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President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
(Algeria).

AGENDA ITEM 20

Strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*)

1. Mr. MORETON (United Kingdom): In the temporary absence of Mr. Richard, I speak on this particular subject, as a relative newcomer to the United Nations, with some diffidence. But what I shall be saying represents the sincerely and strongly held views of my delegation.

2. At the outset of my own statement, I wish to associate my delegation with the remarks made by the representative of France [2307th meeting] on behalf of members of the European Economic Community [EEC].

3. The title of the item we are now discussing invites us to consider the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in three specific areas. These are: first, the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security; secondly, the development of co-operation among all nations; and thirdly, the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States. The twenty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly will end shortly; it ought to have registered progress or achievement in these three areas, which are central to our Organization's purpose. Has it done so? Are there lessons to be learnt? We think that there are.

4. My delegation has from the very beginning given the United Nations all possible support, because we believe it is potentially the best forum in which to come to grips with the daunting problems which face mankind. If it is to realize this potential, then the ideals of the United Nations must be translated into action in the most effective way possible.

5. It can scarcely be denied that the Organization's conduct of its affairs does not always achieve this. Its role can and should be strengthened. Our thanks are due to the Romanian delegation for the opportunity they have provided for consideration of how this should be done.

6. First, there is the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security. Unusually for this item, there are this year two draft resolutions which the Assembly will be invited to adopt. One of these concerns the peaceful settlement of disputes [A/L.749]. My delegation is happy to be one of its sponsors. Peaceful settlement of disputes is a question to which the United Kingdom delegation has for long attached great importance. We believe that the United Nations has a central part to play in the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, and that it has a duty to further the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

7. Because we believe this, the United Kingdom delegation asked that there be included in the agenda of the twentieth session of the General Assembly an item entitled "Peaceful settlement of disputes".¹ For various reasons, discussion of this item was adjourned.² But we remain convinced of its importance, and we believe that the report called for in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution will bear out our concern. We anticipate that the report will show that little advantage has been taken of facilities and machinery available to States which wish to settle disputes by peaceful means. In other words, we expect this report to bear out what my delegation has said in previous debates on this subject.

8. We have not yet exploited to the full the opportunities provided by the Charter. The strengthening of the role of the United Nations in this and other areas depends not on the attentions of business efficiency experts to the way we do things, but on the collective will of the Member States to use the Organization as an instrument for the purposes laid down in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter. Our expectations of the draft resolution before the Assembly are modest. We do not expect the discovery of a hitherto hidden key which will put an end for ever to the use of force as a means of settling a dispute. What we hope for is that those who are parties to disputes may be made more fully aware of the machinery available to them for settling their differences peacefully. They themselves must provide the will; but we can all foster the means which the United Nations provides for this purpose.

9. Secondly, there is the role of the United Nations in the development of co-operation among all nations. When the United Nations was established it had 49 Members: there are now 138. The achievement of co-operation between all countries in the United Nations framework was never a simple task; today the diversity of interests on the multiplicity of subjects

which come before the United Nations sometimes makes it appear impossible.

10. It is natural that individual countries should seek to use the United Nations as a means of promoting their own policies. It is only realistic to recognize that a country's policies are based essentially on its own self-interest. But if the United Nations is to be no more than the vehicle—or should I say the battle-ground—for promoting 138 separate foreign policies, or the policies of blocs, then it can scarcely survive in a form which would be recognized by the authors of the Charter. I believe that, fortunately, most of us feel that there is a central and essential element in our world Organization—if you like, an idealistic element as embodied in the aspirations of the Charter—and that this transcends the short-term ambitions of individual Members. But we need to remind ourselves of this from time to time.

11. It is encouraging that on numberless occasions in the past rigorous efforts have been made in the drafting of resolutions to take into account the views of all those whose interests are affected, and to take into account also the realities of the situation with which the resolutions are concerned. This has led to the adoption of resolutions which even those who were obliged to vote against them have been able to respect as an expression of the views of the majority properly and legally expressed. General Assembly resolutions and, similarly, resolutions of the Security Council other than decisions under Chapter VII are not, of course, mandatory. Yet who would care to say that resolutions drafted in this manner carry no more weight than the expression of certain delegations' opinions?

12. Of course, as I have suggested, the task is more difficult now than it was when the United Nations had fewer than 50 Members. But this does not absolve us from the obligation to tackle the items on the Assembly's agenda in the way I have just described if co-operation among all nations is to be a phrase which has meaning. Yet recently we have seen resolutions adopted which take insufficient account of the realities of a situation. We have seen resolutions in which the interests of a minority whose co-operation may be essential for their implementation have been brushed aside. We have seen resolutions which, by denying from the start any particle of justice to a different point of view, can only damage the prospects for a solution to the problems which they purport to address.

