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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 46TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAIK (Pakistan)

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DISARMAMENT ITEMS

AGENDA ITEMS 34 AND 48 (continued)

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ENGLISH

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

AGENDA ITEMS 34 AND 48 (continued)

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): With reference to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 concerning chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, we wish to make a statement and to draw the attention of delegations to the very serious consequences of this highly dangerous attempt deliberately to confuse international public opinion and to complicate positive development in the sphere of the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The instrument of that attempt is the draft resolution introduced in document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, whose real authors are trying to clothe it in the raiments of objectivity. However, what is that draft resolution in fact? Deliberately cloudy references are made in it to certain communications concerning the alleged use of chemical weapons but it may well be asked, what actually are those communications?

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

Quite clearly we are being told here of absurd and groundless rumours which are being disseminated by the Western information media. However, if the United Nations, which is the most representative international forum, were to be involved in the examination of various kinds of soap bubbles which are being inflated by Western propaganda, an examination that this draft resolution is pushing it into, then our Organization would have to forsake all business relating to the welfare of mankind and assume a role which is quite outside its purview, a role whose framework is not definable in any way.

What does the draft resolution call upon the Organization to do? Noting that the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons and other relevant international instruments do not provide for the establishment of any procedure for investigation, draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 proposes that such a procedure be set up de facto. From the point of view of the substance, and also from the formal point of view, this is tantamount to an unlawful revision of the above-mentioned instruments, especially since the parties to the Geneva Protocol and the membership of the United Nations are not identical.

Taking this into account, the proposal to establish a machinery for "investigation" using information from some mysterious and nebulous "other necessary sources", as paragraph 5a of the operative part says, appears, to say the least, to be totally out of place.

For all sober-minded people the question arises why, then, this draft resolution has become necessary. The answer to this question is clear. Such a draft resolution is needed by the United States of America as a screen, an excuse for undermining the talks now being held on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the beginning of an extensive programme of production and unleashing of a completely new generation of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

As is known, the United States Congress adopted, approximately two months ago, a decision to assign funds for the construction of factories to produce binary gas, which The New York Times has called a new generation of nerve gas.

Apparently the United States of America which, as a matter of fact, took more than 50 years to accede to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, is no longer satisfied with the types of chemical weapons which it now has and of which, as is known, it has made extensive use, as, for instance, in South-East Asia. Thus, the armed forces of the United States have spread "agent orange" over Vietnamese soil, and incurable diseases caused by that reactive substance are now being transmitted to the second generation of American Viet Nam war veterans. About 50,000 American servicemen served in regions which were processed by "agent orange"; and who has counted how many Vietnamese were there?

At present, poison gas grenades produced by the United States are being supplied to the bandit groups in Afghanistan, which has been stated convincingly by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

But, I repeat, apparently the United States finds this insufficient. The decision of the United States Congress concerning the building of factories to produce binary gas is but the first step in the deployment of a programme of a qualitatively new series of chemical weapons to cost in the order of no less than \$4 billion. What, then, are we faced with? On the one hand, the United States is taking part in talks on the prohibition of chemical weapons, and on the other hand it is carrying out new long-term programmes for the production of such weapons, "waiting", as The New York Times noted on 21 September 1980, "for the day when chemical warfare would become more politically acceptable". This, then, is the accurate formulation of the genuine purposes of what is at first sight a rather innocuous draft resolution in document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

If, in spite of common sense, that draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 were to reach the voting stage, then every delegation would have to become aware of the fact that it is an excuse for the undermining of negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons and for giving a green light for the creation and proliferation of a new generation of dreadful chemical weapons. Delegations which see as their purpose the setting up of a barrier to this dreadful course of events will vote against the draft resolution. That is how the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR intends to vote.

Mr. KOMIVES (Hungary): On behalf of the Hungarian delegation, I wish to express very briefly the position of my delegation in connexion with the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2. The intention of the draft resolution has been revealed clearly and in a detailed manner by many delegations. I have, therefore, nothing to add on that score. I want to deal only with some questions in connexion with the dangerous implications of the draft resolution.

One of its most serious consequences is that it casts doubt on the effectiveness of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which has proved during its long existence to be not only highly important, but also an effective international instrument.

The draft resolution wants in practice to amend the 1925 Geneva Protocol. In the opinion of my delegation, an international treaty or convention such as the 1925 Geneva Protocol can be amended or supplemented not by a General Assembly resolution but only through negotiations among the parties to the treaty or convention concerned. This question has been raised by many delegations, and my delegation has listened with great interest to the statement made by the representative of Madagascar, who dealt with it in detailed manner. In a period when the international community has been keenly awaiting the elaboration and adoption of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, this draft resolution would inevitably have harmful effects on the on-going negotiations in various forums aimed at this purpose.

(Mr. Komives, Hungary)

What we need is a constructive approach by all, a common approach to the elaboration and adoption of a chemical weapons convention. Many delegations have already dealt with the extremely harmful consequences of the draft resolution in that it would create a very dangerous precedent by involving the United Nations in investigations based not on reports and requests from Governments, but on reports in the mass media on the alleged use of chemical weapons. That could serve as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of States.

