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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 24 October 1985, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. DE PINIÉS

(Spain)

- Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations [39]
(continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America

Mr. Zhao Ziyang, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

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The Right Honourable Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Right Honourable David Lange, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand

Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Mr. Roland Dumas, Minister for External Relations and Special Envoy of the President of the French Republic

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

COMMEMORATION OF THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Ronald Reagan.

Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, was escorted to the rostrum.

President REAGAN: Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, honoured guests and distinguished delegates, thank you for the honour of permitting me to speak on this anniversary of the United Nations.

Forty years ago, the world awoke daring to believe hatred's unyielding grip had finally been broken, daring to believe the torch of peace would be protected in liberty's firm grasp.

Forty years ago, the world yearned to dream again innocent dreams, to believe in ideals with innocent trust. Dreams of trust are worthy, but in these 40 years too many dreams have been shattered, too many promises have been broken, too many lives have been lost. The painful truth is that the use of violence to take, to exercise and to preserve power remains a persistent reality in much of the world.

The vision of the United Nations Charter - to spare succeeding generations this scourge of war - remains real. It still stirs our souls and warms our hearts. But it also demands of us a realism that is rock-hard, clear-eyed, steady and sure, a realism that understands the nations of the United Nations are not united.

I come before you this morning preoccupied with peace, with ensuring that the differences between some of us not be permitted to degenerate into open conflict. And I come offering for my own country a new commitment, a fresh start.

(President Reagan)

On this United Nations anniversary, we acknowledge the Organization's successes: the decisive action during the Korean war; negotiation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; strong support for decolonization; and the laudable achievements by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Nor must we close our eyes to this Organization's disappointments: its failure to deal with real security issues; the total inversion of morality in the infamous Zionism-is-racism resolution; the politicization of too many agencies; the misuse of too many resources.

The United Nations is a political institution, and politics requires compromise. We recognize that. But let us remember from those first days one guiding star was supposed to light our path towards the United Nations vision of peace and progress: the star of freedom.

What kind of people will we be 40 years from today? May we answer: free people, worthy of freedom and firm in the conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few, but the universal right of all God's children.

This is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights set forth in 1948, and this is the affirming flame the United States has held high to a watching world. We champion freedom not only because it is practical and beneficial, but because it is morally right and just.

Free people, whose Governments rest on the consent of the governed, do not wage war on their neighbours. Free people, blessed by economic opportunity and protected by laws that respect the dignity of the individual, are not driven towards the domination of others.

We readily acknowledge that the United States is far from perfect. Yet we have endeavoured earnestly to carry out our responsibilities to the Charter these past 40 years, and we take national pride in our contributions to peace.

(President Reagan)

We take pride in 40 years of helping avert a new world war and pride in our alliances that protect and preserve us and our friends from aggression. We take pride in the Camp David agreements and our efforts for peace in the Middle East rooted in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); in supporting Pakistan, target of outside intimidation; in assisting El Salvador's struggle to carry forward its democratic revolution; in answering the appeal of our Caribbean friends in Grenada; in seeing Grenada's representative here today, voting the will of his own people. And we take pride in our proposals to reduce the weapons of war.

We submit this history as evidence of our sincerity of purpose. But today it is more important to speak here about what my country proposes to do in these closing years of the twentieth century to bring about a safer, a more peaceful, a more civilized world.

Let us begin with candour, with words that rest on plain and simple facts: the differences between America and the Soviet Union are deep and abiding.

The United States is a democratic nation. Here the people rule. We build no walls to keep them in, nor organize any system of police to keep them mute. We occupy no country. The only land abroad we occupy is beneath the graves where our heroes rest. What is called the West is a voluntary association of free nations, all of which fiercely value their independence and their sovereignty. And as deeply as we cherish our beliefs, we do not seek to compel others to share them.

When we enjoy these vast freedoms, as we do, it is difficult for us to understand the restrictions of dictatorships which seek to control each institution and every facet of people's lives, the expression of their beliefs, their movements and their contacts with the outside world. It is difficult for us to understand the ideological premise that force is an acceptable way to expand a political system.

(President Reagan)

We Americans do not accept that any Government has the right to command and order the lives of its people, that any nation has an historic right to use force to export its ideology. This belief regarding the nature of man and the limitations of government is at the core of our deep and abiding differences with the Soviet Union, differences that put us into natural conflict, and competition, with one another.

Now, we would welcome enthusiastically a true competition of ideas, welcome a competition of economic strength and scientific and artistic creativity, and, yes, welcome a competition for the good will of the world's people. But we cannot accommodate ourselves to the use of force and subversion to consolidate and expand the reach of totalitarianism.

When Mr. Gorbachev and I meet in Geneva next month, I look to a fresh start in the relationship between our two nations. We can and should meet in the spirit that we can deal with our differences peacefully, and that is what we expect.

The only way to resolve differences is to understand them. We must have candid and complete discussions of where dangers exist and where peace is being disrupted. Make no mistake: our policy of open and vigorous competition rests on a realistic view of the world. And therefore, at Geneva we must review the reasons for the current level of mistrust.

For example, in 1972 the international community negotiated in good faith a ban on biological and toxin weapons. In 1975 we negotiated the Helsinki accords on human rights and freedoms. And during the decade just past the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated several agreements on strategic weapons. And yet we feel it will be necessary at Geneva to discuss with the Soviet Union what we believe are violations of a number of the provisions of all of these agreements. Indeed, this is why it is important that we have this opportunity to air our differences through face-to-face meetings, to let frank talk substitute for anger and tension.

(President Reagan)

The United States has never sought treaties merely to paper over differences. We continue to believe that a nuclear war is one that cannot be won and must never be fought. That is why we have sought for nearly 10 years, still seek and will discuss in Geneva radical, equitable, verifiable reductions in these vast arsenals of offensive nuclear weapons.

At the beginning of the latest round of the ongoing negotiations in Geneva the Soviet Union presented a specific proposal involving numerical values. We are studying the Soviet counter-proposal carefully. I believe that within their proposal there are seeds which we should nurture, and in the coming weeks we will seek to establish a genuine process of give-and-take.

The United States is also seeking to discuss with the Soviet Union in Geneva the vital relationship between offensive and defensive systems, including the possibility of moving towards a more stable and secure world in which defences play a growing role.

The ballistic missile is the most awesome, threatening and destructive weapon in the history of man. Thus, I welcome the interest of the new Soviet leadership in the reduction of offensive strategic forces. Ultimately, we must remove this menace, once and for all, from the face of the Earth. Until that day, the United States seeks to escape the prison of mutual terror by research and testing that could in time enable us to neutralize the threat of these ballistic missiles and ultimately render them obsolete.

How is Moscow threatened if the capitals of other nations are protected? We do not ask that the Soviet leaders, whose country has suffered so much from war, leave their people defenceless against foreign attack. Why, then, do they insist that we remain undefended? Who is threatened if Western research - and Soviet research, that is itself well advanced - should develop a non-nuclear system which would threaten not human beings but only ballistic missiles?

(President Reagan)

Surely the world will sleep more secure when these missiles have been rendered useless, militarily and politically, when the sword of Damocles that has hung over our planet for too many decades is lifted by Western and Russian scientists working to shield their citizens and one day shut down space as an avenue for weapons of mass destruction.

If we are destined by history to compete militarily to keep the peace, then let us compete in systems that defend our societies rather than weapons which can destroy us both and much of God's creation along with us.

Some 18 years ago the then Premier Aleksei Kosygin was asked about a moratorium on the development of an anti-missile defence system. The official Soviet news agency, TASS, reported that he replied with these words:

"I believe that defensive systems, which prevent attack, are not the cause of the arms race, but constitute a factor preventing the death of people ... Maybe an anti-missile system is more expensive than an offensive system, but it is designed not to kill people but to preserve human lives."

Preserving lives: no peace is more fundamental than that. Great obstacles lie ahead, but they should not deter us. Peace is God's commandment. Peace is the holy shadow cast by men treading the path of virtue.

But, just as we all know what peace is, we certainly know what peace is not.

Peace based on repression cannot be true peace and is secure only when individuals are free to direct their own governments.

Peace based on partition cannot be true peace. Put simply, nothing can justify the continuing and permanent division of the European continent. Walls of partition and distrust must give way to greater communication for an open world. Before leaving for Geneva I shall make new proposals to achieve this goal.

