Twenty-ninth Session

FIRST COMMITTEE

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND AND ELEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 7 November 1974, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)
Rapporteur: Mr. COSTA LOBO (Portugal)

- Reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries (continued)
  (a) Report of the Special Committee on the Distribution of the Funds Released as a Result of the Reduction of Military Budgets;
  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

- Napalm and other incendiary weapons and all aspects of their possible use: report of the Secretary-General (continued)

- Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (continued)

- Urgent need for cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests and conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive test ban: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (continued) /...

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NAPALM AND OTHER INCENDIARY WEAPONS AND ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR POSSIBLE USE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/9726)

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IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 2266 (XXII) CONCERNING THE SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL I OF THE TREATY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA (TREATY OF TLATELOLCO) (A/9692)
Mr. KARIM (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, speaking here for the first time I should like to extend to you, on behalf of my delegation, our warmest felicitations on your election to preside over the First Committee.

My delegation is participating for the first time in the deliberations on items concerning disarmament. As a developing country which has put primary emphasis on economic and social development, Bangladesh spends a very small percentage of its budget on defence compared with most countries. Its defence expenditure, expressed as a percentage of total revenue expenditure or gross national product, is less than in any other country of the subcontinent.

Bangladesh therefore recognizes the close link that exists between disarmament and development, and fully supports general and complete disarmament as a goal towards which the United Nations should strive as a matter of priority.
At a time when large parts of the world, especially Bangladesh, are facing a situation of great economic hardship arising out of a critical shortage of food and other essential commodities, it is disturbing to see an enormous proportion of the world's resources diverted to sterile military expenditure. A global expenditure of some $200,000 million every year on armaments is a colossal waste of resources. It cannot be justified even on grounds of security. The ever-spiralling arms race has not promoted a sense of security, it has led only to a spiral of insecurity.

In this context, we commend the initiative taken by the Soviet Union for placing on the agenda of the General Assembly a proposal calling for "reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries". The specific mention of five permanent members of the Security Council in this connexion may seem to call for unequal sacrifices on their part. But at the same time, one cannot be oblivious to the fact that the five permanent members of the Security Council have been given special rights and obligations by the United Nations Charter. They have a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In the view of my delegation, therefore, it is they who should intensify efforts to bring about a reduction in the level of expenditure on armaments.

The economic benefits that would flow from the implementation of this proposal have been detailed in the experts' report on this subject. To be sure, there are some practical difficulties in ascertaining what constitutes military expenditure in a budget; but this difficulty certainly is not an immeasurable one and should not be used as an argument for lack of action.

The disarmament negotiations at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament have progressed at a disappointing pace. Indeed, no tangible progress has been registered on the question of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty and on other matters, such as the draft convention on chemical weapons. We hope for better results from CCD, now that it has been enlarged by five new members who will, no doubt, make important contributions to the work of the Committee.
Ever since the General Assembly's first resolution, resolution 1 (I) adopted on 24 January 1946, the United Nations has been concerned with the question of the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons of mass destruction. Since then, quantitative and qualitative improvements in nuclear weaponry have reached a stage where at least two of the nuclear Powers have attained overkill capacity. It was hoped at one time that the capacity of each super-Power to destroy the other would act as a spur towards the taking of concrete steps for progressive nuclear disarmament. That hope has yet to be realized. Nevertheless, we are happy to see that some progress has been made in the bilateral SALT talks and that the two sides have promised to negotiate a new agreement on strategic offensive arms to cover the period up to 1985.

Another important matter on which meagre progress has been made is that of chemical and bacteriological weapons. It has now been a subject of discussion by the General Assembly for the past eight years. It is a matter of regret that the 1971 Convention banning biological weapons, which was endorsed by the Assembly that year, has not yet come into force because of the lack of ratification by three major Powers which originally sponsored it.

Although CCD has not been able to indicate any progress on this issue, we hope that the two major Powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, will take the lead in proposing measures at CCD sessions next year, so that more progress can be made in controlling chemical warfare. In this connexion, we have noted that the Moscow summit communiqué of 3 July contains a pledge by the United States and the Soviet Union to consider a joint initiative in this regard. The draft convention submitted by Japan is another favourable development.

Throughout the history of warfare, mankind has always expressed abhorrence with regard to weapons which are unnecessarily cruel or destructive. Whenever, through technological progress, new weapons have come into existence, the world community has questioned whether their use would be in order or whether their effects would violate acceptable humanitarian standards. Various international instruments have prohibited weapons such as expanding bullets, banned by
the Hague Declaration of 1899, or poison gas, by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. In recent years the world community has expressed its disapproval of the use of such weapons as napalm and other incendiaries, fragmentation and delayed-action weapons, high-velocity ammunition for small arms, mass-bombardment weapons and the like, because of their vast destructive capacity and their indiscriminate impact on civilians and combatants. However, in spite of general disapproval of these weapons, they continue to be used because of a lack of agreement on the elimination or restriction of the use of these weapons. The growing concern of the international community was highlighted at the Conference of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Teheran in 1973, and at the first session of the Humanitarian Law Conference in Geneva this year. We look forward to the forthcoming second session of the Conference on Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, to be held early next year, and we hope that it will lead to further positive action.

My delegation supports the Soviet proposal for the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes if they are incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well-being and health. Technology has now reached a stage where it is possible to manipulate the environment and climate in a manner which could not be dreamed of only a generation ago. Ambassador Malik, in his statement, catalogued some of the ways in which our environment could be tampered with, with resulting modification of the environment not only temporarily but to the detriment of future generations. The Soviet initiative is thus both timely and pertinent, especially for the developing world. Because of their limited scientific capabilities, countries of the developing world are particularly vulnerable to the manipulation of meteorological and geophysical conditions. It is our belief that there should be a study by experts on the manner in which scientific discoveries could be used for destructive military purposes through tampering with the environment. Such a study could form the basis for appropriate recommendations by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and the General Assembly.
The non-aligned countries have for many years expressed themselves in favour of a world disarmament conference. We as a non-aligned country are convinced that the convening of a world disarmament conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all States, would be an important contribution towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament. We know that there is a diversity of views on such a conference, especially regarding the timing. We do realize that without the willing participation of all nuclear Powers, the conference would not be as useful as we should wish. We are therefore gratified to note that the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference has explored various ways of reconciling differences among the Member States, especially the nuclear States, on this question. Although only three nuclear countries participated directly in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, it is gratifying to know that the two other nuclear countries have maintained contact with the Committee, through its Chairman.

