

**REPORT
OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE
WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION**

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Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

In my annual report last year I commented on the performance of the United Nations in discharging its primary duty of maintaining international peace and security and on ways in which that performance might be improved. I am gratified that those suggestions have been extensively discussed, both in the General Assembly and, in considerable detail and over a long period of time, by the Security Council. Certainly there is an urgent necessity to develop international institutions capable of encompassing the harsh realities of our time. But despite the interest displayed in my last annual report by the General Assembly and the will of the members of the Security Council to enhance and strengthen the performance of the Council, the actual developments of the past year have been far from encouraging. It seems to me that we are more than ever in need of a fresh collective look at some of the major problems of the world. The basic issue continues to be the development of, and commitment to, a working system of international security as an essential complement to progress in disarmament and arms limitation and a renewed effort at the highest level to strengthen international economic co-operation for growth and development.

There are a number of current problems affecting international peace, security and co-operation which cry out for a central instrument of co-operative effort through which Governments can control conflict and work out solutions. Despite the efforts of many, 1983 has, so far, been a frustrating year for the search for peace, stability and justice and for those who believe that the United Nations is the best available international instrumentality to achieve these ends. As I believe that the erosion of multilateralism and internationalism should be arrested and reversed, I propose in this report to concentrate on certain approaches which might make our Organization more effective as a political institution.

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The Charter of the United Nations clearly gives priority to dealing with threats to international peace and security and to the commitment of all nations, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, to co-operate within the framework of the United Nations towards this end. It is the weakening of this commitment that has, perhaps more than any other factor, led to the partial paralysis of the United Nations as the guardian of international peace and security.

Furthermore, when East-West tension is superimposed on regional conflicts and serves to exacerbate them, the already destructive nature of such disputes is likely to be aggravated and the danger of widening strife becomes an ominous prospect. On some occasions this process has gone so far that regional conflicts have been perceived as being wars by proxy among more powerful nations. In situations of this kind, the deliberative organs of the United Nations tend to be bypassed or excluded or, worse yet, to be used solely as a forum for polemical exchanges.

There have been, at any given time in past years, several regional situations with grave potential implications for international peace. At the present time, for example, such situations exist in South-East Asia, Afghanistan, Central America, Namibia and several other parts of Africa including Chad, in the Middle East and Lebanon, Cyprus and in the Iran-Iraq war. I shall be dealing in more detail with most of these situations in separate reports either to the General Assembly or the Security Council.

Neither the Security Council nor any other international organ can in all cases hope to resolve in short order acute international conflict situations that may involve serious clashes of interest between the actual parties as well as between the members of the Council. The Security Council under the Charter has, however, the obligation to assist the parties in the search for solutions to international disputes. But above all it is the Council's duty to ensure that this process should remain peaceful, lest it endanger the wider peace. Even though the members of the Council may be profoundly divided about the merits of a given case, it is their duty to find ways and means of keeping the situation under control, without prejudice to the shape of an eventual settlement. Seen in this perspective, conflict control is a basic element of the primary responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For their part, States and other parties to international disputes have a primary obligation at all stages to co-operate with the Security Council and the Secretary-General in suitable forms of conflict control. However, the willingness of the parties to co-operate with the United Nations will inevitably be contingent upon the capacity of the Organization to act as an effective and impartial instrument of peace. Only if this essential condition is achieved will Member States come to the realization that in times of trouble they can rely on the United Nations to help to restore or maintain the peaceful conditions in which negotiated solutions of the basic issues can be sought as part of a civilized and rational international order.

Aside from conflict control, the main objective of the Security Council, particularly of its permanent members, should be to develop an effective common approach to potential threats to international peace and security, to assist and, if necessary, to put pressure on the conflicting parties to resolve their differences justly and by peaceful means. Such a concerted approach would dispose of great resources of persuasion and, if necessary, of practical leverage. That, surely, is the approach to important conflict problems which the authors of the Charter had in mind. This approach would go a long way to developing in practice a system for international peace and security designed to supersede arms races, military and other forms of conflict and the inherent risk of ultimate disaster. This is, after all, the basic idea of the Charter.

