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at 10.30 a.m.

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**President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA (Algeria).**

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Upadhyay (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**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. The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on item 20 be closed this morning at 11.30.

*It was so decided.*

2. Mr. ASHTAL (Democratic Yemen): Some like to arrogate to themselves a patronizing role in this Assembly; others wish to project themselves as judicious patriarchs, claiming to be objective peace-makers; yet others attribute to themselves unimpeachable wisdom by virtue of their power. The simple fact is that we are all politicians, enhancing our respective national interests and promoting international peace and co-operation. We are as subjective as the multiplicity of our respective foreign policies. That is why my delegation was not surprised that the United States and some Western European countries addressed themselves to the item under consideration with some alarm, if not bitterness. To them the Assembly is no more the political arena where they could marshal a distinct majority in support of their resolutions. They suddenly discovered that there is something wrong in the voting pattern of Member States. While paying lip-service to legality, they seem to suggest that a number of decisions taken by the Assembly during its current session are inappropriate.

3. On many occasions in the past they have proposed that the Assembly should curtail unnecessary waste of time and even suggested that procedures and statements be rationalized to avoid redundancy. Yet last week, in a well-planned scenario, they criticized a decision taken by this Assembly aimed at avoiding redundancy. On many occasions they have expressed their distaste for polemical statements and public recrimination, yet last week they almost deplored the lack of polemics in this session, and instead they themselves engaged in provocative polemics. When they could rally a clear majority behind them they upheld the principle of sovereignty of States and respected the voting procedure, yet at the 2307th meeting, last week, Mr. Scali almost questioned Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which declares that "the Organization is based on the principle of sovereign equality of all its Members".

4. When an overwhelming majority of the Assembly recommended to the Security Council the expulsion of the *apartheid* régime of South Africa, that decision was considered a brutal disregard for the minority. For years the United States rejected the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, yet last week it lamented the temporary punitive action endorsed by this Assembly against South Africa. When the Soviet Union vetoed their resolutions in the Security Council, it was an abuse of the veto power, but when they cast a triple veto to retain the membership of South Africa in the United Nations theirs was a responsible act. Over the years the Assembly passed hundreds of resolutions with the United States commanding a substantial majority, but their effectiveness was not questioned although they were opposed by a minority. Yet today's resolutions, which to a great degree reflect the universal will of the United Nations, are less effective in their eyes. The majority of yester-year was benevolent because the United States endorsed it, but today's majority is tyrannical—in the words of Mr. Scali.

5. Are we not to be outraged by their duplicity, their double standards and their self-righteous statements? When, in 1947, the Assembly was seized of the question of Palestine, the United States Government exerted tremendous pressure on a number of countries to vote for the partition of Palestine. Addressing the Assembly at that time, Mr. Camille Chamoun, the Lebanese delegate, had this to say:

"... I can well imagine to what pressure, to what manoeuvres your sense of justice, equity and democracy has been exposed during the last thirty-six hours. I can also imagine how you have resisted all these attempts in order to preserve ... the democratic methods of our Organization. My friends, think of these democratic methods, of the freedom in voting which is sacred to each of our

\* Resumed from the 2308th meeting.

delegations. If we were to abandon this for the tyrannical system of tackling each delegation in hotel rooms, in bed, in corridors and ante-rooms, to threaten them with economic sanctions or to bribe them with promises in order to compel them to vote one way or another, think of what our Organization would become in the future.”<sup>1</sup>

6. Can anyone claim that such unethical tactics were employed when the General Assembly voted on the question of Palestine 27 years later? Is it the fault of the majority of States that the United States found itself in an isolated minority? Are we not to congratulate ourselves that this Assembly has become more democratic and its members less susceptible to pressure and arm-twisting? If there is something wrong, it is not in the Organization, its Charter or its rules of procedure; it is rather in those Members who resist change and fair play.

7. Two factors seem to have prompted the concerted barrage of statements by the United States and some West European countries with regard to the United Nations of today. The first is the outcome of the sixth special session of the General Assembly—the proposed new international economic order and its concomitant change in economic power relationships between the third world and the developed countries. The second is a political aspect, relating to decolonization and desegregation, notably in Palestine and South Africa. These two factors are, however, two faces of the same coin. They represent points of conflict between the ex-colonial Powers and the ex-colonized peoples. Their roots go deep into the past when colonial Powers played havoc in Africa and Asia.

8. Mostly by force of arms, they colonized peoples, usurped their land and exploited their natural resources. Today much of that is happily past history, but there are remnants of old atrocities and plunder. A great injustice plagues the people of Palestine and deprives it of its right to national self-determination. A whole people in South Africa is relegated to a caste society in its own homeland. An inequitable relationship in trade and economic interaction prevails between the developed and the developing countries. A widening gap between the affluent and the poor characterizes the international system.

9. Those are real problems, not imaginary problems. They are being discussed in the General Assembly and decisions are being taken on them. Why is it surprising, then, that divergent views should exist? After all, each of us looks at those problems from a different vantage point. What other recourse do we have than to vote on resolutions, when compromise is tantamount to injustice and when negotiations drag on while millions of people are suffering from destitution and national deprivation?

10. Of course we are aware of the limitations of our resolutions. We know that they are advisory in nature. But we are also aware that they carry with them the moral weight of the international community. We are not convinced that even in the United States the support for the ideals of the United Nations is being eroded. It is true that Zionist demonstrators maliciously burnt the flag of the United Nations when the Assembly decided to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the debate on the Palestine question. But do they represent even a tiny frac-

tion of the American people? On the official level, Zionists have exerted their influence on Governments. In his memoirs<sup>2</sup> President Truman complained about Zionist pressure in 1947 in the following words:

“... The facts were that not only were there pressure movements around the United Nations unlike anything that had been seen there before but that the White House, too, was subjected to a constant barrage. I do not think that I ever had as much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White House as I had in this instance . . . Some [of the extreme Zionist leaders] were even suggesting that we pressure sovereign nations into favourable votes in the General Assembly.”

11. There seem to be two world opinions: that of the biased news media in the Western world and that of the peoples of the world. The United Nations derives its moral strength from the peoples of the world.

12. There is no such thing as a mechanical or mathematical majority. It is indeed an insult to the intelligence of this Assembly to claim that delegations sponsor resolutions without conviction, or that they vote irresponsibly. We have seen the so-called majority vote differently on questions such as Cambodia and Korea. Indeed, there is a majority and a minority on specific issues. For example, a majority of the Members always votes against foreign occupation, against *apartheid* and against colonialism. By doing so they are upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter.

13. The problem is not mechanical, it is a genuine conflict of interests that can best be solved when the grievance of the developing countries and their political and economic aspirations are taken into account by the so-called minority. In the words of the President of Algeria, Houari Boumediène:

“For the developed countries, the question is whether they have understood that their future cannot be dissociated from that of the peoples of the third world. If indeed they have understood this, it is up to them to assume the responsibility that this awareness implies for them.”<sup>3</sup>

14. Mr. RAHAL (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): The debate on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations has been transformed, in the most unexpected manner, into a harsh criticism of the General Assembly and into a trial, as intemperate as it is tendentious, of the majority within this Assembly. Conducted by the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, the delegations of most of the Western countries have come in turn to this rostrum, in accordance with an obviously concerted and premeditated scenario, to bring against us the most strange accusations and to address to us the most extravagant warnings. This is quite certainly a public relations operation, whose motives we do not wish even to question, and we would not allow ourselves to be drawn into such an argument if the respectability of our countries and the authority of this Organization were not impugned.

15. Certain truths need to be stated or restated. We shall do so, firmly but without passion, since our objective is not to be drawn into this dispute, which some have wished to impose on us, but rather to correct the record where facts have been distorted

and to clear up any misunderstandings that may have been created.