I should now like to turn to the proposal for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the South Asian region, to which Bangladesh belongs. My country believes that denuclearization of regions, especially in the developing world, would greatly assist in lessening international tension and consolidating international peace and security. Bangladesh as a small country would certainly welcome promotion of nuclear-free zones.

We therefore favour, in principle, proposals which are aimed at creating nuclear-weapon-free zones. However, we believe that proposals which affect a region should be advanced in a constructive manner. For this reason we feel that before such a proposal is brought before the General Assembly the countries of the region should consult among themselves about the desirability of such an idea and such aspects as the geographical scope, institutional arrangements, if any, the relationship with other nuclear-weapon-free zones, etc. Without a careful and thorough examination of these and other pertinent points, it would be unreasonable to expect a successful outcome.
This is the way Latin American countries proceeded before they reached agreement on their nuclear-free zone; this is the way countries of the ASEAN region are proceeding. Unfortunately, in the case of the proposal relating to South Asia, no such consultations have been initiated -- at least, so far as Bangladesh is concerned. We would therefore hope that the sponsors would engage in consultations with the countries of the region before putting forward any proposal in this respect before the General Assembly.

Fortunately, in contrast to the Middle East region, the countries of South Asia have relations with one another, and channels of communication are open.

Let us therefore approach the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an opportunity that would help to promote regional co-operation, and not become a source of misunderstanding. Let us therefore proceed in such a manner that, when we come to the General Assembly, countries of the region can speak with one voice, and not many.

In this connexion, my delegation has noted with great interest the proposal made by Finland with a view to undertaking an expert study of the question of nuclear-free zones in all its aspects. We believe that such a study would be of great benefit to the Members of the United Nations that are interested in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

As a country whose only seaboard is on the Indian Ocean, we welcomed the initiative to establish the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. The Indian Ocean is the only ocean whose waters do not wash the shores of any great Power. Yet, because of its central position, it has become an arena of great Power rivalry. That was why in 1970 the non-aligned States in Lusaka advocated the concept that the Indian Ocean should be respected:

"... as a zone of peace from which great Power rivalries and competition as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition, either army, navy or air force bases, are excluded."

(Lusaka Declaration, page 21)
The Ad Hoc Committee which was set up in 1972 to study the implications of the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace has produced a report which, regrettably, falls somewhat short of our expectations. For instance, the Ad Hoc Committee report has listed 36 States as littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. The General Assembly obviously wished to include in that list all coastal States as well as hinterland States whose main access to the sea is the Indian Ocean. It is perhaps understandable that South Africa, whose primary concern is with the Atlantic rather than the Indian Ocean, should have been excluded, but there is no explanation as to why Bangladesh does not appear on the list. We hope that in future this will be rectified. The list, in our view, should also include Mozambique, which is virtually self-governing and is on its way to statehood.

In our opinion, the full implications of the scheme are yet to be worked out. Further definition and clarification is required. Thus, for instance, the countries to be involved in the realization of the proposal for a zone of peace, including littoral and hinterland States, the great Powers and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, need to be more precisely spelled out. Similarly, the limits and geographical scope of the Ocean itself should be defined. It is therefore desirable that efforts be made to make the Ad Hoc Committee's deliberations more purposeful. In this respect, we feel that the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee should be enlarged to enable greater participation of littoral and hinterland States.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank Ambassador Karim of Bangladesh for his cordial congratulations.
Mr. KRUTZSCH (German Democratic Republic): Mr. Chairman, please let me, first of all, add my personal congratulations to those already expressed to you by the delegation of the German Democratic Republic. Our delegation is well aware of your outstanding talents and of the skill with which you have been conducting the work of this Committee.

Taking the floor on 7 November, the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution, I should like to express my felicitations and good wishes to the delegations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The coming into being of the first socialist State in the world opened new avenues for mankind to peace and freedom.

The contributions made so far in the general debate on disarmament in the First Committee impressively reflect the serious efforts of the great majority of States to achieve progress in disarmament and arms limitation. We share the view of many delegations that political détente is conducive to success in the disarmament field. At the same time, it is obvious that success in the field of détente will be impaired or imperilled unless invigorated by disarmament measures.

Nuclear disarmament deserves top priority. In view of the dangers to which all mankind is exposed from these weapons, and in view of the strain on international relations inherent in the continued nuclear arms race, it is necessary to step up efforts in order to find generally acceptable solutions.

We therefore welcome the agreements on the limitation of strategic arms and on the prevention of a nuclear war concluded between the USSR and the United States. We hope that the new round of talks between these two States recently opened in Geneva will yield further results. At the same time, it is necessary to stress the special responsibility resting on all five nuclear Powers -- the five permanent members of the Security Council -- especially in the nuclear disarmament field.
During the last few years, various efforts have been made to find ways that may lead to an understanding on disarmament problems among these very Powers. It is therefore all the more disappointing that the representatives of that nuclear Power, which has so far ignored all agreements in the field of arms limitation and which has sought to block the implementation of all decisions of this Organization on disarmament matters, should again appear before this Committee with an absolutely negative attitude on the disarmament issue.

This mere fact shows that it is being irresponsible in the face of what is one of the great hopes of the people. Moreover, this stand is to becondemned on the ground that it is linked with gross defamations of the first socialist State of the world. It remains to be hoped that in the end the appeal for disarmament actions by the nuclear Powers, which has been voiced here with great unanimity, will be heard and taken into account by the representatives of that nuclear Power.

On account of the numerous obstacles yet to be overcome on the way to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, special importance must above all be attached to all measures directed against the spread of these weapons. The non-proliferation Treaty has up till now been the most important result of these efforts. As is generally known, it is the principal purpose of this Treaty to prevent more and more States from acquiring nuclear weapons. Even at the time when the drafting and conclusion of the Treaty were still at stake, the German Democratic Republic clearly sided with its advocates. Now that almost five years have passed since the Treaty entered into force, its worth and significance for the efforts to strengthen peace and achieve disarmament have become obvious in every respect. How much greater would be the risk of regional conflicts growing into world-wide nuclear war if a large number of States possessed nuclear weapons. How much more difficult would it be to agree on nuclear disarmament measures if the number of States possessing such weapons were large. Nor can it be overlooked that the finally successful struggle for this Treaty was at the same time a defeat for aggressive circles the influence of which was thus curtailed and which have since then not dared to reach out openly for such weapons.

