VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 65 AND 142 (continued)

STATEMENTS ON SPECIFIC DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS AND CONTINUATION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. CARIAS (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): Permit me first, Sir, to convey to you on behalf of the delegation of Honduras our warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of our Committee. We also warmly congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

We have now entered the phase of our debate devoted to statements on specific items on the Committee's agenda, and our delegation wishes to refer today to two matters on the agenda that are extremely important to us: the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session and conventional disarmament.

In 1978, when the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament ended, our peoples and Governments had great expectations. They hoped that, with the updating of mechanisms for negotiation and the adoption of a comprehensive set of recommendations on substantive measures to be adopted by Member States, a new era of negotiations and practical results in disarmament and arms control was about to begin, as a logical and inspired response to the international community's deep desire for peace and peaceful coexistence.

Ever since then, however, narrow national interests and an enduring distrust in relations between the two super-Powers have prevailed, thus spoiling the best intentions. This has hampered, almost paralysed, the permanent process of political negotiations aimed at reducing tensions, lowering the high costs and risks of the arms race and making considerable progress in disarmament, especially in the control and reduction of nuclear weapons.

The second special session devoted to disarmament, in 1982, gave further evidence of that trend towards paralysis. The international situation of the past two years has caused growing concern, owing to the absence of high-level dialogue between the two super-Powers and what we regard as an uncontrolled increase in conventional armaments, mainly in third world countries, where there are periodic
clashes and armed conflicts, with terrible consequences. Apart from the loss of human life and material damage that they cause, there is the danger that any local or regional confrontation may today lead to a progressive escalation towards nuclear war.
For those reasons, our country continues to insist on the need for a mandate to negotiate to be given, a mandate which the General Assembly has repeatedly advocated and which, together with measures and specific agreements on arms control and disarmament, should be strengthened with renewed political will and should lead to peaceful procedures for the settlement of international disputes. We therefore wish to make an urgent appeal that the programme of the Conference on Disarmament be implemented more quickly.

We also hope that a convention on the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons will be adopted soon and, further, that greater emphasis will be placed on the prohibition of the use in any confrontation of asphyxiating or poisonous gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare, especially because it is more likely that such substances will be used for military purposes in peripheral conflicts - that is to say, in countries of the third world.

Indeed, while Honduras fully shares the objective of general and complete disarmament, joins in the efforts to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and firmly advocates negotiations to control and reduce them, our basic concerns also broadly focus on the devastating effects of the conventional arms race, the illegal traffic in conventional weapons and the frequent use or threat of their use in our countries.

In this context conventional disarmament becomes an urgent need which should be given the highest priority by the international community. The large number of armed conflicts carried out with conventional weapons, simple as well as sophisticated, since the Second World War has been amply documented. We have also been able to ascertain the enormous danger which, for the stability of entire regions, rests in the unlimited development of the military power of a country which, because of that circumstance, becomes a real threat to the peace of its neighbours.

Disarmament in the field of conventional weapons is, furthermore, the responsibility not only of each Government in a given geographical area but also of the international community as a whole. It is well known that increasingly so and in various forms, legal or otherwise, more and more important flows of weapons and military technology are at present going from the industrialized countries, Eastern
as well as Western, to developing countries. That is why Honduras firmly supports all efforts at conventional and regional disarmament which may be undertaken and as far as it is concerned will decidedly join in supporting or negotiating effective, binding and fully verifiable agreements in order to achieve arms control and arms limitation, as well as bringing to a halt the unprecedented increase in the military potential of any country, thus seeking a military balance among the States of a region. That is why from the outset our country has supported the process of consultation among the South American countries members of the Andean Pact which led in 1974 to the formulation of the historic Declaration of Ayacucho on the limitation of conventional weapons, which we hope will become a reality in practice. That is why we have lent our support in the Organization of American States to the initiative of the Government of Colombia on the creation in Latin America of an agency to control conventional weapons.

It is undoubtedly in keeping with this spirit that we fully subscribe to the document of objectives adopted by the Governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras on 9 September 1983, in the context of the Central American process of negotiations with the assistance of the Contadora Group, an essential objective for the peace and stability of our subregion, a political commitment entered into by the five Central American countries which is embodied in the following quotation:

"To halt the arms race in all its forms and to initiate negotiations forthwith on the control and reduction of the present inventory of weapons and on the number of weapons."

Since then, this objective has become a real framework for negotiations to halt the arms race in Central America and to reduce, control and verify ceilings on weapons, installations and numbers of weapons in the countries of the region.

The Government of Honduras has welcomed the study of the Group of Experts on All Aspects of the Conventional Arms Race and on Disarmament relating to Conventional Weapons and Armed Forces, which the Secretary-General has submitted in his report A/39/348, and hopes that the praiseworthy effort at analysis and method will be followed up with a view to translating the approaches and recommendations it contains into concrete agreements, bilateral or multilateral.
The relevant principles for the work of the Group were contained in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly. In our view it is important to recall two important concepts which appear in paragraphs 22, 45 and 46 of the annex to the report, which we fully share:

"Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the needs of all States to protect their security." (A/39/348, para. 8 (j))

A good summary of the approach which should be undertaken to the negotiations in the areas we are considering is to be found in paragraph 8 (h):

"Priorities in disarmament negotiations shall be: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and reduction of armed forces. Nothing should preclude States from conducting negotiations on all priority items concurrently." (Ibid., para. 8 (h))
Mr. O'CONNOR (Ireland): I wish on behalf of the ten member States of the European Community to address myself to agenda item 59 (i) concerning the activities of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, and in this connection I wish to note the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Board contained in document A/39/549.