16. It may not be irrelevant to begin by stressing that the countries which today are rebelling against the rule of the majority are the very ones which constituted the majority of yesterday, and whose behaviour at that time represents the best frame of reference for judging the behaviour of today's majority. Those countries had the additional advantage of having taken part in the drafting of the Charter and of the rules of procedure of our Organization and of having thus been able to ensure that their own views would prevail in the determination of the principles and the rules which were to govern the operation of our Organization. That was not the case for us who joined the international community later and who had no choice but to accept an international order, an international law and international customs that were established without reference to us and sometimes—why not say so?—contrary to our own interests.

17. Thus, if those who now criticize us protest the very rules which govern our work in this Assembly, they should remember that they themselves are the authors of those rules. And if they question the use we make of those rules, let them not forget that the lessons they wish to teach us today are worth little when compared with the example they have already given us in the past.

18. It is one of the fundamental principles of the Charter that in the General Assembly all States are equal. This equality may seem unreasonable or even grotesque when it places on the same footing a super-Power and the least of the under-developed countries. Nevertheless, it underlies the provisions governing international law and, when we call it into play, we find it difficult to understand why we should be reproached for so doing. Yet, it is one of the criticisms directed against us since, in the decision-making procedure, our critics feel that considerations of size, wealth and power should not only enter in but should play a determining role.

19. It is even more difficult for us to accept the protests aroused by the adoption of resolutions by the majority. Such resolutions, we are told, are unjust, biased, unrealistic and impossible of application because they do not take into account the view of the minority. We are not a parliament, and according to our detractors the majority is abusing its power when it takes such decisions. The most surprising thing is that the bigger the majority, the more dubious the minority finds its authority to be, as in the case of the examples that have been given and to which we shall come back in a minute.

20. For the moment, I should like to draw on some examples from the past. The decision to partition Palestine is unquestionably one of the most important and most tragic decisions ever taken by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, there was a majority in favour of that decision, despite the opposition of a considerable minority, which advanced some valid arguments. The decision that the United Nations should intervene in Korea was also taken by a majority of the General Assembly, against the view of an appreciable minority, a minority that was certainly convinced of the justice of its position. And was it not also by using the rule of the majority that it was possible to delay for

over 20 years the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, despite the reiterated appeals of a minority which grew larger every year?

21. Why should those very States that imposed such decisions on the General Assembly come here today to question the exercise by the majority of a right conferred upon it by the Charter, and which it is exercising only in the most reasonable manner?

22. It is said that we have illegally expelled South Africa from the United Nations. That is false, and those who make such an accusation should be the first to know that it is false. South Africa is still a Member of the United Nations, but its delegation, whose credentials have been rejected—and would be rejected again if they should be presented again—has not been authorized to participate in our debates. This is not merely a nuance and we would have hoped that our colleagues in the minority would be sufficiently honest not to resort to a facile inexactitude which misrepresents the General Assembly's decision. The expulsion of South Africa is the business of the Security Council, and the Assembly referred it to the Council. The three vetoes which were cast in opposition to that expulsion were cast in the teeth of world opinion, and it is wholly ironic that those who cast those vetoes should now come to reproach the majority for having acted in a tyrannical fashion. The decision of the Assembly concerning the delegation of South Africa is not only legal, but reflects the will of the vast majority of the international community; the only reproach which might conceivably be levelled against us is that it is not in accordance with the precedent established at earlier sessions. Well, we shall endeavour not to incur that reproach in the years to come.

23. The debate on Palestine gave our friends in the minority further reasons for discontent. They may not agree with the decision taken by the Assembly to limit the participation of each delegation in the debate to a single statement, but it would be bad faith on their part to claim that this decision was contrary to the rules of procedure of the Assembly. Furthermore, the construction they place on this attitude, which they claim was intended to deprive a delegation of its right to speak, is absolutely unacceptable and borders on intellectual dishonesty. The delegation in question has shown in its behaviour such contempt for this Assembly and such a determination to upset its proceedings, that complaisance must be carried far indeed to claim that it is the victim of the manoeuvres of the majority.

24. We agree with those who wish to see the Assembly reflect the unanimous views of its members and its decisions taken only after efforts to reconcile all the views expressed. Although the rule here is not that of unanimity—and there is nothing we can do about that since it was not we who decided that it should be so—we are convinced of the need to seek resolutions and decisions that represent the broadest possible support and the widest possible view. Of course this means dialogue, an open and frank dialogue, between the majority and the minority. This must not in any event lead to the dictatorship of the minority, through a rigid opposition preventing any possibility of unanimous agreement.

25. What happened at the sixth special session of the General Assembly provides us with an example on this

subject that is worth reflecting upon. For once, at that session, the majority and the minority did try to have a frank discussion of their problems and to understand each other's difficulties. We are very happy about the precedent thus established. We could not hope that our differences and our disputes would disappear in the space of only a few weeks. But, if our agreement could be no wider than it was, is it just, is it reasonable to lay the responsibility for that solely at the door of the representatives of the majority? The stubborn intransigence of the minority certainly has a lot to answer for, but, contrary to the apocalyptic conclusions the Western representatives draw from it, we believe that the road we took together is the only one that can really lead us to our goal.

26. The numerical majority we hold has limited virtues, and we know it. That majority draws its strength from rules that were not established by it, and it is both false and immoral to accuse the majority of taking advantage of those rules. The fact that the majority is made up of the less developed, less populated and less powerful countries takes away nothing from its moral authority; it might even be said that it is precisely in this that its moral authority principally resides, since mere strength has never given rise to wisdom. Our majority has been described as mechanical or systematic; that is done in order to play it down and discredit it in the eyes of the world. We all know that such language is no novelty in the history of this Organization. Furthermore, my colleagues of the minority will surely allow me to ask them whether they do not think, in all honesty, that our majority seems to them systematic only because their opposition is systematic, unreasonable and irrational.

27. The representative of the United States, who is aware of the friendship I bear him personally, was kind enough to warn us of the steadily increasing disaffection of the American people and the United States Congress vis-à-vis the Organization. I am absolutely convinced of his sincerity when he deplores the growing detachment of his country from an institution which seems to be belying its previous calculations about it. I hope he will not hold it against me if I say that, in my view, it is not the United Nations which has disappointed American opinion but, rather, the completely distorted image of the United Nations provided by the organs responsible for informing Americans. He must know as well as I do that the echo of our work received by American opinion is far from corresponding to what really goes on here. On the basis of such information, it is truly difficult to ask the American people to support the United Nations.

28. But what we cannot bring ourselves to accept is that the representative of the United States—like the European representatives of the minority—should recapitulate the false reports carried in a partisan and rather unscrupulous press instead of helping to provide his fellow citizens with information which could give them a more objective and more thorough understanding of our Organization and the development of the world situation.

29. That now brings me back to the item under discussion—that is, the strengthening of the role of the Organization. The first prerequisite for such strengthening is obviously our faith, our complete faith, in the mission of the Organization. What we have to reproach

our colleagues in the minority with is that, in sum, they are proclaiming that they believe in that mission only to the extent that it serves their interests. No sooner do they lose their ascendancy in the Organization than it no longer represents for them the same irreplaceable instrument of understanding among peoples; immediately they dispute its authority, transgress its rules, defy its decisions and refuse to carry out their obligations.

30. The world has undergone far-reaching changes since the creation of the United Nations. Some of those changes, the most important of them, have been brought about by the United Nations itself, and they represent its finest claim to glory. The world has changed because it has given practical form to the aspirations of peoples to freedom and dignity, because it has realized an ideal that has long germinated through the religions, the philosophies and the civilizations. These changes must be accepted. We must not merely resign ourselves to them as to an inevitable disaster. Neither must we bow before them hypocritically, hoping to limit the consequences of the changes and neutralize their effects. We must swim resolutely with the tide of history, without regrets for the past, leaving open all the opportunities of the future.