(President Reagan)

Peace based on mutual fear cannot be true peace, because staking our future on a precarious balance of terror is not good enough. The world needs a balance of safety.

Finally, peace based on averting our eyes from trouble cannot be true peace. The consequences of conflict are every bit as tragic when the destruction is contained within one country.

Real peace is what we seek, and that is why today the United States is presenting an initiative that addresses what will be a central issue in Geneva - the issue of regional conflicts in Africa, Asia and Central America.

Our own position is clear. As the oldest nation of the New World, as the first anti-colonial Power, the United States rejoiced when decolonization gave birth to so many new nations after the Second World War. We have always supported the right of the people of each nation to define their own destiny. We have given \$300 billion since 1945 to help people of other countries. And we have tried to help friendly Governments defend against aggression, subversion and terror.

We have noted with great interest similar expressions of peaceful intent by leaders of the Soviet Union. I am not here to challenge the good faith of what they say, but is it not important for us to weigh the record as well?

In Afghanistan, there are 118,000 Soviet troops prosecuting war against the Afghan people.

In Cambodia, 140,000 Soviet-backed Vietnamese soldiers wage a war of occupation.

In Ethiopia, 1,700 Soviet advisers are involved in military planning and support operations, along with 2,500 Cuban combat troops.

In Angola, 1,200 Soviet military advisers are involved in planning and supervising combat operations, along with 35,000 Cuban troops.

(President Reagan)

In Nicaragua, there are some 8,000 Soviet-bloc and Cuban personnel, including about 3,500 military and secret-police personnel.

All of these conflicts - some of which have been under way for a decade - originate in local disputes but they share a common characteristic: they are the consequence of an ideology imposed from without, dividing nations and creating régimes that are, almost from the day they take power, at war with their own people. And in each case Marxism-Leninism's war with the people becomes war with their neighbours.

These wars are exacting a staggering human toll and threaten to spill across national boundaries and trigger dangerous confrontations. Where is it more appropriate than right here at the United Nations to call attention to Article 2 of our Charter, which instructs Members to refrain "from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State"?

During the past decade these wars played a large role in building suspicions and tensions in my country over the purpose of Soviet policy. This gives us an extra reason to address them seriously today.

Last year I proposed from this rostrum that the United States and the Soviet Union hold discussions on some of these issues, and we have done so. But I believe these problems need more than talk. For that reason, we are proposing, and are fully committed to support, a regional peace process that seeks progress on three levels.

First, we believe the starting point must be a process of negotiation among the warring parties in each country I have mentioned - which, in the case of Afghanistan, includes the Soviet Union. The form of these talks may and should vary, but negotiations and an improvement of internal political conditions are essential to achieving an end to violence, the withdrawal of foreign troops and national reconciliation.

(President Reagan)

There is a second level: once negotiations take hold and the parties directly involved are making real progress, representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union should sit down together. It is not for us to impose any solution in this separate set of talks. Such solutions would not last. But the issue we should address is how best to support the ongoing talks among the warring parties. In some cases it might well be appropriate to consider guarantees for any agreements already reached. But in every case the primary task is to promote this goal: verified elimination of the foreign military presence and restraint on the flow of outside arms.

(President Reagan)

Finally, if these first two steps are successful, we could move on to the third - welcoming each country back into the world economy so its citizens can share in the dynamic growth that other developing countries - countries that are at peace - enjoy. Despite past differences with these régimes, the United States would respond generously to their democratic reconciliation with their own people, their respect for human rights and their return to the family of free nations.

Of course, until such time as these negotiations result in definitive progress, America's support for struggling democratic resistance forces must not and shall not cease.

This plan is bold. It is realistic. It is not a substitute for existing peace-making efforts; it complements them. We are not trying to solve every conflict in every region of the globe, and we recognize that each conflict has its own character. Naturally, other regional problems will require different approaches. But we believe that the recurrent pattern of conflict that we see in these five cases ought to be broken as soon as possible.

We must begin somewhere, so let us begin where there is great need and great hope. This will be a clear step forward to help people choose their future more freely. Moreover, this is an extraordinary opportunity for the Soviet side to make a contribution to regional peace which, in turn, can promote future dialogue and negotiations on other critical issues.

With hard work and imagination there is no limit to what, working together, our nations can achieve. Gaining a peaceful resolution of these conflicts will open whole new vistas of peace and progress: the discovery that the promise of the future lies, not in measures of military defence or the control of weapons, but in the expansion of individual freedom and human rights.

(President Reagan)

Only when the human spirit can worship, create and build, only when people are given a personal stake in determining their own destiny and benefiting from their own risks, do societies become prosperous, progressive, dynamic and free.

We need only open our eyes to the economic evidence all around us. Nations that deny their people opportunity - in eastern Europe, Indo-China, southern Africa and Latin America - without exception are dropping further behind in the race for the future.

But where we see enlightened leaders who understand that economic freedom and personal incentive are keys to development, we see economies striding forward: Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, India, Botswana and China. These are among the current and emerging success stories because they have the courage to give economic incentives a chance.

Let us all heed the simple eloquence in Andrei Sakharov's Nobel Peace Prize message:

"International trust, mutual understanding, disarmament and international security are inconceivable without an open society with freedom of information, freedom of conscience, the right to publish and the right to travel and choose the country in which one wishes to live."

At the core, this is an eternal truth. Freedom works. That is the promise of the Open World and awaits only our collective grasp. Forty years ago hope came alive again for a world that hungered for hope. I believe fervently that hope is still alive.

The United States has spoken with candour and conviction today, but that does not lessen these strong feelings held by every American. It is in the nature of Americans to hate war and its destructiveness. We would rather wage our struggle to rebuild and renew, not to tear down. We would rather fight against hunger,

(President Reagan)

disease and catastrophe. We would rather engage our adversaries in the battle of ideals and ideas for the future.

These principles emerge from the innate openness and good character of our people and from our long struggle and sacrifice for our liberties and the liberties of others. Americans always yearn for peace. They have a passion for life. They carry in their hearts a deep capacity for reconciliation.

Last year at this General Assembly I indicated there was every reason for the United States and the Soviet Union to shorten the distance between us. In Geneva - the first meeting between our Heads of Government in more than six years - Mr. Gorbachev and I will have that opportunity.

So yes - let us go to Geneva with both sides committed to dialogue. Let both sides go committed to a world with fewer nuclear weapons and, some day, with none. Let both sides go committed to walk together on a safer path into the twenty-first century and to lay the foundation for enduring peace.

It is time indeed to do more than just talk of a better world. It is time to act. And we will act when nations cease to impose their ways upon others. And we will act when they realize that for whom the achievement of freedom has come dear, will do what we must to preserve it from assault.

America is committed to the world because so much of the world is inside America. After all, only a few miles from this very room is our Statue of Liberty, past which life began anew for millions, where the peoples from nearly every country in this hall joined to build these United States.

The blood of each nation courses through the American vein and feeds the spirit that compels us to involve ourselves in the fate of this good Earth. It is the same spirit that warms our heart in concern to help ease the desperate hunger that grips proud people on the African continent.

(President Reagan)

It is the internationalist spirit that came together last month when our neighbour, Mexico, was struck suddenly by an earthquake. Even as the Mexican nation moved vigorously into action there were heart-warming offers by other nations offering to help and glimpses of people working together without concern for national self-interest or gain. And if there was any meaning to salvage out of that tragedy, it was found one day in a huge mound of rubble that was once the Juarez Hospital in Mexico City.

A week after that terrible event and as another day of despair unfolded, a team of workers heard a faint sound coming from somewhere, from the heart of the crushed concrete and twisted steel. Hoping beyond hope, they quickly burrowed towards it. And as the late afternoon light faded, and racing against time, they found what they had heard, and the first of three baby girls, newborn infants, emerged to the safety of the rescue team.

And let me tell you the scene through the eyes of one who was there:

"Everyone was so quiet when they lowered that little baby down in a basket covered with blankets. The baby didn't make a sound either. But the minute they put her in the Red Cross ambulance everybody just got up and cheered."

Well, amidst all that hopelessness and debris came a timely - and timeless - lesson for us all. We witnessed the miracle of life.

It is on this that I believe our nations can make a renewed commitment. The miracle of life is given by One greater than ourselves. But once given, each life is ours to nurture and preserve, to foster - not only for today's world but for a better one to come.