The Ten consider that the role of the Board in advising the Secretary-General on various aspects of studies and research in the area of arms limitation and disarmament carried out within the United Nations system is an important one.

Increasingly, resolutions are adopted in the General Assembly which call for the setting up of studies on various topics on the initiative of one or more States. The Ten believe that this increase in the incidence of resolutions calling for studies needs to be tempered by a more rational approach to the allocation of the available resources, material and expert. This would result in those studies being undertaken which were more deserving and more amenable to completion whilst others could be avoided.

In this connection, the Ten share the view reflected in the Secretary-General's report which urges that

"the Board's unique potential in identifying topics for study and devising ways to carry them out should be realized more effectively".

(A/39/549, para. 4)

In particular the Ten believe that proposals for new studies should first be placed before the Advisory Board in order that an opinion might be made available to the Member States taking the initiative as to the possible scope, priorities and resources, and that these implications might be brought to bear on the initiative prior to seeking action by the General Assembly to proceed with the study envisaged. Such an approach would, in the view of the Ten, assist Member States in reaching positions on proposed studies as they would then be armed with the details necessary to make an informed decision on the relative merits of the proposals before the Assembly. The Ten therefore share the view that the Advisory Board should lend a solid rationale to an otherwise unstructured programme of studies.

The Ten believe that the subjects for study should be carefully selected and whenever possible studies should attempt to reach consensus findings in order to be of the widest possible benefit. In some cases, however, the pursuit of consensus can only lead to a fruitless, costly and unnecessary prolongation of the procedural
aspects of concluding a study after the expert contribution has been made. In such circumstances there is, in the view of the Ten, considerable merit in guiding the study in such a manner as to give full expression to differing views and their supporting arguments, without necessarily attempting to arrive at joint conclusions and recommendations. We note that the Board has taken such a position in respect of one study on which it has made its recommendations.

The Ten note that the Board in the same report and in its capacity as the Board of Trustees for the United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has resubmitted the draft statute of the Institute, incorporating the amendments concerning the arrangements for promoting financial and other support as requested by the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly in its decision 38/447. The Ten share the view reflected in paragraph 33 of the report that every effort should be made to fund UNIDIR's activities from within the available resources of the Organization. The Ten hope that the draft statute as amended will provide a basis for a decision by the Assembly at this session to establish the Institute as an autonomous institution within the framework of the United Nations.

As regards the ambitious research programme of UNIDIR, which has been approved by the Board, the Ten express the hope that it will positively contribute to present and future negotiations on concrete measures of disarmament.

Mr. CARASALES (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): In this statement I shall refer to various matters relating to nuclear weapons. I do so at the risk of adding one more statement to the long series of statements made on these weapons of mass destruction, not only in this Committee but also in all the Forums dealing with disarmament or simply with the prospects for mankind's future. But I believe that the value of the present debate would be diminished if it did not result in a well-balanced view of the situation, on the basis of the presentation of all opinions.

The first comment I wish to make is precisely that the origin and explanation of the repeated references to nuclear weapons is the universal concern not only over the possibilities of their use and the harmful consequences thereof, but also over the mere existence of these weapons. The fact that these weapons exist is in and of itself sufficient reason for disquiet and fear.

Perhaps these repeated references to nuclear weapons are related, paradoxically, to the total absence of negotiations to limit, reduce and eventually eliminate them. It is unbelievable - but it is a fact - that it is precisely these
apocalyptic instruments - which are capable of sweeping away all signs of civilization and even of life on the planet and should be the subject of constant intensive efforts to ensure control - that continue to grow in number, emplacement and sophistication, free of all restrictions and with nothing being done in this regard.

For the truth is that absolutely nothing is being done. The Geneva bilateral talks have been interrupted and no date has been set for their resumption. The Conference on Disarmament is not negotiating on, and not even discussing, any item directly related to nuclear weapons; and in no other intergovernmental forum do we see any positive signs. Since there is no State that either does not possess nuclear weapons or is not linked to one of the two major military blocs which does not deeply desire the elimination of the nuclear danger, we must conclude that the responsibility for the present unprecedented situation rests exclusively with the nuclear Powers and their allies.

Obviously, anyone who has the most powerful weapon in his arsenals does not want to give it up. In some cases, such weapons constitute the basis of an entire policy. That is true of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, a doctrine that was perfectly defined in the "Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons" as "the most dangerous collective fallacy that exists" (A/35/392, annex, para. 519).

In this context, we would remind the Committee of the following passage in the report of the Conference on Disarmament:

"The Group of 21 reiterated that military doctrines based on the possession of nuclear weapons, and thus explicitly or implicitly admitting the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, were indefensible, for it was unacceptable that the prospect of the annihilation of human civilization be used by some States to promote their security. The future of mankind could not be made hostage to the perceived security requirements of a few nuclear-weapon States and most notably of the two major nuclear-weapon States". (A/39/27, para. 63)
Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

All this may be observed by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, but what cannot in any way be denied is that all the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, have been impeded and even vetoed by some nuclear Powers and their allies. This is a fact of life which cannot be denied. It is an undeniable fact that whenever there is mention of the possibility of negotiating any international instrument imposing restrictions on the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, there are negative reactions and vetoes. This is what occurred with items 1 and 2 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, which deal respectively with a nuclear test ban and the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament and we all know the position regarding compliance with the commitment entered into under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament reflects briefly but appropriately the main characteristics of a nuclear disarmament process. The time has come for the Conference on Disarmament to be allowed to take the necessary action in accordance with that paragraph.