13. My delegation represents a country which is inseparably bound to the ideals of democracy. Our democratic processes work on the basis of giving effect to the will of the majority if this is properly and legally expressed and if it takes due account of the rights of the minority. The General Assembly is also a democratic forum, and we are the first to acknowledge the expression of the view of the majority here. But all Member States, including the minority, have the right to expect that the view of the majority should be reached and expressed in a tolerant and constructive manner.

14. There is a related aspect of the conduct of United Nations business which, so far from strengthening the role of the United Nations in the development of co-operation among all nations, in my delegation's view weakens it. We are concerned at the growing tendency to promote the impression of general support

for resolutions even where that support may be lacking. We have observed moves to limit negotiations, however important and complex a subject may be; to prevent discussion of divergent views; and even to attempt to attach some kind of moral stigma to those who might wish to ask for a vote and thus make adoption of resolutions by consensus impossible.

15. We are deeply concerned at these attempts to create an impression of unanimity where it does not exist—attempts which have included the threat that negotiated documents would be withdrawn or that requests for a vote would be challenged if such false consensus seemed threatened. My delegation does not regard it as proper or legal to deny the request of a member for a vote. Under the Charter, decisions of the Assembly must be taken by a vote if any member so wishes. It is his right and it cannot, consistently with the Charter, be denied to him. Moreover, to try to deny it destroys the fundamental purpose of the General Assembly as a deliberative body. Such tactics are in fact self-defeating. Not only does the false consensus represent no more than a wafer-thin formula to paper over our differences, it also endangers the role of the United Nations in important international issues if the Organization's pronouncements have no chance of being translated into action.

16. Finally, I wish to refer to the promotion of the rules of international law. For the purposes of this debate I mean the rules provided for us by the Charter of the United Nations. I have already said that in our view the opportunities provided by the Charter have not yet been fully exploited. We believe that if these possibilities were exploited then the role of the United Nations could indeed be significantly strengthened. But if our hopes in this direction are to be realized it is, in the view of my delegation, of fundamental importance that the provisions of the Charter are adhered to. For example, the Charter entrusts a clear and essential role to the Security Council in certain matters, including the admission, expulsion and suspension of Members. Any infringements of the Charter must reduce the authority of the United Nations as an organ of world law and government. If the will of the majority is to command respect it must be exercised in accordance with basic legal and constitutional requirements.

17. It may be thought that my remarks today seem somewhat over-sombre. In the view of my delegation they are realistic. I have spoken less of ways in which the role of the United Nations could be strengthened than of developments which in our view should be reversed if its role is not to be weakened. We think these deserve immediate attention. In the world at large the countries we represent are in the grip of severe crises concerning food, energy, population and raw materials. We are still faced with threats to the peace. We are in the process of profound political and economic change. We need an effective United Nations if we are to face these challenges to our common benefit. We can achieve nothing on our own. Our first duty is surely to use the framework which the United Nations provides in a way which makes the most positive and effective contribution to the solution of these problems. That is the basis on which posterity will judge us.

18. Mr. GROOT (Denmark): The consideration today in plenary meeting of agenda item 20, on the strength-

ening of the role of the United Nations, offers us a welcome opportunity to linger for a moment and reflect whether our Organization really works in the best possible way and lives up to our expectations. When making an evaluation of this kind, we should appropriately use the Charter, the rules of procedure and established practices as our point of departure. This is where we have the fundamental principles to which we are all committed. They are not perfect, I admit, but they do represent the maximum on which we, the 138 Member States, have been able to agree so far. We have been unable to proceed any further but we have, on the other hand, accomplished at least this much.

19. The very fact that sovereign States have agreed on the drawing-up of a set of rules for their co-operation, aimed at safeguarding their security and development, and that it has been possible to build up an Organization or, rather, a complex of organizations, which day in and day out works for this cause is, *per se*, a very great thing and a very important step in the right direction. For smaller nations in particular, an efficient universal Organization with the objectives which are laid down in the Charter and with the potential and facilities inherent in the machinery is of paramount importance. If we are to promote the positive trends and impede negative forces, a global, responsible and efficient United Nations is to the world as a whole the best vehicle that we have so far been able to conceive of realistically. No State or group of States can remain indifferent to the United Nations and the way in which it works.

