



General Assembly

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Forty-first session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 23 September 1986, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh)

later: Mr. BIN ABDULLAH (Oman)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Eric Arturo Delvalle, President of the Republic of Panama
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Mabrouk (Tunisia)
Mr. Shevardnadze (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Sir Geoffrey Howe (United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland)
Mr. Vayrynen (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ERIC ARTURO DELVALLE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Eric Arturo Delvalle, President of the Republic of Panama, 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 His Excellency Mr. Eric Arturo Delvalle, President of the Republic of Panama and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President DELVALLE (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, in choosing you to preside over the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, this Organization took a very wise decision, on which we should all congratulate ourselves; for we shall be able to draw on the extensive resources of your political skill and diplomatic experience and on the guiding presence of someone deeply interested in and committed to the fate of the international community.

Panama extends a warm welcome to the peoples and Governments represented here and hopes that in the not too distant future we shall be joined by the remaining nations of the world as full-fledged Members, so that one of the main purposes of this Organization can be fulfilled.

I am pleased to express the heartfelt gratitude of Panama for the dedication and perseverance of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and for the wisdom, vision, skill and tact which have characterized his constant efforts to restore peace wherever it has been shattered or threatened and to preserve it where, fortunately, it prevails. The recent advances in the cause of peace are

(President Delvalle)

largely the result of his extraordinary dedication, and the praise and thanks which will be extended to him at this session will be well deserved.

In particular, in so far as Panama is concerned, we are grateful for the exceptional promptness, the receptive attitude and the painstaking attention with which he has listened to us in regard both to problems of Panama specifically and to those relating to our peace efforts through the Contadora Group.

My Government's foreign policy is based on a tradition of struggle against colonialism and discrimination in all its forms and manifestations; against the use of force as an instrument of submission or subjugation; against intervention in the internal affairs of States and for the defence of the principle of equality among peoples; for inherent respect for human rights; for the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes; for the equitable distribution of the benefits of mankind's scientific, technical and cultural progress; but, above all, for the right of States to have their territorial integrity respected and the right of all peoples to enjoy political independence and to forge their own destinies, without interference of any kind - especially foreign pressures.

For those fundamental reasons, I wish to place it on record in this Assembly that Panama rejects and condemns the violent armed invasion of Afghanistan and supports the demands of the Afghan people that Soviet armed forces be withdrawn from their territory. It also repudiates the state of permanent aggression suffered by the front-line countries and the situation of the Namibian people, for they constitute flagrant violations of international law which deserve the unanimous condemnation of other nations and threaten the ideals which inspired the creation of this Organization. Furthermore, they force us to see with threatening clarity that our efforts will be useless, in the face of the arrogance of the racist minority, if we impose only moral sanctions.

(President Delvalle)

I should also like to express Panama's regret at the obstinacy with which the Pretoria Government still clings to mankind's most shameful practices. The majority wishes of the South African people have long since shown that apartheid as a formula for human coexistence has had its day. Unfortunately, obscurantism and intolerance continue to prevail over the tireless efforts of the civilized world, which is filled with horror and consternation at the crimes committed daily in that territory.

(President Delvalle)

At the very heart of our most hard-won struggles is our respect for the principle of equality among all men, and we therefore wish to see established in South Africa as soon as possible an egalitarian system reflecting the wishes of the majority of that people and a democratically elected government that will fully rectify the odious practices we insistently deplore and condemn.

Furthermore, and on the basis of the same considerations, Panama supports Madagascar in its claim to the Malagasy Islands; the Comoros in their authentic right to incorporate the Island of Mayotte under their jurisdiction; Bolivia in its long-standing aspiration to gain access to the sea and thereby contribute to its development; Spain in achieving a negotiated settlement to the problem of Gibraltar and Cyprus in its well-justified desire to win universal recognition for its independence and freedom. Panama also advocates the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea and the holding of free elections in that country under strict international supervision.

In a great spirit of conciliation, Panama will support any effort to put an end to the tensions and acts of violence between Arabs and Israelis. The State of Israel was created by a resolution of this Organization, and Panama strongly supports that decision, that country's existence and its participation in the community of nations. It also supports any effort to secure an end to the prolonged state of war between Iran and Iraq and demands from their Governments absolute respect for vessels flying the Panamanian flag, some of which have been the victims of unjustified attack in open violation of international agreements. Panama supports any attempt to secure the conclusion of agreements to put an end to the fratricidal struggle of the Lebanese people and any action to ensure the peaceful unification of the Korean people, which must be achieved through direct dialogue between the two parties. We hope that that will take place soon and that the Republic of Korea and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea will become full

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members of the United Nations, so that the two parts of the Korean peninsula are represented in the Organization.

Similarly, Panama welcomes any efforts to secure the holding of negotiations between the Government of the Republic of Argentina and the Government of Her Britannic Majesty with a view to eliminating all vestiges of colonialism from the Malvinas Islands.

Furthermore, the destructive capacity of the nuclear weapons deployed or stockpiled by the super-Powers is such that a mere mention of their equivalent in dynamite per human being is a telling indication of the absurd course mankind has thus far pursued.

The Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania, in offering their assistance in securing agreements among the nuclear weapon countries, have taken an initiative which all peoples of the world have welcomed. Their declarations and the conclusions they reached last month in Mexico are a faithful reflection of our position and our hopes.

In recent months we have followed with the closest attention and the keenest interest the public statements and proposals made by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, because those statements rekindle the hope that those countries will make definite progress towards reaching fundamental agreements that will dispel the threat of a nuclear holocaust which has hung over us for the past four decades.

There can be no doubt that any concrete step towards the prohibition of nuclear weapons and their stockpiling, and any measure to prevent the arms race from extending and becoming widespread on earth, would be cause for universal rejoicing. We can never allow the day to come when a human being will raise his eyes to heaven, searching for a reply to the eternal questions, only to see the terrible silhouette of his imminent destruction.

(President Delvalle)

I wish to place on record our position concerning two terrible evils of our day that warrant the most stringent action and the most constant vigilance on the part of all Governments: terrorism and drugs.

The Organization must strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and wherever its appalling ramifications have spread, for no human conscience can condone the sacrifice of innocent lives for the sake of alleged tactics of militancy or persuasion, no matter who the authors of such unpardonable crimes may be or who instigated or encouraged their perpetration.

The same attitude must also be taken to the problem of the trafficking in and use of narcotic drugs, the proliferation of which has reached appalling levels in many countries. We have an immediate obligation to root out this infamous tumor from our contemporary human society, for it corrupts and erodes the most elementary principles of conduct assumed to be indispensable to the life of peoples.

Faced with this permanent attack on the very essence of mankind's best aspirations and the fruits of his social and cultural progress, we must act in unison, indefatigably and conscientiously, to put an end to the production and distribution of narcotic drugs and to combat their traffic. To that end, we must apply the same degree of vigilance, the same interest and the same zeal, both internationally and locally, without ever falling into the futile trap of singling out and condemning the corruption in our neighbour's camp while closing our eyes to what is going on in our own back yard.

The drug problem must strengthen the unity of men and hence the unity of nations, for when we all understand that the value of human life transcends any other consideration, we will be able to set up a common front that will save mankind from this scourge.

We acknowledge and applaud the efforts of other States to this end. Panama has not been spared this plague and, as a contribution to the common cause, our

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country will in the next few days be issuing a new legal instrument which, approaching the drug problem as an international problem, will permit total co-operation among States in suppressing drug offences, allow for the confiscation of goods on a reciprocal basis among nations, speed up the extradition procedures for persons detained in such cases and penalize such offences with stiffer penalties in order to deal with this latest calamity looming over our younger generation.

For those Governments currently grappling with the dilemma of meeting their countries' international financial commitments, it is appalling to make a comparison between the amount of the external debt of the least-advantaged countries and the volume of the military budgets of the major Powers.

On the one hand, we feel the aspirations of our peoples to live in greater dignity and, on the other, we see quite simply the ever-growing capacity for death and destruction. On one side, we see vast sectors of mankind living in the most dire poverty and, on the other, we see the appalling and ever-more sophisticated machinery of death and destruction being constantly refined.

(President Delvalle)

Although the developing countries welcome the possibility of agreements by the powerful nations in the areas of the economy and peace, they resent the way in which the limited possibilities for the progress and well-being of the weak are overlooked. This equation prompts Panama to support all efforts which contribute to the strengthening of peace and security, especially at the regional level, while at the same time urging that part of the resources available be used preferably for programmes of economic development and social progress, which are urgently needed.

The first concern I wish to mention in turning to the current problems of the world economy is the stifling situation which foreign debt obligations have created in the developing countries, a situation which prevents them from meeting social needs and ensuring adequate economic growth. This situation must make creditor countries, which have a great interest in the preservation of peace, freedom and, above all, democracy, realize that poverty and backwardness hold the seeds of social unrest, which pushes peoples to agitation and violence in the search for other political solutions which seem likely to improve their precarious living conditions.

The innumerable complex problems which characterize the interdependence of economies in our time have made anxiety and unrest or the breakdown of the social order and recourse to armed violence in some regions obvious dangers for the rest of the world.

Inequalities in the flow of capital and technical know-how continue to make a satisfactory level of progress and development a privilege reserved for a handful of peoples. The misfortune of the underprivileged, swept by a tide of justified but unsatisfied aspirations, threatens the future of peace and freedom in all nations. The sooner the Governments of the countries where wealth and power have

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been concentrated understand and accept this reality, the sooner mankind will find itself on the road to universal respect for the ideals of peace and freedom.

In order to create the necessary conditions for the sustained growth of the world economy, we must analyse in depth and conscientiously reorder the economic relations among States so that there is genuine equity in trade and in the study of the factors which determine the distribution of capital investment.

The solutions adopted to deal with the debt crisis continue to favour creditor countries, to the detriment of the development and political stability of debtor countries. Panama is determined to meet its credit responsibilities but wishes to give the international financial community warning that it must not seek to place any country in the position of having to choose between satisfying the basic needs of its people and cancelling its obligations on the pretext of avoiding a world financial catastrophe.

In the face of these dilemmas, the Governments of all countries, creditors and debtors alike, and all the international credit institutions and agencies concerned have an unavoidable responsibility to offer creative solutions which will enable us to overcome the crisis without destroying the future.

Aware of its responsibility as a nation and of its history as a host country, Panama once again offers its territory for a summit meeting of all the countries and bodies concerned, so that in a realistic, creative and constructive dialogue a successful and effective solution may be found to avert the impending fatal outcome.

In recognizing the efforts made by the United Nations in its consistent aim of safeguarding peace and in its numerous activities aimed at promoting the material and spiritual progress of mankind, I must express the gratitude of the Panamanian people for the specific actions and positive influence of the Organization on behalf of the ideals we Panamanians pursue and the struggles we wage.

(President Delvalle)

We cannot forget the support given to the proposal by the Panamanian Ambassador, Aquilino Boyd, that the Security Council meet in Panama at a crucial stage in our efforts to secure the abrogation of the shameful 1903 Panama Canal Treaty. Subsequently, with the election of former President Illueca as President of the General Assembly at the thirty-eighth session, the Organization honoured Panama in a way that we shall never forget.

Concerning the crisis in Central America, the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation, which was handed to the five Central American Foreign Ministers on 7 June last, reproduced the results of three and a half years of talks and negotiations with the countries directly concerned, which established formulas for agreement which had been carefully studied, discussed and revised and which left unresolved only a few differences concerning international military manoeuvres and the control and reduction of weapons.