31. This is the second condition that the Organization must meet if it wishes to maintain its contact with the real world and play there what should be its decisive role. Obviously the Organization of 1945 cannot impose itself on our world of today. The delicate balances, the compromises, the deals on which it was built no longer mean anything today. In the living and changing world of today, an unchanging organization is condemned to death; its life, its strength and its usefulness can be envisaged only in terms of a rapid, intelligent and voluntary adaptation to the changes in the structures and philosophy of the international community.

32. It goes without saying that such adaptation, which affects the architecture of the Organization as much as its working methods, must in the first place concern the actual administration of the Organization and the personnel responsible for administering it. It is of the utmost importance for the strengthening of the role of the United Nations that the officials responsible for its operation should bring to the tasks entrusted to them, over and above their well-known dedication to their universal mission, an exceptional sensitivity to the trends that emerge within our community, and the intelligence to foresee them ahead of time. A correct understanding of their responsibilities should lead them not to devise ways of delaying or impeding the Organization's adaptation to the changes in today's world but rather to facilitate, to encourage and even to anticipate that transformation. We know that this is their own view of their mission of service to the world community, and that is why we are convinced of the absolute necessity of their loyal and unstinting co-operation in any serious effort to strengthen the Organization.

33. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): After the events of the past few weeks, and in particular after hearing the harsh statements made by a number of delegations, including the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and the United Kingdom, on the item under



consideration and on others that have been discussed in the Committees, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the crisis which the Organization has now been undergoing for some years. That crisis is especially serious because, despite all the thought we have had to give to the world situation, it is very difficult to define it clearly enough to enable us to study its causes and effects. It would be useful, therefore, to analyse the crisis in the hope that this analysis will lead us not to a major confrontation, which would solve nothing, but to a better understanding of the various positions. That understanding seems to be essential in arriving at the desired, and necessary, common ground.

34. From a sense of decency, there has been an unwillingness to describe the crisis too frankly, as if by referring to it as a malaise it would be possible to overcome it without dealing systematically with the various symptoms which have been clearly discerned on both sides. It is also regrettable that the crisis is denounced by some only when internal difficulties arise relating to the defence of particular interests, thus responding to the pressures of the moment.

35. The crisis of the United Nations is due to the fact that the world has evolved, not according to the predictions of certain people, but according to its own logic, into which, naturally, has entered the factor of the emergence of new nations, their anxiety to preserve and strengthen their independence, their desire to participate positively in international life and, lastly, their wish to see in the international community a better reflection of their aspirations and their needs.

36. Over the years these claims have become clearer, and in recent years they have become more coherent, and also more demanding, because of the determined opposition of those who wish to maintain the established order without making any concessions. It is natural that the actions of the third world should go beyond the framework of the Charter, not to destroy but to expand the idea of a new world, based on a frank recognition of the forces at work and on a rational choice of the means to be used to safeguard the general spirit of co-operation and tolerance.

37. The San Francisco Charter, of a generation ago, was for a long time considered the only valid instrument, both because of its principles and objectives and because of the procedures in it. Our aim is to consider, not the universal support for the purposes and principles of the Charter, but rather the spirit in which they should be understood. Directly after San Francisco, the influence of one group—let us call it the group of the Allies—was acceptable because it was exerted on certain problems directly connected with the elimination of all the after-effects of aggression, nazism and fascism. The spirit of San Francisco was conceived in a context of sound defence, as a safeguard against a confrontation that was considered inevitable in the absence of rigid measures attended with the greatest vigilance. But as the Organization came closer to universality, as interests and objectives diversified, and as priorities were established in accordance with the international majority will, the danger of the confrontation I have referred to lessened, but unfortunately shifted to areas where it was quite unnecessary. That change accentuated the crisis in

the United Nations, and certain major Powers used that fact to disregard and even stifle the emerging awareness of the third world, which in their view might be regarded as an even greater danger.

38. Since that is the situation, who can blame the third world for wanting to defend itself, by using first the provisions of the Charter, and then the strength provided by cohesion and solidarity? A serious accusation has been levelled at us about failure to respect the Charter. It is based on an incomplete and one-sided interpretation of certain provisions of the Charter, and we cannot agree that in a democratic assembly anyone should impose misinterpretations on others by undemocratic means, for consumption by a public that has been deliberately left in the dark about certain procedures. Furthermore, since our resolutions derive from the Charter, and only serve to clarify or supplement certain points in the light of the development of a given situation, can we be blamed for referring to texts that constitute our jurisprudence to give the Assembly the power it should have in a case like that of South Africa, which we have denounced as a threat to international peace and security?

39. In view of the results that we have achieved, an attempt is made to mock our cohesion and our solidarity; but those are the characteristics that determine our survival in a world that, in its desire to be pragmatic, has ended up practising gratuitous cynicism. It is by cohesion and solidarity that we manage to defend our own interests and to safeguard principles that allow us to cope with various attempts to get us to endorse dubious procedures whose purposes do not coincide with our objectives. As a result of agreements among ourselves we have managed to forge a majority that we can use in a responsible manner to defend our interests, of course, but never to crush the minority. In any case, a majority in the service of justice is certainly much more democratic than a minority that does not wish to bow to the rule of the majority.

40. Let us be perfectly clear. The majority and the minority have essentially the same rights; it is absurd for a minority to claim that it has more rights than a majority. Democracy can be defined as a commitment freely entered into to share and also to participate. That is something that cannot be questioned except by those peevish spirits that neither wish to share nor to accord to their equals the rights they themselves enjoy. That a minority should wish to impose its views because it believes that they spring from a more just, more realistic and more reasonable evaluation of the problems is basically anti-democratic, unless the intention is to insult the members of the majority by denying them the same faculties of understanding and thought that the minority so lightly arrogates to itself. That attitude is too disturbing to require further description, but those who might boast of it before their public opinion will understand what we out of decency shall refrain from saying in this Assembly.

41. Let us go further and ask that majority which decided on the partition of Palestine and on foreign intervention in Korea, on what kind of democracy they based those decisions. It is time for the minority to take a new look at things, to stop crying over a past that will never return, to agree to play a con-

structive role on the side of justice and progress, and to try to give some substance to its claims of good faith that are unfortunately contradicted by its actions.

42. We have also heard other arguments according to which the Assembly is not a parliament and that those who sit here are the representatives of sovereign States. That is not a debatable position, because everybody knows that in any civilized and organized society, any State, by the very fact that it has agreed to be part of that society, has decided to give up part of its sovereignty. But is it not curious to note that those who subscribe to this doctrine of limited sovereignty wave the red rag of sovereignty in the face of a gullible public opinion by way of an advance excuse for the contempt they are going to show for the resolutions of the Assembly? Acting in that way will not strengthen the role of the United Nations. Furthermore, in order to show how well a hint of arrogance befits this idea of sovereignty, they try to make believe that the minority has the monopoly over the implementation of the resolutions of the Assembly, because of the material and other power that it enjoys—always with justification of course.

43. It would not be realistic for us not to recognize that power can be wielded at any time and to defend any cause. But in that case, we have the right to ask what would become of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, unless we are to take a very special view of the meaning of self-defence, or unless those who have always had a tendency to use force fear that they may in turn be attacked in their strongholds by us, who have always preached peaceful coexistence. One does not try to kill flies with a gun, and a too-literal pragmatism becomes ridiculous. However that may be, it might be a good thing to remind some members of article 4 of the Convention on Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the Seventh International Conference of American States in 1933, which stipulates that:

“States are juridically equal, enjoy the same rights, and have equal capacity in their exercise. The rights of each one do not depend upon the power which it possesses to assure its exercise but upon the simple fact of its existence as a person under international law.”<sup>4</sup>

44. In any case, the distorted way in which some have defined responsibility by speaking of power, of size, of population and of wealth, prompts us to reject categorically any attempt to discuss the question of the creation of a special category of Member States, the so-called “associated States”. It might have been thought that that hypothesis took favourably into account certain difficult situations, but after careful analysis one could conclude that by way of progress some people would readily accept the idea that membership should be reserved to the powerful minority, and that the majority should be satisfied with some sort of vague associated status. The danger of such an approach no longer needs to be proved, but unfortunately that way of thinking does exist, even within the present international community, and there are some who would support it, although they would not dare to say so openly.

