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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 26 September 1989, at 10 a.m.

- President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
- later: Mr. MADRIGAL NIETO (Costa Rica)
(Vice-President)
- Address by His Excellency Mr. Andrés Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Paraguay
 - General debate [9] (continued)
 - Statements made by:
 - Mr. Shevardnadze (USSR)
 - Mr. Dumas (France)

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

ADDRESS BY MR. ANDRES RODRIGUEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Andres Rodriguez, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Paraguay, His Excellency Mr. Andres Rodriguez, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President RODRIGUEZ (interpretation from Spanish): May I begin my address to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations by expressing my heartfelt pleasure at being present in this forum, which holds such a deep significance in today's political world.

I wish to pay my respects to you, General Joseph A. Garba, President of the General Assembly, representative of the Republic of Nigeria, and to extend my best wishes for the success of the proceedings conducted under your expert and competent leadership.

I also wish to convey my most cordial greetings to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, a brilliant representative of the Americas who has done so much to unite the nations of the world and who deserves our admiration and gratitude.

On behalf of the people of Paraguay, and for myself, I wish to pay homage and respect to all the peoples so honourably represented here. I also extend our very best wishes to their leaders and express our hope that by following the broad highway of liberty and justice they may bring peace and prosperity to all mankind.

(President Rodriguez)

Since the day in 1945 when the United Nations was founded, Paraguay has striven to remain faithful to the lofty principles of the Charter, and above all to those actions that guarantee the peaceful settlement of disputes, the unfailing advance of social and economic well-being to the benefit of every country in the world, the equal standing of all States under the law, self-determination for all peoples and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations.

We are pleased to note that in the past year, and so far this year, it has been possible to bring to an end hostilities in the Persian Gulf, to sponsor the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and to promote the peace accords involving Angola, South Africa and Cuba.

With such happy outcomes to strengthen our faith in the ability and will to bring into being an international community based on reason rather than force, we trust that, as Article 1 of the San Francisco Charter provides, all nations in the world will abide by the decision

"To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

That is why we view with such deep concern the violence prevalent in various parts of our planet, violence provoked by racial prejudice or by theories leading to harmful and dangerous discrimination. We fervently hope that we can put an end to wars, conflicts and pitiless persecutions which have become permanent afflictions in some parts of the world.

(President Rodriguez)

There is no time to waste before reason comes into its own and efforts are made to eliminate from our civilization the last vestiges of institutionalized hatred that threaten to nullify Article 1 of the Charter, to which I have referred.

In this context we wish to support the efforts made to bring about the unity of Korea and we hope for a solution to the long-standing conflict in Namibia.

(President Rodriguez)

We are saddened by the fact that in America, a continent so closely tied to our emotions and so constantly in our thoughts, we have found it difficult to stop this endless fratricidal fighting that destroys everything, filling the land with ruin and desolation and casting a dark shadow on the history of brother nations. Our thoughts turn in particular to El Salvador. No effort - large or small, simple or genial, temporary or permanent - will be tried in vain if we are to stop the bloodshed in that noble nation and in others where the loudest sound nowadays is the sound of gunfire.

Just as grave as conventional war between nations or between fellow citizens is the horror provoked by modern acts of terrorism. Today the scourge of terrorism can arise anywhere to tarnish the traditions of honour of any nation. Terror knows no boundaries, and even at the risk of leaving unmentioned the suffering of other countries I must express our deep sympathy to Spain, Peru and Colombia. We fully appreciate the just and painful sacrifices made by the Governments of those countries to combat by lawful means and with due respect for human rights the inhumane and abominable practices of terrorism and to put an end to them.

Our heartfelt solidarity goes to Colombia. Deeply moved, we wish to express our warmest support for the courageous and resolute decision taken by its eminent President, Doctor Virgilio Barco, to proceed in the struggle without quarter that his country is facing at this time when it is fighting for its very survival.

Let me make it clear that, just as we condemn the terrorism of the armed bands that are out of control, we also heartily condemn the terror imposed by the State. The tragedy of Tiananmen Square and the executions ordered by people's courts also deserve our most sincere and heartfelt repugnance.