My delegation is of the opinion that the revised draft resolution, despite many changes, continues to maintain the substance of the original draft resolution. Thus the revised draft resolution is absolutely unacceptable to my delegation.

In formally opposing the revised draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 the Hungarian delegation has joined the sponsors of the revised amendment submitted yesterday by the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): With regard to the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly contained in document A/C.1/35/L.59, my delegation feels the need for a little more clarification and therefore we should like to put the following questions to the Secretariat.

First, we should like to know the basic data on which the statement on the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 was prepared. During what period will the assistance by medical and technical experts be provided?

Secondly, what specifically are those reports referred to in operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2? Is it assumed that the Secretary-General, with the assistance of experts, will ascertain reports on which there already exist valuable statements concerning their investigation by other international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross?

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

Thirdly, in the discussion on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 a number of delegations referred to reports concerning the use of chemical agents in the ongoing conflict between Iran and Iraq. Some delegations referred to reports concerning the use of chemical agents by Israel against the Arab population of Jerusalem or the use of chemical agents by the South African racists against the population of Namibia. Were those statements by delegations taken into account in the drafting of the report on the administrative and financial implications?

Fourthly, how will the Secretariat act in case new reports concerning the use of chemical agents in various parts of the world emerge? Who will take the decision on investigating such reports and reporting on conclusions?

Fifthly, on the basis of what criteria will the "countries concerned" be determined?

Lastly, what are the "sources necessary" referred to in subparagraph 5 (a) in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2? Are the reports in the press and other mass media the sources mentioned?

I think that without a satisfactory answer to those questions it seems - at least for my delegation - impossible to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2. My delegation reserves its right to make another statement on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 at a later date.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that the Secretariat will require some time to answer the questions of the representative of the German Democratic Republic.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation listened very closely to the statements made at our last meeting and at this one on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2. It took particular note of the comments made by the representative from Madagascar.

The representative of Madagascar said that draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 tended to modify or supplement the Geneva Protocol by adding to it provisions regarding verification that were lacking. He stressed that it was therefore up to the States parties to the Protocol to negotiate among themselves, at a review conference, any provisions they might consider appropriate.

That analysis is legally impeccable and we do not question it in any way. We recognize that treaty law in this matter can indeed only be changed by those who created it; namely the States parties to the Geneva Protocol. But the purpose of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 is by no means to change that Protocol; nor is it to create or change treaty law on this subject. It is not even an attempt to open a new chapter of common law that would in some way affect the Geneva Protocol.

The procedure referred to by the representative of Madagascar is indeed the correct procedure if the aim is to supplement the Protocol by provisions concerning verification or consultations concerning possible breaches that might be committed. But this review procedure will of course take a great deal of time. The subject is of great importance and requires detailed consideration followed, undoubtedly, by negotiations that will require very great care.

Our purpose today is quite different. It is to demonstrate the concern of the international community, represented by the General Assembly, at possible past or future breaches of the Geneva Protocol. It concerns a demonstration of international awareness and it is difficult to imagine that the international community could wait long before requesting some action, the sole purpose of which would be to reveal the truth. The purpose of the investigation that we are proposing is to know whether or not the allegations made are founded.

Therefore I believe that the argument to the effect that our proposal encroaches on existing international law cannot really be entertained. On the contrary, to our mind it is a question of strengthening international law - in this case the Geneva Protocol - by demonstrating the vigilance of the international community concerning respect for provisions that are undoubtedly essential for the conscience of the world.

Mr. KOH (Singapore): Two days ago my delegation made a brief statement on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1. At that time we reserved our position on the 13 amendments submitted by the seven sponsors in document A/C.1/35/L.57. We did so because the document was made available only that morning and we did not have an opportunity to study it. Now that we have had that opportunity I wish to make a few observations on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43 and the consequential amendments.

I should like to begin by reiterating my delegation's position, in view of the very emotional response from some quarters on this question. I want to make it perfectly clear that my delegation's only interest and its only objective are to ensure that there be some impartial investigatory machinery to investigate allegations of violations of the 1925 Protocol.

It is regrettable that an attempt has been made by some of our colleagues to transform the issue involved into an East-West issue. I think the purpose of that attempt is clear. If this were an East-West issue, of course, many of us representing countries in the third world would be reluctant to support draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43, as we should not wish to be involved in the East-West confrontation. In my delegation's view, the issue in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43 is not, however, an issue between the East and the West, and I want to explain why we hold this view. We do not think this is an issue between the East and the West, because, if you study the historical record you will find that since the Second World War the victims of chemical warfare have been peoples of the third world. According to reports, which we feel should be investigated, the present victims of alleged chemical warfare are also of the third world, and no doubt the victims of chemical warfare in the future will also be in the third world. That is the reason why my country, which is a member of the third world and a non-aligned country and which would not take sides if the issue were an East-West issue, feels that it should support draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43.

(Mr. Koh, Singapore)

As I said the other day, all we want is an impartial investigation of the allegations. If the allegations are false, those who are at present accused will be vindicated, and I repeat that he who is innocent need have no fear of an impartial investigation.

