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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 4 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President:

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later:

Mr. CAPUTO
Mr. HUERTA MONTALVO (Vice-President)
Mr. MEZA (Vice-President)
Mr. HUERTA MONTALVO (Vice President)
Mr. CAPUTO
Mr. DLAMINI (Vice President)

(Argentina)
(Ecuador)
(El Salvador)
(Ecuador)
(Argentina)
(Swaziland)

- General debate [9] (continued)Statement made by:

Mr. Upadhyay (Nepal)

Address by Dato' Seri Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia

Statements made by:

Mr. Rao (India)
Mr. Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)
Mr. Tran Quang Co (Viet Nam)
Mr. Evans (Australia)
Mr. Lopez Contreras (Honduras)
Mr. Tillett (Belize)
Mr. Aziz (Iraq)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. UPADHYAY (Nepal): Mr. President, I have the honour to convey to you and, through you, to this assemblage of representatives greetings from my august sovereign, His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, and his best wishes for the success of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the Nepalese delegation and on my own behalf, I congratulate you most warmly on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Your election is as much a reflection of the high esteem that the Argentine Republic enjoys in the international community as it is of your well-known diplomatic skill and dynamism. My delegation feels confident that under your guidance the Assembly will achieve its goals.

On this occasion I should like to express my delegation's deep appreciation to Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly as well as the regular and resumed meetings of the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay a richly deserved tribute to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his admirable endeavours in promoting the cause of international peace and co-operation in general, and, in particular, to congratulate him on the award of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

After years of frustration we meet today in an atmosphere of renewed hope. The restoration of peace on several fronts, as has been underscored so well in the report of the Secretary-General, has been a source of satisfaction and encouragement to all. At a time when the United Nations is emerging as an effective instrument for peace we find it somewhat ironic that it should be subjected to financial constraints. It is our fervent hope that peace will be given a chance. While welcoming recent moves in some quarters to meet their financial commitments to the United Nations, we urge all Member States to rise to the occasion by underwriting the costs involved in the ongoing and future peace-making and peace-keeping operations of the United Nations.

As a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has all along been working for the reduction of cold war tension, Nepal is naturally happy to note the recent signs of improvement in East-West relations, particularly those of the two super-Powers. Its ripple effects have wafted across the wide international horizon. The most visible manifestation of this change was reflected in the signing and ratification of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty.

Nepal warmly welcomed this disarmament agreement as a landmark of historic dimensions, aimed as it is at the elimination of an entire category of nuclear missiles. We are hopeful that this will pave the way for serious negotiations and the early conclusion of an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in their arsenals of strategic offensive arms. Given the latest technological advances and innovative verification mechanisms incorporated in the INF Treaty and, more important, a continued climate of mutual respect and trust between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, we believe that such a disarmament objective is attainable.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Like other Member States, Nepal attaches the highest urgency to nuclear disarmament, concerning as it does the very survival of humankind. At the same time, given the all-too-frequent resort to conventional warfare and the ever increasing destructive capacity of conventional weaponry, Nepal can hardly overlook or minimize the importance of conventional disarmament. My delegation is concerned over the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent years and joins with other countries in calling for the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, and their destruction.

Nepal shared the disappointment of the majority of Member States when the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which convened here this summer, could not adopt a consensus document. There was solace, however, in the fact that it could generate an enhanced understanding of the triangular relationship between disarmament, security and development. Appreciation of such a relationship, indeed, lies at the very core of Nepal's long-standing policy of support for initiatives that seek to promote disarmament through the establishment of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace, whether they relate to the Indian Ocean or the South Atlantic, the Mediterranean or South-East Asia, the South Pacific or the continents of Africa and Latin America.

The concept of an intimate linkage between peace and development and its corollary - that a durable peace is a prerequisite for meaningful development - is the foundation on which rests His Majesty King Birendra's proposal that Nepal be declared a zone of peace. I should add that the peace proposal is an effort on our part to give practical expression to the basic ideals of the United Nations and the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement. In this context, I am pleased to disclose that 97 Member States have thus far extended their valuable support, for which I once again express my deep appreciation. Similarly, it gives me great satisfaction to inform the Assembly that consequent upon a mandate from the forty-second session

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

of the General Assembly, the United Nations Centre for Disarmament in Asia has been set up in our capital, Kathmandu. His Majesty's Government has extended all possible co-operation towards its establishment and hopes it will receive active support from interested countries and non-governmental organizations.

I have referred briefly to some positive developments with regard to the present international political climate. Among them must be mentioned, of course, the very welcome cease-fire and ongoing peace negotiations between Iran and Iraq following their acceptance of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). I assure the Secretary-General, and his Personal Representative, Mr. Jan K. Eliasson of Sweden, of the continued support and co-operation of Nepal in the Security Council in the urgent task of the speedy restoration of a lasting peace in the Gulf.

Since December last year, we have watched the developments in the Middle East with increased anxiety. These have created new political realities on the ground and completely altered a 21-year occupation imposed by military might. This has only reinforced our view on the desirability of convening an international conference on peace in the Middle East. The three essential elements of a durable peace in the Middle East, in our view, are: recognition of the right to an independent homeland for the Palestinian people, whose sole, legitimate representative is the Palestine Liberation Organization; the withdrawal by Israel from territories occupied since 1967; and recognition of the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure, internationally recognized borders.

Another area in the Middle East that has been caught in an endless cycle of violence and strife is Lebanon, which has been the unfortunate focus of competing foreign and sectarian interests for more than a decade. While recent events in Lebanon have increased our concern, Nepal is proud to be making a small contribution to the cause of peace in the southern part of the country by

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

participation in United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) operations. As a country that yearns to be universally recognized as a zone of peace, Nepal will naturally continue to endorse any proposal that ensures Lebanese sovereignty over all Lebanese territory and secures not only the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon but also acceptance by all concerned of commitment to non-interference in Lebanon's internal affairs.

Nepal was encouraged by the recent meeting in Geneva between the Cypriot leaders, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, which led to peace talks in Nicosia last month on all aspects of the unification of Cyprus, under the auspices of Mr. Oscar Camillion, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. I take this opportunity to reaffirm Nepal's strong support for an independent, non-aligned, federal and bicomunal Cyprus.

Nepal warmly welcomed the signing in Geneva on 14 April 1988 of the Accords on ending the conflict in Afghanistan. Admittedly, the process envisaged in the Geneva Accords has yet to be completed and some uncertainties remain.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Nepal is nevertheless heartened by the fact that the foreign military presence is withdrawing, thus preparing the way for the voluntary return of millions of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran in conditions of peace and security for the region and beyond. Nepal has also been encouraged that such a turnabout has taken place thanks to the painstaking efforts, over six years, of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez. It was a matter of considerable pride and honour for Nepal to be invited to participate in the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) set up to monitor the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

Nepal has been following with considerable interest recent developments with regard to the situation in Kampuchea, including the Jakarta Informal Meeting held at Bogor, Indonesia, from 25 to 28 July 1988. We have also taken note of recent high-level talks between China and the Soviet Union on the situation in Kampuchea and the initiative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries before, during and after the Bogor talks. While Nepal notes that some progress has been made, we remain convinced that a peaceful settlement of the Kampuchean problem requires, first and foremost, the unconditional withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea and the full and free exercise by the Kampuchean people of their right to determine their own future.

The situation in the divided Korean peninsula still remains potentially explosive. Nepal is greatly pleased that the Seoul Olympic Games have been brought to a successful conclusion on an overall note of sportsmanship and harmony between participating countries and athletes. It has observed and welcomed endeavours for broadening ties and contacts and initiating dialogue between the two Koreas. It thus remains Nepal's hope that the Korean people will address the important question of reunification with their age-old wisdom and customary ingenuity, without outside interference.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Auspicious harbingers of change have been discernible in Africa in the recent past. Among those that Nepal views as positive and hopeful are the efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the quadripartite negotiations on Angola and Namibia. The recent visit of the Secretary-General to Pretoria has paved the way for the dispatch of a United Nations technical team to Namibia to prepare for the emplacement of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group and has given rise to hope that South Africa may actually begin the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which it accepted in principle 10 years ago. Nepal would be honoured to co-operate in any Security Council endeavour to implement its resolutions on Namibia, particularly resolution 435 (1978), if such a Council meeting were convened during Nepal's current tenure of non-permanent membership of the Security Council. On this occasion I should like to place on record Nepal's recognition of the contributions to Namibian independence made by the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)*

In South Africa, despite the clearly and repeatedly expressed will of the international community, the racist régime tenaciously clings to its abhorrent system of apartheid. As the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and the anti-apartheid movement world wide gain new momentum every day, there are welcome signs that a growing segment of South Africa's white community is increasingly beginning to see the writing on the wall. Nepal remains convinced that comprehensive and mandatory economic sanctions, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, represent the most effective and peaceful instrument for dismantling the apartheid régime and installing a truly representative, multiracial society in South Africa.

*Mr. Huerta Montalvo (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

A note of optimism is also in order, we believe, with respect to the conflict over Western Sahara following acceptance by parties to the conflict of proposals for a peaceful settlement put forward by the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. Nepal was privileged to have joined in the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 621 (1988) authorizing the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative on Western Sahara.

Last year from this rostrum I welcomed the Central American peace plan signed by the five Central American Presidents on 7 August 1987, based on that document greatly was on a commitment to strict observance of the principles of non-interference and non-intervention by all States with concerns and contacts in the region. That being so, it is only natural for us to be disappointed at the lack of substantial progress in the consolidation of peace in Central America since then. Nepal appeals to all concerned Governments to continue to demonstrate political will in favour of peace and commends those which have already fulfilled their commitments as enumerated in the Central American peace plan.

This year we have witnessed a tragic number of natural disasters and calamities that have struck various parts of the globe, including our region of South Asia. Coming as this does when broad global environmental concerns such as those relating to the depletion of the ozone layer and the increase in the greenhouse effect, among others, have spurred calls for a comprehensive study on climate and man's environment, my country welcomes the inclusion of the item entitled "Conservation of climate as part of the common heritage of mankind" in the agenda of this General Assembly session. As the Himalayas in Nepal constitute a very important climatic determinant for much of South and Central Asia, we would certainly co-operate in any regional or international effort aimed at a better understanding of the crucial, if often fragile, linkage between man and the biosphere or environment in our part of the world.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

A further matter of grave concern is the prolonged crisis in the international economic system and its adverse effect on the economies of the developing countries and the sharp decline in the general level of international economic assistance. This phenomenon, we have long maintained, has its origins in the structural inequities and imbalances in the present international economic order. It has been exacerbated by the anti-inflationary policies pursued by some developed countries, adversely affecting the prices of and demand for products from the developing world, including commodities and oil. While industrial market economies appear to be progressing through the longest period of prosperity since the Second World War, this has coincided with the most prolonged and severe structural development crisis in the developing countries. As a consequence, over the past 10 years many developing countries have experienced stagnant or declining growth rates, in striking contrast to the goal of a 7 per cent growth rate set in the International Development Strategy. It is also quite contrary to the targets and objectives of the United Nations Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the least developed countries, into which category my country falls.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Nepal is concerned at the deteriorating external-debt situation of many developing countries. That is a cause of grave economic and political anxiety, severely threatening as it does their very political stability. We believe that a lasting and mutually acceptable solution of the current external debt of developing countries is feasible only through an integrated growth-oriented strategy. In this context, we hold that debt rescheduling merely postpones the problem of indebtedness. Hence, in addition to reducing debt repayment, whenever possible, we believe that a substantial portion of such debts of the least developed countries should be written off. Nepal also supports the call made in Geneva last month by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for commercial banks to reduce by 30 per cent debts owed by developing countries.

What is clear, in any case, is the urgency of the revitalization of the stalled North-South dialogue, based on a shared and enlightened community of interest. We therefore endorse the Economic and Social Council's recommendation to the forty-third session of the General Assembly to call a special session of the Assembly in 1990 to examine ways of achieving sustained growth in the world economy. Such a special session, we maintain, would not only assist in solving the problems facing the world economy but also help to improve the overall climate of international economic co-operation. Similarly, we support the Economic and Social Council's call for chalking out an international development strategy for the fourth United Nations decade, from 1991 to 2000.

Over the years, Nepal has sought and welcomed assistance from friendly countries and development agencies to complement its own efforts to ensure planned economic development. In this context, Nepal is deeply grateful to Japan not only for its recent decision to convert official loans into grants but also for its long association as a major partner in Nepal's development efforts. On this occasion, I

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should like to express again the appreciation of His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the sympathy and the timely and generous support extended by friendly countries and non-governmental organizations in the aftermath of the severe earthquake that struck eastern Nepal in the early hours of 21 August 1988.

While development assistance is welcomed across the spectrum of planned development activities in Nepal, international assistance is especially invited for the exploitation of Nepal's well-known potential in water resources and for the expansion of its own determined and urgent - but necessarily limited - afforestation endeavours. Besides helping Nepal to meet the chronic fuel and energy needs of its rising population, such assistance would, we sincerely believe, also have a profound and salutary impact in preventing further ecological degradation of the Himalayan foothills.

We have long held that the annual flooding of the plains that stretch from the foothills of the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal - of which the recent devastating floods in Bangladesh were such a stark example - is inextricably linked to, among other factors, the denudation of those once verdant and densely forested hillsides. One direct by-product has been this: every year, from Nepal alone, an estimated 250 million cubic metres of precious topsoil is washed away into the Bay of Bengal. On this occasion I should like to recall and reiterate the proposal made by His Majesty King Birendra as far back as 1977 indicating Nepal's readiness to co-operate with all countries in its region in any joint ventures to marshal and exploit its water resources for the common good of the region. Such benefits could be realized in the area of flood control and regulation, in the production of new and renewable sources of energy and in the provision of additional navigation and irrigation facilities, including those of my landlocked country.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

As a least developed country, Nepal finds it most disturbing that in today's unfavourable economic situation there should be a general decline in official development assistance (ODA), including that to the least developed countries. In this context, we regret that the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product called for in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the ODA target for the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the least developed countries remains unfulfilled.

The full and timely implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action is of vital importance for Nepal, which is making serious efforts to ensure that our people's minimum basic needs for foodgrains, clothing, fuel wood, drinking water, primary health care and sanitation, primary and skill-oriented education and minimum rural transport facilities are met before the turn of the century.

Under the dynamic and forward-looking leadership of His Majesty King Birendra, Nepal has for many years been engaged in an all-out war on poverty and underdevelopment. This is a battle that is being waged against such formidable foes as the legacy of a century-long period of isolation, a rapidly expanding population and a difficult topography within the confines of a landlocked configuration.

I wish to record my country's commitment to the eradication of the social cancer of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. In that regard, I should like also to recall that Nepal has been co-operating with its South Asian neighbours within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC).

With respect to another scourge of our times - terrorism - I am pleased to inform the Assembly of the signing, at the third SAARC summit in Katmandu last November, of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. I am also

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pleased to confirm that the cause of regional co-operation in South Asia has been further boosted since I last addressed the General Assembly. Agreement on the establishment of the South Asian Food Reserve and the declaration of the SAARC member countries on initiating the process of dealing with the causes and consequences of natural disasters can be cited as two positive examples in that context. My delegation has every reason to believe that, given the grave dimension of the natural calamity that struck our friendly neighbour Bangladesh last August, the next SAARC summit - scheduled for December at Islamabad, Pakistan - will provide further momentum and urgency for such a study.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to reaffirm our steadfast adherence to the principles and purposes of the United Nations - a commitment that is enshrined in the Directive Principles of the Constitution of Nepal. Similarly, I wish to express again Nepal's continuing support for the Non-Aligned Movement.

Nepal is convinced that the United Nations Charter provides the most universally accepted legal framework for conducting international relations. If recent developments have tended to rekindle new hopes in the future of the United Nations, the materialization of those hopes will largely depend on the active support of Member States for the principles of the world order to which the United Nations is committed. In our view, the continued credibility of the United Nations will also depend, in our dangerous nuclear age, on how effective the United Nations can be as an instrument of multilateral diplomacy at the preventive level.

Since January Nepal has had the great honour of sharing in some of the responsibilities of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, by virtue of its non-permanent membership of the Security Council. I should like to assure the Assembly that Nepal will continue to uphold the cherished values and ideals of the United Nations Charter in the discharge of its duties in that principal United Nations organ.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Nepal will, naturally, be extending its unstinting support and co-operation to you, Mr. President, for the success of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. As in the past, Nepal will continue to join in any concerted endeavour that is aimed at the realization of the noble objectives of this world Organization, convinced as it is that the United Nations remains not only an accurate mirror of an ever-changing world but also the most effective international agent for affecting timely, peaceful and meaningful change.

ADDRESS BY DATO' SERI MR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Dato' Seri Mr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Mr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Mahathir (Malaysia): It is with much pleasure, Mr. President, that I extend to you my heartiest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. Your well-known diplomatic skills and outstanding abilities will ensure that the deliberations of this session will be constructive and rewarding.

To your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, we owe a great debt of gratitude for his tireless devotion in presiding with consummate skill and infinite wisdom over the deliberations of the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

To the Secretary-General, we offer our sincere felicitations on his outstanding contribution to the cause of world peace and security. My delegation also extends its congratulations, through the Secretary-General, to the United

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Nations peace-keeping forces on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize so fittingly bestowed upon them. The Nobel Peace Prize speaks eloquently as a tribute to the individuals from various States Members of the United Nations and those within the Organization who have so honourably discharged their duties in upholding the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter.

The General Assembly meets this year at a propitious time indeed. World regard for the United Nations has taken a turn for the better, influenced as everyone is by the return of peace or the promise of peace to many flash-points: Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, Namibia, Western Sahara, Cyprus, Kampuchea, and perhaps also to the Korean peninsula. In contrast to the cynicism and disillusionment that many had felt in the past about the United Nations, we are now witnessing a clear shift towards a better appreciation of the role of the United Nations and of its relevance to the aspirations of the community of nations. We would like to believe that at long last the United Nations is coming into its own and fulfilling its task of moving conflicts from the battlefield to the conference table.

Malaysia's faith and confidence in the United Nations have never wavered, but we were saddened in the past to see the United Nations struggling to retain its relevance and credibility. Multilateralism had become a bad word as the powerful nations resorted to solving problems on their own. We are therefore pleased to welcome this change, this renewal of faith in the United Nations which we hope will mean the birth of a new era in multilateralism.

As an international organization, the United Nations must be perceived to be relevant in meeting the needs of its Members as a forum for multilateral diplomacy, an instrument for maintaining international peace and security and a catalyst for promoting international economic growth and development. The United Nations is at its most effective in the discharge of its functions when Member States fully

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

support the course of action that it takes. The most telling example is the unanimous support given by the members of the Security Council to the Secretary-General to bring about an end to the Iran-Iraq war. The collective efforts of the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent members together, have raised clear hopes for the resolution of conflicts. For the first time in decades, we are witnessing a convergence of the interests and wills of Member States to effect solutions on major issues. This development, it is hoped, will fulfil the vision of the pioneers of the United Nations when they conferred upon the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Malaysia stands for the full and effective discharge of the Council's conciliatory and mandatory powers and for universal compliance with and implementation of the Council's decisions. It is a matter of great reassurance to us all that the Security Council's increased effectiveness has been made possible by the convergences of interest and action of the United States and the Soviet Union. Conversely, it should be instructive to those two countries that they are drawing from the best of themselves when they counsel and collaborate together with the rest of the world on common objectives.

When one extols the achievements of the United Nations, one is not refusing to recognize that the steady improvement of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union have helped significantly in bringing about progress on conflict resolutions. Those of us who have lived during periods of unease and uncertainty, when the two Powers stared at each other eyeball to eyeball, are greatly relieved that these two super-Powers are realistically discussing peace and construction between them. They can make an enormous contribution to the realization of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. It is our common appeal to

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

both these countries that they seek recourse through all the institutions of the United Nations when attempting to defuse conflicts and in realizing a more equitable world order.

A United Nations functioning at its best will be in the interest of all its members and will not simply serve the interests of certain Powers or groups of States. The time for United Nations bashing and the assault on multilateralism is over. If universal responsibility is a creed that this and future generations can believe in, then every country must provide full commitment to the United Nations. A revitalized United Nations, poised to assume even greater responsibility, must not be hampered by a lack financial resources. A sine qua non of its very survival is the timely payment by member countries of their assessed contributions.*

*Mr. Meza (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Malaysia welcomes the signing of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan. There must be complete and faithful implementation of those Accords by all concerned parties if the sufferings of the people of Afghanistan, after eight years of bloody and brutal war, is to come to a definite conclusion and if Afghanistan is to regain its independence. At this juncture, may I pay tribute to the late President Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan for his immense contribution towards the successful signing of the Geneva Accords. My country and many others will sadly miss the friendship and wise counsel of the late President.

The withdrawal of Soviet forces must continue and be completed within the agreed time-frame. It is our hope that the Accords will be fully implemented to enable the Afghan people to freely exercise their right to self-determination through the process of genuine reconciliation.