No one denies the complexity and difficulties of this issue, but everything must have a beginning and the international community cannot remain inactive and indifferent indefinitely when every minute its future is at stake. Whatever the problems connected with item 2 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, the position is not the same as regards item 1, on the nuclear test ban. As is stated in the first paragraph of the report on this matter, which was submitted by the Secretary-General to the Committee on Disarmament in 1980:

"No other question in the field of disarmament has been the subject of so much international concern, discussion, study and negotiation as that of stopping nuclear-weapon tests." (CD/86, p.6)

The Secretary-General's report, issued only a month ago, on unilateral nuclear disarmament measures adds:

"the complete cessation of such tests is a prime objective of the United Nations and, since the 1950s, the General Assembly has adopted almost 50 resolutions on the subject - far more than on any other issue of disarmament." (A/39/516, para. 57)
(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

In the view of my delegation, of all the wide-ranging and important measures which can be taken up in the area of disarmament, a nuclear test ban is the easiest to implement, the simplest to structure, and would have greater implications in the short term, as well as in the medium and long term.

The development of new, increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons becomes practically impossible if they cannot be tested. At the same time, existing nuclear weapons need to be tested from time to time if they are to be relied upon. No one would dare launch a first strike without having absolute confidence in the weapons used. After a test ban nuclear arsenals would gradually lose importance. A total nuclear-weapon test ban would be the best guarantee of vertical as well as horizontal non-proliferation. In the long term there would be no reliable nuclear weapons. In other words, there would be a considerable reduction, if not total elimination, of the risk of nuclear war.

The benefits which would ensue from a nuclear test ban treaty are so obvious that there is no justification for doing nothing to that end, especially since in 1980 the parties to the trilateral negotiations which were then under way informed the Committee on Disarmament that they had already agreed on the main elements of a convention on the subject. That being the situation — and it is so described by most of those who deal with this question — it is difficult to understand why the world today is in a worse state of paralysis than it was a few years ago.

It is a fact that four of the five nuclear Powers have problems in initiating or resuming negotiations on a nuclear test ban. In one case, such a ban, despite international commitments of long standing, beginning with the Moscow Treaty in 1963, has now become a "long-term objective". That has dashed the hopes of concluding a treaty on the subject in the immediate future, despite the fact that all the necessary conditions exist. This situation cannot be ignored nor concealed, no matter how many dialectical or procedural efforts may be directed to that end.

There are various reasons why some nuclear Powers refuse to engage in negotiations on a test ban, but they are not technical but political reasons. To invoke verification problems, as is done in some cases, is to contradict the virtually unanimous opinion of those in scientific and technical circles, who
(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

assure us that under present conditions such verification is possible and reliable. As stated in the Secretary-General's report in 1980, to which I have already referred:

"When one takes into account the existing means of verification ... it is difficult to understand further delay in achieving agreement ..."

(UN/86, p. 42)

Highly respected scientists have stated repeatedly that all nuclear explosions, except very small ones of less than 1 kiloton, can now be detected, and while it would be theoretically possible to evade compliance with a treaty by tests at a lower level the hypothetical advantages of this would in no way be commensurate with the political damage which would be done by possible detection. To insist on discussion of the problem sine die in the search for an absolute, perfect system that would guarantee that no violation would ever occur is to waste efforts and distract attention by seeking something that has been shown to be unattainable in any disarmament agreement.
In other words, it would be postponing further and further something that should be
done immediately, and in the last analysis it constitutes a pretext for evading
compliance with an obligation that has been presented on moral and legal grounds.

The Conference on Disarmament, which has this as the first item on its agenda,
was faced in 1984 with a situation of a complete lack of political will on the part
of some countries, which had been concealed in 1982 and 1983 by an academic
discussion of the item which did not approach the basic purpose, which was to
negotiate an agreement, despite the existence of the treaty principle resulting
from the tripartite negotiations that had been interrupted in 1980, and despite the
submission of two complete draft treaties by Sweden and the Soviet Union.

Some member States at the Conference this year deemed it advisable, in the
absence of a will to negotiate, to continue the exercise which had been undertaken
in previous years. My delegation accepts and respects that viewpoint, although it
does not share it. However, it cannot accept what has emerged in the course of
this debate; first, the contention that the draft non-negotiating mandate presented
by a group of Western countries had received general approval and support and that
thus its failure to be adopted was caused by the opposition of a minority of
delegations; and, secondly, characterization of the attitude of those delegations
as whimsical, with reference made to their position as being: "If I cannot have
what I want at this time, I would rather have nothing".

The first of those viewpoints is totally incorrect. In 1984 at the Conference
on Disarmament four drafts providing for the establishment of an ad hoc committee
on agenda item 1, "Nuclear test ban", were submitted. The first two were submitted
by the Group of 21, the second being actually a revised version of the first
(CD/492 and CD/520). Another draft was sponsored by a group of socialist
States (CD/522), and the fourth draft was prepared by a group of Western States
(CD/521).