20. It is the responsibility of all Member States, irrespective of size and location, that the Organization which we have created should work in conformity with its purpose. Obviously, considering that we are a body of the sovereign States of the world, the will to enter into and adhere to compromise with due consideration for everybody are indispensable elements in order to attain this goal. To Denmark, the principle of universality has always been and continues to be essential. It is obvious that if our world Organization is to live up to its universal task the voice of all recognized States must be allowed to speak and their rights in the spirit and the letter of the Charter must be exercised unhampered.

21. The legal foundation of the United Nations was established in order to provide a universal background for the fulfilment and guarantee of a number of rights which we consider of basic value. The constitution of the United Nations is the carefully designed framework of its activities and the role of the various organs, and it continues to reflect reality.

22. Through the patient work and efforts of its Member States, and the idealistic and devoted contribution of its successive Secretaries-General, the United Nations has become an important instrument for international relations, probably even taken for granted. Right from the start the world Organization and what it stands for have enjoyed widespread sympathy and support among peoples the world over. The ideals enshrined in the Charter represent the concepts which the individual human being, regardless of race, creed and nationality, considers right for a dignified human life.

23. However, the United Nations should not be taken as a matter of course. Only by close adherence to and respect for the basic principles, by compromise and avoidance of unrealistic adoption of decisions shall we be able to safeguard the universal support from the peoples of our nations. Without this support from the peoples of our nations, our Organization will not be able to perform its functions as an instrumental and conciliatory organ in international relations. The representative of France has particularly emphasized this point, which we find important at this juncture. We need such an organ for the safeguarding of peace and safety and the promotion of economic and social development. It is our task jointly to provide the basis for an adequate and equitable solution to the existing problems confronting the world as a whole.

24. Mr. LONGERSTAEY (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): The Belgian delegation will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions now before the Assembly under agenda item 20, on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations.

25. This approval does not, however, absolve us of another duty which we see as imperative, that is, to express our concern about the turn the Assembly's work is taking.

26. The multitude of resolutions that we adopt tends to lead us to participate in an exercise of verbal abstraction the consequences of which are sometimes negligible when a minor matter is involved, but sometimes harmful when a matter of the higher interests of the international community and certain of its members is dealt with in that manner.

27. Recognition of the rule of the majority is the basis of all democratic organizations. It is one of the bases of our political system; we understand full well that it should be applied also within the United Nations.

28. The majority indicates the strength and the direction of the trends of thought prevailing in the world. In a classical parliamentary system, the executive branch has means of implementing its decisions which are not available to the Organization. Yet, even in its national systems, the majority always does well to take the essential interests of the minority into serious consideration.

29. There is all the more reason that this should be so in our Organization, which is "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members", and in the Assembly, which only formulates recommendations.

30. The majority must recognize the fact that no positive action can be undertaken in the United Nations if there is not the prior acceptance of the countries whose co-operation is indispensable to the implementation of the proposed programmes. In the economic field especially, consensus is frequently necessary.

31. It must of course be a consensus without reservation. We have too frequently seen that the majority seeks to impose its views by the adoption of some resolutions after a consensus accompanied by reservations is reached. As these reservations are expressed by the minority, they are later forgotten.

32. A recommendation or a decision taken after a consensus has been reached cannot contribute to an effective solution of any problem unless the consensus

is based on the genuine agreement of all the States involved in its implementation—that is, an agreement not only with regard to the general lines but also with regard to the detailed aspects of its contents.

33. My delegation makes this appeal because questionable methods have been used during recent negotiations. The French representative, on behalf of some members of EEC, made a clear allusion to that in his statement at the 2307th meeting. I wished only to support him in this statement, which is designed also to proclaim the fundamental rights of the minority, whose opinions and views must always be heard and which has the right to express them and to have them given equal treatment.

34. I shall conclude by stating that unless a true consensus exists on fundamental matters, unless there is respect for rules whose fairness has been established, no resolution can strengthen the authority of the United Nations.

35. Recommendations and decisions adopted or approved without regard for those principles to which I have just referred will never be anything but illusory victories with no practical effect, dividing opinion and even jeopardizing the very credibility of the Organization.

36. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan): There is an awakening in this Organization regarding the need for strengthening the United Nations. An enthusiastic debate is taking place in the Sixth Committee over the question of the review of the Charter of the United Nations. Here in the General Assembly, we are reopening the issue of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States.