(President Rodriguez)

We stand unconditionally by Colombia and other nations in condemning with all the strength at our command the infamous trade in narcotics. I take this opportunity to declare before this General Assembly that Paraguay supports, and will continue to support, as matters of the utmost priority, all the initiatives and measures that may be necessary within the international community to destroy without mercy the nefarious traffic in drugs.

In my country, which has not escaped this scourge, my Government proceeded to destroy fields where marijuana was being grown just as soon as information on its clandestine production became known, by fumigating from the air, with the help of aircraft supplied by the United States Government. We took immediate steps to eradicate every indication of trade in narcotics. My Government will not permit Paraguayan soil to be used for the transit of drugs and drug dealers and, within the limitations imposed upon us by economics, we will use every possible means to prevent and eradicate this development.

I take this opportunity to request the broadest and most positive co-operation of all Member States to achieve the objectives we have set ourselves. I also wish to declare that we share, with optimism and sympathy, President Bush's firm decision to lead the fight on drugs on a world-wide scale.

Before I continue to address other international issues that have come to our attention and which we are bound to discuss, I must refer to my own country, Paraguay, where certain developments that are public knowledge have changed the political channels since 3 February 1989. Those changes have a direct bearing on some of the fundamental principles of the United Nations, principles that are at the heart of the major objectives of the United Nations and perhaps point the way of destiny itself. It is a well-known axiom that the history of a nation seldom

(President Rodriguez)

follows the demanding postulates of political science because situations arise in unfortunate circumstances that are difficult to correct. In Paraguay we were fully conscious of the need to bring about substantial changes in our internal policies.

While it is true that in recent decades economic developments had the effect of easing changes in my country's infrastructure, especially in connection with important public works, it is also true that the prolonged exercise of personal power and the prevalence of special interests arising around the seat of power did noticeable and progressive damage to the political institutions of Paraguay and did much to tarnish the international image of the nation.

Any strategy designed to bring about the downfall of the dictatorship that had taken over the Government needed careful thought and planning if it was to achieve the proposed objective at the least possible cost to society. Thus it came about that on 2 and 3 February this year a military operation conducted by the armed forces of the nation under my immediate command removed the oppressive and totalitarian régime and dissolved the Parliament that was part and parcel of the power structure dominant at the time.

(President Rodriguez)

Immediately, and without exceptional measures of any kind to affect the political and legal structure then in effect we proceeded to build as fast as we could and with the means available to us a new framework for democracy. That is the path being followed at present by the Republic of Paraguay with the unanimous support of every shade of political opinion and of the armed forces.

The first and most important development came about when, in the initial days of my Government, fellow citizens, many of whom had heretofore been compelled to live abroad for political reasons, returned to our country as they wished and without restrictions of any kind. All constraints on press and radio came to an end. Those that had been closed down recovered on that same day, 3 February, their constitutional right to inform Paraguayan public opinion.

After the events of 3 February elections were called under the Constitution to elect the President of the Republic and members of the National Congress. The electoral law was amended to allow all political parties to participate in a just democracy.

Twelve political parties responded to my Government's call, some of them formed under the new political situation, and no fewer than eight parties ran for the office of President of the Republic and to serve in the Chambers of Senators and Deputies.

The general elections were held on 1 May this year. The election campaign was hard fought but every candidate enjoyed full guarantees under which to run for office without constraints of any kind. That election brought to our Paraguayan horizon a new era of democracy allowing all my fellow citizens to join in building a modern Paraguay.

In the initial phase of the constitutional term the executive branch together with the National Congress proceeded to repeal all repressive or restrictive laws

(President Rodriguez)

bearing on the political freedoms of citizens. In this connection the first legislation enacted by my Government served to ratify the San Jose de Costa Rica American Convention on Human Rights, which my country had signed 20 years ago.

In the same context of compliance with international agreements, so closely bound to the recovery of Paraguay's image, I have submitted for approval by Congress the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture signed in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 9 December 1985, and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

Within the framework of its intention to consolidate democracy the national Government intends to call for direct elections for local municipal authorities. Another priority project is to call a national constitutional assembly to amend the present Constitution so that the people of Paraguay in an atmosphere of serene and rational debate may adopt a new Constitution that will guarantee the democratic and republican system and eradicate for all time any attempt to bring back autocracy.

