



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.6

28 September 1988

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 27 September 1988, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. CAPUTO

(Argentina)

- Address by Mr. Manuel Solis Palma, President of the Republic of Panama
- Address by Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Londoño Paredes (Colombia)

Mr. Shevardnadze (USSR)

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

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

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

ADDRESS BY MR. MANUEL SOLIS PALMA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): This morning the Assembly will hear first an address by the President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Manuel Solis Palma, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations General Assembly the President of the Republic of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Manuel Solis Palma, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SOLIS PALMA (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Panama, may I express great pleasure at the choice of Your Excellency to carry out the responsible task of presiding over the forty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Your Excellency's experience and capacity, as well as your thorough knowledge of world problems, and in particular your familiarity with the cause of Central American peace, will, without doubt, contribute to the achievement of satisfactory results in the Assembly's consideration of the complex and delicate issues with which it will be dealing.

I wish to pay a special tribute also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his diplomacy, which has produced significant results in the case of some of the issues that concern us most. He is to be commended for his immense and positive activity in the cause of peace, particularly with regard to the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq. Those achievements seem to have brought closer the realization of the ideals espoused by the founders of the United Nations, enabling the Organization to serve effectively as a system of collective security.

(President Solis Palma)

From the Secretary-General's report, there are many lessons we can learn concerning the need, in the case of external debt, to recognize that debtors and creditors share responsibility, and concerning the relationship between the arms race and inequalities of economic development. In addition, there is the question of the net export of capital to which the Latin American nations have been subjected in the servicing of their debt. The imposition of terms that are quite out of keeping with their capability, or even with the most elementary criterion of equity, constitutes a graphic accusation against their creditors.

A decade of zero growth in our continent, and even, in many areas, of decline in the production of wealth, constitutes an irrefutable and terrible denunciation of the imbalance that still persists in our world. What has really been happening is a greater concentration of wealth in a tiny minority of nations, while the difficulties placed on the majority of the less privileged nations, which are trying to break out of the trap of poverty and backwardness, have increased.

(President Solis Palma)

If it is calculated that there may be 200 million Latin Americans living in poverty by the end of this century, surely that is more than enough reason to assert that the problem requires immediate action through the integration of Latin America, leaving aside traditional considerations.

Apart from the grave economic and social problems encountered everywhere, we are deeply disturbed by the international conflicts that keep the world in a state of instability and anxiety.

Even so, let me observe that the recent understandings between the two great Powers on the reduction of certain types of nuclear weapons allows us to hope that the world is moving away from the danger of a holocaust and that immense resources may be released for the solution of the most serious economic and social problems. It is encouraging that the principal source of fear and disquiet for several decades among large segments of mankind now appears to be less threatening.

However, these nuclear-arms limitation agreements coincide with the emergence of new concepts of security among the Powers that feel the need for greater emphasis on the use of conventional weapons as an instrument with which to subjugate weak and smaller peoples. This in turn means that renewed importance attaches to military installations located in strategic sites of regional or global importance.

Thus, while the world moves towards peace, a new danger hovers over many underdeveloped countries, and this is particularly true of Panama because the United States is now attaching greater importance to its military bases on Panamanian soil than it did before its agreements with the Soviet Union.

That is why the United States does not wish to honour the commitments it entered into under the current Panama Canal Treaties and seeks to prolong its military presence in my country beyond the agreed terms.

(President Solis Palma)

Our geographical position, our most important and valuable natural resource, is thus being turned into the greatest danger to our sovereignty and independence. What for us is a bridge between the seas for the strengthening of international trade and for our own development is for others becoming a strategic position with global implications. What we have offered for the benefit of the world, others want for control of the world.

We in Panama have no ambitions or aspirations to wield power. We aspire only to being allowed to develop, under normal conditions, our capacity and potential to bring about material and spiritual improvements for our people.

Another of the great dangers now hanging over small peoples is disinformation. Using the weapon of disinformation to subjugate a smaller people, a great Power has set in motion its enormous established capacity to influence and control systems of collection, generation, distribution and presentation of news and comment, and has established a network for the manipulation of public opinion the world over.

The defenceless state in which societies now find themselves, confronted with massive processes of distortion in the mass media, is one of the most terrible problems of our time, particularly for the underdeveloped peoples, which are very vulnerable to disinformation. If that vulnerability is exploited at the national level, or at the level of regional hegemony, and if the strategy includes cultivating, exporting and introducing methods of Nazi fascism, from the defeat of which this Organization was born, then the time has come to give thought to the need for broad-based action to halt such a diversion of mankind from the right path.

Discord has been introduced into Panamanian society in a studied and planned way by the manipulation of minds, which has been extended to the rest of the world through the substitution of invented reality for truth - an invented reality in keeping with the will and designs of the present American Government.

(President Solis Palma)

It should be recalled that in the last two years disinformation has been functioning as a propaganda ministry whose purpose it is to introduce everywhere a monstrous image of Panama and its highest officials.

If I say here and now that the whole campaign against the Commander-in-Chief of the Panamanian Defence Forces, General Manuel Antonio Noriega, is nothing but a sinister tissue of lies and falsehoods organized and spread by agents of the present Government of the United States, and if I say that the Panamanian defence forces have struggled in an exemplary manner against narcotics trafficking throughout the whole time they have been under his authority, some of the distinguished statesmen and officials in this Hall will perhaps think I am not talking about the same man against whom such immense power has been unleashed.

What, then, is the truth?

On 12 July 1988, in the Senate of the United States, Mr. John C. Lawn, Chief of the United States Drug Enforcement Agency, declared that he had never seen any evidence at all linking General Noriega with drug trafficking. What the United States Government has done is to introduce into world public opinion an image of Panama and its leaders that is nothing more than the product of its own invention, a fiction manufactured by its agents and transmitted and disseminated through channels under its control and orchestrated to lend dignity and merit to United States objectives.

The peoples of the world, and particularly the people of the United States, have been fed deplorable lies about Panama and have been induced to yield to fear of Panama. In the implementation of this plan not only the norms and fundamental principles of the United Nations have been breached but also even the most elementary considerations of humanity.

(President Solis Palma)

What is being inflicted on the Panamanian nation today deserves the most careful attention and very serious thought by the Governments of States Members of this Organization, because a new mode of war of conquest is now being set in motion against the Republic of Panama.

Since the end of February of last year the present United States Government has committed against my country an astonishing series of violations of the basic norms of international law and the rules of peaceful coexistence. I wish to place on record categorically that my Government has more than sufficient reason to fear direct military aggression by the United States against the Republic of Panama. The Heads of State or Government of countries which have diplomatic or consular representatives accredited to my Government know quite well what I am talking about.

With the presidential succession of 26 February this year, when I took over as constitutional Head of State, all the masks were torn away, to leave exposed to the eyes of the whole world the objectives of the United States Government - that is, to overthrow the legitimate Government of Panama and impose a de facto régime headed by figures committed to the renegotiation of those clauses of the Panama Canal Treaties which guarantee the Panamanian people definitive consolidation of an independent, free, sovereign and neutral nation at noon on 31 December 1999.

I strongly urge all representatives to focus most emphatically on this painful account of the grievous sufferings which my country and my people have endured, and which I shall now describe.

Panama was a flourishing, tranquil, happy and simple country with a satisfactory growth index. Dialogue had been the normal way of resolving our internal and international differences, when suddenly we found that discord had

(President Solis Palma)

been insidiously injected into Panamanian society, with a strategy of subjugation aimed at my country under the pretext that the system of government was not democratic.

We have long understood that the only way to give the word "democracy" any real meaning is by means of a high level of popular participation and a just distribution of wealth and opportunities, so that all sectors may have access to the political decision-making machinery and the benefits of growth.

Aware of the inherent weaknesses of institutions which are copied or imposed by force, we have worked constantly on the vital substance of democracy, striking at the essence of social injustice and the social and economic obstacles that confine the liberty and equality of individuals, because they are prejudicial to human dignity. Of course, this mode of thinking gave rise to opposing reactions among those who felt that it was a threat to the privileges which they had accumulated with a régime of supposed formal democracy, but which could not be sustained. There were also opposing reactions in sectors which felt that we were moving too slowly, because the solution of problems could not be delayed. Those reactions were viewed and accepted by us as a domestic issue. We find it utterly unacceptable that a foreign Power should use all the resources of disinformation and manipulation of peoples' minds in order to penetrate those sectors and force them to act against the interests of our nation.