45. Once the crisis of the United Nations is blamed on the majority, then obviously it is up to them to change, to accept an undemocratic arrangement such

as that of association, to renounce their rights and to go along with the minority's interpretation of negotiation or consensus—as if in the twentieth century we still had to believe in the magic power of the spoken word.

46. The third world has never refused to negotiate, especially since at one point its only weapons were those of dialogue and persuasion. And in any case one must be able to negotiate in accordance with generally recognized principles to achieve fixed goals in the common interest and in a spirit of true concession. It is obvious that negotiating procedures within the international community need to be improved to prevent the sometimes lengthy debates from providing an opportunity for some either to impose their views to the exclusion of all others, or to oppose reasonable and reasoned changes. That prompts us to say that the main thing is not to negotiate, but to show a common desire to reach the goal; if the third world had applied only the principle of majority rule, it could easily have refused to negotiate.

47. We have sufficient proof of that in the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States,<sup>5</sup> which has been discussed for more than two years in a number of different bodies. Negotiations continued up until last week and, to my great regret, I must point out that it was not the majority which submitted the last-minute texts, which the sponsors knew were unacceptable. Nor must the minority, by unduly prolonging the negotiations, force us to take a hard line in the face of their lack of understanding and lack of co-operation, for it has never been said that a spirit of conciliation should force us to act contrary to our own natures or to compromise ourselves.

48. The second remedy proposed by the minority is the adoption of decisions by consensus. There again, whenever it proved necessary we have used this method. The most recent significant examples of this may be found in the sixth special session of the General Assembly. A consensus, to our way of thinking, should not be like Joseph's coat of many colours, in which no one can recognize either his own ideas or the principles on which obviously there can be no compromise. A true compromise should, first of all, be based on a majority; whether one likes it or not, it should reflect the tendency of the majority. Rather than narrowing the majority base of the consensus, the minority should, on the contrary, widen it and seek loyally to fit into the general trend. That does not mean that the minority should be submissive; but it can, by a constructive and positive contribution, enrich the majority consensus. A consensus should not, in its turn, be tyrannically used by a minority which may wish, under cover of the consensus, to destroy our objectives. A consensus, we believe, is one method which can be used to lead to concrete results, at least in the area of ideas. A democratic vote is another way, and we do not see how procedures provided for in the rules of procedure can be considered unsound simply because they do not always prove that the minority is right. A vote is not always taken to prove who is right and who is wrong. It is indicative of the kind of support that is given to an idea, an objective or the application of a principle. Wanting to translate a vote in terms of victories and defeats is not worthy of those who claim to have the wisdom of statesmen.

49. Democracy, responsibility, majority, minority, negotiations, consensus—these are worth talking about, although stirring up a controversy is not a useful contribution to the strengthening 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, which is the title of the item at present under discussion. Instead of saying that the United Nations is morally bankrupt, let us try to take a more objective look at how we can strengthen the Organization, whose minority perhaps needs it more than the majority at this time when doubts prevail over the enthusiasm of yore. Concerted efforts must be made as proposed in the Romanian draft resolution in document A/L.748 and Add.1-4, which could lead to a confrontation; but we feel this confrontation is necessary if we wish to put an end to truths and untruths, propaganda and counter-propaganda.

50. In considering what measures can be adopted to give the Organization its true image, we should be constantly guided by the principle that international law and legal institutions can be expanded, developed, modified to enable them to respond to the needs of a changing world, a world made up of increasingly interdependent nations, and to ensure the progress of all peoples and help them move towards political, social and economic justice. Let us also accept the idea that international law and domestic law are part of a general and single system within which international law is the basis of any national system. And if we feel that a conflict may arise—since it is always difficult to make a distinction between the general and the particular—let us support the international cause over the national interest because we all still claim to believe in the United Nations.

51. Let there be peace in the interests of all peoples, not just in the interests of a few. Let us try to find the ways and means of making the General Assembly and its organs more effective. That is a legitimate programme which the present majority wishes to undertake. Instead of being satisfied with merely restating what already exists, we should like the Organization to draw up a balance sheet, to have the Member States give it some guidance, to help it with its future actions, to help it overcome the crisis for which we are all responsible. Let us place ourselves above partisan positions. Let us set aside minor preoccupations and let us get moving again in a spirit of co-operation which requires, first and foremost, mutual respect.

52. The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to announce that Kuwait and the Libyan Arab Republic have become sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/L.748 and Add.1-4.

53. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): My delegation will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions before the Assembly under agenda item 20.

54. We congratulate the delegation of Romania for inscribing this item on our agenda a few years ago and we are happy to sponsor draft resolution A/L.748 and Add.1-4.

55. I had not planned to speak in substance on the item under consideration in view of my many other

obligations at this stage of the session, when there is so much voting taking place in the Committees. However, last Friday, 6 December [2307th and 2308th meetings], what seems to have been an all-out, well-concerted, well-orchestrated, well-rehearsed surprise assault was made by the representatives of the industrialized Member States of the group of Western European and other States against the Member States of the third world.

56. I am particularly concerned about the reference made by the representative of the United States to the size, population and wealth of the small nations, which are endowed with sovereign equality with the big Powers under the Charter of the United Nations. Mr. Scali seems at once to say that the responsibilities of the small nations in this Assembly are limited and that their representatives are a bunch of—if I may use undiplomatic language—irresponsible nincompoops.

57. I have therefore decided that I should be failing in my duty as the representative of a small nation if I did not speak in defence of my small country and, indeed, in the defence of this Assembly itself.

58. However, at the very outset, let me make it perfectly clear that I shall not be resorting to anti-American feeling, of which, indeed, I have none. In fact, I hold the United States in reverence and I have unbounded love, affection and respect for its people. My Government and my people share this noble feeling and, indeed, we are very grateful to the United States for its understanding, co-operation, kindness and generosity, which it never fails to extend to us in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect. We are also inspired by many of its institutions and its determined efforts, although not always successful, to promote democracy and the rule of law.

59. Nevertheless, I consider that I would be redundant at the United Nations if I were not to stand to defend the votes I cast here in this Assembly in accordance with the foreign policy of my country whenever they are attacked, however obliquely or collectively, no matter by which Member State. In such circumstances, I cannot sit by honourably in silence.

60. Mr. Scali of the United States has presented us with a challenge. So it is perhaps appropriate for me to follow the advice given to us by Mr. Kissinger at the beginning of this session when he said "... let us no longer fear to confront in public the facts which have come to dominate our private discussions and concerns" [2238th meeting, para. 80]. Mr. Kissinger then concluded his statement by quoting the following words of Thucydides: "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it" [*ibid.*, para. 103].

61. After these few preambular paragraphs, I shall now proceed to express my frank and honest comments on the statements made here in this Assembly at the 2307th meeting, with special emphasis on the statement of Mr. Scali of the United States.

62. Let no one unduly take offence, because no offence is meant; I speak with a sincerity of purpose. I speak in the interests of the United Nations—as I see them.

63. Let those who need reminding be reminded.

64. Let those who live in ivory towers be conscious of the existence of others.

65. We, the members of the third world in this Assembly, are castigated for failure to resort to reason, compromise, harmonization and consultation.

66. Is this charge fair—or factual?

67. The record of the United Nations over the years on major, crucial issues affecting the lives of millions of oppressed people in the colonies, of hundreds of millions in the hungry and impoverished developing countries, shows that if we have sinned at all it was on the side of compromise.