A policy of the highest priority adopted by the present Government of Paraguay is to bring about effective and real integration with its neighbouring countries within the Plata Basin and a more ambitious plan to involve not only the southern countries but the entire South American continent. In this connection I have had the honour to meet on several occasions with my illustrious colleagues the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay. I cherish the hope that I shall be able to establish fraternal relations with other American Presidents so that they may come to understand the true dimensions of the political changes brought about in Paraguay in its frank and irreversible advance towards democracy.

(President Rodriguez)

Within the framework of this dynamic policy in search of integration based on the treaties signed by the countries in the Plata Basin and the Latin American Integration Association, some encouraging results have already been achieved, even though there is still a long way to go. We are improving upon the terms of our reciprocal trade; we are trying to integrate our industries; we are seeking a better understanding of our mutual interests; and above all we are increasing communications among our territories.

The binational hydroelectric projects at Itaipu, built jointly with Brazil and already in operation, and the dam at Yacyretá, being built jointly with Argentina, are eloquent examples of this spirit of integration. Furthermore, within the past week, the Presidents of the Plata Basin countries have agreed to build an international waterway on the Paraguay, Parana and Plata rivers so as to direct their powerful waters to facilitate waterborne traffic bearing the produce of the vast areas bordering those rivers towards the Atlantic Ocean.

This vital project is now under study by skilled technicians and has attracted, in principle, the support of the Inter-American Development Bank. This waterway will without doubt serve as an instrument of exceptional usefulness for the countries that will benefit from its development.

Paraguay and Bolivia will be strengthened substantially from this improved access to the sea. At the same time I cannot fail to point out that Paraguay and Bolivia are landlocked countries. They are the only two such countries in the entire American Continent afflicted by this disadvantage. This condition should be fully acknowledged not only by the community of States in the Americas but also by the rest of the world.

In this connection may I recall that the law of the sea is a legal accomplishment that does great credit to the ingenuity and political will of people that may now benefit in so many ways from their sea coasts.

(President Rodriguez)

Nevertheless, true international solidarity among all nations will achieve its real meaning only if so-called landlocked countries, numbering not more than 20, can share equally in the law of the sea, which has been justly named the common heritage of mankind.

(President Rodriguez)

The economies of landlocked countries, although they benefit from existing international accords dealing with transport, need the resources of the sea, whose rich treasures cannot remain the exclusive property of those situated along the coastlines, but rather should benefit entire continents bathed by its waters. My country daily experiences the problem of being landlocked and believes that perhaps it is time to reach agreements towards international action in concert with other landlocked countries in Europe, Asia and Africa which, like my own country, aspire to find not only easy access to the sea but also to receive from it the bounty that Providence has placed in its waters.

I now wish to refer to the foreign indebtedness of our nations. The weight of the external debt continues to threaten the economic recovery of vast areas where the population is struggling on the very threshold of survival. The economy of the developing countries, in spite of wrenching efforts at internal adjustments which always exact a high social cost, have witnessed dramatic reductions in income levels, where the index of poverty and dashed hopes are increasing, while the international financial community often looks on indifferently.

May I take this opportunity to remark before this highest forum on the enormous risk run by the nascent democracies in our hemisphere if they remain unable to solve the social and economic problems faced by the large majority of their populations. The solution to these problems will require the unstinting co-operation of the most highly developed societies on our planet. It would be dangerous and fraught with unpredictable consequences to bring about a backward step in the march towards democracy owing to the indifference or neglect of those who are honour-bound to impose a more just international economic order because of the eminent levels of economic growth they have already achieved.

(President Rodriguez)

The 1980s has been a troubled decade for Latin America, which now finds itself faced by drastic declines in the level of foreign capital investment that weakens the incipient economic strength of the region and burdens the debtor countries with an additional heavy load when they are faced with the problem of financing its stabilization and subsequent growth out of meagre domestic savings. There has been time enough since the initial structural adjustments took place in a number of debtor countries for us to be able to say that internal sacrifices alone will not provide a final solution to the economic crisis which still holds many countries in its grasp.

