

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

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Statements were made by:

Mr. Bhatt (Nepal)

Mr. Skobelev (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Mr. De La Gorce (France)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 30 TO 45, 120 and 121 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BHATT (Nepal): At the outset, I should like to associate myself with the deep concern of the international community over the alleged nuclear test by the racist régime of South Africa. If true, this event is an open defiance of General Assembly resolutions 33/63, 33/183 G and 33/183 H on South Africa's nuclear adventure, as well as of the spirit of paragraph 12 of the Final Document of the tenth special session. We wish to join preceding speakers in asking our Organization to probe into the matter and in requesting the Secretary-General to report the outcome of the inquiry at the earliest possible date.

The ideal of general and complete disarmament is inherent in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, which expresses the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In this quest for peace, the tenth special session of the General Assembly was historic, as it focussed the attention of the world, for the first time, on the pressing need for disarmament. The Final Document of that special session constitutes a sound basis for meaningful negotiations on this difficult issue which is, however, of paramount importance to the whole of mankind.

My delegation finds it satisfying to note that the multilateral deliberating and negotiating machinery suggested in the resolutions of the first special session on disarmament have started functioning in a considerably revitalized manner. The Committee on Disarmament, which now is the most vital multilateral negotiating forum, has settled its organizational questions and adopted its rules of procedure and agenda. Though the achievement of the Committee on substantive issues has not been great, its report is indicative of the free and frank exchanges of views, a factor which must form a natural prelude to any meaningful result. The most important thing to save the vitality and utility of the Committee

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

on Disarmament is the willingness of the members to carry on negotiations within its purview. Bilateral or trilateral negotiations must, as far as possible, be carried out within the Committee, which has already devised a suitable mechanism for such negotiations, should the need arise. All disarmament issues fall within its purview, according to the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly. This will give more credence to the ability of the Committee, because disarmament and international security are of paramount importance to every sovereign nation, big or small, wielding powerful military muscle or not.

The reactivated Disarmament Commission recently concluded its deliberations. During those meetings the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement displayed their unity in resisting the attempts made by some nuclear-weapon States to dilute the urgency of total nuclear disarmament. It is largely due to their united stand that the consensus document of the Commission incorporates the decision that an immediate cessation of the nuclear race should receive special priority at the very initial stage of complete disarmament. The document of the Commission does not include the call to prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, though the last session of the General Assembly had adopted that call. That was largely as a result of the refusal of the nuclear-weapon States to co-operate.

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

The non-aligned and other developing countries that wish to see an early cessation of the insane arms race were plainly disappointed by the meagre achievements of the Commission. Yet the Commission has done major spadework in the direction of general and genuine disarmament on an internationally agreed basis. The mention in the report of the Commission of the areas of dissension will facilitate their being reopened at subsequent sessions. While talking of the Disarmament Commission, I should like to express our appreciation of the statement, made by the representative of China before that Commission, that China is ready to join the Committee on Disarmament in due time.

Paragraph 59 of the Final Document of the tenth special session calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to conclude effective arrangements, as appropriate, to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This vital issue was also debated during the summer session of the Committee on Disarmament. We are fully aware that these so-called negative guarantees alone do not at all guarantee the security of the non-nuclear States.

We are fully aware that today "conflict anywhere can destroy everywhere", to quote Mr. Seignious of the United States. Even so, we are willing to go by the call for realism made by the big Powers in approaching the ideal of complete disarmament. We feel that assurances by individual régimes about the non-use or non-development of nuclear weapons are not enough to reassure the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States. Only the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones backed by effective and legally binding international instruments can carry weight.

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America is a bold initiative. Sincere implementation of that Treaty can give a tremendous fillip to the creation of similar nuclear-weapon-free zones elsewhere and thus effectively control the growing dangers of nuclear proliferation. We have supported the proposal for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia and the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. We view with concern the growing presence of the big Powers in the ocean. We sincerely call upon the Soviet Union and the United States of America to resume their talks on the Indian Ocean. My delegation fully supports the recommendation of the Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean.

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

As we approach the second Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we cannot lose sight of the fact that this achievement of mankind has yet to attain universality. We call upon all nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligation under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we call upon all States having nuclear-weapon capabilities not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to display magnanimity in the interest of human security by acceding to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nepal welcomes the recent adherence of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

My delegation regrets the inability of the Committee on Disarmament to report progress in the tripartite talks on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We hope that the Committee will be able to present the draft treaty on a comprehensive test ban at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Such a major breakthrough would constitute a fitting prelude to the Second Disarmament Decade.