37. The views of many States on the subject have been transmitted to this Assembly in the report of the Secretary-General [A/9695] prepared in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 3073 (XXVIII). We have before us a draft resolution [A/L.748 and Add.1 and 2] of which my Government is a sponsor, which proposes to open the way for further study, consultation and action by the Member States in this direction. My delegation has some views which it wishes to record on this occasion on the subject under consideration. These are views of substance, which we hope will contribute to the debate on this important goal of strengthening the role of the United Nations in international life.

38. The vast majority of nations now believes that, despite the frustrations and agonizing limitations, the philosophy and procedures of the United Nations are basically sound and politically and practically indispensable to ensuring a certain measure of order and co-operation in international life. That realization is supported, not diminished, by a healthy realism born of the experience of the last quarter of a century about the limitations and inadequacies of the machinery and political will reflected in the institutions of the United Nations. The exaggerated gloom and pessimism about the future of the United Nations which one has heard of late in some quarters reflect the disappointment of the moment over the substance of de-

cisions taken by the United Nations and trends within it, not an objective appraisal of the effectiveness of the institution *per se*.

39. We heard this morning [2307th meeting] a revealing, if regrettable, example of this. Twenty years ago this criticism would have come from a completely different source, and with more justification perhaps, because at that time it would have come not only from a minority but also from the weak minority.

40. My delegation believes that while the machinery of the United Nations can be improved upon in the interests of more effective and co-ordinated action, it is not the United Nations as such but the character of our present international system which is basically responsible for our frustrations and failures to meet the goal, to meet the ideal. It has been the political will and willingness of Member States in varying degrees to support the Charter principles and procedures which have been less than adequate, if not sometimes going in the very opposite direction.

41. Having said that, I wish to outline some aspects in which the role of the United Nations must be redefined and expanded. The international environment in which the United Nations now exists and operates is almost radically different from that in which the United Nations was founded. That international environment, which must be deeply reflected in the spirit, direction and scope of activity of the United Nations, is characterized by the following.

42. First, the international Organization is no longer a small club of nations, mostly European in background and outlook. The world today consists of a vastly larger number of nations representing different civilizations, cultural backgrounds and philosophies. The representation within the United Nations reflects a changed variety of concerns, preoccupations and aspirations.

43. Secondly, the concept of collective security, which is the central concept of the Charter, is overshadowed today by the overriding issue of collective survival. The realignment of international forces and the technological revolution in weapons of destruction have introduced a dreadful urgency into the question of mutual coexistence, mutual accommodation and organized international control.

44. Thirdly, a new dimension has now been added to the philosophy and scope of the international Organization. The question of international development and economic co-operation has come to the centre of the work of the United Nations. A new horizon has opened up before the United Nations for the restructuring of economic relations among nations on the basis of the restructured political relations of the post-decolonization era. There is also the acute and fearful problem of mass poverty and the widening gap between the developing and the advanced industrial countries.

45. Fourthly, the world has had suddenly to face the serious prospect of the depletion of the resources of the earth and the problems of the erosion of the environment.

46. The international environment has changed deeply for the United Nations. The role of the United Nations and its concerns and operations must be re-

defined in its terms. I should like to refer to some of the implications of this changed international environment. The broadening representation in the United Nations, and with it the introduction into the United Nations of different cultures, outlooks and aspirations, has had the effect of democratizing the world Organization. The hopes and agonies of the majority of the population of the world must now acquire priority in the concerns of the United Nations.

47. The United Nations is an organization of peace and security, but it is also an organization for change and human emancipation. Now, more than ever, the dynamic rather than the static elements of the Charter must be emphasized. The *status quo* is changing and must be changed. The process of decolonization is rapidly occurring within the framework of the interests of the United Nations. The issue of self-determination is in the foreground now, and the problem of the suppression of national self-determination is calling for the active attention of the United Nations.

48. International peace and security are today as much threatened by colonial practices, *apartheid* and racial discrimination as by the conventional threats envisaged by the founding fathers. The efforts of the smaller and weaker nations to achieve independence in form and substance must be assisted and promoted, and the efforts of those nations to ensure international social justice as much as international political justice must be channelled and enhanced within the framework of the United Nations.

49. If their efforts reflect a changed world, those nations must not be looked upon by the former dominant Powers as a frightening emerging majority. The United Nations must not be weakened but strengthened by this major change. The survival and success of our institution will be tested by its ability to absorb the change and channel and assimilate it into its philosophy and its intellectual and psychological atmosphere.