Democracy is forged through the daily practice of a combined effort, by those who govern and those who are governed, designed to establish the true economic and social justice on which is based the development of a new mode of life, which each nation has the right to try for itself. No country may take upon itself the power to intervene in another in order to impose on it an institutional pattern contrary to its self-determination.

(President Solis Palma)

Our sovereign rights were violated when the Government of the United States proceeded to freeze \$54 million belonging to the National Bank of Panama, belonging to the Panamanian people, thus unleashing a fierce campaign designed to create widespread distrust in the Panamanian banking system. This was action provided for in plans made long ago to destroy the banking centre of Panama, an objective which, independently of the destabilizing campaigns, had been attempted some years before. So arbitrary was this action that it included the denial of justice to the National Bank of Panama, which has been unable to bring its case before United States courts or even obtain any information on the fate of its funds.

Similarly, another thing that is completely inconceivable is the retention of payments which the United States Government undertook to make to our country under the Panama Canal Treaties, and of payments which should be made by United States individuals or corporations in the form of taxes or duties established in our fiscal legislation.

It is without precedent, moreover, that by virtue of the Executive Order of the United States President, of 8 April 1988, the State Department authorizes individuals to dispose with absolute impunity and no legal controls of public and private Panamanian funds arbitrarily withheld and deposited in a bank of the United States Federal Reserve. That Executive Order, to provide a reason to invoke the war powers Act, makes the absurd claim that my Government

"constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, the foreign policy and the economy of the United States of America."

(President Solis Palma)

A country such as Panama cannot be a threat to the United States from any point of view, and our legitimate exercise of our independence, sovereignty and self-determination cannot be a threat to any people in the world. But, when the United States resorts to arbitrary actions and capricious moves in its relations with another nation, that certainly has very grave consequences. World leadership in the political field imposes great responsibilities in both the execution and the formulation of policies.

The United States has declared economic war on the Republic of Panama. In this war the effects of warfare are not quantified in terms of loss of life and material destruction, but rather through the grave political, social, economic and moral damage which has had such a severe impact on the entire Panamanian people.

(President Solis Palma)

In 1988, the gross domestic product will drop by more than 20 per cent, which represents more than \$2 billion. In a country of 2 million inhabitants, sudden impoverishment of this sort makes the whole job of strengthening democratic institutions very much more arduous and difficult.

When we have seen the destruction of our economy, of the sources of our work, of our means of production and exploitation of our resources, and when supplies of food and medicine for our population have been seriously jeopardized, how can Panama fail to protest in the most energetic terms? How can it fail to protest when its financial negotiations are sabotaged, when even public Panamanian funds, which have been withheld, are dealt with in a piratical manner without precedent in history, and in particular when every day may be the eve of a military attack from those United States bases located in our own territory?

Allow me now to state the reasons why the Panamanian people is increasingly afraid of direct military intervention. We are now experiencing a visible, tangible and permanent threat, as can be discerned from the facts I have given and shall now continue to give because the entire international community needs to know these things.

The 1977 Panama Canal Treaty authorizes United States military presence in my country only for the purposes of the defence and protection of the inter-ocean Canal. However, that presence has now been turned into a base for hegemony and influence, particularly since 1986 with the fundamental restructuring of the nature and purposes of that military presence.

With the establishment of the Southern Army, and the reorganization of the hierarchy of the chain of command in the Southern Command, and with the considerable build-up of troops and military hardware, the United States military bases became a part of a structure designed to have the capacity to plan and carry

(President Solis Palma)

out armed attacks against other countries. At the beginning of 1988, the total United States manpower present in Panama exceeded by several thousand the figures permitted by the Panama Canal Treaty.

Between 27 February and the first days of March of this year, commando units specialized in surprise attacks arrived in Panama together with an élite battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division, groups specializing in electronic warfare and more than 300 attack helicopters and troop helicopters, in addition to special units for control and occupation of urban centres.

Later, 1300 more soldiers arrived, and 800 marines, combat helicopters and offensive military equipment which has never been a part of the military facilities used by the United States for the defence of the Panama Canal.

Fighters planes have taken over the Panamanian skies. They are carrying out, with significant frequency, threatening manoeuvres not only against installations of the Panamanian defence forces but even against international commercial flights flying different flags.

There has been a steady, unbroken succession of movements of arriving troops, reinforcing and taking over from those already present, together with more armaments having overwhelming destructive power. In addition, every day an interminable succession of manoeuvres and war exercises is rehearsed continuously; its purpose can only be to display the power constantly available for attack.

I wish now to refer again to the Secretary-General's report in order to reiterate the position the Panamanian Republic has traditionally upheld at the United Nations and as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in the light of the problems dealt with in this important paper presented to us by Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

(President Solis Palma)

We agree with the Secretary-General's concerns about Central America and, as Panama has done within the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group, we insist on the need for a halt to pressure and foreign interference so that the Central American Republics can press ahead on the path to the broad-based agreement adopted in the Esquipulas II Agreement.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar's report also touches on a problem of vital importance to my country and people when it refers to the manifestations of contempt for international law which have occurred lately.

If States do not properly implement treaties they have entered into and are currently in force, that will mean the collapse of the entire superstructure of international law and of the foundation of the organized international community. The Secretary-General tells us this in words which are a warning laden with grave implications.

Seeing the sufferings being endured by my country as a result of the determination of the United States to disregard substantive commitments under the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties, I wish to add some final considerations because contempt for international Treaties implicitly involves a very grave breakdown of the moral basis for coexistence among nations.

When force replaces the mandates of international law, the door is opened to all sorts of abuses. The United States maintains a diplomatic Mission in my country but does not recognize my Government; that Mission continues to engage in destabilizing activities, and we cannot have it removed from our soil because we are quite sure that that would be used as a pretext to use force against us. This is a new dimension of abuse of power. It is a day-to-day humiliation, an affront to the dignity of nations and their leaders. It is disrespect for the law of peoples.

(President Solis Palma)

Panama is not the only vulnerable nation. Many other nations now run the same risk and are faced with the same threat, a threat we can avoid only by uniting more strongly, because the sole protection of weak countries lies in our common defence of the principles the United States is violating.

Is not the power to decide upon the legitimacy of a Government and to give the funds of a sovereign State to individuals to use as they like a threat to everybody?

Only through the fullest and most resolute exercise of solidarity in union by all now and the taking of concrete steps towards prompt integration can it be guaranteed that Panama will be the last in a chain of similar cases.

(President Solis Palma)

The political alliance constituted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries is a powerful moral force in the international community. It is an unquestionable political force which is now obliged to extend its influence to the economic field in order to generate greater solidarity among the smaller, weaker countries. That is the best protection against situations such as that now inflicted on my country. Latin America bears an excessively onerous burden in terms of its problems of social, economic and cultural development, with immense numbers of people plunged into despair. In that context the introduction of discord into societies in the name of democracy, justice and freedom may give rise to results that will be quite contrary to those same ideals.

One hundred and sixty-seven years ago, one of the most distinguished of the founders of the United States, John Quincy Adams, uttered a prophetic warning against the danger of its government going beyond its frontiers seeking monsters to destroy, warning that the consequences would severely tarnish its libertarian ideals.

Those who love freedom, in my country and indeed all over the world, are certainly dismayed and indignant that the United States Government now resorts to the invention of monsters in pursuit of its designs of continental domination. The fact that the United States Government is now using its economic and military might to asphyxiate Panama and trying to bring it to its knees is seen by the countries of Latin America with weak economies as a sinister precedent. That policy can turn into a grievous parasitic burden for continental development and for the normal deployment of United States capital.

Foreign investment would give rise to apprehension and well justified fear, particularly in the Latin American countries, which would find themselves abruptly obliged to identify such investment as potential instruments of imperialist designs.

(President Solis Palma)

The orders and prohibitions imposed by the current United States Government on the corporations of its nationals in Panama are really tantamount to stamping its foreign investments with the label of weapons of aggression.

There are many countries which, like Panama, require massive capital investment in their development process, countries which have reformed their policies, have modernized their methods, have invested efforts and valuable resources in the training of qualified personnel. They have adapted their laws and signed agreements in order to help attract foreign capital for the strengthening of their economy.