Unfortunately, we are in danger of becoming accustomed to a very different situation. All too often the members of the Security Council tend to be so

divided on the matter at hand and so apprehensive of each other's reaction to it that agreement on how to proceed remains elusive. When we consider how to improve the performance of the United Nations we must give priority to the cohesion and co-operation of the membership in facing threats to international peace. We should recognize that such threats are of an importance which should override the differences of interest and ideology which separate the membership. The Council must be primarily used for the prevention of armed conflict and the search for solutions. Otherwise it will become peripheral to major issues, and in the end the world could pay, as it has before, a heavy price for not learning the lessons of history.

If this analysis seems Utopian, it is certainly preferable to a course of action which risks, through partisanship, the elevating of a local conflict into a world confrontation. Indeed the habit of adopting a concerted approach to problems of international peace and security might lead to the statesmanlike co-operation which will be essential in bridging the great present divisions of our international society and in turning the tide in crucial matters such as disarmament and arms control.

We have this year witnessed some notable efforts to maintain unity and realism in the Security Council on highly charged issues. I am thinking in particular of the Council's proceedings on the complaint of Nicaragua and the Namibia question, which revealed a constructive search for consensus on difficult and controversial problems. This is indeed a step forward, but the next step may be more difficult, namely, to put the necessary leverage and movement into the decisions of the Council.

We must, I believe, firmly persevere in the effort to move from words to action. In this context, and having in mind the views expressed by the members of the Security Council, I have, in the course of this year, kept the Council informed of the responsibilities entrusted to me and of my efforts to discharge them. I have also, within the Secretariat, initiated steps in order to be alerted in advance to incipient problems. I look forward to working with the Council in order to develop a wider and more systematic capacity for fact-finding in potential conflict areas.

As Secretary-General I am the repository of numerous injunctions to use my best efforts, to keep in contact with the parties and to report on a wide variety of problems that no one has been able to solve. Resolutions are passed, on occasion requesting reports which form the basis for new resolutions. This process often becomes the substitute for action, and indeed the antithesis of it. Once again I wish to urge the necessity for realistic and politically effective approaches to problems. I welcome the indications of a trend in this direction.

Naturally, I and my colleagues do our best to follow up on important issues before the Organization. I cannot, however, escape the feeling that decisions of the United Nations on important issues require more than this. As I said last year, I believe that decisions of the various organs should be the beginning, not the end, of governmental concern and action. A continuous effort to contribute to the implementation of United Nations decisions should be an integral part of the foreign policy of Member States to a far greater extent than it is at the present time.

It is deeply disturbing to me as Secretary-General, while pursuing efforts to solve this or that problem, to

receive the impression that some Governments sometimes attach little importance to the decisions they themselves have participated in at the United Nations. Conversely it is most encouraging—as I have found in my visits to numerous capitals in the past year—that a basic faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter remains a dominant theme. I wish here to repeat with all possible emphasis the statement in my last report that an essential first step towards strengthening the United Nations would be a conscious recommitment to the Charter by all Governments. With an objective as elusive and as vital as the preservation of peace, a sense of shared purpose and direction is imperative.

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In no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of humanity than in the field of disarmament and arms limitation. The prevention of nuclear war remains the unique challenge of our time, since such a war would be the ultimate negation of all human endeavour. While the international community as a whole is deeply concerned with this vital problem, the key to its solution is in the hands of the two major nuclear Powers.

The current bilateral negotiations on the reduction of strategic and intermediate-range nuclear forces are of vital importance in the face of the destabilizing effects of advancing technology and the continuing arms race. It seems likely that the mood and outcome of these talks will decisively affect the general climate of international relations in the future, as well as the chances of progress on other aspects of disarmament.

