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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 1 October 1986, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh)
later: Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of the Republic of Colombia
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Maynard (Bahamas)
Mr. Al-Shara (Syrian Arab Republic)
Mr. Chnoupek (Czechoslovakia)
Mr. Obed Asamoah (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. VIRGILIO BARCO VARGAS, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President BARCO VARGAS (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, I wish to convey my greetings and congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Your vast experience and proven diplomat skill assure us that you will guide our deliberations with intelligence and even-handedness.

I also wish to thank and congratulate Ambassador Jaime de Piniés for his endeavours during the fortieth session of the General Assembly.

Similarly, I wish to express my support and admiration for the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, whose report to the Assembly reveals not only his thorough knowledge of international problems but also his faith in multilateral solutions based on the principles of the United Nations.

As the head of State of Colombia, I come here to reaffirm my country's confidence in the role of the United Nations in this disturbing period of history and to urge that the serious problems of our region be duly dealt with.

(President Barco Vargas)

My country contributed effectively to the founding of the United Nations and of the inter-American system. Our legal tradition gives us authority to offer our good offices whenever required and also our firm support for the aspirations and hopes of the international community and its representative organizations.

As I had occasion to state quite recently, at the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, we have faith in the principles of coexistence regulated by law. Hence our concern about the deterioration of peaceful coexistence in Central America, and hence our readiness to continue with our good offices in the Contadora Group. We are motivated by an undeniable commitment to peace and the desire to avoid a generalization of the conflict situation in that area of our continent.

The influence and the prestige of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries will increase only to the extent that it acts dynamically and independently, serving the interests of developing countries, and to the extent that it serves as a democratic and positive link between conflicting Powers. Only thus will it contribute to world détente, to arms control, to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and to the building of an international economic order based on justice and respect for the right of every people to choose freely its own future.

One of the factors having the greatest effect on the prospects for progress in our developing countries is foreign debt. The statistics are overwhelming. Many countries suffer mass unemployment, in some cases more than 15 per cent of the labour force, as well as a generalized trend to recession, which is showing few signs of abatement - all this added to a worrisome decrease in international trade.

(President Barco Vargas)

Yesterday, at the forty-first annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, I referred to the various aspects of the critical situation of indebtedness in several countries of our continent and to the prospects for overcoming the situation. I did the same in October 1985 in letters I addressed to Fidel Castro, President of Cuba, and Aldwin Clausen, President of the World Bank, with regards to the Assembly to be held in Seoul. I referred to the disquieting phenomenon of the flight of capital from Latin America, a region which, because of the problems of foreign debt has become a net exporter of capital and, in those letters, I analysed the adjustment programmes begun under the sponsorship of the IMF.

I also referred to the need to avoid any form of protectionism on the part of the industrialized countries and to provide preferential access to their markets for the commodities, manufactures and services of the developing countries. The specialized agencies of the international system and the United Nations have very clear responsibilities at this time. We must stop the flow of resources from developing to industrialized countries.

Similarly, with all due considerations, there should be plans for adjustment programmes and restructuring. The burden that this places on debtor countries should not be borne by the poorest classes of society, thus making an already explosive situation more difficult and untenable. In the case of Africa, even though its debt is moderate compared with that of Latin America, its economic capacity is extremely fragile and thus the situation is no less serious.

Terrorism and the drug traffic constitute crimes against mankind which put to the test the sturdiest defence mechanisms of our societies. In this forum we have heard condemnations of these crimes, and today, more than ever, when so many innocent lives have been lost in vandalistic attacks, we must denounce such crimes. On this occasion I join in the justified and outraged universal condemnation of these outbursts of barbarism.

(President Barco Vargas)

Colombia is fighting a head-on battle against the production of, trading in and consumption of narcotic drugs. In this heroic struggle magistrates, judges and government officials have died, among them a minister of justice; and members of the armed forces of the Republic, well-known journalists and ordinary men and women have also sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

Although we have paid an extremely high and painful price, I wish to state in this Assembly that my country will not waver in its struggle against such barbarous crimes. For this struggle to be successful it is essential that the countries with the highest levels of consumption of these degrading substances put into practice, as is finally being done, co-ordinated programmes to penalize and discourage the consumption of and trade in drugs of this type. Here, as well as in other fields of our joint battle against terrorism, it is imperative to have understanding and co-ordination among all civilized nations. Colombia is ready to participate in agreements and action along these lines.

The enormity of the sums of money States devote to developing new technologies of annihilation and to manufacturing instruments of death and destruction makes even the strongest spirits fearful. The resources used up in this endeavour could well be devoted to alleviating the sufferings of mankind and speeding its development and progress.

(President Barco Vargas)

Latin America, which seemed to be far removed from the risks of nuclear contamination, must now carefully examine what is happening elsewhere in the world, including the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and must exercise care in its own utilization of such energy.

Last year, the world reviewed with justified pride the achievements of the United Nations. There had been 40 years of maintaining world peace and striving towards development and international justice. More than 60 world leaders came here on the occasion of that anniversary celebration to renew their confidence in the Organization.

We must now look ahead. We are less than 14 years away from the third millenium of our era. War and peace, development, human rights, the rational use of outer space and of the oceans, all these are matters for which the United Nations provides a natural forum for international discussion and for the attainment of effective compromises, through negotiations, in order to move forward.

But side by side with those international problems, there are others, seemingly domestic, that call for the solidarity of the international community. I refer to the increasing disparity between those who share in the benefits of civilization and those who are inexorably shut off from them.

The poor, the victims of discrimination, the unemployed, peasants who cannot produce what they need, children who perish daily because of hunger and disease that could, without too much effort, be cured, refugees, South African blacks: those are injustices, those are inequalities that become more intolerable with each day on a planet which - and this is true - is able to overcome them.

Alone, a way out of such situations cannot be found; together, we can create a better world. Mankind, if it wishes to do so, can alleviate hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance. The means exist. The technology exists. However, resolve is lacking.

(President Barco Vargas)

If that were forthcoming, we would have a world Organization devoted to building a more just society, and that enhanced society would better serve the world Organization.

Hope must once again arise and inspire the actions of the international community. The Organization must adapt to the vision of the different world for which we hope, a world vastly different from the world of the founders at San Francisco. In order to do this, action is needed in at least four areas.

The United Nations must establish a limited list of priorities and promote and administer them with the best possible expertise and effectiveness.

The Secretary-General, who acts on behalf of the large, the medium-sized and the small States alike, must have the necessary instruments and support to carry out his delicate task to the full.

The peoples of the United Nations must have greater access to our deliberations and greater responsibility in programme implementation.

The financial costs of the Organization, once its purposes have been restated, must be more generously borne by all Members, including the poorest. That is the only way in which we can prove our commitment.

So far we have managed to avoid another world conflagration. The awareness of poverty and inequality must lead to their elimination with the same vigour with which we have repudiated war. This is the ideal of our time: to wage war against injustice and inequality. If we make up our minds to do so, it will take us less than 40 years, and we will have consolidated the peace.

Today, I would ask the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the total eradication of poverty. Among the many threats confronting our world, none has been as constant as poverty. The so-called progress made over the 41 years of the United Nations can be measured in terms of the number of people who continue to live in utter poverty. In recent years that number has grown significantly, and today it includes one fourth of mankind.

(President Barco Vargas)

No other problem requires swifter or more urgent action. I shall return to this point in greater detail later in my statement. When I assumed the presidency of the Republic of Colombia last August, I invited several Heads of State and representatives of friendly Governments present in my country to join in an all-out battle against utter poverty, which is the root cause of so many political, social and economic ills.

At that time, I voiced some ideas that I should like to repeat here today. I said:

"Extreme poverty cannot be accepted as the inevitable consequence of natural differences between men, nor can it be accepted as a characteristic of still-backward societies beset by want. I am convinced that for those who will in the future have the responsibility of governing, the major challenge will be to overcome the barrier poverty has set up before us."

The maintenance of harmony and the achievement of peace have a special significance in each country, one that can be identified only with the constant and determined search for social justice. Yesterday, before the Assembly of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, I stated that problems of the developing countries are not only extremely serious but that they have become even worse because of the weaknesses of the present international economic situation.

Here, before this Assembly, I do not wish to conceal the fact that in my own country, Colombia, despite efforts to achieve development and the wellbeing of the people, we are at present confronting a tragic reality with regard to poverty. Of the population of Colombia, 25% - in other words, 6.5 million people - are living in abject poverty. Overt unemployment and underemployment affect more than one third of the economically active population.

(President Barco Vargas)

Faced with that situation, my Government has taken urgent measures. It has sent to Congress bills to introduce prompt and effective reforms in the structures of the agrarian and urban economies. It has ordered immediate action in programmes for improving drinking water supplies, housing, health and nutrition, and it is preparing to implement an emergency employment plan aimed at drawing up a set of programmes and projects for the elimination of what is classified as abject poverty.

I appeal to the countries of Latin America, and to the whole world, as well as to international organizations, to take united action against this degrading social scourge, and to that end we hope we can continue to enjoy the support of the United Nations Development Programme.

I therefore wish to ask the Secretary-General to convene the responsible officials of all the relevant agencies of the United Nations system to establish the bases of a programme for immediate action against abject poverty, with the particular aim of submitting it to the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean. Such action would help create the impetus and the means to enable us to build a new society in our countries in which everyone can be sure of a minimum level of well-being.