The statements made by the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union that they attach high importance to the conclusion of conventions prohibiting the development, manufacture, deployment and stockpiling of chemical and radiological weapons is indeed heartening. Their optimistic statements on the subject reinforce our natural optimism that 1980 will see the adoption of a convention prohibiting chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons.

As in the past year, I should like to reaffirm our support for the call for disarmament in conventional weapons. The sadly wasteful expenditure in this area of the arms race has been eminently elucidated by many speakers in this Committee. The tenth special session has outlined the Programme of Action to be undertaken in this area of arms control. We call upon major suppliers and recipients of such weapons to open a dialogue immediately so that there can be a beginning to the end of the transfer of conventional weapons.

We welcome the immensely significant studies now being undertaken, such as the development of a format for the reporting of military budgets, disarmament and security, and the study on disarmament and development. The widening gap between developed and developing countries and the worsening economic condition of a large number of developing countries are in themselves great threats to international peace, stability and security. We have a vital stake in the gradual

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

slackening and eventual ending of the arms race, for it could release tremendous resources for the development of the countries of the third world. Apart from the wasteful expenditure that the arms race represents, it creates conflicts and tension. Developing countries like Nepal cannot afford to be embroiled in tension, fear, anxiety or instability, when the greatest challenge of economic development is facing them. This realization of the inseparability of peace and development has prompted us to propose that Nepal be declared a zone of peace. We are deeply gratified by the growing international understanding of and support for our proposition.

In spite of the distant silver lining, the tendency to seek security, superiority and prestige in sophisticated arms build-up continues, unfortunately, not only among the nuclear-weapon States but also among the medium-power States. Disarmament is a universal concern. The tenth special session created enough momentum to sustain our efforts till now. With a view to creating world public interest on the subject, Nepal reiterates its support for the World Disarmament Conference under United Nations auspices.

Paragraph 110 of the Final Document of the tenth special session has linked disarmament to the development of a security system upon which States can confidently rely. The logic of this linkage is undeniable. Only when the nations of the world develop a better climate of mutual confidence and take recourse to the means envisaged in the United Nations Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes, and, secondly, only when the United Nations can more effectively function as a guardian of international peace and security, can States be induced to take concrete steps in the direction of general and complete disarmament. The Final Document of the special session on disarmament has also called attention to the importance of confidence-building measures that can smooth the path to disarmament. My delegation feels the building of such confidence is in the last analysis the special responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States.

This brings me to the fact that the ultimate fulfilment of our pious desire hangs on the sincerity of the support of the great Powers. Our cherished call for gradual progress toward general and complete disarmament, the reduction of military expenditures and the use of the funds thus released towards the creation of a more just and secure world for man to live in - all depend upon their willingness to co-operate.

(Mr. Bhatt, Nepal)

We welcome SALT II, and we are confident that it will soon lead to SALT III. Yet we cannot forget that SALT II has, after all, imposed only an upper ceiling on the number of already-omnipotent weapons of annihilation. We hope that the dedication of the 1980s as a Decade of Disarmament will not fail to impress upon all nations, nuclear and non-nuclear, the fact that the world order cannot be maintained for ever by a precarious balance of nuclear warheads. Implementation of the programme of disarmament will be painfully demanding and time consuming. But we must not lose time and squander the momentum generated by the tenth special session. In this Disarmament Week my delegation hopes that the United Nations will, through the sincere and concerted efforts of all its Members, be able to play a powerful role in generating world public opinion on disarmament.

Mr. SKOBELEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)(interpretation from Russian): The First Committee is now discussing unquestionably the most important and timely international problem: the need to halt the arms race and to move on to measures of genuine disarmament. Our approach towards this problem is determined by the position of principle of the Soviet State, which has been set out in the decisions of the twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and subsequent plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Comrade Leonid Brezhnev, on 1 October 1979, in Berlin, stated that:

"We are in favour of freeing the 1980s from the war of nerves and from suspicion and fear and, most important, from the arms race. Genuine political courage consists not in trying to achieve competition and conflict but in the ability unwaveringly to conduct a policy of peace and good-neighbourliness."