Malaysia hopes that the United Nations humanitarian and economic assistance programmes relating to Afghanistan will be able to meet the immediate needs for relief and rehabilitation as well as the long-term requirements for reconstruction of the country. But full implementation of such assistance can be realized only under conditions of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The acceptance by Iran and Iraq of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) as the framework for the termination of the Iran-Iraq war is a source of satisfaction to us all. The world witnessed in horror and helplessness the terrible toll exacted by the conflict for eight long years. We are therefore thankful that the first crucial steps for a durable solution have been taken. It is our hope and prayer that the resolve of Iran and Iraq to embark on the path of peace is irrevocable and that they will now turn their full attention to marshalling the creative energies and talents of their peoples to the urgent tasks of national reconstruction and development.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Despite all efforts, the Middle East is still embroiled in an endless cycle of violence. Israel must bear responsibility for this tragic state of affairs as it remains the main stumbling-block to any peace attempts in the region. The United Nations has not been allowed to play its proper role in the search for a settlement primarily on account of Israel's intransigence. Israel is single-minded in the execution of its policies of aggression and expansion and brutal subjugation of the Palestinian people. It has defied the international community's call for a total withdrawal from all occupied territories. The Palestinian problem, the core of the Middle East conflict, remains unresolved due to the arrogant Israeli hubris and its continued refusal to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State.

Israel cannot continue to believe that it can ensure its security and survival by adherence to policies which seek to consign the Palestinian people to either permanent diaspora or permanent oppressive Israeli rule. The Holocaust cannot be flaunted by Israel as an excuse for treating Arabs under their rule in like manner.

Israel's policy of dictating to the Palestinians as to whom they should choose to speak for them has been an unmitigated failure. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) remains the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The best hope for a durable and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem lies in the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties, including the PLO. Malaysia fully supports the convening of such a conference and calls upon those Powers that have been the strongest supporters of Israel to lend their influence to convince Israel that its vital interests are best served by dialogue and negotiations at a peace conference rather than by the mailed fist. Indeed these supporters of Israel must share the moral responsibility for the injustice and inhumanity committed by Israel against the Palestinians.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

In South Africa, we are confronted with the challenge of a régime that seeks to dehumanize human beings on the basis of colour. The only response of good men to this crime against humanity and affront to the universal conscience must be to seek the total destruction of the evil system of apartheid. It is a delusion for anyone to believe that we can effect an evolution of the system into something more human and humane. The hideous manifestations of apartheid are seen daily in the atrocities inflicted on black South Africans.

Malaysia has never been persuaded by the arguments advanced by some that it is in the interest of the blacks of South Africa that comprehensive sanctions should not be imposed against the Pretoria régime. We therefore reiterate our call for decisive action in the form of comprehensive mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Consistent with our stand, we have undertaken efforts to provide assistance to black South Africans and the front-line States to assist them in coping with the destabilization caused by South Africa and to enable them to cope with the effects comprehensive sanctions could have on them. A total of \$US 2 million has been pledged as Malaysia's contribution to the Africa Fund established for this purpose by the Non-Aligned Movement. We wish to appeal for generous support by the international community for the Africa Fund, which must be seen as part of a universal battle to bring about the total elimination of the system of apartheid.

The agreement on the comprehensive settlement for South Western Africa offers Namibia the promise of realizing its freedom and independence. It is our hope that all parties to the agreement will enter into the spirit of the times and bring peace and freedom to the long-suffering people of Namibia. Familiar with the record of the Pretoria régime in exploiting every opportunity to perpetuate its iron grip on Namibia, we must continue to apply unrelenting international pressure on the régime to honour its commitments.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

In the meantime, our support of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) must continue unabated. We have seen how SWAPO's successes on the battlefields of Namibia have forced the hand of the Pretoria régime to agree reluctantly to a negotiated solution of the problem. Pressure must therefore be sustained on the ground to prevent South Africa from reneging on its promises.

The question of Kampuchea has been a subject for debate at every United Nations General Assembly session for the last nine years. With the support of a huge majority of its members, this Assembly has repeatedly called for the total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces, restoration and preservation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea, and reaffirmation of the right of its people to self-determination.

The fundamental issues of the Kampuchean problem have to be clearly addressed. Vietnam's forces in Kampuchea must withdraw. Vietnam should not be allowed to continue to cloud this issue. There cannot be any conditionality. The concerns of the international community and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to prevent the return of the universally condemned policies and practices of a recent past must be addressed. The Kampuchean people must be assured that they will be free from the horrors of the past. National reconciliation under the effective leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk will not only heal divisions between the various Kampuchean partners, but will also regain for that turbulent country its rightful sovereignty and independence.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

The constant search by the ASEAN countries for a solution yielded a significant measure of success with the convening of the Jakarta Informal Meeting in July. This meeting was a regional initiative constituting an important milestone in the process of finding a comprehensive political solution to the Kampuchean problem. This initiative should be allowed to continue. The present international climate augurs well for allowing the parties concerned to come together in the near future to achieve agreement on the issues. Malaysia welcomes the efforts of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to complement the regional efforts on Kampuchea.

Peace in Kampuchea will contribute tremendously to regional peace and security. It will facilitate the achievement of more co-operative relations among the States of South-East Asia, particularly between the members of ASEAN and Viet Nam. It is our hope that the peace that we long for will bring about a climate of regional stability and co-operation which can then make possible the early realization of the regional aspiration for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia.

The Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Kampuchea have resulted in the displacement of a large number of people. Furthermore, the influx of boat people from Viet Nam seeking better opportunities elsewhere has for several years brought further serious problems to countries such as Malaysia and Thailand and others. Recently Malaysia has reached an understanding with the Government of Viet Nam under which the latter will accept the repatriation of those boat people in Malaysia who are not qualified for resettlement in third countries and also prevent a fresh exodus. We are happy to note that Viet Nam has agreed to participate in the preparatory meeting which Malaysia hopes to host to prepare for the International Conference on Indochinese Refugees, including the boat people.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

In Central America the high expectations raised by the regionally initiated Esquipulas peace agreement have not yet been fulfilled. The aspirations of the peoples of Central America for peace, freedom and justice remain hostage to the harsh dictates of international and external divisions in the region. Coercive measures from outside the area only compound the problems of the region and should not be allowed to continue. It is our hope that the peace process will be given renewed impetus by the very leaders whose vision and statesmanship led to the signing of the Esquipulas agreements.

In raising the issue of Antarctica at the United Nations, it was the intention of Malaysia and the other like-minded countries to draw attention to the considerable environmental, climatic and scientific significance of the continent to the world. We also earnestly seek an international instrument having universal validity and serving the interests of and for the benefit of mankind.

It is most regrettable that a Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resources Activities has been concluded recently in total disregard for United Nations resolutions calling for a moratorium on all negotiations on a minerals régime until such time as all members of the international community can fully participate in such negotiations. We cannot understand the haste, because all the minerals that can possibly be found in Antarctica can be found in plentiful supply elsewhere.

We also regret that the General Assembly's appeals for urgent measures to exclude the racist régime of South Africa at the earliest possible date from participating in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have not been acted upon.

Antarctica represents to us a touchstone of the constancy of the adherence of the Consultative Parties to fundamental principles and norms which have evolved

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

through common endeavours and have gained universal currency in the course of the democratizing process of international relations and institutions. We remain steadfast in our conviction that a régime for Antarctica built on such foundations will better reflect and respond to the needs of our age than one founded upon circumstances and considerations which are tainted with colonialist adventurism.

The issue of disarmament must remain high on the agenda of this Organization and must continue to receive the urgent attention of the international community. Threats to mankind derive not only from the stockpiling and continuous development of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction but also from the growing arsenals of sophisticated conventional weapons. We are now beset also with the problem of nuclear and toxic wastes dumped in the developing countries. Our efforts at arms control and disarmament must proceed on all fronts, and a prerequisite for any success in this regard must be a general improvement in the climate of relations among States. An important start has been made with the signing of the Treaty on Intermediate-range nuclear forces between the United States and the Soviet Union in May this year. This Treaty is an important breakthrough and should generate the necessary mutual confidence and trust to allow the concluding of negotiations on the reduction of strategic weapons and on the additional verification procedures required for a complete test-ban treaty.

While the two super-Powers with the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons must carry the primary responsibility for bringing about progress in nuclear disarmament, multilateral approaches should make an important contribution to the attainment of mankind's objective of a safer world through arms control and disarmament.

We regret that the outcome of the General Assembly's third special session devoted to disarmament did not fulfill our highest expectations but we remain

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

hopeful that the steady improvement in the international climate will generate the necessary political will for the success of such multilateral initiatives, which provide the best opportunity for a genuine harmonization and reconciliation of all interests. The resources released as a result of the successful achievement of the disarmament process would provide a source of much-needed funds for humanitarian work and productive investments in the economic development of the developing world.

Outer space, which, we reaffirm, is the common heritage of mankind, should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, and we urge that negotiations on the prevention of the militarization of outer space should begin in earnest. Malaysia would also like to lend its strong support to the early conclusion of a convention for the complete prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons.

The economic issues before this Assembly may appear to be stale issues, for they have been debated repeatedly over the years; but being stale does not make them any less relevant or less urgent. On the contrary, the resolution of these economic problems, such as the establishment of a fairer and more favourable international trading environment, a re-examination of the role and functions of the multilateral financial institutions, a review and realignment of the international exchange rate régime and a resolution of the international debt problem would constitute positive beginnings in the United Nations work programme in the economic area.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

As a primary-commodities producer that is also heavily dependent on exports of manufactured goods, Malaysia attaches great importance to the Uruguay Round of the multilateral trade negotiations. While the objective of the Uruguay Round is to retain an open international trading system and to promote increased trade liberalization, we are also concerned about the opposing trend of increasing integration, which brings about greater exclusion. It is our hope, therefore, that the intention of the European Economic Community to achieve an integrated internal market by 1992 does not obstruct efforts under United Nations auspices aimed at greater trade liberalization. To maintain effectively an open and liberal international trading environment the developed countries in particular must curb domestic pressures for protectionist policies that have historically proved to be myopic, leading to distortions in trade and stifling growth and expansion.

Aside from restraints on protectionist tendencies, the world's trading nations must also agree on a more realistic and broad-based action on their currency realignment. Agreements confined only to an exclusive group have proved disastrous to the poorer nations, whose currencies and small trade advantages have been seriously affected. The interests of the smaller nations are best served by their representation at such gatherings when issues that affect them are taken up.

The debt crisis is debilitating for the countries affected, diverting attention and energies away from domestic political, economic and social needs. While the crisis has deepened in the past year, we see hope in the initiatives of some commercial banks to write off their loans and of Governments which have converted some of their official loans into outright grants. The proposal by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a 30 per cent cut in commercial bad debts owed by the 15 most heavily indebted countries merits serious consideration. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

must engage more actively in the design and creation of a debt-reconstruction facility. Proposals abound, but the international community must quickly study various modalities to relieve those countries that are carrying impossible burdens. The United Nations has provided the forum for detailed discussion on the debt crisis and has participated in the search for solutions. Malaysia fully supports the United Nations efforts in this regard and endorses the recent recommendations by the Africa Recovery Review Committee substantially to increase financial flows to Africa to ensure reform and development.

Two years ago, at the forty-first session of the Assembly, I spoke about the initiative of the developing countries to set up an independent South Commission. The Commission has since been set up to complement and supplement other efforts in making a fresh and objective analysis of the formidable economic, social and political challenges confronting the developing countries. It attempts to identify areas for practical and mutually beneficial South-South co-operation. It is heartening to note that since its inception in July last year the Commission has vigorously pursued the responsibilities entrusted to it.

The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT) held at Vienna in June 1987 brought home to the 138 participating countries the extent and seriousness of the international drug problem. The seeming impotence of the international community to combat the drug threat brought the realization that without the manifest political will of nations to act, and to act in concert, to counter the drug problem there can be no effective solution. Thus, the adoption by the Conference of its political declaration and the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities represents a collective struggle to eliminate drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Malaysia congratulates the United Nations and the Secretary-General for that success and important beginning. The momentum created by ICDAIT last year must be maintained.

In this connection Malaysia welcomes the convening of the plenipotentiary conference at Vienna from November to December of this year to adopt the new convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which will plug an important loophole and provide for further action against illicit-drug traffickers.

We are always concerned when there is extreme disparity between rich and poor within any country, but in some countries there is no disparity - everyone is just poor. If asked to imagine what poverty is like in those poor nations, we should find it extremely difficult to visualize it accurately. But we need not imagine. Today, we see in colourful detail, accompanied by sound and motion, the extent and horror of human poverty. We see living children being literally devoured by flies; we see skeletons hobbling around. We see people so ill that we wonder how they survive at all.

Even if we have to spend billions on weapons, on preserving the beauty of nature, the trees and the forests, the rare insect species and other things that we claim will enhance the quality of our life, we have no excuse in this day and age to permit such misery to befall millions of fellow humans.

The response of millions of ordinary people to the appeals for aid to the suffering poor is laudable. But the task is too big for ad hoc charitable efforts. The answer would lie in a full-time and fully manned authority to fight against the scourge of poverty. This civilization of ours will be condemned by posterity if we can put men on the Moon but we cannot, at only a fraction of the cost, give enough help to the needy on earth.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Inequality is the bane of human society. Democracy, purportedly cherished by all, is associated with equality and equitability. While Governments are urged to be democratic, in affairs between nations democracy is noticeably absent. In the community of nations, the strongest and the richest take advantage of the weak and the poor. There is no equality there.

This does not happen only in the economic sense but also in the political sense. Ideologies and philosophies, as well as value systems, are forced upon weak nations in the name of democracy. Acting like fanatical religious proselytizers, the so-called champions of democracy are not averse to using undemocratic and coercive means to force their particular brand of democracy on the weak and the poor. Refusal to comply results in all kinds of economic and political arm-twisting.

Democracy must confer a freedom of choice. No one has a monopoly on the type of democracy that everyone should have. Certainly no one should force his own choice and interpretation on someone else. While harsh and even violent methods may be used to force a dictatorship to yield to democratic forces, it would be tragic if a working, prosperous, democratic nation were destroyed because some self-appointed democrat felt it was not democratic enough. This holier-than-thou attitude is out of tune with modern mores.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

The democracies of the West were hundreds of years in the making. Do not expect colonial territories ruled autocratically for several centuries by Western democracies to become perfect democracies overnight.

I have every confidence that this forty-third session of the General Assembly will prove to be deliberative and fruitful. The time and circumstances have never been more propitious. Our multilateral institution is riding a strong wave of credibility. If we can be weary of war and strife and ready to beat our swords into ploughshares, then we can devote our collective energies to our economic and social advancement. The next, more formidable, challenge will be to see whether this institution can grapple with the issue of international economic imbalance in the context of the need for equitable resources management. It should be our concerted purpose to ensure that the last decade before we enter into the next millennium will be one of peace and construction for the benefit of all.

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

Dato' Seri Mr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. RAO (India) (spoke in Hindi; English text furnished by the delegation): It gives me great pleasure that a distinguished son and eminent representative of a country with which my country has close and cordial relations is presiding over the General Assembly at its forty-third session. I extend to Ambassador Caputo our warm felicitations on his well-deserved election. We are confident that with his exceptional ability and experience the deliberations of the Assembly have already been assured success.

(Mr. Rao, India)

I should like also to place on record our deep appreciation for the effective leadership that his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, provided to the General Assembly during its forty-second session.

In his report on the work of the Organization for 1988, the Secretary-General recalled that he was cautiously optimistic that

"the sails of the small boat in which all the people of the Earth were

gathered seemed to have caught a light but favourable wind". (A/43/1, p. 2)

I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the man who has played no mean role in the careful and patient navigation by which the vessel has come within sight of large sections of the shore. The Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has earned the admiration of all for his patience, his skill, his understanding touch and his grasp of the larger questions as well as the small details involved in the various issues dealt with by the United Nations.

The decision to confer the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding on our Secretary-General was a tribute to his exceptional contribution to the cause of peace.

This year, 1988, has been the year of the United Nations. In the past few months the patient and persistent diplomacy of the United Nations was capped with the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan, the entry into force of a cease-fire on the Iran-Iraq border, the renewal of intercommunal talks in Cyprus and the creation of an environment conducive to the resolution of the problem of Western Sahara. Even those who tended to pass judgement on the United Nations purely on the basis of the criteria of the maintenance of international peace and security are happily acknowledging today that this is indeed an impressive record of which the United Nations can be justifiably proud.

(Mr. Rao, India)

India welcomes this reaffirmation of faith in the United Nations. For an overwhelming majority of Members, support for the United Nations has always been an article of faith. The universalization of this support during 1988, which we applaud as we always did, will no doubt strengthen the capacity of the Organization, not only with respect to preserving peace but also, equally, to tackling other scourges facing humankind, such as poverty, hunger, ecological degradation, terrorism and narcotics. We trust that the United Nations will be reinvigorated, not only in political terms but also in terms of concrete financial support. Let the coming decades be the decades of the United Nations. Let the all-round support which the United Nations always deserved, but seems to have got this year, be always available to it hereafter.

India, along with the rest of the international community, rejoices in the transformation of the international climate during the past year. We are indeed living through historic times. The dramatic improvement in relations between the super-Powers, for which we salute the leadership of the two countries, has had a positive impact throughout the world. History, however, teaches us that good times, like bad times, do not normally last for ever. But one may be forgiven on the present occasion for entertaining the belief that the principal players have by now made a realistic assessment of the long-term interests of mankind, along with their respective national interests, and that hence the current thaw may be more lasting than those of the past.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, since its inception, has worked tirelessly precisely for such a turn in the international climate. By taking principled positions on major issues of our times and by refusing to get entangled in the confrontation of competing military alliances, the non-aligned countries

(Mr. Rao, India)

have helped in containing conflict, and have thus contributed to the peace process which has always inhered in the minds of the millions, although it had been rendered dormant and muted by the display of military might. Therefore, we the non-aligned can claim part of the credit for the improved state of affairs. But along with claiming the credit the Movement needs to redouble its efforts to make the peace process irreversible, no longer vulnerable to the braking mechanisms which operated earlier owing to motivations too well known to need recounting.

(Mr. Rao, India)

The new air of euphoria is totally understandable as it marks a welcome departure from the intense and often bitter rivalry between the major Powers which at times brought the world to the brink of a catastrophe. It seems to have been replaced now by healthy competition for presenting proposals for strengthening peace, supporting the United Nations, saving the world from ecologic disaster, among others. It is true that this long-awaited spirit of change unfortunately has not extended to the economic field. We would therefore be well-advised to remain watchful and alert, while pursuing determined efforts to make the transformation to peace final and all-pervasive so as to comprehend all facets of human life and activity on our planet. While the primary responsibility would remain with the major Powers, the rest of us and, of course, the United Nations, can and must play a very important role.

The ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - by the United States and the Soviet Union was a historic first step which must, within an agreed time-frame and in well-considered stages, lead to successive reductions and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons. While we are fully aware of the complexities involved in disarmament negotiations, we find that political will has enabled the experts to find satisfactory answers to what were projected as almost unresolvable difficulties of adequate verification. Similar political will would be needed in solving the whole gamut of disarmament questions, beginning with the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons by 50 per cent, which has already been agreed upon.

Those steps, each important in itself, have to be viewed in the perspective of a comprehensive scenario of total disarmament. Only thus do they make sense and become effective and beneficial. At the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in June this year, my Prime Minister,

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Shri Rajiv Gandhi, put forward a comprehensive action plan for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2010. That action plan has received appreciation in the Non-Aligned Movement, among other Governments as well as non-governmental organizations. We put forward our proposal to give concrete shape to the desire of a large segment of world public opinion for a time-bound action programme to eliminate nuclear weapons. We should also take into account other related aspects including verification.

With regard to verification, delegates will recall that the delegations of countries participating in the six-nation initiative for peace and nuclear disarmament presented a concrete proposal at the third special session on disarmament: the endorsement, in principle, of an international verification agency within the United Nations. It is the intention of the six countries to revive this initiative at this session of the General Assembly.

The linkage between disarmament and development is by now well-recognized. Hardly anyone can dispute the proposition that the resources being spent on armaments could be more profitably employed in peaceful developmental activities. The decisions taken by the United Nations Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held last year, need to be followed up and acted upon.

Regional conflicts have dominated discussions at the current session of the General Assembly. This is perfectly understandable. Success in achieving breakthroughs in most of these conflicts is attributed, and justifiably so, to the patient diplomacy of the United Nations, as well as to the rapprochement between the two super-Powers. There is, perhaps, a lesson for all of us in this, particularly for the non-aligned and developing countries. If the tendency to seek massive external military assistance and to pursue dangerous nuclear weapon policies

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in the illusory hope of strengthening one's bargaining position with one's neighbours were resisted, there would be fewer regional conflicts and consequently less dependence on outside Powers for the solution of such conflicts.

India rejoiced at the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq which came into effect on 20 August 1988. Thanks to the statesmanship of the leaders of the two countries and to the efforts of the Secretary-General, the international community has been spared witnessing the eighth anniversary of the war. The cease-fire is an important first step and must be consolidated. The negotiations between the two countries currently under way, under United Nations auspices, must be pursued. The issues involved are complex and highly emotional for both sides. India has been involved in discussing the issues in detail with the two countries as part of the efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement. That experience makes me feel confident that the issues, though complex, will eventually be solved. India has the closest of ties with Iran and Iraq, and we know that the two countries are anxious to get on with the stupendous task of reconstruction.