Having examined the amendments submitted in document A/C.1/35/L.57, we should like to say that we could accept most of the provisions which would widen the scope of the investigation. In particular we note the broadening of the mandate of the Secretary-General to investigate not only recent reports but also recent wars. It will be remembered that in my own statement two days ago I did refer to the use of chemical agents in the Viet Nam war, which was a very reprehensible episode. We are very pleased that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43 have incorporated many of the amendments which we can accept into the revised text of their draft resolution. We feel that in this way the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43 have demonstrated that it is not directed to any particular country and they have also demonstrated, at least to my satisfaction, their broad-mindedness and integrity.

For these reasons my delegation will continue to support draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2. If any new amendments are submitted to this second revised draft resolution, we shall study them carefully in the same way as we studied the amendments to document A/C.1/35/L.57. Our vote on the new amendments, if they should emerge, will again be guided by our positive and constructive intention to ensure an impartial investigation. However, we will not allow any attempt to impede or to destroy this proposal.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to what the representative of Singapore has said about further amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, I wish to inform the Committee that further amendments were handed to the Secretariat only this morning, and these are about to be distributed in document A/C.1/35/L.61.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): I should like to make a few observations concerning draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, of which my delegation is a sponsor, and the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.57. I understand that we are expecting further amendments, to be contained in document A/C.1/35/L.61. Of course I reserve the right to return to those amendments as soon as I have been given a chance to go through them.

My delegation, together with the other sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, has made a serious effort to evaluate conscientiously the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.57 and to incorporate them, where feasible and possible, in the original draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1. The result of this endeavour is the text of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, which was rejected by the representative of Viet Nam immediately after it was distributed in the Committee last Wednesday. We have noted with regret that the authors of the proposed amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.57 are not prepared to discuss the proposal with us, and I feel compelled to make some remarks about my delegation's position.

The sponsors of the revised draft resolution (A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2) have gone a long way to make compromise possible. We have incorporated a great number of the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.57 in our revised draft resolution. The submission of this revised version was undertaken in an effort to bring about the early adoption of a draft resolution that reflects the opinions of all delegations.

I think in particular the remarks made this morning by the representative of Singapore with regard to the amendments which we have accepted may rightly be seen as a sincere effort to make this new revised draft resolution acceptable to the Committee.

When they compare draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 with the amendments put forward in document A/C.1/35/L.57, representatives will find that the proposals contained in the latter document which are relevant to the task to be fulfilled by the proposed investigation are included in document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2. The other proposals which have been conveyed to us are, in my delegation's view, not relevant to that investigation. They contain provisions which are extraneous to a draft resolution concentrating on reported uses of chemical weapons. They are directed at inducing the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 to withdraw their initiative.

My delegation must vote against those amendments because they would alter the realistic aims of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, as they would introduce completely new elements into that draft resolution. Some of these elements have a place in the on-going and, in the opinion of my Government, promising negotiations on a comprehensive chemical weapons ban which are taking place bilaterally and in the Committee on Disarmament.

I should like to say a few words with regard to some statements on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 which have been made in this Committee. I should like first to point out that, among those opposing the draft resolution, not one speaker took the trouble to explain what is wrong with an impartial investigation into some most disturbing reports about the alleged recent use of chemical weapons. It should be in our common interest to restore confidence in the full compliance with the stipulations of the Geneva Protocol. We fully share the view of the representative of Singapore, who said that he who is innocent need not fear an impartial investigation.

I feel compelled to take up one of the arguments put forward against our draft resolution last Wednesday. We were told that any proposal to ascertain the facts pertaining to reports of the use of chemical weapons would weaken the 1925 Geneva Protocol. I must quite honestly confess that I cannot follow the reasoning leading to this conclusion. Current international treaties govern

(Mr. Pfeiffer, Federal Republic  
of Germany)

the behaviour of States towards each other in a way similar to that in which the penal code, for example, governs the behaviour of citizens towards each other. Has anyone ever heard that if someone reports a crime the penal code is weakened because there is an investigation as to whether that report is true? Certainly not. My Government has on many occasions voiced its conviction that the effectiveness of arms control and disarmament agreements is not weakened, but on the contrary enhanced, by procedures to verify strict observance of them and to ascertain the facts as to possible violations. The very possibility of an investigation and of the detection and disclosure of breaches of an agreement is in itself a very strong motive for strict compliance with that agreement.

In the context of the remarks I have just made, it is very clear that my delegation is not aiming at establishing a verification machinery in connexion with the Geneva Protocol. We are simply asking for an objective and factual investigation of certain reports. Draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 by no means has the intention of changing or adding to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. In the light of all this, my Government welcomes the offer made in his last statement on Wednesday by the representative of the Soviet Union to co-operate with the United States of America in order to strengthen the Geneva Protocol. That reflects exactly the position of the authors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, and it should be the common aim of all delegations in this Committee to strengthen the viability of the Geneva Protocol. Such co-operation can only advance the on-going bilateral and multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive chemical weapons ban.

It is this position, and not any wish to accuse or to suspect any State, which has led my Government to its decision to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, and to ask States to give that draft resolution the broad support it deserves.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Viet Nam, who will introduce the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.61.