Analysis of that instrument, which contains a whole set of understandings reached with the participation of all the Central American countries in the face of many problems and difficulties, must logically be followed by the political decision of those countries to resolve whatever has remained pending so that, with vision and realism, they can proceed with the signing of the peace document.

The mediation of the Contadora Group and the Support Group succeeded in overcoming major differences and deep-rooted distrust and resentment and in reconciling markedly different positions and aspirations, a task of conciliation which brought us very near to achieving peace.

Throughout all this time, the spirit and action of Contadora contained the scope of the hostilities and prevented the outbreak of widespread war. From the outset of its efforts the Contadora Group has insisted and emphasized that agreement on the necessary conditions for peace and their acceptance and

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observance depend principally on the political will of the Central American countries, but also on the political consent of countries with important links and interests in the region.

Panama, together with the other countries of Contadora, is determined to continue to fight for the Latin American approach - that of the peaceful settlement of disputes in Latin America. Our unswerving aim of continuing to seek the conclusion of an international instrument which may once and for all restore peace to the Central American region will not be altered by any kind of pressure.

The Republic of Panama wishes to state to this Assembly that retrograde sectors wielding great economic power and considerable influence have conspired to weave a whole tissue of lies and slander against the image of the Governments of the countries that form the Contadora Group and have stopped at nothing in their perfidious attempt to undermine the process towards a peaceful settlement and frustrate our people's aspirations to peace.

In this important forum, I denounce those same forces for launching a cruel campaign against my country because they are seeking to deny us the right to manage, operate and defend the Panama Canal from the date agreed in the Torrijos-Carter Treaties and to maintain the Panama Canal within the strictest neutrality, offering efficient service to all the nations of the world.

(President Delvalle)

Allow me now to refer to a serious question which concerns all the Governments that are represented here and that are concerned with safeguarding the principles of the Charter of the Organization and preserving the full force of the international legal order.

In September 1977, the international community welcomed the culmination of years of effort on the part of Panama in the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. With a high sense of justice, the great North American Power and Panama, a young and small country, offered the world, through those Treaties, an admirable example of what can be achieved when countries have the will to resolve old disputes and profound differences peacefully.

Imbued with the determination to make common interests prevail over divisive self-interest, the two countries agreed on a system for the management, operation and defence of the Canal until 31 December 1999, with the transfer to the Republic of Panama, on that date, of the interoceanic waterway, without encumbrances of any kind and in good operating order.

On 27 September 1979, however, four days before those Treaties entered into force, the United States Congress adopted Public Law 96-70, in which it determined the conduct to be followed by the Panama Canal Commission in connection with the treaty signed with the Republic of Panama, thereby limiting rights inherent in a genuine joint administration.

As a result of that action, which amounts to subjecting the norms of international law to the judgement of one of the parties in order to impose its wishes, my Government made an immediate protest, which was followed by numerous representations made by Panama at the bilateral level in order to put an end to this situation.

By ignoring the scope and formality of the documents marking an agreement between the two countries, the United States Congress unilaterally set up a régime,

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which still exists, by which the United States decides everything while its Panamanian counterpart is limited to expressing its disagreement and protest at the refusal to recognize the rights of our Republic.

The Canal Commission thus took over the direction of all matters relating to the Canal, and since then, some policies and practices have been applied unilaterally which contradict the spirit of the agreements reached between the United States of America and the Republic of Panama.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Panamanian members of the Canal Commission have repeatedly denounced all those actions that we consider to be in violation of the Treaties. As the result of our insistence, we have managed to have a very small number of those violations removed. Certain major violations, however, have not even been considered.

The inappropriate accounting practices adopted by the Canal Commission have resulted in a loss to the Republic of Panama of sums to which it was legitimately entitled in accordance with Article 13, paragraph 4 C of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty and which, however insignificant they might appear in the context of a United States budget, represent a considerable input to my country's financial requirements for meeting its population's most urgent needs.

Furthermore, funds disbursed by the Canal Commission to cover obligations of the United States Treasury are also unilaterally charged, as costs for operating the Canal, thus removing profits that could have been used to finance urgent improvements without which the Canal will not be able later to meet the growing demands of international maritime traffic.

The labour policies that have been adopted, also without our consent, bar Panamanians from access to senior technical and administrative posts, provided for by the principle of increasing participation, which is essential in order for the

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transition to take place on 31 December 1999 without problems or complications of any kind.

For these reasons, my Government has undertaken with renewed resolve and full determination to ensure that Public Law 96-70 of the United States Congress be abrogated or substantially revised, so that it does not violate the agreements reached in 1977 with the best of intentions.

We feel that the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties should have put an end to our country's great struggle. The adoption of Law 96-70, however, has confronted us with a new struggle, which we Panamanians must today wage for the benefit of future generations.

Panama will continue to comply faithfully with the obligations imposed on it as a partner in the Canal and will continue to do so in a spirit of full co-operation and good faith, secure in the knowledge that the sense of justice of those who forged the great democracy of the United States will also apply to the people living on the banks of the Canal.

In response to the profound desire for peace which distinguishes the Panamanian people, I should like to take this opportunity to urge the Governments represented here which have not yet signed the protocol to the treaty on the neutrality of the Canal to consider the advisability of doing so without further delay - a step that would be a source of great satisfaction to us.

The developing nations - and above all those in which the majority of the population is still living in terrible conditions of hunger and misery - are the real Achilles' heel of the human condition, and man will not be able to live without the threat of war as long as vast and shameful differences exist among countries.

Those with the highest qualifications and the greatest wealth are the ones who can contribute the most to lessening the heavy burden of unsatisfied aspirations

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and correcting the tremendous inequalities which hang like the sword of Damocles over the whole of mankind.

It is essential that all the nations of the world - large and small, rich and poor - and the peoples in them should commit themselves fully to the noble cause of pooling their efforts and potential with a view to finding positive solutions to the serious problems created by inadequate development. Extreme need pushes people beyond the limits of civilized conduct and turns man into his own enemy.

It must be recognized that the United Nations, whose founding over 40 years ago filled the world with such hope and whose lofty aim it was to serve as the highest forum in which countries could settle their disputes through international dialogue in its noblest expression, has seen the effectiveness of its aims weakened.

This last and greatest bastion for the preservation of world peace cannot afford to lose the importance, respect and vitality necessary for it to fulfill its noble mission. To that end, however, it must renew the energy and strength with which it started and receive the firm support of all Member States which, as such, have committed themselves to the principles of peace established in the Charter.

That support must not, however, be limited to theoretical adherence to just principles which are then violated with impunity. It must, rather, be transformed into an irreducible standard of conduct in the face of any conflict which threatens world peace and the sacred right to life of all peoples.

(President Delvalle)

Panama has been and always will be an eminently peace-loving country. Because of the very special nature of the geographical formation of the territory and what man's creative genius has made of it, we Panamanians have long understood the noble goals of serving the world.

The Latin American nations have achieved through their struggles for independence the right to live in freedom and steer their own destinies, with appropriate respect for the rights of others. Peace, which the illustrious Mexican Benito Juarez defined as being based on respect for the rights of others, is the banner of this Organization; it is the peace which Panama, as a free, sovereign and independent country, preserves and defends.

In Panama's democracy, which has been strengthened by its historic tradition and which today we all wish to renew and strengthen, we have the necessary conditions for strengthening relations of peace, freedom and respect with all the nations of the world.

May peace triumph over war; may freedom conquer slavery; may democracy prevail over totalitarianism; may justice overcome iniquity; may development defeat backwardness; may civilization prevail over obscurantism; and may man, as a citizen of the world, emerge from the vortex of time and circumstances in the image and likeness of the Divine Creator.

Mr. Eric Arturo Delvalle, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MABROUK (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a great pleasure for me to be representing Tunisia for the first time in the United Nations and speaking on behalf of Arab and African Tunisia, which is proud of being Arab.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

I take pleasure in congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly, which demonstrates the great respect in which Member States hold you. My delegation is convinced that your well-known qualities as a diplomat, your great experience and your wide knowledge of the United Nations will prove most valuable as you guide our deliberations on the important and complex items on our agenda.

I should like also to pay a well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, a great friend who was President of the fortieth session of the General Assembly. The qualities of leadership, dedication and wisdom that he demonstrated in presiding over the fortieth session earned him our deep and lasting gratitude.

I wish to say to Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, our Secretary-General, how very glad we are to see him among us once again completely recovered and resuming his work with all the dedication and sagacity that he has always displayed. We congratulate and thank him for the courage, level-headedness and constructive approach he has demonstrated, particularly in his latest report on the work of the Organization. I should like to congratulate him also on his welcome and decisive contributions in dealing with difficult issues.

(continued in French)

This session is taking place at a crucial stage in preparations for the major negotiations between the two super-Powers which have been awaited for so many years. We hope that the mishaps along the way that occur from time to time and make us wonder whether those negotiations will ever take place will not thwart the profound universal aspiration to a better world in which peace, security and progress will prevail.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

All nations, regardless of their size, attach the greatest importance to these negotiations. Their success will to a large extent depend on the practical response they bring to the super-Powers' overall concerns.

Naturally, the limitation of nuclear weapons and a halt to the arms race, particularly in outer space, in favour of collective security that promotes lasting peace and fruitful co-operation will be the main goal of the proposed East-West dialogue. The peace-loving nations that seek progress and prosperity, as our own does, can but welcome such a development.

There is hardly any need for me to recall how indescribably wasteful the arms race is at a time when so many nations are arduously struggling just in order to live and their peoples just in order to survive.

Redeployment of finances currently used by some to produce weapons and by others to buy them at inordinate prices towards development projects would contribute immensely to solving growth problems in the third world and also promote the harmonious development of international relations of benefit to all. To this end the American-Soviet negotiations must not be limited to deployment and counterdeployment of missiles in Europe; they must also deal with establishing a balance of deterrent systems between the super-Powers. This in itself is not enough, but it is a commendable objective, one we would like to see attained.

Already, the news from Stockholm on the agreement reached on specific measures to restore confidence is very encouraging, and we are pleased. We also welcome the constructive aspect of these measures, which constitute the first ray of hope in more than seven years in this difficult process of negotiations on disarmament in Europe.

Arms developments are the result of international tensions throughout the world. Any agreement on limitation, banning and reducing military potential, whatever the size of the force involved, must be the result of considerations that

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

go beyond weapons themselves and take account of the whole range of international factors.

Foremost among these factors is the right of peoples to self-determination. More than 40 years after the San Francisco Charter was signed, peoples in the Middle East, Africa and Asia still suffer under the colonial yoke or once again find themselves deprived of their freedom. We are not the only ones to be shocked at this and to condemn it. The major Powers themselves say that they are dismayed. All of them are distressed at violations of the Charter involving injustice when it strikes the centres of their own interests.

In promoting negotiations between the super-Powers and other Powers, it is surely time now that these problems of freedom and dignity for millions of men and women should be regarded as fundamental problems and that the super-Powers should agree on treating them as such. In other words, they should agree to remove those considerations that have no raison d'être except their mutual antagonism at the world level. As we see it, the relaxation of tension that is sought does, to a large extent, depend on their just solution in keeping with the inalienable rights of peoples to self-determination.

Secondly, world peace is seriously threatened by the interplay of regional conflicts and acts of destabilization. Of course, most of the time, these acts involve local régimes that use violence as their preferred instrument for promoting their hegemonistic aspirations and have recourse to the use of force and aggression to carry out their dark designs, scorning the principles and rules of law governing the international order.