While Paraguay is not in an extreme situation, we also face debt problems. In this respect we have recently renegotiated an important sector of our external debt with another Latin American debtor nation, the Federal Republic of Brazil. Our terms of adjustment could well be taken as a demonstration of the fact that solutions can be found if there is political will to co-operate towards that end. We perceive hopeful signs of a renewed dialogue in search of solutions to the problem of foreign indebtedness. We call upon the international financial community and on the Governments of industrial nations to press on in a joint effort designed to strengthen the structures of production and finance in the developing economies. This joint effort will be of benefit not only to the debtors but also to the creditors who wish, as indeed they should wish, the world to be awash in prosperity rather than poverty. Generalized poverty will not bring legitimate prosperity to anyone.

We are largely a farming and cattle-raising country, and the vigour of our economy still awaits the support and driving power of investment. We offer in exchange our bountiful soil, our gentle climate, and the strength of the Paraguayan people. Our nation opens its doors to productive investments by foreign enterprises. They will enjoy the support of a Government that follows clear

(President Rodriguez)

policies to bring about a social market economy, to provide protection for private property and to secure for them the legitimate benefits they earn. We offer to them an adequate guarantee for their investments within a climate of absolute honesty and administrative probity.

I am encouraged to make this announcement in this highest forum in the presence of such qualified personalities. I place my trust in the intelligence and the natural goodness of my fellow Paraguayans, who are anxious to achieve an improved quality of life. United in strength, with a practical approach, we can put together concerted action embracing debtors and creditors, multilateral financial organizations and prosperous nations, in a quest for solutions founded on socially acceptable and politically viable terms and conditions, thereby putting aside the dangers threatening the promising democratic processes of so many countries.

The economics of production, especially in a country such as mine, that places its trust in agriculture and cattle-raising, run the grave risk posed by the deterioration of the environment. In this connexion, I wish to place on record the concern of my Government over the preservation of a physical environment as bountiful as that of my country. We call for international co-operation so that the resources and experience may serve to defend the fertile valleys, dense forests and bountiful rivers of Paraguay, so that the many millions who will, in the future, share with us the soil of one of the most beautiful regions of America may find a natural environment that can provide for a way of life which is healthful and uncontaminated. Paraguay finds itself at the very moment when it can seek a balanced combination of industrial progress and clear skies in a land that can be even more generous in its gifts.

(President Rodriguez)

Paraguay is headed irrevocably towards political democracy and is facing the challenges of social and cultural deprivation that affect the youthful majority of of its population.

Sixty-nine per cent of the people in my country are under the age of thirty. We suffer from a high level of illiteracy; we lack the means for adequate higher education; we are behind in the area of public health; and we face increasing unemployment levels.

We look with hope to the interest shown by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization in co-operating with us to solve the deficiencies of our social make-up. We look forward to further and increasing assistance in the coming years so that before the next century begins my country may leave behind the disturbing conditions we inherited from the political system displaced on 3 February this year.

My Government also wishes to voice its concern over the constant erosion in the funding of the United Nations Development Programme assigned to the Latin American region. As the time approaches for consultation on the funding and appropriation of resources for the fifth programme cycle for the United Nations Development Programme, 1992-1996, we wish to make a clear statement of our position. We feel that the share assigned to our region by the programme must remain at least at the same level as today, so as to reverse the process of constant deterioration in technical assistance. We need such assistance for our development, especially in those of our countries that are economically weaker.

On behalf of my Government may I also express our satisfaction with the flexibility and speed shown by the United Nations Development Programme in responding to the high priority requests of my Government, such as those in the field of land reform and job creation in small enterprises.

(President Rodriguez)

We are confident that, with international co-operation, we shall move forward in the field of social and economic democracy as an inescapable component of the auspicious political transformation now taking place in Paraguay, with the broadest practical guarantee of freedoms the Government and the people of Paraguay have set about consolidating.