However, if those countries now see that Panama, with an economy so closely linked to United States investment, suddenly finds that the United States Government is exploiting the relative dependence which emanates from that bond, and if they see that it is then brandishing that fact as a weapon in order to strangle the Panamanian economy, bring its Government to its knees and subjugate its people, then, of necessity, they are bound to have grave misgivings. In the world economy a formula whereby more dollars are generated with less dignity can only give rise to fear.

Panama has rigorously fulfilled its international function as a centre for inter-ocean communication for the benefit of mankind and will continue to fulfil its historic role with absolute self-denial whatever difficulties may come its way and notwithstanding all the obstacles deliberately placed on its path. For that reason we demand respect for our dignity as an independent nation. We demand full compliance with the terms of the treaties which govern the functioning and maintenance of the Canal, with a view both to achieving full control by the end of this century and to ensuring its strict neutrality.

(President Solis Palma)

As the main reason for the existence of the United Nations is the desire of all mankind for peace, I am obliged to invoke the full capacity for moral deterrence which its assembled Members represent as protection for a nation which is threatened and against which aggression has been committed.

My Government wants peace and will seek a dialogue and broad-based agreement for the solution of all its international disputes. I wish to place on record in this Assembly that Panama has proved itself able to withstand aggression and has upheld its dignity because of the sense of nationhood and the feeling of the sovereignty of the Panamanian people, which has gradually deepened with each passing generation in my country. Our will will not be stifled however unequal the terms of the struggle that lies ahead of us may be.

The deliberate aggravation of differences and the stepping up of aggression against Panama can only result in driving our peoples further apart and doing serious damage to the peace and security of that part of the world. It can have no other result. On the other hand, stretching out our hands to each other and reaching an understanding will have great mutual benefits for the community of nations as a whole.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Panama for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Manuel Solis Palma, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): In order to facilitate the work of the General Assembly, I have to make a request to all representatives regarding noise, movement and congratulations in the General Assembly Hall. Congratulations are understandable, of course, after a speaker has made a statement, but it should be remembered that often the congratulating take place when somebody else is speaking. Therefore I once again request representatives, and out of courtesy to facilitate the maintenance of order, to be kind enough scrupulously to observe silence and decorum in the Hall and to refrain from congratulations which may interfere with the statement being made by another speaker. I hope that all members understand the need to co-operate with the presidency in this regard.

ADDRESS BY MR. ROBERT G. MUGABE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, His Excellency the Honourable Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President MUGABE: First, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Dante Caputo, upon your election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. Your elevation to that high office is a reflection not only of your own proved diplomatic skills, but also of the esteem in which your country, an important member of the Non-Aligned Movement, is held internationally. We are confident that under your able guidance our endeavours will meet with success.

Mr. Peter Florin had a remarkably busy watch. Apart from the forty-second regular session, he was called upon to preside over several resumed and special sessions of the Assembly. He more than justified the confidence that the international community had reposed in him. We are grateful to him.

The Secretary-General is, of course, the very personification of the internationalistic ethic itself. Throughout these turbulent and anxious years that have marked his second term, only Mr. Perez de Cuellar's steady and resolute determination has restored the Organization to its present high esteem, even among some of its detractors. Although the fortunes of the United Nations have not quite turned around, we have nevertheless passed the point where the Secretary-General feared he would preside over the dissolution of the United Nations. Instead, he now presides over peace talks, from the Gulf war to Afghanistan, Cyprus and Western Sahara, all under the auspices of, or in terms defined by, the United Nations. It is a remarkable achievement, a culmination of that patient and careful diplomatic choreography that has characterized Mr. Perez de Cuellar's tenure as

(President Mugabe)

Secretary-General. We of the non-aligned countries derive great satisfaction from the achievements of one of the outstanding diplomats of Peru, a key member of our Movement.

The outbreak of peace in places of seemingly intractable conflict and a resurgence in the fortunes of the United Nations are the central features on the international stage today. In the Gulf war, perhaps the most painful and destructive war since 1945, the guns have fallen silent. The former belligerents now sit together in Geneva, talking peace. The basis of that peace continues to be Security Council resolution 598 (1987), in whose evolution and balanced formulation the caucus of the non-aligned countries in the Security Council played no small role. This cessation of hostilities not only puts an end to the anguish of the peoples of Iran and Iraq and affords those countries an opportunity for reconstruction and development, but also eliminates a dangerous threat to international peace and security. We therefore urge the two non-aligned countries, also Member States of the United Nations, to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the effort to find a durable solution to the conflict.

Pursuant to the Geneva accords on Afghanistan, negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations by the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez - then Under-Secretary for Political Affairs and now the Foreign Minister of Ecuador, another key non-aligned country in Latin America - thousands of foreign troops have already left Afghanistan. That not only paves the way for the Afghan people to decide their future free from outside interference but, again, removes a threat to international peace and security. We urge all parties to respect the letter and spirit of those accords to ensure that nothing is done which can cause them to unravel.

(President Mugabe)

In southern Africa also, we have seen the tripartite agreement which involves Angola, Cuba and the Pretoria régime and which provides for the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola and possible implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia. We welcome the declaration of a cease-fire and the end of South Africa's illegal occupation of the sovereign territory of Angola. It is our earnest hope that South Africa will live up to the letter and spirit of the tripartite agreement and will proceed to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

Elsewhere in Africa, thanks to the United Nations a breakthrough also appears imminent in the 13-year war over Western Sahara. In particular, we note the proposal by the Secretary-General last month whereby a cease-fire would be declared, followed by a referendum of the citizens of Western Sahara, including those living in refugee camps. It is also satisfying to note that Morocco and POLISARIO, the two parties to the conflict, are soon to engage in direct talks as called for by the Organization of African Unity. We hope it will now be possible to resolve, once and for all, the central question of self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

On Kampuchea too there are signs of movement. Viet Nam has promised to pull out its troops from Kampuchea and the parties involved have held the Jakarta informal meeting and are in constant contact on the nature of the post-settlement order in South-East Asia. We in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries shall continue to prod the parties concerned to quicken their search for an honourable solution to the problem.

On the vexed question of divided Cyprus, we have recently witnessed some promising stirrings, thanks to the efforts of the Secretary-General. We hope that here too progress can be made.

(President Mugabe)

The recent relaxation in tension on the international scene has not altered the essence of the problems we face in our region of Africa. The Non-Aligned Movement has always maintained that apartheid is the root cause of conflict and that peace and security cannot be obtained in southern Africa until that system is eradicated. The destabilization of the economies of the front-line States continues unabated. Millions of displaced persons, innocent men, women and children, tragic refugees of the evil system of apartheid, are constantly on the run in search of food and security. Only a month ago I had the privilege of attending in Oslo, Norway, the International Conference on the Flight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa. That was the first conference of its kind devoted entirely to the problem of refugees in southern Africa. The Conference established that the number of persons uprooted from their homes by the apartheid régime's acts of destabilization had reached the tragic figure of 5.4 million. Thousands of old men and women, the sick and little children, the weakest in our societies, who cannot make it to safety, perish as victims of the harsh elements or the bayonets of Pretoria's financed bandits.

(President Mugabe)

In South Africa itself, the majority population continue to be victimized by the apartheid police for no crime other than the colour of their skin. Thousands are incarcerated in apartheid gaols. The world must take note and do something. Apartheid cannot be wooed into oblivion; it can only be forcibly taken out by the roots. The only means of doing that, short of war, is the imposition by the entire international community of comprehensive mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter. The arguments of those who oppose sanctions sound increasingly hollow and self-serving. Sanctions may cost some blacks and some whites jobs, but there is no doubt that they do weaken apartheid. The non-application of sanctions leaves apartheid intact. Apartheid kills. Sanctions can have a powerful psychological effect on the white minority in South Africa. For no man is an island, nor is a nation for that matter, not even a nation of unreconstructed racists.

The Middle East is another long-running sore where movement towards peace has been elusive. As Israel has continued to occupy captured Arab and Palestinian lands, the citizens of those occupied territories have met Israeli armour with their bare hands, sustaining many casualties. The uprising of the past nine months in the occupied territories is not a simple matter of bravery. No one wants to die. It is a matter of desperation. The Palestinian people, like all human beings, want to exercise their right to self-determination. Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories and let go of the Palestinian nation. It is our view that only the holding of the international peace conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to address all aspects of the Middle East problem can bring peace and security for all in the region.