Yet, it seems to us that the super-Powers are not entirely free of responsibility. The sorry plight of innocent people in Africa, the Middle East and Asia reduced to a tragic existence of death and devastation should not leave them

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

indifferent. Neither should the cruel dilemma in which many countries find themselves obliged to buy weapons at exorbitant prices, to the detriment of their economies and the social well-being of their peoples. Yet, thanks to their influence deriving from their power and the responsibility they assumed on the world level, the major countries are able to change the diabolical course of events, so that hotbeds are extinguished and negotiations can replace armed confrontation. That is how the super-Powers could increasingly introduce the best remedy to eliminate the scourge of terrorism - individual terrorism and State terrorism - which is also gradually making use of evermore sophisticated weaponry.

As everyone knows, one kind of terrorism is but an extension of acts of violence caused by the obstinate refusal to recognize legitimate and inalienable rights of peoples subjected to foreign domination. Having said that, we are in no way trying to justify or excuse terrorism as a loathsome practice; but we feel that one should not neglect one important element in our understanding, one which truth and the reality of the situation make it incumbent upon us to recall. For terrorism is also an extension of acts of violence committed by those who obstinately refuse to accept this aspiration to freedom; and it is also an extension of acts of violence committed by belligerent countries in the vain hope of exercising some pressure or indeed achieving victory.

There is no need for me to emphasize our extremely strong condemnation of terrorism, which, as tragic recent events have unfortunately reminded us, strikes innocent children, women and the elderly. They are innocent victims of conflicts with which they have absolutely nothing to do.

It is indeed with real feeling that I refer here to the painful trial imposed on France, in its capital, by blind attacks on innocent persons who, as I say, have nothing to do with the difficult debate on the international scene.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

France and its President, its Government and its people, deserve a better response to the contribution they are making to the solution of the problems that are of concern to us all. We condemn terrorism wherever it occurs and will indeed co-operate to prevent such misdeeds and to punish the guilty. But we also believe that we can crush this evil only if we attack it at its roots.

Tunisia, an Arab country by reason of its unalterable identity, an African country because of its roots and the way it has taken root, a Mediterranean country through its universal aspirations, is indeed well placed to give expression to some truths relating to the concerns we share in these very perilous times.

In the Mediterranean, to begin with, the situation is indeed a threatening one. The Mediterranean has traditionally been described as the lake of peace, and this is the unanimous desire of all the coastal States. It is also the cradle of civilizations that have given mankind so many things to be proud of. Yet, in this area we are witnessing a re-emergence of armed conflicts, open and covert terrorism, things that make this area a favoured area for confrontations, increasingly serious in scope and with incalculable implications. Overlying disputes relating to offended nationalism is an East-West antagonism which maintains hotbeds of tension and jeopardizes any possibility of peace. And so, in the final analysis, the goals of the local antagonists are submerged in these greater stakes that go beyond them.

The problem of the Middle East, the problem of Palestine, which is undergoing torture, is often subjected to the effects of this East-West antagonism.

This problem is at the crux of all the crises in the Arab world, crises that could lead to tragic upheavals affecting society in countries far away from the region. But this does not seem to influence Israel at all; it is still, blindly, obstinately, considering force and alliances as the exclusive grounds for its right

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

to drive a people from its lands. How else could one explain that in response to all the proposals made by the Arab side, particularly the Fez plan, in response to all the terms accepted by the Palestinian side, the Israeli side responds with a categorical refusal to engage in any discussion on the basis of a fair and lasting compromise, one that would involve a return of the occupied land, thus ensuring a safe and secure existence for all States in the region?

This formula, which is repeated in all international forums, must one day prevail through the understanding of those who realize they cannot let this tragedy go on developing until it threatens the whole world. In these circumstances and in connection with this tragedy, we must recall the moving words of wisdom and sincerity spoken by President Bourguiba in 1965 in Jericho, when he called for this solution, which is feasible and good for our Palestinian brothers, a solution based on strict international legality, namely the decision of the United Nations.

The only thing that can support Israel's refusal is obviously force, military superiority, which enables it to hold to its inflexible position and engage in an armed conflict in which it thinks it will be victorious. But there can be a change in the balance. Force will not necessarily always be a prerogative of just one area and one party. It is military force that enables Israel to invade any country at all in the area, such as Lebanon, under the pretext of guaranteeing its own security, and then to continue occupying the area as long as it feels it is necessary.

So for more than four years there has been a new dimension to the problem of the Middle East. This is a new imbroglio that brings increased tragedy, death, fear and anguish, far away from the frontiers of Lebanon.

We are analysing this tragedy without using euphemisms. Sometimes we may sound a little severe, but I think it is quite clear that we have no hatred at all

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

towards Jews living in any part of the world whatsoever, because Jews are our brothers through their origin, and in Tunisia they are our brothers because we have the same national identity. They have the right to regard themselves as full citizens, to live as such and to flourish as such. They are even entitled to respect for their fervent devotion to our common national identity.

Our people, and Bourguiba in particular, believe in tolerance and human fraternity. This is well enough known for me not to have to dwell on it here. It is because we refuse to let a racially inspired danger erupt elsewhere in the world that we are pleading for peaceful and reasonable solutions. This is why we want to see some influence from the super-Powers and from the major Powers, in support of restoring the total sovereignty of the Palestinian people with a guarantee for all States in the region to enjoy peace.

Do people believe that the East-West dialogue can take place while this part of the world is still in flames? And Europe, an integral part of the Mediterranean basin, should surely respond more vigorously in order to restore a just and lasting peace, inspired by that spirit of justice and by the moral values that are the very basis of European democracy.

Moreover, this is the only real way in which it can escape from the cycle of violence to which it is being subjected, and the cost in human life and money is beginning to weigh on it. Moreover, would this not be the most effective way of combating terrorism, and then building this economic and culturally complementary whole, this union between the developed European north and the Arab-African south, which is still developing but which has such tremendous potential?

The same applies to the situation in southern Africa. A problem of freedom and dignity affecting two peoples, victims of colonialism and shameless racial

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

discrimination is increasingly shifting into a conflict with world dimensions, because, on the one hand there are damaging consequences for all countries in the subregion, whose security, stability and supplies of food are being affected, and also because it is leading to a disturbance, if not a rupture, in trade and co-operative relations between the West and the region that is so useful to the economy of the West.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

Other conflicts bring suffering to other parts of the world. Millions of men and women are deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination and to choose their own kind of government. Bloodthirsty repression follows punitive expeditions and leads to the exodus of millions of innocent people from their homeland.

Thus, the situation in Afghanistan remains a tragic stalemate. Tunisia renews its appeal to the international community to take strong action without delay to promote a peaceful solution based on the principles of the Charter, thereby ensuring the withdrawal of foreign troops and respect for the independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan and the right of refugees to return to their homes.

The same applies to Cambodia, where the people have been decimated by massacres, war, and disease. Here also our Organization should take firmer action to ensure the withdrawal of foreign troops and respect for the independence and territorial integrity of that country and the right of the people of Kampuchea freely to choose their own future.

Important though it is to invite the United States of America and the Soviet Union to undertake negotiations covering all aspects of international tension, including the arms race, this is only one factor, and in highlighting their paramount role in the reduction, if not the elimination, of regional tensions and conflicts we are not in any way minimizing the responsibility of the protagonists in many of the conflicts which are disrupting the third world.

The parties involved in the conflicts cannot justify their actions, which are damaging to themselves and to others beyond the area of conflict, by the fact that the super-Powers allow this to happen.

The position of Tunisia is clear. It has been stated many times from this rostrum, in other, regional forums and within the framework of the Non-Aligned

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

Movement. Our position derives from our belief, the belief of President Bourguiba, in the freedom of peoples to determine their own future, respect for the sovereignty of nations and peace in a world of brothers dedicated to the well-being of the people.

It is in the light of that search for peace that Tunisia is particularly concerned by the tragedy being played out by two fraternal countries. After six years of bitter fighting, bringing death and destruction to Iraq and Iran, those two countries must take the sensible course of peace and negotiation. They must save their human and economic potential from destruction, which could become irreversible. They must realize the danger of this disastrous development of a ridiculous war, condemned to failure for both sides, the real danger of its bringing death and desolation to neighbouring countries and of assuming an international dimension, and going beyond the context of the region, because of the strategic economic interference that could provoke such an extension.

Iran in particular must understand that its interest lies in peace, which it can still establish with Iraq, which has already accepted an immediate cease-fire supervised by the United Nations with a view to finding a solution to the conflict in keeping with the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The distressing problems raised by conflicts in other regions far from ours should encourage us to fulfil the wishes of successive generations in the northern part of Africa.

Thus, Tunisia is working with faith and determination to bring nearer the blessed day when a united Maghreb will at last be a living reality. Tunisia, at the instigation of President Bourguiba, dean of the Heads of State of the Maghreb, proposed nearly two years ago a Maghreb summit meeting with the objective of

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

establishing principles and working out ways and means of bringing about a united Maghreb based on mutual trust, good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, agreement on matters of common concern and the promoting of co-operation between the States of the region. That meeting, by looking to the future with confidence, is intended to be a valuable opportunity for considering together the problems that are obstacles to the creation of such a Maghreb, and, of course, Western Sahara is in the forefront of our preoccupations.

The difficulties that have impeded our initiative will not prevent us from persevering in the patient search for the means of bringing about this Maghreb community to help us solve our common economic problems and fulfil an old hope that has never died. That community will be a model of co-operation and a powerful partner for the other coastal countries in the conception and realization of a policy that will make the Mediterranean an area of brotherhood.

Thanks to respect for these principles, realism and the farsightedness of their leaders, faced with the existing problems and the challenge they present, the coastal States of the Mediterranean, from north to south and east to west, will have an opportunity to make their sea, the Mediterranean, which today is prey to all kinds of tension and conflict, a lake of peace, friendship and co-operation. It is time for a spiritual revolution so that confrontation may give way to dialogue and quarrels about matters that can now be resolved may cease, to the benefit of the great aspirations the fulfilment of which will determine the future of mankind.

We firmly believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in that process, which could lead to the accomplishment of its great cause, which is certainly within our grasp if we take control of events and direct our action towards common objectives in which the interests of one are the interests of all.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

So we might think about reaching agreement on ways and means of establishing peace, security and co-operation in the Mediterranean, thereby avoiding any danger of the confrontation that might result from the extreme tensions in this part of the world.

Tunisia is making this proposal, and we suggest that it should be considered by all those concerned, in the hope that the idea will make headway at the next session of our Assembly and that specific means of implementing the proposal can be drawn up then.

In entrusting to this Organization the realization of our ideas, in choosing it as the best forum for giving effect to them, we are reaffirming our faith in its important task, which as we all know is to reduce antagonism, and to mobilize good will in order to free our world of tension and conflict by the pursuit of the dialogue so essential to mutual understanding and to the harmonization of international relations. But if our Organization is to continue this task and bring it to a successful conclusion it must have the means to do so. We are convinced that each one of us will do his best to ensure that means are made available in terms both of material requirements, and of the resolve to reassert the authority of this Organization that has rendered such outstanding service to mankind. As far as Tunisia is concerned, and President Bourguiba, this prestigious Assembly constitutes, as always, the summit of the international legal order. Thus, it has been a pleasure and an honour for me to speak here on behalf of my country, and make the voice of Tunisia heard from this rostrum.