My country rejoices at the release of the Indian national, Mr. Mithileshwar Singh. We hope that all the other hostages will also be freed and reunited with their families at an early date.

India has welcomed the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan. We have had historical ties of deep friendship with the people of Afghanistan. The Geneva Accords have established a framework which would enable the Afghan people to decide on their future free from foreign interference or intervention. While the withdrawal of Soviet troops has proceeded on schedule, we are greatly perturbed at persistent reports of violations of the Geneva Accords and hope that they will be implemented faithfully by all the parties. In addition to restoring peace and stability to the

(Mr. Rao, India)

region, the implementation of the Geneva Accords would also remove the ostensible cause for introduction of sophisticated arms into the area.

While positive developments have taken place in the Gulf as well as in Afghanistan, the continued great-Power naval presence in the Indian Ocean remains a factor contributing to tension and instability. We reiterate our call for the withdrawal of all military forces of outside Powers from the Indian Ocean so that it can emerge as a zone of peace.

There is more than a glimmer of hope for the resolution of the conflict situation in South-East Asia. The horrors suffered by the people of Kampuchea in the 1970s must not be allowed to revisit them ever. The dialogue at the Jakarta Informal Meeting was a welcome beginning, which we appreciate. We also applaud the initiative of the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement to explore ways and means in which the Movement can assist the efforts to solve the Kampuchean problem. Given India's historical ties with the peoples of South-East Asia, we are ready and willing to contribute in whatever way we can to this process.

In our neighbourhood, we have watched with growing concern the trials and tribulations faced by the people of Burma, with whom the people of India are bound by close ties of history and culture. India has always scrupulously avoided interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. However, we cannot but sympathize with democratic aspirations. We are saddened by the growing number of innocent dead in Burma. We hope that a way will be found to end this tragic conflict as soon as possible.

There is renewed belief that the long-delayed solution to the Namibian question is at hand. Responsibility for the delay rests squarely with the South African Government, which has, with impunity, refused to comply with its international commitments and obligations. The world community is committed to the

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emancipation of the Namibian people engaged in a historic struggle for freedom under the leadership of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). their sole and authentic representative. India was the first country to accord diplomatic recognition to the representative of SWAPO. We look forward to welcoming Namibia as the 160th Member of the United Nations at the General Assembly session next year.

While there is movement on the question of Namibia, the situation in South Africa itself shows no sign of improvement. The racist Pretoria régime continues its reign of terror, subjecting the people of South Africa to the most inhuman forms of oppression.

(Mr. Rao, India)

The evil system of apartheid cannot be reformed; it has to be abolished in toto. South Africa must open a dialogue with the genuine representatives of the oppressed people. Nelson Mandela, the universal symbol of courage and fortitude, whose state of health is a cause of concern to all of us, must be released immediately and unconditionally. Effective pressure in the form of comprehensive mandatory sanctions must be applied, without invoking unconvincing arguments regarding their effect on employment of the oppressed people, and so on.

The Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid (AFRICA) Fund, established by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, has received pledges and contributions from a third of the world community. Described at the recent meeting of the non-aligned in Nicosia, Cyprus, as an instance of the Movement's capacity for collective action, the Fund demonstrates an international commitment to the front-line States and liberation movements of southern Africa transcending geographical or political barriers.

The international community should be opposed to racial discrimination no matter where it is practised. Last year my delegation referred to the unfortunate developments in Fiji, which had distinct racial overtones. We hoped that the groundswell of international public opinion would help restore the spirit of trust, harmony and concord which had prevailed in Fiji since its independence. As a Member of the United Nations and as a member of its Committee on decolonization, India had been in the forefront in the fight for Fiji's independence. It is a matter of great regret to us that the situation in Fiji has considerably deteriorated during the past year. There are clear indications that an attempt is being made to institutionalize racial discrimination in Fiji. We understand that there is to be a process of consultation with the various communities before the draft constitution is finalized. We hope that this process will enable all

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sections of the people to participate in it in a non-discriminatory manner. There was a time when Fiji used to be described as "what the world should be like". The racial harmony, peace and tranquillity in Fiji used to be a model for the world to follow. We hope that Fiji will return soon to those harmonious times.

India's support of the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people has its roots in our own struggle against colonial rule. Many changes have taken place in the region. What has remained constant, however, is the determination of the Palestinian people. The message of intifadah to the world is unambiguous: 20 years of occupation have utterly failed to suppress the fierce nationalism of the Palestinian people. It should also have made it clear to the world, including Israel, that territories illegally occupied cannot be retained for ever. Israel must withdraw from the territories it has occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. We reiterate the call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing. Such a conference, we believe, should facilitate the establishment of an independent homeland for the Palestinians and the creation of conditions in which all the States in the region can live within secure and recognized boundaries.

India has always supported the aspirations of the people of Cyprus to live together in an independent and non-aligned country, with its territorial integrity intact. We deeply appreciate the resumption of dialogue between the two communities under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General. We urge both sides to spare no effort to find a solution to the problem within the time-limit envisaged by the Secretary-General.

Similarly, we are heartened by the acceptance by the two sides concerned of the Secretary-General's proposals for finding a solution to the problem of Western

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Sahara. Here again, we hope that this question will be resolved satisfactorily so that the people of the Territory, as well as other countries in the Maghreb, can live in peace and co-operation with one another.

In the Korean peninsula, which unhappily remains divided, there is an overwhelming sentiment in favour of peace, reconciliation and dialogue. We hope the aspirations of its people to peaceful reunification will find early fulfilment.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, which furnishes the philosophical basis for the human rights work of the United Nations, is of seminal importance. Like the Charter itself, it points to the interdependence of human rights, social and economic progress and international peace and security. Over the past four decades, the concepts embodied in the Declaration have been developed and enriched, particularly with regard to economic, social and cultural rights. It remains our firm belief that the inherent dignity of the human person requires full respect for his civil and political rights and, equally, for his economic, social and cultural rights.

While there have been encouraging developments recently in the political sphere, the outlook in the area of international economic co-operation remains bleak. The low rates of growth of world trade and output in recent years will not suffice to resolve any of the major problems facing the world economy. In the industrialized countries high rates of unemployment persist, making it difficult for them to undertake the structural adjustments that are necessary in the long term. The major imbalance, with its attendant uncertainties, continues to persist. For the developing countries the outlook is even worse. Inadequate resource flows, deteriorating terms of trade and the heavy burden of external debt have all but halted the development process of these countries. They have retarded

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attempts to address the fundamental problem of poverty and deprivation. The 1980s are being characterized as the lost decade of development.

The policies of the major developed countries constitute the essential determinants of the external environment for the developing countries. There has been no coherent and considered effort to fashion these policies on the basis of co-operative international action, taking into account their impact and consequences for the developing countries. Here it is useful to recall the proposals made by the developing countries for removing the structural deficiencies and fundamental failings of the international monetary, financial and trading systems. The underlying structural and systemic problems of the world economy have to be addressed by deliberate and co-operative international action that gives full recognition to global interdependence. Both the developed and the developing countries need to pursue convergent and mutually reinforcing policies in the interrelated areas of trade, money and finance.

The area of international trade is being increasingly characterized by an erosion of the accepted rules and regulations and by reliance on unilateral discriminatory action. Despite repeated affirmation of commitments on standstill and rollback, protectionism continues to grow unabated. Protectionist measures are imposed in those areas where the developing countries have demonstrated their competitiveness and made investments for structural reforms. There has been little progress so far in the ongoing Uruguay Round on multilateral trade negotiations in areas of direct interest to the developing countries, such as safeguards, textiles, agriculture and tropical products. The Uruguay Round should provide an important opportunity for strengthening and preserving the multilateral trading system. It should also help to reduce the tensions and distortions that characterize the world trade system.

(Mr. Rao, India)

The proposals made in the new areas in the Uruguay Round have to be consistent with the right of developing countries to manage their economies in accordance with their national objectives and priorities, to regulate activities of transnational corporations and to channel investment into those desired sectors of their economies. Such proposals should promote the autonomous and self-reliant development of those countries.

Another area of concern is the stagnation or decline, in real terms, of resource flows to developing countries. The international financial system has failed to ensure the transfer of adequate resources on proper terms and conditions to developing countries and thus provide adequate financing for development activities. The alleviation of the current development crisis requires a more effective system that will guarantee an increasing flow of resources, in particular official development assistance resources, to developing countries and also guarantee access by international monetary and financial institutions to adequate resources.

Let us collectively recognize the need to evolve a more broad-based system for managing the world economy that reflects the interests of all groups of countries and provides an equitable and harmonious basis for the collective management of global interdependence. The seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was a small step in this direction. In the coming days we must make use of other opportunities for building a renewed consensus on development directed against the global problem of hunger and poverty. The formulation and elaboration of an international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade provides one such opportunity.

The virtual paralysis of the North-South dialogue makes it all the more important for the developing countries to redouble their efforts at promoting

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collective self-reliance through the economic co-operation among developing countries. It has become imperative for developing countries to build on complementarities in their economies. In this respect the conclusion in Belgrade earlier this year of the Agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences was a significant achievement. It laid down for the first time among the signatory developing countries the legal and institutional foundation for trade expansion.

In our own region the formation of the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation has provided a framework for wide-ranging economic and technical co-operation. Specific areas of mutually beneficial co-operation have been identified and practical measures are being implemented by member States.

One is, however, constrained to note that economic co-operation among developing countries has developed only partially and its full potential remains unexplored. What is needed is a hard look at concrete programmes to address, in the first instance and in the main, the elementary human needs of a large chunk of humanity. In these areas it is possible to make a better impact than has happened so far.

During the current year many developing countries have been hit by natural disasters requiring urgent international relief operations. Large areas in Africa have been afflicted by prolonged drought. Jamaica has been devastated by a hurricane of unprecedented magnitude, and Sudan by floods. Our own region, South Asia, has witnessed widespread havoc caused by floods, above all in Bangladesh, though we too have not been spared the ravages of floods. It was our privilege, as a friendly neighbour, to be the first to go to the assistance of the people of Bangladesh in response to an appeal from the Government of Bangladesh. A task force of experts from Bangladesh and India has been set up to study the Ganga and Brahmaputra waters jointly for flood management and the water flow thereof.

(Mr. Rao, India)

Over the past two decades, drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs have assumed proportions of a major global problem, not only affecting consumers but also posing serious problems for transit States. We hope that the Plenipotentiary Conference scheduled to convene in Vienna later this year in order to finalize a draft convention on this question will meet with success.

The United Nations is dedicated to the pursuit of the twin goals of peace and development. It can claim credit for significant achievements in both these spheres, and in particular in recent months we have seen encouraging progress in the resolution of complex political issues. But in the sphere of economic and social development, its major successes belong to past decades; its achievements recently have been relatively modest. We must renew our commitment to the eradication of the evils of poverty, disease and illiteracy through concerted international action. This is a struggle that must be waged in common by all humankind. As Jawaharlal Nehru told the Assembly in 1963, "The only war we want is a war against poverty and disease and its brood".

Many centuries ago India's sages gave the call: "Let us move, together. Let us talk, together. Let us be of single common mind."

The renewed sense of community witnessed in the United Nations today gives hope that over the coming year, in time for its forty-fourth session, the world body can set before itself a viable specific agenda for the 1990s that would help render our planet ready for the century drawing in upon it. Such an agenda must assess and chart the means of fulfilment of the minimum needs of man. The world, as Mahatma Gandhi put it, has enough to fulfil man's need, but not his greed. This distinction between need and greed becomes all the more real and crucial at a time when geo-environmental, geo-economic and geo-political imperatives have to be fully

(Mr. Rao, India)

harmonized in the interest of survival. Runaway desires of imprudent humans must be tailored so as to be compatible with the capacity to fulfil them. If we collectively determine to do that, this forum, the United Nations, is the place where we must begin, for the United Nations is as strong, and only as strong, as the will of its Members.

And when we talk of Members, let us not forget that behind the Member States represented in this Assembly are the men and women of the world. It is they who give this Organization its flesh and its blood and should therefore legitimately dictate its aspirations and efforts. Their control over rulers who fall short of or go beyond their mandate is not as palpable as it should be, but that is part of man's constant aspiration, which the United Nations needs to be inspired by in order to give effective voice to the millions who cannot speak for themselves.

The United Nations should thus promote the ascendancy of peoples, translating into reality the relationships which the peoples would wish to have among themselves.

Invested with a popular dimension, rooted in a time when the process of peace can be rendered irreversible and man's scarce energies given a chance to better his own being, this is the moment for the United Nations which should endure until the mission for humanity is completed.

We must not fail.

Mr. AL-NUAIMI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the United Arab Emirates it gives me great pleasure to extend to Ambassador Caputo my heartfelt congratulations on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-third regular session. His election reflects the appreciation of the international community for the leading role played by Argentina at the regional level in Latin America and at the international level, especially at the United Nations. It also reflects the confidence the international community places in him and in his ability to guide the proceedings of this important session with wisdom and confidence.

It also gives me great pleasure to convey my sincere thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, for presiding so ably and judiciously over the previous session, its resumed sessions, and the special session.

I would like, on this occasion, to reaffirm the confidence of my country in the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his continued efforts to enable the Organization to cope with the problems it faces. I would also like to congratulate him on his efforts to enhance the role of the Organization, and to settle international and regional disputes peacefully and through negotiations. Most of his endeavours have been successful this year.

The forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly is meeting in unique international circumstances in the wake of a number of international political developments, including the peaceful settlement of numerous regional disputes. Foremost among these developments was the summit meeting between the leaders of the two super-Powers last May. This meeting led to a great accomplishment with regard to disarmament, namely the ratification of the Treaty which calls for the elimination of shorter and intermediate-range nuclear missiles. The meeting also led to political achievements that will have positive,

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

far-reaching consequences, since the two super-Powers expressed their determination to reduce the tension existing between them by replacing lack of trust by open dialogue. In that summit meeting, the two super-Powers created an atmosphere of détente, even agreement on the settlement of certain regional conflicts.

This session is also unique in another respect: the fact that it is being held against the background of the United Nations success in settling a number of difficult regional problems. Through its various mechanisms, the United Nations has been instrumental in settling the problem of Afghanistan, and in stopping the war between Iran and Iraq. In addition, the Secretary-General has taken an initiative for the settlement of the Cyprus problem, and for the opening of a dialogue between the parties in the Namibian question in order to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

These achievements represent an important turning-point, signalling the opening of a new phase in international politics. We in the United Arab Emirates welcome these accomplishments and hope, or rather urge, that they be utilized for promoting peaceful coexistence and co-operation among nations in order that we may reach a new and more advanced stage of international relations. This stage should be based on respect for, and equality among, all nations, as well as on the right of all peoples to secure their freedom and independence. To reach this advanced stage, the following conditions must be met.

First, the two super-Powers should not only sustain the new favourable political atmosphere existing between them, but they should also work diligently to promote it on the level of their bilateral relations, as well as on the level of their respective military blocs.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

Secondly, the success of the United Nations in solving certain regional problems must be a lesson to all of us. We must renew our confidence in the Organization and its effectiveness. We must enhance its role through the commitment of all States, especially the great Powers, to the Charter of the United Nations, and to its purposes and principles. We must also benefit from the organs of the United Nations in all fields, particularly the Security Council, which should be used as a forum for the conduct of negotiations with respect to urgent international problems, and which should be utilized for the adoption of preventive and other measures.

The United Nations has become the basis for the international order of the future, and the instrument through which collective efforts can be undertaken to solve international conflicts and controversies, and to reduce the possibility of escalating regional conflicts into nuclear confrontations among the big Powers. The United Nations has also had many accomplishments in economic, social, human, legal, and other fields. In the light of all this, it is incumbent upon all of us to maintain these achievements, and to expand upon them by enhancing the role of the United Nations.

Thirdly, we must utilize the existing favourable conditions by reinforcing the prevailing trend towards solving regional conflicts through the mechanism of the United Nations. We must above all expand the scope of this trend to cover other regional and human problems, most notably the Palestine question and the problem of racial discrimination in South Africa.

My country welcomed the recent decision of the Islamic Republic of Iran to accept, as Iraq has done, Security Council resolution 598 (1987) as a basis for ending the war between the two Islamic countries. We also welcomed the decision of

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the two belligerents to cease fighting and to enter into direct negotiations in order to resolve all their outstanding problems. In this context, we express our appreciation for the role played by the United Nations Secretary-General in achieving the cease-fire and in bringing the two parties to the negotiating table. We also thank him for his continuous efforts to narrow the gap between the two parties.

We, in the United Arab Emirates, consider the cease-fire agreement, and the subsequent direct dialogue, to be a major turning-point in the process of restructuring the future relations between the two countries. We hope that the recent developments will lead to an agreement on just and equitable peace principles that will leave no room and no pretext for resorting to arms once again in the future.

As a Gulf country, we look forward to the restoration of peace and security in our region, a peace that is just and acceptable, and that is based on good-neighbourly relations among all Gulf countries, big and small, and on non-interference in internal affairs. We are following the negotiations very carefully, and we are certain that the two countries have a vested interest in the restoration of peace. We believe that good intentions will inevitably lead to this end. We shall do our best to make this happen.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

Despite international détente and the movement towards the settlement of a number of regional conflicts, the Middle East problem - with its core issue, the Palestine question - is still unresolved. It is still a source of tension and deep anxiety, and peace is not at hand. The Palestinian people are still suffering from oppression, imprisonment and torture under the brutal fist of Israeli occupation. Even though Israel's aims in rejecting peace and insisting upon occupation are clear to everyone, it is difficult for us to understand the attempts of certain big countries to isolate the Palestine question from the trend of international peace. It is to be noted that Israel persists in creating obstacles, which the United States endorses, in order to obstruct the convening of an international peace conference. The convening of this conference has won the universal support of the international community.

The crux of the problem is the fact that one of the two super-Powers fully endorses the aggressive policy of Israel and refuses to recognize the existence of the Palestinian people, who are oppressed and deprived of their basic rights. Indeed, this super-Power works jointly with Israel in a futile attempt to stamp out the Palestinian identity, hoping to remove the Palestinian people from the pages of history. But through its valiant uprising, which Israel has tried to crush with all its instruments of oppression, the Palestinian people has clearly demonstrated its full awareness of its national rights, and its determination to secure those rights.

For seven decades the Palestinian people has been tenaciously struggling for freedom, independence, and the ending of occupation. We are confident, therefore, that this long struggle will lead to freedom and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

The present trend at the United Nations to use its mechanisms for resolving certain regional conflicts and problems affirms the validity of the view that the only mechanism for achieving a just and permanent peace in the Middle East is the holding of an international peace conference. This conference is to be held in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, under the auspices of the United Nations, and with the participation on an equal footing of all the concerned parties, including the Palestinian people as represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole, legitimate representative.

Lebanon is still a source of danger and deep concern for all of us. This fraternal country will not return to normalcy unless Israel withdraws from Lebanese territory, ceases to meddle in its internal affairs, and stops its aggression against Lebanese towns and villages.

We urge our brothers in Lebanon to put aside their differences and resolve their disputes through open dialogue, in order for Lebanon to regain its vanguard position in the fields of culture and progress.

My country has followed with interest the process of negotiations and what has been reached so far with respect to the question of Namibia and putting an end to South Africa's continued aggression against Angola. We hope that the Pretoria régime will not renege on its commitment to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which constitutes a comprehensive blueprint for the independence of Namibia. In this connection, we wish to reaffirm our support for the struggle of the Namibian people, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Despite the progress achieved with respect to the question of Namibia, the policy of apartheid, adopted by the white minority régime in South Africa, has been made more evil in its practices, thus causing more death and destruction. We strongly condemn the institutional régime of this policy, which

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denies the basic rights of the overwhelming black majority. This violates the principles of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and contradicts the tenets of justice and human progress. My country also strongly condemns the continuous acts of aggression, terrorism and destabilization perpetrated by the Pretoria régime against the African front-line States.

My country is a firm believer in the Charter. We therefore support its organs and call for the use of the mechanisms provided by those organs. We also wish to emphasize the need to abide by the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, non-recourse to the threat or use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Guided by this belief, the United Arab Emirates welcomed the conclusion of the Geneva Accords last April for the settlement of the question of Afghanistan. The mechanisms provided by the Secretary-General played an important role in the conclusion of these Accords and in the involvement of the two super-Powers in guaranteeing their implementation, including non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and full respect for its independence and sovereignty.

We also welcome the recent dialogue among the parties to the Kampuchean problem and the constructive role played by the Governments of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in this regard.

We also welcome the ongoing dialogue to solve the problems and conflicts confronting the countries of Central America. In this regard, we support the initiatives of the Contadora Group and the Support Group.

Concerning Korea, we urge the North and South to settle their differences through free dialogue unhampered by pressure and pre-conditions. This should defuse the crisis and bring about the unity the Koreans so earnestly seek. We welcome the readiness of the Secretary-General to help the two Governments.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

With respect to Cyprus, we commend the Secretary-General for his latest initiative, which has had a more favourable response from the parties to the conflict. We also welcome the decision of the leaders of the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities to co-operate with the Secretary-General, as well as their desire to meet without any pre-conditions and their setting of 1 June 1989 as the date for reaching a negotiated settlement for the Cyprus problem in all its aspects. We hope that the settlement will be just, comprehensive and durable. We also hope that within its framework, security and coexistence will be ensured for the two communities and that the settlement itself will guarantee the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-alignment of Cyprus.