The experience of the German Democratic Republic, a socialist industrial State, shows that for a State to be a Party to this Treaty does not in any way impair its peaceful use of nuclear energy or its development of nuclear technology. As is
known, the German Democratic Republic was among the first countries to accede to this Treaty. Since 7 March 1972 the Safeguards Agreement concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under article III of the non-proliferation Treaty has been in force for the German Democratic Republic and is scrupulously observed.

The years that our State has been a party to the non-proliferation Treaty it has experienced an upswing in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; thanks to its co-operation with the USSR and the other member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. The commissioning of the first 440 megawatt unit of the "Bruno Leuschner" nuclear power plant in the north of our country, which is designed for a total capacity of 880 megawatts, was a major step towards the large scale industrial use of nuclear energy. Preparations for another large nuclear power plant are under way. Good progress has also been made in research in nuclear and reactor physics and in the production and use of radio-active and stable isotopes. Having but limited sources of energy, our country takes a keen interest in the further development of international co-operation in the nuclear energy field not overshadowed by the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We therefore join all those delegations which stand up for the world wide application of the non-proliferation Treaty.

We welcome the statements made by representatives of some countries to the effect that they want to accede to the Treaty even before the forthcoming review conference or intend to accelerate negotiations with IAEA for a safeguards agreement. If States, which on account of their levels of economic development have been near nuclear States for a long time already, are now going to accede to the Treaty, this will certainly have a favourable effect on others which had been influenced by the prolonged wait and see attitude of the former.

The German Democratic Republic views the forthcoming review conference as an important event which should strengthen the Treaty and increase its effectiveness. It is with this objective in mind that the Republic, which has so far followed the work of the Preparatory Committee as an observer, will take part in the third session of the Preparatory Committee and in the conference itself.

No doubt the agreement concluded between the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States in June 1974, making IAEA safeguards more effective, serves also to strengthen the non-proliferation Treaty. Those States have committed
themselves not to provide fissionable material and certain equipment to non-member States of the non-proliferation Treaty, unless those deliveries are subject to IAEA safeguards. The German Democratic Republic has joined this agreement.

Moreover, my delegation endorses the activities undertaken to implement article V of the non-proliferation Treaty with regard to the peaceful application of nuclear explosions. We welcome the fact that IAEA has taken steps in this connexion to set up a service for such explosions. As regards the political issues to be solved in connexion with an arrangement on peaceful explosions, we consider the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to be a competent body for drawing up appropriate arrangements.

In connexion with the limitation of the nuclear arms race, the cessation of all nuclear tests is of major importance. Since the Moscow Treaty of 1963 on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests in three environments, the Agreement of 3 July 1974 on the limitation of underground nuclear-weapon tests has been an important step towards the cessation of all underground tests.
That agreement, which applies to the most powerful nuclear weapons, is subject to national means of control. It is to be hoped that the practical use of such means of verification under the agreement will help to dissipate the doubts still harboured by a number of States regarding the effectiveness of those means, and to clear the way for the political decision to ban all underground nuclear testing also.

The efforts to limit the nuclear arms race and the spread of nuclear weapons are also reflected in the growing interest shown in this General Assembly in the question of nuclear-free zones.

Our delegation views the endeavour to create nuclear-free zones as a welcome development. In this way the spread of nuclear weapons in various regions of the world can be counteracted, which would serve to strengthen both regional and global security. The proposal of the Finnish delegation for a study of the question of nuclear-free zones deserves attention. It is our understanding that it is designed to contribute to an analysis of the various political aspects and problems involved in the creation of nuclear-free zones. We regard the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament as a body which, on account of its experience and composition, is competent to carry out such a task.

As can be seen from the report of the Conference on the Committee on Disarmament, that body devoted much attention last year to the question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. Several informal meetings, involving experts, dealt with this subject. Regrettably, the consultations have not led to the drawing up of a draft convention this year either. That is because the Western States rejected the draft of the socialist States, which has been before the Committee since 1972, without submitting concrete proposals of their own. The presentation of a draft convention by the Japanese delegation did not appreciably change this situation. Neither in that draft nor in the subsequent discussion were new ideas submitted, especially concerning the scope of the prohibition.

Our delegation which, like many other, advocates a comprehensive prohibition of all chemical and bacteriological weapons, also considers that it would be feasible to draw up draft conventions which would pursue this
objective step by step. For that reason we welcome the fact that the Soviet Union and the United States of America have agreed to consider a joint initiative with a view to banning certain chemical weapons. That could ensure early progress and prevent agreement being rendered more difficult — and put off indefinitely — as a result of the development of new types of chemical weapons. For this reason the General Assembly should also call upon States to abstain from taking measures liable to hamper the conclusion of an agreement in the field of chemical weapons.

Undoubtedly, the early entry into force of the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons would have a favourable effect on the solution of the over-all problem, i.e. the prohibition of all chemical and biological weapons. We welcome the statement of the representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Roschin, that his country intends to ratify the Convention this year. We hope that the other two depositary States will follow that example.

The close relationship between a prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons and their elimination from the arsenals, on the one hand, and the prohibition of their use laid down in the Geneva Protocol of 1925, on the other, has been noted in many United Nations resolutions. In view of the possibility of finding a step-by-step solution to the problem of chemical weapons, the universal applicability of the Geneva Protocol is of increasing importance. On 17 June next year it will be half a century since that important international document was adopted. We very much hope that by then the Protocol will also have been signed and ratified by those States which have not yet done so. In this connexion we strongly support all those delegations which have advocated the idea of a special appeal of the General Assembly to mark this occasion.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has always attached special importance to the work of the Committee on Disarmament. In numerous statements it has expressed its views on the questions dealt with by the Committee and has helped, to the best of its ability, to bring about arrangements on disarmament measures. The German Democratic Republic has acceded to all arrangements in the disarmament field, almost all of which
have been an outcome of the work done by the Committee on Disarmament. Since it has been agreed to enlarge the Committee on Disarmament, the German Democratic Republic will now have the opportunity to take part in the Committee's work as a member. Permit me, on behalf of my Government, to express our readiness to help carry out the difficult tasks facing the Conference on the Committee on Disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for the kind words which he addressed to me.