The failure so far to achieve real progress in these negotiations can only cause us all profound alarm. If they should fail, we may be faced with another significant escalation in the spiralling arms competition. A development of this kind would inevitably add to the world's burden of insecurity and instability. The situation could well become virtually irreversible if the establishment of viable methods of arms limitation is jeopardized by the development of new weapons systems, and if either side, in search of military advantage, deploys strategic weapons that suggest an attempt to reach out for first-strike capability. Currently, perhaps even more acute is the problem of intermediate-range missiles, which may reach a critical stage unless the present negotiations bear fruit. Beyond all this there looms the longer-term prospect of the militarization of outer space and the computerization and automation of warfare, which could eventually escape political control altogether.

I have no doubt that the responsible leaders on both sides are aware of the ominous prospects, and of the crying need for renewed determination to move the current Geneva talks forward. In this connection, I might venture the observation that in this field there are no bargaining chips. Each side seems determined to respond to any advance achieved by the other side by matching it rather than by making concessions.

In view of the urgency of the situation, especially as regards intermediate-range forces, I hope that the parties will give thought to possible interim measures that would keep open the possibility of negotiations. I further recall that certain promising compromise proposals have been informally discussed in Geneva. It is important to bear in mind that negotiations on one weapons system intended to deter one particular

threat are inextricably linked to perceptions of the overall threat and to negotiations on other weapons systems. It is therefore imperative to reduce the totality of mutual threat by moving in the direction of more stable systems. The extension of the mutual observance of current limitations would also be helpful in order to allow consideration of a new longer-term approach. Future limits on qualitative improvements and modernization could provide a useful subject of discussion in both sectors of the Geneva talks. The object, while preserving military parity, should be to promote equal security for all at progressively decreasing levels and under effective international control.

I share the general anxiety about the possible uses of outer space for military purposes, and I welcome recent suggestions to deal with important aspects of this problem. I would strongly urge that comprehensive negotiations should begin at an early date on a peaceful régime for outer space. To improve the atmosphere, it would also be desirable to lend fresh impetus to the talks on banning the production of chemical weapons and destroying existing stocks. Enough work has already been done to provide the basis for the long-awaited convention on this subject. Furthermore, I would urge a renewed effort to conclude negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon test ban. This would significantly help to halt the nuclear-arms race by impeding the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. All these questions are currently under consideration in the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva. In addressing that body earlier this year, I urged its members not to let their vital work fall hostage to lack of progress elsewhere.

The situation relating to conventional arms is a source of increasing concern. It is necessary to bear in mind that the many millions killed in war since Hiroshima and Nagasaki have all died from conventional weapons. This situation has had a corrosively harmful effect not least on the world's developing countries, which feel obliged to spend an increasing proportion of their resources for defence purposes, often to the detriment of essential needs. It is of course the right and duty of all nations to provide for their self-defence. But unresolved disputes tend to provoke regional arms races and the international tensions accompanying competitive arms purchases can no longer be ignored.

In the Final Document of the 1978 special session on disarmament, the General Assembly called for consultations among major arms supplier and recipient countries to limit transfers of conventional weapons, in order to preserve security and promote stability at a lower military level. No concrete action has been taken so far to follow up that appeal. I would therefore suggest that the two Governments concerned give careful thought to the possibility of reviving the bilateral talks on conventional arms transfers, which were suspended in 1978. The scope of these talks could eventually be enlarged, perhaps within the framework of the Committee on Disarmament, to cover multi-lateral aspects and to provide representation of recipient as well as supplier countries.

The United Nations, as stated in the concluding documents of the two special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, has a central role to play in this field. At its thirty-seventh session, the Assembly adopted a record number of resolutions on disarmament matters, including over 20 dealing with

nuclear questions. They reflect the deeply felt concern of many Governments with the present situation. World public opinion is increasingly reacting against the constant threat of extinction hanging over humanity, in a world where despite our vaunted advances in science and human knowledge we cannot even assure our children of their future. In this context, I urge all Members to give full support to the World Disarmament Campaign of the United Nations, which was launched at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In an area hitherto marked by polemics, this campaign will enable the Organization to disseminate objective information worldwide so as to provide a solid, factual basis for constructive public involvement and understanding.