The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was held this year in a favourable international atmosphere of détente. The successful results of the bilateral negotiations on disarmament conducted between the two super-Powers encouraged many participants in the special session to believe that those achievements could be transformed into new incentives for multilateral negotiations. Like many others, we nurtured the ambition that through consensus we would be able to agree on a final document that reflected the new developments in the field of disarmament. But our ambition exceeded the prevailing realities owing to the lack of sufficient political will on the part of certain countries for arriving at a fruitful and successful conclusion to that session.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

As the Secretary-General has stated in his report on the work of the Organization,

"Disarmament and the regulation of armaments ... will remain a decisive test of the improvement of international relations and the strengthening of peace." (A/43/1, p. 13)

In this regard my country reaffirms its support for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East. We also reiterate our support for, and commitment to the United Nations resolution declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, and look forward to the elimination of all obstacles that have so far prevented the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean.

The improvements in international relations witnessed on the political level have not been reflected to the desired degree in the state of the international economy. Serious economic structural imbalances still persist. As a result, the prices of raw materials have become unstable and have even declined. Moreover, the policies of protectionism, the discriminatory practices and the restrictions imposed on the exports of developing countries have a detrimental effect on the process of development. They also cause an escalation in the crisis of foreign indebtedness faced by the developing countries.

We believe that it is impossible to enhance international détente without consolidating the economic foundations upon which it rests. This requires a stronger spirit of co-operation and the enhancement of the role of international economic agencies. It also requires the adoption by the advanced countries of more flexible policies and the introduction of structural reforms in the system of international economic relations.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

We emphasize the importance of strengthening the role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as they constitute the main forum for dialogue and negotiations with respect to international co-operation for development. We also stress the need to abide by the principle of multilateralism and to pursue an integrated approach to the various problems pertaining to finance, currency, indebtedness, commerce and the resources devoted to development. Similarly, we call on all States to adhere to the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and to refrain from using commercial restrictions, blockades or sanctions as political tools for conducting economic relations in a manner that violates the Charter.

This session provides all Members of our international Organization with a valuable opportunity to review and re-evaluate both the great achievements attained through collective co-operation and the setbacks and obstacles resulting from selfish or aggressive policies. The United Nations offers an important frame of reference for such re-evaluation. The challenge before us today is whether or not we shall be able to utilize this session by drawing on our past experience, both positive and negative, for the purpose of reaching the right conclusions. The historical record proves that peace and security are synonymous with mutual trust and that they are the only means of elevating the human race to the desired level of economic growth, cultural advancement and social stability.

Modern history has taught us that the United Nations, through its organs and mechanisms, is able to lead human society to more understanding and co-operation. Can we vest our confidence in the United Nations? More important, can we trust each other in order that we may build a world in which justice and mutual respect prevail and man may enjoy freedom and stability? Future developments, in the shaping of which we all participate, will provide the answers to these questions.

Mr. TRAN QUANG CO (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): The delegation of Viet Nam would like to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo on his election as President of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under his guidance our session will leave an imprint commensurate with the watershed significance of the present period.

We also take this opportunity to express our great appreciation of the major contribution of Mr. Peter Florin, President of the forty-second session, to the success of that session.

The delegation of Viet Nam wishes to join previous speakers in expressing high appreciation of the indefatigable efforts made over the past year by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in the service of peace and security in many parts of the world.

Since the forty-second session we have witnessed far-reaching developments in both the world and the regional situation which give rise to hopes for those who are striving for a world of peace, friendship and co-operation among nations.

The two summit meetings between the Soviet Union and the United States, the ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - and the progress, albeit modest, made in the negotiations on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic weapons constitute important breakthroughs which open up a real opportunity of achieving still greater results in the long struggle to free mankind from the nightmare of a nuclear war of annihilation. The strengthening and broadening of international co-operation at the global and regional levels - an objective necessity of our time - and especially the signing for the first time of an agreement establishing official relations between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the European Economic Community (EEC), gives a significant impetus to the process leading to a world of peace, détente and co-operation.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

These encouraging events have contributed to the improvement of the international political atmosphere after many years of tension and confrontation. They have not only enhanced more than ever before the possibility of safeguarding peace and averting the danger of a war of extermination but also ushered in a new era in international relations, an era of struggle and co-operation in peaceful coexistence among countries with different social and political systems. As a result, all the nations of the world are in a better position to meet together the challenges facing the whole of mankind, which today cannot be met by any one country alone, no matter how large or rich. I refer to such challenges as are posed by pollution of the environment, the demographic explosion, the world food problem and the problem of sources of raw materials.

Important though they may be, the positive developments in the world situation are but a beginning. Mankind is still faced with the danger of a frenzied arms race in outer space. It is still witnessing the wasteful channelling of huge natural resources to the arms race or to regional conflicts, while two thirds of mankind are living in poverty because of the heavy legacy of a long colonial past and the unfair international economic order.

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Never before has mankind had such a strong common will to accept and overcome these serious challenges. From years of fierce struggle and untold sacrifices and losses, the peoples of the world are now all the more aware of the indivisibility of world peace and détente and, furthermore, of the close link between peace and détente, on the one hand, and independence and development, on the other. There can be no peace and détente in the world unless the independence, security and development of nations in every region are guaranteed. Conversely, the independence, security and development of nations are a decisive factor in the preservation of a solid and lasting peace on earth. In that context, the initiative for a comprehensive system of international peace and security designed to encourage international dialogue based on respect for the independence and sovereignty of nations is certain to win the approval and support of a broad segment of world public opinion.

The initial successes having been scored, the international community is now stepping up its efforts in the struggle for peace and development. The Ministerial Meeting on disarmament held in Havana by the non-aligned countries, the third General Assembly special session on disarmament and the world-wide movement in response to the "Peace Waves" campaign in 1988 have given powerful expression to the earnest aspirations of nations to live in peace, free from the use of force in international relations, and to enjoy the benefits of the relaxation of world tension and genuine security in every region, so that they can concentrate all their efforts on the long-term development of their respective countries. The broad movement towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is spreading across Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania; it reflects the peoples' determination to continue their struggle to reverse the costly and dangerous arms race in outer space and to secure a complete ban on nuclear tests and a prohibition of the testing and production of other weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

The need to struggle for peace and disarmament cannot be dissociated from the nations' struggle for independence and development. The serious economic difficulties now facing the developing countries require common efforts by the international community to bridge the ever-widening gap between the developed and the developing countries. External debt, the flow of capital resources from developing to developed countries, protectionism and unequal terms of trade: these are serious problems requiring urgent and effective solutions that would contribute to the establishment of a just and equitable new international economic order. The expansion of bilateral and multilateral economic co-operation and, especially, the promotion of regional co-operation in order to tackle the major challenges more effectively, as well as the need for a readjustment of the economic development strategies of nations - which is required by the scientific and technological revolution - are the real imperatives of our times.

The new developments in regard to peaceful coexistence in the world and the persistent endeavours of nations in various regions to achieve peace, independence and development have revealed the real possibility that many regional problems can be solved peacefully through dialogue. Although, for various reasons, the results obtained vary in degree, peace talks have aroused high hopes about the search for a political settlement of regional conflicts. We are witnessing vivid and diverse manifestations of that trend in various parts of the world - from Afghanistan to southern Africa, from the Gulf region to the Korean peninsula, from Cyprus to Western Sahara.

In keeping with its unswerving position, Viet Nam extends its constant solidarity and strong support to the heroic peoples of Cuba, Nicaragua and Panama in their staunch struggle against the imperialist forces that stubbornly continue to engage in interventionist and hostile policies, and for the defence of their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

We value highly the good will shown and the major efforts made by Afghanistan and the Soviet Union in implementing the Geneva agreements and strongly urge the other parties concerned to implement these agreements scrupulously in order to put an early end to the conflict and enable the Afghan people to live in peace and national harmony.

Like the rest of the international community, Viet Nam supports the correct position adopted and the good will shown by Angola and Cuba in order to ensure progress in ongoing quadripartite negotiations towards a solution that would guarantee Angola's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity as well as Namibia's genuine independence. The South African authorities must implement strictly the agreements reached and put an end to their warlike policy, so that peace and security can soon be restored to that region.

For the sake of peace in the Middle East and the legitimate rights of the heroic Palestinian people, Viet Nam fully supports the convening of an international conference - with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing with the other parties concerned - for the purpose of finding a fair and realistic settlement.

We whole-heartedly welcome the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and hope that their bilateral talks will soon bring about lasting peace for the peoples of those two countries.

As for the Korean peninsula, we hope that in the not-too-distant future the United Nations will be able to welcome in its midst a peaceful, reunified Korea, free from the presence of foreign troops.

With regard to regional questions, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has a consistent position of supporting the trend towards the peaceful settlement among the countries of each region of the disputes and conflicts in that region, on

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the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of each country as well as the legitimate interests and equal security of all the parties concerned, and of supporting all processes designed to achieve national reconciliation without outside interference. That Vietnamese position is in conformity with the view of the Non-Aligned Movement, as expressed most recently in the Final Document of its Ministerial Meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

South-East Asia has of late witnessed positive developments that are in keeping with universal trends and the earnest aspirations of the peoples of that region, particularly since Viet Nam, with the agreement of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, recently announced the withdrawal of 50,000 troops and the command of its volunteer forces from Kampuchea. For the first time in that part of the world, which has been a theatre of constant tension over the past 40 years, favourable factors have emerged for mutual understanding and trust and friendly co-operation among the countries of the region, which are so necessary for them to find together a fair and reasonable political solution to the Kampuchean question and to build South-East Asia into a zone of lasting peace and stability.

On the basis of the agreement reached in Ho Chi Minh City in July 1987 between Indonesia and Viet Nam, representing the two groups of countries in South-East Asia, the four parties of the two opposing sides in Kampuchea and the two groups of countries in South-East Asia have for the first time, after 10 years of intense confrontation, come to engage in dialogue at the Jakarta Informal Meeting in discussions on a political solution to the Kampuchean question, with the prospect of a peaceful and stable South-East Asia.

The Jakarta Informal Meeting took the Kampuchean question out of deadlock because that meeting did not follow the beaten track of the past 10 years, in which the will and interests of one side were imposed on the other. Its success constitutes a victory for regional co-operation, mutual understanding and respect for each other's interests, and first and foremost the legitimate interests of the Kampuchean people.

It was thus possible in Jakarta, for the first time, for a consensus to be reached among the parties directly concerned in the region on recognition of the two interlinked key issues of the Kampuchean problem, namely the withdrawal of

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Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea and the prevention of the return to Kampuchea of the genocidal Pol Pot régime. Besides this extremely important achievement of the Jakarta Informal Meeting, in Jakarta Prince Sihanouk and Chairman Hun Sen reached an agreement to resume their talks in Paris to discuss further the internal problems of Kampuchea in a spirit of national reconciliation.

The results of the Jakarta Informal Meeting and the agreement reached between Prince Sihanouk and Chairman Hun Sen have not only broken the stalemate of the past 10 years but have also created a framework for a political settlement of the Kampuchean question in both its internal and its international aspects. They have thus opened up the prospect of solving the Kampuchean issue in the not too distant future.

That is precisely why the consensus reached at the Jakarta Informal Meeting has been widely welcomed and supported by world public opinion from the East to the West, which regards it as movement in the correct direction, to be further encouraged and supported. The Non-Aligned Movement in particular, with its constructive initiatives, has extended valuable and timely support to the common endeavours of the South-East Asian countries to find an early solution to the Kampuchean question, thus contributing to turning that region of confrontation and tension into a zone of lasting peace, stability, friendship and co-operation.

In this very forum, all the countries that are concerned about the Kampuchean question and peace and stability in South-East Asia, and sincerely desire to make a constructive contribution, have noted with satisfaction that, given the recent profound changes in South-East Asia, there now exists a real possibility of achieving a political settlement of the Kampuchean question.

Regrettably, however, despite this common trend, some in this forum are still trying to swim against the tide. For 10 years, they have tried by any means

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available to distract world opinion in an attempt to cover up the appalling crimes committed between 1975 and 1984 by an utterly inhuman régime against an entire nation, and to blur the all too real danger of the scourge of renewed genocide in the land of Angkor.

With their one-sided arguments and their distortions of the realities in Kampuchea, they attempt to represent the genocidal clique as pitiful victims whom foreign troops have unjustly deprived of their freedom to commit genocide. Is it by way of compensation that this genocidal clique has been allowed to retain the right to represent the Kampuchean people at the United Nations? As for those who, together with their fellow Kampucheans, have made every effort over the past 10 years to resurrect from the ruins and the killing fields left behind by the Pol Pot régime a new Kampuchean State full of vitality and having a political, economic and social life, they are denied that legitimate right.

Such is the shocking reality, despite the existence since 1948 of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Worse yet, in the face of world opinion's strong condemnation of the genocidal Pol Pot clique, the latter's sponsors have taken up an odd line of reasoning, putting on an equal footing the danger of the genocidal Pol Pot clique and the existence of the Administration of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which enjoys the full support of the Kampuchean people and has done its utmost to overcome the terrible legacy of the genocidal Pol Pot régime.

These same people also claim that they pursue no self-interest in their approach to the Kampuchean question. If that is so, why do they make a series of demands that are tantamount to imposing their will on the Kampuchean people, including on matters pertaining to Kampuchea's purely internal problems? They demand that the future Administration of Kampuchea be like this, and its army like

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that. Is that the way to respect the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination? Or are these demands only aimed at serving their purpose of preserving and legalizing the genocidal Pol Pot forces as part of a solution of the Kampuchean question?

I have been compelled to express the aforementioned views in order to reply to assertions that cannot remain unanswered. It is not my intention to engage in polemics in this forum. I only wish to engage in constructive exchanges of views here, in an atmosphere of goodwill, with a view to contributing usefully to world peace as well as to peace and stability in our region.

Once again, Viet Nam reaffirms its full support for and active contribution to all efforts to find an early political solution to the Kampuchean problem. We are of the view that a political settlement of the Kampuchean question should ensure the legitimate interests of the Kampuchean people first and foremost, their right to live free from the danger of another genocide, while duly taking into account the security interests of all parties concerned, including the People's Republic of China.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

Like many other regional problems, the Kampuchean question has two aspects: the internal and the international. Viet Nam wishes to secure a comprehensive settlement that would solve both aspects. If that is not yet possible, we think that the international aspect of the Kampuchean question could be solved first, as has been clearly indicated by the Jakarta Informal Meeting. As for the internal aspect of the question, it should be left to the Kampucheans themselves to settle this without outside interference. All other countries should respect the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination and the agreements reached by the Kampuchean parties.

For its part, Viet Nam, in a spirit of regional co-operation and together with other South-East Asian countries, will do its best to make the forthcoming session of the Jakarta Informal Meeting a success. In keeping with the spirit of regional co-operation, Viet Nam will strictly carry out its announced withdrawal of 50,000 of its troops from Kampuchea in 1988. The remaining Vietnamese forces will be completely withdrawn in 1990, as has been stated earlier. If a political solution, either comprehensive or partial, is reached, the total withdrawal will be effected sooner. The timetable for the troop withdrawal will be closely linked with the timetable for the cessation of all forms of outside interference in the internal affairs of Kampuchea, in the spirit of consensus reached at the Jakarta Informal Meeting.

Viet Nam's consistent wish is for a fair and reasonable settlement of the Kampuchean question. This, however, depends, not on the resolve of one side alone, but rather on the common goodwill of all the parties involved, and, in particular, on the determination of the countries of the region to continue to co-operate in the solution of the problem on the basis of the Jakarta consensus, especially at the meeting of the working group of the Jakarta Informal Meeting on 17 October.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

Desiring as we do an early, fair and reasonable political solution that guarantees the Kampuchean people a peaceful and happy life, with national reconciliation, in fulfilment of the common aspirations of all South-East Asian countries to peace and development, we fully support the seven-point proposal put forward at Jakarta by the People's Republic of Kampuchea. These points are the following. First, the aim is to build a peaceful, independent, democratic, sovereign, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea.

Second, by December 1989, or at the latest by the first quarter of 1990, all the remaining Vietnamese volunteer forces will be completely withdrawn from Kampuchea, along with the simultaneous ending of all foreign aid and sanctuaries provided to the genocidal Pol Potists and opposing Khmer forces and cessation of the use of Khmers in refugee camps against the Kampuchean people and of all foreign interference in the internal affairs of Kampuchea.

Third, the internal problems of Kampuchea must be settled by the Kampuchean parties themselves on the basis of national reconciliation, the exclusion of the criminal leadership of Pol Pot's genocidal régime and the inadmissibility of the Khmer Rouge armed forces.

Fourth, the status quo in Kampuchea will be maintained until the completion of general elections to the National Assembly, which will then adopt a new constitution and form a coalition Government.

Fifth, a national reconciliation council will be established made up of the four Kampuchean parties and headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. This council will be entrusted with the following duties: to implement all the agreements reached between the various Kampuchean parties; to organize general elections to the National Assembly.

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

Sixth, an international control commission will be set up to supervise the implementation of all the agreements concluded.

Seventh, an international conference will be convened, with the participation of Kampuchea, Laos, Viet Nam, the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Chairmen of the sixth, seventh and eighth summit Conferences of non-aligned countries, the Soviet Union, China, France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other countries that have contributed to the process of peace in South-East Asia, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The purpose of this conference will be to guarantee the independence, sovereignty, neutrality and non-alignment of Kampuchea, as well as peace and stability in South-East Asia.

We welcome the Secretary-General's continued efforts aimed at promoting the implementation of the agreements reached at the Jakarta Informal Meeting and supporting the 5 November meeting between Chairman Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Sihanouk so that it may be a success.

The period between now and 1990 offers us the best possible opportunity to bring the Kampuchean question to a close and to turn a new page in the history of relations among South-East Asian countries. Viet Nam sincerely wishes to build up mutual trust and relations of co-operation with all countries in the region in accordance with the spirit of the seven-point proposal on the principles governing the relations among South-East Asian countries, put forward by the Lao People's Democratic Republic at the Jakarta Informal Meeting. Relations of mutual trust and co-operation among South-East Asian countries are an essential factor in the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the settlement of the Kampuchean question. In the long run, this will provide a sound basis on which to assure the security

(Mr. Tran Quang Co, Viet Nam)

and development interests of each country in South-East Asia. Only through regional co-operation can regional problems be solved.

The world is moving away from confrontation towards dialogue and co-operation. The positive changes in the world situation in this direction in the last few years of the twentieth century have engendered hope for a world in which nations can live on an equal footing in peace and friendship without the threat of a nuclear war of extermination, in which regional conflicts can be solved not by the use of force but through dialogue, and in which ideological differences do not hinder co-operation for the well-being of mankind. It is hoped that, with the emergence of these premises, this lofty aspiration will become a reality in the not-too-distant future for all the regions in the world, including South-East Asia.

Mr. EVANS (Australia): I warmly congratulate Mr. Caputo of Argentina on his election to the important post of President of this General Assembly. Our two countries share important objectives in relation to Antarctica and the liberalization of trade in agricultural products. I also acknowledge the courageous role he personally has played in the consolidation of constitutional democracy in Argentina. It is a great pleasure, therefore, to see him presiding over our deliberations at this particularly auspicious time for the United Nations.

This year of 1988 is not only a special one for Australia, marking our bicentenary, but also for the United Nations, marking as it does the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a landmark in the struggle of the international community to guarantee individual rights for all people. Not entirely coincidentally, it is also the fortieth anniversary of the presidency of this Assembly of one of the founding fathers of the United Nations, and one of its strongest voices on behalf of the small and middle Powers, Herbert Vere Evatt, then Foreign Minister of Australia, who worked strenuously for, and announced during his presidency, the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In preparing to address this Assembly for the first time, I turned for a little encouragement to the wisdom and writing of my distinguished Labour Government predecessor, and I was not disappointed. A very great deal that Mr. Evatt did and thought, and that was important to him, stands the test of those 40 years. Twice in his lifetime Mr. Evatt had seen the world tear itself apart. In the First World War both his brothers were killed. He had seen the League of Nations collapse into impotence and irrelevance. In the Second World War he had been Foreign Minister when Australia was in grave peril. To him, therefore, the introduction to the Charter - "We, the people of the United Nations, determined to

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" - was not just a resounding piece of rhetoric but a commitment born of despair and necessity.

Fortunately, we have all been spared a third world war since then; but this period has seen tragedy and suffering wrought on our fellow human beings by a continuous epidemic of conflicts - both regional and internal - which have blotted the world's landscape. We have seen the return of chemical weapons. War has filled the refugee camps of the world. Violence has been father to suffering, poverty and homelessness, on a scale that indicts us all.

The United Nations has performed indispensable work in dealing with the tragic consequences of these conflicts; but the sad reality is that for most of the past four decades it has largely been blocked from performing the task for which it was pre-eminently created, the peaceful resolution of conflict itself. So it is with a profound sense of hope for the future that we look back over the past 18 months. From southern Africa to the Western Sahara, through the Middle East, the Mediterranean, across to Afghanistan and Cambodia, we see the United Nations, led by its Secretary-General, at last bringing to bear the collective will and commitment of the nations of the world.