The results will come about more quickly and will be more substantial if that action goes hand in hand with an emergency financing programme with the participation of the industrialized countries and the international agencies.

We know very well that the primary responsibility rests with each of our countries, and we have assumed that responsibility, calling for support and sacrifices from all social sectors, especially those at the higher income levels. But we are also aware that the situation we face makes it necessary to have the co-operation of the industrialized countries. This task is one of unknown dimensions and calls for united decision-making and efforts.

(President Barco Vargas)

Colombia offers to host a meeting of all the countries of the region, the industrialized countries and the developing countries which may wish to make proposals and exchange information about useful experience in the great battle of our civilization against abject poverty.

I ask you, Mr. President, and all representatives to accept the gratitude and commitment of a Colombian, a South American, who hopes to see the whole continent a beacon of peace, well-being and freedom for the human race.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MAYNARD (Bahamas): On behalf of the Government and people of a fellow Commonwealth nation, I have the honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-first session. The fact that our Governments are closely linked through several agreements makes it all the more pleasurable for me to express my delegation's willingness to assist you in your onerous task.

I wish to pay a tribute, Mr. President, to your predecessor, Don Jaime de Piniés, who performed admirably under very difficult circumstances. It is no exaggeration to say that from one of the most experienced, skilful and affable diplomats the General Assembly expected, and received nothing less than, expert leadership.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Last year, during the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, an earnest reassessment of the Organization was made. Its notable achievements were highlighted and many of its shortcomings were emphasized. It cannot be disputed that the Organization has played a significant role in promoting interdependence and has been a stabilizing influence in a turbulent world.*

*Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Yet a higher level of international co-operation is vital if we are to settle our problems. Hence, all countries have a stake in strengthening the Organization's capability to meet the needs of mankind.

The achievement of peace is in the best interest of all States. It is timely, therefore, that the United Nations has proclaimed 1986, the year after its fortieth anniversary, the International Year of Peace. The dedication of this year to peace underlines the foremost purpose enshrined in the United Nations Charter: to maintain international peace and security. It is only in a peaceful environment, whether local, regional or global, that we can hope to implement the significant and lasting improvements in the quality of life that are so desperately needed around the world.

Regrettably, the growing trend towards unilateral action tends to undermine the Organization's central role in dealing with pressing global problems. Further, progress is urgently needed in coping with the financial crisis of the United Nations, arresting the erosion of multilateralism, particularly in the area of international trade and debt, halting escalation of the arms race, combating terrorism, reducing international tensions, interdicting the trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and ending the racist policies of the Government of South Africa.

We are all acutely aware of the financial problems which threaten to cause the United Nations to disintegrate. Earlier this year the crisis not only intensified but threatened the ability of the Organization to protect the principles for which it was founded. A disastrous end was averted owing to creative and determined responses promoted by the dedication and determination of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. His forthright decisions and tireless efforts have been instrumental in persuading Member States to keep the Organization intact and its high principles alive. It is evident that there is much more to be done, but

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

I sense that the uncertainty which surrounded the survival of the United Nations has abated to some degree. We, as Member States, must co-operate more than ever before in carrying out the necessary recommendations to ensure the continued existence and effectiveness of the United Nations.

One of the Organization's most pressing responsibilities concerns the issue of disarmament. In 1978, at the first special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly unanimously reaffirmed the goal of the United Nations totally to eliminate atomic weapons and to ensure that atomic energy would be used solely for peaceful purposes. In the ensuing years various measures have been proposed to achieve this goal, including the destruction of and cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, a cut-off in the production of weapon-grade fissionable material and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In essence, even the super-Powers and other militarily significant States agree with the view that any further escalation of the arms race would pose untold dangers for the survival of mankind. However, there seems to be an attitude of indifference and inflexibility until an actual disaster occurs. Certainly history supports the maxim that prevention is better than cure.

The Bahamas is heartened by the very strong universal public opposition to the escalation of the arms race. We note the growing number of non-governmental organizations and church and civic groups, which are extremely active in this regard and should be given as much encouragement as possible.

International peace and security have been endangered by acts of terrorism and hostage-taking. An alarming number of human lives have already been lost. The Bahamas emphasizes that our times call for multilateral co-operation to find solutions to the underlying problems that give rise to terrorism. Efforts must also be made to apply and strengthen the various mechanisms and instruments

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

available to the international community as safeguards against this ongoing menace.

The Bahamas is also a party to the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages and has recently introduced legislation implementing the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. We also firmly support the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and other relevant instruments.

When we look around we observe conflicts in several regions of the world which have increased the level of international tension. The Iran-Iraq war is still ominous despite the many efforts of the Secretary-General, the Security Council and other mediators to persuade the opponents to end a costly and destructive war. Multilateral efforts to end the war must be intensified if the danger it poses to the security of the region is to be averted.

The Middle East continues to be a hotbed of tension and, besides the mounting death toll and devastation of property and of the environment, thousands of people are homeless and nomadic. The obstacles to peace and stability must be realistically confronted.

The conflict in Western Sahara continues to escalate despite the appeals and efforts of the international community. Also, turning to South West Africa, there is no clear sign that Namibia will become a sovereign nation in the near future.

The question of Cyprus remains unsettled, despite the occasions when a solution seemed imminent.

In Afghanistan, the international community must strive relentlessly to end a conflict which has taken a grim toll of lives and which continues to exacerbate the world refugee situation and to destroy families. We should not be deterred by the absence of visible signs of movement by opposing sides to resolve this smouldering conflict.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

In our region of Latin America and the Caribbean we have pockets of conflict and confrontation which require a greater measure of peace and stability. The Bahamas commends the efforts of the Contadora Group as a realistic approach to quelling the conflict in Central America. We would appeal to all parties involved to give the process a reasonable chance.

The Bahamas is pleased to note that the issue of the security of small States is being addressed increasingly and more meaningfully in such international forums as the General Assembly, the Commonwealth, the Organization of American States the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

At the regional level, the ministers for foreign affairs of the Caribbean Community, at their annual meeting in Belize last June, repeated their call to the international community to respect the right of every State, regardless of size, to a peaceful, secure and sovereign existence and urged the multilateral financial institutions to respond to the special needs of small, developing countries.

It is widely accepted that small States are particularly vulnerable. They are dependent on multilateralism to promote a stable environment in which development can take place and to erect barriers against the arbitrary use and abuse of military, economic or political power. Too often, instability results from external influences of an economic or military nature and from the deployment of mercenaries against national Governments.

The participants in a Commonwealth colloquium on the special needs of small States held in Nassau last year recognized the need for the international community to continue to consider the constraints placed on small States and to consider special measures to assist island developing countries to maintain and improve their economic, political and social security. Small States do not deserve less simply because of their size and they, too, have a significant part to play in the process of strengthening international peace and collective security.

Drug trafficking and drug abuse are aggravating an already unsettled world climate. The destructive effects of that international phenomenon are undermining the security, stability and socio-economic viability of a growing number of States. The intense multilateral response to drug trafficking and drug abuse offers good prospects for stemming the expansion of this menace. The Bahamas is endeavouring to participate actively in bringing to fruition notable international initiatives, including the new convention against the illicit traffic in narcotic

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

drugs and psychotropic substances, the meeting of the heads of narcotic law enforcement agencies held in Vienna earlier this year and the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking that is to be held in Vienna in 1987. The success of these and other initiatives is vital to the strengthening of a comprehensive régime for drug control.

Accommodation, balance and general agreement, particularly among the producer countries, the consumer countries and these countries in the chain of illicit traffic, are being encouraged in all endeavours. In that way, new and creative responses, including the forfeiture of the proceeds of drug crimes, measures to alleviate the special problems of transit States and the comprehensive multidisciplinary framework for drug control to be adopted at the Conference on drug abuse next year, can provide an impetus to international efforts.

At the regional level, the Bahamas is pleased to be associated with the decisive step taken by the Americas in the establishment of the Inter-American Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In our own subregion, the Caribbean Community is resolute in its support for the promotion and development of a coherent strategy for drug control. This is concomitant with our critical concern to counteract the organized and sophisticated international drug trafficking organizations which continue to exploit the vulnerability and strategic location of the area for the trans-shipment of narcotic drugs to North America and Europe. Those initiatives are in keeping with the goals and objectives of the community.

Bilaterally, the Bahamas - a transit State which produces no narcotic drugs - is co-operating very closely and successfully with the United States of America in joint air, land and sea operations in the war against drug traffickers who would use Bahamian territory to transfer their cargoes to the United States of America. In the Bahamas, our national policy is to eradicate drug trafficking and drug abuse.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

In response to the nefarious practice of drug trafficking, my Government will soon present to Parliament a bill on drug-trafficking offenses. The bill provides new powers for tracing and freezing the proceeds of drug trafficking and for the imposition of a confiscation order on persons convicted of a drug offence. It also provides for increased maximum periods of imprisonment in default, in situations where the amount of the confiscation order is not paid in full, and it defines new offences consisting of assisting another person to retain the proceeds of drug trafficking and of disclosing information likely to prejudice a drug-trafficking investigation.

Bahamian organizations and the general public have become sensitized to the seriousness of the problem of drug abuse and are giving positive assistance to the national effort. The Bahamas believes in the ability of the international community to find lasting solutions to the problems of drug trafficking and drug abuse, and we are committed to international drug control efforts, particularly the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the forthcoming world Conference. It is therefore our earnest hope that the international community will support our candidature for those bodies.