In Central America, the Arias plan has provided a concrete and viable framework for peace. Negotiations continue, even if intermittently, in countries with an insurgency problem. We note in particular that the Government of Nicaragua has continued to extend its hand to the opposition, asking them to continue

(President Mugabe)

negotiations. The cease-fire that was called for by the plan has repeatedly been extended and is still holding. It would be irresponsible to call for, or cause, the abandonment of that cease-fire. Countries should not resort to the politics of intimidation or diplomacy of violence in the region. It is essential, for the sake of the people and Governments of Central America and also for international peace and security, that the Arias plan be given a chance to succeed.

Foreign troops remain on the Korean peninsula, prolonging the unjustified division of that land and resulting in increased tensions. Therefore we demand the removal of all foreign troops and call for talks on reunifying the peninsula.

In an age of apocalyptic destructive power, co-operation to reduce the means of war has become a categorical imperative. The international community has set itself clearly defined priorities in disarmament as contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. At the top of the list is the need to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war. Non-aligned States have already stated that the use of nuclear weapons, besides being a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, would also be a crime against humanity. To this end they have urged all nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament, to sign a binding instrument forswearing the use of nuclear weapons. It would also be desirable, in the interim, for the nuclear-weapon States to make a solemn declaration that they will not be the first to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. At the same time, the Conference on Disarmament must seek ways of fulfilling its mandate with regard to the item on the prevention of nuclear war with which it has been charged by the General Assembly.

Clearly, for as long as the nuclear arms race persists and nuclear arms remain in the arsenals of States, the risk of nuclear war remains with us. For this reason urgent measures must be taken to effect the cessation of the nuclear-arms

(President Mugabe)

race and proceed to nuclear disarmament. We welcomed the Treaty on the elimination of medium- and short-range missiles concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States late last year. The conclusion of that Treaty, while of great symbolic importance as representing the first significant step of disarmament in our time, should not obscure the fact that it accounted for a mere 4 per cent of nuclear warheads and that the remaining 96 per cent, constantly being modernized and made more accurate, lethal and usable, is still with us. The occasion should be one not for mere self-congratulation, but for renewed efforts to eliminate the remaining, far greater arsenals of nuclear weapons. To this end, we urge the United States and the Soviet Union to move quickly towards the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arsenals which they have set themselves.

While the bilateral negotiations on disarmament are important, success in that forum should not be used to curb the role of the United Nations in that field. The United Nations, as the sole universal forum, has a central role to play in all issues that affect the generality of mankind. To that extent, we profoundly regret that the momentum generated by bilateral negotiations last year was not translated into concrete achievements during the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The non-aligned countries have always believed that bilateral and multilateral negotiations on disarmament should mutually reinforce and complement, not hinder or preclude, each other. This is particularly so of such disarmament topics of vital importance to all States as a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, nuclear disarmament, chemical weapons, conventional weapons and the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

(President Mugabe)

My country is particularly perturbed by the continued nuclear collaboration between South Africa on the one hand and certain Western States and Israel on the other. As we have all along warned, Pretoria has now publicly admitted that it has the capability to produce nuclear weapons. We therefore hope that those responsible for transferring the know-how to the apartheid régime will now desist from any further collaboration with it in this and related spheres. The nuclearization of South Africa not only poses a direct danger to our part of the continent, but also hinders the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, and is a threat to international peace and security as well. The Security Council has a responsibility, under paragraph 63 (c) of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, to ensure that the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa is not hindered. That body should move at once to institute measures that curb South Africa's continued nuclearization. Furthermore, we believe that South Africa's offer to the three Non-Proliferation Treaty nuclear-weapon States to enter into negotiations on the possibility of its adhering to the Treaty is only a ruse to delay its suspension from the International Atomic Energy Agency. For that reason, we do not see the need for any negotiations and urge the Agency's General Conference to suspend South Africa immediately.

While still on the issue of Africa and nuclear weapons, I wish once again in this Hall to protest indignantly at the callousness shown by the industrialized nations in dumping their nuclear and toxic wastes in Africa. Africa already has enough problems of its own without becoming the garbage-bin of the wealthy northern nations. It is not fair that the poorest nations should be the ones to suffer the worst effects of "progress" in which they do not share.

(President Mabe)

The Indian Ocean is another region of vital concern to the littoral and hinterland States of the area. Seventeen years after the Assembly's adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean is still mired in fruitless squabbles about procedures and methodology. Meanwhile, great-Power militarization of the Ocean is proceeding apace, and the envisaged Colombo Conference is repeatedly postponed. Since those who have spoken against the Conference used to cite the focal points of tension around the region as the reason why the Conference could not go ahead, the solutions in Afghanistan and the Gulf should now pave the way to Colombo. It is our fervent wish that the Conference should not be postponed again beyond the present target date of 1990.

The acute crisis affecting the international economy has not shown any signs of abating during the past year. Growth has continued to be either sluggish, non-existent or even negative in most developing countries. Commodity prices remain well below acceptable levels. External indebtedness continues to exact a heavy toll on the economies of the developing countries. High interest rates have drastically increased the burden of debt service. In addition, resource flows continue to go from the poor of the South to the rich of the North.

The reality of interdependence makes those problems the concern of every country. A solution requires the adoption of a comprehensive set of measures that addresses all aspects of the problem and is geared towards the resumption and acceleration of growth in the developing and debtor countries. The official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product in financial-resource flows from developed to developing countries, which was agreed in the International Development Strategy, must be reached soon, as must the ODA target of 0.15 per cent of gross national product for the least developed countries, as agreed in the Substantial New Programme of Action.

(President Mugabe)

In 1986 the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Great hopes had been attached to that Programme, but up to now we have not yet seen any African economic recovery, despite the enormous sacrifices the countries of the region have made during the past two years.

Only a year ago we were reminded by the World Commission on Environment and Development that poverty was one of the major causes of environmental degradation today. People may be forced to cut down the rain forest by economic necessity in the tropics, but the effects will be felt equally in New York, in London and in Tokyo. There was much talk of the greenhouse effect this year. The Commission on the environment told us that a plausible way of reversing that trend may be to raise the standards of living in the third world.

Unilateral solutions are impossible. What is needed is global dialogue. We of the Non-Aligned Movement have consistently argued for the multilateral approach. We have called for the resumption of the North-South dialogue. We have called for the convening of an international conference on money and finance with universal participation aimed at meeting the development and financing requirements of the international economy, particularly with regard to the economies of the developing countries. We have also stated that international negotiations on the debt problem, involving creditor and debtor nations, multilateral financial institutions and international private banks, were a necessary step in the search for a lasting resolution of the current debt problem.

For our part, we in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries stand ready to contribute in any way possible towards the real launching of dialogue. Earlier this year, the Non-Aligned Committee on Economic Co-operation met at Harare to assess the state of North-South dialogue and to formulate proposals for its

(President Mugabe)

revitalization. I commend the important document espousing those proposals for your close study and serious consideration.

However, the Non-Aligned Movement forms only part of the family of nations. A comprehensive resolution of the current crisis in the international economy needs the participation of all members. It is our hope that the climate of dialogue that has been made by possible by the new thaw in super-Power relations will spill over into the economic sphere. It was therefore with a sense of hope that we noted the gentle breezes blowing from the Group of Seven summit meeting at Toronto. The proposals from Toronto, though limited, envisaging the cancellation of the official debt of the least developed countries of sub-Saharan Africa, reflected a sensitivity that we hope will become part of the approach of the industrialized countries to the entire question of the developing world-debt crisis.

Later this year the mid-term review of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations will be carried out at a high-level meeting to be held at Montreal. That meeting provides a unique opportunity for both the developed and the developing countries to assess the development in the current Uruguay Round and to renew their commitment to the search for lasting solutions to the malaise affecting the present international trading system. In these negotiations it is imperative that approaches that seek to negate the spirit of international co-operation or the mutuality of interests between the developed and the developing countries be avoided at all costs. Attempts to derogate or deviate from long-standing principles and the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade for self-interest should be resisted.

Great strides have already been made in recent years in the conceptual appreciation of the threat those economic problems pose to international peace and security. The time has come to move these concepts to the realm of policy. We of

(President Mugabe)

the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries stand ready to participate constructively in that process. We trust that others are ready to join with us.