Mr. Todorov (Bulgaria) (interpretation from Russian): Before turning to my statement, I should like, on behalf of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, to congratulate the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic upon their national holiday, the fifty-seventh anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution.

The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria has already had occasion to express its views on certain fundamental problems of disarmament. We proceed from the premise that in the circumstances of an increasing process of détente it is becoming possible to attempt the solution of a number of important and urgent problems upon which depend further progress towards the final objective: general and complete disarmament. No one could possibly entertain any doubt about the fact that underlying general and complete disarmament are the problems of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons are those which threaten the very existence of mankind and life on our planet. There have been very eloquent statements made in this Committee which can have left no doubt in anyone's mind that more than enough nuclear explosive material has been accumulated for the total annihilation of all life and all people in the world.
The countries of the Socialist community, and the People's Republic of Bulgaria as an indissoluble part of that community, have been doing everything in their power to achieve a solution of the most important and urgent problem of the day: the elimination of the danger of a nuclear war. The first appreciable steps have already been taken in that direction. It suffices to refer to the agreement achieved as a result of the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks.
Together with the development of the scientific and technical resolution, which has created tremendous benefits for the peoples of the whole world, the question in the forefront of attention is that of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. This question has several aspects. First of all, we should stress the fact that a number of so-called near-nuclear States have in their possession the resources necessary to undertake the creation of their own nuclear potential. The spread of nuclear weapons is fraught with very serious consequences for the political atmosphere in the world. This has been referred to quite unambiguously by the leaders of delegations of three of the nuclear States who have spoken at this session. I am sure that no serious-minded person could fail to share this view. If new Powers embarked on the course of creating nuclear weapons this would cause a sharp deterioration in the world situation, begin a chain reaction on the part of other interested countries, create tension in new parts of the world, make even more difficult the achievement of new agreements in the field of disarmament and, in the final analysis, have a most pernicious effect on the life of the population of the country concerned as well as on that of all the peoples of the world.

The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria attaches great importance to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as an international instrument on the basis of which we should seek ways of ending the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is precisely for this reason that a large number of countries of the world have acceded to that Treaty. To attack the 1968 Treaty in existing circumstances means only one thing -- disregarding the favourable opportunities which exist at the present time, triggering off the process of proliferation of nuclear weapons and doing great damage to the vital interests of all States and peoples as regards strengthening international peace and security. It is now necessary for the non-proliferation Treaty to become a universal international document. The accession of new Powers, and particularly nuclear Powers which have not so far acceded to the Treaty, and also of the near-nuclear Powers, would have favourable consequences for the cause of strengthening confidence and international security. In this connexion, my delegation notes with satisfaction the statements of the delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan with regard to measures taken to accede to the Treaty.
The use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in order to seek new sources of energy for development is receiving particular attention in a whole number of countries of the world. The People's Republic of Bulgaria is developing its own economy very rapidly for the benefit of its people. Considerable resources are being set aside for the development of science and technology. This year the first chain of nuclear-power stations in the Balkans has begun to operate successfully. The first is in the Bulgarian town of Kozloduy, with a power output of 440 megawatts, and when it is fully operational it will achieve a power output of 880 megawatts. There is widespread use of radio-active isotopes in industry, agriculture and medicine.

In this connexion, the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria wishes to state that the only possible and correct way of solving the problem of the peaceful use of nuclear energy is to be found in the guarantees provided by control agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as provided for in the provisions of the 1968 non-proliferation Treaty. Our country has concluded a safeguards agreement with IAEA which came into force on 29 February 1972. Our delegation considers it necessary for all States Parties to the Treaty which have not yet concluded agreements with IAEA to do so as soon as possible. The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is convinced that the review conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be held in May next year will make a positive and substantial contribution to the strengthening of the system guaranteeing the non-proliferation of those weapons.

The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria has already in previous statements more than once expressed its attitude of principle on another important problem in the field of the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons: that is, the creation of nuclear-free zones. We are in favour of creating such zones on the basis of the observance of certain principles and the assumption of certain obligations. In this connexion, our delegation would like to stress now that we are interested in the proposal of Finland with regard to the carrying out of comprehensive research in the field of the creation of nuclear-free zones. We consider that a discussion of this proposal could be undertaken by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.
The question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as we know, has other aspects too. Among them, in particular, is the need to call a halt to nuclear testing. The total prohibition of such tests -- and the People's Republic of Bulgaria has often spoken in favour of such a ban -- would have results of many kinds, of which the most noteworthy would be those concerning the military aspects of the problem. It is well known that the cessation of nuclear testing would lead to a considerable slowing down of the qualitative sophistication of nuclear weapons and hence to a limitation of the arms race itself. The cessation of testing would also have favourable consequences for the strengthening of confidence and, by no means least, for the preservation of the environment and the health of mankind. In our view, a substantial step towards a solution of this problem was represented by the Moscow Treaty of 1963 which prohibited nuclear tests in three environments -- in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. While adhering fully to our position of principle in defence of a comprehensive ban on all nuclear testing in all environments, the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria welcomed the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty, considered it a big step towards the full and total prohibition of testing and acceded to it.

A new and positive change concerning the halting of nuclear testing is represented, in our view, by the agreement between the USSR and the United States on a limitation of undergrounds testing above a certain threshold. Together with the agreements signed by the two countries limiting strategic armaments and preventing nuclear war, it represents a considerable advance in the implementation of the obligations stemming from the non-proliferation Treaty which relate to the halting of the arms race and the elimination of the threat of a nuclear war. This agreement is also important in another way: first, it limits the possibility of creating and developing more powerful forms of nuclear weaponry and, secondly, it provides for a system of control based on national resources.
At the present time the international community is encountering two difficulties, the roots of which lie in the reluctance of a number of militarily and economically important States—primarily two nuclear Powers—to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty. We should also stress the fact that so far there is reluctance to proceed to the total cessation of underground nuclear testing, and various kinds of unconvincing proposals are being put forward such as so-called on-site inspection.