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In the common quest to realize the ideals and objectives of the Charter, we must never lose sight of the quality of the world we are seeking to build and of the ultimate *raison d'être* for all our activities: the individual human being, for whom the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the right to a social and international order in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.

Over the past years, there has developed a growing trend for international co-operation in dealing with human rights issues. In addition to the elaboration of international conventions since the Declaration, I should like to mention the work of the Commission on Human Rights on arbitrary and summary executions and the holding of the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

However, despite the progress achieved at the international level, gross violations of human rights and restrictions of fundamental freedoms are still taking place in many parts of the world. Racism and racial discrimination in various forms, including the totally unacceptable policy of *apartheid*, have not been eradicated. There are still far too many refugees, uprooted and destitute as a result of political conflicts.

The problem of refugees can be resolved only with a settlement of the root political causes. In the meantime, various United Nations operations and programmes have provided emergency assistance to many refugees and displaced persons and helped to alleviate their plight in some measure. But this is clearly not enough in spite of the effectiveness and devotion of the United Nations personnel involved. The means available to the Organization are grossly inadequate in relation to the actual needs. I earnestly hope that Governments as well as voluntary agencies will intensify their support of the United Nations for this important humanitarian endeavour.

I attach the highest importance to the question of human rights and I believe it my responsibility to consider the most effective means of dealing with specific cases. Taking into account the nature of my office and mindful of the kind of approach necessary to achieve practical results, I have been in contact with a number of Governments regarding particular human rights situations or individual cases. I am heartened by the instances in which co-operation has been extended to me in these contacts, and I am determined to persist in my efforts.

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The Preamble of the Charter expresses the determination of the peoples of the United Nations "to pro-

mote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" and to this end "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

I am convinced that the impressive economic progress since the Second World War—in which almost all nations have shared—owes a great deal to multilateral co-operation which the United Nations has helped to bring about and develop. Recent trends and events, however, far from strengthening such co-operation, mark a clear retreat from these efforts. Indeed, while the effects of economic interdependence, due to growing integration in trade, finance and money, are widely acknowledged, obvious opportunities to address the major issues in these areas are being repeatedly missed. There can be no doubt that today more than ever many individual nations are affected—for good or ill—by trends elsewhere and by the decisions of others. Furthermore, there are categories of problems which can only be dealt with multilaterally or globally. All these developments intensify the need for international mechanisms to bring about greater harmonization of national policies.

Unilateral actions, taken without due regard for their effects on partner countries, would inevitably lead to the weakening of economic co-operation, thereby damaging world growth and development. They would lead to economic nationalism, the evil effects of which we witnessed during the '30s. Unresolved economic conflicts can be, and usually are, a breeding ground for dangerous political tensions.

A major economic imperative of our times is the accelerated development of the developing countries. The eradication of the poverty that continues to be widespread in several parts of the world must remain a collective responsibility. The needs of the least developed and other poor countries require particular attention. The total population of developing countries is projected to increase from around 3 billion to approximately 5 billion by the end of the century, that is, within less than two decades.

The slowing, and sometimes the halt, in the development process that has taken place in recent years should be seen as a temporary phenomenon that must be reversed in the coming years. In the meantime, every effort has to be made to reduce the vulnerability of developing countries to external shocks and to assist them in attaining greater autonomy and freedom of action, both by themselves and in co-operation with other countries—developed and developing.

At the same time, it is necessary to realize a higher level of growth in the industrialized countries. Thirty-two million people are unemployed in the OECD countries alone, and this figure is likely to rise in the immediate future. A burden of this magnitude cannot be economically or politically accepted as a permanent part of the realities of these countries. The need for investment in order to fight unemployment, to ensure structural adjustments and to deal with the needs of underprivileged areas and groups requires higher growth in that region. This would also encourage better prospects for increased trade and transfer of resources from the industrialized countries to the developing countries. Similar considerations call for high growth in socialist economies as well.