The drafts of the Group of 21 and the socialist group provided for the
immediate initiation of negotiations on the subject. When they were submitted to a
decision, they were supported by both groups; in other words, by 29 of the 40
members of the Conference. The statement by the co-ordinator of the Western group,
which prevented the adoption of those drafts, was framed in such terms that it was
clear that at least some of the Western countries would have been ready to adopt a
mandate providing for the immediate initiation of negotiations. The draft of the
nine Western countries (CD/521), on the other hand, was not submitted to a decision.

In view of those facts, which are clearly set forth in the report of the
Conference on Disarmament (A/39/27), one must ask how it is possible to maintain
that the latter mandate (CD/521), which did not provide for the initiation of
negotiations but rather for the continuation of the previous academic exercise, enjoyed general support.

With regard to the second point I have mentioned, suffice it to say that I do
not agree with the phrase used to characterize the position of the countries - the
majority of the Conference, as we have seen - which preferred to face up to the
reality of a lack of political will on the part of some nuclear Powers rather than
to continue talking - I underline the word "talking" - about items which have been
under discussion for decades. Nor is it appropriate to affirm that that position
"is far from the obligations accepted under international law".

Considerations of that kind would be applicable with more reason to that
minority of States which has prevented the establishment of ad hoc committees with
appropriate mandates, a measure supported by a large number of members of the
Conference and based on resolutions of the General Assembly, adopted by
overwhelming majorities on such important questions as the cessation of the nuclear
arms race and nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear war and prevention of
an arms race in outer space, not forgetting the nuclear test ban. In all these
cases, as was wisely put by the Ambassador of Mexico on the first day of this
general debate, it is clear that for certain delegations at the Conference on
Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum,

"the word 'negotiations' provokes - let us not speak of antipathy or

To conclude on the issue of the nuclear test ban, I should like to make the
following two comments. First, the refusal to undertake negotiations on the
subject at present, or for a time which may be encompassed by the phrase "long
term", justifies the view expressed in paragraph 50 of the report of the Conference
on Disarmament on its 1984 decision (A/39/27), which mentions that many delegations
consider that in the circumstances the establishment of a subsidiary organ without
a negotiating mandate "would only serve as a smokescreen to cover their
unwillingness to conclude a treaty" (A/39/27, para. 50). My delegation, along with many others, is not willing to contribute to the production of that smokescreen.

Secondly, it should be borne in mind that in the case of the nuclear test ban, as in so many other cases, there are controversial points of view among the various delegations, but those differences will never be resolved within the framework of an academic discussion in which each delegation will reaffirm its position. However, it would be possible to overcome this within the framework of a negotiation, which by its very nature would allow for accommodation of the different interests through concessions to one and compensations for another.

To sum up: the question of a total nuclear test ban is urgent; it is relatively simple to resolve in comparison with other disarmament problems; it is a question whose resolution would have enormous favourable consequences in halting the nuclear arms race; it is an issue which has already been discussed at length for three decades; it is a question on which there has been for a long time a readiness to conclude a treaty; and it is a matter on which negotiations should be initiated immediately, resolving within that framework the few outstanding issues which, I might also say, can be resolved only through a comprehensive negotiation process.

As long as that negotiation process is not completed, it would be highly desirable for the nuclear-weapon States to put an end to all their nuclear test explosions through a moratorium or moratoriums, as requested by the General Assembly on numerous occasions, beginning in 1959 with resolution 1402 (XIV).
Next, and to conclude, I shall refer to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I shall not reiterate the position of my country in that regard because it is well known. But, because the Third Review Conference of the parties to that Treaty which will take place next year, the present debate has given rise to a paean of praise of that international instrument and appeals to participate without further delay in a régime which yields so many benefits.

Since my country is one of the recipients of such appeals, I cannot but make some comments on some of the statements made, principally by members of the two major military alliances, and particularly of one of them.

It has been said time and time again that the world is today much safer than it was in 1968 and that that is so thanks to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is hard to believe that such a curious, not to say absurd, statement could be made. According to the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook for 1968, at that time there were a little over 5,000 nuclear warheads. Today the number is estimated at 50,000, in other words, 10 times as many. And there has been an increase in not only their number but also in the places where they are installed and deployed. New countries have accepted nuclear weapons on their territory and today on all the seas and oceans we see vessels of all types equipped with nuclear weapons. All of this has increased the feeling of insecurity and disquiet everywhere, but the desire to find virtues in the Non-Proliferation Treaty seems to know no limit. Only thus can we explain the statements that the world today is safer than it was 15 years ago, and that that ideal situation has come about because of the NPT.

Curiously enough, those statements have been made by nuclear-weapon States or by States which have nuclear weapons on their territory, all of them parties to the NPT. Here we should like to recall the wise words spoken on 19 October by the Ambassador of Romania. He said:

"The deployment of missiles and of nuclear weapons in general on the territories of other States parties to the Treaty constitutes in reality proliferation of nuclear weapons, a violation of the fundamental purposes of the Treaty, because the non-nuclear-weapon States on whose territories such weapons exist assume a certain role in their use and thus, even though indirectly, become nuclear-weapon States." (A/C.1/39/PV.6, p. 21)
(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

It is therefore logical that the representative of Romania, which is also a State party to the NPT, should have said that the Third Review Conference should "undertake a serious assessment of the new situation that has arisen".