There is no purpose more noble than for us to sustain and celebrate life in a turbulent world. That is what we must do now. We have no higher duty, no greater cause as humans. Life - and the preservation of freedom to live it in dignity - is what we are on this Earth to do.

(President Reagan)

Everything we work to achieve must seek that end so that some day our prime ministers, our premiers, our presidents and our general secretaries will talk not of war and peace, but only of peace. We have had 40 years to begin. Let us not waste one more moment to give back to the world all that we can in return for this miracle of life.

Thank you all. God bless you.

Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Mr. Zhao Ziyang.

Mr. Zhao Ziyang, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. ZHAO Ziyang (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Forty years have passed since the birth of the United Nations. In world history it is rare for a political international organization to have such enduring vitality as that of the United Nations, whose universality and importance grow with the passage of time. Despite twists and turns and its present weaknesses, the United Nations is irreplaceable in the historical mission it shoulders and the impact it exerts on the world. Today,, we may say that the world needs the presence of the United Nations as much as the United Nations needs the support of the world. We are holding this session to celebrate its birthday for the very aim of reaffirming the purposes of the United Nations and strengthening its functions, in the hope that it will better play its due role.

It is the common aspiration of mankind to build a world of peace and security, prosperity and development, and equality and co-operation. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations are the very reflection of this aspiration. All peace-loving countries and peoples have made unremitting efforts and the United Nations has done a great deal of work under complicated and difficult conditions in order to realize these lofty objectives.

Over the past four decades, tremendous changes have taken place in the world, but they fall far short of our expected goals. Though no new world war has broken out, regional hot wars and the East-West cold war have been on and off. The colonial system has disintegrated, but there have been repeated encroachments upon others' sovereignty, and armed conquests. All countries, big or small, should be

(Mr. Zhao Ziyang, China)

treated as equals; yet power remains operative in international relations. Though the system of apartheid has been universally condemned, the perverse acts by the South Africa authorities have been intensified. While the wealth created by mankind has multiplied, there is a widening gap of wealth between the North and the South. The arms race has swallowed up an enormous amount of wealth and resources, whereas millions upon millions of men, women and children in some developing countries are suffering from starvation and diseases and struggling for their very existence. In a word, our present world is still fraught with contradictions, confrontations, turbulence and conflicts. There are many factors of insecurity and causes for anxiety.

(Mr. Zhao Ziyang, China)

The decision of the United Nations to take "United Nations for a better world" as the theme of the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of its founding accords with the aspiration and desire of the people of all countries, irrespective of colour. There are bound to be different explanations as to what kind of world can be regarded as a better world. According to the purposes in the United Nations Charter, a better world cannot be built without peace and development, and it calls for equality and co-operation among nations. These are its fundamental requirements.

The Charter of the United Nations has made it clear in its very first sentence:

"We the peoples of the United Nations

determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind ..."

Regrettably, however, the four post-war decades have been years of East-West confrontation and spiralling escalation of the arms race. The international situation remains turbulent and the danger of war lingers on.

In order to safeguard international security and prevent war, the East and the West should remove confrontation, ease the atmosphere and develop their relations. All countries, whether different or similar in social system, should coexist peacefully. Every country should recognize the right of the people of any other country to choose their social system as they think fit. No country should harm the security of any other country on the excuse of safeguarding its own. In international relations, no country should resort to the threat or use of force as a means of pushing its own policies. International disputes which are likely to lead to conflicts constitute a hidden danger to world peace and are sources of turbulence. The parties concerned should seek just and reasonable solutions by negotiations or other peaceful means. As an Organization for maintaining world

(Mr. Zhao Ziyang, China)

peace and safeguarding international security, the United Nations ought to play an active role in this respect.

At present, all the peace-loving countries and peoples are faced with a common task, namely, to check the arms race. We are opposed to the arms race, be it conventional, nuclear, on ground or in outer space. Neither "deterrent force" nor "balance of terror" can ensure peace. On the contrary, they are bound to give rise to spiralling intensification of the arms race. There is every reason to ask the two super-Powers that possess the largest nuclear arsenals to take the lead in drastically reducing their nuclear armaments so as to create the necessary conditions for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. Like many other countries, China is paying close attention to the forthcoming summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is hoped that, in conformity with the demands of the people of the world, they will really abandon their attempt to seek military superiority and reach an agreement through negotiations which is conducive to world peace and, furthermore, translate it into action.

A fundamental change has taken place in the pattern of post-war international relations owing to the rise of the third world and the development of the Non-Aligned Movement. The days when a few big Powers could dominate the world are gone once and for all. The peace forces have outgrown the factors making for war. So long as all the peace-loving countries and peoples unite and work together, world peace can be maintained and a new world war averted.

(Mr. Zhao Ziyang, China)

Another important problem and major historical challenge facing mankind is whether or not common development and prosperity can be attained throughout the world, just like whether or not another world war can be averted. As a result of the heavy burden left over from the prolonged colonial rule and of the existing inequitable international economic order, most developing countries have yet to lift themselves from poverty and backwardness. Revitalizing the economy of the developing countries and tapping the potentials in these vast areas with three quarters of the world's population will contribute significantly to the growth and prosperity of the world economy as a whole. This not only requires arduous efforts on the part of the developing countries vigorously to develop their national economies and actively strengthen South-South co-operation, but also calls for the restructuring of the international economic order and the promotion of North-South dialogue and co-operation. In spite of the exploratory efforts made at the Cancun Conference four years ago, no global North-South dialogue has been launched up to now, and no significant change has taken place in the current North-South relations. The United Nations should address this important question seriously and take effective measures in regard to finance, money, trade, debt and assistance so as to promote better North-South relations. This will be most helpful to the economic growth of both the North and South and to the maintenance of world peace. We hope that more developed countries will join the developing countries in making their due contributions to this end.

Equal rights of nations, large and small, constitute the fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter as well as the cornerstone of the United Nations. These equal rights should not be interpreted merely as the right to speak and to vote in the United Nations. They should include the right of every nation to the inviolability of its sovereignty and independence, and to non-interference in its

(Mr. Shao Ziyang, China)

internal affairs. In this regard, the present state of the world is not satisfactory. There are still attempts to impose one's will on small States in disregard of their rights. What is worse, acts of invading and occupying others' territories and trampling upon their sovereignty have not yet ceased. The universality and efficacy of the United Nations lie in the equality of all its Members. Only when the weak are free from bullying by the strong and the small nations are respected by the big Powers can the United Nations play its full role and world peace and stability be maintained.

As one of the founding Members of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, China is well aware of its responsibilities and obligations. We have always abided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, supported its activities in maintaining world peace and promoting international co-operation and stood for the strengthening of its functions and status in world affairs. China is a developing socialist country belonging to the third world. We have always supported the people of all countries in their just struggles to maintain peace and safeguard their sovereignty and independence and to oppose imperialism, colonialism, hegemonism and racism. We will, as always, make unremitting efforts for the just cause of peace, development, equality and international co-operation.

China loves peace and needs peace. It is essential for it to have an international environment of durable peace and stability in which to eradicate its prolonged backwardness and turn it into a modernized socialist country with Chinese characteristics where there will be prosperity for all.

(Mr. Zhao Ziyang, China)

Pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, China considers itself in duty bound to oppose hegemonism and safeguard world peace. China hopes to live in harmony with its neighbours and all other countries, and wishes to see peaceful coexistence among all countries. China's initiative in cutting the size of its military force by one million has once again demonstrated its firm stand against the arms race. China does not set up military bases or station troops abroad, nor does it seek hegemony or interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. It steadfastly pursues a policy of opening to the outside world and engages in reciprocal and mutually beneficial economic and technological exchanges with countries in the North and the South, the East and the West in the interest of common progress. China will always remain a reliable friend and partner to all countries that work for world peace and promote international economic growth.

The United Nations has traversed a long course but it is still faced with arduous tasks. All the Member States and the peoples of all countries must continue their tremendous efforts to build a better world of peace, development, equality and co-operation. Let us work together in compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter to attain this lofty goal.

Mr. Zhao Ziyang, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. GANDHI (India): On this fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, I bring all those gathered here greetings from the people of India and from the Non-Aligned Movement.

The United Nations was founded to prevent war: to enlarge the scope of freedom - freedom from oppression and freedom from want. Many national liberation movements would not have succeeded without the moral and political support of the United Nations. This has made the United Nations increasingly representative and universal.