The recovery and expansion in the industrial and developed countries and economies have not for the most part been mirrored in the developing countries. Many developing countries are obliged to adopt a policy of structural adjustment necessitating reductions in imports and in domestic investment. The prospects for recovery are further dimmed by the heavy debt burden.

Economic interdependence is a reality. Where possible, it is in the interests of all States to facilitate the flow of resources from private and public sources to the developing countries and to grant free access to the trade of those countries. Protectionist measures adopted by the developed countries that are

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

detrimental to the economic recovery of the developing countries should be reviewed and repealed.

In this regard, the Bahamas was heartened by the United Nations response to a critical situation. By its convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the serious economic situation in Africa earlier this year, the Organization underlined the efficacy of the multilateral approach to issues of developmental assistance and support. That historic session demonstrated that the United Nations is ready to consider the economic problems of any region of the world comprehensively and effectively. The five-year programme of action for Africa's economic recovery and development has the full support of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

The Bahamas concurs with the view of the Secretary-General that tapping the resources of Africa, a continent rich in physical and human resources, would go a long way towards meeting the aspirations of its people and at the same time contributing to the economic and social well-being of the region and of the whole world.

The Bahamas is impressed by the determination and commitment of the African countries themselves to launch programmes for their economic development and to take upon themselves the bulk of the burden of the estimated \$128 billion required to implement the five-year programme of action.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The racist policy of apartheid of the Government of South Africa has as its foundation discrimination and denationalization and brutal repression of the black majority. The rising tide of black resistance to apartheid is evidence that the black majority will no longer be patient. It is undaunted by the brutal and savage repression and by the frequent and lengthy states of emergency, and it has courageously defied the state of emergency imposed in June of this year, the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising. Racial desegregation, social justice and the abolition of apartheid are now considered by many as life-and-death issues.

The racist South African régime is obstinately determined to maintain white supremacy at all costs. It has failed to heed the appeals of the international community, including the United Nations and the Commonwealth, to undertake fundamental changes in the system of apartheid. It has discredited the call for peaceful change by itself resorting to repression and brutality. It has refused to negotiate with credible black leaders within South Africa.

At a meeting in London last August, seven Heads of Government of the Commonwealth determined that no concrete progress had been made in dismantling apartheid since the Nassau meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government. The seven leaders re-examined the situation as mandated in the Nassau Accord on southern Africa and were disappointed that Pretoria had taken none of the substantive suggestions put forward in the Nassau Accord. In fact, the report of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group concluded that the absence of effective economic pressure on South Africa and the belief that pressure need not be feared were delaying change.

The Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group contended that the worst blood-bath since the Second World War might occur in South Africa if the Government there felt that it did not have to fear effective economic measures. The only way to deal with Pretoria is severely to increase economic sanctions.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Regrettably, the South African Government is not interested in negotiations at this time, and has consciously moved away from any realistic negotiating process. Hence, the international community has no meaningful alternative to adopting economic sanctions against South Africa. Otherwise, the only logical projection is that South Africa is headed into an increasingly violent and bloody struggle, after which power-sharing will for all practical purposes be out of the question.

The Bahamas concurs with the Secretary-General's admonition to the World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa, held last June, that

"it is high time for the South African Government to realize that time is running out for a negotiated settlement and to understand that its defiance of the international community as a whole cannot be tolerated indefinitely."

Since South Africa does not intend to abandon its apartheid policy voluntarily, what is required is a range of economic sanctions sufficiently costly to compel South Africa to initiate the process of dialogue with representatives of the African National Congress of South Africa and other legitimate organizations of the black population with a view to establishing a non-racial representative government. There is no need to add that the immediate release of Nelson Mandela would be essential to the process.

Further, the sovereign States, neighbours of South Africa, ought to be protected from the incursions and bombings by the South African military, which murders innocent civilians and wreaks costly damage on their national health and strength. In this International Year of Peace, a United Nations presence in strategically related areas of Africa would go a long way towards saving the front-line States from the force and injustices imposed on them by South Africa's economic and military might.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

A just and non-racial society in South Africa would enhance the peace and stability of the whole southern African region, for the front-line States would no longer be the victims of a strategy of destabilization, direct military incursion and economic coercion. Accordingly, the Bahamas encourages the United Nations and all its Member States, especially those with significant economic relations with South Africa, to implement effective economic sanctions with a view to abolishing apartheid.

We believe too that resolute measures ought to be taken by all States that support self-determination, democracy and human rights to persuade South Africa to implement the plan for Namibian independence adopted in the framework of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Economic considerations and appeasement of South Africa will further delay the independence of Namibia. In this International Year of Peace it is difficult for this august body to rationalize the continued subjugation of the people of Namibia. We are confident, however, that international commitment to the decolonization process will ensure that Namibia takes its seat in this Organization at an early date.

To be effective, the the broad objectives of the Charter of this Organization require the fullest measure of support from as many sovereign nations as possible. The purposes set forth in the Charter are universal in scope, and to our minds can best be achieved by an organization with a universal membership. It would therefore seem to be advantageous, especially in this International Year of Peace, for all sovereign States that express their willingness to subscribe to the Charter to be allowed membership of this Organization. Universality of membership would, I submit, not only increase the opportunities for dialogue, but also make a positive contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

It augurs well for the Organization that throughout the 1980s many resolutions relating to the social issues on its agenda have been adopted by consensus. In particular, the Bahamas has followed with interest matters related to youth, as persons under the age of 30 constitute nearly three quarters of our population. The Bahamas was pleased to participate in the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year, held during the fortieth session of the General Assembly. The guide-lines for follow-up action to the International Youth Year are given due attention in the formulation of policies and programmes of the Ministry of Youth, the National Youth Advisory Council and other relevant organizations.

In closing, allow me to emphasize that the international community should not be thwarted by any conflict or tragedy which might mar the International Year of Peace. This body was organized at the close of the "war to end all wars". Its objective is to maintain international peace and security and to make military conflicts obsolete by entrenching the process of dialogue and negotiation as the valid means of solving differences between nations, regardless of size, political influence and military or economic strength. The challenge, then, is to demonstrate through renewed determination and commitment that the goals of universal peace and security can be achieved.

The international community may be assured that the Bahamas remains committed to the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter. The Bahamas stands firm in its conviction that the multilateral process must be maintained and strengthened if stability, order and justice are to prevail.

Mr. AL-SHARA (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic and on my own behalf, I am pleased at the outset of this statement to extend to Ambassador Choudhury our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. His election to this distinguished post is a source of deep satisfaction to us, since he represents a friendly country with which Syria has ancient, historical ties. Moreover, both our countries are members of the Conference of the Islamic Organization and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We are confident that his diplomatic experience and political skills will contribute to the success of our work and place the General Assembly on the road to the attainment of its goals.

We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Jaime de Piniés, whose efficiency and wisdom contributed greatly to the success of the fortieth session of the General Assembly.

I am also duty bound to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the strenuous efforts he has been making to enhance the role of the United Nations and to reaffirm adherence to its Charter and principles in the conduct of international relations - and all this for the benefit of mankind and the cause of freedom and world peace. We are very happy that he has resumed his duties following his recovery, and we wish him the best of health.

This time last year we in this Hall witnessed an important event - not merely the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, but also the exceptional opportunity afforded to leaders and representatives of the Governments of the entire world to review the achievements of our international Organization and to assess its failures since its inception.

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It also afforded an opportunity to analyse and discuss the aspirations and concerns of the countries of the world with regard to the major issues and crises which the Organization has so far been unable to solve.

Summarizing our general impressions of that important event, we could conclude that no representative of any country of the world, large or small, strong or weak, was able to paint a reassuring or optimistic picture of mankind's future in the shadow of an escalating nuclear-arms race on earth. And what would the situation be if such a race were to spread beyond the earth and spill over into outer space? Furthermore, none of the representatives of the countries of the world, rich or poor, advanced or developing, was able to speak with confidence about the future of their countries' national economies, as a result of the continuing crises in, and unpredictable fluctuations of, the world economy.

It was abundantly clear that the countries of the world had two major motives in commemorating the fortieth anniversary: The first was the fact that 40 years had passed since the end of the Second World War without a third world war. The second was that the United Nations has continued to exist, as the only international organization to which the countries of the world may resort in order to lodge their complaints and solve their problems.

Although we in no way belittle the great significance of those two international achievements, it still should not be forgotten that the number of victims of wars and acts of aggression backed by world imperialism during the past 40 years - beginning with the Korean war and continuing through Viet Nam, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America - has not been fewer than the number of those who fell in the Second World War. Moreover, we should not disregard the fact that the United Nations has been unable to reach appropriate and just solutions to many serious crises in the world - not to speak of the financial and political pressures

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to which this international Organization has been subjected of late, with the aim of diminishing its role and reducing its effectiveness.

The countries of the third world which in the past paid a heavy price in blood and sweat in their long and arduous confrontations with the forces of old colonialism are today still paying a heavy price, one way or another, in their current confrontations with world imperialism and neo-colonialism. That is a well-established fact and I need not dwell on it. Our international Organization must pay attention to this confrontation with the forces of world imperialism and neo-colonialism and assign to it a higher priority, like that given to the question of decolonization.