In this regard our delegation would like to point out that the adoption of national means of control would make it possible to decrease or eliminate entirely the threshold. The socialist countries and primarily the Soviet Union, a powerful nuclear Power, have always been in favour, and still are, of the total cessation of all underground testing on the basis of national means of control. The history of the talks on disarmament has clearly demonstrated that measures of such significance as, for example, the cessation of nuclear testing, can only be successful if all the nuclear Powers take part in these measures. In this regard our delegation can only welcome the statement by the Government of one of the nuclear Powers that it intends to halt testing in the atmosphere. We hope that this intention will actually be realized. In the light of this we note the invidious role of another nuclear Power which is conducting nuclear tests in the atmosphere. And this invidious role it is continuing to play.

Among the questions of high priority in the field of disarmament we find the problem of the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. In spite of 50 years of effort, so far it has not been possible to achieve any substantial advances in the elimination of one of the basic weapons of mass destruction, namely, chemical weapons. As in other fields of disarmament, the absence of political will is, in our view, the reason for the tormentingly long process represented by the adoption of an international convention which would ban such weapons. The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has now been discussing this problem for many years. Conferences have been held within the framework of the Committee with the participation of experts from a number of countries. A great number of
working documents have been submitted throwing light on various aspects of the problem. The People's Republic of Bulgaria has taken an active part in all these discussions and has always striven for the Committee's success.

The socialist countries, in 1972, submitted a draft convention on the total prohibition of chemical weapons which was explained very thoroughly in a number of statements. The draft convention of the socialist countries is, in the view of a majority of non-aligned States members of the Committee, a good basis for producing a text which will be acceptable to all. However, in spite of the numerous resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and appeals from broad sectors of world public opinion, including some in the Western countries themselves, there has been no perceptible progress in talks on this problem.

This year the delegation of Japan submitted a draft convention which elaborates the provisions of the Japanese working document from the previous year. With regard to the fundamental purpose of the talks, the achievement of a comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, the question remains open as to the scope of the prohibition — and this is the very foundation, the very underlying basis of the problem. There is provision in the draft for the possibility of temporary exceptions from the ban on chemical weapons. However, the question still remains open about what should be the criteria for determining these exceptions.

The results of the Conference, in which this year, too experts participated, have shown the flaws in the approach proposed by the Western countries — that is to say, to go ever deeper into the technical aspects of the problem. Profound and comprehensive study of the problem of chemical weapons, both within the framework of the Committee on Disarmament and elsewhere, entitles us to advocate an immediate solution to the problem. The many years of work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament give us grounds for believing that in the early future agreement will be achieved with regard to producing a convention on chemical weapons.
In this regard, our delegation notes with satisfaction the agreement by the Soviet Union and the United States to consider the question of a joint initiative in the Committee on Disarmament with regard to the conclusion, as a first step, of an international convention which would deal with the most dangerous and deadly means of chemical warfare. We also welcome the agreement between the two countries as to their intention to promote progress towards the achievement of an effective international agreement which would exclude all chemical weapons from the arsenals of States.

Notwithstanding the efforts to produce a new important international document on chemical weapons, the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria wishes to express its unreserved support for the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which is an important milestone on the road towards ridding mankind of chemical warfare. On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of this important international agreement, many delegations have appealed to the countries that have not yet signed this international document to accede to it as soon as possible. We fully support this appeal. And this applies equally to the appeal to those countries which have not so far ratified the Convention on bacteriological weapons.

In considering the problems which constitute the content of disarmament and ways and means of solving these problems, the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria once again would like to stress that the attainment of genuine progress in this high priority field of international relations is possible only if the important military States and all nuclear Powers take part in these efforts. This, and not any other conditions put forward by the opponents of disarmament, who are well known to all, is really the alpha and omega of disarmament. The struggle for disarmament, at the same time, is the business of all peoples and of all countries of the world. That is why the People's Republic of Bulgaria, in so far as it is able, is doing everything in its power to achieve progress on specific problems of disarmament which is the very basis for the realization of complete and genuine disarmament, and would be a guarantee of lasting peace on earth.
As a member State of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, the People's Republic of Bulgaria would like to welcome the expansion of its membership and take the opportunity to congratulate the new members of the Committee: the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Peru, Zaire and Iran. We express our conviction that they will make a new important contribution to the fruitful work of this very important international forum in the field of disarmament.
Mr. PETRIC (Yugoslavia): Although we have witnessed some positive achievements of détente, new crisis situations and conflicts jeopardizing the already unstable international relations have occurred in the course of the past year. The development of international relations has clearly shown that peace and security in the world cannot be assured by the might of arms or, in particular, by the so-called balance of weapons of mass destruction.

In our time, rapid scientific and technological progress is leading to the manufacture and constant sophistication of weapons, in the first place of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, endangering the security and the very existence of all peoples and countries. Such weapons have been developed that their destructive power actually brings into question their practical value, because no military advantages gained through the use of those weapons could compensate and justify the tremendous devastation and the risk of general annihilation. Unfortunately, the arms race with these means of mass destruction continues unabated.

Never in the history of mankind have weapons harboured such dangers and temptations as is the case today while, on the other hand, parallel to the growing awareness of those dangers and to the general belief that such weapons cannot and must not be used, the nuclear arms race continues to absorb ever greater human and material resources. This contradiction is all the greater since the accumulation of arms by nuclear-weapon States does not, in reality, strengthen their own security while it has, moreover, a negative impact on the general state of international security. The fact that no nuclear war has broken out so far cannot justify the development of new generations of nuclear weapons and cannot diminish the potential and real dangers and risks inherent in nuclear weapons.

The only solution is to be sought through the implementation of measures conducive to general and complete disarmament in the conditions of a just and lasting solution of outstanding international problems and the strengthening of peaceful and active coexistence among all countries. It is becoming ever more urgent and necessary to conclude new agreements in the field of disarmament, and in that of nuclear disarmament in particular, because without disarmament measures that will keep pace with the progress attained in the political sphere, the
further positive development of international relations taken as a whole will
be limited and could even be impaired.

Existing crises and unsolved problems in the Middle East, in the
Mediterranean, in South-East Asia and in other regions of the world have
resulted in an acceleration of the arms race, accumulation of weapons in various
regions and in certain countries in particular, as well as large concentrations
of naval forces equipped with the most sophisticated weapons.