But vestiges of colonialism persist. Namibia remains enslaved. Twenty-five years have passed since the United Nations Declaration on freedom for colonies, and seven since the Security Council unanimously spelt out the steps for Namibia's independence. Seven years of deprivation. Seven years of death. The world awaits an independent Namibia.

Let us, from here, send a message of solidarity to the freedom fighters of Namibia and South Africa. As the world enters the third millennium, the Pretoria régime refuses to learn the lessons of the second - that all people are equal. The people of India have a special bond with the people of South Africa. It was South Africa that enabled Mahatma Gandhi to fashion his strategy of mass defiance of lawless laws. I am reminded of some lines of Leo Tolstoy, who had deeply influenced Mahatma Gandhi:

"I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means - except by getting off his back".

When will apartheid get off the black man's back? Every pressure must be applied. India has never wavered. Only comprehensive mandatory sanctions will work.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

There can be no peace in West Asia till the Palestinians secure their legitimate right to a State of their own in their homeland. A conference on the Middle East was proposed. Should it not be held? No code of international behaviour restrains Israel from waging its war on the people of Palestine.

Terrorism has become a major challenge of our time. It has assumed new forms. Violent groups use modern communications and the media to dramatize their demands. Their contempt for human life borders on barbarism. Violent acts by individuals or groups are indefensible enough. No less reprehensible is violence by States or by official agencies. Such unilateral acts can only spell anarchy for the international order.

Man has throughout searched for order. It was sought in the tribe, in the clan and in the nation-state. Civilization has meant the progressive evolution of norms for interaction between individuals, societies and nations. The League of Nations was an expression of mankind's yearning for peace and order among nations. As we know, it failed, but that very failure showed that world security and peace-keeping needed a new vision.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

The United Nations was born amid hope and fear, hope that the holocaust of the Second World War would never be repeated, and fear that human wisdom and ingenuity might fail to control the atom. Gradually some sort of world order began to take shape. Much has been achieved: freedom and equality from colonialism and racism, an early consensus on development, the beginnings of a viable financial and monetary system, structures of international co-operation, collective striving for disarmament. But, from our point of view, there are also several negative aspects. Does it behove the powerful to put a brake even on the slow progress towards evolution of an order? How will it profit them to abort the hope and the faith that the United Nations system symbolizes? These disturbing trends have vitiated the dialogue between nations. Today, the post-Second-World-War international order, never very strong, shows wide cracks. Let us attend to them.

The United Nations functions in a divided world, a world marked by nuclear confrontation, by economic disparities, by seemingly unbridgeable distrust. The biggest threat to mankind is posed by the division of the world into rival military blocs. It is a negation of the philosophical vision of the United Nations Charter whose essence is peaceful coexistence.

Mercifully, the nuclear blocs have not gone to war. But the arms race continues unrelentingly. New space weapons are conceived as ultimate deterrents. Response times are shrinking dangerously. Control of weaponry is becoming more complex. Action and reaction are being removed from the realm of human decision. The button threatens to press itself. The world moves helplessly towards nuclear catastrophe.

The military blocs must understand that stability cannot be achieved through superiority or even balance of weapons; it can come only through coexistence and disarmament. Without disarmament the danger of annihilation will persist.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

Six nations, from five continents, which included the developed and the developing, the non-aligned and the aligned, met in New Delhi early this year and put forward a practical programme of disarmament. The Delhi Declaration calls for an immediate halt to the testing, development and production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. It urges that this first step must be followed by substantial reductions in nuclear stocks, leading eventually to the elimination of these fearsome weapons of mass destruction. An overwhelming majority of the Member States of the United Nations and public opinion throughout the world, including in the nuclear-weapon States, have supported this appeal.

No chance for peace should be lost. All of us have a collective interest in the preservation of the planet. Constructive disarmament proposals must be earnestly examined. The Gorbachev-Reagan summit assumes special importance. The world hopes that they will not let this opportunity pass and that the meeting will be the start of a purposeful dialogue and of a process of pulling back from the brink.

Just as the peace of the world is threatened by nuclear war, so its prosperity is threatened by an economic crisis of unprecedented gravity. The developing countries see the harshest face of this crisis. India has been fortunate in being able to maintain, and even accelerate, its rate of economic growth. But most developing countries are hit. Africa has taken the heaviest blows. Latin American countries suffer under a burden of debt made unbearable by actions beyond their control. The affluent too are affected by the crisis. They continue to be locked into low growth and high unemployment. Hopes of early recovery are fast receding.

How has this state of affairs come to pass? Why does the international community lack the will and the vision to tackle global problems on a global and co-operative basis? Why does the stalemate continue in every important

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

multinational forum? The consensus on development which was painstakingly built in the decades after the Second World War has broken down today. It is fitting that we use this session to make a start on repairing the damage. The consensus must be rebuilt.

While experts painfully hammer out agreements, in many parts of the world hunger stalks hundreds of thousands. We must unite to save them.

We in the Non-Aligned Movement are believers in coexistence. But international order and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. Freedom and racism cannot coexist. Science and poverty cannot coexist.

In this the fortieth, commemorative year of the United Nations, should we meekly accept the fact of the world's divisions, dangers and injustices? Let us rededicate ourselves to peace. Let us resolve to fight against the shame of starvation in a world of plenty. Let us denounce the crime of racism in an age of equality and human dignity. Let us cure the world of the insanity of nuclear militarism. Let man's creative genius be enlisted on behalf of enrichment, not destruction.

Friends, let us launch a crusade for peace, freedom and equality.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mrs. Margaret Thatcher.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mrs. THATCHER (United Kingdom): On this celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, I should like to start with the words of someone who was present at its creation, Winston Churchill. In his Fulton speech in 1946 he said:

"We must make sure that the United Nations work is fruitful, that it is a reality and not a sham, that it is a force for action, and not merely a frothing of words, that it is a true temple of peace in which the shields of many nations can some day be hung, and not merely a cockpit in the Tower of Babel".

And so I shall address my remarks today to the work of the United Nations.

The United Nations work has been fruitful over those 40 years. It has acted as a court of world opinion, and now no Government can afford to neglect or ignore its views. The Security Council has given us a forum for managing both the unexpected crisis and the stubborn problem. The General Assembly provides a setting where the voice of any Member country, however small, can be heard. In the Secretary-General we have an impartial and skilled negotiator in whom we have total confidence and trust.

The United Nations has also shown that it is a force for action. It can help to keep the peace in three vital ways: first, by setting the stage for negotiation, as it did with the famous resolution 242 (1967) on the Middle East; secondly, by acting as the catalyst which persuades those in dispute to prefer negotiation to confrontation; and thirdly, by pursuing its peace-keeping role. Had it not been for the blue helmets and blue berets of the United Nations - guided by a great British servant of the United Nations, Brian Urquhart - local conflicts would have spread, and the toll of death and the flood of homeless would have been even greater.

(Mrs. Thatcher, United Kingdom)

But there are those who refuse to make their fair financial contribution to these vital peace-keeping operations. I believe they are failing in their duty to the United Nations, to mankind and to peace. I think it is about time they felt guilty that they leave others to bear an unfair share of the burden.

I pay tribute to those specialized agencies, which have concentrated on their appointed task: for instance, eliminating disease, caring for the needs of children, feeding and sheltering refugees. They, and the men and women who serve them, deserve all our thanks.

In these ways the United Nations has shown that it is a reality, not a sham; it is a force for action, not a mere frothing of words; it is a temple of peace, not just a Tower of Babel. For all its dangers, our world is safer and more orderly, thanks to the United Nations.

It would be easy on this anniversary simply to praise and to express support. But if we really mind about the United Nations - and I am one of those who do - then we must make it more effective by recognizing its shortcomings and putting them right. We have to admit to many disappointments.

True, as so many speakers have said, we have been spared the ultimate horror of another world war. But that is little consolation to the many millions of people who have been killed, maimed or made homeless in over 140 lesser conflicts.

We still cannot say that basic human rights - freedom of speech and opinion, freedom from arbitrary arrest, freedom from torture - are observed across the world. The problem is not a lack of rules and standards - they are all there in the United Nations Charter and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The problem is that some Governments blatantly disregard these standards because human rights have no place in their political system.