Mr. TUAN VO ANH (Viet Nam)(interpretation from French): I should like to speak about the amendments put forward by a number of delegations which may be found in document A/C.1/35/L.61. I should like to point out that although yesterday was a holiday, the authors of these new amendments worked for quite a long time and that the Secretariat did all it could to see to it that they could be translated into all working languages and distributed this morning to delegations in the First Committee. In this connexion, I should like to express our appreciation to all those who helped make it possible for this document to be produced so quickly.

On behalf of the delegations of Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Poland and Viet Nam, I have the honour briefly to introduce the amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 contained in document A/C.1/35/L.61. As the Committee will have noted, draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, because of its propagandistic nature against the socialist countries and its concealed intentions, has given rise to a bitter and lengthy debate which runs the risk of being prolonged further. The revised texts of the draft resolution, A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 and Rev.2, show that the authors and those who support them are determined to pursue their manoeuvres to the detriment of the progress of this Committee's work.

On the other hand, the authors of the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.61 are motivated by a spirit of co-operation and accommodation. They have made every effort to revise the amendments taking into account the constructive remarks and suggestions of many non-aligned and other delegations. With regard to the harmful effects of chemical weapons, we have deleted any explicit or implicit reference to the military personnel of the belligerent parties and we have limited the scope of our amendments to the harmful effects of chemical weapons on human beings and on the environment of the victim countries only.

We insist that the following paragraph be added to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2

"Urging all States to refrain from the development, production and deployment of new types of chemical munitions, in particular binary and multicomponent munitions" (A/C.1/35/L.61, para. 4), because this reflects the fervent and legitimate aspirations of the international community.

(Mr. Tuan Vo Anh, Viet Nam)

However, since we understand the difficulties of some delegations, we have placed that sentence in the preamble and not in the operative part of the draft resolution.

In keeping with the suggestion of a delegation which joined the sponsors of document A/C.1/35/L.61, we have proposed that the existing seventh paragraph of the preamble be replaced by the following:

"Noting also the statements of various international organizations in particular of the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning these reports."

That new paragraph is but a statement of fact, and we believe that it is not likely to give rise to any controversy.

In the operative part of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2, with regard to the question of an investigation, we have added the following words to operative paragraph 4: with the consent of the countries concerned"; and we have replaced operative paragraph 5 by the following text:

"Requests the Secretary-General to carry out such investigation on the basis of proposals advanced by States victims of the use of chemical weapons."

The position of the sponsors of the draft amendments in document A/C.1/35/L.61 on this question is quite clear. The question of investigation affects the sovereignty of Member States. That is why the consent of the countries concerned is indispensable. Operative paragraphs 4 and 5 of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 are nothing but an attempt to use the United Nations to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States in violation of Article 2 of the Charter.

The sponsors of the draft amendments in document A/C.1/35/L.61 therefore strongly oppose such attempts. In this connexion my delegation categorically rejects the tendentious interpretations given the other day by the delegation of China, and those that support China's point of view, concerning the position of Viet Nam with respect to the question of the investigation.

The delegation of Viet Nam has repeatedly stated that it is ready to take part in the work of the Committee on Disarmament on chemical weapons in order to shed the necessary light on unfounded allegations concerning the use of chemical weapons by Viet Nam. Unfortunately, it has been unable to do so by reason of the opposition of China and its new ally.

(Mr. Tuan Vo Anh, Viet Nam)

The sponsors of the draft amendments in document A/C.1/35/L.61 propose the addition of the following words to operative paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2:

"in particular, calls upon the States responsible for such use of chemical weapons to contribute to the healing of the damage caused to human beings and the environment".

Of course, I am referring to the victim countries. The mention of the responsibility of States in such cases is a logical consequence of an investigation. Incidentally, I should like to inform the Committee that the sixty-seventh Inter-Parliamentary Conference, which was held in Berlin in September last, requested the United Nations:

"... to call on those countries responsible to assist the victim countries to redress the harmful short- and long-term effects of chemical weapons on human beings and the environment." (A/35/570, annex, p. 8)

In conclusion, we believe that the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.61, if they are adopted by the Committee, would greatly improve draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.2 and make it a more balanced text.

We are happy to note that a number of delegation we have contacted have welcomed our amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1, which was introduced by the representative of Denmark at the 34th meeting of the First Committee on 18 November 1980. The financial implications of that draft resolution are contained in document A/C.1/35/L.60.

I shall first call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions before the Committee proceeds to take a decision on the draft resolution.

Mr. MITTAL (India): In the statements made by my delegation in the general debate in the First Committee, our views on the question of conventional disarmament have been made amply clear. My delegation is opposed to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1, which calls for a study to be conducted on conventional disarmament, first and foremost because we cannot subscribe to the concept of a conventional arms race in which all or a majority of countries are engaged. It is a well-known fact that it is the five or six most heavily armed States which have the largest and increasingly sophisticated and growing arsenals of conventional weapons. Any call for conventional disarmament therefore must at the outset take this fact into account.

Secondly, the view that conventional disarmament is a matter worthy of such attention diverts our focus from the main issue to which the international community has consistently accorded the highest priority, namely, the achievement of nuclear disarmament. Efforts directed towards nuclear disarmament have not resulted so far in a single nuclear weapon being destroyed. On the contrary, the nuclear-arms race has continued to escalate at an ever-growing pace. Nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to the peace and security of the world and endanger the very existence of mankind. Faced with such an alarming situation, to speak about the deep concern over the so-called conventional arms race would only shift the focus of our attention from the ever-increasing danger of a nuclear war.

