative of the United States either ignores, or is unaware of, history. We think that the representative of the United States fails to understand and wants to ignore the history of mankind because the United States so deliberately sticks to what the former French Foreign Minister, Mr. Claude Cheysson, described recently as the imperialist conception of the world.

Mr. Campora (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): In our statement we did not allude to the question of the Malvinas. All we did was refer to a paper submitted by Argentina which, it is true, is linked to the question of the naval arms race. We believe that the naval arms race is directly linked to the militarization of the seas. So what we wanted to do was draw the Commission's attention to the existence of that note by the Republic of Argentina so that it might be known that there is an international focal point of tension in the South
Atlantic because of the growing militarization of that ocean as a result of military fortifications established by the United Kingdom in the Malvinas Islands. Vast sums, amounting, according to United Kingdom data, to £2,500 million, have already been invested in them. It is estimated that 4,000 soldiers are at present stationed in the Malvinas, a strategic airport has been opened and the presence of warships equipped with the most modern offensive weapons has been observed in the area; and it is possible that nuclear submarines are also there. That militarization of the South Atlantic can in no way be explained as strictly defensive in purpose.

In the Republic of Argentina a democratic constitutional process is at present under way. This is known to the entire world and to the United Nations, for the President of the Republic of Argentina addressed the General Assembly in order to affirm that our country had embarked on a democratic stage of law and of commitment to the peaceful settlement of its disputes. The difference between this new stage and the former military dictatorship, which was eventually removed from power, is clearly shown by the fact that the military chiefs responsible for so many errors of domestic and international policy are now the objects of public censure and are standing trial before the courts.

I am making this objective statement of domestic policy to explain the sincerity and firmness of the peace-loving policy of the present Government of Argentina which is now directing the destiny of the Argentine people. We do believe however that the militarization of the Malvinas is in line with the broader objective of the United Kingdom, which is the militarization of the South Atlantic, and that the military bases that are being constructed there are basically intended for offensive ends.

This is our question: what are the real objectives of the United Kingdom, which is a nuclear Power and a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)? What is it doing in our region? Part of the answer certainly resides in statements made by the British Secretary of State for Defence in Washington in September of 1983 when he linked the Malvinas Islands to the East-West conflict. That approach, which can certainly lead to the nuclearization of the South Atlantic, disregards the fundamental interests of our region in terms of peace and security and has repeatedly been rejected by the Latin American countries.
(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

The statement that I originally made was merely intended to draw attention to the existence of a document directly related to the problem of war on the seas, the militarization of the seas, including military armaments and military bases which service and supply the fleets that cross the world.

The South Atlantic must become once again a sea of peace. The South Atlantic has no reason to be a centre of conflict in the confrontation of the major military alliances.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.