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): We all come in turn to this important rostrum to speak of our perception of the world, our combined efforts produce a picture of present day international realities.

What is the picture that we see today?

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

At first glance, the interval since the last session of the General Assembly has done nothing to brighten the panorama of our time. The intervening period has been marked by a number of factors which have aggravated existing concerns. The arms race has not been halted; it is advancing in a steep spiral. The danger of its spreading to outer space has become more real. Dangerous hotbeds of armed conflict persist. In many parts of the world, misery and poverty are becoming more acute.

Despite all this, we still believe that the International Year of Peace will go down in history as something more than just a symbol of peace.

I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to some trends which enable us to speak of glimmers of light on the world's horizon. They should be noted by everyone of us, for they should strengthen our resolve to act even more vigorously. They should be noted by all the peoples, who are tired of bearing the burden of fear and anxiety. They should be noted by the world as a whole, which is becoming an increasingly interdependent and indivisible whole, and which may no longer be able to withstand strain and destruction.

Hope breeds optimism. In the words of Mikhail Gorbachev:

"Everywhere in the world there is a growing conviction in the minds of the peoples and in political public circles and widely differing in their orientation and outlook that what is at stake is the survival of mankind and that the time has come for decisive and responsible action."

We see a glimmer of light in the fact that at a time so crucial for mankind the peoples of the world, and an increasing number of Governments, are becoming aware of the need to adopt a new way of thinking in line with the realities of the nuclear and space age.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The time is at hand when considerations of groups, blocs or ideologies are beginning to give way to the understanding that peace is the supreme value. Only if peace is translated from declarations into practical action is there a chance for survival. This new way of thinking is bringing that truth into the foreground. Whole groups of countries, the Non-Aligned Movement, political parties, public organizations and anti-nuclear forces are putting forward promising ideas for ending the nuclear deadlock. A favourable background is emerging for developing a dialogue.

An exception to this trend is the policy pursued by the imperialist forces. This contrast, however, only emphasizes the general will for action, for concrete practical deeds.

It is becoming a fact of life that vast territories are being declared nuclear-weapon-free zones. Democratic majorities are taking such decisions through democratic procedures.

Political leaders who claim that they are committed to democracy, should become aware of the contradictions between their behaviour and their declared principles. Instead of building up and counting warheads, they should be counting the votes of those who call for the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Unfortunately, in some countries the institutions of democracy are being outweighed by the immoral arithmetic of military superiority. But it is an indisputable fact that the call for action is no longer a voice crying in the wilderness. On the contrary, even in the wilderness of the Nevada desert calls are being heard for an end to nuclear testing. The Nevada explosions are now registered not only by us but also by United States scientists with their instruments installed near the Soviet city of Semipalatinsk.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

At the same time, not a single seismograph in the world is registering nuclear explosions on our territory - not because of any lack of sensitivity on the part of the instruments, but because the Soviet Union is responsive to the will of the world community.

In pursuing the foreign policy proclaimed at the Twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, our country is taking specific, practical steps. One of the most important is the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions. This is precisely the kind of action that proves the sincerity of our intentions and the seriousness of our concern for the future of the world.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

For more than a year now the Soviet testing sites have remained silent. Listen to this silence; it is very eloquent. If it were accompanied by a similar silence at United States test sites, that more than any words would tell mankind that what we are witnessing was the beginning of a movement towards realizing the idea of a nuclear-free world.

Stopping the tests means not allowing the emergence of new types of nuclear weapons and barring the way to the creation of nuclear space weapons. We call upon the United States to join us in this forward march and not call us back to carrying out explosions, as it proposed here yesterday. A bilateral moratorium, followed by a multilateral one, is one of the most important links in the chain of actions which could lead to the creation of a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

In its determination to make this a reality, the Soviet Union, together with other socialist countries, has submitted proposals on this subject for the Assembly's consideration. We are convinced that the creation of this system that would embrace the political, military, economic and humanitarian fields would be in keeping with the interests of all States and peoples.

The sponsors of this proposal make no claim to have discovered a hitherto unknown political "continent". If there are any blank spots today they exist mainly in the field of concrete, practical measures. To clear the way for such action would indeed be a discovery of the highest order. The proposed bases for security are consonant with the principles of the United Nations Charter and designed to promote their implementation within the specific conditions of our day. Here, we are looking forward to a most democratic and constructive discussion and the collective creative efforts of all countries.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The idea of comprehensive security presupposes first and foremost material guarantees of peace, political and international legal safeguards and the establishment of principles of civilized and respectful relations among States. A safe world is a world of law and order, in which there is strict compliance with the United Nations Charter and respect for all rules of international law, for human rights and freedoms.

Our initiative contains an answer to the question of what should be done to save life on Earth. As we speak of this the abandoned villages in the area of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant stand before our eyes. That accident has meant for us more than grief over our losses and compassion for its victims. It has reinforced our anxiety for the future of the Earth. Chernobyl was a tragic mistake on the part of human beings working with the peaceful atom. But still less are there any guarantees against mistakes with the military uses of the atom. Given the existence in the world of 50,000 nuclear warheads, we are living on borrowed time and no one knows when that time will run out.

What should be done? Continue to play the game of nuclear roulette? It is clear even now that, sooner or later, this could lead us to collective suicide and self-destruction. There is only one way out: before it is too late, while there is still time, the game played for insane stakes and in which there can be no winner must be stopped. Stop once and for all this deadly gambling with nuclear death.

It is within the powers of the international community, the sole sovereign master of its own fate to do this. No single nuclear Power has the right to take decisions on behalf of all, and the USSR refuses to do so. In his historic statement of 15 January, the Soviet leader proposed something quite different - to scrap all nuclear weapons. Once again the criterion is experience.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Political responsibility is the opposite of political arrogance. The problem of nuclear testing clearly highlights these mutually incompatible approaches.

There are other facts. Look at the fate of the SALT I and SALT II treaties. They are being torn up now because they allow no room for equipping a 131st bomber with cruise missiles. One thousand, five hundred such missiles seemed too few, so it was necessary to add 20 more.

The tribunal of history is merciless in its verdicts. If political leaders fail to take timely and responsible decisions, history will not forgive them. We have a chance to lay the foundations for lasting peace. Of course it is not just a matter of adopting yet another resolution. The United Nations must establish a system of values which gives the highest priority to practical actions.

Let me emphasize that this is being stated by the representative of a nuclear Power. We never wanted to acquire nuclear weapons, but from the time we were forced to acquire them we have constantly sought to limit, reduce and eliminate them. We are not the last member of the "nuclear club", but we are proposing its dissolution. Let there be no mistake - we have our pride like anyone else. However, the prestige and dignity of a great Power are things we associate with the equal security of all.

We are motivated by our sense of responsibility both to our own people and to other peoples. It is for this reason precisely that we are willing to agree to sensible compromises and make realistic concessions when we put forward proposals for the reduction of strategic offensive weapons and medium-range missiles. This reflects the new approach to the realities of the nuclear space age outlined most fully and comprehensively in Mikhail Gorbachev's report to the Twenty-Seventh Congress of our Party.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The sincerity of our intentions and the integrity of our position are matched by our determination to put an end to the dangerous course of world events. We are putting so much emphasis on the renunciation of nuclear-weapon tests because it is precisely this that is the real test of the sincerity of declarations.

Yesterday we heard the statement of the President of the United States. It is regrettable that the rostrum of the General Assembly was used in such a way. To respond point by point to that statement presents no problem. However, to enter into polemics would be to show a lack of respect for our audience. The subject under discussion is far too serious to turn it into a grindstone for sharpening political wit. Time is too precious to be wasted on refuting misconceptions and prejudices that distort reality and facts.

Nevertheless, there is one key point to which we must refer, because it is of fundamental importance. I am referring to the attempt to provide a philosophical rationale for the assertion that new sophisticated military technology is capable of reliably ensuring security. It is precisely that kind of philosophy that caused the tidal wave of armaments which has been growing year after year and now threatens to obliterate the Earth.

There is only one path to security - destroying existing weapons instead of replacing them with new ones. The technology of destruction must not be allowed to determine policy.

One can imagine the sigh of relief among people if they heard that in this International Year of Peace the United States, too, had decided to stop nuclear testing. That is what they had been expecting from the United States President.

I have been authorized to state that the Soviet Union is ready, at any time and anywhere, to sign a treaty on the total prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. We are ready to do so here at the United Nations, so that the entire world community could become part of this great act and historical turning-point which would be a sign of respect for its will.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Words not matched by deeds are worthless, but words supported by deeds are a country's gold reserve.

We urge those who make verbal pronouncements in favour of eliminating nuclear weapons to follow up with practical deeds. Otherwise whatever they say about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons is no more than a rhetorical mirage behind which there looms an altogether different policy.

Its proponents have a favourite argument, verification. But that argument increasingly resembles a tattered curtain. Broadly speaking, there is no longer any problem of verification. In the conviction that there can be no trust without verification, the Soviet Union is open to any form or method of verification.

In our view the summit conference of the non-aligned countries at Harare made some very valuable recommendations in this respect. The United Nations could support the proposals of the Delhi Six - Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden - on monitoring compliance with the obligation not to carry out nuclear tests. The Soviet Union will accept recommendations formulated under the auspices of the United Nations.

We agree with those States which believe that the question whether mankind will live in a nuclear or a nuclear-free world must be decided by the whole world community and not by a small group of nuclear Powers.

This also applies fully to the future of outer space, for near-Earth space is the common heritage of mankind and should be used for the benefit of all. However, if weapons get into space, this heritage would become a threat to all; just two or three States enjoying the status of military-space Powers would then dominate the rest of the world.

Is that what we want? Do we want a military-space fiefdom to be established? The question is posed by the course of events, which may become tragic for

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international relations as a whole. Therefore we shall continue to work to protect outer space from attempts to turn it into a military domain of one or two Powers.

Today those designs are being camouflaged with high-sounding pronouncements about a defence programme, which supposedly would do away with the threat of attack once and for all. One hears moving and soul-stirring stories about a dream which when realized would free mankind from the fear of nuclear death. Evil designs are being purveyed as good intentions, and swords as shields.

Let no one be misled by such talk. It serves to conceal an attack against the main pillar of stability, the anti-ballistic-missile Treaty. The intention is to get the Treaty out of the way within a time frame of seven years. Here everything is being very carefully calculated, for it is precisely in seven years that they plan to prepare space weapons for deployment.

The question is, What for? Would it not be more sensible to work for an agreement on the complete elimination of nuclear missiles, whether strategic, medium-range or any other, as we are proposing?

The answer is simple: whatever is done to disguise it, the so-called defensive space shield is being designed to carry out a first strike with impunity. The first strike could become the last one, and not just for the country being attacked. Space weapons, like nuclear arms, do not recognize national boundaries, and they do not choose whom to spare and whom to destroy. And in any circumstances they would threaten, not one country or several countries, but the entire world.

Therefore we consider it necessary to warn everybody that if space is to remain peaceful everyone must protect it. In this, the United Nations, the only legitimate trustee of peace in outer space, should make its voice heard.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We also call for the help of the United Nations in regard to a matter of extreme importance - the elimination of chemical weapons. Encouraging progress has been achieved at the Geneva Conference.

The historic goal of ridding the earth of chemical weapons is now closer to attainment. The only thing that could hinder the attainment of that goal is the position of the United States, which is seeking to develop binary weapons. However, obstacles can be removed if political will is evinced - and this Organization is quite capable of stimulating it.