68. The record is too long to recite in detail in this debate. But let us take the questions of Southern Rhodesia, of South Africa, of Namibia—and, formerly, the 10-year colonial Portuguese war in Africa. It will soon become clear how, over 20 years of *apartheid*, we have yielded to every resolution calling for waiting, for patience, for dialogue—and even now, in this session, the so-called minority Powers have abstained or voted against our resolutions.

69. Let us take the burning issue of the economies of nations. For years in UNCTAD alone we have yielded to very comma, to every semi-colon in Western compromise resolutions. We adopted many resolutions to close the fatal gap, which became the scandal of contemporary times. In the end, at the sixth special session of the General Assembly, we got nothing but the same, shop-worn reservations—even right up to the last minute on the Mexican draft of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

70. Now we are told that our vote should go where the “real power” is, that is, the power to negate all that our people desperately strive for, all that spells life or death for our people.

71. And we know only too well that if we were to proceed step by step and keep moving for long enough, we might get lost on the way, and we might well end up in hell—rather than in heaven.

72. Of course we seek compromise, of course we seek consultation. But not when these have become synonyms for an Assembly-brand veto.

73. In all of the abstentions and negative votes in the current session and in previous sessions we have heard no real, valid objections—only legalisms, technical excuses in the guise of explanations of votes.

74. The United Nations has come to the world in crisis—in the hour of decision. Now the decisions will be made not by us representatives of Governments, but by the peoples of the world, the peoples of the United Nations. The ultimate solutions lie not in the numbers game of voting one way or the other, but the ability to solve problems. One of these problems is to determine where the power Mr. Scali talks about really is: it is not with the Governments who now boast of their power—the real power, to use his own expression. It is with the peoples. They will decide the issue—even after the demise of the United Nations has been announced, as some would wish to see.

75. We are accused of silencing Members and excluding them from the free expression which should reflect the spirit of co-operation in the United Nations.

76. But what does this charge involve? Two States, Israel and South Africa. I will not emphasize the significance of Mr. Scali's complaint with respect to these two Members which have been the cause of some controversy here, except to say that it is not true that Israel was silenced—the Committee records are there to tell the facts.

77. But it is not Members of the majority who have inaugurated the penalty of exclusion. That was first introduced in the United Nations by the United States itself, when the United States held sway over the temper of the Assembly, when the United States had what was frankly called “a mechanical majority”. And how was that power used? We have the Korean item to remind us that for years North Korea was barred from making a statement before a Committee, in violation of every universal precedent of fair and objective hearing. And that bar was maintained for virtually 20 years before a North Korean could appear before a Committee and state his side of the issue.

78. As for “exclusion”, for how many years was that same mechanical majority used to keep out of the membership so-called “undesirable States in the unseemly game of the cold war? Italy, for example, could not secure admission before 14 December 1955, and Japan succeeded only in December 1956. For how many years was that same mechanical majority used to deprive the People's Republic of China of its rightful seat in the United Nations? And what are we to say about the two Germanys, and others? And yet some people with safe permanent seats in the Security Council only recently attempted to give us a lecture on universality.

79. I am not discussing the substance of the issues involved in these examples. I merely wish to point out to Christian nations—and I am not speaking derogatively, the small minority of our critics happen to be all Christian nations—the historic moral challenge of Jesus Christ: “He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone”—and I would add, especially if it is the same sin you condemn.

80. Is it not time some Powers stopped being patronizing? Is it not time some Powers stopped being parochial?

81. When Mr. Scali had the power of veto in the Security Council, which is far more powerful than any combination of votes in this Assembly, how did he use this power? Did he use it with that forbearance which he now counsels in this Assembly? That veto in the mind of the majority might well have been used in a better cause. But who are we to make constructive suggestions to all-mighty nations who seem to have lost all interest in the true spirit of the principles laid down in the Charter, but continue to cling to their permanent seats only because it affords them the feeling of past glory and arms them with the bludgeoning power of the so-called veto?

82. My elegant and distinguished colleague from France, Mr. de Guiringaud, spoke, and rightly so, of rigorous professional ethics, in a much-appreciated sermon of moderation, accommodation and consultation. But even in this session, how did the so-called minority use its votes when it had them in the case of the item on Cambodia? The procedures they forced to gain their point were far from the best pattern for the



dignified conduct of the parliamentary affairs of the Organization, which were reduced to knock-down, dragged-out infighting, which exhausted the delegates and left them ashamed of the spectacle into which they were thrust.

83. The impression is given that the United Nations is divided into majority and minority parties. That is not borne out in the scores of resolutions submitted and eventually adopted in the Committees as well as in this Assembly. There are many instances where the so-called majority of nations have taken different positions. How else does one explain the votes on Cambodia and on the question of Korea? The majority is not a solid, monolithic bloc. It is not a conspiracy. In fact it is the majority which so often sacrifices national interests to accommodate international interests.

84. Neither is the so-called minority a monolithic phalanx, as regards either national interest or motivation. Thus we are bound to note that the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany has made only a very limited criticism and that the Permanent Representative of Italy has not made any, speaking instead of some great Powers which bypass the United Nations.

85. My distinguished colleague from Romania, the author of this item, has also made some observations on the necessity for broad consultation, but when it comes to the vote where will you find Romania? Invariably, if not always, with the so-called majority.

86. Similarly, when we receive a diplomatic admonition from our esteemed, lovable and distinguished elder colleague from Sweden, we know that his motivation is always not colonial or economic interests but certain genuine convictions relating to the best interests of the United Nations and genuine dedication to the cause of maintaining the purity of the principles of the Charter.

87. Nor do we find in the small—very small—minority of nations that joined in criticism of the so-called majority anything of the attack and the threat that unfortunately found their way into the statement of Mr. Scali of the United States. They did not make a philosophical excursion into a new philosophy of United Nations democracy. They did not resort to threats. They did not engage in using a constructive debate on how to strengthen the Organization for the purpose of defending a special ally. The simplistic division of the United Nations into two confrontation groups is not contained in their statements.

88. Representatives of Governments in this Assembly, which sits in New York, in the United States, have over the last few years been conditioned by the American press to look upon the distinguished Secretary of State of the host country as the apostle of *détente*, as opposed to confrontation, as the prince of peace and peace-making. It is therefore an astonishing paradox that the language of threat and confrontation should come from his representative, Mr. Scali, and all the more paradoxical since it reduces the so-called minority to a minority of one. It was so received by the world press, as can be seen from the way in which it reported the unpleasant episode in which the United States representative dominated the headlines.

89. We are not here engaged in a manoeuvre to divide the minority where no division exists. That division has already taken place when United States allies pleaded with the United States not to enter into a confrontation with the petroleum States; and, as we all recall, the United States also resorted to threat—a threat which the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries did not entertain.

90. My delegation is intrigued by attempts to define or circumscribe the dimensions of what our critics call “the majority”, which they say represents only a small fraction of the people of the world, its wealth or its territory. That, as can be seen from any school-book, is simply not in accordance with the facts, unless all the Socialist States, including the Soviet Union and China are arbitrarily amputated from the overwhelming margin of votes by which virtually all the major decisions have been adopted in this session, and for many years past. That represents not only a lot of votes but a lot of wealth, a lot of territory and a lot of people indeed. But even if that arbitrary subtraction is made in order to isolate the so-called small nations, which in fact include some giant and medium-sized States in their ranks, our population is considerable—in fact so considerable that we are asked to reduce it and its rate of growth. Our territory is the entire continent of South America, the whole continent of Africa, all of Western Asia and the vast island territories eastward, not to mention the Caribbean. As for our “wealth”—we are not so poor either, having most of the oil, most of the precious minerals, most of the raw materials.

91. All this, of course, assumes that the three criteria mentioned by Mr. Scali are to be found in the Charter, which defines membership and its privileges in terms of the sovereign equality of States.