(Mrs. Thatcher, United Kingdom)

And, may I say, resolutions of the United Nations have not always been objective. Some have been guilty of double standards. Judgement has been passed on countries, not on the merits of the case, but because it was easy to find a majority against them. Other countries which have deserved censure have been protected through sheer political expediency. South Africa is properly condemned for its degrading refusal of basic human rights to black people. Yet where are the resolutions on the treatment of Soviet Jewry?

Nor has the United Nations yet shown the capacity to deal effectively with terrorism. The terrorist is callously prepared to kill, cripple and wound to get his own way. He speaks the language of human rights even as he extinguishes them by his deeds.

At the United Nations we have spoken out against terrorism often enough. Yet there are countries represented among us which harbour and train terrorists; and others who seem ready to support terrorism in preference to peaceful negotiation. This is an utter betrayal of our Charter.

Order and an effective rule of law are just as important between nations as they are to justice within nations. But a. s, in 40 years, although we have created a corpus of public international law, we have not been able to make it effective and enforceable. As that great classical historian, Thucydides, remarked many centuries ago:

"The strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must."

In some nations justice is still a remote ideal. If the majority in the United Nations wants to influence the Government of a particular Member, it must offer not rhetoric and abuse but encouragement when steps are taken in the right direction. I refer in particular to South Africa, where there is a sense that the time for change has come. Provided that negotiations are accompanied by a

(Mrs. Thatcher, United Kingdom)

suspension of violence by all sides, I believe that there is a chance of progress, progress which will allow all the people of South Africa, of whatever colour or creed, to play their rightful part in the government of their country in conditions of prosperity and peace.

What are the reasons for the disappointments and shortcomings of the United Nations?

Why do we hear cynical assertions that the United Nations has ceased to be relevant; that all it does is pass resolutions; that disputes brought before it are prolonged, not resolved; that collective action by such a disparate body of nations will of necessity always be weak and ineffective? I think the answer is twofold. Wishful thinking has led some people to believe that the United Nations was intended to be a kind of World Government. It may be a kind of Parliament of the world but it is not and never can be a Government of the world. Its structure limits what it can do.

Secondly, when we ask about shortcomings we should start by looking at ourselves. The United Nations is only a mirror held up to our own uneven, untidy and divided world. If we do not like what we see there is no point in cursing the mirror, we had better start by reforming ourselves.

Our task after 40 years is to rediscover both the hope and the resolve that characterized the founding of the United Nations.

First we must recognize that in most circumstances the power of international organizations in today's world is the power of persuasion, not coercion. The United Nations cannot and shouldn't try to dictate detailed solutions to countries involved in disputes. Only the parties themselves can reach agreements, whether they be the Soviet Union and the United States, the Arabs and the Israelis, or white and black in South Africa.

(Mrs. Thatcher, United Kingdom)

We must also recognize that it is not enough to agree on words. We must live up to them. Nor should we take refuge in deliberate ambiguity, in finding "a form of words" because that is easier than finding a solution. No lasting solution will be achieved by saying one thing and meaning another, or by getting majority support for a resolution only because the words are capable of meaning different things to different nations.

We must decide what we mean. And say so.

(Mrs. Thatcher, United Kingdom)

As in our own nations, so with the United Nations, we have a duty to maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of the whole system and to get better value for the money we spend. The work of the agencies should not be side-tracked into political issues which are none of their business. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an example of this, which is one reason why we have given notice of our intention to withdraw. Political issues belong to this Assembly. Technical bodies are for technical issues.

We cannot do without the United Nations, but we can do a lot more with it. There are plenty of new areas where international action is required and where the United Nations can take a lead. We have taken action on a global scale to deal with the famine in Africa, action led by the nations which run free-enterprise economies. They are the ones able to provide food and help for the starving.

We must take more action to end the international drugs trade, that traffic in death which ruins so many young lives. We must try to stop the cultivation of plants from which these drugs are made. We must intercept the transport of them and catch and punish severely the criminals responsible for their sale. Governments - all Governments - must co-operate whole-heartedly in this task.

And I believe we must be more resolute in our action to deal with international terrorism. The murders of an American and a Soviet diplomat in the last month remind us that no country is immune. We should all recognize that, in dealing with terrorism, weakness never pays.

These are problems against which national efforts alone are not enough.

As the idealism and freshness which accompanied the birth of the United Nations were tested in the school of life, it was inevitable that we should suffer disappointments. But let us not lament what has gone wrong; let us learn from it.

(Mrs. Thatcher, United Kingdom)

It was once again Winston Churchill who expressed so well the positive approach we need, in his description of the journey of life:

"Let us be contented with what has happened to us and thankful for all we have been spared. Let us treasure our joys but not bewail our sorrows. The glory of light cannot exist without its shadows. Life is a whole, and good and ill must be accepted together."

Let us continue to work together until the United Nations is a true temple of peace in which the shields of many nations can be hung.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Lange.

Mr. David Lange, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. LANGE (New Zealand): We celebrate today, but under a heavy shadow. The nuclear arms race threatens us all. It in fact threatens the very survival of the human race. More than ever before, the nations of the world need to resolve their differences peacefully and to stop using force against each other. This is the day to renew our commitment to the United Nations Charter and pledge ourselves to carry out the obligations we accepted in signing that Charter.

Forty years on, there is now more questioning of the United Nations than ever before. What use is the United Nations? What can it do to help us or to save the world? Forty years ago my predecessor, Peter Fraser, who led the New Zealand delegation to the San Francisco Conference, expressed the fear that

"if this fleeting moment is not captured, the world will again relapse into another period of disillusionment, despair and doom."

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

I feel the chill of that fear today. The present wave of scepticism about the United Nations is distressing. I am just a shade older than the Organization. I have never experienced war or the threat of war. I hold that I am entitled to the view that the United Nations can claim responsibility for that state of affairs for me. The current scepticism makes me worry about what sort of hope we offer the young, or indeed what sort of concept of a world we are leaving for them. For I share Peter Fraser's view that in this body is

"perhaps the last opportunity that the nations of the earth will have of forming an organization to maintain peace and prevent aggression".

Those who criticize the United Nations sometimes concede that it has done some useful things in the economic and social field, such as wiping out diseases and saving the lives of millions of people threatened with starvation. The critics tend to give the credit for those achievements to the agencies directly involved: to the World Health Organization, to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to the World Food Programme. Those agencies certainly deserve credit, and they deserve support too, financial support. New Zealand, for its part, certainly supports the goal of immunizing all the young children of the world by 1990. What the critics do not always acknowledge is that most, if not all, of the agencies owe their very existence to the United Nations.

At San Francisco New Zealand proposed that the Economic and Social Council be given the status of a principal organ, along with the Security Council and the General Assembly. We are proud of that, because it is the Economic and Social Council that has launched the most successful United Nations programmes, including UNICEF and United Nations technical assistance programmes. It is also that Council, working with the General Assembly, that gives cohesion to the complex

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

system that has grown up around the United Nations, by constantly stressing the needs of developing countries.

Those needs are substantial, and they are growing. Per capita incomes in much of the developing world are falling. The debt burden is becoming intolerable. Stark poverty is the daily reality for countless human beings. And the international community has not been sufficiently responsive to all of that. Net flows of resources to developing countries as a whole have become negative. We can take some hope from the stirrings of new and constructive thinking emerging from the Seoul meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. I want to underline what Commonwealth leaders, meeting in the Bahamas, have just declared: that there is a pressing need to renew the consensus on international co-operation for development within the United Nations system and to revitalize the multilateral institutions.

As we take part in the sumptuous festivities associated with this celebration, we must pledge to broaden and strengthen that consensus, which is, for two thirds of humankind, no abstract resolution but potentially a matter of life and death.

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have played key parts where the United Nations is acknowledged to have achieved something - human rights. Here the United Nations has broken entirely new ground by setting standards for the behaviour of Governments towards their own citizens and establishing machinery for monitoring that behaviour. It cannot enforce the standards it has set. Human rights are still being abused in many places: torture is probably more prevalent than or as common today as it was a thousand years ago. The greatest outrage is the legalized and institutionalized racism known as apartheid. New Zealanders are striving to build a society based on racial equality and harmony. We have shown by our actions that we are ready to work with the international community to end apartheid and to uphold the standards set forth in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. These actions reflect the deeply felt and widely debated convictions of the great majority of New Zealand people.

The United Nations deserves great credit for what it has done, and is doing, in the field of human rights, as well as in that of economic and social co-operation. These are perhaps its most practical contributions to the betterment of ordinary people all around the world. We should not forget them. We should take pride in them. But, as Peter Fraser said at San Francisco, "the maintenance of peace is the paramount problem that confronts us". The question is, what has the United Nations achieved in this crucial area?