I wish to return to the subject of the United Nations and the concept of multilateralism. The 1980s will go down in the history of this century as the decade of a retreat from multilateralism. Many of us would like to believe that this phenomenon of the 1980s has not peaked and is on the wane. But, sadly, the reality is less reassuring. The United Nations is still mired in a financial crisis deliberately engineered. The Secretary-General has been reduced to a virtual street beggar passing the hat to keep the Organization from closing its doors. This is most unseemly. Coming at the very time when the United Nations role in defusing threats to international peace and security has been on the rise, it is doubly intolerable.

I appeal to all Member States to rally behind the Secretary-General by fully honouring the legal obligations they solemnly undertook under the Charter.

On that note let me conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the Non-Aligned Movement to the lofty ideals of this body. As you carry out your difficult duties, I wish to assure you of the continued support of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. LONDOÑO PAREDES (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me first of all, on behalf of the people and the Government of Colombia, to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this Assembly. We are all confident that your well-known ability and your devotion to democratic values will contribute to the success of our work.

The forty-third session of the General Assembly is taking place in an atmosphere of optimism generated by the climate of détente that has emerged from the agreements between the great Powers. That climate and the intelligent endeavours of the Secretary-General are restoring faith in and credibility to the United Nations system.

We believe that this is an auspicious time for making of this forum a real centre of world understanding, not merely one that will continue to strive to avert confrontation and foster the settlement of disputes but one that will be a genuine setting for conciliation where we can find effective instruments to guarantee true, stable and lasting peace for all States. Although the Organization has shown signs of having the energy and capability to undertake substantial changes and convincingly to propose measures to establish higher standards of living and better patterns of development suited to the various regions of the world, the great Powers must be prepared to make use of this effective machinery to attain those objectives.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

Let us hope that we are witnessing a strengthening of the United Nations that will give it the kind of role it has never had before in safeguarding peace and achieving more rapid development for the poor nations of the Earth.

As they strive to consolidate their fragile process of development, third-world countries confront phenomena that pose agonizing threats to them in such vital areas as the food crisis, violence, underdevelopment, economic problems and, at times, political instability.

No less significant is the situation caused by destabilizing factors such as drug trafficking and terrorism. One of our major concerns in this regard is the way in which representatives of groups involved in these practices obtain the resources with which to strike at the legal order and democratic institutions. The wrong, senseless traffic in weapons which goes on unchecked all over the world bears with it disruptive elements that involve grave consequences for the countries that must endure these factors and that destabilize democratic, popularly elected Governments through interference in their internal affairs.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

When we look into this matter universal hypocrisy becomes evident, for at times those very countries that profess to defend peace and security are the ones that are supplying arms to those fighting to destroy them in other parts of the world. Often certain arms manufacturers encourage the commercial aspects of this traffic, and the whole world, without exception, is the victim of a travesty nurtured primarily by economic interests and private greed. For that reason, therefore, we believe that this issue must be tackled squarely and courageously, for we cannot continue to ignore the seriousness of the matter nor to turn a blind eye to its injurious consequences while at the same time, on the international scene, the great Powers are destroying a portion of their nuclear arsenals.

We wish likewise to condemn the use of chemical weapons. There is no argument that can possibly justify their use. We call on this Assembly to denounce and condemn not only those who employ such weapons but also those nations which supply the raw materials and technical assistance for their manufacture, for in this case the responsibility is shared equally by those who use such weapons and those who facilitate their use for motives of profit, or for whatever other reason.

We reaffirm our unconditional adherence to the resolution of disputes by means of the peaceful settlement procedures set forth in the United Nations Charter. We reiterate our continued hope that it will be possible to reach an understanding in the Central American conflict on the basis of the immutable principles of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples.

We accordingly reaffirm our shared commitment, along with a group of other democratic Latin American countries, to the establishment of a permanent political consultation and co-ordination mechanism to safeguard our countries' autonomy and respected position and to guarantee a future of peace, democracy and social and economic progress for generations to come.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

We today express the hope that the negotiations aimed at resolving the Malvinas Islands sovereignty issue may be resumed as early as possible. You, Mr. President, are well aware that my country is in solidarity with your own in these endeavours.

We also place on record our satisfaction at the heartening signs of dialogue emerging in the Korean peninsula, and we shall be happy at this session of the Assembly to hear the views of representatives of both parties concerned.

We share in the whole world's feelings of satisfaction and optimism about the solutions now developing to such sensitive conflicts as those in Afghanistan, southern Africa and the Western Sahara and, of course the cessation of hostilities in the war between Iran and Iraq. Let us hope that next year we will be able to welcome among us in this forum representatives of a free Namibia.

We are hopeful that in the case of any other conflict the Security Council will act, in conformity with the terms of the Charter, in the same conciliatory spirit to promote peace for all mankind. The Security Council's potential should be used to the full.

It is with this conviction that Colombia has put forward its candidacy for one of the Security Council places allocated to Latin America. Colombia feels that in that position it would be able to make a constructive contribution in the next biennium to resolving the problems besetting international peace and security. We have the honour to be endorsed unanimously by the Latin American and Caribbean Group and we hope likewise to be worthy of this Assembly's vote of confidence.

The issue of South Africa and apartheid is once again on the agenda of this Assembly, and rightly so, for although we take the view that South Africa is not the only place in the world where there is racial discrimination, the racial discrimination in South Africa takes a uniquely repugnant form and is consequently morally indefensible and inhuman.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

We therefore reaffirm our solidarity with the South African people, which is suffering the consequences of the present perverted system, and with the countries of southern Africa that are directly involved in the struggle.

We have a cast-iron commitment to finding formulas to strengthen peace that actually work. In particular we are committed to identifying international co-operation measures that will bring about speedy and balanced development in all the countries of the third world. For this reason we are pleased to be able to inform this Assembly that the request made by our President, Mr. Virgilio Barco, in his address to this forum two years ago, when he called for a meeting of

"... the responsible officials of all the relevant agencies of the United Nations system to establish the bases of a programme for immediate action against abject poverty, with the particular aim of submitting it to the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean" (A/41/PV.18, p. 16) has borne fruit with the holding last month in Cartagena de Indias of the first Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Absolute Poverty, whose conclusions, at the request of the participants, I shall be placing before this Assembly for consideration.

In this context, we believe that the external debt issue, a daily growing source of disquiet and complexity, must be addressed without delay. It is disillusionment and nothing else that has led to this issue's being left in the hands of those who have no option but to declare themselves impotent in the face of unbreakable undertakings. Indifference and ambivalence are of no assistance in freeing us from this abyss in which we have been trapped by an economic blunder that must be tackled with by debtors and creditors simultaneously.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

A similar point needs to be made with respect to drug trafficking. It is not possible for the burden of this struggle to be laid, as has been done with unparalleled hypocrisy, solely on the shoulders of a small group of countries whose societies are not the ones which, dissatisfied in the midst of abundance, have resorted to drug use. The war against drug trafficking must be the shared responsibility of all and should go hand in hand with effective controls on the interdiction of consumption. We are gratified to see that this position is now shared by the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean and that voices have been heard that prompt us to hope that in future the consuming nations will unequivocally accept their responsibility in this regard.

(Mr. Londofo Paredes, Colombia)

Colombia, one of the oldest and most robust democracies in Latin America, is committed, in the midst of the threats of terrorism and drug trafficking, to the protection and promotion of human rights. We actively and unconditionally support the activities of governmental and non-governmental human rights bodies alike, but we would issue a warning that the attempt by some to politicize these efforts in the service of certain interests must be checked if the actual advancement of human rights is to be achieved.

The prevailing climate of optimism prompts us to propose the convening in 1990 of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to development. We believe that a setting of that kind would enable us to arrive at an objective assessment of the world economic situation and the measures needed to speed up development in the poorest countries. As long as human beings continue to go hungry, to be homeless and to suffer disease, those who have the resources cannot remain unmoved. Solidarity must be a prerequisite for the continued survival of peoples and nations.

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): As my first duty, permit me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the important and honourable post of President of the General Assembly at the current session.