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

The experience of history has shown that the major problems in the life of peoples are being resolved as a result of the growing decision on the part of the people to close ranks in the general struggle against aggression, injustice and inequality. Was the mighty hurricane of decolonization brought about only by hopes and expectations? Was the failure of the policy of the cold war and the recognition of the principles of peaceful coexistence as a historical necessity brought about only by discussions of the usefulness of peace and the evils of war? Are the first, and of course, inadequate transformations in international economic relations determined only by the aspirations of peoples? Similarly, the solution of the problems of disarmament, which determine the further course of civilization, may be achieved only when the consolidated forces of war and the opponents of disarmament have changed their position and, instead of making the frequently stated commonplace remarks concerning the usefulness of disarmament, associate themselves with those who are making concrete proposals concerning questions of disarmament and collaborate on the elaboration of practical measures in this field.

There is no doubt that disarmament would improve the international situation, including the situation in the economic sphere. It is also important to point out that any concrete measures to fight hegemonism, to achieve the settlement of political problems in a spirit of justice and to base international relations on principles of mutuality and equality, will help to promote the cause of disarmament.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR proceeds from the premise that the practice in international relations has demonstrated that it is possible to strive for and achieve the necessary level of confidence between States and to direct the competition between various social systems into channels of co-operation in order continually to decrease the nuclear rocket threat.

Reference has been made on a number of occasions to the Soviet-United States treaty, SALT II. We also consider that the treaty represents an important contribution to limiting the strategic arms race. Its significance also resides in the fact that it provides better prospects for subsequent steps towards disarmament. However, we are realistic, and we see the difficulties on the path towards disarmament. Those difficulties reside in the fact

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

that some people still continue to base their policies on strength and to commit acts of aggression and repress the sovereign will of people. They block any constructive dialogue towards mutual understanding and attempt to replace dialogue with polemic and slander in order to foment distrust and suspicion towards other people and to increase the arms race.

The Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community are doing everything in their power in order to strengthen peace and security. In the Declaration adopted in November 1978 in Moscow, at the Conference of the Political Consultative Committee of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty and in the meeting in May 1979 of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of those same States in Budapest, it was pointed out that military competition in Europe and in the world should be carried on not through the building up of arms but through their reduction and through the resolute transition to measures of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. The documents emerging from those meetings contain an extensive programme of measures which would lead towards disarmament and the security of peoples. In particular, there is a proposal concerning the convening of a political conference with the participation of all European States, as well as the United States of America and Canada.

All those who are not bound by prejudice know that the Soviet Union has always been in the vanguard in the struggle for disarmament and that the Soviet Union was the first Power in the world which has said "no" to war, to private property and to the exploitation of man by man. In making an outstanding contribution to the defeat of fascism and to the establishment of the United Nations, the Soviet Union has drawn up and submitted important proposals concerning the question of disarmament, both general and complete disarmament and the individual aspects of disarmament, including partial measures, taking into account the security interests of all the parties concerned. Those proposals have been broadly supported, and with good reason.

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

In speaking on 6 October this year in Berlin at the solemn meeting on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, Comrade Leonid I. Brezhnev stated that the Government of the Soviet Union has adopted a decision to withdraw from the territory of the German Democratic Republic during the next 12 months, 20,000 Soviet troops, 1,000 tanks and a certain amount of other military equipment. He also expressed willingness to withdraw intermediate range military devices from the Western part of the Soviet Union provided that comparable military devices would not be deployed in Western Europe. This action has been warmly welcomed by many countries. However, certain States have still not yet responded appropriately to this act of peace and goodwill, which genuinely lowers the threshold of danger on the European continent, and thereby throughout the world.

Artificial pretexts are being advanced for the purpose of increasing the military potential of NATO in the countries of Western Europe. In a genuine desire to achieve common solutions, let us speak the truth. The security of people is in the interests of the policy of decreasing military potential. This has been stated in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and here in the First Committee by representatives of the overwhelming majority of States. The direction of the road we should take has been clearly stated, but what do we see in fact? Under the guise of propaganda specifically related to an alleged Soviet threat, no mention is made of the dangerous doctrines of NATO. On the territory of Western Europe alone, there are 8,000 United States nuclear weapons. It is intended at the next session of NATO to force upon the countries of Western Europe the deployment of approximately 600 additional rocket facilities with nuclear warheads. That is a qualitative new stage in the question of disarmament. It will upset the balance of power which over the past 35 years has made it possible to maintain peace in Europe. The proposed new stage in the arms race is contrary to all the decisions of the United Nations and to the efforts made in our Committee.