A comprehensive system of international security has more than nuclear, space or chemical parameters. Security implies the non-use of any force, including conventional armaments and armed forces.

The Soviet Union calls for a significant reduction in the level of military confrontation, above all between politico-military alliances. Radical proposals to that effect, based on the concept of reasonable sufficiency, have been made by the States members of the Warsaw Treaty.

I shall say even more. We would certainly not want our troops to be present anywhere beyond our national borders. This question is also open for discussion and can be resolved in an atmosphere of increased trust and with the implementation of measures of military détente.

A beginning has already been made in the Stockholm forum, and all of us - not just the Europeans - can congratulate ourselves and each other on this triumph of reason and good will. It has given us something more than just a major agreement. It has demonstrated that when we really want something, we can achieve it. It has confirmed that the Helsinki process is being successfully developed and has taken deep roots in European soil. It is now extremely important that the forthcoming meeting in Vienna should become yet another milestone in Europe's advance towards reliable security and improved co-operation.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The Asian and Pacific region should also be allowed to breathe freely. Our ideas in this regard are incorporated in a concrete programme of action that was outlined in Mikhail Gorbachev's address in Vladivostock. We are encouraged that this programme has proved to be in harmony with the feelings of many States of the region.

We are aware of all the sore spots existing in the region. First of all, there is the Korean peninsula. The people of Korea yearn for an end to the division of their country. There is only one impediment to that, namely the presence of United States troops, which in effect occupy the southern part of the country.

The situation around Kampuchea is another source of tension. Here again the fate of the entire people is being sacrificed to the geopolitical interests of certain States. To serve those interests, some are trying to consign to oblivion the millions of human lives destroyed by the reactionary anti-national clique. This must not be allowed to happen.

The constructive proposals of Kampuchea, Laos and Viet Nam open the way for resolving the region's problems on a broad political basis and stabilizing the situation in South-East Asia.

Untying those and many other knots would undoubtedly contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in the Asian and Pacific region, and we are doing our best to promote this.

The positive changes now under way in our country's relations with the People's Republic of China are important not only in terms of bilateral co-operation; they are also conducive to the improvement of the overall situation.

New and increasingly rich substance is being added to our traditional friendly relations with the people of India and its Government.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The Soviet Union values good relations with many Asian States and wishes to discuss with them, in particular with the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), ways of upgrading relations where they are as yet below the desired level.

Measures to eliminate regional conflicts would form an organic part of the concept of comprehensive security. Of course, there is not, nor can there be, a uniform model for a political settlement here. Nevertheless, concrete expression must be given to some general principles. Those are, first, unconditional respect for sovereignty, independence and the right of nations themselves to choose their way of development; secondly, a respectful attitude towards legitimate Governments; thirdly, respect for the obligations and agreements concluded between States in full conformity with international law.

Every regional conflict is a difficult test for the United Nations. This is particularly true with regard to those territories where the emblem of the United Nations symbolizes special responsibility. Unfortunately, it is all too often darkened by the shadow of unfulfilled hopes.

The time has long since come to put to effective use all the powers of this Organization, to exercise all its rights. This applies above all to the fate of the Namibian people and to the Trust Territory of Micronesia. Their problems are as old as the United Nations.

The Middle East problem is somewhat "younger". There must not be many people present in this Hall who participated in the adoption of the resolution on the division of Palestine. Today, we are once again voicing our view that along with the State of Israel, which owes its existence to, among others, the Soviet Union, an Arab Palestinian State should become part of the world's political map.

We believe that the United Nations should again take the matter of a Middle East settlement into its hands. As a practical step in that direction, the Soviet

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Union proposes that a preparatory committee be set up within the framework of the Security Council to do the necessary work for convening an international conference on the Middle East.

The tragedy of the people of Cyprus has been going on for so many years now. Here as well there has been no lack of mediation efforts and plans for a settlement. Various options have been tried, but the proposal that the problem of Cyprus be settled at a representative international conference under the auspices of the United Nations has been studiously evaded. Who stands to gain from that? Only those forces which intend to use the island for their military and political plans. Raising the stick of "neo-globalism" over the Mediterranean, they would like to turn the entire region into a hotbed of tension. They sometimes use that stick without giving any thought to the consequences, as was done with barbaric cruelty in Libya.

Since the very beginning of the war between Iraq and Iran, the Soviet Union has been calling for a stop to that senseless mutual extermination. Being sincere friends of both nations, we are making use of the possibilities available to us to convince the parties to the conflict that they should make peace. We shall continue to do so.

It is our conviction that were it not for the racist régime of Pretoria the black, white and coloured people in South Africa would have long ago found a common language - a language of equality, concord and racial peace. The dividing line is drawn not by ethnic differences but by the cruel policy of apartheid, which is hostile to everyone, irrespective of the colour of the skin. To fail to see that is to encourage, wittingly or unwittingly, genocide against the majority of the South African people.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The world community has just spoken out unequivocally about the situation in southern Africa, and it is up to the Security Council now to adopt binding decisions, embodying in them the will of the absolute majority of the world's nations.

Recently, a new and ugly phenomenon of "prepaid" regional conflicts has appeared in international practice. A graphic example is Nicaragua, into which millions of dollars are being channelled to finance the massacre of peasants and the destruction of villages and plantations - only because that small country has dared to choose its own way of development which, in the eyes of the administration of the world's largest and most powerful capitalist nation, appears to pose a threat to its security.

The undeclared wars against the legitimate Governments of Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia are paid for in exactly the same way. And quite often the country financing a conflict maintains diplomatic relations or conducts negotiations with the Government concerned, while at the same time seeking to overthrow it by any means. Indeed, it does not mind the cost when blacklisting Governments and countries which, for some reason or other, it finds inconvenient. Thus, the entire range of reprisals, from direct military to economic and ideological, has been used against the Republic of Cuba for more than a quarter of a century. But surely it is high time to understand that such a policy is bankrupt and that it can only be described as insane.

Political wisdom dictates acknowledging the established realities and not seeking to undo them arbitrarily. Describing gangs of mercenaries as "freedom fighters" - which is attempted in the war against Afghanistan - does not help. The time has come to learn to call things by their own names. With regard to Afghanistan, a national democratic revolution has taken place there. Its social base is constantly becoming broader and stronger; it relies on the support and participation of all social strata and ethnic groups in that country without any

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

exception. They have a clear-cut programme for a peaceful settlement of crisis phenomena, and all that is needed is not to hamper that positive process. Here again, the Soviet Union is in favour of seeking new solutions and a fresh approach, unobscured by prejudice, that would help to identify ways of solving the problem with due regard for the legitimate interests of the Afghan people and of its friends and neighbours.

A comprehensive system of international security can give us the keys to many of the most intricate locks.

We have outlawed, as most other States have, any form of terrorism. At the same time, we are prepared to contribute, and are already contributing, to fighting that plague. No sane person can live with it. Terrorism must be mercilessly eradicated, for innocent people suffer and die because of it. But to combat it effectively we also should see its causes. One should not ignore the nature of that abhorrent phenomenon: outbursts of individual and group terror are sometimes engendered by imperialist violence against entire peoples. An improvement in the overall international situation would do much to help stamp out terrorism.

An obstacle to an improved international climate is posed by neo-globalism. It entails diktat and aggression; it tramples upon the independence of nations. The alternative to it is a comprehensive system of security.

The arms race and regional conflicts inevitably have an adverse effect on the world economic system. And while politicians, futurologists and experts are trying somehow to model a structure of security in a world with or without weapons, no one can come even close to predicting the economic consequences of the situation as it evolves. Yet the explosion with which it is fraught would be no less catastrophic than a possible malfunction in the technologies of war.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, Soviet Union)

Today, militarism is not only jeopardizing man's physical survival but his socio-economic progress as well. The cost of the arms race is reaching a level comparable to the material damage caused by past world wars. All of this makes disarmament imperative.

Against the background of the uncontrollable crisis affecting the world economic structure we see with particular clarity the increasingly prevalent process of pumping out resources from the national economies of the developing countries of Latin America, Africa and other regions. In the early 1980s the developing world, exploited by imperialism, was pushed into a vicious circle of development via debt, and it now finds itself hung up in the noose of a trillion dollar indebtedness. This, in effect, means that regions with the world's greatest concentration of population, resources and future markets are sliding towards economic catastrophe.

That is why we regard economic security as an integral part of a comprehensive system of international security. When it begins to function, it will be possible to set up a fund for assistance to the developing countries and to draw up, under United Nations auspices, a global programme of scientific and technological co-operation.

In our opinion, a comprehensive system of international security is inconceivable without wide-ranging and open co-operation in the humanitarian field. We are strongly in favour of expanded international co-operation in implementing political, social and individual human rights, and we urge everyone to take a fresh, unbiased look at that problem. Specifically, at the Bern meeting the Soviet Union proposed that steps be taken by all States bring their domestic legislation on the whole range of humanitarian problems into conformity with international norms. Unfortunately, another approach emerged at the Bern meeting,

(Mr. Shevardnadze, Soviet Union)

one that ignores the consensus among most of the participants in that dialogue. Here, the United States of America undermined the adoption of any agreement.

The path of détente is a path towards greater openness in societies, towards a better level of objective information, towards nations' mutual familiarization with each other's life and towards the strengthening of the spirit of mutual understanding and accord in their relations.

Whatever the field of international relations we turn to, the role of the United Nations can be seen as indispensable and its responsibility as great. Today, with the emergence of a new consolidation of the forces of progress and peace, the members of the Organization should have as their common concern the enhancement of United Nations authority and prestige and the increased effectiveness of its decisions. The dedicated work of Mr. Perez de Cuellar as Secretary-General of the United Nations at a difficult time for the Organization evokes deep respect, and we would like to thank him cordially.

The United Nations is on the verge of serious changes. It is impossible to restructure relations among States without taking into account altered realities. The Organization could only gain were the country presiding as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement to participate, in one form or another, in the work of the Security Council.

Recent events have once again focused attention on an odd phenomenon: the country that once offered the site for United Nations Headquarters today all-too-often shows intense hostility towards the Organization. It slams the door and refuses to fulfil its obligations, as has been the case with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), or tries to assert the principle that whoever has the most money is right. It puts spokes in the wheels of the collective machinery with the notion that by so doing that machinery can be made to function according to its will. The United States has adopted the practice

(Mr. Shevardnadze, Soviet Union)

of lecturing, punishing and arbitrarily threatening the Organization as a whole and those of its members it dislikes for some reason. Lately, the States Members of the United Nations have begun to ask with increasing frequency whether the United Nations can function normally in a country whose Government shows such undisguised disrespect for them and for the Organization itself. Perhaps that question should be heeded. It might be useful to hold a special debate in the United Nations on the numerous accumulated problems of the operation of the Organization.

The Organization's universality implies a forward thrust towards rapprochement and towards the elimination of centrifugal forces. In light of the proposed concept of comprehensive security, the East-West, North-South polarities can and must be expunged from the political vocabulary. That is what socialism is calling for. Whatever its antagonists assert, socialism is opposed to confrontation and intransigence in the most important pursuit of mankind: the construction of a durable and guaranteed peace. We have adopted that system of priorities in our relationship with the United States as well. This question has already been addressed here yesterday. Let me say that we are far from regarding our relations with the United States as holding no promise particularly since we have a high regard for the American people. Lately, encouraging outlines of meaningful agreements have been emerging. A summit meeting is also a realistic possibility. We could move forward fairly smoothly, if that is what the United States side wants. We are realists, and we do not draw inspiration from utopian ideas. At the end of the last century, people envisioned the coming twentieth century as a golden age. But reality has dashed those expectations. Today, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, the objective reality is such that it could become either the golden age of science or the age of nuclear permafrost. The material means for bringing about either outcome already exist. The question is, which of them will be put to use?