Critics point to all the wars that have been fought since 1945 and they ask, rhetorically: what did the United Nations do to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war? They seldom go on to ask: why has the United Nations been unable to prevent war? Yet the answer to that second question is as clear as the answer to the first. From the outset the great Powers have been unable to co-operate closely enough to make the Security Council work as it was intended to

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

do. My predecessor foresaw it all in 1945. He said: "The veto may be destructive not only to the main purpose of the international Organization but to the Organization itself". The Security Council performs some useful functions - notably as a body to which countries can appeal quickly when they are attacked. But the central problem is to stop the use of force by States, and especially by big Powers against small ones; and here it is the General Assembly that plays the key part.

Thanks to an amendment proposed by New Zealand at San Francisco, the General Assembly is free to discuss any problem at any time, even if the Security Council is already seized of it. Critics claim that the Assembly has abused that power, and they accuse it of applying double standards. But look at the record. In 1983 the Assembly considered three cases in which small countries had suffered armed invasion. One hundred and five Members voted for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea. One hundred and eight voted for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Grenada. One hundred and fifteen voted for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Where was the double standard? An unprejudiced observer might well conclude that the General Assembly had acted rather impartially, and had done as much as the Charter allowed to discourage the use of force by the strong against the weak. Whether that is enough depends upon the great Powers.

I speak for a small country. Dag Hammarskjold reminded us often that this is first of all the Organization of the small countries. Not just because we need it; not just because we have the numbers; but because we have a contribution to make. That contribution will be the greater if we bear in mind that regional or group solidarity pursued inflexibly can often be the enemy of effectiveness. Whether the issue is international security or international economic management, the small and the vulnerable have more in common with each other than with the big Powers. It requires both political will and political courage to set aside the calls of

(Mr. Lan-²⁰, New Zealand)

geography and ideology. A broad coalition in this Organisation of small countries crossing regional and other group lines not only makes sense; it is also the more persuasive in helping resolve conflicts.

In moving together, we the small countries must always seek to put effectiveness before posturing, to go for results rather than illusory victories. We will achieve real advance only by seeking lasting consent to agreed solutions; and to get that calls for the exercise of all of the arts of the weak and the vulnerable - the arts of negotiation, of mediation, of conciliation, of compromise. But we must never compromise on the fundamental principles of the Charter. These must be upheld by small and large without fear, for that Charter and those principles are the cornerstone of the rule of law among nations which small States must look to as a framework for their existence, for their continued survival and for their economic prosperity. Let us not forget that the Statute of the International Court is an integral part of the Charter and that each Member of the United Nations has pledged to comply with its decisions. I am concerned that in the long run we will not establish international peace and security until the rule of law is buttressed by widespread acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction. If there is one great step forward that we could all take to mark this anniversary, it would be to put some real commitment into compulsory dispute settlement.

I come back to the big Powers - and to our dependence on them to end the nuclear arms race. The United States and the Soviet Union have committed themselves to that goal; for that we are thankful. They are now preparing to discuss the problem at a summit meeting; we pray for its success; for the nuclear arms race threatens all of us - not just small countries like mine, but big ones as well, and the super-Powers themselves. New Zealanders are appalled at the implications of the compulsive technological competitiveness that drives the

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

nuclear Powers. We simply cannot understand how you can stop the arms race by piling up more and more sophisticated means of mass destruction. The United Nations does not have the power to stop the arms race, but it can make an important contribution - by reminding the nuclear Powers constantly of their responsibilities. With Australia, New Zealand will continue to press for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing as the most effective way to achieve the goal all countries are seeking.

The United Nations has not achieved all that was hoped for it in 1945; there is no denying that. It has not achieved all its goals, because some Members have not been willing to carry out their commitments. This is a moral problem, and not merely a mechanical one. The League of Nations failed because its members would not perform what they undertook to perform. If the United Nations ever failed, it would be for the same reason.

But the United Nations has not failed. The Charter is the foundation of the system of international law under which we have all lived for 40 years. Its key principles are the self-determination of peoples, the sovereign equality of States and the renunciation of the use of force. Sorely abused though they are, those principles are accepted by virtually all States, and they are still generally respected. Since 1945 more than a hundred countries formerly under colonial rule have become independent, including a number in the South Pacific.

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

That is a great achievement, for which the United Nations is usually given much of the credit. What is no less important is that the same 100-odd countries have withstood all the pressures on them and kept their independence to this day. For that, too, the United Nations surely deserves some credit. The Charter and the Organization that upholds it have given individual countries and peoples more freedom than they have ever had before, and that is no mean achievement.

Those who criticize the United Nations do not often talk about the alternative. They just imply that it would be a better and a safer world, at least for their own countries. To see what the world would actually be like without the United Nations we have to go back a long way, before the forming of the League of Nations - in fact, back as far as 1914. There was not much room for small countries in that world, and it did not end very peacefully, either. As that great American Franklin Roosevelt said just before he died, the founding of the United Nations

"spells - and it ought to spell - the end of the system of unilateral actions, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence and balances of power and all the other expedients which have been tried for centuries and which have always failed."

The United Nations has not fulfilled all the hopes placed in it. It cannot achieve all its goals unless and until all its Members want it to. It cannot stop the nuclear-arms race or the use of force unless and until the great Powers allow it to do so. But the United Nations does give the peoples of this earth more freedom than they ever had; it actively discourages the use of force by the large against the small; its Charter still offers the best hope of substituting the rule of law for the destruction of war.

(Mr. Lange, New Zealand)

New Zealand believes in this Organization. We are committed to it. We will stand by it. It can help forge a world characterized by peace, freedom and justice - a world, in fact, fit for the meek to inherit.

Mr. David Lange, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, upon whom I now call.

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like first of all to carry out an important mission and convey to the General Assembly the message from the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. The message reads:

"To the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to the participants in the commemorative session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations:

"I extend greetings to you and to all participants in the commemorative session of the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

"The United Nations owes its birth to the victory of the freedom-loving peoples over fascism and militarism. It is therefore quite logical that the opening lines of the United Nations Charter proclaim the determination of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

"The Charter of the United Nations, which took effect on 24 October 1945, the date that has come to be considered the Organization's birthday, has stood the test of time, and the Organization itself has emerged as a major factor in the system of international relations. Over the past 40 years mankind has succeeded in avoiding another world war, and the United Nations has made a contribution towards this.

"Yet today, more than ever before in all those years, it is necessary to state openly and emphatically that the main task formulated in the United Nations Charter has not yet been accomplished: a lasting, guaranteed peace has not become a reality. Today, as never before, joint efforts by nations and peoples are needed to save mankind from the threat of a nuclear catastrophe.

"In practical terms this requires above all ending the arms race on earth and preventing it in space.

"Renewed efforts are also needed to extinguish regional hotbeds of tension and to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism in all its manifestations.

"The United Nations also has many other urgent tasks before it: to facilitate, through real disarmament measures, the reallocation of resources for creative purposes, for eliminating backwardness and famine, disease and poverty. The same purposes should be served by restructuring international economic relations on a just and democratic basis and by ensuring genuine human rights and freedoms, above all the right to live in peace.

"We say all this in the firm belief that, even as we observe the fortieth anniversary of the Organization, the attention of its Member States should be focused on making the work of the United Nations even more efficient and productive.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

"The Soviet Union, as one of the founders of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, will continue as before to contribute in every way to the success of this world Organization in fulfilling its lofty mission on the basis of strict respect for its Charter.

"Mikhail Gorbachev."

Among the events in the calendar of international life, the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations is a special occasion. While once again bringing back the memory of the tragedy and the great victory of mankind, it makes us take a closer look at the world around us and give deeper thought to how we must act and what we must do to make this world safer and more just.

The establishment of our Organization brings to mind one folk custom: when a man starts to build a house, the whole community helps him. From the basement to the roof, the house is built with the joint efforts of men and women, the old and the young, who rightly believe that only such a house can be a home where peace and happiness will live forever. This custom exists in many countries, carrying a great humanistic meaning that proves a simple truth, namely, that there is a great deal more in life that unites people than divides them.