50. The United Nations absorbed and enhanced the radical international change represented by decolonization. It must absorb and enhance the concept of an evolving structure of international economic relations. The emergence of a new world economic order is necessary and inevitable. While the change may be agonizing to the hitherto dominant Powers in the world, they must not regard it as hostile or dangerous. Above all, they must not blame it on the United Nations and abandon the Organization because of it. Just as the new emerging majority must exercise restraint and responsibility, the powerful minority must accommodate the change and continue to support the international institution within which it is reflected.

51. There is now a new dimension to the international Organization—international development. In the passing decades the United Nations has found a new role in this area. This role has been important and rewarding. The international community now feels that assisting the developing countries in the development of their resources and entering into a healthy, equitable and co-operative partnership with industrialized advanced countries is both a moral obligation and a practical requirement for a stable international order. There is still a broad horizon open before the United Nations in this respect.

52. The area of collective security has often been defined and redefined by the accumulated experience of our Organization. There is no doubt that specific Articles of the Charter provide the essential legal framework for the peaceful coexistence of States and for the unilateral control and reduction of armaments, conventional and unconventional. The accumulating United Nations documents on the subject, the declarations and political efforts in that direction, are part of our international legacy, which must be broadened, deepened and translated into effective measures and concrete action. But, as I said earlier in this statement, the problem of our collective security has been overshadowed by the problem of our collective survival. The search for international peace is dominated by the fear of annihilation. The effort to tame and bring under control the nuclear monster is only at its beginning; while bilateral efforts may be active and energetic in this area, the United Nations has a long way to go and a large role to play in the process of ensuring human survival.

53. I referred earlier to the depletion of world resources as a problem of the erosion of the environment. That and the discovery of new worlds beyond our own are radical developments in international society. Nations with super-technology and appropriate capability are better qualified to speak authoritatively and without presumption on this matter. All my delegation wishes to register here is that the United Nations is the appropriate forum and arena for debating and arriving at policy decisions on these major issues affecting the future of mankind.

54. Let me stress one main point in conclusion. While the United Nations has a broad and versatile role to play in our international life, it is, in the final analysis, our only universal, or semi-universal, political institution. It is our world parliament and our over-all peace mechanism. We have no alternative for it, and cannot do without it. But it can and must be improved and made more adequate if it is to maintain the necessary credibility and confidence of our people and to deal more effectively with world problems. That can be done only if a way can be found for the implementation of its resolutions and the continuing functioning of its organs, principally the Security Council, unhindered by big-Power confrontations and negative votes. Legal formulas for revising Charter procedures can be devised, but unless the Member States themselves decide to make the United Nations function, to implement its resolutions and to impose its moral vision on world events and conflicts, no change in form or letter can strengthen the United Nations and its role.

55. As a parliament, the United Nations is bound to reflect the desires and goals of the majority. I agree that the spirit of consensus is the spirit most desirable in our Organization, particularly in the area of co-operation: The world-power élite, which no longer commands a majority, should not translate resentment of change into disillusionment and the downgrading of the United Nations. The new majority of developing nations must not, through over-eager or impatient conduct, provide justification for the hostility of forces that are either anachronistic or inimical to the United Nations.

56. As I said before, it is the attitude, political will and spirit prevailing in the United Nations that will ultimately decide its future.

57. In conclusion, my delegation obviously supports the purposes and aims of draft resolution A/L.748 and Add.1 and 2. We hope that other steps will follow in the efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States.

58. Mr. GIAMBRUNO (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On explicit instructions from my Government I should like to speak on agenda item 20, on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of peace, by referring to a contribution by my country, in the form of a specific action directed to the consolidation of peace and security and the implementation of international law in relations between States.

59. In this connexion, I should like to point out, speaking absolutely objectively, the great contribution to the promotion of international law represented by the signing and subsequent ratification of the Treaty of the La Plata River and its Maritime Limits.³

60. On 19 November 1973, barely a year ago, at Montevideo, the Government of Uruguay concluded the above-mentioned Treaty with the Government of Argentina. The Treaty served as a final settlement of disputes with regard to the river that had led to friction between the two sister countries for over a century, and also established a clear maritime border between the two States, the lack of which also had been a cause of tension.

61. The Treaty is a veritable statute governing the coexistence of the two parties and establishing the bases for fruitful collaboration in what we might call the key to development: the exploitation of natural resources in the La Plata River and its estuary.

62. I wish to refer only to chapter XXI of this instrument, dealing with the settlement of disputes, which makes the Treaty one of the most advanced technically in this sphere. First of all, the Treaty establishes a procedure for conciliation for the settlement of any dispute arising between the parties with regard to the La Plata River. If an agreement cannot be reached by that method and by direct negotiation either of the parties can, with regard to a dispute over the interpretation or application of the Treaty, refer the matter to the International Court of Justice. The compulsory jurisdiction of the Court is also recognized with regard to any question dealing with the interpretation or application of the Treaty, which might occur with regard to the maritime limits.