I should also like to add that the draft resolution creates the erroneous impression that there was wide support in favour of recommending such a study on conventional disarmament at the last session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution before us has been rather selective in its reference to the report of the Disarmament Commission on this issue. While noting that there was wide support, in principle, to recommending to the General Assembly that a study on conventional weapons and armed forces be undertaken, the Commission also noted:

"that strong objections or reservations were made from various quarters to such a study on several grounds". (A/35/42, p. 18)

The last part of the section in the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission relating to the study balances the earlier portion and provides the correct picture of what really transpired at the last session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

(Mr. Mittal, India)

My delegation would therefore have preferred to let the United Nations Disarmament Commission decide at its next session whether or not a study on conventional disarmament was really necessary, taking into account the views of all States in this regard. The draft resolution before us, however, attempts to prejudge the issue in favour of conducting a study. With considerable regret, therefore, my delegation has decided to vote against this draft resolution.

My delegation is not opposed to conventional disarmament as such. We believe, however, that the problem must be considered in its correct perspective. This would require us first to give the highest priority to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and the achievement of nuclear disarmament. It would require us also to acknowledge the fact that it is the five or six most heavily armed States which have by far the largest arsenals of conventional weapons as well. And finally, it would require us to pursue conventional disarmament essentially in the over-all context of the process of achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control and the establishment of a universal climate of peace and security.

We are also somewhat surprised that the Secretariat has circulated the financial implications of the proposal that may only be approved in principle by the General Assembly at this stage. The General Assembly is not taking a decision on the establishment of a group of experts by the Secretary-General. This should properly be taken up only after the United Nations Disarmament Commission has decided to carry out such a study and worked out its approach and scope. By requesting this Committee to approve the estimates as well at this stage, the decision of the United Nations Disarmament Commission with respect to the proposed study is being pre-empted and it is being taken for granted that the United Nations General Assembly will decide to go ahead with the study without giving due consideration to the report of the Disarmament Commission in this regard.

My delegation therefore sees no reason why this draft resolution should be presented in this Committee with financial implications at this stage. As far as my delegation is concerned, there are no financial implications to this draft resolution and this will be the position of my delegation in the Fifth Committee when this proposal is taken up there.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In connexion with draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 on a study on conventional disarmament, the delegation of the Soviet Union would like to state that it has serious objections to the draft resolution and will therefore vote against it.

In its approach to tackling the question of whether any particular study should be conducted in the field of disarmament, the Soviet Union has always proceeded from the premise that at the present time the essential task is successfully to elaborate and conclude practical agreements to curb the arms race and bring about disarmament, and this should be the focal point of efforts by States in the United Nations and at disarmament negotiations.

Unfortunately, there has recently been an increase in efforts to distract the United Nations from specifically discussing and tackling the actual urgent problems of disarmament. We cannot fail to express our concern at such a turn of events whereby various studies on disarmament matters - which are ever growing in number - yield no tangible results that could genuinely curb the arms race or bring about disarmament. At the same time, in a number of instances the conducting of these studies entails considerable financial implications for the United Nations. This directly concerns the draft resolution that we are now considering and involves fantastic expenditure for the United Nations. The Organization would be obliged to spend almost \$3 million on an absolutely fruitless study.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

As far as disarmament studies in the field of conventional weapons are concerned, it can be stated with absolute certainty that such studies are not warranted by any practical necessity. At various stages in negotiations that question has been considered from various angles and there is no aspect of the matter at the present time which could not become the subject of an agreement, provided, of course, that was the political will on the part of all States.

The Soviet Union has frequently put forward specific initiatives designed to curb the conventional arms race and has indeed done so during this session of the General Assembly. The most important thing now is to get down to serious negotiations on that score as quickly as possible.

The proposal that this question be studied is essentially aimed at delaying the initiation of such talks and strangling the entire issue in red tape. That is an approach with which the Soviet Union cannot agree, and it is this that determines our attitude to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1.

Mr. DE MOHR (Italy) (interpretation from French): The draft resolution concerning a study on conventional disarmament in our view deserves the support of all those delegations that are in favour of a comprehensive, truly well-balanced approach to disarmament.

We agree that we must respect an order of priority which not only is necessary in the field of disarmament but which the comprehensive disarmament programme should dictate, following the lines already laid down in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

There is no question of minimizing, as it were, the tragically risky nature of the qualitative and quantitative spiralling of the nuclear arms race. We simply feel that we should also focus our attention on the question of the reduction of conventional weapons. After all, these are means of destruction and death that have struck at mankind in all corners of the globe in the course of the 35 years that have elapsed since the end of the Second World War.

(Mr. De Mohr, Italy)

It is therefore in a proper perspective which seeks a final objective of general and complete disarmament through balanced progress in the two sectors of conventional and nuclear weapons that in our view we can place the interesting proposal for a study in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1. We feel in particular that even the procedures by means of which the draft resolution in question seeks to achieve the preparation of such a study are appropriate. In fact, they constitute a kind of guarantee concerning the possibility of taking due account of the different views and at times divergent requirements which characterize, in the field of disarmament, the approaches of different countries or groups of countries, all equally concerned with achieving specific and concrete progress in this field.