The Secretary-General and the United Nations peace-keeping forces thoroughly deserve their award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The Prize is a very timely recognition of the commitment that this Organization must continue to assert: that deep-seated and genuine differences must be resolved without blood and agony for ordinary men and women caught up in conflicts not of their own making.

In Afghanistan, despite many problems, the Geneva Agreements are holding. The Soviet Union has met the target for the withdrawal of 50 per cent of its forces, and we urge that it maintain the agreed target for the complete withdrawal. Withdrawal will provide the conditions for the essential next step of allowing the

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people of Afghanistan to decide for themselves their form of government. The international community has a responsibility, through the United Nations, to assist in the reconstruction of that land devastated by invasion and war and to help provide for the millions of refugees it has created.

We have all greeted with immense relief the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, another extraordinary achievement of the United Nations. But we are deeply concerned that, although the fighting has stopped, there has been little apparent progress in talks between Iran and Iraq under the auspices of the Secretary-General. Australia urges both countries to bring about an enduring peace, in accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

In southern Africa there is a distinct prospect that independence for Namibia is at hand; but it is still only a prospect. As a traditional supporter of the United Nations peace-keeping activities, Australia reconfirms its willingness to participate in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group for Namibia.

Australia also fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General towards resolving the conflict in Western Sahara.

In recent weeks, the most promising meetings in many years have occurred between the President of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, again under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

There have also been encouraging signs in my own region. My visit to New Caledonia three weeks ago and my discussions there with all major parties confirm that the process set in train by the Matignon and Oudinot accords not only is workable but has generated a whole new spirit of reconciliation and optimism. The process to which the Rocard Government and all the major groups in New Caledonia have committed themselves has Australia's support and that of the South Pacific Forum. We in the South Pacific share with France a determination to assist

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the peaceful evolution of New Caledonia to self-determination in a way which ensures that the legitimate interests of all the people of New Caledonia, including its indigenous Melanesian population, are fully protected, and their aspirations are given a chance to be realized.

Once again, after many years, Korea is on the agenda of the General Assembly - but for the first time as a single item. Australia heartily endorses the common goal of this new item: peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula. Australia finds encouraging the recent willingness by both South and North Korea to consider resuming dialogue. We believe there is now a real opportunity to bring to an end 35 years of confrontation.

There have also been important recent developments relating to the conflict in Cambodia. Talks are taking place among the concerned parties. The Jakarta Informal Meeting, ably presided over by Indonesian Foreign Minister Alatas, realistically noted that a solution would require not only the withdrawal of Vietnamese military forces but also the prevention of the return of the genocidal policies and practices of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) draft resolution this year makes that point, and we welcome that statement.

There remain, regrettably, a number of regional conflicts and tensions where there has been less progress.

Australia is especially concerned about the seemingly intractable nature of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Australia's commitment to the State of Israel is firm: it may be traced back to Mr. Evatt's time and it has not wavered since. The right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized boundaries is and must remain an indispensable condition of peace. It is from this firm basis of commitment and friendship to Israel that we say that peace and justice for Israel will be found only when there is also peace and justice for the Palestinians.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

The right of self-determination for the Palestinian people, including, if they so choose, the possibility of an independent Palestinian State, must be recognized. Israel's friends can only view with concern the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Recent events there put at stake its reputation and future as a liberal democratic State and risk increasing isolation from traditional friends and supporters, like ourselves, who place priority on respect for democratic ideals and fundamental human rights.*

It is also time for the Palestinians to take historic decisions regarding their relations with Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization must reject, unequivocally, the use of terror, accept the process of negotiation and be prepared, clearly and without equivocation, to recognize Israel. To be durable, any negotiated settlement must take account of the legitimate interests also of the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon and other countries of the region.

In Burma we have witnessed tragic loss of life as the Burmese people have struggled for their political and economic rights. The Burmese people have our deepest sympathy, and I offer to them Australia's support in the period of reconstruction and reconciliation which must follow the resolution of the current crisis.

While there is much still to be done, recent events do hold out prospects for peace that only a few years ago would have been thought of as naive fantasy. Who among us two years ago - even one year ago - would have envisaged, for example, that President Reagan would be able to stand before us at this time and say that in many regional conflicts the Soviet Union had shown a "spirit of constructive realism"?

*Mr. Huerta Montalvo (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

The United Nations itself has been a crucial contributor to the improved East-West atmosphere. The United Nations needs the great Powers, but the great Powers also need the United Nations. There is a wide and growing agenda of issues that cannot be resolved by the great Powers acting unilaterally or bilaterally. The great Powers, alone or together, can hamstring the United Nations; but, alone or together, they cannot by themselves make it work. An effective United Nations requires the collective will and commitment of the whole international community. It is only when this is fully accepted by everyone that the recovery of the United Nations, with all its potential, will become permanent.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

There can be few areas where this is better exemplified than disarmament and arms control. The conclusion by the United States and the Soviet Union of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the first arms-control agreement eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons, is a truly significant development, as is the acceptance under that agreement of highly intrusive provisions for verification, which, in turn, make further agreements possible. Great progress has been made towards concluding an agreement to cut by 50 per cent strategic nuclear arsenals; and for all those developments Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev deserve the gratitude of us all.

But nuclear disarmament and arms control are not matters exclusively for those great Powers that currently possess nuclear weapons. For if there is nuclear conflict, it is not just the peoples of the nuclear-weapon States who will suffer. The peoples of the world will be devastated. As the potential victims of nuclear catastrophe, the peoples of all nations have the right to demand real progress and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. They have the right to demand that the nuclear-arms race not take new forms, including its spread into outer space.

One of the few things that has given the people of the world some confidence that nuclear catastrophe will not occur is that almost all the nations of the world have undertaken not to acquire nuclear weapons. Australia considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which embraces that commitment, to be perhaps the single most important arms-control agreement in existence. We consider its preservation to be of paramount importance to peace and security.

We understand and have shared the frustrations many countries feel at the glacial pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament, but we do not believe that frustration is well served by bringing into question the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself. Does any nation really believe that its security or the safety of the

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

world would be served by a world in which yet more States had nuclear weapons? Further nuclear proliferation would bring about an even more desperately dangerous world than the one we now inhabit. So we appeal once more to those countries that have not yet become parties to the Treaty to do so without delay. And, remembering - as we always must - the terms of the compact that lies behind the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in which the nuclear-weapon States undertook to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith and at an early date, we appeal once again to those existing nuclear-weapon States to accelerate the progress they have been making towards the elimination of those weapons.

The urgent conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty to prohibit all nuclear tests by all States in all environments for all time would be a major barrier to the further refinement of nuclear weapons, and it would be an additional obstacle to prospective proliferators. I hope the Assembly will once more resoundingly call upon the Conference on Disarmament to resume work on its nuclear-testing item.

The most immediate threat is posed by chemical weapons. The Secretary-General, after careful investigation, has found repeated use of chemical weapons in the Gulf region. We condemn such use without qualification or equivocation. We are convinced that the only solution to the increasing use and spread of these abhorrent weapons lies in the early conclusion by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva of a comprehensive chemical-weapons convention. Australia actively supports all practical measures to advance the negotiations for a convention and to prevent the further erosion of international norms against the use of chemical weapons.

In this context the proposal for an international conference on chemical weapons use, made last week in the Assembly by President Reagan, has the support of

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the Australian Government and, we hope, of all Member States of the United Nations. To give effect to that proposal we must seek to ensure that the international conference is open to participation by all States, is convened as soon as possible this year and is attended at a very high level. The conference must have a clearly defined central purpose: a declaration that chemical weapons must never be used and a commitment to bring into existence a universal chemical-weapons convention, as currently being negotiated in Geneva, which would rid the world of chemical weapons for all time.

One of the clear messages to come from the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in June was that we all have a responsibility for disarmament. We cannot lay the blame for the state of the world only at the door of those who possess nuclear arsenals.

The quest for greater security through higher and higher levels of conventional arms is only too well known to us all. The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development provided ample evidence. It is a simple proposition that more arms do not equal greater security. They feed the appetite of instability and the coffers of those who choose to supply arms at levels that are well beyond those needed for self-defence. The only way that peace and security will ultimately be guaranteed is by universal acceptance of the principles of common security so well articulated by the Palme Commission in 1982, the thrust of whose conclusions is that no country can guarantee its own security by threatening others and that real security is achieved, not against other countries, but with them.

While the founders of the Organization saw immediate issues of peace and security as the pre-eminent role of the United Nations, they also understood clearly that the roots of many of the world's conflicts lay in poverty, suffering and abuses of human rights.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

Australia insists that human rights know no boundaries. Human rights must always be high on the Organization's agenda. The repulsive and contemptible system of apartheid in South Africa is the most serious instance of institutionalized abuse of human rights facing us today, and we continue to urge the United Nations Security Council to adopt comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions as an effective means of bringing apartheid to a peaceful end.

In the absence of such mandatory United Nations sanctions we have worked within the Commonwealth to develop an effective pattern of economic sanctions aiming particularly at the banking and financial system, as well as strategies to meet South African propaganda and to strengthen the economic security of the front-line States in meeting destabilization by South Africa.

Australia also recognizes that all countries must be answerable to the nations of the world on these issues, and we are willing ourselves to answer to the nations of the world for Australian policies and actions. Every year sees an anniversary of one kind or another, but 1988 is, as I have already said, a special one for my country. Two hundred years ago Europeans arrived to establish permanent settlement in Australia. Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, of course, were there before us. They are, in fact, celebrating at this time not their bicentenary, but their bicentennial bicentenary - some 40,000 years of habitation on Australian soil. All too many of the 200 years of European settlement have been, for our original Australians, years of discrimination, cruelty and oppression. Australians today cannot reverse that history, but nor are today's Australians responsible for it. Our duty today is to acknowledge the truth of our history and to redress it.

In the past 20 years significant progress has been made. Aboriginal and Islander Australians have the same legal and civil rights as other Australians. We are taking special measures to accelerate access to services and to provide a basis

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

for further economic, social and legal advancement. We are seeking to complete a compact or agreement with our Aboriginal people and Islanders, acknowledging their rightful place not only in the past of our ancient continent but in its present and future.

Although much has been done to improve the position of Aboriginal Australians, much remains to be done. We have undertaken to the descendants of our original inhabitants - and I repeat that undertaking to the United Nations - that we will leave undone nothing that can be done to right this great wrong of our past. Racial prejudice and discrimination have no place in any contemporary society and have none in my country today. Over 20 years ago bipartisan agreement was achieved within Australia to bring to an end the abhorrent but long officially sanctioned racially restrictive immigration policy. I bring here now, on behalf of my Government, the solemn undertaking, recently confirmed by resolution of both Houses of our national Parliament, that never again shall we allow race to be used as a criterion in the exercise of our sovereign right to decide who shall enter our country. That undertaking is made not only as a reflection of deeply held principle but also because if Australia were to do otherwise we would deserve the censure of the world.

Australia shares with developing countries the conviction that the United Nations has a major role to play in the areas of international trade and development.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

We have a commitment second to none to ensuring the success of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations in the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). That Round is a historic opportunity for the world to demonstrate conclusively its commitment to the multilateral trading system and to forestall the fragmentation into hostile trading blocs that damaged us all in the 1930s. The potential benefits of liberalization are great and the need is urgent. Results in key areas will be very important at the mid-term review of the Uruguay Round to be held at Montreal in December. Early results will enhance the confidence of the participants in the Round and establish a solid base for its ultimate success.

As efficient producers of agricultural commodities, Australia and its fellow members of the Cairns Group of Fair Trading Nations in Agriculture have a common interest in promoting a more liberal trading system in agriculture. The benefits, however, can be far more widely shared. Recent research indicates that food importers would benefit from liberalization and the removal of distortions in international agricultural trade. The adoption of market-oriented agricultural policies in the industrialized countries lies at the heart of the agricultural trade reform issue.

Nor are our interests confined to agricultural trade reforms. Australia strongly supports efforts to strengthen the GATT framework, secure a broad-based liberalization of trade and extend multilateral discipline into new areas such as services and intellectual-property rights. The Uruguay Round provides an opportunity for us all to tackle these persistent and serious problems, an opportunity that might not come again soon.

The value of the United Nations is demonstrated most particularly when the Organization helps resolve problems which respect no national boundaries. One such

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

problem is the environment, especially changes to the world's climate. Australia and our island neighbours in the Pacific and Indian Oceans have already pointed to the potentially serious consequences of the warming of the Earth's atmosphere. The very existence of a number of our fellow countries in the world is at stake. It is only by a total international commitment that we can protect ourselves, and we look to the General Assembly to give a stronger focus to international measures for dealing with this threat to our environment.

The Antarctic Treaty is a good example of international co-operation embracing environmental and disarmament concerns. It has grown from the original 12 signatories in 1959 to 38 with the accession in May of Canada. The disarmament provisions of the Antarctic Treaty ensure that the Territory is used only for peaceful purposes. The Treaty has promoted scientific research, environmental protection and conservation, has kept the continent free from international tensions, and deserves continuing support.

This session of the General Assembly has commenced on a note of high optimism not least because of the commitment of the United States to meet its financial obligations to the United Nations and to pay its arrears. Australia has always maintained that all Member States must abide by their obligations to the Charter of the United Nations. All should pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, and Australia has always done so.

The decision of the United States to meet its financial obligations should not give rise, however, to complacency about the need for reform. Much has been done to make the United Nations more efficient since the Group of 18 Intergovernmental Experts submitted its report on reform in 1986, but there is still much to be done, especially in implementing an improved budgetary process, ordering priorities and avoiding duplication.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

A strong, efficient United Nations is the best guarantee that the Organization will be able to meet the new and different challenges it confronts. It is only if the United Nations is strong and efficient that continued support can be guaranteed from the parliaments and the taxpayers of its Member States. This is especially the case at a time when new peace-keeping operations are likely to place much greater burdens on us all.

Australia will not shrink from its share of that burden now that the United Nations is succeeding in its pre-eminent role of peace-maker and peace-keeper. We have contributed personnel and financial resources to the peace-keeping force in the Gulf; we have committed funds for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan; we have committed ourselves in principle to providing 300 personnel to United Nations transitional arrangements in Namibia. It is against that background - and with those credentials, I guess - that we urge the Secretariat to ensure rigorous economy in developing its peace-keeping plans.

The reform process should proceed at many levels. There is an urgent need for rationalization of the economic and social areas of the United Nations. The Secretary-General must have greater flexibility in adjusting the human resources of the Organization to meet emerging priorities such as peace-keeping, human rights, drug-control programmes and the status of women.

I began my remarks today by referring to Mr. Evatt. Let me conclude the same way. Evatt was a towering figure in Australian life. He was one of our greatest lawyers, a judge of our High Court, Chief Justice of a State Supreme Court. He was Attorney-General, Foreign Minister and a Leader of the Opposition. He was a journalist and a writer - not always the same thing. For decades he was at the centre of political, social and economic change in our nation, often its most controversial figure. He was an ardent nationalist.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

But to this ardent nationalist nothing in his entire life's work was more important than this international Organization here in New York. For all his many achievements and titles and honours, his modest grave in our national capital has inscribed on it only his name and the words "President of the United Nations Assembly".

Evatt once described in his characteristically straightforward way what he saw as the objective of the United Nations. In 1948 he pleaded for Governments to keep faith with their peoples. They wanted, he said,

"not very much: just peace and justice and decent standards of living, for themselves perhaps, but mainly for their children."

Those words are simple and modest. They remind us that this place does not belong to the powerful or the wealthy, that it does not exist for diplomats or officials or statesmen. This Organization belongs to the ordinary men and women of our world. It was founded on a promise to those men and women that never again would their leaders bring upon them war, injustice and poverty. That promise has not to date been honoured.

We have today a second chance, a chance to fulfil that 40-year-old promise to our peoples to bring them peace, justice and a decent standard of living.

Let us get it right this time.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I propose now to suspend the meeting for five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 6.35 p.m. and resumed at 6.40 p.m.*

Mr. LOPEZ CONTRERAS (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, I take especial pleasure in conveying to you my Government's satisfaction at the decision taken by this Assembly to place the representative of a recently restored democracy in charge of our deliberations. That decision is, without any doubt, based on recognition of your personal merit and of your professional skills. It is also an honour to your country, with which we are fraternally linked by bonds of history and geography and by our common identification with the ideals and principles underlying democracy. We are sure that, under your guidance, this Assembly will conduct its business in a manner which will ensure its complete success.

Similarly, I wish to express to your predecessor, Mr. Peter H. Florin, our congratulations on the sound, intelligent and constructive manner in which he conducted the business of the last session of the Assembly.

Over the last few months, mankind has witnessed - at first with disbelief and, later, with mounting hope - the way in which a number of the crises from which the world had been suffering seemed to be nearing a solution, thanks to a combination of new circumstances. The conflicts in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Cyprus, Western Sahara and southern Africa appear to be moving towards a negotiated solution.

Among the circumstances which have helped restore faith in the ability of human beings to resolve their differences in a peaceful manner, mention must be made, on the one hand, of the détente in the relations between the super-Powers resulting from a realistic and positive dialogue between the United States of

*The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

America and the Soviet Union and, on the other, to the role played by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in his quest for negotiated settlements to those conflicts. His prudence, diplomatic tact and amply demonstrated perseverance are factors of fundamental importance which now allow us to glimpse a process of peace in various regions suffering from conflicts. I wish to offer to the Secretary-General our gratitude for his extraordinary hard work for peace and also our encouragement to him in his efforts.

My Government reiterates its faith in, and support for, the purposes and principles of the United Nations, compliance with which is the best guarantee of the maintenance of international peace and security and also the best means of promoting the economic and social progress of all peoples.

My Government wishes also to place on record its concern over the financial straits in which the Organization finds itself, which prevents it from fully meeting its objectives. The financial crisis continues to threaten the Organization notwithstanding the efforts made by the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations of the Group of Eighteen.

We share the joy that is felt over the progress made in the negotiations with a view to the elimination of the spectre of a nuclear confrontation. The success achieved by the United States and the Soviet Union in agreeing on a treaty which means that, for the first time, there will be an actual reduction of nuclear delivery systems, is a step we all applaud. We trust that the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - will be a prelude to new agreements eliminating for ever the threat of a nuclear holocaust and inaugurating a new era of understanding, peace and prosperity for all.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq and the start of negotiations between the parties is also a source of pride for our Organization. In keeping with the principle that all disputes can and must be resolved by peaceful means, we encourage those States that have suffered so terribly from the scourge of war to renew their efforts to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution to their disputes.

We wish to stress the importance for world peace of the complete and final withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghan territory. It is to be hoped that this process will lead to reconciliation for the Afghan people and to the exercise of its right to self-determination.

We are likewise encouraged by the talks taking place in Geneva with the participation of the Governments of Angola, Cuba, the United States of America and South Africa with a view to creating conditions that would enable Namibia to achieve independence and thus reduce tensions in that part of the world.

We view with enthusiasm the positive turn taken by events in Western Sahara, where agreements are now beginning to emerge which, it is hoped, will lead to a settlement between the parties to the conflict. In this respect, the resumption of diplomatic relations between Algeria and Morocco has been a constructive factor.

Regrettably the spirit of conciliation has not spread to other delicate situations in the world, such as the case of Kampuchea, where lack of agreement has prevented the withdrawal of occupation troops under international supervision. None the less, we are confident that the efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations will bear fruit in the near future.

Honduras wishes to express once again its sincere hope that the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom will resolve their dispute over the Malvinas Islands through negotiation.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

We exhort the countries of the Middle East to put forth their best efforts to find a lasting solution to their dispute. The agreements arrived at by Egypt and Israel are proof that the determination to promote peace, even in a region which has been a witness to bloody and prolonged conflicts, can bear fruit.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

In this respect, Honduras endorses the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

My delegation reiterates its view that the question of Korea must be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiations between South Korea and North Korea.

Faithful to the principle of universality for this Organization, we reaffirm our belief that it is essential for all nations that endorse the principles of the San Francisco Charter to belong to the United Nations.

My country wishes to emphasize its repudiation of all policies of discrimination, in particular the policy of apartheid, which the Government of South Africa continues to apply.

One of the problems that my Government views with mounting concern is that of the illegal production of, trafficking in and consumption of narcotics. Honduras, as is the case of other neighbouring States in Central America and the Caribbean, by the mere fact of its geographical situation, equidistant from drug-producing and drug-consuming countries, feels threatened by the continuing attempts to use its territory as a bridge for drug trafficking. We wish to place on record our resolute support for the struggle against the scourge of drugs and our determination to participate in the new international efforts to halt the illegal narcotics traffic, as we have in the past.

In the sphere of international co-operation for the solution of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, we wish to acknowledge once again the work done by the Organization, particularly through the United Nations Development Programme. We fully share the concern expressed in this Assembly by the President of Venezuela, Mr. Jaime Lusinchi, who said that the need to overcome the problem of external indebtedness is fundamental to the attainment of social development.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The Government of Honduras takes great pleasure in the decision by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to establish in Tegucigalpa a regional office that will make it possible to deal more effectively and efficiently with the important programmes it is implementing in the Central American isthmus.