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

The thesis has been advanced here concerning the possibility of conducting disarmament talks only from a position of strength and military superiority, and not on the basis of not jeopardizing the security of any party and not on the basis of the desire of people to maintain their security at a lower level of armaments, in the genuine desire to achieve general and complete disarmament. This is an inaccurate and unconstructive approach, which gives way to those who are not interested in strengthening international peace and security.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR expresses the hope that all those who think soberly will not yield to those pressures, that all the Western Powers will respond favourably to the Soviet proposal and that they will not accept plans for the further deployment of nuclear weapons in Western Europe. It is necessary to display a will towards disarmament and to understand that the senseless arms race will result in further difficulties for States.

In speaking on 28 December 1978 at a meeting devoted to celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, a candidate member of the Politburo, Comrade Masherov indicated that the most important activity of the Communist Party was the courageous struggle for peace, the cessation of the senseless arms race and the deepening of détente, which determines the trend and development of international relations. Only a consistent policy of détente can protect mankind from a nuclear holocaust. Only a policy of détente can make it possible for mankind to build a solid peace and to strengthen genuine and universal security. It is necessary to remember that détente can be maintained only through the constant and energetic efforts on the part of all peoples.

The Byelorussian SSR has been steadfastly in favour of the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons in all forms and the gradual decrease of their stockpiles, down to their total elimination. The cessation of the production and elimination of nuclear weapons must be carried out in stages on a mutually acceptable basis, with the necessary and agreed controls corresponding to each stage. It is necessary at all stages not to upset the existing balance of forces, along with the continual decrease of their levels.

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

An important basis for practical steps in the sphere of nuclear disarmament could be the proposals of the seven socialist countries dated February 1977, submitted in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. They relate to negotiations on the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons in all forms and the gradual decrease of stockpiles, down to their total elimination. The General Assembly must contribute to the beginning of such negotiations that will lead to a successful conclusion.

Along with other delegations, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR firmly condemns the policies of certain States to acquire nuclear weapons. Those States, which hold highly dangerous views with respect to the cause of peace, are secretly trying to develop and acquire nuclear weapons, expecting the world community to reconcile itself to their criminal actions which definitely increase the danger of war.

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

Plans to acquire nuclear weapons exist in the racist Republic of South Africa - and there is evidence of this in the press. As early as August 1977 Tass drew attention to the fact that the Republic of South Africa was close to the completion of its work to establish nuclear weapons and that definite preparations were being made for testing.

The hotheads in Israel are not falling behind those in the Republic of South Africa. They do not realize the kind of responsibility which they are assuming. Our delegation will support any proposals aimed at the prevention of the appearance of nuclear weapons in these or any other States. The right of States to peaceful utilization of nuclear energy is questioned by nobody. However, it is most important in everybody's interest that there should be in operation an agreed international system of guarantees and controls which excludes utilization of nuclear energy for military purposes.

The elaboration and implementation of various measures in the sphere of nuclear disarmament must be accompanied by the active strengthening of political and legal international guarantees for the security of States. Such an approach would mean eschewing the policy of hegemonism and concluding a world-wide treaty on the non-use of force in international relations and an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees for the security of non-nuclear States. My delegation co-sponsored such a resolution in the last session of the General Assembly.

We consider that a convention is a useful initiative aimed at the implementation of the provisions of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. In our opinion, this must be implemented in the shortest possible time. We believe that this is a highly promising move in the cause of disarmament. If it is not brought into operation in good time, it will be much more difficult, as has been pointed out here on a number of occasions, to achieve any agreement on action in a whole series of other very much more complex questions.

The participation in such a convention of all nuclear States would demonstrate their good will on the subject of peace and security, whereas non-nuclear States would not be required to do anything new under the convention except to maintain their States as non-nuclear nations.

There is no need to demonstrate the importance of a comprehensive prohibition of the testing of nuclear weapons. The Byelorussian SSR greatly welcomes the trilateral talks engaged in by the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom relating to the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons. A barrier should be placed on the qualitative improvement in the development of weapons of mass destruction, thereby furthering the cause of peace and disarmament.

My delegation welcomes and values the efforts of States in various parts of the world to establish nuclear-free zones. There is no doubt that the activation of such work would contribute to the work of the present session of the General Assembly and encourage it to speak in favour of the elaboration of further treaties on the non-deployment of nuclear weapons where they do not already exist.

At the thirty-third session of the General Assembly the Byelorussian SSR came forward as co-sponsor of a resolution on the prohibition of the elaboration and production of new forms of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. Together with a majority of States, we continue to believe that the elaboration of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons would to a great extent increase the likelihood of the outbreak of war because it would almost certainly upset the balance of forces and give unfounded hopes of success to certain adventurers.