It goes without saying that this delegation, faithful to the approach I have described, is ready to make its contribution to the rapid attainment of the objectives pursued in this draft resolution, which results from the initiative of the Danish delegation, which we want to thank at this time.

Mr. de SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): The Brazilian delegation will not be able to support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 for the following reasons, some of which have already been explained, and very well explained, by the delegations of India and of the Soviet Union.

May I draw the attention of this Committee to the fifth preambular paragraph, in which the author of the draft resolution has quoted from page 18 of the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/35/42). The author of the draft resolution refers there to those who spoke in support of the recommendation that the General Assembly approve in principle a proposal for a study on all aspects of the conventional arms race.

Unfortunately, we do not see the paragraph in question quoted in full and I think it is only fair, for the sake of the record, to read out its last two lines:

"At the same time, the Commission noted that strong objections or reservations were made from various quarters to such a study on several grounds."

(A/35/42, para. 20 (11))

The second reason that my delegation will not be in a position to vote for this draft resolution is contained in the operative paragraphs.

(Mr. de Souza e Silva, Brazil)

In operative paragraph 1, the General Assembly would approve in principle the carrying out of a study on all aspects of the conventional arms race. In paragraph 2, it would agree that the Disarmament Commission at its forthcoming third substantive session should work out the general approach to the study, its structure and scope. In operative paragraph 3, it would ask the Commission to convey to the Secretary-General the conclusion of its deliberations. And, finally in operative paragraph 4, it would request a progress report from the Secretary-General. For my delegation, all those studies, reports and progress reports are not only confusing but at the same time represent a clear bypassing of the functions and tasks entrusted to the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Thirdly, may I draw the attention of the Committee to document A/C.1/35/L.60, paragraph 4, where the financial implications of those requested studies are stated: \$2,720,500. My delegation does not think that the value of the studies requested justifies that expense. Finally, we do not see in this draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 a clear definition of the priority that should be attached to nuclear disarmament as compared to conventional disarmament.

For all those reasons, my delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1.

Mr. KABIA (Sierra Leone): The delegation of Sierra Leone in principle supports draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 and will vote in favour of it.

The Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone has always without equivocation supported disarmament in both the nuclear and conventional fields, but we hope that the concern shown here in this draft resolution on conventional armaments will not be interpreted as indicating a change in our policy, which remains that nuclear disarmament shall be the priority concern of disarmament efforts.

Furthermore, the Sierra Leone delegation wishes to re-emphasize that the action in the field of conventional disarmament should not interfere with the right of peoples under colonial or racist domination to liberate themselves, neither should it be aimed at undermining the legitimate security activities of all States, and, in particular, those States not covered by military alliances.

Mr. SY (Senegal) (interpretation from French): The delegation of Senegal will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 because we consider that the question of the conventional arms race represents an ever more threatening danger, which means that it deserves to be considered in detail by those United Nations bodies entrusted with disarmament matters in order to identify ways and means acceptable to all to stop that arms race.

In this connexion, the delegation of Senegal would like to reaffirm that it continues to subscribe fully to the opinion according to which the nuclear arms race is by far the most serious danger and, consequently, should continue to receive priority attention.

(Mr. Sy, Senegal)

Nevertheless, in view of the hundred or so wars which have broken out since 1945 and the more and more frequent use made of conventional weapons, we consider that the question of the production, accumulation, stockpiling, deployment, transfer and utilization of conventional weapons should receive greater attention.

This being so, my delegation would like to reaffirm that it could not subscribe to any approach which would tend to reduce the problem of the conventional arms race to a question of the North-South transfer of arms. This would be not only an erroneous and sterile approach, but would also ill conceal the hegemonistic and monopolistic motives of its sponsors. In fact, no solution to the problem of the conventional arms race can be permitted to disregard the right of self-defence, nor the need to find a just and lasting solution to certain conflicts such as those of southern Africa and the Middle East.

Nevertheless, we must say that the transfer of armaments has sometimes had negative effects on international peace and security, particularly when it has given certain States the means to implement a policy of aggression, domination and expansion. This is particularly true of the South African régime, which has equipped itself with a vast military machine whose obvious purpose is to enable it to maintain its shameful policy of apartheid and to carry out aggression against neighbouring African States.

This is also true of certain countries in the third world which buy quantities of armaments which go far beyond their legitimate needs for defence and which they use to destabilize, commit aggression against and intervene militarily in the affairs of neighbouring countries.

(Mr. Sy, Senegal)

Such acts have the immediate result of setting off an arms race in the region and impeding the development policy of the countries concerned, and, worse still, of increasing their dependence on military blocs. All of these are reasons which indicate that the conventional arms race in which the two military blocs are engaged is contaminating the third world more and more extensively and profoundly and thus requires serious and detailed study in order that it shall be stopped and reversed..

These are the reasons which have led us to support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1.

Mr. TAVARES NUNES (Portugal) (interpretation from French):

The delegation of Portugal supports the proposal presented by Denmark and contained in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 concerning a study on conventional disarmament. That study will help to clarify one aspect of the conventional arms race which has been neglected and which, when added to other studies conducted within the United Nations, will make possible an overall view of the whole question of disarmament.