We are meeting at a remarkable time. Though it may appear quite unremarkable on the working calendar of our Organization, it is a time filled with extraordinary events - events that can become the norm for the life of mankind if we succeed in turning them into a trend. Such, in our view, should be the main thrust of the current session, which in many respects is a watershed for the world community. I am referring to a new world calendar which is being created by the efforts of States and peoples, by the efforts of the United Nations.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

A character in the classical comedy "Woe from Wit" exclaims, "Calendars all lie". However, the calendar that has taken shape today does not deceive us. It tells of change in the world: change that is a product of reason. We find on that calendar the Moscow summit meeting, at which Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan exchanged the instruments marking the entry into force of the Treaty on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles; the conclusion of the Geneva Accords on political settlement around Afghanistan; the first ever public destruction of nuclear missiles; and the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war.

All this is a product of reason, of a new political intellect, which has superseded the dark legacy of the past. It is destroying the reciprocal "enemy images" that have existed and is shaping the image of co-operative partners.

It has made it possible to discuss a world without arms in the emerging context of real disarmament, as was recently demonstrated at the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

It offers us a chance for the successful conclusion of the Vienna meeting, which is a major milestone in the process of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

All that has occurred in the year 1988, which has witnessed many other remarkable events. This year has witnessed the four-party talks on southern Africa; the movement towards a political settlement around Kampuchea; contacts to resolve problems existing on the Korean peninsula; dialogue between the leaders of the two communities in divided Cyprus that were until recently irreconcilable; and the positive response to the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General concerning a settlement of the problem of Western Sahara.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

I shall permit myself to include among the year's landmark events the Party Conference in my own country. Its main conclusion was that perestroika is irreversible. It is irreversible in both our domestic and our foreign policy. Radical change in our own house - and here I am quoting Mikhail Gorbachev - has engendered new approaches by us to international affairs too. In a sense, the calendar that I have brought to your attention is one of the consequences of that process.

Two years ago we said here that group, bloc or ideological considerations were beginning to give way to an understanding of peace as the supreme value. Only peace, translated from the language of declarations into practical action, can give mankind a chance of survival. The Soviet Union has grasped this world-wide trend and coupled it with its own perestroika, its process of renewal.

Today the world is changing along new lines. Through the joint efforts of States and by implementing the principles of the new political thinking, it has become possible to avert the threat of war. To a large extent this is due to the political will demonstrated by the leaders of States, and here I can only agree with President Reagan's remarks yesterday about the beneficial impact on that process of Soviet-American political dialogue.

We are now moving further ahead - towards comprehensive security. This requires truly international co-operation. This universal international alliance must rise above differences, which, to use the words of Albert Einstein, are infinitely small compared to the danger that threatens us all.

The formation of this alliance is being facilitated by the emergence of mechanisms of interaction among States and peoples, first and foremost through the United Nations and its institutions. Its main working unit, its engine, its heart, is here, in our house of peace, as are the people who have found ways to increase the power of the instruments of peace-making, and we thank them for that.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

There is, however, no better way of expressing gratitude than by a collective effort to enhance the role of the United Nations and make it stronger not only as a unique international forum but also as an equally unique global centre for ensuring universal and regional security and the security of each country.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In this capacity the United Nations should, in our view, play a more active and direct role in eliminating the main threat to mankind - the threat of a nuclear catastrophe. We would like to see greater involvement by the United Nations in the process of nuclear disarmament, in reaching a global agreement on the cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapons testing, and in creating nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world.

Space should become an area for the priority attention of the United Nations. The international community has a vital interest in preventing it from becoming an arena for military rivalry. Today this can still be done; tomorrow will be too late.

The Soviet Union has made the case for setting up a world space organization, which could include a centre for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, to be established on the basis of the Krasnoyarsk radar, as proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev.

We call upon the Government of the United States to follow that example, and thus allay our concern with respect to United States radar facilities in Greenland and Great Britain. By doing that, we would not only lay the material groundwork for international co-operation in space but also strengthen the ABM Treaty régime.

This Organization could become involved, in practical terms, in resolving the issue of conventional arms limitation. The Soviet Union supports the idea of setting up, within the United Nations, a register of conventional arms sales and transfers, and is ready to take part in developing the parameters of such a register.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The arms race cannot be curbed without putting under control the use of scientific and technological achievements for military purposes. We support the proposal by India and other countries to set up a group, under the United Nations Secretary-General, to provide assessments and forecasts in the area of new technology.

The United Nations will measure up to all these tasks if we take a fresh look at the practical aspects of our work. First of all, the General Assembly, as one of the principal bodies of the Organization, should substantially increase its contribution towards finding ways and means of solving international problems, inter alia, through renewing and improving its methods and procedures.

There is but one criterion here - that decisions be productive and democratically worked out and adopted. A first step in this direction would be to adopt an increased proportion of United Nations decisions by consensus, though it is important that General Assembly resolutions adopted by a vote should not be devalued.

It is also necessary to reinvigorate the work of the Security Council, and to ensure closer interaction among its members. At consultations among the five permanent members of the Council, attended by the Secretary-General, it would be useful to hold periodic reviews of situations in areas of conflict and to identify priority measures to improve the situation. It is felt that there is a need for periodic meetings of the Security Council at the foreign-minister level, as envisaged by the Charter.

The idea of convening special expanded Security Council meetings in regions of tension is worthy of consideration. Such meetings could also be held in the capitals of the Council's permanent members. The Soviet Union confirms its readiness to host such a meeting in Moscow.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We all owe a debt to the United Nations, and it is in our common interest to repay our debts. We can repay them in full if, in addition to dollar contributions, we invest innovative thought in the activity of the Organization's institutions, if we revive its main function - as a centre for the settlement of international conflicts through united efforts.

Let there be no lament, then, over the sacred national prerogatives. The Soviet Union is a firm advocate of strengthening national sovereignty, particularly wherever infringements of it are most keenly and painfully felt. We regard as highly objectionable the anomaly of foreign military presence - military bases in other States' territories - as well as violations of national sovereignty by the undeclared arrival of nuclear arms in, or their transit through, ports of other countries. We have stated clearly what we believe: that any military presence must be confined within national borders.

But what we are speaking of now is voluntarily delegating a portion of national rights in the interests of all - paradoxically enough, to strengthen national security, while at the same time strengthening universal security.

The interrelationship of events in an interdependent world increasingly compels us to delegate some national prerogatives to an international organization. In fact, this is happening already. Military activity is ceasing to be taboo. Having cleared the verification barrier, and having initiated the process of real nuclear disarmament, the Soviet Union and the United States, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands gave up some of their rights when they permitted the inspection of facilities in their territories. This was done in the interests of universal security.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

By establishing new, previously inconceivable, rules of openness in the military sphere, the world is undoubtedly moving towards the creation of a common sovereign right - the right to survive. When the United States Secretary of Defense sits at the controls of a top-secret Soviet bomber, and the Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces tours an equally secret United States base, that is something more than a mere exchange of protocol courtesies in the spirit of the times; it indicates that the elimination of secrecy is becoming a factor of security.

We draw this conclusion from the conviction that, today, it is no longer possible to achieve political goals by means of war. To put it simply, war is ceasing to be - indeed, it has already ceased to be - an instrument of rational policy.

Let us consider this from the perspective of regional conflicts. While they flare up and develop in different ways, they still have one feature in common - they drag on intolerably long, without delivering positive political results.

However, positive political results are not slow in coming when interference in regional conflicts gives way to the efforts of the world community to promote their settlement. No one should hinder this process.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In this context we have to speak of Afghanistan.

The Geneva Accords are not just an isolated local instance of the settlement of a regional conflict. They are the first step in a chain reaction leading to a healthier world. They are a new promising beginning in world politics, attesting to a qualitative change in political thinking. They are a message of good news to other regions. Any violation of the Geneva Accords undermines those achievements.

The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan are observing their obligations under those Accords faithfully, to the letter. There is no need to prove that. However attempts are being made arbitrarily to alter the formula established by the Geneva Accords, thus significantly changing its meaning.

As soon as the Soviet troops began to withdraw, a non-stop production line of violations was set in motion. The list of them would totally refute the assertion heard here yesterday that bloodshed has diminished in that region. On the contrary, terror has been mounting sharply and is increasingly directed against civilians.

In the circumstances, the fact is that faithful compliance by some with their obligations creates conditions for others to commit new crimes, of which the most heinous is the destruction of hard-won hopes. This must not be allowed to happen. The chain of conflict settlement generated by Afghanistan must not be allowed to break.

We are not complaining to anyone. We have the means to make things fall into place. But we are responsible to the United Nations, and therefore we are appealing to it.