It is a paradox that States which bear such a responsibility should arrogate to themselves the right to give advice to those which have not acceded to the NPT, insinuating that the mere fact of not acceding to a system which has been justifiably questioned is the major source of insecurity in the world.

Another statement on which I should like to comment is the attribution to the NPT of the credit for the fact that no new nuclear-weapon States have emerged in addition to those which existed when the Treaty was signed. Fortunately it is a fact that, as far as we know, there is no sixth nuclear-weapon State in the full sense of the term, but we very much doubt whether that is due to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Indeed, as has been said many times, the number of States which could be on the threshold of the nuclear option is small. Many of that small number are members of military alliances, and not only are they defended by nuclear weapons, but there has been to some extent proliferation through such weapons being admitted to their territories. A number of States with nuclear capability have not subscribed to the NPT, so it cannot be maintained that the NPT, and not sovereign political will, has been the reason for those States having opted for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. A few countries which are technologically advanced are parties to the NPT, but in that respect one may legitimately wonder if there is any reason to think that those States would have opted to produce nuclear weapons had there not been an NPT.

I repeat what I have said on other occasions, that it is a mistake to consider the objective of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the Non-Proliferation Treaty to be synonymous. The former is an objective which deserves the support of the entire world, and my country shares and sincerely and fully supports it. The latter is a means, an instrument, which in the opinion of many is replete with deficiencies, inequalities and discrimination in norms as well as in its operation. This view may not be shared by all, but the present debate has clearly shown that there are increasing doubts in the minds of the States parties themselves, especially those which are not in military alliances, with respect to this allegedly beneficial Treaty.
The words of the representative of a State party are very eloquent in this regard. I am referring to Ambassador Sutresna of Indonesia, a colleague in the Conference on Disarmament, who stated in this Committee on 17 October that the Treaty

"has resulted in a monopoly on nuclear weapons and on control over international decision-making about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In the same vein, all anti-proliferation policies are in the category of denials. In fact, these policies are on a nation-to-nation basis rather than a multilateral one. Thus, nation-based action has led to resentment, discrimination and denial of equivalent rights. Moreover, it is a fearsome fact that, while a great majority of members are signatories and have scrupulously observed the Treaty's provisions, the number of nuclear weapons has multiplied many times over since it came into force in 1970. This unequal emphasis on the goal of horizontal proliferation has de-emphasized the equally important question of vertical proliferation. In sum, the balance of obligations and responsibilities is given a perverted and unilateral interpretation: all rights and privileges have been reserved exclusively for the nuclear Powers, while the non-nuclear States have become the sole bearers of obligations." (A/C.1/39/PV.3, p. 79-80)

The shortcomings of any given international instrument cannot be concealed, nor can the doubts about and criticisms of its operation be allayed, by undue praise. Nor can we disregard the fact that certain obligations which it contains, primarily those in article VI, have not been complied with. Rather than look the other way, we should carefully and thoroughly examine this Treaty and seek to eliminate the serious defects of various kinds because of which a number of countries have not been able to accept it, and others that have accepted it are increasingly now questioning it.
Mr. Hohenfellner (Austria): My delegation would like to comment today on sub-item (c) of agenda item 65, on the study on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional and armed forces.

While reductions in nuclear arms must have first priority, it is also of vital importance to seek balanced and substantial reductions in conventional weapons.

Throughout the post-war period the world has constantly devoted between 4.5 per cent and 7 per cent of its gross national product to military expenditure. Of the nearly $850 billion spent world-wide on armaments this year, approximately 85 per cent accounts for purchases of conventional weaponry. The conventional arms race with its massive diversion of resources thus creates an ever-growing problem for most countries, especially third world nations, and is partly responsible for the economic crisis the world faces today.

Whereas only a few Powers are engaged in the nuclear arms race, the conventional arms race that began after 1945 has now assumed a global character.

My delegation can only deplore the deflection of the world's financial, technical and intellectual resources to the arms race. It is indeed tragic that a quarter of all research and development expenditure is devoted to inventing new or improving existing weapons as if there were no other areas for human ingenuity.

Whereas the roots of the arms race seem clear to us all, it is more difficult to identify the hurdles obstructing effective conventional disarmament measures.

A major factor hampering such measures is the different strategies and composition of the armed forces of the leading Powers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. Within these armies the concept of whether to rely primarily on nuclear or on conventional weapons plays a decisive role. Any conventional disarmament is therefore closely linked to nuclear disarmament and vice versa.

It will therefore be primarily the responsibility of the two States with the largest nuclear arsenals to undertake concrete measures to reduce nuclear armaments, to be accompanied by a significant reduction of conventional weaponry.

Since its foundation the United Nations has been aware of the problem posed by conventional armaments. This item was in fact discussed already during its very first session, in 1946.

In 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, nations agreed that:
"Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament." (resolution S-10/2, para. 81)

Although there has not yet been any significant progress with respect to the declaration on conventional weapons and armed forces, we note that there is an ever-growing awareness by politicians and international public opinion of the need to put an end to the conventional arms race.

Questions relating to the building of confidence and security are important elements in all negotiations on arms control and disarmament. These questions also constitute a key element in the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. In our opinion this Conference constitutes a promising framework for dialogue, in which the neutral and non-aligned European countries are actively participating. The high political level of the delegations present in Stockholm has given rise since the month of January to some optimism among the participating States, which also reflects the state of mind of the general public. By ensuring concrete confidence- and security-building measures and thereby reducing the risk of a surprise attack or of a conflict caused by a misunderstanding, the Stockholm Conference would be able to make a significant contribution to mutual understanding and to a more relaxed atmosphere on the continent of Europe. It is therefore a sign of hope - although admittedly a modest one - that the Stockholm Conference is taking place. The Conference, however, cannot be a substitute for other arms control efforts.