92. While referring to the Charter, may I say that I agree with Mr. Tapley Bennett of the United States delegation who, when paying his tribute in this Assembly [2304th meeting] to U Thant, a champion of the third world, reminded us that the founding fathers of the United Nations were the victors of the Second World War. Indeed they were. But who were the victors? Were they only the permanent members of the Security Council, wielding the bludgeoning power of the veto not only in the Council itself but also in this otherwise democratic Assembly, under Articles 108 and 109 of the Charter? No, Sir. The victors include almost all of the Member States of Africa and Asia. True, most of them were then dominions or colonies, but their people fought side by side with the European and American allied forces against fascism. Taking into account its geographical situation, its territorial area, the size of its population between 1939 and 1945, and its limited wealth, Mauritius, like Malta, may well hold a world record in war effort, both in manpower and in sacrifices. Those are facts which are sometimes conveniently forgotten by those who would like to pretend that they won the war against fascism on their own and without the help of the countries of Africa and Asia and others, including the liberal use of their human and material resources.

93. We are taken to task for adopting resolutions that are potentially unenforceable, because those who have the power, the real power, simply will not join in their implementation; we are told that it is dangerous,

and diminishes the prestige of the Organization, to keep heaping up resolutions that can never come to life and are adopted with no regard to "reality".

94. If that were so, my delegation wonders why the minority—and we speak here not of all the minority, but of only a very small faction—is so desperately concerned? Obviously they fear these resolutions, not because they are impotent, but because they carry enormous weight and impact and do get results—perhaps not overnight, but with the blessings of time and justice, they do attain their objectives.

95. It is, of course, impossible in this brief debate to review the efficacy of Assembly resolutions over its 29 years of existence—that would make an interesting study by some competent author of a book—but a few highlights come to my mind. The issue of colonialism is one; it is largely the history of the struggle against the "minority"—a few colonial Powers—their negative votes, their abstentions, their reservations, their boycott of committees and their non-co-operation. They had the power—they still do—and still continue in this obstructionism. Hundreds of those "paper resolutions" kept piling up, until the last one, that was the last straw that broke the camel's back; and, one morning in Lisbon, the resistance collapsed.

96. That is the invisible power of those so-called paper resolutions.

97. There is another invisible power in those resolutions: the peoples of the world—at any rate the peoples of our world, the third world, and its friends and allies. Those resolutions that defend their rights are heeded by them—in life they are the ultimate reality, theirs is the ultimate power, and much of that power comes in supporting aid from great segments of the enlightened populations of those who choose to label themselves "the minority". After all, is it not wiser in the long run to use even "paper resolutions" rather than bullets? Is it not wiser to use "paper resolutions" rather than foreign interference in the internal affairs of States?

98. I am not sure that in some major issues those minority Governments represented in this Assembly may not be a minority in their own countries. We saw an excellent example of that in the Viet Nam war.

99. I will mention only one more instance of the power of "paper resolutions". For a number of years the third world has been piling them up on the sovereign rights of nations over their natural resources—in the face of minority opposition. Then, as happened one morning in Lisbon, it happened in Riyadh and elsewhere, and oil is now changing the power ratio between the few powerful and the many impotent. Only a few days ago, Venezuela announced another important decree on nationalization.

100. It is true, of course, that in the closing of the tragic gap between the many poor and the minority rich nations, our resolutions still remain pieces of paper, rendered impotent by minority reservations. But, having failed to heed the cry of developing nations and peoples, where are the economies of the minority nations now? In deep trouble; in deep trouble, indeed, with no visible sign that they have a ready formula with which to extricate themselves from the pain of their lost opportunities.

101. Again, on the very day we were put in the stocks, the minority stubbornly continued to vote "No" and to make serious reservations against the charter for a new international economic order. What is the relation here of wisdom to power, of power to what the minority calls "reality", or even of votes to consequences? We are not trading votes here like so many stocks on the Stock Exchange. It is not the bludgeoning votes of the third world or the handful of cultivated abstentions secured by a super-Power that will decide the issue. The new economic order is being born—is, in fact, already here—whether or not we vote. All that we can achieve here is merely to identify which realities are illusions and which illusions are realities. The true realities are the peoples of the world—we vote under the agony and the pressure of our people, inflation-ridden people—and that includes the people of what is called the abused "minority", who are closer to us than they think.

102. There are two threats contained in the speech of our colleague Mr. Scali of the United States. One is to the effect that, if this trend continues—that is, if the majority continues to adopt the resolutions they think necessary—the United States

"... must from time to time reassess our priorities, review our commitments, and redirect our energies." [2307th meeting, para. 131.]

We can interpret that to mean only the threat of reducing United States financial contributions to various United Nations projects. On this point we can only say the obvious: that every Member is free to contribute to voluntary fund-raising projects.

103. In the case of the rich United States Government that does not involve a financial question, but a question of conscience and morality, and in that each Government is its own master. So far the United States has been extremely generous to the countries of the third world and to the United Nations. We have no reason to believe that that trend will not continue and promote even further existing bonds of friendship and understanding for mutual benefit. But we can only say that the United Nations generally is not and should not be placed on the auction block of the vote game. The United Nations is not for sale to the highest bidder with the lowest votes.

104. There is also what appears to us a second threat when Mr. Scali said:

"... But the trends and decisions of the past few months are causing many to reflect and reassess what our role should be." [Ibid., para. 130.]

We were glad to hear the United States representative quickly add:

"I have not come to the General Assembly today to suggest that the American people are going to turn away from the United Nations." [Ibid., para. 131.]

I take this to mean that the United States is not going to leave the United Nations.

105. Perhaps, as the saying goes, discretion is the better part of valour, if we recall an unwritten axiom largely held throughout the atomic age that neither of the two most powerful Member States would dare to resign from the United Nations for fear of incurring the risk that this may open the door to a pre-emptive nuclear strike; that the guarantee, whatever it may be

worth, of United Nations membership is an integral part of what constitutes the so-called "balance of terror" and that the minute this slim thread of confidence is gone the spider's web will be ripped apart and the Apocalypse let loose on them.

106. In this connexion perhaps it is time to correct another cliché. It is said *ad nauseam* that it is the small nations, in their impotence, which need the protection of the United Nations. It may well be, on closer examination, that the nuclear Powers need its protective umbrella just as much, if not more, because of their unlimited potency and power.

107. In general, we do not believe in the use of the threat as a wise tool of diplomacy, not because it is human nature and the nature of sovereign States to reject the threat, but here again because for a super-Power to resort to it is especially dangerous. If today one such Power threatens one organization, who can predict how and against whom it will be used tomorrow?

108. The United States is a mighty Power and has mighty problems, but the United Nations is not its sole problem and the United Nations majority is not its sole majority problem. This Assembly cannot be expected to accept all the blame whenever something goes wrong somewhere else.

109. All around the globe we see an unhappy tendency for United States policy to contribute to its isolation in one degree or another, as repeatedly reported by the American press.

110. In the Organization of American States, there is a growing majority veering from Washington positions. There was the recent clash with Canada over oil—not with the Arabs, but with a valuable ally in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO].

111. In Western Europe similar difficulties are encountered, in what some have termed a futile effort to assume leadership in a so-called Atlantic community, and now in assuming management of a Western oil consumer group.

112. More and more this mighty Power which has contributed so much to victory in war and so much to the building of a new order of peace and stability, seems to direct its policies from a lonely position.

113. Even in the chastising sermon delivered to the majority on that unhappy Friday, the United States' allies differed from the extreme United States position. As we examine their speeches we find them more moderate and more restrained. Even in this little minority group the United States has chosen, shall we say, the extreme expression of the issue—whatever the issue may be. Frankly, we still do not rightly know what this tempest is all about.

114. It was the great Norwegian dramatist Ibsen who made one of his characters say: "He is strongest who stands alone". But Ibsen, wisely, did not state the converse that he who is alone is always the strongest, or likely to stay so.