These developments are becoming even more acute both in view of the various
demands for the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones and in connexion
with urgent problems that endanger the human environment.

The world is faced with grave economic problems and we feel that considerable
resources could be saved through the cessation or limitation of the arms race and
the reduction of military budgets and could be used for extending urgent and
long-term assistance to the developing countries. That is the reason why Yugoslavia
gave its support to the proposal of the Soviet Union for the reduction of
military budgets and the creation of a fund for providing assistance to
developing countries.

Without underestimating the importance of negotiations and agreements
between the two great Powers on the limitation of the arms race, we consider
that the United Nations cannot reconcile itself simply to awaiting the results
of such negotiations. If we accept the irrefutable fact that peace is
indivisible and that every Member State of our Organization has its share of
responsibility and rights in the building of peace and security in the world,
then we cannot fail to note that negotiations concerning the most important
and substantive disarmament issues are conducted outside the United Nations
or without its participation. Therefore it is the legitimate right of
all countries to participate in the efforts towards disarmament. We feel that, in
this situation, the earliest possible convening of a world disarmament conference --
an idea that was initiated and is constantly supported by the non-aligned
countries -- is of vital interest to the international community. We believe
that the said conference could provide a powerful incentive for fresh efforts
and create conditions for achieving practical results in the field of
disarmament, and in the field of nuclear disarmament in particular. The Ad Hoc Committee has exerted great efforts in order to clear the way for the holding of a world disarmament conference. We think that the Ad Hoc Committee should continue and intensify its work with a view to bringing us closer to the convening of the World Disarmament Conference by the United Nations.

The signing, in 1963, of the Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and under Water, that is, of the first important agreement in the sphere of the control of armaments after the Second World War, quite rightly raised hopes that it would soon become possible to conclude a treaty on the complete prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests. Now, 11 years after the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty, we can only note that those expectations have not been fulfilled. Nuclear weapon tests continue to be carried out in all environments; their frequency is not diminishing, while the nuclear arms race is assuming ever more dangerous forms.

The continuation of nuclear-weapon tests has had, in many respects, a negative impact on the general development of international relations. It has also brought into question the effectiveness of certain international agreements whose basic purpose was to help to prevent the intensification of the nuclear arms race, in the first place the effectiveness of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The continuation of nuclear weapon tests undermines the very basis of that Treaty, considerably reduces its importance and poses a challenge with regard to the duration of its validity. The vast majority of countries that have acceded to it have not done so in order to legalize and perpetuate the monopoly of nuclear Powers, but have acted in the profound belief that they were making thereby an effective and important contribution towards the discontinuance of the nuclear arms race and the prohibition of the use, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. They also rightly expected an increased use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially for the accelerated development of developing countries.

Together with other non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia has always strongly supported the effective prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests in all environments. We continue to believe that this is a question of the highest priority.
With the approach of the review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the questions raised by that Treaty and the premises on which it was founded have become a subject of primary interest on the part not only of the signatory States, but also of a large number of other members of the international community.

In this connexion, we wish to support the Secretary-General's opinion regarding the necessity of international consideration of the question of peaceful nuclear explosions in all its aspects.

In spite of the serious shortcomings of the Treaty to which Yugoslavia has repeatedly drawn attention, particularly at the time of its ratification, the objectives of the Treaty have met with the approval and support of a large number of members of the international community.
Without entering into a deeper analysis of the results achieved in the course of the five years since the entry into force of the Treaty, it seems that we should be particularly concerned over the developing of new generations of nuclear weapons, the improving of existing ones, the perfecting of the means for delivering them, the constant accumulation and spread of the most up-to-date nuclear weapons over the vast ocean spaces and under the sea, the arming of ever lower-level military units with nuclear weapons, the increased training of military personnel in the handling of nuclear weapons -- these are only some examples of actions which are causing concern. The cessation of these activities and the withdrawal of all troops and weapons from foreign territories and international waters are necessary prerequisites for strengthening the non-proliferation Treaty, reasserting its principles and ensuring its duration.

In our opinion, one of the most significant weaknesses of the Treaty is the absence of a satisfactory solution of the problem of security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States. The minimum requirement to ensure the broadest acceptance of the Treaty would, in our view, be an obligation undertaken by nuclear-weapon States that they will not, under any circumstances, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States which do not possess them. In this context, we also feel that one should take into consideration the possibility and need for convening a new conference of non-nuclear-weapon States.

A comprehensive test ban constitutes, in our view, one of the most urgent and important measures required for strengthening the NPT. The prohibition of these tests would have the effect of considerably limiting the nuclear arms race and the development of nuclear weapons, and would provide a convincing proof of readiness to proceed along the road leading to the elimination of the nuclear threat.

Under existing circumstances and conditions, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can represent an important step within the context of so-called collateral measures of nuclear disarmament. The Yugoslav Government has always supported initiatives aimed at the creation of such zones,
convinced that they can usefully contribute to limiting the arms race and creating favourable political conditions in the various geographical regions of the world. In this respect, Yugoslavia has also been guided by the positions adopted by numerous conferences of the non-aligned countries.

Proceeding from such a position of principle on those zones, the Yugoslav Government welcomes wholeheartedly the conclusion of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, appraising it as an important step towards the consolidation of peace and security in the region of Latin America. We also welcome the efforts to implement the General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

My Government is studying carefully the present initiatives concerning the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, proceeding from a position of principle which is based on two essential premises. The first premise concerns the right of countries themselves to take decisions on the establishment of such zones. The second premise proceeds from the reality of the present nuclear situation which differs essentially from the one prevailing, say, 10, 15 or more years ago. The nuclear might of countries possessing these weapons has grown considerably in the meantime, and in particular their nuclear presence in various parts of the world has increased. As a result, today the question of the value of the zones is of a different character. Precisely for this reason, and with a view to ensuring that the zones fulfil their basic function, the nuclear Powers should commit themselves to withdrawing all their nuclear weapons from the vicinity of the zones and to refraining from the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons against States belonging to such zones.