I have recently presented, in statements to inter-governmental bodies, my views on ways to revive the world economy and resume the process of development. There is a primary need for action at the national

level to correct economic and social imbalances. Such efforts need to be supported by concerted action among nations and the assistance of multilateral institutions. In this connection I have emphasized the need to make additional finance available as part of concerted policies for world recovery and to examine basic reforms in international trade, money and finance. Economic co-operation among developing countries also needs strengthening.

The recently concluded sixth session of UNCTAD provided an important opportunity to counter the present negative trends and to demonstrate the capacity and the will of Governments to overcome difficulties and to act together. Unfortunately, the results of this important Conference are not commensurate with the gravity of the situation in developing countries and the requirements of the world economy in general, and there was a failure to respond to the need for concerted international action. The opportunity of UNCTAD VI was to a large extent allowed to lapse, thus exacerbating political tensions on a range of economic issues. It is regrettable that efforts at flexibility, as evinced, for example, at the Buenos Aires and New Delhi meetings, did not evoke a comparable response. Nevertheless, it is my view that the consensus achieved at Belgrade on several issues could constitute a worthwhile step provided there is a continuing process of dialogue and action. In this context and despite the remaining obstacles, we must activate the process of negotiation between the developed and developing countries on long-term problems in several interrelated areas and at a high political level.

Let me now turn to the role of the United Nations on economic issues. How effective is the United Nations in discharging the responsibilities with which it has been entrusted by its Charter? Contrary to the perceptions of some, the Organization has been successful in anticipating and identifying issues of importance, mobilizing public opinion, researching and analysing critical problems, providing direct assistance within its means and negotiating constructive agreements in various sectors of activity.

The record of performance and accomplishments of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields is varied and substantial. Through a vast network of technical co-operation activities, organizations of the United Nations system continue to assist developing countries in formulating and implementing a large number of specific projects, ranging from the establishment of primary health care centres to highly sophisticated institutions of agronomic research and training, and technology.

However, I am very much aware that much more needs to be done to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system and to ensure its responsiveness to changing needs. This requires efforts on the part of the Secretariat as well as of the Member States.

I shall deal elsewhere in this report with issues relating to the improvement of the administration of the Secretariat. There is a need to ensure more concerted action by the organizations of the United Nations system in dealing with the important issues of development and international economic co-operation and in their work at the field level.

As regards Governments, it is important to ensure greater cohesion and consistency in their positions in the different intergovernmental bodies. A greater sense of priority in the deliberations of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council

would encourage more effective consideration of issues. It would also strengthen the impact of resolutions. Frequently such resolutions lead to a proliferation of institutions. This can hamper efficiency and add substance to criticism of an ever-expanding bureaucracy. Improvement is also needed in the machinery and methods of negotiation.

Innovative measures should be considered to foster the habit of co-operation. In this connection, I wish to underline the need to strengthen the efforts of the United Nations system to support the initiatives of developing countries to promote co-operation among themselves through the implementation of specific and action-oriented measures.

It is incumbent on us to seize every opportunity to carry forward the development dialogue, setting aside, where necessary, traditional practices or methods which may be obsolete, and testing new means of strengthening the collective effort of Member States to attain their common objectives.

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No organization can succeed if its administrative system is inarticulate or unresponsive to its real needs. While there have been criticisms of the United Nations administration as inflated, politicized or extravagant, it is also necessary to understand its fundamental nature and problems. In the full knowledge that much responsible criticism is justified, let me, as chief administrative officer of the United Nations, attempt a brief look at the problems and realities which we face.

The administration of the United Nations is not like the administration of a national government. For one thing, the Organization has 157 Members, with widely differing notions of administration. For another, it has existed for less than 38 years, a period of great flux in which its membership has more than trebled and the emphasis of its work dramatically changed. The principle of equitable geographical representation, which is essential, nevertheless poses its own considerable problems in the building up of a coherent international civil service. And the fact that there is often on one side of an administrative or budgetary issue a relatively small number of Member States that provide the bulk of the budget, and on the other a majority in the General Assembly that do not, also imposes stresses and strains. These and other factors render the Secretary-General's task as chief administrative officer a complex and sometimes exasperating one, for while all profess their dedication to the principles of independent and objective international administration, few refrain from trying to bring pressure to bear in favour of their own particular interests. This is especially so on the personnel side.