We are proposing that a meeting of the permanent members of the Security Council, hosted by the United Nations Secretary-General, discuss the question of compliance with the Geneva Accords. It would also be appropriate to invite to such a meeting representatives of the parties directly concerned.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The deep involvement of the United Nations in the resolution of major international problems has spotlighted the acute need for new mechanisms of verification and control. We propose that consideration be given to the idea of an international monitoring and verification agency within the framework of the United Nations.

That body's terms of reference could be very broad. Disarmament and security in all its aspects are becoming an increasingly multilateral and truly international process. The institution for monitoring and verification should also be international.

Many countries feel the need for it. Thus Japan is proposing an interesting idea for the world-wide seismic monitoring of nuclear explosions. France has what we regard as the reasonable idea of setting up an international satellite monitoring system.

These are interesting ideas, but how could they be implemented? Naturally, the most sensible way is to make them part of a universal monitoring and verification mechanism that would operate under United Nations auspices or within its structure.

Verification is no longer a preference but an imperative of our time. It is an imperative of our time to search for forms and methods for the development of societies that would be in keeping with modern requirements. Certainly this is true with respect to socialism, but with equal certainty it applies to other socio-political systems. While we are changing in both our own and international interests, we are entitled to expect the same kind of perestroika from others.

Separating the wheat from the chaff, distinguishing the right choice from the wrong, and achievements from deterioration, we are unforgiving in judging the past. To be self-critical is the canonical rule for politicians who believe in their people and want the people to believe them. But we expect certain leaders of

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

States who address the international community to be equally self-critical in assessing the past.

It is appropriate to mention this in the year that marks the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which some are marking by reasserting the supremacy of law, and others by preaching their own faultlessness.

We could list numerous international instruments on human rights that have not been ratified by the countries represented here by some speakers. We could talk of the continuous practice of violations of civil rights in those countries. But we prefer to speak of ourselves.

The supremacy of law is the corner-stone of political renewal in our country. Creating a State based on the rule of law also has a direct bearing on our foreign policy.

A constitutionally authorized mechanism for working out and adopting strategic foreign-policy decisions is being put in place in our country. Questions such as military budgets, the use of troops outside the country, and innovations in the development of the armed forces will also be subject to constitutional and legal scrutiny.

For us, the principle of the supremacy of law and the policy of democratizing our society are indivisible. The emergence of a State based on the rule of law links with the world-wide will to assert the primacy of international law as the standard for mankind's existence. Among politico-military, economic, humanitarian and environmental guarantees of universal security, we view its legal guarantees as paramount.

From States based on the rule of law to a world based on the rule of law - such is the logic of the movement.

A starting-point on this path could be the elaboration of a major long-term programme for the development of international law. Its thrust could be expressed in the motto "Security, trust and co-operation through law".

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We must also work persistently to enhance the effectiveness of the International Court of Justice on the basis of developing a common approach by all States to that main judicial body of the United Nations. Completion of the preparation of a code of crimes against peace and the security of mankind would be a major step.

Probably nowhere is the role of law so important as in ensuring freedom of choice, which is the linchpin of the new political thinking. For how can there be any freedom to choose one's own course in situations in which international law is constantly violated - as in southern Africa, the Middle East, Central America and elsewhere?

Freedom of choice defies confinement within ideological borders or geographical zones. It cannot be stopped by "crusades"; it can only be recognized. It is absolute, and equally absolute is our respect for it, regardless of the orientation of any particular country.

By defining freedom of choice as the key link in the new political thinking, we hope to use that key to open many doors that until now have been tightly locked. Recognition of the diversity of interests, the priority of universal human values and the supremacy of political means in solving international problems, and replacing confrontation with dialogue - those and other components of the new political thinking have resulted in substantial and, we trust, irreversible positive changes.

(Mr. Shevardnaze, USSR)

Yet, the fires of political inquisition are still blazing in the world, and some would try to bring to the stake entire nations and movements accused of the heresy of having freely chosen their own course. Ideology in the shape of missile projectiles crushes them with the cruelty of a medieval axe. I should like to stress that our sympathy is on the side of those who seek to achieve freedom of choice.

Why, for instance, can the great American people have their own great dream, and why should the Cuban or the Nicaraguan, the Angolan or the Vietnamese people, the Ethiopian people be deprived of the right to have their own ideals? Why cannot the Palestinian people have their homeland? Why should other nations, countries and movements be humiliated by great Power arrogance? While not renouncing any of our values or denying to others the right to have their own, while continuing to respect the yearning of peoples for national self-assertion and liberation from economic subjugation and political dependence, the Soviet Union supports the de-ideolization of international relations and the exclusion of the overwhelming component of ideological differences from foreign policy and diplomacy. It expects and hopes that others will do likewise.

It expects the problem of how to pool our efforts to be recognized as commensurate with the problem of the survival of mankind. It expects the force of peace-making policy to prevail over the policy of force which has run its historical course.

The division of mankind into great and small countries is something which has also run its historical course. And, if the term "great Powers" is to be kept at all, it is only in the sense of great responsibility towards the rest of the world. Divisions and redivisions of the world into spheres of influence are historically pointless. Today, we must all have only one sphere of influence - our

(Mr. Shevardnaze, USSR)

planet. It will perish if our influence on the threatening course of destructive developments is divided and fragmented into blocs and systems. Therefore, the Soviet leadership has attempted to reinterpret more profoundly the idea, originally inherent in Marxism, of the interrelationship between class and universal human values, according priority to the interests shared by all nations. In our vision of peaceful coexistence as the universal principle of international relations, it does not emerge as a special form of class struggle.

A rigid polarization of the world, which is becoming increasingly diverse, must give way to its consolidation, which allows the rivalry of two different systems to take on non-confrontational forms. This, if you will, is also a choice, the freedom of which is born of the new political thinking and of its dialectics, which makes it possible to put policies to the test of real life.

But it would appear that not everyone measures up to this freedom. Obstinate clinging to divisive fetishes, some would try to put a brake on the action of the centrifugal forces. As a result, many red-letter days have not appeared on the new calendar of peace this year. For example, it does not include the date marking the completion of a treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic arms. The pace of real disarmament set by the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles is slowing down as negotiations proceed.

We seemed to have dealt once and for all with the issue of verification, but it has arisen again because of the negative position of our negotiating partners. It looks as if the Russian proverb "Trust but verify" is good only when applied to the Soviet Union but is not applicable to the United States.

Once again we call on the United States of America to reconsider its attitude to verification of the process of reducing and eliminating nuclear arsenals. For

(Mr. Shevardnaze, USSR)

verification is something more than the technical checking on the parties' compliance with their obligations. It is the material expression of sincerity and honesty, without which it is impossible to make policy today. It is also regrettable that an agreement barring weapons from outer space has not been concluded in 1988.

We had every reason to hope that 1988 would see the signing of a history-making global convention on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. Indeed, most of the complex fundamental issues have either been settled already or are close to agreement. But once again, the sticky quagmire of procrastination is thwarting the final step towards victory. Meanwhile, in the absence of progress an alarming trend towards the spread of chemical weapons and what I would call chemical permissiveness is surreptitiously beginning to develop.

We do not object to the exploration of alternative ways. The Soviet Union takes a positive view of the proposal made yesterday by the President of the United States to convene a conference of the parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. At the same time we, of course, assume that the drafting of the convention banning chemical weapons will be continued and, of course, completed.

The beginning of the process of nuclear disarmament has brought into sharper focus the problem of conventional armed forces and armaments, including naval armaments. Here, too, great hopes were being pinned on this year. The programme of radical reductions in the military capabilities of the two opposing political-military alliances proposed by Warsaw Treaty countries has put the problem on the track of practical solution.

We have a clear goal - to achieve a situation in which the two sides would have only the forces and capabilities sufficient for defence but insufficient for launching a surprise attack or conducting offensive operations.

(Mr. Shevardnaze, USSR)

There is also another priority problem. Access to conventional weapons in their most modern modifications is expanding. Their technological sophistication makes it easier to use them. There is now no need to spend much time or money on special training, and anyone can easily operate those infernal devices. In other words, conventional weapons are becoming part of everyday life, a common tool in the hands of too many people. This dangerous situation, which is particularly typical of regional conflicts, calls for joint efforts to constrain international arms markets.

Working out a mandate for the future negotiations is also a collective undertaking. Jointly with our allies, we have been finding solutions which bring general agreement closer.