We also welcome the presentation at this session of the Secretary-General's report on co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States. The fact that both organizations pursue the same objectives dictates the need for a common endeavour. Our initiative, adopted last year, calling for closer and more productive co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States was designed to achieve this goal.

One of the organs of the United Nations system whose work in the Central American area deserves special emphasis is the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Central American crisis, which is characterized by domestic crises in some of the countries of the region, has resulted in the international displacement of hundreds of thousands of people seeking security. Honduras shares borders with the three countries in the region in which civil wars or internal armed conflicts have taken place and have led to massive flows of refugees.

Honduras extends protection in its territory at the present time to approximately 45,000 refugees - Nicaraguans, Salvadorians and, to a lesser extent, Guatemalans - in camps which receive assistance from UNHCR. To that number we must add about 200,000 citizens from those countries who have entered Honduras since 1979 and are living widely scattered over our national territory, in many cases lacking proper documentation. For a small country such as Honduras, which is struggling with great determination and self-sacrifice to emerge from underdevelopment, the entry of so many refugees into its territory imposes a burden

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that exceeds its capabilities. In this respect, it is essential to find a permanent solution to the problem of the placement of those refugees, whether by facilitating their repatriation, which necessarily requires a successful effort at democratization and domestic reconciliation in the countries concerned, or by their relocation in third countries. I wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to UNHCR for its difficult and meritorious work in connection with the material care of Central American refugees and in facilitating their voluntary repatriation.

It is worth emphasizing that in May 1989 an international conference on Central American refugees will be held in Guatemala, with the participation of Mexico and the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in order to find practical solutions to the problems of the repatriation of Central American refugees. We hope that the international community, which has so often expressed its interest in helping resolve Central American problems, will play an effective part in this international endeavour, which is of vital importance to our countries.

Last year the General Assembly adopted resolutions 42/1 and 42/204, calling urgently for the preparation of a special plan of economic co-operation for Central America. The Secretary-General has already submitted to the Assembly, in document A/42/949, the special plan drawn up with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in close co-ordination with the Central American Governments and Central American regional institutions. This plan had the support of all the Members of the Assembly, which made it possible for the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, at a later date, to allocate special funds for the promotion, co-ordination, implementation and follow-up of the plan and the attainment of its objectives.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

Honduras is a small country situated in the heart of Central America, between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, and sharing a common border with El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Honduras pursues two fundamental objectives in its foreign policy; strengthening the democratic régime chosen by Hondurans as their way of life and government, and guaranteeing our citizens access to better levels of well-being. A basic prerequisite for the attainment of these objectives is a peaceful, stable and secure environment in the Central American isthmus, for which we have been struggling vigorously.

Our foreign policy is pursued in compliance with the norms and principles of international law, in particular, the peaceful settlement of disputes, fulfilment in good faith of commitments entered into, respect for the right of peoples to self-determination, and the promotion and protection of human rights. These are the objectives which my Government has sought to achieve, notwithstanding the crisis which has afflicted the region since the latter part of the last decade. That is why we have taken an active part in the negotiations sponsored by the Contadora Group and its Support Group, and later in connection with the Esquipulas II agreements.

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Esquipulas II is to a great extent a response to the regional crisis, in that it establishes a procedure agreed upon by the five Governments of the area aimed at the return of internal normalcy in the countries that have endured civil war and the strengthening of the democratic system of government.

It should be recalled that on 16 October 1987 the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/1, voicing its most resolute support for the Esquipulas process. In that resolution the Assembly renewed its support for a negotiated solution to the crisis, a support it has demonstrated since 1983.

Honduras has fulfilled the obligations deriving from that process, including the deposit of the basic instrument of the Central American parliament. However, it is impossible to overlook the fact that the particular situation of those countries that are experiencing internal armed conflict is a determining factor in the regional crisis.

Honduras acknowledges the difficulties that have arisen at the negotiating table owing to the complexity of the situation. In certain cases, the armed opposition has sought objectives quite contrary to democratic principles. But in other cases it is precisely the lack of will on the part of the authorities that has provoked a deadlock in the dialogue between the Governments and the opposition forces.

That internal lack of will is also reflected in foreign policy. Indeed, the Government of Nicaragua, which together with the other Central American Governments signed the Esquipulas II Agreements, has obsessively engaged in international actions that are mutually incompatible.

Honduras has underlined that incompatibility both in this Assembly and in other bodies in order that the historical record will show that regional efforts to bring about peace have been adversely affected by the attitude of the Nicaragua Government.

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I refer to the legal proceedings brought by Nicaragua against Honduras in the International Court of Justice on the very same matter that is being dealt with in the regional political process. That incompatibility between legal recourse and the political procedure of Esquipulas II has emptied the latter process of its substance, thus thwarting the peace initiative of President Arias, endangering the plan for special economic co-operation for Central America adopted by the United Nations and even jeopardizing the co-operation between the European Economic Community and Central America - all efforts fully supported by Honduras.

In July 1986 the Sandinist Government brought suit against Honduras and Costa Rica before the International Court of Justice for reasons it would be irrelevant to mention here since what is of importance is to save Esquipulas II.

Honduras and Costa Rica, on the basis of applicable law, argued that the International Court of Justice lacked jurisdiction, both Governments emphasizing that they could not continue negotiating while the suit initiated by Nicaragua was still pending.

On the basis of this criterion, upon signing the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America" - Esquipulas II - Nicaragua withdrew the action against Costa Rica and promised to withdraw its suit against Honduras, a commitment it has not yet fulfilled.

On the contrary, the Sandinist Government, violating the principle of good faith, sought to use its law suit as an element of pressure on Esquipulas II.

In view of this Sandinist stubbornness, and with the purpose of freeing implementation of Esquipulas II from the interference of the judicial procedure, Honduras requested the International Court of Justice to hold the oral phase on the question of jurisdiction, which took place in June this year.

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The Court's lack of jurisdiction in this case was firmly demonstrated before the Court by Honduras.

The Government of Nicaragua has used the judicial proceedings in the International Court of Justice as a means of diversion, apparently with the purpose of justifying its lack of compliance with its own commitments in regard to national reconciliation, democratization and repatriation of the million Nicaraguan refugees - one third of the Nicaraguan population - which are now scattered around the world.

The negotiations between the Government of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan resistance undertaken in Sapoá, Nicaragua, are unmistakable proof that the case brought against Honduras belongs to what in the practice of the Court is known as "ongoing or fluid situations" and is therefore not appropriate for judicial decision.

Evidence produced in connection with these cases is intrinsically inappropriate and unsuitable for consideration by the Court.

During the negotiations held by the Sandinist Government and the Nicaraguan resistance in the town of Sapoá, Nicaragua, both parties reached agreements in principle on security matters. Those agreements assumed the character of an international treaty, since the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States and representatives of the Catholic Church took part in the negotiations as qualified witnesses. The signing of the final document of Sapoá on 23 March this year was attended by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega himself.*

It is worthy of special mention that in that Sapoá agreement the parties to the conflict solemnly agreed to suspend military operations of an offensive

* Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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character throughout the national territory - I repeat: to suspend military operations of an offensive character throughout the national territory.

It is very difficult to reconcile this carefully chosen language with the accusations levelled by Nicaragua against Honduras to the effect that Honduras is hosting and supporting armed groups that supposedly carry out offensive actions from the frontier zone against the Government of Nicaragua.

The reality is that the Nicaraguan resistance has never been recognized by my Government and its limited and sporadic presence in the Honduran frontier zones has been a de facto situation similar to what happened in the past with the Sandinistas, who also used our territory as a sanctuary in their fight against the Somoza régime.

I consider it essential to emphasize that in the same Sapoa agreement, the Sandinista Government and the Nicaraguan resistance defined territorial enclaves within Nicaragua that add up to 20,000 square kilometres, almost the size of the Republic of El Salvador, where the resistance should concentrate without laying down their weapons until an agreement on a definitive cease-fire had been reached. It was also stipulated that the Nicaraguan resistance could receive foreign humanitarian assistance. It is a well-known fact that the Sandinist Government has deliberately delayed the negotiations on these points.

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In the light of these facts, the continuation of Nicaragua's suit against Honduras is totally absurd. It is the Sandinist Government, not the Government of Honduras, that recognizes the rebel army in its status as a belligerent organization with a territorial base, with the capacity to negotiate on an equal footing with the Government of its country. It is the Sandinist Government that negotiates and defines territorial enclaves, acknowledging the armed presence of irregular forces inside its own territory. It is the Sandinist Government that has agreed, as a matter of principle, to the delivery of foreign humanitarian aid to its armed opposition within the territorial enclaves inside Nicaragua.

But the most absurd aspect of this hullabaloo is that the Sandinist Government, which calls on the Government of Honduras to prevent the use of its territory by the Nicaraguan resistance, defined at Sapoá three territorial enclaves, with an area of 8,000 square kilometres and a length of about 230 kilometres adjacent to Honduran territory.

The Sapoá Agreement is the most eloquent testimony to the international conduct of the Sandinist Government, which, while calling for an international commission of inspection to verify the non-use by armed groups of territories adjacent to its two land frontiers, promotes conditions in which the Nicaraguan resistance can make use of Honduran frontier zones. By denying foreign humanitarian assistance, it inevitably compels the rebel army to infiltrate Honduran territory out of the sheer will to survive.

How can Nicaragua dare thus to accuse Honduras, when its own nationals are crossing into Honduran territory to escape extermination? Was it not the Sandinist Government itself that agreed at Sapoá to have three enclaves right up against the Honduran border where the Nicaraguan resistance was to concentrate? How is it possible to reconcile, from the point of view of logic and political ethics, the

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contradictory and irresponsible use of incompatible international procedures? Is it not clear that this is a political manoeuvre to serve the destructive domestic and international purposes of the Sandinist Government?

The democratic and constitutional Government of President José Azcona has fulfilled all the obligations of Esquipulas II and has fundamentally met the obligation to maintain domestic peace. It has even established a national commission for reconciliation, though since 1957 Honduras has fulfilled the constitutional mandate to form governments of national conciliation. Lastly, it has approved, ratified and deposited the constituent instrument of the Central American parliament, also provided for in Esquipulas II.

Given the disruptive elements that characterize and have caused the crisis in Central America - in particular the desire for political and military hegemony of a super-Power alien to the American continent, and the resistance provoked by such ambitions - it is essential that this problem have an international and global solution.

In this forum my Government endorses the proposal we submitted on 12 November last year in the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, and in that respect urges the Secretary-General of the United Nations to work towards the establishment of an international peace force consisting of units from Canada, Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany, to be stationed along the frontiers between Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua to guarantee that Honduran frontier territory is not used by the armed insurgents in those countries.

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Honduras has frontiers with the two Central American countries in which several wars are now going on. Those internal conflicts are being fed by the two hegemonistic super-Powers.

How can the Government of Honduras be compelled to disband the armed insurgent movements of Nicaragua and El Salvador when that would mean bringing Honduras into confrontation with the policies of those super-Powers? On what grounds is an attempt being made to impose on Honduras an obligation to resolve the security problems of neighbouring States?

It is a universally recognized truth that the Central American crisis is a problem of a complex international character. Consequently, it is for the international community to bear its responsibilities for the maintenance of regional peace and security without excluding an international peace-keeping force. That force, through inspection and enforcement actions where necessary, would guarantee the non-use of Honduran frontier territory by Salvadoran and Nicaraguan rebels.

However, it should be recalled that the Esquipulas II procedure was designed for the purpose of resolving not just the problem of Nicaraguan security, but also that of putting an end to the subversion, financed by foreign sources, of which El Salvador is a victim.

It is equally important to prevent the trafficking of weapons to the Salvadoran insurgents, just as it is important to prevent the use of Honduran frontier territory as a sanctuary by Nicaraguan and Salvadoran rebels.

For that reason the international peace-keeping force should locate these combatants far from Honduran borders, in Nicaraguan and Salvadoran territories. Their relocation in third countries should be carried out from sites in Costa Rica

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and Guatemala, whose Governments have declared themselves neutral, a declaration apparently not challenged by the Governments of Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In parallel, the Secretary-General, through appropriate international machinery, would make the necessary arrangements to prevent new flows of refugees into Honduras and would promptly repatriate those already in its territory or relocate them in third States.

The people and Government of Honduras cannot go on bearing the burden which has weighed down on them for nine years, a burden caused by the presence of tens of thousands of Central American refugees. We have thoroughly met our humanitarian quota, and it is unreasonable to expect us to make even more sacrifices detrimental to our economic and social development and our ecological equilibrium.

In order that this plan may be carried out successfully, it is essential that the process of Central American normalization be liberated from any interference that might have a harmful effect on it - for example, incompatible international procedures.

In implementing this initiative, it would be appropriate for the Secretary-General to call on whatever parties were necessary to overcome interference preventing the finding of a solution to the Central American crisis. For example, thought should be given to the holding of negotiations between the two super-Powers, on the one hand, and the five Central American countries, on the other - and also the United States of America and Nicaragua, when the parties deem it appropriate, as we suggested last November in the General Assembly of the Organization of American States.

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Such a global approach would guarantee parallel co-operation between all the parties concerned and would make it possible to take up the subject of security, focusing on the restoration of the balance of forces, which has not so far been dealt with effectively.

The problem of security is of particular importance, in view of the irrational arms race upon which the Sandinist Government has embarked, having set itself the goal of recruiting hundreds of thousands of military personnel and having recently emphasized that the size of the Sandinist army "is not subject to any type of negotiation". This incomprehensible attitude is in sharp contrast to the agreement recently reached by the super-Powers to dismantle intermediate nuclear forces.

The establishment of an international peace-keeping force as proposed by Honduras, and the adoption of the complementary measures which I have submitted to the Secretary-General for his consideration, would reinvigorate the peace-making impetus of Esquipulas II, which now seems to be in jeopardy. The establishment of stable, lasting peace in Central America depends on whether the Sandinist Government meets its obligation to allow the Nicaraguan people to choose its own destiny, without imposing its will in such a way as to prolong the people's suffering yet further, so that democracy, justice, freedom and peace may be achieved.

In the same spirit, my country reiterates its unswerving respect for the norms of international law, particularly those relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes through the procedures set out in the United Nations Charter and the charter of the Organization of American States.

In conclusion, the Government and people of Honduras are delighted by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, on which

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we congratulate the Secretary-General. It is a well-deserved recognition of a job well done throughout many years of selfless dedication and sacrifice.

Mr. TILLET (Belize): I bring greetings from the people and Government of Belize. I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina on his election to the high post of President of the General Assembly. I am confident that he brings with him the expertise and energy for which he is well known and I wish him a most successful presidency, of which he and his great State, Argentina, may be proud.

It would, however, be remiss of me to fail to recognize the great contribution to the process of the presidency made by my colleague and friend, Dame Nita Barrow of Barbados, and to wish her, too, success in her continuing illustrious career.

It is my sad duty to inform the Assembly that the Foreign Minister of Belize, Mr. Dean Barrow, is unable to take his place at this rostrum owing to serious illness in his family. Only something of such critical importance could keep him away. He sends his greetings to all his colleagues, with the following message:

"The forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly has opened in an atmosphere of almost unbridled optimism. Since last we met favourable developments in international relations have occurred with a speed that has confounded the naysayers. We have been witness to the de-escalation of several of the consuming conflicts that earlier blighted the global agenda. And we have even seen the possible beginning of the end of the madness that is nuclear stockpiling.

"We may be forgiven, then, if our speeches at times depart from the usual sententious rhetoric to strike an occasional high note of celebration. For we are enjoying a victory of sorts, and that victory is nothing less than the

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triumph of multilateralism, the revalidation of the United Nations system, and the vindication in the contemporary era of the historical vision of our founding fathers.

"I think it is particularly fitting that the assignment of superintending this exciting excursion into new avenues of international collaboration, should fall on the capable shoulders of one of Latin America's giants - a son of Argentina. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this high office, confident that your authority and capacity are nonpareil. My delegation wishes you well as you embark on a difficult but rewarding task. The burden of your duties will surely be eased appreciably by the fact that another eminent son of Latin America, in the person of our esteemed Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, will be at your side.

"The Secretary-General has now seen much of what he has striven for become reality. I congratulate him on his patience, his persistence and his success.

"Often the sacrifices and hard work of Under-Secretaries-General go unremarked in the bureaucratic profusion that is the United Nations. My delegation seeks the Assembly's indulgence to record our appreciation of the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and his staff. They efficiently serviced the last General Assembly and its resumed sessions, as well as the third special session on disarmament.

"That there has been a significant reduction in regional and international tensions over the past year is undoubted. Greater communication has been established between the super-Powers, the global community is resting a little easier, and the dream of universal peace has taken new wing. Much of the credit for this breakthrough can be claimed by the Organization. Burdened by

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notions of their national interests and misguided by the concept of bipolarity, the United States and the Soviet Union would not have reached their current degree of rapprochement without the atmosphere created by the United Nations. It is as much to the appeals and pressure of peace-loving Member States as to their own enlightenment that the super-Powers owe the present, unprecedented level of détente.

"My Government congratulates the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the positive first step they have taken to reduce the balance of terror. By agreeing to the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - they have signalled some small acknowledgement of the cry of the world community, which rejects being held hostage to the possibility of nuclear annihilation.

"At the same time, the point has been fairly made that, if the super-Powers had the capacity to destroy the world 50 times over, the achievement of a Treaty that merely cuts that ability in half, so that they are now able to destroy the world only 25 times over, is more symbolic than real.

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"We therefore encourage the super-Powers to continue their dialogue, recognizing their responsibility not to let an illusion of peace replace the reality of peace. Our world will be a better place if the strongest among us find ways to co-operate with each other and accept that their best security lies not in the quantity of their arms but in the quality of their trust. Both their peoples and our peoples would benefit from the reduction of the stupendous military budgets, with some of the savings being designated for the poorest and most infirm among us.

"Most countries, and particularly those in our region, Latin America and the Caribbean, have come to realize that the problems of peace and development are indissolubly linked, since without peace there can be no development and without development peace will always be precarious.

"My Government congratulates our neighbouring Central American republics on the path to peace and development they have undertaken with the signing of the Esquipulas II agreement. We note, though, that the road has not been a straight one. There seems to have been a sapping of the political will that led to the regional agreement. Stasis has set in and there may even have been some slippage. We therefore urge Central America to recover the energy that will allow it to find a lasting and indigenous solution to a complex problem. At the same time we call on external interests to refrain from further jeopardizing the prospects of peace by attempting to transform essentially local difficulties into dimensions of East-West rivalry. We urge all Member States of the United Nations to abide by the Charter principles, most particularly the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States. A scrupulous regard for these norms of international behaviour will

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ensure the continuation of the regional process leading to peace, social betterment, economic development and security.

"For its part the Government of Belize supports the right of all States, including the Republics of Panama and Nicaragua, to choose their own leaders and to fashion their own political, social and economic systems free from threats or pressures. This is one small way in which we think we can contribute to the process of regional respect and reconciliation.

"Another contribution to peace in Central America is Belize's often-stated willingness to remove itself from the agenda of conflict in the region. In this effort we reiterate our appreciation to Member States for their continued support for Belize's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Their interest and active participation in promoting the rights of the Belizean people continue to be a source of strength to us.

"It is a measure of the maturity of that country that the civilian administration of the Republic of Guatemala has agreed to join with us in a search for a solution to the difficulties that have prevented our two States from the full enjoyment of normal relations as independent neighbours.

"My Government is pleased to report that some progress has been made during the past few months. A permanent Joint Commission comprising representatives of Belize and the Republic of Guatemala, with the additional participation of representatives of the United Kingdom, has been established. This Commission is charged with the preparation of a comprehensive draft of a treaty designed to resolve definitively the situation between Belize and Guatemala.

"All sides have embarked on this exercise in good faith, in an effort to arrive at a just and honourable solution acceptable to all the interested

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parties. Since people-participation is a fundamental pillar of Belize's democracy, whatever treaty is produced must be endorsed by the Belizean people in a general referendum before it can be considered to have been accepted.

"Our country maintains warm and friendly relations with all our neighbours in Central America, and our people would welcome a formula that would enable Belize and Guatemala not only to coexist in geographic contiguity but also to co-operate in human harmony.

"We continue to confront the challenges inherent in our reality as a Caribbean State on the Central American isthmus and we are encouraged by the recognition by the United Nations system that Belize is possessed of a dual heritage that entitles it to maintain both its Caribbean and its Central American identity.

"It was therefore with a sense of special status that Belize took part in the dialogue of Latin America and Caribbean Foreign Ministers initiated by the Latin American Economic System and held in Caracas in September. We fully endorse the conclusions from the dialogue and propose to participate actively in further efforts to strengthen Latin American and Caribbean unity.

"Our region, in common with most of the developing world, continues to face a serious economic crisis that takes its toll of the quality of life of our peoples, creating conditions ripe for the political instability and social tensions that are anathema to the consolidation of democracy.

"The persisting external imbalances that characterize the international economy at present give rise to the inevitability of chronic diminishing returns for primary producing and debtor countries, however valiant their efforts at greater production and timely debt servicing.