In March of this year the negotiations on the mutual reduction of forces and armaments and associated measures in Central Europe were resumed. Before their temporary interruption in December 1983 substantial progress had been achieved, notably with regard to control mechanisms. This path should be followed. Agreement on verification mechanisms in the context of mutual and balanced force reductions would constitute a hopeful sign for arms control in general. Questions of verification are among the most controversial problems in all arms control talks. A positive outcome in Vienna might, for example, further the Stockholm discussions on measures of verification in the context of confidence- and security-building measures.
The talk on mutual and balanced force reductions point to one of the major elements of the military relationship between East and West. Because of the link between the nuclear and the conventional fields, a stable balance in the conventional sector at a low level of armaments would also facilitate the solution of nuclear arms control problems. Today more than ever before it is unrealistic to hope for genuinely significant reductions in one field without parallel progress in the other. The main objective is to prevent war, whether nuclear or conventional, especially since today it is conventional wars that really threaten international stability and co-operation. Let me express my Government's hope that the report of the Secretary-General [A/39/348] will provide valuable assistance in facilitating a solution of this crucial problem.

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

Mr. EMERY (United States of America): I regret that it is necessary for me to speak on behalf of the United States in reply to remarks made yesterday by the representative of the Byelorussian delegation. It is particularly ironic that those remarks were made on election day in the United States, which is for us a very special day because it embodies one of the most important rights of a free people, that is, the right to choose its leaders and the policies that they will follow.

The Byelorussian representative made the rather strange accusation that somehow in the United States the free flow of information to its public was restricted and, furthermore, that the United States engaged in the repression of peace movements. I should say that, if there is any tradition in this country, it is the tradition of the freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition. These are among the rights guaranteed to all Americans in the Bill of Rights embodied in our Constitution.
(Mr. Emery, United States)

I will not spend a great deal of time describing those rights because I think every individual who is here representing his or her country has availed himself or herself of those freedoms as they visit the United States and particularly New York. So these rights and freedoms are observable every day by every citizen, every visitor, and of course, we welcome you to enjoy your stay here because it will give you an idea of how well that system has served us as Americans throughout our history.

Let me also say that we have just undergone in this election campaign a particularly important debate in which the people of this country have been presented with probably the clearest choice between philosophies on various issues of any election campaign in recent years. And the people have spoken. But there were also third- and fourth-party candidates who ran in many States as well. There were members of the Communist Party on the ballot in many States, of the Socialist Worker’s Party and of various right-wing and left-wing organizations, special groups that chose to exercise their right in the electoral process. In fact, many of these candidates were given television time, placed advertisements in various publications, and of course, the voters had an opportunity to avail themselves of this information in many more ways and occasions than I can possibly describe here today.

So I think that the suggestion that somehow the United States does not allow the free flow of information is rather easy to refute and, of course, the charge is ridiculous and needs no further discussion.

With respect to peace movements, of course, any look at Western society will demonstrate that individual citizens exercise the right to assemble and petition their Governments on any number of issues. Throughout the political campaigns we saw huge rallies. In fact, in rallies of one candidate very often supporters of the other candidate would appear, again, exercising their constitutional rights and expressing their views on a variety of issues. Debates were held. There were many occasions where peace groups and those who sympathized with points of view that may differ drastically from those of President Reagan or his opponent in this campaign, former Vice-President Mondale, were given the opportunity to do so.

Let me say also that last spring I participated in a United Nations Disarmament Campaign session in Leningrad, which I thought was an extremely and
valuable experience for me because it gave me an opportunity to visit the Soviet Union and to see Soviet society as it is. I was very interested and very impressed by many things, and dismayed by many others. But the fact of the matter is that we had an opportunity at that meeting to discuss a variety of issues.

One of the things that I commented on at the time which disturbed me somewhat was the fact that Pravda and other organs of the news media in the Soviet Union did not provide what could be objectively considered to be unbiased and adequate coverage of all points of view expressed by our delegates. I raised that point there at that time, and I must say that considerable sympathy was expressed by those in attendance that the point I raised was a legitimate one, especially since the goal of the United Nations Disarmament Campaign as stated for all to hear was the desire for the greater dissemination of information, the greater participation by non-governmental officials and organizations and an opportunity for citizens to exchange views, to learn more about these international problems and, hopefully, to suggest possible solutions to their Governments. Of course, we all share in these goals.

Let me say that I could, I suppose, spend a great deal of time contrasting our system of Government with that of the Soviet Union and its ally, Byelorussia. That might be a great deal of fun for someone who wishes to engage in polemics and who wants to raise the level of tension unnecessarily. But it seems to me that we are here for a greater reason. We are not here in this hall today merely to throw arrows at each other, or merely to sling mud, as we often say in political campaigns. We are not here to find ways to accuse one another of bad faith or to make political points that are essentially unrelated to the work of the First Committee. It seems to me that if the delegates who represent their nations are doing the jobs that they were sent here to do, they will concentrate on the issues of disarmament and find ways to resolve the very many difficult problems that all of us face, differences of opinion notwithstanding.