Article 97 of the Charter, which designates the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer of the Organization, gives no precise indication of the functions involved nor of how these functions are to be delimited against those of other principal organs, particularly the General Assembly. I shall not go into detail here about the various fields in which this lack of precision creates problems.

The General Assembly is, of course, pre-eminent. It appoints the Secretary-General under Article 97. It has the power of the purse (Article 17), the power to discuss "any matters . . . relating to the powers and functions of any organs" (Article 10) and to establish regulations for the governance of the Secretariat (Arti-

cle 101). In other words, the Assembly lays down the general legislative framework within which the Secretary-General performs the executive functions entrusted to him by the Charter. The problem is that there is no defined borderline between the legislative and the executive. This can on occasion have an inhibiting effect on the Secretary-General in instituting and carrying out coherent policies, under the Charter, in recruiting, administering and running the Secretariat and the administration.

Thus in personnel matters, the Charter distribution of functions may be seen as blurred if decisions in respect of individual staff members, or the power to appoint a staff member or part of the staff, are vested in authorities other than the Secretary-General. This is also true of the increasingly detailed directives issued in recent years by the General Assembly concerning various aspects of recruitment, even if these merely reflect its frustration at the administration's failure to achieve, or the slow pace in achieving, goals set in earlier and more general guidelines as to the geographical, gender, linguistic and age distribution of the staff. While it is not my intention to raise constitutional or legal objections to these detailed directives, the fact remains that rigid directives can be counter-productive from a political and administrative point of view and may not always be conducive to the smooth functioning or efficient administration of the Organization. A case in point is the recent decision curtailing the Secretary-General's hitherto unquestioned authority to promulgate Staff Rules, as distinct from the Regulations issued by the General Assembly.

Another, perhaps unintended, consequence is that an effective career development programme is becoming increasingly difficult to work out. A programme of this kind, which I consider essential for the future capacity of the Secretariat as well as for the morale and encouragement of the present staff, presupposes considerable flexibility in conducting an active personnel policy. The current trend seems to be pushing us in the opposite direction.

The Charter is silent as to any explicit financial or budgetary functions of the Secretary-General, although the Financial Regulations and other decisions of the General Assembly assign to him substantial functions in this area. Of these, perhaps the most important is the preparation of the proposed programme budget for each financial period, upon which the General Assembly makes the final decision. The Secretary-General needs to retain the degree of authority necessary to maintain the financial integrity of the Organization and to safeguard the concept of a unified Secretariat. This necessity has, with minor exceptions, by and large been recognized. In the budget adoption process, it is inevitable that differences of opinion will arise at times between the Secretary-General and the Fifth Committee or the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. This is completely normal; there is nothing wrong in a process in which the Secretary-General defends his proposals fully and fairly and then implements faithfully whatever decision the Assembly may take thereon.

As regards the structure of the Secretariat, there are, since it is determined by the budget, very considerable restrictions on the Secretary-General's freedom of action. One trend, however, deserves mention here, namely, the tendency to establish more or less autonomous units to carry out certain functions—organs over which the Secretary-General does not have clear con-

trol. This trend raises serious questions of organizational responsibility and authority and may sometimes not be altogether consistent with the Charter concept of a unified Secretariat working as a team under a single leadership.

At the same time, critical attention needs to be given to the internal administrative set-up. After nearly four decades of wear and tear it needs a careful overhaul so as to ensure that it meets with increased efficiency the needs of this larger, more complex and more decentralized Organization. To that end I have recently established a high-level advisory group on administrative reform to identify issues and areas in which modification or reform could be effected.