63. It must be emphasized that the system thus devised for the settlement of disputes provides for a prior stage of direct negotiation between the parties, and a subsequent stage in which the judicial process is invoked, thereby confirming a traditional principle of the foreign policy of Uruguay, the recognition of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court in the field of the settlement of disputes.

64. We believe that, in referring in this Assembly to the ratification of that Treaty, we are indicating that Uruguay and Argentina have effectively contributed to the cause of peace and friendship among nations, thereby promoting their mutual relations and also extending the influence and effectiveness of international law and of the system of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in a specific way in terms of legal recourse.

65. I wished to refer to this matter, which is directly related to problems that my country has had, because I believe that this is the best way to contribute to the development of co-operation among nations.

66. I should also like to add that we shall vote for draft resolutions A/L.748 and Add.1 and 2 and A/L.749, as we did in the case of General Assembly resolution 3073 (XXVIII), which was unanimously adopted last year.

67. I should not like to conclude without pointing out that my country believes that strengthening the function of the automatic compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, accepted without reservations, is a principle which is gaining increasing acceptance. During this session, we have been considering the need to expand the scope and implementation of this principle by attempting to make it possible for the Court to contribute more than it is doing at present, but we believe that without the specific co-operation of States which, in this sensitive area, would mean a restriction of individual sovereignty, it would be extremely difficult to progress in this field. The example I mentioned, which was the main reason for making this statement, is thus our contribution. Since from this rostrum we can see the living reality of the problems of each State, we felt that it would be helpful to bring to the attention of the representatives the example of the Treaty of the La Plata River and its Maritime Limits which is an effective and fruitful contribution to the strengthening of peace and of international law among States.

68. Mr. HARMON (Liberia): We have intervened in this debate to endorse the initiative taken since 1972 by the delegation of Romania. We have undertaken to sponsor this draft resolution because of the importance we attach to the role of the United Nations in world affairs and the respect for the rule of law and the full recognition of *détente* as we know it now, in international relations.

69. One of the fundamental motives which influenced the Liberian delegation to sponsor this draft resolution was that it provided another chance for us not to lose the momentum and the opportunity afforded to this and other world organizations to resort to formal legal procedures for the settlement of disputes without resorting to war.

70. Listening to the previous speakers, we admit that the course of events within certain areas has, unfortunately, placed the United Nations in a category where there seems to be some disenchantment as to how effective it is, at this time, in meeting the principles and high ideals provided for it under the United Nations Charter. However, in the opinion of the Liberian delegation, the United Nations has met some of the great needs on the international scene and has very definitely minimized hostilities. We must, therefore,

avoid any attempt to undermine the Organization, and yet demonstrate our ability to be objective and constructive in any decision whatsoever, or the implementation of existing resolutions and those to be adopted, that will help to strengthen the credibility of this world Organization, thereby giving real meaning to the quest for international peace and security among nations and peoples.

71. We wish to appeal most especially to the super-Powers and, through them, to their great peoples, to continue to give full faith and credit to this Organization so as to ensure that its credibility will not be diminished.

72. The adoption of draft resolution A/L.748 and Add.1 and 2, introduced by Romania, of which we are a sponsor, can only help to emphasize the important role the United Nations must most definitely continue to play in the years ahead. Let us all endeavour to allay the suspicions of those who feel that the United Nations is losing its effectiveness, and, on the other hand, remind the sovereign States represented here to take into consideration the interest of securing world peace and security rather than pursuing personal or selfish gains.

73. I therefore hope not only that this draft resolution will be adopted, but that it will initiate a revival of interest among Member States and bring into focus the intent of the founding fathers in establishing this world Organization that it should serve generations to come as a bastion of hope and, in accordance with the Charter, maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

74. The call for the review on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations is, I think, timely. It has given Member States the opportunity to come forth with constructive proposals as to how we can best strengthen the role of the United Nations and enhance its effectiveness. That is why my delegation will not go into a lengthy debate about the pros and the cons. We feel that, taking into consideration the 29 years the Organization has been in existence and the tragedies of the past, the time has come when we should be courageous enough to undertake an appropriate and constructive review of the role of the United Nations.