(Mr. Shevardnadze, Soviet Union)

The danger for civilization is all-too evident. Hence the need for responsible, concerted action to prevent any possible catastrophe. We have made our choice. The Soviet Union - and I quote the words of Mikhail Gorbachev - will "continue to use every opportunity for productive dialogue, for progress towards arms limitation and reduction, as well as towards the settlement of regional conflicts and the development of international co-operation in all areas of importance."

We think that in our deliberations it is very important that we never lose sight of the real scale of time and of the world. The language of which some politicians are so fond obscures that scale in a fog of nebulous abstract concepts, as if what is involved were not the Earth, but some other, remote, planet. Yet it is the Earth that we see before us in the images of our children and grandchildren, our fathers and mothers, our sisters and brothers, all those who are close and dear to us and with whom each of us identifies the concepts of "nation," "country" and "mankind."

This is the only acceptable yardstick. And one should not adjust his political telescope as though his sole interest were whether there is, indeed, life on Mars. All of us must answer one question, a question that is equally important to all: whether there will be life on Earth. We would very much like to answer, with confidence: Yes, there will be!

Sir Geoffrey HOWE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, I welcome you to your prestigious office with the same warmth which exists between our two countries - both members of the Commonwealth. I share with you some knowledge of the English Bar and know that you will show the dedication, wisdom and objectivity which, if I may say so, is the hallmark of our legal profession.

I cannot fail at the same time to pay a tribute to your predecessor, who represents a fellow member of the European Community. Ambassador de Piniés has had a distinguished career at the United Nations, crowned by his handling of the fortieth anniversary session, which captured world attention. He did not disappoint the high expectations we all had of him.

Nor can I omit to pay a tribute to our Secretary-General and to say how happy I am, how happy we all are, to see him restored to health. His modesty and patience - qualities which once again showed through in his annual report - are an example to us all.

I have the honour to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the European Community and its 12 Member States.

Forty years ago, on 19 September 1946, Winston Churchill had this to say of Europe:

"Over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and homes and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror."

A generation later it is sobering for us in Western Europe to remember those words. They remind us of the full destructive force of what Churchill, in a later speech described as:

"Ancient nationalistic feuds and modern ideological factions [which] distract and infuriate the unhappy, hungry populations."

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

The destructive power of Churchill's "feuds and factions" is undiminished, and it is for that reason I wish to dwell for a moment on the more hopeful experience of the European Community. I say this with great humility; for in this century, as often before, we Europeans have feared and distrusted, fought and plundered one another. Yet today 12 free countries of Western Europe can speak to the world with a single voice; and we can do so in the conviction that we shall never attack one another again.

The Community is an ambitious undertaking. The decisions we take in our Community can change the laws of all our countries. They touch the life of all our citizens. Of course it sometimes takes us time to agree; but we believe other nations could profit from the same stability and trust which we have built in Europe since 1945. This mutual trust has allowed us to build up our joint political and economic strength. We are determined to go on advancing our interests together. Let there be no doubt: a challenge to one of us is a challenge to all: whether it be to our liberties, interests, rights or well-being; whether it comes from terrorists or drug-dealers, from bullies or from tyrants.

Last year my predecessor, Jacques Poos, the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, spoke here as representative of 10 members of the European Community. It is my privilege to address you on behalf of 12 member States, for the Community has welcomed two new members - Spain and Portugal. Their accession weaves two more strands of European culture and history into one ever-thickening cable. Meanwhile the construction of Europe goes on. We are ratifying new treaty provisions on foreign policy co-operation. And by the end of 1992 we mean to have broken down the barriers that still divide the Community; so that, from Aberdeen to Athens, from Copenhagen to Cadiz, goods, services and capital and, by no means least, people, can move freely between us.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

Our Community has learnt to work together in domestic affairs. It is now the world's single greatest trading bloc. Individually we have made powerful contributions to world affairs: our contribution must and will grow, now that we act together. The principles of the Charter of the United Nations have always been basic to our Community. We believe that our history imposes on us a particular responsibility to work for those principles and to promote in the world the ideal of dialogue and peaceful co-operation which has served the member States so well.

But Europe, the wider Europe, remains divided. Twenty-five years ago the Berlin wall cast its shadow between East and West. Barbed wire and concrete set neighbours and families apart from each other. These man-made divisions oblige us, as Europeans, to search for reconciliation and the rebuilding of trust between nations. Our common history and culture encourage us to believe we can succeed.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

The accident at Chernobyl, to which the Soviet Foreign Minister has just referred in his own speech, has added a new dimension to exchanges between East and West. Let us hope that the lessons of that accident will be well learned. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, in a different context:

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

For us in Europe, as for the rest of the world, better relations between the two super-Powers are of the greatest importance. We warmly welcomed the Geneva summit meeting last November between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev. We share the widespread hope that there will be another summit this year. That prospect has already produced major proposals by both sides. We therefore much regret that the arrest of a respected American journalist in Moscow has cast a cloud over those hopes. We look for its early removal.

The Geneva negotiations have as one priority the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The other urgent priority is deep cuts in the strategic and intermediate forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. We believe that the United States, the Soviet Union and Europe can make significant progress towards disarmament without compromising their security. An early agreement on the world-wide elimination of chemical weapons should and must be obtained.

Even if the objective of general and complete disarmament can only be gradually achieved, it nonetheless remains our ultimate goal. But agreements will have lasting value only if they are fair, balanced and verifiable. And if confidence is to grow, existing arms control agreements must be respected by all parties. We are approaching a critical period: there is an opportunity for major decisions. Future generations will not forgive failure.

Arms control and disarmament negotiations are only part of East-West

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

relations. Practical steps are needed to overcome the tension and divisions that lie behind the high level of armaments.

That is why the Helsinki Final Act is so important. It is fundamental for the health of East-West relations that all the Helsinki commitments should be honoured. We look to all the participants in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process to do so. At the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna, we will press for the sort of steps which ordinary people in our countries can see and understand.

The Twelve warmly welcome the successful conclusion of the Stockholm conference last weekend. The agreement that has been reached there is a significant contribution towards reducing the risk of war in Europe and towards establishing greater confidence between East and West. The Twelve, who made a substantial contribution to that result, will seek to build on it both in the field of arms control and, more widely, in the CSCE process.

Although Afghanistan and Cambodia are two countries far distant from our own, the outside interventions there symbolize many of the problems we face in East-West relations and in working for greater stability in the world at large. In Afghanistan in particular, some small detachments of Soviet troops may be withdrawn, but over 110,000 Soviet troops will still remain.

Tens of thousands of Afghan citizens have been killed as a result of the Soviet occupation. They will not return to life. Four million people remain outside their country, living as refugees. Many of them have been taken in by Pakistan, which has been rewarded by numerous attacks launched across its border from Afghanistan.

Speaking for a moment as the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, I cannot refrain from observing that it was in this context that the Foreign Minister of the

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Soviet Union said that "the time has come to learn to call things by their proper names." I cannot refrain from expressing my astonishment and dismay that the facts which I have just described - the events which have taken place in the past six years in Afghanistan - were described by the Soviet Foreign Minister as "a national, democratic revolution". If that be their view, then it is not a view that can be shared by the rest of the world.

Speaking again for the Twelve, the principles we seek are those that must underlie a solution. They have been massively endorsed by the Assembly on many occasions. The Soviet Union should implement those principles, withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan and agree an acceptable timetable without delay. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to resolve the conflict. Only the success of those efforts - and soon - can prevent further suffering.

Few parts of the world have suffered more than the Middle East from the ancient feuds and modern factions of Churchill's phrase. Our approach is the same: to counsel dialogue and co-operation. There are no military answers to the conflict in the Middle East or in North Africa.

A just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute can be achieved only through negotiation. We take encouragement from the agreement between Egypt and Israel over Taba. We have made our own views known on many occasion, and we stand by them. An international conference could make a major contribution if the gap between the parties could be narrowed and if they could agree on the principle and nature of such a conference.

All parties should clearly and unambiguously accept two principles: the right to existence and security of all States in the area, including Israel, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and all that that implies.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

We appeal to the parties concerned - the Arab States, Israel and the Palestinian people - to open the door to peace by recognizing each other's rights.

The Twelve are working individually and collectively to help development in the occupied territories. We call on Israel, pending its withdrawal in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967), scrupulously to fulfill its obligations as the occupying Power and to ease restrictions on political activity and economic development. But such measures must be a prelude to, not a substitute for, true peace negotiations.

Six years ago this month, the conflict between Iran and Iraq broke out. It has claimed well over half a million casualties and gravely damaged both countries. It is a source of great concern to their neighbours in the Gulf, with whom we sympathize. We have unreservedly condemned the use of chemical weapons and the escalating attacks by both sides on shipping in the Gulf. The two countries should ask themselves what possible good is served by continuing this conflict. We would deeply deplore any further escalation.

It should be accepted equally by both parties that this conflict can only be brought to an end by negotiation. Security Council resolution 582 (1986) forms the best basis for such a negotiated settlement. We urge Iran and Iraq to agree an immediate ceasefire and to seek a peaceful, honourable solution to their differences, co-operating fully with the Secretary-General in the exercise of his good offices.

In the Western Sahara, as well, we appeal to the parties to respond positively to the Secretary-General's efforts to find a peaceful solution.

The United Nations is doing vital work in the effort to preserve Lebanon's sovereignty, unity independence and territorial integrity. We deplore recent

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incidents which have put new obstacles in the way of the mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We extend our sympathies to the victims. We wish to underline the urgency and importance of taking measures to enable the Force to carry out its mission safely and effectively. The latest events have demonstrated how intolerable the present situation has become.

I now turn to the problem of Cyprus, which after too many years remains an important matter of international concern. The island remains tragically divided. The Twelve reaffirm their strong backing for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Cyprus, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. We stand fully by our previous statements.

In particular, we reject any action that purports to establish an independent State within Cyprus. As we have made clear on many occasions, we support the Secretary-General in his mission of good offices for a just and viable solution to the problem. We ask all concerned to co-operate with him and not to take any action that would make his task more difficult.

In South Africa, the Twelve have worked to promote the genuine national dialogue that is so obviously and urgently needed if there is to be a peaceful solution to the country's problems. South Africa's policies also affect its neighbours. We have forcefully condemned its armed incursions against neighbouring countries. There must be no recurrence of those armed raids.*

* Mr. Bin Abdullah (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

The Twelve have repeatedly made clear their revulsion at apartheid. We have demanded that it should be abolished. We utterly reject a philosophy which denies opportunity or liberty to one child yet gives ordinary rights and privileges to another solely on the basis of his or her colour. Such a system breeds hatred and violence. There have been reforms in South Africa, but too few and too slow to stem the surging bitterness and bloodshed in the country. The present state of emergency has brought desolation to the homes of many thousands of people imprisoned without trial and has worsened, not improved, the prospects for peaceful change.