Having in mind the great complexity of problems arising in various forms in connexion with the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we welcome the timely proposal by Finland that the Secretary-General should organize a study of all the aspects of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Contemporary nuclear science and technology should be increasingly used for peaceful purposes. An ever-growing number of developing countries are able and ready to adopt technical and technological solutions in the sphere of nuclear energy, a sphere of considerable interest to countries that
do not possess large reserves of conventional raw materials and energy. However, in spite of certain successes achieved in this field by the International Atomic Energy Agency, we are convinced that the Agency could make an even greater contribution; if it does not, we can expect that many countries will endeavour to solve this problem alone or in co-operation with others.

The proposal of the Soviet Union concerning the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well-being and health is, in our opinion, a very useful one, as it draws attention to the necessity of solving a very complex and topical problem involving the security of the human environment. Therefore, it seems natural to us that the international community in its entirety should participate in solving these problems.

As regards chemical weapons, our position is known. Together with a number of other non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia was one of the sponsors of the resolution on this subject adopted by the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We continue to support the effective prohibition and destruction of all chemical weapons.

Those are some of the important problems to which my delegation wanted to draw attention at this stage of our deliberations. We hope that, with the necessary political goodwill and mutual cooperation, it will be possible to adopt adequate resolutions that will meet with the widest possible support of the Assembly.

Mr. PLAJA (Italy): The record of the international situation in 1974, while registering limited progress in the field of détente, does not offer substantial achievements in terms of disarmament. This is a matter of concern for Italy, which has always placed the greatest hopes in negotiating processes designed to reduce international tensions through the limitation of armaments and the achievement of effective measures of disarmament. Today, my country sees one more reason for urging progress in disarmament: the threat of a world economic crisis emphasizes the interdependence of States and points up the importance of the possibility of diverting to investments and economic development part of the economic resources used for armaments.
These considerations strengthen my country's attachment to the fundamental objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Partial measures and measures divorced from a global vision of the problem of disarmament, however valid and worthy of pursuit, are insufficient to solve the problems the world is facing. Consequently, as we consider the negotiations in progress, whether they deal with genuine disarmament or with the limitation of armaments, it is to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament that we should continue to refer.

It is very true that détente in the world presupposes détente among the major military Powers. This is why the dialogue between those Powers cannot fail to interest the other members of the international community which share with them a direct and vital interest in the creation of conditions of greater security and in the strengthening of peace.

In this context, Italy has followed closely the resumption of talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic weapons. My Government expressed at the time its satisfaction at the SALT agreements concluded in 1972. We should have liked to be able to express this year a similar satisfaction at subsequent achievements in this field. The results so far attained and of which we are aware do not allow us to do so, but we are still anxious to see the successful continuation of the dialogue between the two countries. We hope that, besides new specific understandings on strategic arms limitation pursuant to the 1972 agreements, such a dialogue will produce additional measures of effective disarmament which should be linked to the broader objective of an organic programme and will thus contribute to the strengthening of world security.

Indeed, the discontinuance of the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and the achievement of nuclear disarmament are both indispensable for reinforcing and reaffirming the régime of non-proliferation.

In recent times, international attention has been concentrated with increasing intensity and deep anxiety on the vital problem of safeguarding mankind against the added risks of the further dissemination of nuclear weapons.
The debate that has taken place so far in our Committee is an eloquent demonstration of how deeply the international community is concerned over the problem of nuclear proliferation. We all have been deeply impressed by the awesome picture given to the Committee by Senator Symington, the representative of the United States, when he referred to the threats that nuclear proliferation poses to mankind.

The nuclear arms race, the addition of new members to the nuclear club, as well as the increasing availability of nuclear materials and the continuing dissemination of nuclear technology without the assurance of adequate safeguards, constitute further major obstacles that stand in the way of the full attainment of the objectives of the non-proliferation Treaty.

In particular, recent developments and the approach of the review conference on the non-proliferation Treaty have stimulated an increased awareness of the risks involved in nuclear explosions, since even those explosions that are intended in good faith for peaceful purposes appear, in the present state of technology, objectively indistinguishable in nature from those planned for nuclear-weapon purposes. To eliminate the risk of nuclear proliferation, peaceful nuclear explosions -- a technology that in the future may prove beneficial to mankind -- must be subject, within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to the most rigorous and incisive system of international control and verification that is possible. Such a system should also ensure that benefits from peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to all States that desire to obtain them. The serious energy crisis affecting the whole world makes it all the more necessary for every State to pursue the legitimate aim of gaining access to all sources of energy, including access, without limitations, to the benefits of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In the broader context of peaceful nuclear research, the achievement of a solid and widespread system of international verification based on the control of fissile materials, of the use of nuclear plants and of the exchange of nuclear technology, would open new horizons and more specific prospects of international nuclear co-operation for peaceful purposes. It would also encourage a broader and more positive contribution in this respect from countries with
a high level of technological and industrial development. Of course, the active participation and co-operation of all countries and, primarily, of all nuclear Powers, is required to this end.

Finally, the right approach in finding appropriate solutions to the problem of nuclear proliferation, by creating a favourable international atmosphere, would also act as a powerful stimulus to all the negotiations under way for the reduction of armaments and the achievement of disarmament.

The Italian Government, while confirming its adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty, believes that the forthcoming review conference must provide the opportunity for reconciling some aspects of the Treaty with new international realities, with a view to ensuring the universality of accession which is the essential condition for its success. In particular, while the basic understandings of article VI of the Treaty must be reaffirmed and reinforced, the analysis conducted at the review conference should concentrate on the ways and means of facilitating safe access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, guaranteeing non-discrimination among States in this field.

I would now like to comment on the activities of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.

First of all, my country is gratified at the forthcoming participation in the work of the Conference of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Iran, Peru and Zaire. New ideas will certainly contribute to a more constructive evolution of the Geneva negotiations. At the same time, I cannot fail to stress that Italy has always advocated, and continues to consider as a fundamental condition for the complete success of such negotiations, the presence in CCD of all the nuclear military Powers.