It must not be forgotten indeed that the military power of the militarily most powerful States comprise both the nuclear and the conventional elements. Some States, in the light of certain technological progress, have entrusted a great part of their defence on the nuclear element, while others have relied more on the conventional element.

By tackling only or principally the nuclear element, disarmament efforts could well, after a given point, bring about an imbalance which, rather than consolidating international peace and security, would favour destabilization and the possibilities of an armed conflagration.

(Mr. Tavares Nunes, Portugal)

Moreover, this study is perfectly compatible with the letter and the spirit of paragraph 29 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, according to which:

"The adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage. At each stage the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces". (resolution S-10/2)

My delegation is of the view that the study recommended in the draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 will contribute in a very positive way to the achievement of the objective laid down in paragraph 29 of the Final Document to which I have just referred.

In addition, the General Assembly has already adopted recommendations favouring the consideration at the regional level of disarmament measures. Although conventional weapons constitute the major part of the world's military arsenals, the proposed study will also help to achieve that objective.

It is for these reasons that my delegation will support the proposal contained in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1.

Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Panama has considered very carefully Denmark's initiative as reflected in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1. In fact, that initiative pursues very positive aims in the context of Latin America. As the Committee knows, in Latin America an overwhelming number of States have made possible the establishment of the Tlatelolco Treaty system on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and we may say in this connexion that in our region there is a very clear intent as regards nuclear disarmament.

This does not apply to conventional weapons. Thus for Latin America the study proposed by Denmark is, in our view, of great relevance and importance and should be examined with the greatest interest by this Committee which should give it very serious consideration over and above the interests of military blocs or spheres of influence or the individual interests of each country.

Of course my delegation respects the legitimate right of each State to provide for its defence and security needs. However, the investments that are being made in armaments, in some cases amounting to a real conventional-arms race is, in our view, a cause for concern. Therefore my delegation will vote in favour of this draft resolution because of its importance for Latin America.

I must, moreover, say that some remarks have been made concerning the possible costs of this study. As presented in the draft resolution, the study would not involve any unilateral formulation. On the contrary, this draft resolution cautiously and sensibly calls on the Disarmament Commission at its third substantive session, in other words at its next session, to work out a general approach to the study, its structure and scope, so that all States here present will have the opportunity to put forward their views. I believe that this will be a very relevant and important study. I have spoken only of Latin America, but I think it will be equally important for the rest of the world.

Some of the countries that have expressed objections to this draft resolution are surprised that it can cost \$2,720,500 but are not surprised that \$500 billion are spent on weapons each year. I believe that this draft resolution should be adopted and we shall vote in favour of it.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): My delegation has noted with interest draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 on a study on conventional disarmament. We should like, first of all, to take this opportunity to congratulate the Danish delegation for the very extensive consultations which they had undertaken prior to the submission of the text. In the course of this session we have noticed also that they have been willing to seek and accept suggestions for modifying the text.

My delegation, of course, has no doubt about the need to arrest the continuing arms race, both in its nuclear and conventional aspects. We also have no doubt that we shall always need to bear in mind and give priority consideration to the overwhelming danger which nuclear weapons pose to mankind and to the very survival of civilization. Provided that priority and that overwhelming danger of nuclear weapons continue to receive the great attention which they deserve my delegation believes that issues relating to conventional weapons cannot but be given some consideration too. That should not imply any shift of emphasis away from nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament as the priority item, as identified and accepted universally. I think paragraph 45 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is clear and unambiguous in its enumeration of priorities in disarmament negotiations, a point which draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1 has, we think, taken care to reflect.

The issues relating to conventional weapons are many and complex. They cannot lend themselves to isolated treatment. In a world where 80 per cent of the \$500 billion expenditure on armaments is spent on conventional weapons and armed forces, in a world where the same countries that dispose of vast nuclear arsenals are also in the forefront of the conventional arms race, naturally any effort aimed at conventional weapons and armed forces, to be effective, should involve the very sources of that great war machine. It should also be borne in mind that in a world where national sovereignty and territorial integrity are still subject to violations, the minimum means of national defence and security cannot be denied, even to those who have no capacity to produce those means nationally.

It is clear that the regional threats which dictate the accumulation of conventional weapons are often exacerbated by the uneven provision of conventional weapons, either through one-sided generosity of supply, or licensing for local production which puts some States in the region at a great disadvantage vis-à-vis others.

Another aspect of this complex subject relates to the continuous frustration of the universally recognized principle of self-determination of colonial and subjugated peoples as a result of the generous supply to the oppressors of the means of perpetrating force, and the denial of access to those means by those who have to struggle for their right to self-determination.

It is of course to be noted that the appetite for the acquisition of conventional weapons sometimes can go beyond the immediate need of maintaining sovereignty. It can, in such circumstances, distort national priorities at the expense of the social and economic needs of peoples and thus often result in the lop-sided distribution of resources in developed as well as in developing countries, in favour of the unproductive arms race.