An Organization such as ours, which proposes to establish the conditions for permanent peace, must logically include on its agenda every year the subject of disarmament. The topic has been taken up with special emphasis and concern by the so-called great Powers; but it is none the less true that all of our countries, however modest their resources, must also limit their levels of armaments to the strictest minimum. Either the rule of reason or the balance of terror will ultimately decide the level of armaments, whatever our terms of reference.

Fear of a nuclear holocaust has driven the super-Powers to take the path of reason. We who lack the power to destroy our planet must be comforted by the hope that true brotherhood will reign in the world.

Most recently Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, summarized in memorable words the entire issue of disarmament when he said "war itself is irrational and the principle of the peaceful solution of conflicts is the only alternative worthy of mankind".

Risk is seldom far from human existence, but risk can be controlled by intelligence and judgement. This is my understanding of the greatest challenge facing this increasingly important Organization, which we support and will continue to support fervently and loyally in our quest for indestructible solidarity among all human beings.

(President Rodriguez)

I shall return to my country with the image of this memorable occasion imprinted in my mind, as I have had the honour of addressing this Assembly and in a few words expressing my Government's views on some of the issues we face in our time, as well as the hope cherished by the Paraguayan people that every dawn will bring, together with the light of the tropical sun, the promise of a more fraternal and happy world.

May these hours never be wasted as we embark upon the long road to peace, justice, liberty and the brotherhood of man.

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

Mr. Andres Rodriguez, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): My task as head of the delegation of the Soviet Union to the General Assembly has been greatly facilitated by two fundamental statements made by Mikhail S. Gorbachev concerning the place and role of the United Nations in building new international relations at this crucial stage of world development for mankind, a time when it is moving out of the cold war into a period of peace in its development and affirming a new political order resting on a comprehensive approach to security.

The profound analytical report of Mr. Perez de Cuellar on the work of our Organization over the past year has impressed us with its convincing evidence of the expansion of the role of the United Nations as a global peace-maker. Addressing the Assembly, its new President, the representative of Nigeria, Mr. Garba, also referred to that.

The heads of many delegations have put forward some far-reaching and original ideas at this session. Yesterday we listened with close attention to the statement of President George Bush of the United States, which, in our view, contained a number of very important and interesting ideas.

As always, during these days of the General Assembly's regular session representatives of the world community have together been recreating a panorama of the past year in the life of mankind. Its overriding idea is that of peace and security. Its ideal composition is harmony of universal human values and national interests.

In making our own national contribution to this grand mural, each of us, I am sure, wants it to become a part of an organic and unitary whole. Unfortunately, in

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

some places the overall composition is still marred by cracks that impair its integrity. Over the past 12 months we have seen a rather contradictory picture of the state of the world.

Of course, the central concept remains the same and the theme, a product of mankind's thought and suffering, as we were appropriately reminded by the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, has not changed: it is the piloting of our common ark towards a new shore and our common desire to chart its course so as to avoid a storm that might destroy it.

Nevertheless, there have been some new developments which have aroused concern. It is not just that the ship of the world has not yet negotiated the dangerous straits; it is encountering new threats that could give it a critical lurch.

The twentieth century has released the tremendous energy of nations and peoples, and this has become a major factor in the development of universal civilization. It is capable of and has been working miracles by extricating entire national communities from backwardness and poverty in what is historically an amazingly brief span of time. It is adding to the mosaic of the world more and more bright and clear-cut elements of progress and prosperity. However, the same national energy, when it takes the form of inflated egotism and self-interest, often makes for aggression and expansion, a grasping for one's own good at the expense of others.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Here the problem of the self-defence of nations arises, the problem of their physical survival, preserving their unique historical and cultural identities. Action provokes counteraction, which assumes some highly ambivalent forms. Centrifugal tendencies are prevailing over centripetal ones, thus upsetting the balance of world relationships, which is so hard to build.

This diverts the focus of our attention from traditional international issues to domestic and inter-ethnic conflicts. It has now become quite clear that internal strife in some countries extends the process of their destabilization to vast areas and that regional upheavals convulse the whole world. Lebanon is a case in point. It is often much easier to resolve the external issues in a settlement than to deal with its internal conditions, and this is clearly evident in Afghanistan and Cambodia.