The cause of peace in the world is indivisible. Peace has always been and continues to be the dream of mankind. World peace, however, can be achieved only by liquidating the regional strongholds of imperialism, racism and neo-colonialism, because those strongholds, those vestiges of imperialism are the main source of finance which feeds the military machine of those Powers, and propels them towards strategic superiority in the international arena, as a sure means of safeguarding their interests in those areas of the world.

Because of its economic and strategic importance, our Arab region is still the ideal strategic position, the one most coveted by the forces of imperialism. Those forces have been aided and abetted by the settler-colonialist invasion with which they have allied themselves in our region. That invasion was planned in the capitals of the colonial Powers and since 1948 has been and still is carried out by

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world Zionism in stages, with the continuing and escalating support of the colonial Powers and world imperialism, especially the United States of America. Relations between Israel and the United States of America have in recent years reached the level of strategic alliance, not only in the regional but also in the international context. That is evident from Israel's participation in the strategic Defense Initiative - also known as "star wars".

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Despite our earnest desire over the years that the Arab-Israeli conflict should not spread beyond the regional context, the United States of America has systematically insisted on being a party to the conflict, owing to its blind bias in favour of Israel. Thus it has put its military arsenals and the Federal Treasury at Israel's disposal.

The affirmation of this blind bias has not been linked by any means to the statements and deeds of United States officials, which have been so numerous that there is no room to cite them in detail here. It has also been manifested in the emergence of American groups which vie with the Zionist lobby itself in propagating racist hysteria against the Arabs, whom they accuse of being a nation of terrorists. Such groups act on the theory that God created the United States of America to protect and defend Israel. In their book, opposition to Israel is defiance of God's will, and support for Israeli animosity against the Arabs is obeying God's bidding. Is it reasonable to claim that God discriminates between the human beings created by Him and exalts one people at the expense of another? Is it reasonable that God should will the existence of a people whose task it is to attain for another people whatever the latter desires?

Israel, which has made millions of Arabs homeless and driven them from their homeland, Palestine, carries out racist, terrorist practices against the Arab population languishing under Israeli occupation in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. Hence, Israel should be the last country in the world to accuse others of terrorism. Israel is the mother source and the root cause of terrorism in our region. This reality cannot be altered by distortion of facts and concepts by a mass media machine operated by Zionist-imperialists which is intent on misleading world public opinion on an unprecedented scale. Israel's objective behind these campaigns and calumnies is

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not to combat terrorism, which we, together with the entire world, condemn, but rather to try to justify the State terrorism practised by itself and by the United States of America against the Arabs and delude the Governments and peoples of the world into believing that the struggle of the Arabs to liberate their occupied territories and regain their usurped rights is a reprehensible act of terrorism. We are firmly convinced that such attempts are doomed to failure sooner or later. History has taught us that national resistance to invaders and occupiers vanquishes the vociferous clamour of colonialists, occupiers and their lackeys and will for ever respond to the call of liberation and independence.

We, the Arabs, whether we live in our motherland or in the countries of expatriation, are not to be intimidated by the systematic racist campaigns aimed at branding us with terrorism. Such hostile campaigns, contrary to the wishes of their perpetrators, are bound to alert world public opinion to the hoax and raise certain logical questions. Why did this terrorism take place? What are its motives? Was it possible for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the destruction of whole towns and villages in the south, the eviction of its inhabitants, the shelling of Beirut with thousands of tons of American-made bombs for 90 consecutive days - was it possible for all this to take place without any reaction? Why should the Palestinians continue to be deprived of the right to return to their homes and properties, while Israel impudently insists that certain countries should allow Jews to emigrate to Israel? Such questions will continue to be asked until the world at large comes to realize who is the true terrorist, who is going unpunished, who is the victim and who deserves all possible support and solidarity.

The United Nations is called upon today more urgently than ever before to make a concerted international effort to draw a clear line between terrorism and resistance, so that it may be able to make an effective, constructive contribution

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to putting an end to the cycle of violence and counter-violence that has engulfed our region and other regions of the world.

While we fully appreciate that Israel's motives in strongly opposing such international efforts, which would expose its pretexts and unmask its aggressive, expansionist intentions, we fail to see the logic of the United States Administration's opposition to such joint international efforts, while it gives top priority in its foreign policy to combating terrorism. We can understand such a position only in the light of the blind bias of the United States in favour of Israel, a country that would have the world believe that legitimate national resistance is terrorism and that systematic State terrorism is legitimate self-defence.

This American position, in which we can see no justifiable moral or political interest of the United States, clearly indicates that the United States Administration is more concerned with defending the policies of aggression practised by Israel than with the lives of its innocent citizens, who have been and continue to be subjected to acts of retaliation generated by this American position. Israel and the United States of America have engaged in acts of State terrorism through the hijacking of Arab civil aircraft and the bombing of a number of Arab capitals and other cities, the latest of which were the American acts of aggression and barbaric raids on the residential neighbourhoods of Tripoli and Benghazi.

The Syrian Arab Republic has declared more than once its readiness to contribute to any joint international effort to combat terrorism. This was clearly stated in President Hafez Assad's address in Athens on 27 May 1986 during a State visit to Greece. The Syrian Arab Republic does not stop at a mere declaration of its position. It has actually put this into practice through its backing of

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Lebanese and Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation on the one hand and its sincere condemnation of all forms of terrorism on the other. As everybody knows, the Syrian Arab Republic has given and continues to give humanitarian assistance with the aim of saving the lives of scores of American, French and other citizens kidnapped in Lebanon. If we have not been able so far to save all the persons kidnapped, this is because of the complexities of the situation in Lebanon. The aim of our presence in Lebanon is well known. It is to help our Lebanese brothers put an end to the bloodshed and achieve national reconciliation among themselves, not to replace them or rule them.

The Syrian Arab Republic will remain committed to these concepts and principles regarding the evil of terrorism and the right to resist, regardless of whether the hostile campaigns of defamation continue or cease. As President Hafez Assad said in Athens:

"We are on the side of resistance and liberation everywhere and against terrorism in any part of the world."

The Middle East region, which has been divided and fragmented by the schemes of colonialists and the Zionist settlers' wars against the Arabs, cannot enjoy genuine peace as long as Israel continues to occupy Arab lands and usurp Palestinian rights, and as long as the United States continues to give its unlimited support to this Israeli policy of aggression, expansion and terror. It changes nothing that the Americans and the Israelis claim that they want peace. It changes nothing that some Arab régimes fall into the Israeli-American trap or try to deceive the countries of the world by using more or less opportunistic phrases relating to peace, phrases that are used by the Americans and the Israelis whenever the world public becomes seriously concerned about the explosive situation in the Middle East and the effect it may have on world peace and security.

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An examination of American-Israeli claims and statements shows without any doubt that Israeli and American officials have not budged one inch from their well-known positions. They want peace and security for Israel. From the Arabs they want capitulation and acceptance of hegemony. This was laid down in the Camp David Accords and has been reaffirmed recently at the Ifrane and Alexandria meetings. Such a course of action, however, completely ignores the fact that real peace can never be achieved against peoples' will or at the expense of their rights and national interests.

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We, the Arabs, have a genuine interest in peace, and we are the people who are struggling to achieve peace. But peace has its roots and fundamental prerequisites. There can be no peace in the presence of aggression and occupation. Nor can there be peace while rights continue to be usurped. Peace can only be achieved through the elimination of aggression, the ending of occupation and the restoration of Arab rights, foremost among which is the right of the Palestinian Arab people to repatriation, their right to self-determination and their right to an independent State on their native soil. The road to peace is an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, attended by the permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned.

Lebanon continues to suffer under Israel's continuing occupation of parts of its territories and Israel's interference in its internal affairs, the sowing of hatred among its citizens and the obstruction of efforts to achieve accord and peace in Lebanon.

Despite Lebanon's difficult circumstances which arise from infighting and the Israeli invasion, Syria will never cease to discharge its obligations dictated by the links of brotherhood between itself and Lebanon. The obstacles placed by Israel and the United States of America will not discourage Syria from extending help to the brotherly people of Lebanon. We shall keep extending that help until the Lebanese people achieve national reconciliation, liberate their territories from Israeli occupation, and regain their full role within the Arab fold and the international community. The sad events endured recently by the United Nations troops in southern Lebanon are the result of Israel's continued occupation and its refusal, from the outset, to allow the deployment of those troops along the borders, leaving them dispersed inside Lebanese territories and unable to carry out their mandate laid down in Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

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The complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all Lebanese territories and the deployment of the United Nations forces along the borders will help to pacify the situation in southern Lebanon and restore normal life to its inhabitants who, for many long years, have suffered under Israeli occupation, with its barbaric practices and interference in their daily life.

The persistence of the Pretoria régime in its racist policies, acts of aggression, occupation of Namibia and defiance of the will of the international community require the application of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against that régime in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter until the elimination of apartheid and the accession to immediate independence by Namibia on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

The close collaboration between the Pretoria and Tel Aviv régimes, designed to break the will of the Arabs and Africans and undermine their peoples' aspirations should be strongly condemned. Those two racist régimes should be isolated in the international arena, and an end put to their racist and expansionist policies.

The question of Cyprus is a source of deep concern to the Mediterranean countries. Any solution to this problem should be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions so as to preserve for the Republic of Cyprus its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment.

We support the efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reunite the Korean homeland by peaceful means and to achieve the withdrawal of all foreign troops from South Korea, and we support its call to convert the Korean Peninsula into a zone of peace free of military bases and nuclear weapons.