Very often I find myself caught between the directives of the General Assembly, the interests of the staff and the imperatives of good and efficient administration in accordance with the Charter. I believe that it is in the general interest that we act together in full knowledge of the practical difficulties of the enterprise and with the united objective of strengthening the Secretariat and the administration.

This is, admittedly, a formidable task, complicated by the accretion of 38 years of experiment, development and change. I therefore intend to give priority in the coming year to a searching examination and appraisal of the administration with a view to improvement. But I should be less than frank not to pose here the question that often arises in my mind: Does the Secretary-General still have sufficient authority effectively to meet his responsibilities as chief administrative officer of the United Nations?

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Thirty-eight years after the Second World War it would seem that the drive towards an effective, peaceful and more equitable international order has slowed, and the incentive to develop international institutions corresponding to the realities and risks of our time has weakened. Political will to these ends, in its best sense, has been dissipated in a variety of rivalries, confrontations and conflicts. The belief in a common future has been, to a large extent, lost in the anxieties of a divided present. Short-term national interests, old resentments and fears, and ideological differences have obscured the vision of the Charter. The will to compose differences seems weak or absent in most conflict situations, and at the other end of the spectrum the concept of world affairs dominated by concerns for national security or conceived as an open-ended struggle between massive ideological forces seems to have taken the place of the new and enlightened international community envisaged in the Charter. In this connection, the recent tragedy of the downed Korean airliner, and the very serious issues it raises, also points dramatically to the urgent need for more open and ready communications between all sides in the interests of the international community as a whole in order to create an environment in which the use of force would be unthinkable.

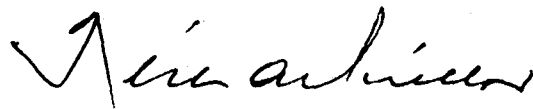
Admittedly, we have been through a period of fundamental change in the world—geopolitical change, technological change and a revolutionary change in the nature and scope of war. But all of these things demand more than ever a return to the far-sighted statesmanship of the immediate post-war years, not a

retreat from it. Who can possibly believe that a world dominated by the nuclear balance, where \$800 billion a year is spent on armaments and where a large proportion of the population lives in destitution and with little real hope, is on the right track? And yet, paradoxically, for the time being at any rate, the United Nations, which was set up to deal with such problems, is too often on the sidelines as far as many major issues are concerned.

We are at present in a period when the value of multilateral diplomacy is being questioned and international institutions are not functioning as they were intended to function. The machinery is running and the wheels are turning, but it is not moving forward as it should. This applies to the United Nations and, in different degrees, to regional organizations and to many international agencies and groupings. Nor is it evident that bilateral diplomacy or unilateral efforts are, in most cases, filling the gap by providing that correlation of national policies which is essential to future stability and the general international interest. We must find means to push the machinery into forward motion again. If we do not do this, we run the risk of being caught, immobile and in the open, in a new international storm too great for us to weather.

Let me here point to a source of real encouragement. It is perhaps best symbolized in the proposal of the Chairman of the seventh non-aligned summit conference, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, that the United Nations should be strengthened by a meeting of heads of State or Government to give a fresh collective look at some of the major problems of the world. At this critical time in human relations it is encouraging that the non-aligned movement has spoken as a protagonist of the multilateral approach and of the purposes and principles of the Charter. Nor is such a view by any means limited to the non-aligned movement. In meetings with many leaders throughout the world I have been impressed by the evident desire to see the United Nations function in the manner in which it was intended to function.

It is therefore paradoxical that we should be experiencing, I trust only temporarily, the fragmentation and erosion of the historic effort to build an international system designed to provide peace, security, stability and justice for all. Although in the short term the world may get by without such an effort, in the long term such a system, evolving through a conscious political effort by all States, is indispensable if we are to avoid chaos and disaster on a scale hitherto unknown. At the present time we are witnessing instead the unravelling of many agreements reached by hard and painstaking negotiation over the years. It is absolutely vital that this trend be reversed and that we strengthen our international institutions, not only in order to deal with immediate conflict problems but also to construct a viable framework for the life of future generations on our crowded planet.



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