Warning of this danger was given by the Soviet Union as far back as 1975 when it introduced a corresponding proposal to conclude an international treaty on the prohibition of the elaboration and production of new weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. The Byelorussian SSR, which supported that proposal, also introduced an additional draft agreement on these weapons. It provides an opportunity for a comprehensive treaty as well as special agreements on specific types of new weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Slobelav, Byelorussian SSR)

As a result of the Soviet-American talks a draft involving basic elements has been elaborated on a treaty for the prohibition of the elaboration, production and accumulation of radiological weapons. The final elaboration and implementation of this treaty will be a further step on the way to the limitation of the arms race. We should spare no effort whatever in seeking the success of this and other agreements, which will increase guarantees for future peace.

We should also like to mention the subject of the prohibition of the elaboration, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction. The Byelorussian SSR was co-sponsor of the relevant draft convention introduced on 28 March 1972 by a group of socialist States in the Committee on Disarmament. We hope that the bilateral Soviet-American negotiations will be crowned with success in the new Committee on Disarmament and that chemical weapons will be eliminated from the arsenals of all States.

The question of convening a world conference on disarmament has been discussed by the General Assembly for a number of years. There are a number of resolutions which contain the clearly stated will of all States as reflected in statements made at the present session of the General Assembly including the First Committee. They have shown that it is not possible to postpone indefinitely the convening of a world conference. Such an authoritative international forum, without competing with the efforts of the General Assembly and its organs but supplementing these efforts, might elaborate a binding set of decisions and thereby promote the cause of peace and disarmament, both from the point of view of general and complete disarmament and from the point of view of partial measures to limit and halt the arms race.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR hopes that the First Committee will be able to recommend to the General Assembly decisions which will make it possible to prepare for the conference on disarmament and to determine the dates for its convening after the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

My Delegation firmly supports the declaration on international co-operation for disarmament introduced in the General Assembly by the delegation of Czechoslovakia. Study of this important initiative shows that its purpose is to contribute actively to a speedy solution of urgent questions of the limitation of arms and disarmament by setting out the principles and norms for the co-operation of States during disarmament negotiations.

The adoption of such a declaration would contribute to the establishment of a climate of trust and confidence among States and would greatly stimulate feelings of greater responsibility by States in their approach to disarmament problems. As has been clear from experience of international relations, it is highly possible, step by step, to achieve agreement on problems of disarmament, to relax tensions and to strengthen security. The only condition for such a possibility is the readiness by certain nuclear Powers to overcome the negative effects of the military and industrial complexes, also the hegemonistic doctrines which are alien to the tasks of national development.

The danger of war lies not only in militarism itself but also in the form of thinking that is cultivated by militarism. The impression is created that there are still some forces which wish to utilize the complexity of the problem of disarmament for their own selfish purposes and to hold back the elaboration of realistic proposals on disarmament questions. This is a dangerous trend - a course which will not lead to any valid goal. A world which is striving for disarmament must acquire a new face. In other words, in a world that is seeking to disarm there is no place for a propaganda war, for new ambitions and new hegemonistic pretensions.

(Mr. Skobelev, Byelorussian SSR)

We are fighting for general and complete disarmament and not the disarmament of some through the building up of the military potential of others. That is why the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR considers that in all agreements on disarmament, those in operation as well as future ones, all nuclear States should take part. This is called for by the United Nations Charter and it is called for by the peoples of the earth. For the Byelorussian SSR a policy of peace and disarmament and the easing of tensions is a constitutional principle. Like other States of the socialist community, the Byelorussian SSR is ready to support all proposals of a regional or general scope which would genuinely strengthen peace and the security of peoples.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation attaches great importance to this debate and, more generally speaking, to the work of the thirty-fourth session concerning disarmament.

In point of fact this is the first time since the tenth special session of the General Assembly that we have had the occasion to assess the sequels to the decisions that were then adopted, in relation to either the Programme of Action contained in the Final Document or the new deliberative, negotiating and research bodies. It is true that our experience covers only a one-year period, so that judgements remain tentative, but the lessons we may draw are no less useful for our future action.

The French Government has followed with great attention the developments that have taken place since the special session. We have in fact attached the greatest significance to the effort made last year by the international community to give new impetus to the work of disarmament. The special session afforded an opportunity for further reflection in contemplation of action based on a better understanding of the problems and equipped with more effective machinery. France wished to contribute to that reflection. We proposed an over-all approach, targets and methods, which the President of the Republic, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, himself outlined from the rostrum of the General Assembly.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

I shall limit myself, in that regard, to outlining the main principles the respecting of which, we believe, must condition the undertaking of disarmament. Disarmament must respect the right of all States to security, which implies balanced measures, with equal security being assured at the lowest level of armament. It is the business of the entire international community, which is the basis of the essential role of the United Nations. Since it is the concern of everyone, disarmament must benefit everyone, and in the first place the most needy, and that establishes the close link we recognize between disarmament and development. Finally, the undertaking of disarmament must take into account the regional situations which constitute a basic aspect of today's reality. Problems arise in different ways in different parts of the world. The geography of security must be matched by a geography of disarmament.