It is disappointing to have to acknowledge that this year too CCD, despite its strenuous and dedicated efforts, has been unable to produce concrete results. This shows, in our opinion, that real progress in disarmament negotiations requires a different general political context and a better climate of understanding in the world. Nevertheless, we have noted with satisfaction the efforts, made by certain delegations in particular, to remove the technical obstacles that constitute the main difficulties in certain fields of the disarmament negotiations. I refer, in particular, to the problems of banning chemical weapons and of reaching agreement on a comprehensive test ban.
With regard to chemical weapons, I should like to emphasize two positive elements which have emerged during this year's sessions of CCD: first, the submission by the Japanese delegation at Geneva of a draft treaty which to a large extent takes into account the views of the various delegations and proposes a compromise for the problem of prohibiting chemical weapons; and secondly, the valuable discussion held in July among the experts from the member countries of CCD, which enabled the participants to define more precisely two basic aspects, namely, the identification of the chemical warfare agents to be prohibited, and the systems of verification of the future convention.

In my Government's view, the idea of an agreement which, while recognizing the ultimate goal of a comprehensive ban, would prohibit in the initial phase only the most lethal chemical agents, is worthy of being pursued. Of course, such an agreement should also meet the two conditions we have long considered to be essential: on the one hand, the recognition of the principle that all stocks of chemical weapons now existing in the world should be destroyed, and, on the other, the institution of an adequate system of controls.
With regard to the ban on chemical weapons, Italy hopes that a positive
trend will also emerge in the relations between the great Powers. An American-
Soviet initiative following the joint communiqué issued at the Moscow summit
talks of last July would certainly facilitate the conclusion of the negotiations
for the achievement of an agreement which, without creating discriminatory
conditions for any State, will make it possible to reduce the risks arising
from the existing and ever-increasing stockpiles of chemical weapons.

With regard to the second issue I have mentioned -- namely, the achievement
of a comprehensive test ban -- my Government has taken note of the agreement
reached between the United States and the Soviet Union at the Moscow summit
talks of July 1974 and of the subsequent comments made on it during the last
sessions of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. It feels, however,
that more efforts are needed, since it believes it of vital importance to
achieve concrete progress on a complete prohibition of underground nuclear
tests, and in view of the Conference for the Revision of the Non-Proliferation
Treaty, to be held next year. Indeed, a complete ban on all forms of nuclear
experiment represents a main step along the road leading to nuclear disarmament
and to general and complete disarmament.

May I now turn briefly to the report contained in document A/9778 concerning
the proposal for the reduction of the military budgets of States members of the
Security Council.

My delegation was impressed by the scientific approach to the subject
matter adopted by the distinguished experts appointed by the Secretary-General.
Particularly in considering an item which our debate last year indicated to be
so controversial, the best way to try to make concrete progress is to start
from facts, figures and statistics. That is what the experts have done, and
they should be commended for their efforts to gather as many factual elements
as possible. But it appears from their report that factual evidence on
military expenditure is not easily available in relation to the budgets of all
major Powers. The experts had to rely mainly on unofficial sources, and it is
clear that the data available for certain countries are not comparable with those
made public by others. It is to be hoped that more detailed information will be provided by all Governments, particularly by those which have supported the specific initiative for the reduction of military budgets, in order to make it possible to complete a thorough technical and financial study of the whole matter. In this connexion, we consider with interest the proposal made in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by the Swedish delegation during the last session, concerning the openness of military budgets.

It is also to be noted that the experts have stressed that the reduction of military budgets should be assessed, first of all, from the viewpoint of the effective reduction of armaments and that, therefore, an across-the-board decrease of financial means earmarked for military purposes is only one of the possible means for reaching that goal, and not necessarily the most efficient one.

With regard to the proposed world disarmament conference, the support of my Government for the idea of convening such a conference has been once more concretely expressed through Italy's active participation in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. This support was not in words but in deeds, as we constructively co-operated to achieve as much progress as was possible under the current circumstances. We were gratified at the fact that some progress was made, even if it fell short of the expectations of some delegations.

We believe -- as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, the representative of Iran, Ambassador Hoveyda, has rightly pointed out -- that when the United Nations engages in so complex and important an endeavour, too much haste or pressure may have negative repercussions.

The Italian Government has constantly believed that an international forum, with the broadest possible participation of Members of the United Nations, if convened at an appropriate time and under certain conditions, could represent and provide an important contribution to the disarmament negotiations, with the view of achieving general and complete disarmament. Of course, owing to the variety and complexity of the problems to be dealt with, such a conference must be built on particularly solid foundations. In this context, Italy has always maintained that the convening of the conference must be preceded by adequate preparation, and that the participation
of all the countries principally concerned is a prerequisite for success. It is in fact obvious that without the active participation of all the nuclear Powers, which are essential participants in any effective dialogue on disarmament programmes, the conference would not meet the expectations that it would engender in world public opinion. Italy is ready to move forward for the convening of a world disarmament conference along these lines.

The report submitted by the Committee provides the General Assembly with a comprehensive summary of the views expressed during its intensive discussions, which constituted, in our opinion, an important step forward in the search for the prerequisite which I indicated to be essential in order to proceed to the subsequent phase, that of convening the conference itself.

While awaiting further developments in the process leading to general and complete disarmament, Italy takes a positive view of other initiatives put forward at our present session for the solution of sectoral and regional problems.

First, my delegation has taken note with interest of the new Soviet proposal for a draft convention prohibiting action that would influence the environment and climate for military purposes. This seems to us to be a timely and interesting initiative. We are ready to participate constructively in the future careful study which such a complex and technical matter undoubtedly deserves. In this respect, my delegation believes that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament would represent the ideal forum where all different ideas in respect of the subject matter could be brought together in order to facilitate eventual agreement on the effective measures to be taken.

Secondly, I wish to refer to the proposals for the establishment of denuclearized zones in the Middle East and southern Asia. They too seem to us interesting and worthy of careful consideration. Naturally, the establishment of such zones should be based on certain political and geographical assumptions which Italy considers valid for all instances of regional denuclearization. Without wishing to go into any specific detail at this stage of our deliberations, I will just limit myself to stressing that, in our opinion, a realistic approach requires that the denuclearization
of a specific region should be freely acceptable to all States concerned, without upsetting delicate military balances and existing security arrangements. And, of course, one of the first elements to be considered in the study of proposals aiming at the denuclearization of a region would be the precise geographic definition of such a region.

Those are the general considerations my delegation wished to put forward at this stage, reserving the right to intervene later on some of the specific items inscribed in our agenda.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to the draft resolution which has been distributed as addendum 1 to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/9629). This draft resolution concerns item 31 of our agenda, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace".

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.