Today the notion of "inside the country" often has a bearing on that of "outside". The trouble, however, is that the isolated fragments of the world which yearn for a better life fail to see beyond the mountain ridges, jungles, dunes and other features of their own national landscapes, the threat to their own existence, that might objectively result from such a fragmented view.

Equally, those who want to prosper at the expense of others do not see that their own existence is also threatened.

This leads us to the question of the responsibility of the part vis-à-vis the whole and of nations vis-à-vis mankind. This places on our agenda the problem of harmonizing universal and national interests.

Some clarifications and explanations are in order here.

The supremacy of universal human values and observance of universal rules of the world community are the imperatives of our time. The objective requirements of the age we live in, its trends, character and circumstances leave mankind no

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

other choice but to reject the traditional polarization. This is the axiom which underlies both the concept and the practical policies of the new thinking. Of course, it cannot resolve the existing contradictions overnight, but as a start it can alleviate them.

On the question of the primacy of universal human values, we are also implying the mature readiness of nations to accept this. Where that maturity has not yet been attained, and where the national idea is being juxtaposed with the common interest, domestic conflicts directly complement and impel global destructive processes.

Now I should like to stress this: freedom of choice continues to crown the hierarchy of a nation's supreme values. Every nation is free to choose the ways and means of its own development, but to do so in a responsible manner. It must not lock itself in the dark rooms of national selfishness or ignore the interests of other peoples and of the entire community of nations. Freedom does not mean irresponsibility towards others, for in the final analysis that would mean irresponsibility towards oneself.

The time has finally come to realize that not all means are good for attaining even the most noble ends.

The international community has become aware of the danger of narcotics traffic, of terrorism. It condemns and outlaws both phenomena. We need equally determined action against any kind of violence, whatever the motives or excuses for it. Violence by the State against its own people must be totally excluded. Violence on national, ethnic or religious grounds can no longer be tolerated.

To repeat, we advocate freedom of choice. However, we reject its interpretation as the licence to use any means, to commit any violence or to shed blood. Freedom must not be sought at the expense of others. No support or

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

sympathy should be extended to so-called movements that countenance actions humiliating to other nations or use terrorist, barbaric and inhuman methods in waging their struggle.

It is to be deplored that, 50 years after the Second World War, some politicians have begun to forget its lessons. Let us remember that political and ideological differences did not prevent Governments and nations from joining forces to defend universal human values from nazism and fascism. The dividing line in that battle was drawn not by ideology but by the rules of and attitudes towards morality. The Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain and other countries and peoples found themselves in the same camp and, fighting side by side, saved civilization.

Fascism, which started the war, is the extreme and ugliest form of nationalism and chauvinism. German nazism marched under the banner of revanchism. Now that the forces of revanchism are again becoming active and are seeking to revise and destroy the post-war realities in Europe, it is our duty to warn those who, wittingly or unwittingly, are encouraging those forces. The revanchist movement is dangerous and inimical to the march of peace, to which President Bush referred here yesterday.

While expressing respect for healthy national movements, let me refer to one modern concept of nationhood. It defines a nation as a collective personality, endowed with certain rights, in many respects similar to and even sometimes identical with individual human rights. But there are no rights without responsibilities, either for the individual or for the State.

It is the mission of the United Nations to promote among the world's peoples the idea of the interdependence of national aspirations and the common good of mankind, and to encourage nations to behave responsibly.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

This fundamental position of the Soviet Union is clearly reflected in our bilateral contacts. Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States provide the best illustration of this. I will permit myself to touch upon the United States-Soviet dialogue only because I am convinced that its importance far transcends the frontiers of the two States. In the view of the Soviet leadership, this is not a kind of privilege but a clearly understood responsibility towards the world community. Therefore my account of the results of our talks with President Bush and Secretary of State Baker is my report to you.

These talks demonstrated increasing awareness by both sides of the need to co-operate for the benefit of mankind and growing confidence that such co-operation, such interaction, is possible.