I would hope that for the remainder of this session all delegations would concentrate on the subject-matter to which we are asked to respond, on finding ways to build bridges to disarmament and to agree on the difficult issues that are before us, and not engage in unnecessary, petty and mean-hearted exchanges or polemics, when in fact that will make our work more difficult rather than easier.
Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): With regard to the statement that was made this morning by the representative of Afghanistan, I would like to make three points for the record. First, the Government of Brazil categorically denies any allegations of genocide in Brazil. My Government has taken appropriate action through diplomatic channels and otherwise to protest the false and misleading allegations which were made by the representative of Afghanistan.

Second, Brazil rejects any insinuation that other States may be conducting tests of any kind of weapons on its territory.

Third, I would suggest that in the future the representative of Afghanistan avail himself of reliable sources when he wishes to make statements about Brazil.

Finally, let me simply close these remarks by stressing that statements such as the one that was made this morning by the representative of Afghanistan do not contribute in any constructive way to the work of this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the representative of Syria does not wish to exercise his right of reply at this meeting. Therefore, he will reserve his right of reply to be exercised at some other meeting.

Mr. PASHKEVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): We listened to the statement promised yesterday by the representative of the United States as a reply to our statement. We understand the emphasis with which it was pronounced. However, the contents of that statement only confirmed how right we were in our statement made yesterday on behalf of the Byelorussian SSR and in our ideas on mass anti-war movements. I think that the question of mass anti-war movements is of great relevance to the work of our Committee and directly concerns it.

The American representative was not able to present any data which would cast doubt on the facts we presented. I can confirm once again with concrete facts what we said yesterday. For instance, we said that in the United States the advocates of anti-war movements, manifestations and demonstrations were persecuted. Here is another fact which we could adduce to confirm this idea. We would like to show that these are not ridiculous inventions but real actual facts of the American reality.
During one of the demonstrations this year a record was set: 1,691 persons were arrested and the sentences were extremely cruel. In August eight participants in anti-war demonstrations in front of the gates of the Martin Marietta Corporation, where Pershing II missiles are manufactured, were sentenced to three years hard labour and severe fines. In 1983, in front of the Livermore Laboratory, which is occupied with devising new types of nuclear weapons, 2,474 arrests were made on the basis of the statements of a provocateur sent by the United States Naval Intelligence to the Livermore area. Is that a ludicrous assertion?

On one day, 20 June 1983, American fighters for peace on World Disarmament Day saw over 1,000 people arrested. They included 40 children, 12 priests, students, workers, scientists, doctors and teachers. An activist of the Livermore action group said:

"The authorities want to sentence the activists of our movement to one or two years in gaol. Even if the sentence is conditional, it means police supervision and a real chance of losing your job. If you are caught again, there will be a lengthy gaol sentence. This is how they [the authorities] try to deal with us and to frighten the others."

I could present many other similar facts, but I do not wish to take up the Committee's time.

With regard to the attempt by the United States delegation to cast doubt on the sincerity of the peace movements in the socialist countries, including those in Byelorussia, anyone will understand why in our countries there is a very active peace movement and a movement against the threat of nuclear war. It is because we suffered extremely heavy losses during the Second World War and in our own lives have felt what war really is. That is why we are a people totally sincere in its fight for peace and disarmament.

As usual, the representative of the United States repeated, without any grounds, the thesis that it was indispensable to have a free flow of information in our country. It is strange to hear that from the representative of a country where the so-called free press writes nothing, for example, about the work of the First Committee in the field of disarmament, and of course it does not express the
position of the socialist and other countries on the problem of disarmament. I recall, for instance, that the United States delegation did not take part in the work of obtaining contributions through the Second United Nations Pledging Conference for the World Disarmament Campaign.

In exercising our right of reply, we do not wish to engage in useless polemics and divert the work of the Committee from the great need to solve difficult and important problems. I could only wish that the statement by the representative of the United States about the need for concrete action would be strengthened by concrete action by the United States Administration; that could only be conducive to the cause of disarmament and prevention of a nuclear catastrophe.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call the next speaker, the representative of the United States, I remind representatives that interventions in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to two per speaker, with the first limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. EMERY (United States): I assure the Committee that I shall not unnecessarily prolong the afternoon’s proceedings. Let me simply say that the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic read an impressive list of numbers of arrest and various other actions. The fact that he has been able to obtain such information speaks eloquently to the openness of our society. I should not begin to know where to obtain a list of the number of peace demonstrators and other dissidents who have been jailed, sent to mental institutions or otherwise persecuted in the Soviet Union. We know that it has happened, but, of course, since such information is not generally available to the public or to private citizens that sort of thing is very difficult to obtain.

As regards openness in our society, I must also observe that this Committee’s work is reported in the American press, but we do not tell the press what to write. The press has obviously decided that it will cover those activities that it, not the Committee, thinks are important. But if we were able to engage in a higher level of debate and discussion here, going to the heart of some of the issues and disagreements that we wrestle with, the American press and the press of the rest of the world would find it a much more stimulating subject than the petty
bickering that we seem to be engaged in this afternoon. The press is willing to report matters of importance and substance, but it has been waiting for something of that nature worth reporting.