115. The question of "minority" and "majority" cannot be equated to a national parliament. There members do not vote by instructions. Here, in the United Nations each delegate represents a sovereign State and a sovereign Government and usually acts on instructions of Governments. We cannot change

our vote to please other Governments except at the risk of facing recall or even a firing-squad. Even Mr. Scali indicated in some passages of his speech that he was not too happy with his soliloquy.

116. So we appeal to the United States to join the world, to join in a spirit of co-operation in effecting policies that will benefit all of mankind and serve the cause of justice, and not only the convenience of its own national interests and its own power.

117. At the beginning of my statement, I quoted Mr. Kissinger. In conclusion, as an added gesture of my good will to the United States delegation, may I quote the President of the United States of America, Mr. Ford:

"First, men of differing political persuasions can find common ground for co-operation. We need not agree on all issues in order to agree on most. Differences of principle, of purpose, of perspective will not disappear. But neither will our mutual problems disappear unless we are determined to find mutually helpful solutions." [2234th meeting, para. 16.]

118. Mrs. Jeanne Martin Cissé (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): It is because it believes in the ideals on which the United Nations is founded that the Republic of Guinea, having regard to the important changes that have recently taken place in international life, feels, as do so many other Member States, the need to strengthen and to make more effective the role of the United Nations. The importance of this item is so obvious that it quickly aroused the interest and won the unanimous support of almost all Member States. Thus, as soon as this item was placed on the agenda on the initiative of Romania in 1972, the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution on the item, without lengthy debate or controversy [*resolution 2925 (XXVII)*].

119. But it seems that this year certain great Powers, despite their good intentions of yester-year, have had bad dreams during the period which has elapsed since the last session, and have got out of bed on the wrong side at the present session, as far as this item is concerned. For this year, to our great surprise, it is an unwarranted rancour that has characterized their tone in the debate in our Assembly on this item. Those Powers, in a desperate attempt to preserve their threatened privileges, are seeking to give the present debate a different aspect.

120. Thus, while all States recognize the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations, we note, and not without concern, that a certain group of States that will stop at nothing to avoid giving up attitudes incompatible with the new and more dynamic impetus we wish to give our Organization are trying to distract the Assembly's attention by sowing confusion. But it will be difficult to bring that about in this Assembly, which is already embattled and alert to subtle manoeuvres of that kind.

121. Today, in the name of a misplaced logic, these Powers would wish, thanks to blackmail and intimidation, to see the small and medium-sized Powers capitulate before a gross attempt to distort the real facts of a situation which obviously needs to be corrected. It will be impossible, in fact, to distort the truth here and to aim it in a direction other than the one to which

our Organization must adapt itself to meet the present aspirations and requirements of the great majority of the peoples of the world.

122. One need only glance back over the 29 years of the Organization's existence to realize what are the realities. The question that must be put is how we can best bridge the gap existing between the objectives of the Charter and the capacity of the United Nations to attain those objectives fully, and how we can avoid a further widening of the gulf existing between the United Nations as an executive system and the practical problems confronting it.

123. What is needed in order to see how we can best direct our efforts is a clear and very sincere appraisal of that situation and of each Member's concerns. In making that appraisal, we should not regard the Organization as something fixed, something frozen, but rather should take into account all the factors and all the realities of international relations. The fundamental characteristics of these international relations are to be found in the constant presence of accelerating changes.

124. We all know that the success or the failure of this Organization will depend to a great extent on the behaviour and the policy of each and every one of the Member States making up the Organization. We know too that as long as certain Member States, in the practice of international relations, continue to act on the basis of force, as long as acts of aggression are committed against the independence and integrity of third countries, as long as Member States continue to dominate or occupy other countries, as long as the right to self-determination continues to be denied, as long as attempts are made to maintain countries under colonial or neo-colonial dependence, as long as economic coercion continues to be exercised to prevent economic emancipation, as long as the principles of sovereign equality and equal rights are trampled under foot on various pretexts, it will not be possible to say that the United Nations is fully discharging the responsibilities entrusted to it; neither can there be any question of an ideal international system as the peoples of the world conceive it. The examples and the lessons of Indo-China, of the Middle East and of the situation in Africa are too well known to need mentioning here.

125. While in certain cases the United Nations has adopted decisions and resolutions fully in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Charter, it must be noted with regret that most of them have remained a dead letter. Let us recall, in particular, the many resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council in the sphere of decolonization or having to do with the Middle East. We shall not dwell on other examples with which everyone is familiar. Here again the main responsibility rests with those who, having refused to implement or having rejected the implementation of the decisions of our Organization, today disingenuously claim to be the victims of the situation of which we complain. Unfortunately for them, the international community will not allow itself to be swept away on this tide of crocodile tears.

126. In the introduction to his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General says:

"... the nature and quality of life for future generations on this planet depends, as never before, on the ability of the community of nations to co-

operate and plan effectively for the future in the common interest of all. We now face a series of global problems from which no nation, however rich and powerful, can remain immune, and which no nation can hope to confront and resolve successfully on its own. We have also, perhaps for the first time in history, a world predominantly composed of free and independent nations. These two facts point to the development of the existing instruments for world order and co-operation as the best, if not the only, way to ensure human survival in reasonable conditions." [A/9601/Add.1, sect. I, p. 1.]

127. Let us therefore seek effective formulas that will enable us to strengthen our methods of work in the direction of enhanced democratization, a more marked equality of rights, and full-fledged participation by each and every one of us in finding solutions to the major problems of our time through the machinery of our system: the United Nations.

128. In that regard we welcome the positive impetus given this year by the efforts of the great majority of the members of the international community, whose voice, too long ignored, made possible the vital participation of the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and leader of the Palestinian revolution in the General Assembly's debate on the question of Palestine.

129. We think also that the contribution of the representatives of the two Cypriot communities in the Assembly's discussions of the problem of Cyprus was a positive development since it enabled this session to break the Organization's deadlock on that problem to some extent.

130. These are important steps which, like the admission of more new States, are part of the process of the democratization and the universality of our Organization. It is undeniable that the genuine universality of the United Nations is essential to its effectiveness. It is one of the essential prerequisites for the attainment of the purposes and objectives of the Charter and requires that all peoples make their contribution to the solution of the problems facing mankind. But our Organization cannot move quickly towards real universality if certain influential countries consider that their will alone must be imposed on the great majority of States and thus prevail in the solution of the important problems involving the authority, the prestige and the mission of the United Nations.

131. This brings me quite naturally to one of the anachronistic aspects of the United Nations system: the right of veto exercised by the five permanent members of the Security Council. The frequent abuse of this privilege has paralysed and gravely weakened our Organization in the face of explosive and intolerable situations. This state of affairs is no longer in keeping with the realities of our century and is a flagrant violation of the principle of democracy, a grave infringement of the dignity of the great majority of the peoples represented in our Assembly.

132. It was essentially to this arrogant anachronism that President Ahmed Sékou Touré was referring when, in the course of a visit to Guinea in March 1974 by the Secretary-General, Mr. Waldheim, he said:



"The United Nations stands in need of thorough restructuring. In particular the right of veto, flagrantly anti-democratic and even oppressive, must be done away with. All the rules governing our Organization should be directed to defending the right of peoples and nations, great or small, because for us the greatness of a nation is not measured by the numerical size of its population, its material power or its geographical extent but rather by the quality of the laws that govern its activities and by its democratic and progressive behaviour, both at home and abroad."

133. My delegation is a sponsor of draft resolution A/L.748 and Add.1-4, introduced by Romania, in the conviction that it represents the common denominator of what needs to be done at the present stage if we are to concert our efforts to strengthen the United Nations further. In accordance with those principles, my delegation has no difficulty in supporting draft resolution A/L.749, and will vote for it.

134. The strengthening of the role and the effectiveness of the United Nations is a necessity. It requires of us that we have a more dynamic vision, and that we do not freeze the Organization in a mould conceived some 30 years ago at a time that was fundamentally different from the one in which we are living.