Agreement to hold a meeting of the top leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States shows that we have moved far ahead in solving a number of major bilateral and international problems. Extraordinary efforts at the highest level will be needed to attain the goal of concluding treaties.

I am referring in particular to the preparation of the agreement on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive arms. We have proposed to the United States side options for resolving the key issues in that agreement: the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-ballistic Missile Systems, space, and long-range sea-launched cruise missiles. Our partners have accommodated us on mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles. Positions on other outstanding problems have come closer to each other.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In our view, by the time the summit meeting is held next year, in late spring or early summer, we may have passed the last turn on the road towards a treaty reducing strategic offensive arms. This is a real prospect. The protocols to the 1974 and 1976 Treaties on nuclear explosions could also be signed at the summit meeting so that they could enter into force very soon thereafter. We are confident that the summit meeting will give a powerful impetus to the talks on major reductions in the armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe.

We welcome the proposal concerning chemical weapons put forward yesterday by President Bush. Generally consistent with the initiatives of the Soviet leadership, it indicates to us that we share the desire to rid mankind of these barbaric weapons.

The Soviet Union is ready, together with the United States, to go further and assume mutual obligations prior to the conclusion of a multilateral convention: cease the production of chemical weapons, as we have already done - I am referring here also to binary weapons; on a bilateral basis, radically reduce or completely destroy Soviet and United States chemical weapons, regarding this as a step towards the global destruction of chemical weapons; renounce the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances; institute rigorous verification of the cessation of the production and the elimination of chemical warfare agents. I think there is no need to say how beneficial all this would be for the overall world climate.

In addition to the problems of security, the Soviet-United States agenda encompasses issues of humanitarian co-operation, regional topics and joint efforts in the fields of the environment and economic development, reflecting the process that brings together national and universal concerns.

We are more aware today than ever before that Soviet-United States relations cannot be built outside the global context, divorced from the problems common to all mankind.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Our discussions in Washington and Wyoming have moved us ahead in our efforts to bridge the continuing gap between the attitudes to one's own good and the attitudes to the common good. Much remains to be done, however, to alleviate the disparities of political objectives, for such disparities endanger all of us.

Let us examine the situation, taking nuclear weapons as an example. Why are they dangerous? Not only because of their sheer destructive power. They are unacceptable because they widen the chasm between national and universal interests. The equality of nations and the unity of the world become empty talk when someone's national selfishness is driven by the idea of nuclear supremacy over the world, camouflaged as national security interests.

I would say that the world community has as yet no reason for complacency or euphoria. The nuclear threat has only been reduced by the Soviet-United States Treaty eliminating intermediate and shorter-range missiles.

We believe that reliance on nuclear weapons does not serve anyone's national interests. It is also an obstacle in the way of more democratic international relations. Only the complete elimination of nuclear capabilities would help to attain real security.

The advocates of nuclear deterrence do not believe this will be possible in the foreseeable future. They respond with concepts of so-called minimum nuclear deterrence. In our view, that is a step forward, if only a timid one, a step that can be taken. But first we must define what we mean by minimum nuclear deterrence and what capabilities should be considered sufficient.

The Soviet Union proposes that those questions be discussed at a meeting of representatives of the nuclear Powers and the States on whose territories nuclear weapons are placed.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Of course, the persistence of the concepts of nuclear deterrence is due not only to the undue emphasis placed on national rights and interests at the expense of obligations, but also to the lack of trust. The problem should not be easily dismissed.

What is the way out of these vicious circles? It lies in affirming glasnost and openness and in building a wide-ranging infrastructure of pervasive verification. If we do need to deter each other, let deterrence be transparent and verifiable.

To that end, the Soviet Union is proposing that all nuclear Powers conclude multilateral agreements on measures to reduce the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war. Detailed discussions to work out such an agreement could be held in consultations among the permanent members of the Security Council.

In the same context, we wish to raise once again the problem of the cessation and prohibition of nuclear tests. This is the question of questions. Why are we still unable to put an end to such tests despite the express will of the overwhelming majority of nations? Because there are those who want to maintain their superiority at any cost.

