

(Mr. Sutowardoyo, Indonesia)

But then, if I act accordingly and take a position which leads to acceptance of, or resignation to, what would amount to inaction on most of what to my delegation and many other delegations, notably of the Group of 21, constitute high priority items on our agenda, I will have trouble with my conscience, because it would imply recognizing that the overwhelming majority of the world's population behind the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the various General Assembly resolutions which guide our work had been wrong.

"So here I feel I must sound a warning against "rationalism", or "excessive rationalism" if you like, by which I mean the attitude of taking what is rational -- or, more correctly stated, given man's limited faculty, what may appear to be rational at any given time, including the present, for instance -- as the ultimate truth and of dismissing anything else as being not worthy of further consideration.

Perhaps I can make myself clear by citing this piece of ancient wisdom from my country. One single thing, for instance, something that we do which may be disturbing to other people, may draw different reactions from different people even though the message they want to get across to us is actually the same. A man of instruction may come to us and tell us that what we are doing is wrong. He may even tell us the reason why it is wrong. A less educated man may just call on us to stop what we are doing. Another man of still less instruction will probably get angry and heap abuse on us.

The reactions of the three different people are different, but what all of them want of us is the same. It is up to us how to respond. A wise man, according to the ancient teaching, will not return the third man's anger, will not ignore the second, or fail to give heed to the first. Irrespective of how the case is presented to him, on the substance of the issue, he will respond in the same manner. He will do what is reasonably expected of him, that is, stop what he is doing.

So much for this piece of Oriental wisdom. The point I want to make is that lack of sufficient knowledge and or experience on the part of some of our members on some subject matters should not be a valid reason for some other members to hold up discussions or to prevent negotiations altogether on that particular subject.

In my delegation's view, contrary to what has been alluded to in this Chamber, the process of learning, if it ever comes to that, can take place at the same time as the process of discussion and negotiation. This view, of course, predicates a readiness to acquire the necessary knowledge in order to be able to take part in the processes if not intelligently then at least reasonably, and certainly with the best of intentions to be constructive. Another point, a corollary to what I have tried to explain, is that one should keep an open mind. One must always be ready to try to see other people's viewpoints, to recognize any merit one may find in their arguments and to change one's own point of view accordingly whenever subsequent events or a new development in human comprehension prove the other party's view to be the correct one.

An open mind, realism and idealism are necessary requisites for fruitful discussion. In the light of the present state of our deliberations, and disarmament negotiations in general, I should say that a heavy dose of idealism is what is particularly needed at present. I am still realistic enough not to expect that everybody could be induced to behave in consonance with the spirit of one other piece of Oriental wisdom which says that truth can be arrived at through the performance of deeds involving self-sacrifice.

However, in this connection, I cannot help being reminded of the slogan much employed by peace demonstrators for many years exhorting that "peace be given a chance",