On the question of unfulfilled hopes, we must mention the lack of progress in settling some of the most pressing problems, such as those of the Middle East, Central America, and certain others.

Today, it is clearer than ever what needs to be done. Elementary common sense enjoins that consolidation of forces must be placed above their fragmentation, and constructive dialogue must be placed above destructive scepticism. None of us can any longer waste our time on mutual fault-finding, on mutual recrimination and reproaches. The growing physical destruction of our planet is the verdict against the existing division of the world.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

It is because of that division that so many pages in the 1988 calendar have not been filled. It is for the same reason that this year has had such a generous supply of somber dates.

It is perhaps for the first time that we have seen the stark reality of the threat to our environment - a second front fast approaching and acquiring urgency equal to that of the nuclear and space threat.

For the first time we have seen clearly that, in the absence of any global control, man's so-called peaceful constructive activity is turning into global aggression against the very foundations of life on earth.

For the first time we have understood clearly what we had guessed: that the traditional view of national and universal security, based primarily on military means of defence, is now totally obsolete and must be urgently revised.

Faced with the threat of environmental catastrophe, the dividing lines of the bipolar ideological world are receding. The biosphere recognizes no division into blocs, alliances or systems. All share the same climatic system and no one is in a position to build his own isolated and independent line of environmental defence.

Man-made "second nature" - the technosphere - has turned out to be dangerously fragile. The consequences of many of its breakdowns are becoming international and global.

The environmental crisis is being exported on an increasing scale, with toxic technologies, facilities, products and wastes spreading, overtly or covertly, through the channels of economic relations.

Quite deliberate attempts are being made to turn densely populated areas of the third world into toxic waste dumps.

In a situation like this it is suicidal to try economically to rein in

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

progressive national developments, to wear down an imaginary enemy by economic pressure. That is the kind of thinking that belongs to the Stone Age.

It is unreasonable to impede the economic reconstruction of countries that seek to restructure the energy industries and to introduce resource-saving and waste-free technologies, thus making the world less dangerous.

How much more sensible it is, as we are proposing to the United States and other countries, to abolish some planned or ongoing military programmes and channel the funds thus released towards instituting an international régime of environmental security.

All the environmental disasters of this year have placed in the forefront the task of pooling and co-ordinating efforts to develop a global strategy for a rational management of the environment.

All of us - and I emphasize this, all of us - need an international programme to manage the risks involved in economic activities and to shift to alternative technologies that spare both man and nature.

We need resources to save our planet, instead of destroying it.

I believe that the world community possesses such resources. But they have to be supplemented, first, by the will and readiness to act and, secondly, by an effective mechanism for international ecological co-operation.

It is quite clear that in this area, too, nothing can be done without the tools of the new political thinking. In this area, too, it must emphasize the factor of time. We have too little of it - very little - and problems are piling up faster than they can be solved.

Even the implementation of the positive decisions already adopted could take years and years. Just the physical elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

missiles will take three years of continuous daily work and the Treaty's entire sequence of implementation will take 13 years. This makes it incumbent upon us to take responsible decisions today.

What are our liabilities? Tens of thousands of nuclear warheads and hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic agents; mountains of conventional armaments; holes burnt in the ozone layer and the eroding biosphere; the greenhouse effect and the depletion of non-renewable sources of energy; acid rains and deserts devouring the green world; forest fires and floods; drying up seas and dying fauna; terrorism against the peoples and aggression against nature.

What are our assets? The world's growing maturity which makes it possible to raise and solve global problems on a planetary scale; a growing world-wide "Green Peace" movement; shared perceptions of environmental scientists and policy-makers who are becoming increasingly active as environmentalists, as demonstrated by the document of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty and the recent appeal issued by the Pugwash movement; the report entitled "Our Common Future", prepared by the World Commission headed by Mrs. Brundtland, and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) models of environmental renaissance to counter environmental apocalypses; the experience of the past three years which attests to the possibility of removing corrosive growths from the body of the earth; the experience of pooling the efforts of States in the use of advanced technology, such as thermonuclear fusion and superconductivity, in the interests of human survival.

This year's calendar has also included another event: the inauguration of the Centre for the development of an international experimental thermonuclear reactor by scientists from very many countries who will chart the way towards inexhaustible sources of energy for the coming century and at the same time develop a model for concerting efforts in the interests of all peoples.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Among our assets is the realization that a monopoly of a small number of countries over advanced technologies and attempts at all costs to keep others on the sidelines of the emerging science-and-information world may boomerang against the monopolists.

Among our assets is the United Nations, whose high efficiency has been so graphically demonstrated by the events of 1988. They have also highlighted a simple but very profound truth: when nations, particularly the great Powers, begin to co-operate, the United Nations gains in influence and strength, once again recapturing the spirit of its initial objectives.

It is true that the fable about two elephants stamping out grass is still popular. President Reagan's statement yesterday would seem to indicate that this grass is not being threatened.

We do not want to fight, and love is still a remote possibility.

But speaking seriously, the world community has gained much from the improvement in Soviet-American relations.

In this regard I am pleased to cite a remark by Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

The meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan, he said, has shown the world community an example of voluntary dialogue. Governments have suddenly realized that the United Nations is an entirely appropriate place for negotiations and solving problems.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Precisely, but I would say "the most appropriate place". If in the past it has not always been that, the Organization itself is least to blame.

Let us speak frankly and say that many of us, including particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, are to blame for the fact that at some point certain fundamental values of our Organization embodied in its Charter were devalued. Now that they are regaining their initial level, it is our duty to learn the bitter lessons of the past for the sake of the future.

Today, for instance, the Soviet Union is reconsidering its previous attitude to the Organization's economic institutions. In particular, we attach great importance to the activities of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and would like to contribute to enhancing its effectiveness.

No country stands to gain by remaining aloof from the international forums of our Organization. Having drawn this more than obvious conclusion, we are asking: should not some of our partners take a fresh look at their attitude to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)?

The permanent members of the Security Council should set an example in strengthening the authority of the United Nations, enhancing its role and expanding and enriching its peace-making functions. All of us here are witnesses to the beginning of the renaissance of our Organization. At the same time we are architects of this process. We shall enhance the role of the United Nations even more by concerted efforts to combat the threats to our environment. It is, we believe, precisely within the framework of the United Nations that international machinery should be established to formulate urgent decisions on pressing global problems, above all economic and environmental problems.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The Soviet Union proposes a discussion on the question of how to turn the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) into an environmental council capable of taking effective decisions to ensure ecological security. It proposes that a three-event series of emergency meetings be held - of course, under the auspices of the United Nations - to co-ordinate efforts in the field of ecological security: a consultative meeting of experts to discuss the health of the Earth, in 1989; a summit meeting of the leaders of, say, 15 or 20 States representing all continents, and the influential force of our time, the Non-Aligned Movement, in 1990; the holding of the second United Nations international conference on the environment, as planned, in 1992, or even earlier, but in any event at summit level.

We have been speaking of a calendar of real achievements, a calendar of ideas as yet unrealized, a calendar of hopes and plans for the future. The review of this year that we have undertaken is not an end in itself. What can be an end in itself is the inner moral objective of achieving progress and acceptance of the political need to identify the moment of truth, which from time immemorial has tended towards movement, towards overcoming inaction.

This year has been full of both movement and slow-downs. It has shown that Mikhail Gorbachev was right when he said:

"A complex and in many respects unusual situation is developing in the world. We are at the beginning of a new, long road that offers new prospects and new problems."

Which tendency will prevail? What will gain the upper hand - the tendency towards further movement ahead or the inertia of stagnation?

The answer is to be found in abandoning certain dogmas, even though cast in the form of eternal truths. We have to write a new catechism of international

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

existence, in which the beginning will be thought and reason, followed by deeds for the sake of our common salvation and development. We must stop sermonizing from lofty international rostrums and recognize the principle of equality in international dialogue.

As for the dogma of "peace through strength", let us leave it to those who worship the faded commandments of the past. The keynote of history is peace through reason, and this, too, is a commandment for the future.

The past has great power over us, but although that is true, the future has an even greater gravitational pull. The poetic metaphor, "to win the affection of space, to heed the call of the future", takes on a lofty political meaning.

Let us not be deaf to that call. Let us respond to it by really uniting to save life on our Earth.

Let us begin now.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.