Four decades ago the world community had the wisdom and the strength to build a house of peace and universal security - the United Nations.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We are proud that the Soviet Union participated actively in laying its foundations, proud of the contribution that our State, together with other socialist and peace-loving countries, has been making to the achievement of the noble goals of the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations was built by people that had experienced the almost unbearable trials of the most brutal war in history. The present generation, to which that war also caused grief and suffering, has an obligation to hand over to its descendants a world free of the charge of universal self-destruction. This, as Mikhail Gorbachev has emphasized, is the overriding mission of the present generations.

This is precisely how the countries of the socialist community are acting in the international arena. This is evidenced by the statement adopted at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty held recently in Sofia.

It is only natural, on an anniversary day, to review some results of the work done in past years. What is the main result? The answer is simple and short: there has been no world war over that period. The United Nations, too, has made its contribution to this, as a world forum of States, a unique Organization that has become an indispensable part of contemporary international relations. Whatever may be said, sometimes not without justification, about shortcomings, failures and unfulfilled hopes, it is an indisputable fact that the prestige and reputation of the United Nations are high and universally recognized. A man is naught when alone, and that is true also of nations. In a world which is both united and divided, entire nations need support and protection. The United Nations is the place where they can hope to receive both.

No historic date is merely an occasion to look at the past, and the best way to observe the anniversary is to focus on unresolved problems. Let us direct our

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

collective attention to the problems which, regrettably, do not allow us to say that all the requirements and principles of the United Nations Charter are being implemented completely and everywhere.

The main problem, the problem of guaranteed peace for present and future generations, is still with us. Indeed, it stands out more sharply than ever before. Today, our planet is beset by troubles and anxieties, but the heaviest burden on mankind's shoulders is the arms race, which is inexorably bringing us closer to the edge of an abyss. It is our duty to stop and then to reverse it, to prevent it from spreading to space.

The Soviet Union has countered the concept of "star wars" with the concept of "star peace" and lasting peace on earth. Mikhail Gorbachev has recently laid out the Soviet programme of resolute steps aimed at curbing the arms race and improving the overall international situation.

The Soviet Union is proposing a world without weapons in space.

The Soviet Union is proposing a world in which nuclear arms would be radically reduced and then eliminated altogether.

The Soviet Union is proposing a world in which the Soviet Union and the United States would set an example for other nuclear Powers by stopping any nuclear explosions.

The Soviet Union is proposing a world in which the Soviet Union and the United States would renounce the development of new nuclear weapons, freeze their arsenals and ban and destroy anti-satellite systems.

We have proposed a far-reaching solution regarding medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe and have removed from operational duty some of our medium-range missiles in the European zone. If an appropriate agreement is reached, we shall not increase the number of such missiles in the Asian part of our country either, provided there is no substantial change in the strategic situation there.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We say that radical steps in the field of nuclear disarmament should be combined with a set of wide-ranging, concrete measures aimed at easing military tension and building confidence.

All this should be done under strict and reliable control. Where verification by national technical means may be inadequate to provide the necessary degree of confidence, we are ready to supplement it with additional, mutually agreed procedures. We state this very emphatically because there are those that would like to make world public opinion believe that the Soviet Union is against verification. This is being said by those that, while contemplating new technologically sophisticated types of weapons, are deliberately concealing the truth, that the more weapons there are in the world, the more difficult it is to carry out verification. This is being said by those that are developing new weapons designed from the outset to make verification more difficult. We ask them, in return: are you ready, as we are, to scrap hundreds of missiles and aircraft and thousands of nuclear charges? Say yes, and we shall certainly be able to agree on verification.

It is no less important to abide by the treaties already signed - or, to use the language of the United Nations Charter, to respect them - which means that it is inadmissible to interpret them in a unilateral and arbitrary manner. One cannot, for example, interpret the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems as permitting the development of a large-scale anti-ballistic missile system, and a space-based one at that. In this connection, I shall quote the full text of article V (1) of that Treaty:

"Each Party undertakes not to develop, test or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based."

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

What could be unclear about that? What is there to interpret?

We hope that the United States will adopt a position that will make it possible at the forthcoming Soviet-American summit meeting to reach an agreement in principle on the questions under discussion in the Geneva negotiations. There is no doubt that this would be the very best gift to all in the jubilee year of the United Nations. This is what people all over the world are eagerly waiting for.

Today, no one has the right simply to wait, not to take concrete steps. Each State and our Organization as a whole can and must contribute to ensuring a stable, durable peace, so as to open up for the peoples of the world bright prospects of life in the third millenium. As Mikhail Gorbachev has said:

"International developments have approached a line which cannot be crossed unless highly responsible decisions are taken aimed at setting a limit to the arms race and stopping the slide towards war. These decisions cannot be postponed without running the risk of losing control over the dangerous processes that threaten the very existence of mankind."

Yes, we have succeeded so far in saving the world from the scourge of a major war, which is in itself a great achievement. But can this alleviate the suffering caused to nations by so-called small wars? Indeed, the suffering these inflict upon peoples and countries is not small, but enormous. They bring them untold sorrow and throw them dozens of years back in social and economic development.

This can be seen in Viet Nam, where neither the people nor the environment have yet been able to recover from the consequences of the barbarous aggression with the use of napalm and chemical agents, which maimed the entire country. It can also be seen in the Middle East and in southern Africa, where Israeli and South African terror has become a harsh everyday reality for several generations. It can be seen in Afghanistan and Nicaragua, where the bullets of hired assassins - the dushmani and the contras - are killing thousands of people.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The right to security is a universal right. The Soviet Union does not dissociate its security from that of other States. We are resolutely in favour of ensuring peace for all nations, as required by the United Nations Charter. This underlies all our efforts aimed at preventing and stopping armed conflicts in various regions of the world and at reaching a just settlement of explosive situations. As the United Nations enters its fifth decade, it should, in our view, make this problem one of its first priorities.

Security has many dimensions. Aggression, State terrorism and demonstrations of force are just some of the sources of danger that threaten people - their freedom, their rights and human dignity. There is a direct link between a State's external militarism and its internal moral atmosphere. The cult of superiority and brute force, fomenting enmity and hatred towards other peoples, and organized crime inevitably result in trampling upon the social and economic rights of human beings and their personal security and freedom.

The belief in the rights and dignity of the human being can never take root in places where colour of skin and anthropological features predetermine a person's status in society and set limits to his aspirations, opportunities and material well-being. Racism in all its forms and manifestations, from outright apartheid to refined discrimination in some so-called democracies, is the most flagrant violation of human rights.

Again and again life teaches us that man does not see his own dignity apart from the dignity of his people. And when a people is humiliated, its small composite part, the individual, is humiliated too. There can be no justification for the fact that some peoples are deprived of their right to have a homeland, their native land which preserves their historic roots, and of their right to statehood and fundamental national institutions.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

There remain no blank spots on our globe. Instead, dark spots have appeared, the territories from which entire peoples have been driven by the force of arms and terror. A blemish on the conscience of mankind is the notion of a homeless nation. Until the Palestinian people are given a possibility to establish a State of their own, until the people of Namibia gain independence, the United Nations cannot escape the bitter feeling of an unfulfilled duty.

And as long as there exists in the United Nations the sad list of colonial and dependent Territories, as long as there are "corrals" for people in the form of reservations or bantustans of various kinds, a burden of guilt will weigh heavily upon the conscience of our Organization.

The destinies of human beings are being dramatically affected by the grave state of the world economy. Millions of people are wandering in search of work, falling into the category of the most underprivileged and ruthlessly exploited second-class citizens. The gap dividing the rich and the poor, people as well as countries, is growing wider and wider. Dozens of States have become debtors primarily because imperialism, at their expense, has been solving its own economic problems, defusing its economic crises and financing its military programmes. The neo-colonialist economic order, which was imposed upon those countries and is being persistently maintained, has inflicted enormous social losses on them and is depriving them of their political freedom.

It could be said that loans and debts are a matter for each State to deal with. But when the debt problem threatens to disrupt the entire world economic system, it must become a matter for thorough consideration by the United Nations, particularly since its Charter proclaims, as one of its fundamental purposes, the promotion of "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

I assume that I shall not be mistaken if I say that everyone present in this hall is asking himself what his country has brought to this forum. And as we come to this rostrum we are putting this question to ourselves: how clear is our conscience in the eyes of the international community and of our own countries?