Violence will not end apartheid. Instead, conditions must be created in which dialogue can begin. But dialogue is impossible while black leaders remain imprisoned or detained and black organizations proscribed. That is why the Twelve have repeatedly called on the South African Government to release unconditionally Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and to lift the ban on the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress of Azania and other political parties.

In September 1985 the European Community countries agreed on a series of measures - some restrictive, some positive - designed to impress on the South African Government the inescapable need for fundamental reform. In June this year, at The Hague, the European Council decided to take additional action. As part of that action, Heads of State and Government of the Twelve asked me to undertake a mission to southern Africa. In the course of two visits to the area in July I sought to explain the policies of the Twelve to South Africa's neighbours and to impress upon the South African Government our deep concern and the need for steps to encourage a peaceful negotiated solution.

In the absence of any progress in that direction, and having consulted the major Western industrialized countries, the Twelve agreed at Brussels last week to

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impose a ban on new investments in South Africa and on the import of iron, steel and gold coins from South Africa. Those measures represent a further step reinforcing the measures we took last year, which included bans on all exports to and imports from South Africa of arms and paramilitary equipment, a ban on oil exports and a ban on all new co-operation in the nuclear field.

In addition we are implementing a concerted European programme to help the victims of apartheid, both individually and collectively. We are helping those arrested under the state of emergency and we are putting heavy emphasis on programmes of training and education for black South Africans. We are also helping South Africa's neighbours, for example over the improvement of transport facilities in the region.

We shall keep up our effort in all these areas and do everything we can to promote urgent and peaceful change.

Time is short. We appeal to the South African Government to look to the future, to accept that fundamental change is inevitable. That Government clearly understands the demographic and economic challenge. South Africa's white leaders are sowing the wind; unless sincere negotiation begins now, their own children will reap the whirlwind.

The South African Government also bears a heavy responsibility in Namibia. Last year it set up a so-called transitional government of national unity. That body has no status whatsoever under the United Nations plan. We cannot accept unilateral moves by South Africa to transfer power in Namibia. We call upon the South African Government to implement the United Nations plan without further delay.

Central America is another area where armed force will solve nothing. Dialogue and peaceful negotiation are the only way forward. A political solution is

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of the highest importance and it must emerge from the region itself. We support the Contadora peace process, which is a major step in the right direction, but further effort is needed by all concerned to reduce regional tensions. At Luxembourg last November we established a political dialogue with Central America to underline our active support for that process in the interests of stability and pluralistic democracy. We also signed a co-operation agreement. We reiterate our intention to increase our aid to the region substantially in order to encourage regional co-operation and economic development.

On behalf of the United Kingdom I shall be circulating a document (A/41/636), a separate national communication, on the Falklands.

More widely in Latin America, we have been encouraged by the continuing consolidation of democracy in most countries of South America. We hope that this process will continue throughout the region. But problems certainly remain in some countries. We have made plain our particular concern about human rights abuses and the continuation of violence in Chile. The Chilean Government has reimposed a state of siege following the attempted assassination of General Pinochet. We view this development with deep concern and reiterate our hope that the Government will immediately release political prisoners and initiate without delay a dialogue with the democratic opposition about a peaceful restoration of democracy.

The human rights abuses in Chile and South Africa are by means unique. This Assembly cannot remain indifferent in the face of the systematic violations of individual liberties, of the tyranny, oppression and indiscriminate violence which persist in many countries and of the fact that hunger, disease and lack of opportunity deny the most basic economic and social rights to countless people.

On 21 July this year we issued a statement setting out our principles in this field. That was a signal of the high priority we attach to human rights in our

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international relationships. This Assembly has established clear standards - in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments. We seek the universal observance of those instruments. That is, what our people expect, not just fine words, so we attach particular importance to maintaining and strengthening the mechanisms established by the United Nations for the protection of human rights.

The scourge of international terrorism has brought a new precariousness to modern life. It has killed innocent people in airports, shopping arcades and crowded streets. We utterly condemn cowardly attacks like the Karachi hijack and the recent atrocities in Istanbul and Paris, which can do nothing to help the political causes that their perpetrators profess to believe in. Our horror is greater when sovereign States lend their support - moral or material - to the terrorists. This year we have taken certain steps to deter State-supported terrorism, particularly in the case of Libya. No country which supports terrorism can expect to enjoy normal relations with the Twelve. We are determined to do more, and a ministerial meeting of the Twelve will be taking place on 25 September to consider future action. We shall not tolerate such behaviour by supposedly responsible Governments.

So, too, the problem of drugs demands an urgent collective effort. International drug trafficking is now on a scale that threatens to undermine whole societies. Close international co-operation is required to defeat this evil trade. We shall play our part at the World Conference in Vienna next June - a valuable initiative by the Secretary-General.

Economic issues have been central to the development of the European Community. It is now the world's largest trade grouping, accounting for 20 per cent of world trade. We are the world's largest importer, in particular of products from developing countries, amounting to \$US 105 billion in 1985. Our

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320 million citizens are linked to some 400 million people in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific through our trade and aid agreements with their countries. We are collectively the largest donors of aid in the world. This economic weight gives us certain responsibilities towards the world's trading systems and we take these responsibilities seriously.

Since the Second World War, growth in world trade has been stimulated by the progressive dismantling of the tariff barriers that existed between the two world wars. Nevertheless there are strains in the world trading system. Old traditional industries in the Western world have faced massive contraction as comparative advantage has passed to the newly industrialized countries, with traumatic social changes for those involved. Pressures for import controls have grown. They look like easy solutions, but they are not.

Protectionism above all penalizes developing countries by reducing access to prime markets in developed countries. In the developed countries themselves, protectionism penalizes consumers by increasing prices and restricting choice and exporters by increasing their production costs.

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Protectionism is self-defeating. A spiral of retaliatory protectionist measures would have disastrous effects on world trade, particularly for the third world. Let us always remember that trade fosters growth.

The contracting parties of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) have just concluded their ministerial meeting at Punta del Este at which an important agreement has been reached to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. The Community has worked hard for a successful outcome. Multilateral trade negotiations serve two purposes: to renew the GATT system, bringing it up-to-date with the realities of world trade, and to pursue trade liberalization by allowing countries to make concessions multilaterally that they may find difficult to make bilaterally. If we all share the burden of adjustment, we spread the pain. We are fully committed to this process.

You may ask what the Community is doing to give effect to these admirable principles. Let me give two brief examples:

First, in the textiles sector, the Community has achieved a remarkable degree of restructuring. The Community is glad that the new Multi-Fibre Arrangement agreed in July foresees the application of GATT rules to trade in textiles as a final objective and calls for all participants to co-operate in the progressive liberalization of the textile trade. The Community also argued strongly for the particularly favourable treatment that the new Multi-Fibre Agreement gives to the least developed countries.

Second, agriculture is a major political issue, and one that must be tackled urgently. There has been a revolution in food production in the last 10 years. New technology has meant new fertilizers, fatter cattle, new types of grain and rice, more efficient storage. India is now exporting food. China is virtually self-sufficient. These are great success stories which serve as an inspiration to those struggling to overcome food shortages.

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Ironically, more plus more can equal less. Too much food in some countries can aggravate food shortages in others. Expensive producers growing more can cause poorer producers to grow less. The result is a tragic paradox: that even in an age of plenty, famine persists. Meanwhile trade disputes become political conflicts, as countries compete to subsidize their food exports, and dispose of their growing surpluses.

We have to address these problems now. While recognizing the importance of agriculture for the well-being of rural communities, the Tokyo Summit agreed on the need "to redirect policies and adjust the structure of agricultural production in the light of world demand". The Community is committed to this. Heads of Government agreed at the European Council in The Hague in June that "a better control of total production must be ensured so that it is better adjusted to the market situation". This is not the responsibility of one country or group of countries. The problem is world-wide, and we can only deal with it - in the words of the Tokyo declaration - in co-operation with each other. Last week, GATT Ministers agreed to launch a new GATT round, including negotiations on agriculture. We have no more important task than to make this a success. The Tokyo Summit was also an important opportunity to review progress on the debt problem. The annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are less than a week away, so I shall be brief.

The last year has seen important changes. International recovery may be in its fourth year, but the international economic environment remains unfavourable. Growth is still unevenly distributed throughout the world and growth rates are still lower than we want. Lower interest rates help us all, even if in real terms they are still high by historical standards. Oil price falls help many but severely affect others, and commodity prices generally remain weak. Many debtors

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have undertaken courageous adjustment programmes. And most of the industrialized countries have reduced the imbalances of the early eighties which aggravated the difficulties facing debtors.

The debt burden remains heavy for a number of countries. The Community fully supports the United States initiative for sustained growth, which aims to meet the legitimate aspirations of debtor countries for growth through structural adjustment and economic liberalization with the necessary external financing. Or, in plain language, it recognizes that we sink or swim together. Those who expected instant results misunderstand the initiative and the problem's complexity. But much has been achieved. The World Bank has stepped up its policy-based loans. The IMF and World Bank are working more closely together. And, in recent weeks, they have shown a flexible and imaginative approach to the very difficult problems faced by the oil-producing countries.

There has been much criticism that resource flows have declined. This may be so for the banks in the short term: it partly reflects falling short-term demand for loans. But the banks have a crucial role to play in support of the United States initiative. We are confident they will rise to that challenge. For their part the creditor countries are responding to the need to ensure adequate finance for adjustment through rescheduling at the Paris Club; new export credits; aid programmes; and support for the international monetary bodies. The Twelve will support a general capital increase for the IBRD at the appropriate time, and they welcome progress towards a \$US 12 billion replenishment, IDA-VIII, to help the poorer countries.

One way or another, be it bilaterally, multilaterally or through the institutions of the European Community, we provide one third of the world's official development assistance. We shall maintain and, where appropriate, expand

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these flows to meet the commitments we have made individually to targets established by the United Nations.

The problems of Africa are particularly acute. As the special session recognized in May, many countries face grave economic problems. But natural disasters such as droughts and man-made disasters such as civil war have made them far worse. We extend particular sympathy to the people of Cameroon who have suffered the appalling natural calamity of Lake Nyos.

At the special session on Africa, African countries acknowledged the role they themselves must play. The industrialized countries, including the Twelve, agreed on the importance of increasing official development assistance to Africa, and on improving its quality and effectiveness. We maintain substantial bilateral aid programmes and contribute to international and regional development agencies; in addition, we are making a substantial collective contribution through the Lomé III Convention and other association and co-operation agreements.

Finally, this Organization itself faces a very serious problem: how to confront its own financial crisis. A number of countries, over the years, have either delayed payments or withheld contributions. The Twelve collectively provide just under 30 per cent of the United Nations budget. We believe that every State should meet its legal obligations. The Secretary-General has shown courage in proposing certain measures, endorsed by the General Assembly at its resumed session in the Spring, to deal with the short-term problem. But further measures are required. There is a clear need for changes in the system which will produce broader consensus on financial issues and help overcome the reluctance of some Members to meet their financial obligations.

We are grateful for the work done by the Group of 18 high-level experts. We shall make a positive and constructive contribution to the discussion of their report. We support the creation of a new mechanism to consider the programme and

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budget, structured so as to ensure effective decision-making and to contribute to greater rationalization and efficiency within the system. We are firm in our support for the Charter and for a strong and effective United Nations. Greater budgetary discipline, improved co-ordination, and rigorous adherence to priorities can only strengthen the Organization and ensure its future stability and vigour.