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We support the Government of Afghanistan in defense of its country's independence, sovereignty and non-alignment. We wish success to the steps taken to solve the difficulties existing between Afghanistan and its neighbours, to whom we are linked by close historical ties.

The continuing deterioration of the situation in Central America and the Caribbean requires a settlement of the problems of that region in accordance with the wishes of their peoples without outside interference. We support the initiative of the Contadora countries in this connection and strongly condemn the external pressures against, and interference in, the internal affairs of Nicaragua by the United States of America. We denounce the contempt shown by the United States of America towards the ruling of the International Court of Justice with respect to Nicaragua's just complaint.

The arms race at the international level imperils mankind and exposes it to the gravest of dangers, foremost among which is the danger of a nuclear world war, whether by mistake or through a sense of superiority. We, therefore, consider every effort designed to reduce nuclear weapons as a step towards their final elimination, an important factor that would help to enhance international peace and security.

On this occasion, we applaud the constructive disarmament initiative of the Soviet Union, specifically the unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests. At the same time, we denounce the American Strategic Defense Initiative designed to militarize outer space, and strongly condemn Israel's involvement in that programme.

The issue of disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons is a most serious one. It requires an urgent solution that would save future generations from the continuing dangers that threaten mankind with self-destruction. Any delay in finding such a solution will only render it more difficult or even impossible in

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the future. In the meantime, billions of dollars are being spent on weapons at the expense of the basic needs of peoples and their development, as well as at the expense of the contributions of the industrialized countries towards combating starvation, poverty and disease suffered by some developing countries.

The world, as it celebrates this year the International Year of Peace, hopes that our work at this session will achieve tangible progress towards building a better world in which justice and peace prevail, and all aspects of oppression, injustice and exploitation of man by man disappear.

It is essential that the international community intensify its efforts to avert the dangers which beset mankind and curb the continuing deterioration of the international situation, which will place the world on the brink of a terrifying disaster, the aftermath of which will spare no one.

This world Organization, which remains the most appropriate forum for solving all outstanding international problems and achieving progress, deserves all our support so tht it may be enabled to play its effective and useful role in contemporary international relations in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. CHNOUPEK (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to congratulate Mr. Choudhury on his election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly and to wish him every success in his responsible post.

In these difficult times which the Organization is now facing I wish also to express great appreciation of the commendable work of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in the interests of the objectives of the United Nations and its Charter.

Last year's fortieth anniversary session of our Organization provided an opportunity to reaffirm its unique and irreplaceable role. Since that time, it has gone through a new and complex stage in its activities. Unfortunately, no progress has been achieved in solving the crucial issues relating to the strengthening of international security, nuclear weapons or the halting of the arms race. There has been no improvement so far in the strained international relations. The reasons for our concern have thus not been removed.

Nevertheless we have witnessed some encouraging events, which have given rise to hope for a thaw in the international atmosphere. Political dialogue has been reactivated. Disarmament negotiations have been resumed. The long-awaited and much-needed Geneva summit meeting has taken place. A strong impression has been made by the declaration and repeated extensions of the Soviet moratorium. The first phase of the Stockholm Conference has been successfully concluded. Agreements on the safe use of atomic energy have been signed in Vienna. Notable progress has been made on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons. New signs have appeared in the efforts to solve regional problems. Ways of increasing security in Asia and in the Pacific region are being sought. Definite possibilities of strengthening international co-operation in the economic and humanitarian fields are taking shape. There have been extremely important

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achievements at the summit meeting of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement in Harare.

The effect of all those positive factors constitutes a solid political basis for further progress in the policy of détente; it is a solid basis and capital bearing high interest. Logically, its value has been enhanced as a result of the positive and generally welcomed announcement that Mikhail Gorbachev's proposal to hold a meeting in Iceland has been accepted by President Reagan. We appreciate the fact that this agreement has been reached, as was stated, thanks to the realism and constructive approach of both sides. The meeting will undoubtedly provide a significant opportunity for reviewing the present international situation. We should like to believe that the Reykjavik meeting would proceed on the basis of such an analysis to chart a course leading to the solution of pending problems, especially those relating to certain questions of nuclear weapons. If that happens it will certainly encourage the further development of the policy of peaceful coexistence and broad international co-operation.

The good news of the forthcoming meeting seems to respond to the desires of the entire international community. It is also fully consonant with the constructive atmosphere prevailing at our present session, especially the new symptoms and tendencies that have so clearly manifested themselves here so far.

Consequently, the world is facing a choice. Everything will depend on the decisions we shall make: whether we drift towards nuclear annihilation or allow the new political thinking on the preservation of life on earth to prevail.

We in Czechoslovakia have always had an unswerving attitude. No matter what differences there may be in social systems or political positions, the will to prevent confrontation and reduce international tensions must prevail. This means that we must reject war in the interest of politics, since another war would mean the end of all politics. The future must not be allowed to be programmed by military technologies. Diverse, often conflicting, interests must be reconciled

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in a way that enables both individuals and entire nations to live in peace without fear for the morrow. This could be decisively facilitated by the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security embracing the military, political, economic and humanitarian spheres; a system which would presuppose the adoption of material, political and legal, as well as moral and psychological, guarantees precluding the use of force, and make it possible to achieve equal security for all by political means.

Such a broadly conceived approach underlies the joint proposal of the Socialist countries which is before this session of the General Assembly. It inspires us to believe that we can think afresh about how to implement and develop in a more meaningful way the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Naturally, everybody talks about peace nowadays, but the concepts of peace are diametrically opposed. Some see it as a mere cease-fire; others assert that to avert war means to rely on nuclear strength, with the concomitant claim to a right to abrogate unilaterally existing treaties on arms limitation. Under the doctrine of neo-globalism there is continued reliance on military force, aggression, economic extortion and the imposition of its will upon other countries and peoples. However, such a philosophy, based on the law of force, is pointless; it would be disastrous for mankind as a whole.

For our part, we believe that deterrence, intimidation and threats of retaliation could be replaced by firm guarantees of trust. Peaceful coexistence can and must become the highest universal principle of inter-State relations. Security must be viewed as mutual and indivisible.

We see in such a set of fundamental practical norms reliable ways of dealing with some of the most complex problems of our epoch. It was within this context that they were formulated, with historic farsightedness, by the XXVIIth Congress

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of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and endorsed by the XVIIth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. As the President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Gustav Husak, has said, we regard them "as a powerful impulse in the struggle for peace and progress".

We have given our full support to the central appeal of the International Year of Peace, which is being observed this year, and have made practical contributions to its implementation. We have gained valuable experience from this. It has confirmed that conditions are ripe for an intensification of the peace-building efforts of nations, Governments and the peoples throughout the world.

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Among the steps that could improve the political climate and strengthen mutual security none is more urgent than arms limitation. The horrifying momentum of nuclear and conventional armament on Earth must be halted and it must be prevented from reaching outer space. So far there is still time, but there is not much left.

Indeed, mankind's destiny has now taken on a completely new perspective. Nuclear arsenals have achieved such absurd dimensions that they no longer serve their original purpose. Even as they are being accumulated the moment is drawing nearer when strategic parity will cease to be a factor of military-political deterrence. Mutual deterrence is now turning into its opposite. That situation in itself argues against the philosophy underlying the old political thinking to the effect that the further accumulation of such weapons is necessary.

Unfortunately, the approach to arms limitation taken by some Western countries is still marked by obvious attempts simply to drag things out. Surely this is proved by the Vienna talks, where nothing has been achieved after 13 years and 40 rounds, and despite 26 proposals by the socialist countries. The truth is that many of those who so often call for progress prove by their actions that they still rely on military force. In their commitment to the policy of confrontation they even go so far as to make plans for besieging our planet from outer space. The question that here is this; what is the purpose of the strategic revolution when demands for a revolution in disarmament are being made from all sides?

All sorts of arguments are being used as pretexts for blocking progress. One of them is the question of verification, which has been raised constantly and inflated out of all proportion, as if there were a reluctance to recognize that the

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socialist States are completely ready to resolve this issue, including the question of on-site inspections, as was clearly demonstrated in Stockholm. After all, it would be just as impossible for us to accept disarmament treaties without strict and equitable verification measures.

However, this assumes that there must be something to verify. This requires, first of all, that there be negotiations and agreement on the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons, a treaty on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban, and a number of other urgent issues on the rather extensive agenda.

We are convinced that the programme put forward by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev on 15 January has opened a viable way to the solution of the entire range of issues relating to nuclear disarmament - strategic armaments, intermediate-range missiles in Europe and operational tactical forces. We regard this as the most detailed, specific and concrete basis for progress that has ever been submitted. It pays due regard to the legitimate security interests of all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear. It offers a truly historic opportunity to eliminate the threat of nuclear devastation. It provides for the safe, peaceful entry of human civilization into the third millennium. That programme enjoys our full support. It should become a focal point in the work of the United Nations as well.

We regard the continuance of nuclear testing as the equivalent of armament. We consider the Soviet Union's decision to extend its unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions through the end of this year, after it has already been in effect for more than 400 days, as proof of the highest sense of responsibility. That step - which is not an easy one to take in the light of one's own security needs - is welcomed throughout the world. It is indeed a genuine example that

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deserves to be initiated. The spontaneous applause in this Hall when Minister Shevardnadze mentioned that action in his statement once again confirmed this. Moreover, this example set by the Soviet Union provides yet another opportunity: it gives us a chance to think things over. We believe that one's attitude to this can be regarded as a yardstick by which to gauge one's sincerity.