The work of this Committee is extremely important, and too critical to be delayed and frustrated by this sort of exchange. I just wish my friends and colleagues from the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic would seriously take to heart the comments I made a few minutes ago, when I suggested that this sort of thing, which is generally unrelated to the work of the First Committee and is unnecessary in its tone and content, frustrates our efforts, because it builds walls rather than bridges. I shall refrain from engaging in that kind of activity myself, although — and many others will probably sympathize — I find it very difficult to restrain myself when unnecessary and outrageous remarks are made about my country. I think that we would all feel the same way.

I conclude by saying, Mr. Chairman, that you will find the United States a very willing and active participant in events that can lead to general and complete disarmament, in activities that will raise the credibility and stature of the United Nations in general and the First Committee in particular. All we ask is that serious proposals be made, that the responses be worthy of the trust and faith placed in us by our nations and the world and that we work collectively to raise the calibre of our activities to action and substance rather than rhetoric and rather boorish behaviour, which degrades this body in the eyes of those who turn to it for progress and security.
The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the representative of the Byelorussian SSR for the second time, I call upon the representative of the Soviet Union.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Since I have the pleasure of speaking for the first time in this Committee I should like, Sir, to congratulate and welcome you and also the Chairman of the Committee and its other officers.

I have asked to speak in order to reply to the statement by the United States representative, and I shall try to be brief. Mr. Emery recalled his trip to Leningrad and said that he could speak about some aspects of life in the Soviet State — probably those which he did not like — and in response I may tell him that I have spent not two or three days in New York but much time, and I could speak at length and say a great deal about social inequities in the United States, including New York; but of course I do not intend to do that.

The question which has now arisen concerns the work of the First Committee — that part of it which deals with the World Disarmament Campaign — and the attitude of Governments towards that Campaign. The representative of the United States is surprised that in our information media nothing is said about repression — supposedly — carried out by the Soviet Government against participants in the World Disarmament Campaign. Yes, indeed, there are no such articles in the press, for the very simple reason that there is no repression.

In this Committee I have often asked a question also: what are the slogans of the participants in the movement in favour of disarmament, the freezing of nuclear arsenals, nuclear disarmament or non-first-use of nuclear weapons? Those slogans are the slogans of Americans in New York, of Englishmen in England, of Italians in Italy and of Soviets in the Soviet Union. That is the policy of the Soviet Government, so why should the Soviet Government take repressive measures? It does not engage in any such repression. It would take repressive measures against participants in demonstrations in favour of war. War and war propaganda are forbidden by law in our country; they are a crime. For that the Soviet authorities would indeed take repressive measures against citizens who engaged in such activities.

But we are surprised — and more than that. We see that in Western countries, and this includes the United States, there is repression. As the representative of
the Byelorussian SSR said, there is repression against those who take part in
demonstrations which are pro-freeze, in favour of the non-first-use of nuclear
weapons, in favour of nuclear disarmament. We are not only surprised: we are
indignant.

I should like to quote from the statement made in this Committee by
Mr. Adelman, who said, among other things:

(spoke in English)

"President Reagan has called the treatment of peace groups 'a litmus test of a
Government's true desire for peace.'" (A/C.1/39/PV.13, p. 36)

(continued in Russian)

It seems that the attitude of the Washington Administration towards pro-freeze
movements is a litmus test of the attitude of the Government towards the United
Nations disarmament campaign.

The representative of the United States spoke of the need to carry out
negotiations but that there should not be any artificial obstacles; there should be
bridges. That is an excellent statement. Then why does the American side - we
have said this quite often - build barriers instead of bridges, with accusations
against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries that are totally unfounded?
Is that a way to build bridges? These are obstacles, barriers to any disarmament
negotiations.

As to the way things are going to happen in reality, past experience of the
work of the Conference on Disarmament shows that there is no such trend towards
building bridges.

We shall see.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on the representative of the
Byelorussian SSR in exercise of a second right of reply.

Mr. PASHKEVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation
from Russian): I would not have asked to speak a second time in exercise of my
right of reply if the representative of the United States had refrained from making
the second statement at the end, that we should work constructively in this
Committee and not engage in mutual recriminations. But he travelled his usual road
and slandered us by saying that in our country people were arrested for
participating in disarmament demonstrations, and so on.
We have just heard a very convincing statement by the representative of the Soviet Union. I am not going to repeat what he said, but I should like merely to adopt a realistic attitude.

We are constantly being pushed towards having our disarmament advocates speak out against their Government, then those so-called disarmament advocates would be praised in the West. But let us think about it a little. How is the peace movement in the socialist countries to act against the policies of the Governments of those countries? In what fields? In what areas? Against the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons? Against the proposal for a freeze? Should they ask that in a couple of minutes the United States should be subjected to nuclear attack? Should they act against the obligation not to have any anti-satellite weapons in space or against the proposal to use space exclusively for peaceful purposes? In other words, we do not have any social group or class which would be interested in war propaganda, which would enrich itself through the armaments industry. Therefore our society is for peace and disarmament, and this is a will expressed by our Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Have the delegations of the United States and the Byelorussian SSR said all they wish to say in exercise of their rights of reply for this meeting? The representative of the Soviet Union used his right of reply, to which the representative of the United States wishes to reply, so I shall now call upon him to exercise his right of reply to the representative of the Soviet Union, not to the representative of the Byelorussian SSR, because in that case he has already exhausted his rights of reply.

Mr. EMERY (United States of America): In the Congress of the United States, when a member has totally exhausted his material he simply says, "I yield back the balance of my time". I believe it would in the best interests of the Committee to do that at this point.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.