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"We note that although real growth in the seven major industrial countries averaged 3.1 per cent in the year just past as against 2.8 per cent in 1986, the pattern of performance in developing countries was different. The rate of output growth in developing countries as a group was in fact one percentage point below the 1986 level.

"For many developing countries the debt problem remained a critical issue. The need to remain current on debt-service payments and thus retain some level of creditworthiness was reflected in restrictive fiscal and monetary policies that served to limit growth rates. Faced with the need to improve external accounts, indebted countries have had to increase savings relative to investment or reduce investment relative to savings, in both cases impacting adversely on the capacity creation for future growth. Approaches to a solution to the debt problem have continued to focus on the case-by-case option, despite widespread recognition of the multilateral and interdependent nature of the situation. Efforts to relieve the debt burden arising from loans extended by commercial banks have been complicated by the increasingly hard line taken by bank regulators in relation to provision for inadequately performing loans.

"To create the conditions for the era of development that ought to accompany the onset of peace, hard decisions will be required to eliminate the main sources of imbalance between the larger industrialized countries on the one hand and between debtor developing countries and creditor developed countries on the other. Unless the heavily indebted developing countries can be assisted to grow out of their present situation, the likelihood of voluntary or involuntary suspension of debt servicing and consequential social and political instability will only increase, making nonsense of the notion of peace in our time.

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"While not itself immune to the vicissitudes of the international economic situation, Belize has recorded modest growth in real terms over the past year. We have managed to restructure our debt burden to service it more effectively. Flows of private and public investment have increased to facilitate infrastructural development and growth in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Under certain preferential arrangements there has been a favourable trading environment for our commodity exports, and an emphasis on diversification into other areas of activity has compensated somewhat for the fall in revenue resulting from the depressed prices on the international sugar market.

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"In keeping with my Government's policy of providing the economic and social infrastructure to facilitate private-sector economic development and provide jobs for our people, we have embarked on a number of large development projects. These include rehabilitation and extension of the main runway and construction of a new terminal building at the international airport; expansion of power generation and distribution capacity in the electricity company, together with feasibility assessments for mini-hydro installations around the country; acquisition of international telephone services from a foreign company; construction of a new public hospital for the country; rehabilitation and expansion of the main highway network; provision of credits for private-sector projects; and a number of smaller projects and initiatives to improve the quality of life in general.

"Belize continues to rely on the performance of its people in the management and direction of the economy; but we also work for improvement with the assistance and support of international development and financial organizations as well as the assistance of a number of friendly countries. These include, but are not limited to, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Mexico.

"We hope to expand the roster of our partners in development by demonstrating our capacity and our maturity in ordering our development priorities. At the same time, we consider it necessary to reject the tendency of some donor countries and international agencies to attempt to dictate the development process of recipient States. That practice has led to misplaced priorities in the social and economic programmes of several developing countries, priorities inconsistent with the basic human needs of our peoples.

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My delegation is of the view that donors need to adopt a degree of sensitivity to this situation. That would allow recipient countries to set their own agenda based on the reality of their individual experiences.

"To allay the concerns of those who fear the spectre of misappropriation of aid money, mechanisms for proper co-ordination and accountability surely can be devised. A comprehensive needs assessment of the targeted sectors within the recipient countries ought to be made in consultation with the beneficiary country. To involve local authorities in the planning stage ensures that account is taken of the peculiarities of indigenous bureaucratic and co-ordinating machinery, and so guarantees implementation of projects for the benefit of the greatest number.

"It is in that context that Belize welcomes the initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme's plan for economic co-operation for Central America. Belize was originally excluded on the ground that it was not part of Historic Central America. But as the Haitian proverb puts it, 'The pencil of God has no eraser'. And we are happy about Belize's belated inclusion in the plan, thereby reconciling the notion of Historic Central America with the simple fact of geography.

"Belize has considered and submitted some project profiles aimed at assisting us to redress the economic and social problems occurring as a consequence of the influx of refugees from situations of conflict in the region. These projects respond to real needs and are intended to assist in the machinery of relocation as well as to benefit the individual refugees and the communities in which they have been integrated.

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"We stand ready to work with the agencies concerned to make sure that the projects are carried out to the optimum benefit of the target group. At the same time, we join in the appeal to potential donors that have not yet done so to commit the necessary reserves to make this humanitarian initiative an early reality.

"My Government joins in the commendation already expressed to the Soviet Union on its decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. We urge the Soviet Union to let nothing deter it from this decision, nor to delay its fulfilment.

"The people of Afghanistan have suffered long enough and their development has been significantly retarded by the presence of foreign troops on their soil. Our hope is that the absence of those troops will create the climate for the return to a genuinely independent and non-aligned Afghanistan under a leadership responsive to the will of the people of that troubled land. We welcome the appointment of a co-ordinator for United Nations humanitarian and economic assistance relating to Afghanistan, and support the people of that country as they embark on the process of reconstruction. I should also like to express my appreciation, and that of my Government, to the Government and people of Pakistan for the constructive role they have assumed during this crisis. Pakistan has served as host to more than 2 million refugees from Afghanistan, at great cost to its own people and resources. It is our hope that they too can now begin the rebuilding process in their own country.

"In the present global atmosphere of reconciliation and good will, there still remain areas where peace has been elusive. One such area is Kampuchea. The occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese troops is a violation of the United

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Nations Charter and the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement. As well, it adds to the economic and personnel burden of Viet Nam itself. This era of conciliation offers Viet Nam a unique opportunity to reflect on its own struggle for independence, which won the support and admiration of the majority of the world's people. To re-establish that spirit of solidarity among the community of nations, Viet Nam is encouraged to subscribe to a political settlement based on the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and internationally supervised free elections.

"We are encouraged by the decision of the protagonists in the Gulf war to agree on a cease-fire under the auspices of the Security Council. The time has passed for determining which side has won or which should win this senseless confrontation. The havoc and destruction visited on both sides, as well as on innocent non-combatants, have been monumental. Security Council resolution 598 (1987) affords the most viable framework for achieving a just and lasting settlement. We are confident of the ability of the Secretary-General to act as a reliable interlocutor, and we appeal to those who have carved for themselves a special role in this affair to do all that is possible to ensure success in the negotiations and a return to normalcy and development in both Iran and Iraq.

"The situation in the Middle East continues to be volatile. My Government was encouraged earlier this year when it appeared that an agreement might be reached on an international peace conference on the Middle East. We would support the early convening of such a conference. Our policy remains committed to the right of Israel to exist within secure borders - but not at the expense of a Palestinian homeland. For these difficult issues to be settled, and for peace to return to the Middle East, dialogue between Israel and the Arab States is essential.

(Mr. Tillet, Belize)

"While athletes from the four corners of the globe convened in Seoul to compete in friendly rivalry for the gold, silver and bronze in the games of the XXIVth Olympiad, South Korea's leadership made a great leap forward toward fulfilling the dream of a unified Korea. We welcome and are encouraged by the declaration of President Roh Tae Woo that his Government is willing to end the situation of confrontation between the two Koreas and to establish relations with North Korea based on a spirit of co-operation. This fundamental change of attitude will go a long way towards defusing tensions north and south of the thirty-eighth parallel and towards re-establishing hope for reunification of the two Koreas.

"We are heartened by the progress made in the negotiations regarding the 13-year-long conflict in Angola. It is our hope that as the South African and Cuban troops make their way home, the issue of linkage will finally be laid to rest and the way opened for Namibia to proceed at last to its independence.

"The intransigence of minority white South Africa in refusing to share power with majority black South Africa makes a bloodbath in that country inevitable. We regret that certain members of the international community are unwilling or unable to join in mandatory sanctions against that terrorist State. And in the name of our suffering brothers and sisters we appeal for an end to this mollycoddling of the Pretoria régime.

(Mr. Tillett, Belize)

"A few months ago we celebrated Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. This occasion also marked his 26th year in Mr. Botha's gaol. To the world, Mandela is a statesman as well as a freedom fighter. But in South Africa he has remained imprisoned like a common criminal. The continued incarceration of Nelson Mandela, as well as the proscription of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), is testimony to the barbarous lack of foresight on the part of the apartheid régime. It might not be too late to demonstrate some semblance of good sense by a decision now to release, unconditionally, Nelson Mandela and the other political prisoners. Such a gesture would facilitate dialogue between the Botha régime and the leaders of the black community, and would perhaps spare the continent of Africa the South African version of Armageddon that will otherwise surely follow.

"Members will recall that at previous sessions of the General Assembly my delegation dealt with the matter of the production, trafficking and consumption of dangerous drugs. The significant aggravation of the drug problem and its harmful effects on our societies urge immediate and concerted efforts to deal with it. For our part, Belize has adopted a multi-disciplinary course of action to prevent and reduce the illicit demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances: to control their use and supply, to suppress illicit trafficking and to provide treatment and rehabilitation for drug abusers and their victims. This is the approach that was agreed upon by the United Nations Conference held in Vienna last year.

"It has long been recognized that the drug problem spans borders, economic circumstances and ideologies, threatening to create its own orthodoxy and its own peculiar moral and social imperatives. The war against drugs requires the co-operation of all nations, and we cannot lose sight of the fact that the basic motivation for drug production and trafficking stems from the

(Mr. Tillett, Belize)

readily available market and the phenomenal rewards offered by that market. Recognition of this by the largest consumer country has therefore been a welcome development.

"Small Governments must continuously defend their political and economic independence and their territorial integrity. Of late, assaults on our sovereignty have included attempts to introduce industrial waste into our region. As industrial and toxic waste accumulates in the developed countries, our small States are offered the argument that somehow we can benefit from the dumping of industrial waste on our land and in our sea. This is a remarkable piece of insolence from those who are determined to protect their own environmental balance while offering blandishments to destroy ours. My Government emphatically rejects those overtures, and we call on the industries concerned to make their own arrangements in their own countries to dispose of the effluent of their prosperity.

"No amount of economic benefit can compensate for the environmental devastation and human harm that will follow indiscriminate dumping of industrial waste. The quality of life we enjoy cannot be bartered for the quantity of promises we are offered.

"We in Belize have more than once undergone the trials associated with killer hurricanes. We are therefore especially able to empathize with our sister country of Jamaica, with the Cayman Islands and with the State of Yucatan in Mexico. We join in the appeal for international assistance to help these areas recover from their savaging by hurricane Gilbert.

"If I began this presentation in an upbeat manner, it is just as well to end on a note of caution. For while there have been real successes in the past year, the international agenda nevertheless remains crowded with conflicts.

(Mr. Tillett, Belize)

"It would be a mistake, then, merely to give ourselves over to self-congratulation. What is needed rather is to press on with a new determination inspired by our recent progress. Such a determination should above all seek to preserve the gains made by the process of multilateralism and to extend them from the political arena to the sphere of economic relations.

"In urging on all Member States this renewed commitment to multilateralism, I am reminded of the tale of Oedipus. Members will recall how in ignorance he killed his father and married his mother, Queen Jocasta, and so became ruler of Thebes. In the meantime, the fates visited a plague on his subjects and tortured them with great pestilences. When Oedipus realized that he himself was the cause of the suffering, he put out his own eyes and wandered blind away from Thebes.

"The Czech emigré writer Milan Kundera uses this story to make the point that we cannot escape the consequences of our actions, even though those actions might have been unwitting.

"Now, one of the recurring themes of international relations is that there is nothing more injurious to an effective world order than that the law of the jungle should prevail, that the strong should take advantage of the weak, that unilateral egocentricity should defeat collective responsibility.

"If we were to reject the case for multilateralism, therefore, we would be deliberately ignoring the lessons of history and could not even lay claim to the dubious excuse that we proceeded in ignorance. And who would gainsay that the consequences of our action could entail the demise of civilization, the extinction of our humanity?

(Mr. Tillet, Belize)

"It is a chilling prospect, but one that we may avoid by our continuing allegiance to the concept of multilateralism that is, after all, the very *raison d'être* of our United Nations system."

Mr. AZIZ (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo on his election as President of this session of the General Assembly. Our pleasure is all the greater in view of the good relations between our two countries. We are fully confident that he will meet with success in conducting the proceedings of the General Assembly at this session, which faces many vital issues of concern to the international community.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation of the efforts of his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, who so efficiently conducted the proceedings of the previous session with all of its important achievements.

Since 1980, our delegation has kept the General Assembly informed of developments with regard to the expansionist war of aggression that the Iranian régime imposed on Iraq. Every time we spoke from this rostrum, we stressed our desire for peace, our readiness for peace and our resolute determination to achieve peace as strongly as we stressed our determination to continue the legitimate defence of our country's sovereignty, security, dignity and right to live a free and dignified life.

Finally, after eight years of imposed war, with all that that has entailed in terms of costly sacrifice in human life and in ruin and destruction, we find ourselves today at the beginning of the road to peace.

The international community is no doubt interested in the negotiations that started on 25 August 1988 with a view to achieving peace; it is closely following their progress and their prospects. To do so with any degree of accuracy, however, it is necessary to review the background of recent events.

(Mr. Aziz, Iraq)

Security Council resolution 598 (1987) was adopted on 20 July 1987. Iraq officially welcomed the resolution just two days after its adoption. We stressed our willingness to implement it in good faith, based upon our firm position of principle and desire for peace.

(Mr. Aziz, Iraq)

The Iranian régime, on the other hand, did not accept the resolution. It followed a policy of manoeuvring, dilatory tactics and procrastination. It devised such means of expressing its position on the resolution as had been unprecedented in the history of dealing with Security Council resolutions. The intention was to cover up its actual rejection of the resolution, to justify its insistence on continuing the war against Iraq and on maintaining its policies of aggression against the countries of the region. In spite of the adoption of a resolution which expressed the will of the international community to establish peace, the Iranian régime continued to launch one military attack after another against Iraq. It occupied more Iraqi territory as well as an Iraqi city. Official statements by Iranian leaders confirmed the designs to enshrine the occupation and the insistence on the continuation of war and aggression. The leaders of the Iranian régime continued to use the term "liberation" to describe the occupation operations they had conducted, thus confirming their ambitious designs on Iraq. The Iranian régime continued its acts of aggression against the countries of the region by carrying out military attacks on Kuwait, by threatening Saudi Arabia and other countries of the region, and by continuing to threaten freedom of navigation and attack neutral shipping.

Then came the turning-point. Our armed forces succeeded in liberating the Fao Peninsula from Iranian occupation in April of this year. This was followed shortly afterwards by the liberation of East Basrah, Shalamja, the Majnoon Islands, and the Zubeidat area. These valiant defensive military operations broke the back of Iranian aggression, and the Iranian régime's scheme against Iraq and the Arab Gulf States was frustrated. The illusions harboured by the Iranian régime to impose hegemony over the region vanished, and its leaders reaped with their own hands the bitter harvest of their policies of aggression which were so opposed to the logic

(Mr. Aziz, Iraq)

of history, to the values of the times and to the principles and rules governing international relations. It was in these circumstances of crushing military defeat that the leaders of Iran announced their acceptance of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) on 18 July 1988.

In spite of this fact, we dealt with the situation on the basis of our position of principle inspired by a desire for peace, and our actions were prompted by realistic considerations as well as by considerations of principle. With a view to taking the best course of action to achieve peace, I proposed in my letter of 20 July 1988 to the Secretary-General that direct official talks should be held between authorized representatives of the two sides under the auspices of the Secretary-General in order to discuss and implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

This proposal was inspired by good faith and the pragmatic desire to ascertain directly the Iranian understanding of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) since the Iranian régime put forward contradictory interpretations of the resolution which were alien to the letter and spirit of it as well as to the concepts of international law and the rules governing relations between States in modern times.

It was Iraq's legitimate right to ascertain directly the true position of Iran. Any impartial observer who has followed the positions taken by the Iranian régime over the 10 years of its existence will have realized that the aims and slogans of the rulers of Iran have their basis in expansionism, aggression and ambitious designs, and will confirm that they do not believe in international law and the rules governing relations between States in our time. That is why the Iranian régime has rejected all resolutions and initiatives with regard to peace,

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from the very first resolution adopted by the Security Council on 28 July 1980 and for a whole year after the adoption of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). It has even rejected the principle of the peaceful settlement of the conflict and of the jurisdiction of the United Nations and other international organizations in the matter. It was necessary, therefore, to ascertain the true intentions of the Iranian leaders in accepting Security Council resolution 598 (1987); for in accepting the resolution, Iranian leaders may not have in mind belief in achieving a comprehensive and durable peace based on mutual respect for sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs and observance of the rules of international law in relations with Iraq and with the countries of the region. Serious suspicions with regard to the Iranian position are aroused by statements made by Iranian leaders to explain their decision to accept Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

The speeches and statements of the Iranian leaders have been full of references to compelling circumstances and to a predicament; the nature and causes of which they cannot disclose. They have talked with sorrow and disappointment about being forced to accept Security Council resolution 598 (1987). On the other hand, the Iraqi people and other peoples of the region have expressed their joy at the cease-fire because of their belief in peace as a way of life. All these facts, taken together, led Iraq to call for direct negotiations with a view to discussing face to face the steps towards peace and the concept of peace. This position is not intended as a condition, since direct negotiations do not constitute a unilateral advantage for Iraq at the expense of Iran.

In any case, in response to the desire of the international community for a speedy end to hostilities, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq announced on 6 August 1988 that Iraq was prepared to accept a cease-fire if Iran officially

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announced, with unambiguous clarity, its agreement to enter into direct negotiations immediately after the cease-fire so that we might discuss, reach agreement on, and implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

Following this historic announcement, which expresses the true character of Iraq's position and its sincere wish for peace, intensive contacts were made with the Secretary-General. On 8 August 1988, agreement was reached on the announcing of a date for the cease-fire. Agreement was also reached on the date, the bases and the objectives of the direct negotiations to be held between the two parties under the auspices of the Secretary-General. On that date, the Secretary-General addressed to the permanent representatives of the two countries a letter which I shall quote in full because of its importance for the events which ensued:

"Excellency,

"In pursuance of the official contact I had with Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran, I should like to inform you that both Governments have agreed that direct talks between their Foreign Ministers shall be held under my auspices, immediately after the establishment of the cease-fire, in order to reach a common understanding of the other provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and the procedures and timings for their implementation."

This outline of the sequence of events will make it clear that the two parties reached agreement, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on setting a date for the cease-fire before there was full agreement on all provisions pertaining thereto. The cease-fire did actually take effect on 20 August in the form of the cessation of the shooting, and United Nations observers took up their positions before the detailed provisions and legal obligations relating to the

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cease-fire had been determined through the agreement of the two parties with the United Nations. It was only natural that the question should be taken up in the Geneva negotiations with a view to consolidating the cease-fire through a clear, definite understanding between the two parties under the auspices of the United Nations and then afterwards they would turn to discussing the other provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

Against this factual background, we began the direct negotiations in Geneva. In those negotiations Iraq demanded that the provisions and obligations of the cease-fire measures should be made clear and unambiguous so as to prevent different interpretations of them in the course of their future implementation and to ensure that the cease-fire would be a permanent state and constitute a sure step towards comprehensive and lasting peace.

Iraq also demanded that these provisions and obligations, when implemented on land, in the air and at sea, should ensure equal benefits for the two parties since that would provide a guarantee for the enforcement of the cease-fire.

On this just and sincere basis, Iraq called for the inclusion of a clear provision on the principle of unobstructed freedom of navigation in international waters in the Arab Gulf and in the Straits of Hormuz for all shipping.

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This position of ours is based on the text of the Security Council resolution, which demands that a cease-fire be observed and that all military action on land, at sea and in the air be discontinued as a first step towards a negotiated settlement. We also base our position on the rule of balance of benefits. It is inconceivable that the provisions and obligations relating to the two sides should be detailed on land and in the air in such a manner as to ensure a balance of benefits for both parties, while at sea they should be impaired by a defect which tends to realize an advantage for Iran at the expense of Iraq because of Iran's geographic situation in the Arab Gulf and the Hormuz Straits.

Iraq also proposed that the United Nations be entrusted with clearing the Shatt-al-Arab and ensuring safe navigation therein, without prejudice to the legal status of the river.

The Shatt-al-Arab is Iraq's only outlet to the high seas. On account of the quantity of obstructions to navigation which have accumulated therein over the war years, the clearing operations will take a long time and will require the services of international experts and the availability of international funds. Since negotiations aimed at the achievement of a comprehensive and lasting peace and the solution of all outstanding issues between the two parties may take a not inconsiderable time, it stands to reason that advantage should be taken of that time to render the Shatt-al-Arab navigable.

These are the only two demands that Iraq made in the negotiations which took place in Geneva between 25 August and 13 September 1988.

The Iranian conduct in the Geneva negotiations, however, has been characterized by evasiveness and has not conformed to what is right and just.

With regard to freedom of navigation in international waters in the Arab Gulf and the Hormuz Straits, the Iranian delegation alleged a right to control free navigation there through its claim to a right of search on the basis of

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interpretations which do not conform in any way to the collective security system as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, and which disagree with both the letter and the spirit of resolution 598 (1987) and its objective of a comprehensive and lasting peace. It is clear that the interpretation maintained by the Iranian side is conceived in terms of a truce rather than in terms of the cease-fire being only a first step towards settlement, as provided by paragraph 1 of the resolution. This has increased our suspicions with regard to the intentions of the Iranian régime and its true aims in accepting resolution 598 (1987).