We value highly the efforts made on this important question by the group of six States from four continents and the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. We would like their proposal, too, to be heeded by the United States. It would be the most natural, the easiest and indeed the least expensive way to halt the accumulation of nuclear capacity. It would preclude the sort of confrontation provoked by such testing. It would pave the way for further significant steps towards the preventing of nuclear war. And, it would be in keeping with the agreement reached at the Soviet-United States summit meeting at Geneva.

We welcome the readiness of the Soviet Union to sign, any time and at any place, a treaty on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban. If an act of such historic significance were accomplished here and now it would indeed be a symbol of our Organization's commitment to this ideal.

We also share the opinion that a basic prerequisite for the radical limitation of strategic nuclear systems is abstention from launching weapons into outer space. Is it not easier, more cost-effective and, above all, much safer to dismantle nuclear weapons than to build a so-called defence against them in the form of a rather complicated, costly and extremely hazardous space shield? That is why we demand that these weapons be dismantled.

We give our unequivocal support to the preparation and adoption of a realistic programme of joint, practical activities for the peaceful use of outer space. Only

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in this way can nations concert their efforts to work for the salvation of their planet, its atmosphere and its biosphere.

We believe that the strengthening of universal security and confidence-building also depend on how reliably atomic power is used. We therefore advocate the establishment of an international system for the safe development of nuclear-power engineering embodying a universal commitment by each State individually and by all States collectively.

We have acquired valuable experience in this respect. The 1982 Czechoslovak-Austrian agreement on the regulation of issues relating to nuclear facilities is a unique document, indeed the first of its kind. It served its purpose excellently after the Chernobyl accident. It provides convincing proof of the possibility of solving matters relating to the safe use of nuclear energy within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), regardless of the social systems of the States involved.

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We favour the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in specific regions of the world - in central Europe, where we are ready to become part of such a zone, in northern Europe on the Balkan peninsula, in Africa, in the Indian Ocean and also in the South Pacific.

We firmly advocate the world-wide elimination of chemical weapons and means of manufacturing them. In the spirit of our proposals submitted jointly with the German Democratic Republic, we are ready to continue to promote efforts to achieve the global prohibition of such weapons, in particular by means of establishing a chemical-weapon-free zone in central Europe.

We wish to express our regret at the delays that have affected the convening of the Conference on disarmament and development. We support the holding of discussions next year on those closely interrelated problems of the present-day world.

We attach great importance to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. We regard it as a particularly necessary forum for negotiation, and as indeed the only place where even partial agreements can take the form of multilateral treaties. We are working to increase its effectiveness.

The decisive arena in the struggle for a peaceful order in the world remains the European continent. It is there that the two strongest military-political groupings, possessing the most destructive types of weapons, are facing each other. Yet it is also there that the policy of détente has emerged, stemming from a common understanding of recognized realities.

Despite all the roadblocks and pitfalls placed in its path and the mistrust and scepticism with which it has been confronted, détente has proved to have solid foundations. Its vitality was also demonstrated by the conclusion of the first stage of the Stockholm Conference. We regard the document adopted there as an agreement of outstanding significance in the process of building up a system of collective security in Europe. It is the most striking success achieved in moving

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towards a reduction of tension and an amelioration of the European political climate since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. It sets forth the relevant provisions of the Act, and provides sound conditions for productive achievements in other areas of negotiations on military détente and disarmament. The complex work in Stockholm, which demanded the maximum of political resolve, thus represents a triumph of common sense, political realism, and sense of responsibility for the future destiny of Europe. It is highly significant that all the participating States worked for the decision that was adopted, a fact which provides an encouraging impetus for the successful continuation of the all-European process.

However, more time is needed. Military activities and transfers of troops to Europe must be still further limited. We must have firm and specific commitments to guarantee the non-use of force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. Military concepts and doctrines must be based solely on defensive principles.

That is what was proposed by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty in their appeal to the States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and indeed to all European countries at the session of the Political Consultative Committee held in Budapest last June. What is at issue here is a programme of drastic reductions, amounting to half a million troops on each side and their respective armaments, including nuclear weapons for operational tactical purposes with a range of up to 1,000 kilometres, from the Atlantic to the Urals, with effective verification carried out jointly. We are prepared to negotiate about such measures in any forum that may be agreed upon. Action on this issue really urgently needs new impetus.

In Budapest we strongly urged the desirability of solving the extraordinarily important problem of the Soviet and United States intermediate-range missiles in Europe, representing a threat that still looms over our old continent. If this

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issue can be resolved, Soviet missile complexes for operational tactical purposes will be withdrawn from the territories of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic. As we have heard in this Assembly also, various solutions are being considered. It is our view that any solution that results in the total elimination of such weapons from the continent would be in the interest of not only the Europeans but indeed all mankind.

As for the forthcoming Vienna meeting, the experience gathered in Belgrade and Madrid shows that it should be a constructive forum and not an arena of confrontation. In view of the more favourable atmosphere in the world, it might indeed usher in a new phase in the policy of détente, become a real milestone on the path of Helsinki, and formulate the mandate for the opening of the second disarmament phase of the Stockholm Conference. Of course we wish to promote actively all aspects of this all-European process, which has already become an integral part of the political awareness of our continent. We intend to pay particular attention to the development of co-operation in trade and economic affairs. Further progress must also be achieved in the spheres of culture, education, contacts, information and humanitarian issues - but of course without the type of vetoes and obstructions, witnessed this year in Berne.

In that connection, we also have in mind specific and genuine human rights, in their full range and richness. It is not merely to issue declarations about them and to lecture others on the subject. What we need is something quite different: fruitful co-operation, directed to safeguarding always and everywhere the right of people to live in peace and guaranteeing them lasting civil, spiritual, cultural and social freedoms.

The peaceful settlement of international disputes and conflicts is something we regard as an essential precondition for the establishment of universal

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security. Unfortunately, this year, once again, we have failed to note any decrease in the persistent feverish temperature of the hotbeds of tension throughout the world.

It is our opinion that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be secured neither by the arrogance of Tel Aviv nor by attempts at partial solutions. The right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including the establishment of a State of their own, must be unreservedly recognized. We continue to advocate the convening of an international conference to be attended by all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We consider that the organization of such a conference has received significant encouragement from the proposal by the Soviet Union for the establishment of a preparatory committee composed of the permanent members of the Security Council.

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From the beginning, we have always advocated a speedy end to the war between Iraq and Iran through peace negotiations.

We are in favour of converting the Mediterranean into a zone of lasting peace and co-operation and of the withdrawal of the fleets of the naval forces of both the United States and the Soviet Union from that area.

We condemn the flagrant acts of State terrorism directed against Libya.

We advocate the convening of an international conference on Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a conference would help to secure independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity for that non-aligned country through peaceful means.

We support the legitimate efforts of the Government of Nicaragua to strengthen the independence of that country and its defence capability. We also support the steps it has taken to reduce tension in Central America. We condemn the double standard of an attitude to national terrorism which passionately denounces it in words while supplying it with \$100 million intended to overthrow a democratically elected Government. We commend the activities of the Contadora Group on behalf of a peaceful settlement of the situation in the region.

As a country that fought a battle fraught with sacrifices in order to achieve its independence, Czechoslovakia cannot ignore the brutal repression being exercised by the racists against the population of Namibia and the aggravation of the ruthless colonial exploitation of that people. At the same time we condemn the shameful policy of apartheid. It is a sad fact that some States Members of the United Nations - even, indeed, members of the Security Council - continue to act in contravention of the decisions of our Organization. They denounce the South African régime with tough rhetoric, but somehow they forget the main requirement, which is support for the adoption of effective mandatory sanctions. As we have recently heard, they have even vetoed such sanctions, thereby virtually lending

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support to Pretoria, and in so doing they are, wittingly or unwittingly, responsible for the denial of the legitimate rights of the people of Namibia. This, even after such demonstrations of the will of the international community as were witnessed at this year's conferences at Paris, Vienna and in New York at the recent special session of the General Assembly, as well as at the summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement at Harare.

Czechoslovakia is sincerely interested in lasting peace and security in Asia. We welcome any step in that direction. One such measure, which we regard as highly significant, is the broadly elaborated concept of security, co-operation, confidence and arms reduction in the Asian and Pacific region advanced by the Soviet Union at Vladivostok on 28 July.

We regard the agreement on the withdrawal of all Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea by the year 1990 as another such step.

We equally value the constructive initiatives taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aimed at reducing the level of military confrontation, establishing a nuclear-free zone of peace on the Korean peninsula and achieving the country's peaceful reunification on a democratic basis, without external interference.

We also commend the proposals and constructive efforts made by the Afghan Government to achieve a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. Above all, this requires a halt to the subversive acts of banditry against that country, which are being orchestrated and fully supported from abroad.

We highly esteem the role played in the struggle for peace, progress and genuine independence by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Through its principled attitudes and significant initiatives, the Movement has made a vital contribution to the elimination of the danger of nuclear war and to the solution of

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the acute problems in today's world. The recent eighth summit meeting of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement has confirmed this.