My delegation, on balance, has no difficulty in supporting the principle of a study of the issues involved in conventional disarmament. We think that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, however, will have to bear in mind all the various aspects of the problem in working out the guidelines which have been requested.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

Besides the study itself will have to be comprehensive. That is why my delegation felt that it could not lend itself to the sort of very rapid completion that had originally been reflected in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2. As a matter of fact we do not believe that such a complex issue can be studied in all its details and all its aspects and be completed before the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Of course we thank the sponsors of the draft resolution for taking that into account in the revision of the draft resolution.

Therefore the Nigerian delegation, notwithstanding the costs, which it had always known would have to be brought before us anyhow, will cast an affirmative vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. DJOKIC (Yugoslavia): My delegation wishes first of all to take this opportunity to express its deep and sincere condolences to the delegation of Italy in connexion with the catastrophic earthquake which has resulted in the loss of so many thousands of lives and injuries as well as terrible widespread devastation. We in Yugoslavia, who suffered not so long ago from similar loss of life and damage, have deep sympathy for our friendly neighbours, the Italian people. We sincerely share in the sorrow of the country and the people affected by this terrible natural disaster.

Turning to the subject we are now considering, I should like to state that my delegation was prepared to support the main demand of the operative part of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1, that the General Assembly should approve in principle that a study on conventional disarmament should be carried out and that the Disarmament Commission at its forthcoming substantive session should work out the general approach to the study, its structure and its scope. Our understanding of operative paragraph 1 is exactly what it is asking for, namely approval in principle of the carrying out of such a study, which does not mean that we are now taking a final decision on carrying out that study.

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

For these reasons I have to state that my delegation was surprised that the financial implications were prepared and circulated to the Committee. We do not consider that such financial implications are needed at all at this moment. We believe that the General Assembly, perhaps at its next session, will have the chance to pronounce itself if the Secretary-General, after consideration of the question of the study in the Disarmament Commission, suggests in his report to the Committee that such a study should be carried out. We do not consider that the time has now come for considering the financial implications of the carrying out of such a study.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions before we proceed to take a decision on this question.

Mr. DE LA FUENTE (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Peru regards as highly positive the initiative proposed by Denmark in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1, entitled "Study on conventional disarmament". However, I should like briefly to point out some facts to supplement the statements by other speakers in support of this important initiative and in particular the meaning of this proposal to the Latin American countries.

As members will know, the Latin American countries, or most of them, have been in the vanguard in this respect, with the establishment of the first nuclear-free zone in the world by virtue of the Tlatelolco Treaty. However, I feel I must point out that the peace initiatives of the Latin American countries have not been restricted to that nuclear disarmament measure; on a regional level, the Latin American countries have continued to take initiatives aimed at limiting conventional weapons in Latin America. In this connexion, I would recall here such important documents as the Ayacucho Declaration of 9 December 1974, which was adopted by the Andean Foreign Ministers and Heads of State, as well as the Washington Declaration of 1971, in which the Andean Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the provisions of the Ayacucho Declaration limiting conventional weapons on our continent.

(Mr. De La Fuente, Peru)

I also wish to point out, in conclusion, that Mexico was the host of a very important meeting in 1978 aimed at limiting the transfer of conventional weapons from developed to developing countries.

For all these reasons, I wish to reaffirm that the peaceful attitude of Latin America and our continent as a whole has found clear expression in regard to both conventional and nuclear weapons, and thus the delegation of Peru will be glad to support the action proposed by Denmark.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): In the past few years the desirability of tackling in greater detail and with more interest the various aspects related to the growing conventional armaments race has become obvious. Those weapons affect international peace and security and absorb very valuable resources which could be used for the development of all the peoples of the world. The clear and irrefutable recognition of the seriousness of the possible consequences of nuclear weapons and the priority they deserve in the disarmament efforts of the United Nations can in no way absolve us from attempting to make progress in the efforts to curb the conventional arms race. In this connexion, we must reiterate that the great Powers and other military Powers bear primary responsibility, which should be reflected in specific actions to reduce the production of conventional weapons.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

The high priority which should be given to nuclear disarmament must not cause us to underestimate or overlook a question which, while less serious and not as broad in scope, has none the less given rise to many hotbeds of tension in various parts of the world.

The delegation of Venezuela will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1, which approves in principle the carrying out of a study on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on conventional disarmament. In our view, such a study could help to promote greater understanding of all the problems and dilemmas connected with the conventional arms race. We believe that it could also help to stimulate action consistent with the requirements of this whole question.

On repeated occasions we have stressed the desirability and usefulness of studies and reports prepared under the auspices of the United Nation in connexion with various aspects of the arms race. We favour such studies and reports in order to achieve a better understanding of the complex questions with which we have to deal here, in spite of the at times high expenditures they may entail.

My delegation understands that initiatives and efforts made in the field of conventional disarmament should be carried out without prejudice to the urgent priority attention that should be given to questions relating to nuclear weapons.

The CHAIRMAN: Since no other representative wishes to speak in explanation of vote at this stage, the Committee is now ready to take a decision on the draft resolution. A roll-call vote has been requested. Fortunately, Conference Room 1, which is equipped with a mechanical voting system, will be available to us this afternoon. Accordingly, unless I hear any objection, and in view of the hour, we shall adjourn now and meet again at 3 o'clock punctually, in Conference Room 1, where our first item of business will be to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.2/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.