Once again, the Soviet Union has come to this session not empty handed and with a clear conscience. The country and the people which suffered so much from war that even today, 40 years later, its wounds still hurt are proposing a large-scale programme of constructive and realistic measures which can minimize the risk of a global catastrophe. All our aspirations are oriented towards the future, but for the sake of that future the risk must be eliminated today. Time does not stand still, and, in the words of Albert Einstein, soon enough the future comes by itself.

The history of our Organization has endowed us with a priceless heritage we all share. It is the new reality which is reflected in the fact that today the tone in the United Nations is set not by a group of States but by the majority, whose will can no longer be subordinated to anyone's diktat. It is the collective wisdom that can guard us against unbalanced judgements, fatal mistakes and ill-considered decisions. It is the well-established institutions for communication among 159 States. And the mere fact that, being so different, so unlike one another, the States are none the less able to find - though not on every occasion - a common language and jointly formulate high moral criteria, is another tremendous asset for our Organization. Finally, it is the experience that has a generally positive impact on the process of solving the problems faced by the United Nations and the entire world.

That, for us, is a source of optimism, which mankind needs so much today, and the reason to believe in its sound judgement and its future.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on the Minister for External Relations and Special Envoy of the President of the French Republic, Mr. Roland Dumas.

Mr. DUMAS (France) (interpretation from French): "A better world". That was the mission assigned in San Francisco to the Charter of the Organization that has brought us together here. Peoples that had been exhausted by too many wars put their hope in reshaping relations among nations to bring about peace through co-operation. Forty years later, that hope still lives; it has spread and gained new strength. The expectations and aspirations that are turned to us today are no less great than they were then. Let us respond to them with enthusiasm and faith, each in his own place and with his own means.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

For France, yes, the commitment made 40 years ago is still worth keeping and always will be. For France, yes, the hope of seeing dialogue and co-operation forever replace the fury of arms lives on. Yes, France wishes to share with other nations a common will to build a common future for all mankind.

Our Organization emerged from the rubble of war. The victors at that time renewed the wager made in 1919. They chose the path of law and collective commitment to preserve peace for the future and increase the world's prosperity. But they wisely learned the lessons of history.

The League of Nations, paralysed almost from its birth, had had the virtue of opening up the way, of promoting principles and bringing people together. But its structural weakness was great, as amply illustrated by the tragic events that Europe, Africa and Asia experienced between the two wars, and the Great Depression that befell the world's economy. Let us remember those things during this fortieth anniversary.

Mindful of this experience, the "united nations" that assembled in San Francisco in 1945 adopted a Charter whose greatest merit was that it based the search for a new and peaceful world order on realistic commitments and mechanisms that took into account the real balance of the forces in the world and called for moderation and a spirit of responsibility from their partners in their joint efforts for collective security and prosperity. France remains committed to the spirit that inspired the architects in San Francisco. It believes that the foundations and structures of our edifice are solid and sound. Organizing peace, preventing war, working for the emancipation and organization of the great society of man, what can be more noble, but what more difficult? To ensure that negotiations prevail over force, exchange over exploitation, freedom over constraints, what can be more just, but what is more arduous?

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Peace first of all. Global peace may well have been preserved. A third world war has not broken out, but there have been and there still are many deadly local conflicts. Too often, the super-Powers, forgetting their promises and commitments, have followed their own strategies, deaf to the appeals of the weaker.

Naturally, France does not intend to deny the role of the balance of forces between those two Powers, which may constitute and has constituted a factor of stability. But it expects them to negotiate a reduction of their forces that will open the way to the process of nuclear disarmament which France could join when the right time comes. Until then, France will maintain the forces necessary for its security. The President of the Republic of France recently repeated this in the strongest terms in response to proposals that were put to him. For this reason, too, French forces cannot be taken into account in any negotiations which we approve of but in which we do not participate.

Nevertheless, the existence of rival blocs conceals serious dangers whenever one or the other fans the embers that are all too often waiting to burst into flames or when the field of the arms race expands. We cannot accept a state of affairs in which, because of East-West rivalry, new areas of tension are continually developing and fresh conflicts erupting among neighbouring States.

Too many regions in the world today are experiencing war, with its train of death and suffering, for our Organization to stand by in resignation, as if those things were inevitable, and to relax its efforts to bring about peace. In our view, the Security Council plays a decisive role in this respect. We must have the political will to reinforce its action. Thus we listened with the greatest interest to the statements by President Reagan that show an obvious willingness to engage in dialogue.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Far from being a mere onlooker, the United Nations must participate actively in the solution of regional conflicts. France is ready to help it. It has paid with the blood of its children the price of its participation in United Nations elements spread throughout the world in order to separate the combatants and promote the settlement of disputes.

My country wishes to pay a tribute to the tireless and resolute action of the Secretary-General, and to all those who, despite failures and setbacks, are persevering on the difficult path of dialogue and negotiation.

Fifty-one States participated in 1946 in the first General Assembly. Today 159 are represented. Those two figures show how far we have come.

The accession to independence by almost all of the countries of the third world has upset the rules of a game formerly reserved for a handful of nations. With these new States, the claim for a new world order, assuring a just place for everyone not only in exchanges but also in the settling of the affairs of the world, has taken on an entirely new dimension. The major conferences that followed that of Bandung affirmed the need for a greater commitment to all the goals set forth in the Charter, particularly in the area of development.

Let us in fact remember that for the vast majority of those represented here, development is the other name for peace. Yet each day poverty and despair take lives. The United Nations in its composition today reflects the powerful rise of a youth, most often deprived, that aspires to dignity and well-being. Let us organize the transition from one generation to the next.

Let us learn to listen to everything that this universality, the very foundation of the United Nations, bestows upon us. Let us recognize that there is room among us, besides the relations of force among the rich, for the expression of the suffering and difficulties of a new world that is emerging. France, with its

(Mr. Dumas, France)

European partners, is working to lay the foundations, especially through the Lomé agreements, for a more harmonious organization of the relations of interdependence that link all the countries of the world through the economy, capital, trade and know-how.

Third world indebtedness, as the General Assembly knows, has reached the limits of what was acceptable. Social turmoil is taking place, economies are collapsing and democracies are wavering. It is vital that everyone share this conviction: the fate of creditors and debtors is intimately linked, and a solution cannot be found without both sharing the burden. It is inconceivable that developing countries should have to face recession or stagnation as their only prospect for the next 15 or 20 years. The indebted countries must be helped, especially the poorest ones, and their courageous efforts to make adjustments must be shared so that they can strengthen the structures of their economies and create the bases for sustained and lasting development. The world's major financial institutions's should step up their aid. Public financing for the whole third world in Asia, Africa and Latin America is equally essential.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

In a word, there will be no lasting solution to the debt problem without a return to a sustained high rate of growth in the world economy and, therefore, without regulating raw materials markets, greater, without greater respect for the rules of international commerce, without reform of the international monetary system which would ensure greater stability for currencies and lastly, without greater access to advances in technology.

For us, the long-term settlement of all these questions can be achieved only through the establishment of a just and efficient economic and financial order, in which the United Nations has a prominent part to play in the future. Let us also avail ourselves of the economic and financial institutions set up after the Second World War in Washington and Geneva, which met the needs of the time and which have served us well. Let us recognize that they have to evolve and grow in order to meet today's realities.

The United Nations, and first and foremost its Secretary-General, has been able to muster the solidarity the international community owed to Africa in its distress. It is now incumbent upon it to meet the pressing needs of those who want not only to survive but also to grow and to hope.

Before concluding, I should like to recall that the cause which has brought us together, in spite of the diversity of our past and our economic and political systems, is the cause of man. The defence of the integrity and the dignity of the human person, regardless of colour, religion and ideas, remains in our view the most noble task of the United Nations. Let us strive never to forget it.

The aspirations of the founding fathers in San Francisco were indeed worthy. Even though events have not always met their expectations, their lofty goal remains our own. The Organization they bequeathed to us mirrors our world with its imperfections and its hopes; it is our task to convey the enthusiasm and political

(Mr. Dumas, France)

will it still inspires to the peoples of the world. It is the hope of France that the next stages in the life of our Organization will enable us to note a genuine reduction in international tension, progress towards freedom, the resumption and pursuit of sound and lasting growth, first and foremost for the poorest, and greater respect for the values and rights of the human person.

We will then undoubtedly be able to rejoice in having helped to build this "better world" for our own and future generations - this "better world" we have chosen as the theme of the anniversary we are celebrating today.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.