Global security and durable peace are inconceivable without a fundamental improvement in international economic relations, which must be restructured on a just and democratic basis while the pending social issues of development are resolved. Numerous disputes and conflicts inevitably arise when such questions are ignored.

Nowadays, it is impossible even in economics to make provisions for one's own long-term security and prosperity at the expense of others. Such was the practice of the former colonial metropolitan Powers, and today's spokesmen of neo-globalism would like to continue along that course. They have also been abusing the distorted and fundamentally unfair structure of the international division of labour. That is why they have developed and promoted the debt syndrome. Acting through transnational banks and, if necessary, through intimidation, they have arrogated to themselves the right to determine the future of the developing countries. This was made very clear, inter alia, at this year's special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa.

We oppose indebtedness being legitimized as a new international means of exploitation.

In conclusion, I should like to assure the Assembly that Czechoslovakia, guided by its loyalty to the purposes and principles of the Organization, will not relent in its endeavours to increase its effectiveness and to help it overcome the obstacles that beset its path. The Organization's immense potential should not be buried under a tangle of financial or procedural problems, which in fact originate in efforts that are designed to produce the opposite result. It would be truly worthwhile to consider and ponder the idea of holding special talks on a number of the pressing issues with regard to the Organization's activity.

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All the possibilities of this world Organization, this unique universal forum to which no alternative exists, must be fully utilized in the interest of strengthening the new political thinking, as well as co-operation and peaceful coexistence.

As our Government's statement of its programme has expressed it,
"the questions of war and peace rank first in our efforts in the field of foreign policy because we are aware of the fact that peace is the highest priority in our lives".

Mr. Obed ASAMOAH (Ghana): On behalf of the people and the Government of Ghana, I extend to the President our warmest congratulations on his election to preside over the forty-first session. His election is a tribute to his personal qualities and an honour to his country. To his immediate predecessor, Mr. Jaime de Piniés, I offer congratulations on a job well done.

A year ago to the day we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It was an occasion for renewing our faith in the Organization and the ideals it stood for. Beneath the many and varied assessments made of the Organization, however, lay one incontrovertible truth - that its continuing relevance as the framework for international co-operation has not been diminished by time or circumstance.

Perhaps at no time has that spirit of international co-operation and good will been better demonstrated than in the response to Africa's economic crisis during the special session in May. Although Africa did not achieve all its objectives, the spirit of international co-operation and good will demonstrated at the special session was a gain for all.

Ghana joins in expressing our gratitude to the international community for the interest shown in Africa's economic recovery Programme. What is urgently required now is that the expressions of good will be reduced to firm commitments to raise the necessary resources for the Programme's success. In an increasingly interdependent world, the rest of humanity will not long remain spared Africa's misfortunes. We therefore renew Africa's appeal to all, especially our partners in the developed world, to translate their friendly understanding of our problems into practical support.

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Africa's problems are many and deep-seated. There is no doubt about Africa's resolve to accept the challenges now facing the continent. But, while Africa's recovery is largely dependent on its own efforts, the fact remains that meaningful progress hinges on the international economic environment.

Indeed, how can Africa make basic structural reforms in the face of the current wide fluctuations in commodity prices, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the decline in real terms of official development assistance, unstable exchange rates, high interest rates, protectionism, the heavy debt burden and a host of other unfavourable economic conditions which adversely affect our economic fortunes? It is a fact that, contrary to all reason, the world economic environment facilitates a far greater influx of resources from the developing countries to the developed countries than vice versa. Those factors contribute substantially to the aggravation of our continent's problems.

It follows, therefore, that a meaningful solution of the nagging socio-economic problems of Africa - indeed, of the third world generally - call for a greater political will on the part of the international community, particularly the industrialized West, to address the root causes. So far that will has not been demonstrated. Initiatives taken by the developing countries to halt the decline in commodity prices and bring some stability to their export earnings have not received the support of some major industrialized countries. Thus, the establishment of an integrated programme for commodities and its common fund today remains a forlorn hope.

If the developing countries expand their productive base, as is being advocated, it is unlikely that world demand will outstrip the increased supply and thus exert upward pressure on commodity prices. In all probability the increased

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supply will only depress prices. And, in any case, would there be increased access of the increased output to the markets of the industrialized countries? On present performance, the answer is likely to be "No".

Debt repayment and servicing have put a great strain on the meagre financial resources of the developing countries, including my own. It is estimated that in 1985 alone the net interest paid in external debt servicing by developing countries amounted to \$4 billion. In recent years the debt service ratio has risen to unacceptable levels. Many countries have come to realize that they cannot cope with it without imposing intolerable sacrifices on their people, with serious implications for political stability. Unilateral ceilings on the percentage of export earnings that should be devoted to debt servicing have therefore been imposed by some countries, and unless there is greater understanding from creditors that practice is bound to grow.

The deepening debt problem requires realistic and concerted international action. The repeated acts of rescheduling and the building up of arrears will, in the long run, only hinder development. Rescheduling creates a climate of uncertainty, while arrears can also lead to the halting of loan commitments and hamper the formulation of adjustment programmes that can bring relief.

In the international monetary area, problems of liquidity and a stable exchange rate régime remain. Special drawing rights (SDRs), if they had been allowed to develop to their full potential, would have put decision-making in international liquidity creation into the multilateral context where it properly belongs. The position today is that the national currencies of a few countries continue to serve as reserve currencies. It is nearly 10 years since the last issue of SDRs was made, and they are shrinking as a percentage of total non-gold reserves. Yet during that period the need for access to international liquidity by

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many developing countries has never been greater. Coupled with the problem of international liquidity creation and allocation is the uncertainty in international financial transactions engendered by wide fluctuations in the floating exchange-rate system.

When developing countries call for an international conference on money and finance, debt or trade, it must be understood that they do not seek confrontation. Rather, they seek an opportunity for a genuine and democratic dialogue to find solutions to the complex problems afflicting the world today. They seek to mould international institutions in a way that will promote the well-being of all countries. What they cannot accept is prescriptions by a few countries through mechanisms on which they have no representation and in which their interests and concerns are given only perfunctory consideration.

Although the world economy has in the last few years shown signs of recovery, serious imbalances in the international economic environment persist. For most of the developing countries, economic recovery in the past three decades has remained a pipe dream. But in an increasingly interdependent world lack of progress in one part has the inevitable effect of slowing down the dynamism of the other. The economic recovery of the developed countries, therefore, is likely to be short-lived if economic growth is not encouraged and induced in the developing countries.

For those reasons, Ghana welcomes the emphasis which has been given lately to adjustment through growth. Past policies of demand management have caused considerable social hardship, particularly to vulnerable segments of the population, in countries pursuing structural adjustment. When we have made our

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best efforts, followed adjustment policy prescriptions to the letter and ended up creating more misery than we set out to alleviate, we are bound to raise fundamental questions about the system and its supporting mechanisms for restoring equilibrium - not an equilibrium based on the old unjust order, but one that gives all countries an equal opportunity to realize their full potential for economic and social development. The widespread recognition of the need to pursue growth-oriented policies must be accompanied by a corresponding recognition that the unfavourable external economic environment should be changed. In short, a new international economic order is called for.

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I wish to turn now to political matters. The General Assembly's declaration of 1986 as the International Year of Peace presupposes that Member States would adhere strictly to their Charter obligations and resort to peaceful means in settling disputes. The year 1986 is fast drawing to a close but, unfortunately, the vision of a world at peace is far from reality. This is true both in the settlement of outstanding regional conflicts, which in the year have shown no signs of diminishing, and in the management of regrettable bilateral conflicts, in which force rather than peaceful negotiations have been the order of the day.

Striking cases in point are South Africa's frequent incursions into the front-line States of Lesotho and Swaziland, and the recent barbaric bombarding of civilian targets in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, calculated to terrorize those countries to withdraw support for the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia and to increase the racist régime's domination of those countries. South Africa is constantly in the news now and high on the agenda of several international meetings because the racist Pretoria régime has opted for the use of violence and terrorism upon those in southern Africa who legitimately protest against the continued practice of apartheid.

The overwhelming majority of the international community favours the isolation of South Africa economically, politically and socially. The choice has been made above all others because it is the only peaceful means available to check the unhappy turn of events in that country from further deterioration and to put an end apartheid. Regrettably, there are certain Governments, including the United Kingdom, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, Portugal and Japan, which by their policies appear to support the racist régime. The Governments of these countries continue to oppose meaningful sanctions because they claim

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sanctions would hurt the blacks in South Africa and the neighbouring States. The fact of the matter is that the burden of apartheid is far greater than the economic deprivation they will suffer with sanctions.

The liberation movements, which articulate the aspirations of the oppressed people of South Africa and the front-line States themselves, have openly advocated the imposition of sanctions and have declared their readiness to make sacrifices now to free themselves from the constant threat and application of violence by the racist Pretoria régime. It is sheer hypocrisy, in the circumstances, to oppose sanctions because of the effect this will have on the peoples of southern Africa.

We have also been told that sanctions will not work, and insincere references have been made to historical parallels, such as that of what was then Rhodesia after Unilateral Declaration of Independence. If sanctions do not work, why impose them on Poland, Libya, Cuba, Nicaragua and others? These claims overlook the gaping dissimilarities in the Rhodesian and South African situations and betray an obvious intent not to make sanctions work. We all know how the effectiveness of sanctions against Rhodesia was undermined by the Western world. The truth of the matter is that opposition to sanctions is based on fear of loss of material interests and on solidarity with persons of a common racial origin.