As this Session will once again demonstrate, the world faces many grave problems - too many to cover in one speech; and I have not attempted to do so. So I am also circulating today as document A/41/634 a memorandum as a companion piece to this speech, describing our position on a number of other issues to which we also attach the highest importance.

Voltaire once observed that, in India and China, they believe that a prophet will come out of the West, whereas people in Europe expect their sages to come from the East. The lesson of this, perhaps, is that we all have something to learn from each other. The United Nations is a place to listen as much as to speak. And if we do so, perhaps we shall find to our surprise that we can learn from each others' experiences and profit from each others' good will.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

I have tried to show how our experience of co-operating together in the European Community has shaped our positions on a number of key issues facing this Assembly. I believe those positions, though ambitious in aim, are fair and realistic in practice. It is an approach which we believe fulfils the ideals to which this Organization is committed. In our search and support for freedom, peace, justice, democracy and prosperity for mankind, in offering our friendship to all who wish us well, we shall continue to pursue our duty to other nations, notably to those less fortunate than ourselves. At the same time we shall uphold and defend what we have built together.

Mr. VAYRYNEN (Finland): May I first congratulate our President on his election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. He brings to his high office unique knowledge and expertise based on service in various capacities. Bangladesh is highly appreciated for its long-standing contribution in the work related particularly to the development process of the least developed countries. I am convinced that he will lead this session to a successful and fruitful conclusion.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Ambassador de Piniés, who served with great distinction as President of the General Assembly during its fortieth session. Like those who have spoken before me, I wish to express my admiration for the way in which Mr. de Piniés carried out his task.

The determined efforts and capable leadership of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in the face of the harsh international situation described in his report, have the full support of the Finnish Government.

When speaking from this rostrum in recent years I have seen only little reason for optimism. Despite signs of improvement, that assessment is still valid. Particularly the increased violence, of which we receive new reports daily, gives

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

cause for alarm. I fear that unless governments which have given their pledge to the Charter work effectively together, our noble intentions collapse, confrontation prevails over co-operation and violence replaces negotiation.

Yet there are signs of promise. During the past year we have witnessed an encouraging improvement in the atmosphere of East-West relations. The ongoing negotiations in Geneva, both bilateral and multilateral, give cause for hope. In the economic field we have also experienced new positive developments which, it is hoped, will lead to the revitalizing of negotiations on international economic co-operation and development.

My Government has welcomed with great satisfaction the reactivation of the dialogue between the two leading Powers. We particularly welcomed the fact that at their first meeting the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States, conscious of their special responsibility for maintaining peace, agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. In a common pledge both leaders stated that they will not seek to achieve military superiority. We hope that these principles will provide a solid basis for a continued dialogue resulting in concrete agreements. They have already given new stimulus for a dialogue across a broad range of issues, particularly in the domain of disarmament. We hope that meetings at all levels, including the highest level, will remain a regular practice in relations between the leading Powers.

In addition to the bilateral negotiations between the two leading Powers, the Conference on Disarmament, with its broad agenda, offers an important multilateral negotiating forum. The banning of chemical weapons, prevention of nuclear war, limitation of nuclear arsenals, and prevention of the arms race, including its extension to new areas, in particular to outer space, remain priorities on the agenda of multilateral disarmament negotiations. Particularly an agreement on a

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comprehensive test ban would be an important disarmament measure. We appeal for such an agreement and we give our support to all measures, including a moratorium on tests, which could lead to such an agreement.

In Europe, considerable progress has been made in the framework of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). A lot has been done and the past CSCE expert meetings and conferences in all three important areas of the Final Act - in security questions, in economic relations and in the humanitarian area - give substantial ground for further co-operation. The outcome of the Stockholm Conference opens widening possibilities for increasing mutual confidence among the European nations and thus provides enhanced stability and security in our continent. It also testifies to the continuing commitment of the 35 participating States to the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act. The Vienna follow-up meeting of the CSCE will offer a renewed opportunity to review what has been accomplished and to chart the future course of the CSCE process.

Another positive development in recent international co-operation is the successful concluded special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa last May. The African Governments have shown determination in reviewing their domestic policies and in adjusting their economies to the hard internal and external realities of today's economic environment. The international community endorsed this new orientation by adopting unanimously the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER). Its full implementation is now an obligation for the international community. For its part Finland has already started to incorporate the APPER programme into Finnish development co-operation with Africa. It is important, in our view, that the donor governments also bear in mind the financial needs of the APPER programme when decisions on replenishment levels are made in various international financial institutions.

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The objectives of the APPER programme also serve to illustrate the interdependence of different aspects of economic development. The programme strengthens, in practical terms, the understanding of the interrelationship between the environment, the use of natural resources and population growth.

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Awareness on these issues is spreading. In this respect concrete policy measures are being outlined in APPER. They can and should also be applied in other parts of the developing world. And they should be supported and complemented by external resources from industrialized countries. This is highly important especially now, when the implementation of such complex developmental programmes requiring difficult measures of economic adjustment is being carried out.

In the area of international economic co-operation there are fewer and fewer issues which lend themselves to unilateral action. The open multilateral trading system is of crucial importance to the economic development of all countries and particularly the developing countries. In the view of my Government the decision reached at Punta del Este to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations was of essential importance. It will undoubtedly be conducive to an improved international climate of trade policy. Finland looks towards the negotiations ahead with confidence and expects that the new round will lead to further trade liberalization, to the strengthening of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) system and to a better response in the face of the evolving international economic co-operation and international relations in general.

The positive developments in the international economic co-operation which I have just mentioned should form a basis for further progress on pending important international economic issues such as those in the interrelated areas of money, finance, debt and trade. In this connection the role of the United Nations in the economic field should be clarified. Also, the idea of convening a ministerial session of the Economic and Social Council deserves attention.

I have spoken about positive signs in the broad area of international relations. They do not change the overall picture, in which human suffering and

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the use of force are dominant features. The Finnish Government strongly rejects the use of force in international relations in any form whatsoever. This applies to acts by States as well as individuals. Human rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be denied in many parts of the world. It is our common responsibility to ensure respect for them.

Today we are witnessing new forms of international violence, notably terrorism. Front pages of the press repeatedly contain descriptions of attacks by terrorist groups claiming to further a multitude of causes. Terrorist acts against innocent people deserve the strongest condemnation.

Effective international action is needed to prevent terrorism. Last year the General Assembly condemned

"as criminal, all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, wherever and by whomever committed, including those which jeopardize friendly relations among States and their security". (resolution 40/61, para. 1)

Last December the Security Council unequivocally condemned all acts of hostage-taking and abduction, having already agreed on a common statement on international terrorism in which it condemned "terrorism in all its forms". The international community ought to develop new, modern means of controlling jointly the new forms of violence. And equally jointly we must find ways to eradicate gradually what lies behind the violence. In the long run that would be much more effective than merely trying to control violent outbursts resulting from those root causes.

I cannot fail to take note of the wide-ranging political confrontation and open warfare which haunt parts of Africa and Asia as well as Central America and the Middle East. We shall have an opportunity to discuss these burning issues as this session of the Assembly continues its work. In this statement I should like, however, to deal with two issues: southern Africa and the Middle East. The

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crises in these regions have grown even more critical and increasingly challenge the world community.

The situation in southern Africa has been the subject of a number of significant international meetings during the recent months. In South Africa the vast majority of the people are determined to end the inhuman apartheid system and the repression practised by the racist régime. The need for concerted international action to persuade the South African Government to abandon the system of apartheid has become evident. Finland, together with the other Nordic countries, is working to increase economic and other pressure against South Africa. We expect the Security Council to take an early decision to impose effective sanctions against South Africa. The world community has a responsibility to alleviate any economic hardships South Africa is causing its neighbours. We appeal to all countries to increase their economic and humanitarian assistance to the front-line States and co-operation with the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference.

The fourteenth special session of the General Assembly on Namibia, which was held last week and at which I presented the Finnish position, amply and accurately demonstrated that the international community does not condone any pretexts to delay Namibian independence on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

The situation in the Middle East remains grave. There is again a risk of a recurrence of more widespread violations. During recent months we have witnessed a number of tragic incidents which have resulted in many victims.

Just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be achieved only if Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), together with guarantees of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, form the basis of the settlement. The possibility of convening an international conference for the purpose of reaching a

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comprehensive settlement of the conflict, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), should be thoroughly examined.

The United Nations and its peace-keeping operations play a vital role in creating favourable conditions for a political solution. These operations have proved a useful instrument of crisis management. During the current year the United Nations peace-keeping Force in Lebanon has carried out its duties under constant and growing danger. It operates in a deteriorating situation created by the inability of the parties involved to reach agreement on security arrangements in the area and to come to an understanding of the role of the Force in southern Lebanon. However unsatisfactory the present state of affairs may be, Finland continues to believe in the role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We are grateful to the Secretary-General and his staff for their unrelenting efforts to redress the situation.

The Charter provides an international code of conduct which binds all Member States. The first and foremost task of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. To fulfil its task this Organization should shoulder its responsibility for collective security as defined in the Charter and make every effort to develop a more just, secure and stable system of different but equal and interdependent nations. The United Nations should assist in resolving conflicts and disputes between nations; it should foster economic and social progress and promote human rights.

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Times have changed, and the challenges facing the Organization have expanded tremendously. One of the most serious new challenges for the world community is the protection of our common environment. Environmental protection has become more and more a problem of international dimensions. As for my own country, Finland has been active in its own region to promote environmental protection. Examples of the results already achieved are the Convention on Transboundary Air Pollution, negotiated under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), and the Convention on the Protection of the Baltic Sea. During the follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), to be held soon in Vienna, Finland will make a proposal to convene an expert meeting on the environment.

Yet regional co-operation, as important as it is, does not alone meet our needs. The endeavours of the rapidly growing world population to achieve higher and higher levels of material consumption is burdening the global environment more and more with results which, in the worst analysis, might lead to a catastrophe. Mankind has to take this threat seriously. The United Nations should provide us with the practical means to promote international co-operation in this area of primary and vital importance.

Together with the other Nordic countries, Finland is systematically examining ways and means of strengthening the Organization. In these efforts, the reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization offer us valuable guidelines. Ours is an Organization of sovereign States, each with its own legitimate need for security and well-being. Yet it is also an Organization of common responsibility. The United Nations is as strong or as weak as we, the Member States, want it to be.

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Against the background of our common aspirations and common achievements, the present financial and administrative crisis of the United Nations seems paradoxical. The latest development gives us a reason for serious concern about the Organization's ability to carry out its task. As we know, the financial viability of the United Nations is jeopardized at the moment. A situation like this is most regrettable and cannot be condoned. The financial crisis of the United Nations is detrimental to the Organization's authority and is even an act against the Charter.

We have to make all efforts to restore the credibility and financial viability of the United Nations. The prerequisite for the redressment of the financial situation is that all countries pay their past and current dues in accordance with the Charter, in full and without delay.

Furthermore, we have to address the question relating to the efficiency of the Organization. During the coming weeks the Assembly will examine the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts. The study conducted by the Group has been called by necessity. It provides, in our opinion, a useful basis for further discussion on longer-term remedial measures in order to promote the efficiency of the United Nations.

In my intervention I have emphasized the unique role of the United Nations based upon the Charter. Finland wholeheartedly supports the Secretary-General as he states in his report that the United Nations should become that strong constructive force in world affairs that is vitally needed. The complex problems of an increasingly interdependent world can only be solved with the help of effective multilateral action. This is the role the United Nations should attain and preserve.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.