The French delegation wishes to place before the Committee briefly the conclusions it has drawn from the activities during this first year of experience of the bodies created by the special session.

First of all I would refer to the Disarmament Commission. The French Government attaches great value to its establishment. We believe that it occupies a very important place in the new structure established last year to allow for the discussion, negotiation and study of disarmament measures. Between the General Assembly - and our own Committee - where States give their views and embody them in resolutions, and the Committee on Disarmament, which is the negotiating body, a sui generis role is played by the Disarmament Commission. As a deliberative body, it has the task of examining disarmament problems within a general and often long-term perspective, to seek out possibilities for a common approach and thus to steer the efforts of the international community towards those subjects that might lend themselves to negotiation.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

In the course of its first session the Commission adopted, by consensus, the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. We are gratified at that result. And from the serious and thorough debates that took place on this subject we draw another lesson, namely, that the work of disarmament, as we see it, should be pursued in the years to come in strict compliance with the provisions of the Final Document adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session. The adoption of that document was the culmination of a remarkable effort of understanding and progress on the part of the international community. We might even term it to a certain extent the charter of disarmament. Hence we consider that it is in the interests of all not to affect the balance by modifying the elements of the disarmament programme and, for the same reasons, we believe that it is untimely to make any proposal of a declaratory nature which would affect that balance as regards the political conditions contained in the Final Document designed to promote or accompany the disarmament undertaking.

The Committee on Disarmament is entrusted with the fundamental task of negotiation. Thus it was necessary for it, through its balanced composition, to be fully representative of the international community, for its members to be equal and for all States to be able to be heard by it if they wished to be. These conditions have been met. We are most gratified by the announced intention of the Chinese Government to take the seat in the Committee reserved for it as a nuclear Power.

Along with many others, the French Government, therefore, has placed great hopes in the actions of the new body entrusted with preparing future disarmament agreements. Does the experience of the first session justify such hopes? Different views have been given and some bespeak a certain disappointment. The Committee, some feel, devoted too much time - almost the entire first part of its session - to discussing and adopting its rules of procedure and its agenda. It was able to take up all the items on its agenda, but in a somewhat superficial way and without arriving at any conclusions, and above all, it has been pointed out quite correctly it was unable to engage in any real negotiation.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

To a certain extent the French delegation subscribes to those reservations and criticisms, but we do not wish to be unmindful of the positive aspects of that first session. The time devoted to the study of the rules of procedure and the agenda was no doubt too long, but the seriousness of the debates, and sometimes even the difficulties to which they gave rise, demonstrated the will of all the participants to lay a solid foundation for their work. They were at particular pains - and I want to stress this - to afford the widest access to the Committee for any non-member State that wished to express its views, to make its contribution or to take part in the discussion of a subject of interest to it.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

With regard to the substantive questions on the agenda, the Committee in fact was unable to conclude its work or even to make any progress in the limited time available to it, either because some of these questions were not ready for negotiation or because the parties that were engaged in more restricted negotiations were not prepared for those negotiations to be extended to the multilateral level. In our opinion however one of these questions could well have been the subject of at least a beginning or a preliminary stage of negotiations. I am referring to chemical weapons, a subject which has been widely studied already and which for four years has been the subject of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Within the Committee a very clear desire was seen to open a substantive debate which could have led to the beginning of negotiations. According to several delegations, including our own, such a debate could result in the drawing up of an agreed assessment of the questions put forward and areas of agreement or of disagreement. The two great Powers preferred not to follow up this idea, although they presented the Committee with a substantial report on the state of their negotiations.

We in no way overlook the great intrinsic difficulty of negotiation on chemical weapons, nor do we overlook the complexity of the problem raised by the relationship between multilateral negotiations and bilateral negotiations already going on on the same subject. But a positive and realistic solution must be found for that problem. Chemical disarmament is of direct interest, at least potentially, to a great number of States. In fact the technology necessary to manufacture and use chemical weapons is very widespread today. This aspect of disarmament therefore calls for a universal type of commitment, which is what the bilateral negotiations under way are aiming at. As this is something which interests the whole international community, the Committee on Disarmament has the right and the duty to negotiate on all its aspects.