Mandatory sanctions can work if they are comprehensive in scope and sincerely applied. They will work if we place humanity before narrow selfish benefits. They will work if we stop placing the employment of a few thousand workers before the fundamental human rights of millions of deprived blacks in South Africa.

The apartheid system no longer has a place in this world. It must be dismantled now. We appeal once again to the racist régime in South Africa to free Nelson Mandela, Zaphena Mothopeng and all other political prisoners, and to

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initiate negotiations with the legitimate leaders of the black majority with a view to sharing power democratically with all South Africans, irrespective of race, colour or creed.

The question of the independence of Namibia continues to pose a serious challenge to the international community. It is unacceptable that South Africa still occupies Namibia 20 years after the General Assembly terminated its Mandate and assumed direct administration of the Territory. This fact in itself reflects a serious weakness of the United Nations which we should help to remedy. The best South Africa offered in terms of co-operation with the United Nations was when it participated in the pre-implementation talks held in Geneva early in 1981. But those talks failed to achieve any concrete results because of South Africa's arrogance and prevarication. Since then the Namibian independence issue has been deadlocked owing in part to the introduction by the Reagan administration of its so-called "constructive engagement" and "linkage" theories. These extraneous elements have played well into the hands of South Africa. The net result is that Namibia's independence plan, authored and sponsored by the Western Contact Group, and accepted unanimously by the Security Council in resolution 435 (1978), has remained unimplemented eight years after its adoption.

The Namibian question is a decolonization issue and cannot therefore be linked with the domestic affairs of an independent country. The people and the Government of Angola have the legitimate right to make whatever practical arrangements they may think fit for the defence of their country, arrangements necessitated by South Africa's aggression and interference in their internal affairs. We therefore totally reject any attempt to link Namibia's independence with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and we reiterate Ghana's support for the conclusions of the special session of the General Assembly on Namibia, which has just ended, and

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particularly, for measures relating to the isolation of South Africa economically and politically, and for the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

There are other hotbeds of tension on the African continent which deserve the attention of this session. With regard to Western Sahara, it is a matter of regret that what should have been a straightforward issue of applying the principle of self-determination to the inhabitants of that territory has degenerated into a war involving Morocco, which has itself in the past been a victim of colonialism. We reiterate our support for the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic and for the right of the Republic to sovereign existence. We call upon Morocco once again to enter into direct negotiations with the Polisario Front in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations General Assembly, on the matter.

In Chad, there seems to be relative calm now. But behind this façade is an uneasy situation that can no longer be tolerated, particularly at this crucial time when the people of Chad need to husband their limited resources to combat the effects of prolonged drought and the serious damage caused to their crops by pests. We remain convinced that the need for a lasting solution of the Chadian problem lies in national reconciliation. We therefore urge all the internal parties and the people of Chad to bury their differences and to seek a solution to their problem on the basis of dialogue.

In the Middle East we have continued to witness an unfortunate cycle of violence, particularly in Lebanon. The spectacle of an Arab turning on a brother Arab is most disturbing indeed and we wonder when the incessant tragedy will end. The grisly killings and the destruction of property in Lebanon should disturb the conscience of all those who believe in peace, brotherhood and progress. Over the past eight years Ghana has been involved in the international effort to assist the

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Government of Lebanon to maintain law and order and to preserve its territorial integrity. We shall continue to do so. However, we hope that all the factions involved in the continuing violence will assist in bringing peace to that country and in preserving its independence and territorial integrity.

The situation in Lebanon is generically linked to the precarious question of the Middle East. We in Ghana continue to emphasize today, as we did last year, that the Palestine question is at the core of the Middle East problem. Lasting peace in that subregion will continue to elude us as long as justice is denied to the Palestinian people. Thus peace will come only when Israel and its supporters listen to logic and reason. The display of military muscle will not promote peace in that area. On the contrary, such actions increase tension. Lasting peace can be achieved only on the basis of dialogue among all the parties, including especially the Palestinians under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The insistence on pre-conditions and the attempt to make scapegoats of Libya and other countries of the subregion for terrorism is counter-productive. In this regard, Ghana deplores fresh threats of the use of force against Libya. Terrorism in the Middle East has its roots in the Palestinian question and its eradication can come about when there is full recognition of the rights of Palestinians to a homeland.

I must, however, emphasize Ghana's opposition to and abhorrence of blind terrorism.

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The Cyprus situation also continues to be a matter of concern to the Government of Ghana. The recent incident resulting from the closure of border points by the Turkish Cypriots once again demonstrates the need for restraint by both parties. We again appeal for tolerance and flexibility, and we support the Secretary-General's mediation efforts. Ghana, for its part, will continue to support a unified and independent Cyprus free from external interference and is in favour of the settlement of communal differences through peaceful dialogue.

I now turn to the fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq. That war, now in its eighth year, is a matter of deep concern to the Government of Ghana, not merely because of the indescribable human carnage involved, but also because of the enormous resources being wasted by the two combatants - resources that could have been used to provide for the pressing needs of their peoples.

We once again appeal to the friendly countries of Iran and Iraq to end the war and to resolve to settle their differences by peaceful means. We deplore the initiation and continuance of the war as being in violation of the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Charter of the United Nations and condemn the violation of international law by the use of chemical weapons, the inhuman treatment of prisoners and the indiscriminate bombardment of civilian targets.

The situation in Central America has taken a turn for the worse as the result of the recent decision by the United States Administration to make available to the rebel forces fighting the Nicaraguan Government weapons and logistic support worth \$100 million. We say in a constructive spirit to our American friends that their decision is ill-advised and contrary to international law. It will only intensify conflict in the area.

That decision, together with the assistance being given to the Savimbi bandits, poses a serious threat to the independence and territorial integrity of

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countries of the third world. It is a new dimension in the attempt to undermine the right of peoples of the third world to self-determination. Such a cynical disregard of the rights of others and of international law constitutes a great threat to international peace and security.

We remain convinced that any attempt to pressure Nicaragua to abandon its search for a suitable form of government on the basis of the country's peculiar historical experience and culture will only result in conflict. The International Court of Justice itself has in recent decisions upheld the sovereign right of the Nicaraguan people freely to choose their own political, economic and social systems and has rejected as illegal any pressure on Nicaragua intended to subvert the popular aspirations of the people of that country.

Ghana therefore endorses the Contadora process as the only realistic way of finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the most serious conflict now raging in Central America. We urge all parties to enter into serious dialogue within the Contadora framework.

Ghana's commitment to the principle of self-determination demands that we not gloss over the ongoing developments in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. It is a matter of deep regret that in spite of the Secretary-General's mediation efforts, the problem of Afghanistan has not been resolved, nor is an end to the Kampuchean conflict in sight. In our view, the people of Afghanistan and Kampuchea must be left to determine their own future, free of foreign interference and occupation forces.

We note with satisfaction the announcement by the Soviet Union of the withdrawal of some of its troops from Afghanistan and we hope that this process will be hastened and embrace all foreign forces on the territory. We also hope that this will be the case in regard to Kampuchea. We call on all parties involved

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in those conflicts to respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to agree to negotiate an end to those conflicts.

The Korean problem also remains unresolved. That problem should, in our view, be solved through peaceful dialogue by the Koreans themselves, without outside interference. We are pleased to note that steps have been taken in that direction and we hope that both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea will make a serious effort towards reunification.

I now turn to the question of disarmament, which remains high on the agenda of all peace-loving peoples of the world. The spectre of nuclear annihilation continues to threaten us all. This unhappy state of affairs is largely the result of the continuing deep mistrust and suspicion between the two super-Powers and their military allies. Contrary to reason, the belief that peace can be secured through strength lives on.

New heights are being scaled in the arms race, and not even outer space will be spared. Enormous resources, which could make a difference between affluence and poverty for the under-privileged peoples of this world, are being spent. For how long can we continue along this path? Every one of us must assist in the momentous task of bringing the super-Powers to the negotiating table for complete disarmament in the interest of the survival of the human race. Recent events make us more hopeful of progress - not least, the current moves to put arms control talks back on track.

If the Organization is to discharge its varied and heavy responsibilities effectively, it must have the necessary financial support. Unfortunately, the United Nations is undergoing a serious financial crisis owing principally to the withholding of funds by certain Member States for one reason or another. We see the present financial crisis as basically political in nature and, in a sense, a

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reflection of the loss of faith in the multilateral system by some influential Members as the result of the fact that the United Nations system is no longer liable to manipulation by them.

Both the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations may be in need of some reform in regard to operating machinery, but the answer to that problem is not to undermine their existence. We certainly deplore any attempt capriciously to weaken these organizations or threaten their usefulness to developing countries or to turn them to the selfish advantage of the rich and powerful. In other words, we pledge to uphold the sacred principles of the Charter and the United Nations system. We call on all Member States, particularly the founding and influential Members of the United Nations, to fulfill their pledge to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I wish to reassure the Assembly of my Government's commitment to the United Nations system and its ideals. The United Nations may not have been able to solve all our problems, but we do not think it has been endowed with the power required for that. However, it remains a shining example of what mankind can achieve through international co-operation. We have a duty to ensure that this unique experiment in human co-operation survives and continues to contribute to the creation of a happy tomorrow for generations to come. That should be the heritage that this generation leaves to posterity.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.