This suspicious position on the part of the Iranian delegation was followed by its insistence on provisions which impose a de facto arms embargo on Iraq at sea. Then Iran started to spread lies to the effect that Iraq was asking for free navigation in Iranian territorial waters, whereas the Iraqi demand was quite clear in calling for free navigation in international waters and through the Hormuz Straits. Furthermore, the Iranian delegation rejected the proposal that the United Nations undertake clearing operations in the Shatt-al-Arab at this stage and began to impose conditions inspired by a desire to blackmail and manoeuvre.

Iraq's demand that provision for free navigation and clearing operations in the Shatt-al-Arab be included in the cease-fire arrangements is nothing new. Iraq has taken this position and confirmed it repeatedly since our acceptance of resolution 598 (1987). We included that demand in our letter of acceptance of the resolution on 22 July 1987, and we confirmed the demand in the letter sent by President Saddam Hussein of Iraq on 6 August 1988, which paved the way for agreement on a cease-fire. We also confirmed it in two letters I addressed to the Secretary-General, one on 20 July 1988, following Iran's acceptance of the resolution, and the other on 11 August 1988, after the date for the cease-fire had been set, prior to the Geneva negotiations.

(Mr. Aziz, Iraq)

Iran's allegation that Iraq has imposed pre-conditions in the Geneva negotiations is a pure lie and deception. What we have demanded is documented in official letters, which have been circulated as part of the records of the Security Council. What we have demanded is just, legitimate and in conformity with the letter and the spirit of resolution 598 (1987) and its objective, namely, a comprehensive, lasting and just peace.

The international community and this Organization are called upon to make a true and fair evaluation of the respective positions taken in respect of the Geneva negotiations. Who is presenting legitimate and logical demands and propositions which are in conformity with the objective of peace, and who is engaging in evasiveness and in attempts to manipulate texts, and wants the situation to remain undecided?

Iraq's wish to reach a peaceful, comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the conflict with Iran is nothing new. This was our position when the war was imposed on us on 4 September 1980 and during the events which preceded and followed that date. Iraq continued to hold firmly to this position throughout the eight years of the conflict. Iraq dealt with the international Organization seriously and sincerely and accepted its resolutions in all circumstances, regardless of the developments of the military situation, beginning with resolution 479 (1980), of 28 July 1980, through the latest resolution of the Security Council, namely, resolution 598 (1987) which Iraq accepted immediately after it was adopted.

We confirm our desire and determination to implement resolution 598 (1987) in good faith, to move forward on the road to a comprehensive and lasting peace and to abide by the principles which govern peaceful and good-neighbourly relations between the countries of the world, particularly contiguous countries, in our time.

(Mr. Aziz, Iraq)

While intent on the peace process and the achievement of the objectives sought by the international community in adopting resolution 598 (1987), we must take into account a number of substantive questions if the peace is to be durable, comprehensive and just and if the region as a whole is to return to a state of peace and stability and continue to play its positive role in the international community.

The primary point, which we must always keep in mind, is that the Iranian régime did not accept resolution 598 (1987) willingly and voluntarily as a result of a deep, firm understanding of the necessity for a state of peace with Iraq and the countries of the region. It accepted the resolution only because of a crushing military defeat and in the context of a struggle for power inside Iran. While it is necessary to emphasize the opportunity provided by the cease-fire, all steps towards the implementation of resolution 598 (1987) should be well studied and well balanced so as to form the basis for the attainment of the objective of comprehensive and lasting peace. Any action that might undermine any of these elements would only encourage those who have made war their paramount cause and taken it upon themselves as their sole task to avoid abiding by the requirements of peace.

On the basis of this conception of the true meaning of peace, resolution 598 (1987) should not be regarded as merely a string of timings and procedures. Timings and procedures are necessary for the implementation of the resolution: there is no disagreement on that point. But what is more important is to reach common agreement on the meaning of the resolution, which may facilitate the achievement of lasting peace between the two sides, rather than to make of the resolution and the way it is to be implemented a political, as opposed to a military, battleground. In the light of these facts, the best way to achieve

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understanding is to allow the two sides the opportunity to engage in direct negotiations, however prolonged such negotiations might be.

The role of the Security Council and the Secretariat is necessary and vital, and should be a part of the peace process from beginning to end. That role, however, must never be played at the expense of understanding between the two parties, because it is the two parties which will assume the responsibility of regulating their relations now and in the future.

Any pressures, whether created by political means or through the information media, that might disturb the atmosphere in which the negotiations are being conducted would not serve the cause of peace and could only be an expression of either misguided efforts or premeditated designs.

(Mr. Aziz, Iraq)

We must refer here to the campaign launched against Iraq and timed to coincide with the beginning of the negotiations at Geneva. Zionist circles, which have allied themselves with the Iranian régime throughout the war years and have used all means to ensure continuation of the war, which is considered a gain for Israel - those are the circles that are at the root of the false allegations spread against Iraq. We hope that those peace-loving States that have nothing to do with the motives and aims of those designs will not allow themselves to be lured into the snares of those who have planned that malicious campaign. The aim of such campaigns is to encourage the Iranian régime to refrain from fully abiding by the requirements of peace and peaceful coexistence with Iraq and the countries of the region, as well as to encourage it to reject what is right and rational.

Those who have planned the campaigns have imagined that they could impose on Iraq an atmosphere of pressure and isolation that would force it to abandon its firm stand on its just and legitimate demands and to accept feeble solutions under pressure. They are only deluding themselves. Iraq is an independent State and enjoys complete independence in all fields, political, economic, social or military. Iraq cannot accept pressure from any quarter, especially now that its people have defended its cultural heritage, its humanitarian aspirations and its gains in a war that was imposed upon it, a war that has lasted for eight years, doing so through reliance on its own resources and its belief in the justice of its cause - peace.

Among the most important foundations for the building of a just and comprehensive peace are the basing of relations between the countries of the region on equality and mutual respect and abandonment of ambitious designs and illegitimate privileges acquired through the use or threat of force, as well as abandonment of positions, tendencies and policies predicated on expansionism, on

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the imposition of hegemony, on aggression against others and interference in their affairs. Without those foundations there can be no real peace. Peace will remain a transient, nominal state in which matters stay quiet for a while only to explode into conflicts again.

We must state frankly that in the past a number of countries have tried to influence the course of the negotiations, not out of concern for peace, but because of their commercial and strategic interests and aims. They have sent direct and indirect signals to the Iranian régime while taking certain stands with regard to the negotiations with a view to gaining commercial or strategic benefits in Iran. We know the secrets of that game and we know who is playing it. We warn them that their game will not serve the cause of peace. We hope that States members of the Security Council and other States interested in peace and stability in the region will make sure that those playing that game will not be allowed to achieve their selfish aims.

The eyes of the world are turned towards the international community and the international Organization to see what they will do with regard to the Palestinian question. The just cause it involves has long awaited a solution that will secure the legitimate rights of the struggling Palestinian people. The world is today witnessing a horrible escalation of Zionist aggression against that people in which they are deprived of their rights, their land is occupied and brutal repression is exercised against them.

The Palestinian "intifada" has crowned the 40-year struggle of the Palestinian people to attain their inalienable right to self-determination. That uprising constitutes a living, heroic example of the struggle of peoples for freedom and independence. It presents the United Nations with a unique opportunity to take the initiative and prove that it really upholds the principles upon which it was

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founded and is now ready to assume its responsibilities with a view to putting those principles into force. The United Nations is called upon, at this decisive stage in the history of the Palestinian question, to support the Palestine Liberation Organization, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the decisions of the Arab summit meetings on the Palestinian question, especially those adopted at the Fez and Algiers summit meetings, which were based on international decisions.

We urge - nay, we demand - that the United Nations deal responsibly and seriously with the proposal of the Palestine Liberation Organization, included among the decisions of the Arab summit meeting at Fez, that the United Nations assume the administration of the occupied Palestinian territories for a specified period after the complete withdrawal of Israel therefrom and pending the achievement of self-determination by the Palestinian people in their own homeland. I should like to emphasize here that Iraq, with all its resources, is determined to stand beside the Palestine Liberation Organization and the brother Palestinian people to enable them to achieve their legitimate national aim of establishing their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

The developments in the situation in Lebanon are causing us great concern. That little Arab country has suffered greatly from Israeli occupation and foreign intervention in its internal affairs. Occupation and intervention have so far prevented the achievement of the wish of the majority of the Lebanese people to reach agreement on the desired national consensus. The latest result of that situation is the illegitimate and unacceptable outside interference in the presidential elections that has led to the suspension of the election of the President, thus creating an anomalous situation. The Arab countries, in the first place, and the international community, in the second, are called upon to take

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concrete and urgent steps to enable the Lebanese people to elect a President without outside interference. Such steps are essential to prevent further deterioration in the situation, to move towards national consensus and to restore security and peace to that sister country.

The peoples of the world are contemplating with optimism the atmosphere of détente which has started to prevail in relations between the two great Powers since the summit meetings held between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States of America and the agreements reached on limiting the arms race. Iraq has welcomed those encouraging developments. It has also welcomed the indications of improved prospects for the settlement of a number of regional conflicts that have been going on for years, including the situation in Namibia and Angola, the question of Kampuchea and the situation in Afghanistan. Iraq highly appreciates the role of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in resolving those conflicts.

Iraq, which has been a victim of aggression, sincerely believes in peace. It believes it is a necessity that the principles of peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourly relations and the negotiated settlement of disputes prevail in our affairs. It believes in strengthening the United Nations system and the sovereignty of the principles of the Charter and international law.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. AL-QAYSI (Iraq): I had said that my delegation would reply to the statement made yesterday by the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I shall not take much of the General Assembly's time, owing to the lateness of the hour. However, we felt we should not let this moment pass without setting the record straight.

Members will have noted that in his statement the Foreign Minister of Iran accused Iraq of efforts throughout the course of the Geneva talks to distort the spirit of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and the Secretary-General's implementation plan; to change the limits and scope of relevant rules of international law; to secure international approval for its "expansionist designs"; and to use the cease-fire to weaken its very foundations.

It was very interesting for those of us who have followed the Iran-Iraq war for the past eight years to hear such a statement made by the Foreign Minister of Iran. There have been 10 years of Iranian abuse and vilification of the United Nations; eight years of war imposed by Iran on Iraq despite seven Security Council resolutions; and one year since a mandatory resolution of the Security Council characterizing the situation as a breach of the peace. And despite all that, we now hear references to rules of international law, the Security Council resolution and the implementation plan of the Secretary-General, and we hear a strong advocacy of their application.

All right: Let us be patient; we have to be patient when it comes to peace. But let us see how the Iranian Government abides by all this in the peace process. The Foreign Minister of Iran says that what is in effect needed for the success of the Geneva talks is the immediate implementation of the remaining paragraphs of the resolution, a resolution which is binding under Articles 39 and 40 of the United Nations Charter. In the same vein he said that the text of the resolution and the Secretary-General's implementation plan should constitute the basis of the talks,

(Mr. Al-Qaysi, Iraq)

and that the Council members' understanding of the spirit of the resolution could also contribute to its implementation. Let us agree on this.

But when the Foreign Minister of Iran comes to the General Assembly and claims that Iraq is raising in the talks irrelevant issues, secondary matters and provisions outside the agenda of the talks, we have to ask him on what basis he is making these allegations.

The "irrelevant issues", the "secondary matters", the matters "outside the agenda of the negotiations" are two, according to the Iranian Government: the issue of freedom of navigation, and the issue of the clearance of Shatt al-Arab.

If what the Foreign Minister of Iran claims is true, and if at the same time he has stated categorically that the implementation plan of the Secretary-General is one of the criteria for the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), how can he explain to the General Assembly that in that very implementation plan, under the very title of "Cease-fire", under the very sub-title of "Cease-fire at sea" the two issues raised by Iraq are dealt with. Thus, they are not secondary matters; they are not irrelevant issues; they are not matters that fall outside the agenda of the talks.

Either you base yourself on the implementation plan or you do not. If you do, or claim that you do, you have to take what is in the implementation plan.

Apart from that distortion, let me point out another: The Secretary-General's letter of 8 August was quoted by the Foreign Minister of Iran. He seems to think that direct talks come after the establishment of a cease-fire; now we have an established cease-fire, so we have to go to the other provisions of the resolution. We have to ask him, if this is so why has the Secretary-General presented to the parties detailed proposals on the obligations of a cease-fire, on the legal status of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG),

(Mr. Al-Qaysi, Iraq)

and on the obligations of the parties towards that force? If those provisions were very well settled and agreed upon, why should they have been presented by the Secretary-General?

A third distortion: Despite all the talk by the Iranian Foreign Minister of how they love Security Council resolution 598 (1987), they still cite a paragraph of that resolution in a way the paragraph itself does not state. They still cite paragraph 6 as a paragraph on the setting up of an impartial body to "identify the aggressor". I challenge any representative of the Government of Iran to show us such language in that paragraph. We remind them that the paragraph calls for the setting up of an impartial body to deal, on an inquiry basis, with responsibility for the conflict.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): The Libyan representative today made a series of outrageous and totally unfounded statements including accusations against the United States. He misrepresented the deliberations of this Assembly and the policies of his own Government.

The Government of Libya has seen fit to use deception, subversion and violence as the tools of its foreign policy. Many in this Hall today represent States which have been the recipients of Libyan attention. We all know too well that Libya has been and remains a singular cause of insecurity in many regions.

It is arrant hypocrisy for Libya to wrap itself in the United Nations Charter and to claim to be the victim rather than the perpetrator of terrorism. Libya has a long and deplorable record of violating the Charter of the United Nations by threats and acts of aggression. It has amassed a lethal arsenal of conventional weapons. More ominous is the Libyan production of chemical weapons, particularly given public reports last year that Libya had used chemical weapons against Chad.

(Mr. Okun, United States)

It has attacked or threatened to attack its neighbours. Farther afield, it has been implicated in attacks against innocent travellers at airports, assassinations of expatriate Libyans, supply of arms to terrorist groups on three continents and protection of one of its diplomatic agents who shot an unarmed policewoman on foreign soil.

As the record demonstrates, Libya has distinguished itself in this body in one respect: It has a record of violations of the United Nations Charter second to none.

My delegation is ready to continue this debate at the appropriate moment.

Mr. IN SOPHEAP (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French): I wish to speak to refute the false allegations of the representative of Viet Nam on the problem of Kampuchea. The many manoeuvres by the Hanoi authorities cannot hide the fact that they have not the slightest intention of reaching a political solution of the problem of Kampuchea and withdrawing their forces unconditionally as called for in the nine resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

First, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has not yet given up its Indo-Chinese federation strategy. The various congresses of the Vietnamese communist party, from the first to the sixth, the latest, in December 1986 in Hanoi - have not failed to reaffirm this Indo-Chinese federation strategy. The Hanoi authorities have systematically inculcated this strategy in generations of party members and young communists since 1930, when the Indo-Chinese communist party was founded - that strategy which they must at all costs implement by making themselves the masters first of Laos, then of Kampuchea and then of the whole peninsula between India and China. To date, the Hanoi authorities have de facto annexed Laos, by the 1977 Treaty that abolishes the border between Viet Nam and Laos. If they have not achieved their expansionist goal of an Indo-Chinese federation it is because the patriotic resistance forces of Kampuchea have been fighting them weapons in hand for 10 years, and because the international community firmly opposes their aggression against and occupation of Kampuchea.

Secondly, the Soviet Union has not given up its regional strategy in South-East Asia and Pacific Asia. To achieve this the Soviet Union has financed Viet Nam to help it to invade and overcome the Kampuchean resistance forces. In exchange, it has obtained from Viet Nam use of the Cam Ranh and Danang bases, which are Soviet outposts in South-East Asia and Pacific Asia.

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

Gorbachev's speech at Krasnoyarsk showed clearly that the Soviets are using these bases in Viet Nam to demonstrate their political, diplomatic and military might in order to change the geopolitical situation in South-East Asia and Pacific Asia to suit their own interests.

In a word, neither Viet Nam nor the Soviet Union is ready to abandon its regional and global expansionist strategies. Therefore they are not going to let go of Laos and Kampuchea.

All this is reason enough for Viet Nam to hang on to Kampuchea.

Thirdly, the war continues in Kampuchea, where the battlefields are spreading throughout the whole territory and where there is no front line. The forces are about equal. The struggle between the Kampuchean resistance forces and the Vietnamese forces can be compared to a tug-of-war. If Viet Nam really withdrew 50,000 men from Kampuchea, one can imagine on which side the rope would land.

The Hanoi authorities lie shamelessly in saying they are withdrawing their troops, because not only has there been no withdrawal, but they are reinforcing the troops already in place, most of whom are already wearing the uniform of the Phnom Penh puppets. Military political and diplomatic observers, as well as serious researchers, have confirmed this. The Washington Post, on 17 September 1988, noted that

(spoke in English):

"Viet Nam ... appears unlikely to meet its declared goal of pulling out 50,000 of its soldiers this year".

(continued in French)

Recently, the Indo-Chinese studies unit of the Institute of Asian Studies of the University of Chulalongkorn in Thailand, basing itself on information received

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

in interviews with Vietnamese soldiers captured by the Kampuchean resistance forces affirmed that

"Viet Nam is continuing to send reinforcements to the combat zones in Kampuchea." (The Nation. Bangkok, 20 September 1988).

There is no mention of the forcible recruitment by the Hanoi authorities of Khmer puppets soldiers which is being stepped up.

Viet Nam has no intention of withdrawing its troops from Kampuchea in 1989, 1990, or the year 2000, particularly if the pressure eases.

What is the political goal of these Vietnamese allegations concerning the withdrawal of troops from Kampuchea in a given year and of the other honeyed statements by Viet Nam? They are simply part of the psychological propaganda manoeuvres and campaigns. Viet Nam is doing its utmost to persuade world public opinion that the problem of the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea no longer exists, and thereby divert public attention to other problems. In so doing, Viet Nam's aim is to weaken international support for the struggle of the Kampuchean people and to create problems for the national resistance forces. If Viet Nam achieves its objectives, it will be able to crush all the national resistance forces on the battlefields and thus perpetuate its occupation of Kampuchea.

In conclusion, we wish to convey our profound gratitude to all peoples and friends that cherish peace and justice, and to the United Nations, which has given its invaluable support to the struggle of the people of Kampuchea and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea.

Mr. ICAZA GALLARD (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): We had hoped that the speech of the Honduran Foreign Minister would give us an opportunity to respond in our usual serious and constructive manner, but this afternoon the representative of Honduras merely repeated incoherent and irrelevant observations which make it clear that that country has not the slightest intention of shaking off the yoke of foreign occupation and intervention - really preferring to do nothing.

(Mr. Icaza Gallard, Nicaragua)

We regret that the Honduran Minister did not take the opportunity to regain some of the credibility and seriousness that his country's policy needs. Claiming that the counter-revolutionary forces, which are financed and supported by the United States, are not using Honduran territory to attack Nicaragua is like trying to blot out the sun with a finger. His argument about the incompatibility of peaceful means of settling the conflict is simply legal nonsense.

In order to put an end to the argument, we shall adopt the most constructive position: first, we shall not contribute to the confusion of the Assembly; secondly, we shall save the time of the representatives present, who need it to rest and prepare to listen to the important statements that will be made tomorrow.

Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic):

Mr. President, I apologize to you and, through you, to all members present here for speaking in exercise of the right of reply at this late hour, but the statement made by the representative of the United States has made it necessary for me to do so.

The repeated accusations made by the representative of the United States are not true. We have challenged the United States and we continue to challenge the United States to come forward with concrete and conclusive proof of their accusations. The competent tribunals and the international media have absolved the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya of those accusations.

The representative of the United States should be the last one to speak about terrorism. It is the United States which explicitly sponsors State terrorism against other States. It is difficult for me at this late hour to enumerate all the acts of terrorism carried out by the United States. It is sufficient to mention the following: its invasion of Grenada; its flagrant intervention in Nicaragua, Panama and Cuba, as well as in the Middle East, including, Lebanon, where it

(Mr. Muntasser, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

attacked civilians from aircraft carriers, killing women, children and the elderly; its action against the Iranian civilian jetliner, when more than 290 people were killed, with more than 100 women and children among them.

The United States has conducted violent raids against the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi, killing innocent women, children and old people. This action has been condemned by the whole world through various international bodies, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of African Unity. Even more important, in resolution 41/38 of 20 November 1986, the Assembly condemned that act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by nearly 80 votes. That is conclusive evidence of the condemnation of the United States.

Such acts by the United States are premeditated. These designs have been exposed by well-known writers and journalists. Perhaps the representative of the United States has read the series of articles in The Washington Post and The New York Times, such books as "Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987", and similar publications.

In his reply, the representative of the United States said that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya possesses chemical weapons. He has forgotten that his country manufactures the most destructive weapons in the world. Other countries are prohibited from ensuring their self-defence, but the United States has the right to manufacture all types of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. All this is well known to the members of this Assembly.

I apologize for speaking at this late hour, and I reserve the right of my delegation to speak again if the representative of the United States responds.

The meeting rose at 8.55 p.m.