This for us is a matter of principle. In our view the Committee should exercise its responsibilities fully, as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We cannot remain satisfied with the negotiations there being given a subordinate or complementary position vis-à-vis other negotiations. Such a situation would not be compatible with the Committee's mission and would disappoint the hopes of the international community.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

In the reform carried out last year in the disarmament bodies, the General Assembly gave justified attention to the problem of study and research. Progress in such a complex field indeed calls for assistance from varied disciplines at a very high level of competence and independence. That is why, in the terms of the Final Document of the special session, the Secretary-General was requested to set up an advisory board of eminent persons to advise him on studies to be made in the field of disarmament and arms limitation.

The French delegation is deeply interested in the work of this advisory board as well as in the programme of studies it will prepare.

Among the ideas which have already been discussed there is a proposal which France submitted last year to the General Assembly and which the latter adopted at its thirty-third session. This proposal called for the creation of an international institute for research into matters of disarmament, an institute that would be placed under the auspices of the United Nations and that would be called upon to give advice to the Secretary-General. The creation of this institute is envisaged today within the framework of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. We are convinced that it will play a most useful role and we hope that the General Assembly will welcome the principle of establishing it. The French delegation intends to submit a draft resolution in that regard very soon.

I recall finally that the same concern over placing knowledge, reflection and imagination at the service of disarmament gave rise to the idea which our Minister for Foreign Affairs announced at the General Assembly last month: to hold an international symposium in Paris next year on the subject "Science for disarmament". (A/34/PV.9, p. 42)

Within the weeks to come the First Committee will consider numerous draft resolutions on the various aspects of disarmament. The French delegation will have the chance to express its views on the matters before us, but today it would like to touch upon some of them on a more general level.

First of all, as far as nuclear questions are concerned, this year has been marked by an outstanding event: the conclusion of the SALT II agreement. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, Mr. Francois-Poncet, told the General Assembly:

"France is well aware of the importance of the step that has recently been taken. It considers the agreement to be balanced as a whole and hopes

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

that it will enter into force soon. The fact remains that even with this agreement we are still only at the preface to true disarmament. The level of nuclear weapons held by the two signatory Powers is not only high now, it is to go still higher in the next few years. The future negotiations, for which SALT II has paved the way, will, I hope, bring this level down very substantially.

As for France, it would take appropriate action on the basis of such reductions only if there were a change in the extent of the disparity persisting between those two arsenals and its own arsenal, which France keeps at its disposal to ensure the security and credibility of its deterrent". (A/34/PV.9, p. 41-42)

Thus as far as the French Government is concerned, under present conditions, nuclear disarmament remains the particular responsibility of the two biggest Powers.

There is however, another aspect of this problem that the French delegation wishes to recall here. We have already stressed the fact that the approach to disarmament must take regional situations into account. Now in the part of the world where France is situated, nuclear weapons - the nuclear deterrent - have for a long time been a basic element of balance. The generous but unrealistic undertaking which is intended to ensure our security by the mere abolition of nuclear weapons, regardless of the political and military context, considered as a whole, would jeopardize that balance and would therefore again imperil security.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

This is a fundamental characteristic of the regional situation where a reduction of nuclear weapons can only result from a specific process involving primarily the nuclear arsenals of the two main Powers. Indeed, there is no European nuclear arena which can be separated or isolated from the global balance.

Furthermore, the regional approach seems to us equally appropriate when we consider another aspect of the nuclear problem: the security guarantees that the non-nuclear-weapon States quite legitimately seek to protect them against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Solutions of a universal character have been proposed. However, we believe that the formula that best lends itself to the very different realities existing today is that of guarantees that would be negotiated among the nuclear-weapon States and those formed into non-nuclear zones. To this end, France has declared itself ready to negotiate with such zones the agreements necessary to give contractual and binding effect to these security guarantees.

In accordance with the policy so defined last year by the President of the French Republic, on 6 March 1979 our Government signed Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, thus completing the commitments we assumed when we adhered to Protocol II.

With reference to the other weapons of mass destruction, we feel that efforts should be directed mainly at chemical disarmament, a matter of great importance which, we believe, is ripe for multiracial negotiations. I have already shown how the problem arose in the Committee on Disarmament, which decided to take it up again at its next session. We hope that real negotiation may begin very soon. The treaty that would end the negotiation would be another milestone in the history of international relations since it would truly be the first real disarmament treaty of universal scope.