75. Mr. President, the way you have presided over this twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly has been an inspiration to many of us; and the success of the most recent mission of the Secretary-General, who went to the Middle East and risked his life in an attempt to bring about better understanding, brings to mind the basic principles that have largely influenced us to move forward in this way. I call upon all members here to give the draft resolution submitted by the Romanian representative, and which is now sponsored by a great many of us, their overwhelming support.

76. Mr. RAHAL (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I think that today, during the morning meeting and this afternoon's meeting, we have been witnessing

a real festival, led by those delegations that say they are the minority against what they call the majority of this Assembly. I must confess that the debate which has gone on all day came as a complete surprise to us—and there are indeed enough of us to constitute that majority.

77. We had not thought that the agenda item under which this debate is taking place, which relates to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations, would give rise to an in-depth debate which, going beyond the provisions of the draft resolution submitted on this subject, would introduce extremely serious elements. Actually, although this debate has taken us by surprise, it is clear that it was agreed upon and premeditated. For proof one need only look at the list of speakers who have been coming up to this rostrum since this morning to repeat—each in his turn and in his own way—the same themes and the same accusations.

78. We think that such statements are unjust, exaggerated and not very elegant. For need we remind the delegations that today make up the minority that yesterday they were the majority and that the criticisms they are levelling at today's majority would be just as justified, if not more justified, if they had been levelled at the behaviour of yesterday's majority?

79. The points made in the statements we have heard here are not new to us, and we read each day in the press of this country the criticisms referred to by the representatives who have spoken today. When one reads the press in this country, one can easily claim that international opinion is displeased with the way this Organization has been doing its job. But I am convinced that if the Headquarters of the Organization were somewhere else, my colleagues here would have a rather different picture of international opinion and would come to other conclusions.

80. We think that the debate which has thus been opened up is much too serious for the majority not to reply and to explain how it views its role in this Assembly. The difference between what is really happening here and the picture painted by certain organs of the press is so great that we must take advantage of this opportunity, not to settle this quarrel but to try to find a common language and to establish what must be called democratic rules of work, what must be called a majority—for, since so many adjectives have been added to the word "majority", we no longer know exactly what it means.

81. We have been told that the majority seems to be abusing its power; we have been told that the Assembly is now living under the dictatorship of that majority. But perhaps they want simply to impose on us the tyranny of the minority, which is much less warranted and much more reprehensible. Since the problem has been raised and the matter is now open for discussion, let us get to the bottom of it. We do not wish to reply to all the accusations that have been repeated here until we have given them due thought and have studied thoroughly the opinions expressed by our colleagues.

82. I said at the beginning of this statement that we have been taken by surprise by this debate. We could, of course, reply in kind right now to these excesses, these exaggerations. But that has never been our intention. We have never wished to take advantage of the numerical superiority of the majority to stifle the voice

of reason. And we can perhaps prove that in most cases, if not all, the majority of today is at least as reasonable and mature in its judgements as the majority of yesterday.

83. That is why I request, Mr. President, that this debate—which has assumed new dimensions and a very great importance for us—should not be concluded until everyone has had his say. Hence, I request that the debate be adjourned to a later meeting, the date of which we shall leave to you, Sir, to set in accordance with the Assembly's programme of work. That will enable many delegations, including my own, to come to this rostrum and state their arguments as members of the majority. I hope that the minority will not exercise its power of tyranny and compel us to reply immediately. If it does, however, I would ask you, Sir, to allow me to reply, as best I can—it will certainly be very imperfectly to everything that was said this morning, at the 2307th meeting.

84. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Algeria has just moved the adjournment of the debate under rule 74 of the rules of procedure. That rule reads:

“During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.”

I shall now therefore call on two speakers in favour of and two speakers against the motion for adjournment of the debate.

85. Mr. KELANI (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In view of the seriousness of the question which has been before the General Assembly since this morning, and of the statements made so far that have given it a particular importance, I fully support the proposal just made by the delegation of Algeria to adjourn the debate so that those delegations which wish to take the floor will have enough time to study the item fully.

86. Mr. REFADI (Libyan Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In my statement I shall merely refer to the proposal made by the representative of Algeria. The delegation of the Libyan Arab Republic supports the proposal made by the representative of Algeria, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to adjourn the debate, so that other delegations will have enough time to express their views on what has occurred today and also on other aspects of the question at present being studied.

87. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Tunisia on a point of order.

88. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): We are making references to rule 74 of the rules of procedure, which speaks of the adjournment of the debate. It is my understanding that under that rule we would not discuss the item further, whereas it is simply a question of adjourning this meeting. In other words it is rule 76 that should apply. I wanted to offer this clarification because, in the view of my

delegation, all that is involved is the postponement of today's debate to another meeting.

89. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I think that the explanation just provided by the representative of Tunisia is extremely important, because if I have correctly understood the statement of the representative of Algeria, he indeed wished to adjourn the meeting and not the debate. Without doubt the representative of Algeria made a slip. The verbatim records will show irrefutably that he did indeed speak of the adjournment of the debate, but he probably meant to invoke rule 76 and not rule 74.

90. We have in fact heard two representatives speak in favour of the adjournment—and it is now a question of the adjournment of the meeting. Rule 76 of the rules of procedure reads:

“During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be immediately put to the vote. The President may limit the time to be allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the meeting.”

Having noted, moreover, that the two delegations that have spoken did so to support the proposal of Algeria, and that no delegation has indicated a desire to oppose that proposal, which was supported by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Libyan Arab Republic, I shall immediately put the Algerian proposal to the vote.

The motion was adopted by 73 votes to none, with 22 abstentions.

91. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I should like to state that a certain delegation has asked to be allowed to exercise the right of reply, but I feel that it desires to do so within the context of today's discussion and that it will not insist on making its reply now since the debate has been postponed. We shall resume our consideration of agenda item 20 on 9 December.

92. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, you have proposed that the next meeting for the discussion of item 20, should take place on 9 December. I should like to ask you whether it would be possible to postpone it for one or two days. I do so because on 9 December we are to have the debate on item 23, on decolonization, and in the First Committee there is the debate on the question of Korea [item 104]. It would be extremely difficult for us to work on the other items at the same time. I propose that, if the General Assembly's schedule permits, we should revert to item 20 on 10, 11 or even 12 December.

93. Mr. HARMON (Liberia): I have asked to be allowed to speak to support the proposal made by Mr. Driss of Tunisia.

94. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I think that the result of the vote of the motion for the adjournment of the meeting, and in particular the fact that there were no votes against it, leaves no doubt that all the members of the Assembly want to discuss very seriously the problem before us today and to be given all the time necessary to prepare a thorough debate on the subject of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations.

95. The remarks made by the representative of Tunisia and supported by the representative of Liberia seem to me to be fully justified. In fixing a date for the discussion which will be acceptable to everybody we shall take account of all these points. It seems to me that the Assembly would not wish to bungle the discussion, which does not deserve such treatment, because this question must not be made the subject of a hasty consideration.

96. I call now on the representative of the German Democratic Republic in exercise of the right of reply.

97. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me once again to exercise the right of reply this evening.

98. Today one of the speakers felt it necessary to use formulations here which directly affect the role of the German Democratic Republic. His choice of words cannot go unanswered.

99. In order to avoid misunderstanding, I should like to state again the fact that the people of the German Democratic Republic, in free exercise of its right to self-determination, has once and for all chosen a socialist social system and in no circumstances does it intend to merge with the Western capitalist—or, to put it more clearly, imperialist—neighbouring State.

100. As the Constitution of our Republic says, the people of the German Democratic Republic is fully determined freely to decide its own fate and to advance unswervingly along the path of socialism and communism, peace, democracy and friendship among peoples.

101. I would prefer not to touch upon the question of whether the people of the Federal Republic of Germany needs a particular situation in Europe in order to exercise its right to self-determination.

102. As for the Treaty on the basis for relations between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, this is binding on both parties and obliges them to be guided by the purposes

and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and particularly by the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. The inviolability of the border between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic now and in the future and the right of both States to unrestricted respect for their territorial integrity has a legal foundation in international law. The Treaty has no time-limit and contains nothing which could call into question the fact that the settlement arrived at is definitive.

103. Permit me to refer to the statement made by the head of my delegation in the general debate in the Assembly. He said:

“The decisive pre-condition of the progress which was reached on the road to *détente* in Europe and hailed by the peoples of the world was the definite recognition in terms of international law of the results of the Second World War and of post-war developments. Therefore, demands based on wishful thinking and reflecting outlived and yet dangerous ideas for changing the map of Europe are not at all helpful to European and international security.”
[2243rd meeting, para. 142.]

104. I have one last comment. The fact that the speaker I referred to at the beginning of my statement, quoting from a man who was suffering from a mental disorder, said from this rostrum that he suspected the United Nations of immorality is sufficiently characteristic, I think, of the position he has adopted.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

NOTES

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 99, document A/5964.

² *Ibid.*, document A/6187, paras. 9-11.

³ See *International Legal Materials: Current Documents*, vol. XIII No. 2 (Washington, D.C., the American Society of International Law, 1974).