135. Mr. PETRIĆ (Yugoslavia): Yugoslavia, as one of the founding Members, has constantly attached the greatest importance to the role of the world Organization, consistently upholding its universal character and contributing to the strengthening of the United Nations and to the fulfilment of the tasks that have been entrusted to it under the Charter.

136. Our Organization has achieved significant results so far. Within its framework ceaseless efforts have been exerted, often in difficult and critical situations, with a view to preserving peace in the world, promoting *détente* and solving international problems. The role of the United Nations in defence of the sovereignty, independence and equality of States, particularly in the process of decolonization, has been especially important. The ever more pressing need for establishing new and more equitable international economic relations and for solving the grave problems of developing countries has resulted in a considerable enhancement of the role and activities of the United Nations in the economic sphere as well.

137. We wish to believe that it is in the genuine interest of all countries that the United Nations should be strong and that major international problems should be dealt with within its framework, with the participation of all countries. The full application of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in relations among all States, without any exception, constitutes the lasting foundation of peace and security as well as of the effective activity of the United Nations. It is well known that there have been many trials, even crises, owing to the threats and onslaughts of the policy of force and various attempts at imposing foreign domination and subjugating other peoples. Today we are witnesses of changed realities in the world and of new requirements posed by contemporary international developments. All countries are in need of new and more equitable political and economic relations. Such relations arise inevitably out of the very changes

that are taking place in the international community, primarily as a result of the emergence of new countries and of their vital interest in extricating themselves from a state of want and under-development as soon as possible, playing an active and equal role in all aspects of political and economic life, and enjoying the benefits of the technological progress that characterizes the epoch in which we live. The United Nations, as the only forum in which almost all the countries of the world are presented, must participate actively in solving the urgent problems of the world and, in the first place, the problems facing the developing countries.

138. The firm orientation of non-aligned and other peace-loving countries towards peace engenders simultaneously a growing resistance to force, aggression and all forms of domination and interference, and this is reflected in United Nations actions. However, concurrently with these developments, there is also a growing tendency, on the part of some Members of the United Nations, to remove some important questions of international relations from the competence of the United Nations and to deal with them in a narrow, closed circle without the participation of all Member States. Yugoslavia, together with many other countries, primarily non-aligned ones, has been constantly drawing attention to this disquieting tendency.

139. Effective actions of the United Nations in the spirit of the Charter depend, above all, on the behaviour and policies of Member States. There can be no international order provided for in the Charter as long as certain Member States undertake actions from a position of strength, as long as acts of aggression are committed against the independence and integrity of other States, as long as foreign territories are held under occupation, as long as the right to self-determination is denied and colonial and neo-colonial dependence is maintained, as long as coercion is used to impede economic and social emancipation, and as long as the principle of sovereign equality is violated under various pretexts. One could, however, pose the question of responsibility of those who are creating such a situation.

140. It is well known that, in a number of cases, the United Nations has adopted decisions and resolutions in the spirit of the Charter, but which were not implemented. This was, for instance, the case of numerous resolutions dealing with economic development, particularly those relating to the International Development Strategy, decolonization, the crisis in the Middle East, and so on. Such a state of affairs was created primarily by those who have rejected or have resisted their implementation and also by those who tolerate and encourage such a situation, asserting, among other things, that the United Nations cannot and should not apply sanctions against the violators of the principles of the Charter and decisions of United Nations organs.

141. Diverse interests and policies of Member States find expression in the work of the United Nations. However, the United Nations was not established to serve any country or group of countries. Gone are the times of the "voting machine", which characterized the work of the United Nations for almost two decades after its foundation and which served the interests

of certain forces, but was not in the interest of the international community. I shall mention only that by means of such actions as the "voting machine" those same forces succeeded in preventing China from exercising its lawful rights in the United Nations for more than two decades. Today, the United Nations is approaching the realization of the principle of full universality and this is being reflected in the ever more democratic character of its work. An increasing number of countries are present in the United Nations and, therefore, are interested in participating, in accordance with their possibilities, in the solving of international problems.

142. The non-aligned countries believe that the United Nations is an irreplaceable instrument for uniting efforts aimed at promoting international understanding and solving world problems in a democratic manner. It is on the basis of this platform and of the Charter that the non-aligned countries organize their activities in the United Nations. The policy of non-alignment and the joint action of countries implementing this policy through the United Nations have become a constructive and important factor in the struggle to build a better and more equitable world.

143. Acting within the framework of non-alignment, my country has always insisted that the broadest consultations and accommodation of interests of vital importance to various countries should be the basic method used in adopting decisions in the United Nations, particularly in dealing with crises such as, for instance, those in the Middle East, Cyprus and elsewhere, in which the non-aligned countries played an important role in the efforts to secure peace and a just solution. This practice was also applied by the United Nations with respect to such important matters as the elaboration of the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order [resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI)] by the sixth special session of the General Assembly, the drafting and adoption of which were preceded by long consultations among all countries and regional groups, and reflected the positions of all countries. Such a method was also used—to mention only a few recent examples—in drafting the documents of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, the World Population Conference and the World Food Conference, in drafting the Definition of Aggression, as well as in adopting decisions on other important matters with which the United Nations is concerned.

144. We consider that even the countries that are unwilling or unable to understand the changes that are taking place in international relations should not act so as to block progress at any cost, by making use of their power and of their special position in the United Nations, and preventing the United Nations from taking action with regard to some important issues. The threats uttered against the United Nations—the only and irreplaceable instrument for solving the most important international problems—by those who are endeavouring to preserve their vested interests and positions based on inequality and on the exploitation of others as long as possible, are certainly not conducive to the strengthening of the United Nations and, thereby, peace in the world.

145. We do not consider it possible to defend—in the name of the defence of the principles of the Charter—

the racist régime in South Africa which, in contravention of the decisions of the United Nations, continues the illegal occupation of Namibia, pursues the policy of *apartheid*, supports the racist régime in Southern Rhodesia through the presence of its troops and threatens independent African countries. Neither can the policy of force, aggression and occupation of foreign territories practised by Israel be justified in the name of the same principles. The United Nations cannot be criticized for reflecting, by its decisions, the feelings of the majority of mankind, which wants to put a stop to practices contrary to the Charter.

146. The theses concealing a contrary position under the cover of an attack against the so-called "tyranny of the majority" and "paper majority" are obviously aimed at infringing the freedom of expression and action of the Member States of the United Nations in the solving of international problems on the basis of the principles of the Charter. Actually, voting, during this session, on such questions as the Middle East, Palestine, South Africa, Cambodia and Korea has clearly shown that there does not exist such a thing as one and the same majority of countries imposing its decisions unilaterally, but that all countries express their views freely and in accordance with their interests. We reject attempts by any State to prescribe rules of behaviour to other Member States of the United Nations, proceeding from the standard of its own interests. The United Nations can be strengthened only if it remains a forum for the free expression of views, where the current problems of mankind can be dealt with on the basis of full respect for the independence and equal rights of all countries, regardless of their size, economic or military power or the nature of their political systems.

147. The complexity of the conditions in which we live and the accumulation of problems which the United Nations is to solve, make it imperative for all Member States of the United Nations to exert constructive efforts in the interest of peace and security and a happier future of mankind. Only in this way can the Member States contribute to the further strengthening of the role of the United Nations and enable the world Organization to become an effective instrument for the solving of the problems with which present-day mankind is faced.

*The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Plenary Meetings*, vol. II, 125th meeting, p. 1341.

<sup>2</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*; memoirs, volume two (Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1956), chap. 12, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Special Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2208th meeting, para. 151.

<sup>4</sup> Convention on Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the Seventh International Conference of American States. Signed at Montevideo on 26 December 1933 (League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 165, No. 3802).

<sup>5</sup> Subsequently adopted as General Assembly resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974.