The reduction of conventional weapons is obviously one of the main aspects of our undertaking. Those weapons and the forces which use them do indeed swallow up the major portion of the resources devoted to defence. All the conflicts that have taken place since the Second World War have been conventional conflicts.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

However, this question is not on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament. That fact is significant: it spells not a lack of priority, but the extreme difficulty of envisaging negotiation at a world-wide level on this subject. It is the regional framework without doubt that best lends itself to a consideration of concrete political and military realities and to the search for solutions. This is the case for the specific problem of the transfer of weapons which, we believe, should be regulated by agreements between the purchasers and suppliers, not by measures adopted unilaterally by a cartel of suppliers.

It is true too of the more general problem of reduction of armaments among States belonging to the same geographical region. In this regard, the specific facts of the European situation gave rise to the initiative announced by the French Government last year. In Europe balance and hence security - as we have stressed - are based principally on nuclear deterrence, whereas the relationship of conventional forces seems to show an imbalance, a factor of destabilization, and therefore of virtual danger, harmful to the progress of mutual trust.

That is why in May 1978 France suggested the convening of a disarmament conference in Europe to study measures calculated to strengthen confidence and to set in motion a process of reduction of conventional weapons whose nature lends itself particularly to surprise attack. Such an objective must be sought in the geographical context of Europe as a whole and must, therefore, involve all the countries concerned, which have a legitimate right to security, whether or not they belong to military alliances. France's offer was addressed also to the 35 signatories of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Indeed, France hopes that the mandate of the conference it is proposing will be discussed and adopted in Madrid next year during the meeting to be held there by the signatories of the Final Act of Helsinki.

The reactions to which the French Government's initiative gave rise and the explanations that we have been led to give in the European capitals, as well as the other proposals made on this subject - particularly at Budapest by the countries members of the Warsaw Pact - attest, it seems to us, to the realism of a move designed to give the policy of détente in Europe the precise content that will show its dynamism.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

Among the general problems of disarmament that of verification is no doubt one of the most important and most difficult. In the course of the thirty-third session it was the subject of an initiative to which the French Government attaches the greatest importance. I refer to the resolution in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study of the technical, legal and financial implications of establishing an international satellite monitoring agency. Since the adoption of that resolution the group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General held two sessions and has submitted a preliminary report dated 14 September which appears in document A/34/540.

The basic idea underlying that initiative - announced from the rostrum of the General Assembly by the President of the Republic of France - is as incisive as it is simple: very few States - only two - today possess this sophisticated means of observation by satellites. Since disarmament and security are matters of concern to all, why not place this means at the disposal of the international community as a whole to verify the carrying out of disarmament agreements and possibly contribute to the control and prevention of crises? This solution seems to us to be the more compelling since a few years from now other States will possess observation satellites. It would be abnormal in those conditions for the international community to be deprived any longer of access to this indispensable instrument of verification.

I do not intend to analyse the report of the experts here. I shall limit myself to quoting a few lines from its conclusions:

"The Group fully recongized the valuable contribution which monitoring by satellites could make to the verification of certain parts or types of arms-control and disarmament agreements ... The Group also appreciated the positive role that satellite monitoring could play in preventing or settling crises in various parts of the world ... The Group considered the gradual approach to the establishment of an international satellite monitoring agency technically feasible and saw in it a way to limit and control the financial commitments required from the international community." (A/34/540, annex, p. 9)

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

The Group of Experts recommended that the questions related to this project should be given further in-depth study and that a comprehensive report should be completed in time for consideration at the next special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

A draft resolution will be submitted to the Committee with a view to prolonging the work of the Group of Experts to that end.

Disarmament is at the service of peace, but it must also be at the service of development. The resources that we hope it will make it possible to save must be used, at least in part in the work of fostering economic and social progress to the benefit of the least favoured nations. Last year the French Government submitted a proposal calling for the consideration of a disarmament project fund. We are gratified by the attention given to that project by the "disarmament-development" group presided over by Mrs. Thorson, and hope that the studies undertaken will contribute effectively to the success of our initiative.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

The French Government continues in its resolve to make its full contribution to the efforts which will be made by the international community, whose spokesman is this First Committee of the General Assembly.

On the occasion of Disarmament Week which we inaugurated on 24 October, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. François-Poncet, made it clear to the Council of Ministers that disarmament constitutes "an essential and permanent element of French foreign policy". My country sees in this arduous but vital undertaking the road that will best lead to an international order based on greater security, justice and prosperity.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.