Guided by its obligations to the world community, the Soviet Union has revised its nuclear-testing programme by reducing the number and yield of explosions.

Let me point out, however, that the efforts of one State are not sufficient for a comprehensive solution to this problem. We see a number of possibilities here. First of all, the USSR is ready to reinstate its moratorium on all nuclear explosions on any day and at any hour if the United States reciprocates. Secondly, it is time finally to end the procedural impasse at the Conference on Disarmament and start concrete discussions there on the problem of a complete test ban. Thirdly, as one possible way of achieving such a ban, we are now considering

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the possibility of extending the 1963 Treaty to cover underground nuclear explosions.

There is an urgent need for a verifiable cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. We have declared that this year we are ceasing the production of enriched uranium, that in 1987 we closed down one reactor producing weapons-grade plutonium, and that we plan to close down in 1989 and 1990 a few more such reactors. By the year 2000 all remaining reactors will have been shut down.

In addition, the Soviet Union is proposing that all nuclear Powers should begin preparing to conclude an agreement on the cessation and prohibition of the production of such material. We believe that in the verification of compliance with the agreement the vast experience of applying International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards could prove useful.

It would seem that even the way the Second World War began ought to have made clear that weapons do not guarantee security - the more weapons there are, the greater the danger of aggression. And yet for the 45 post-war years security has been sought in the arms race. It is only today that we are beginning to understand the need for a fundamentally different concept of security in Europe, a security that relies increasingly on political means and, only as insurance, on the necessary minimum of armaments.

The Vienna accord heralded a new European situation, opening up broad vistas for humanitarian co-operation and exchanges of people, ideas and information. It holds out the prospect that the European idea will assert itself on a foundation of trust and openness. But the groundwork has to be prepared for that by clearing the continent of excessive quantities of arms. That work has begun.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

When the negotiators do not consign their responsibilities to the back rooms, when they sincerely want to strike a balance between their interests and those of their partners, progress is always achieved. One example is the Vienna talks between the Warsaw Treaty countries and the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on reducing armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe.

In response to our alliance's initiative the NATO countries have made some meaningful proposals, which go a long way towards accommodating the positions of the Warsaw Treaty countries. In parallel talks between the countries participating in the European process to develop a qualitatively new generation of confidence- and security-building measures the Warsaw Treaty member countries have proposed a far-reaching approach calling for a comprehensive set of such measures, and extending them to air force and naval activities.

Reverting to the topic of the obligations of individual countries to the community, I feel it my duty to emphasize that reluctance to engage in active talks on reducing naval forces is a sign of neglect of those obligations. Leaving naval forces outside the process of reducing armed forces and armaments would be harmful to universal security. The problem of naval forces could be examined, for example, in special consultations to be attended by all States concerned and, above all, by major naval Powers. They would discuss mutual concerns in this sphere and would exchange views on the mechanism and ultimate objectives of future negotiations and on how to move towards them step by step.

The dialectic of developments on the European continent urgently requires the starting of talks on tactical nuclear weapons. The situation does not appear to be

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deadlocked. Mutually acceptable solutions could be sought in an in-depth discussion of this whole range of issues between the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the States where those weapons have been placed. If NATO countries agree to start talks on tactical nuclear weapons the USSR will respond with further unilateral cuts in its tactical nuclear missiles in Europe.

The problem of missile proliferation is also ripe for multilateral discussions. Nearly 20 countries possess such weapons, and the trend towards further geographical spread is still strong.

The approach to this issue could be two-pronged. Barriers could be erected which, first, would preclude the proliferation of combat missiles and associated technology across the globe, and, secondly, would not impinge on the legitimate interest of countries in gaining peaceful access to outer space.

No one in the world can yet bid farewell to arms, but we can abandon, once and for all - and we can do it now - the practice of unconstrained and uncontrolled international weapons transfers. To that end the principles of glasnost and openness should be asserted here as well. The USSR reaffirms its willingness to participate in the establishment of a United Nations register of weapons sales and transfers, including work on parameters.

The time has come when the idea of preventing war is finding material expression in relations between the armed forces of a number of countries. A new peace-making instrument is being shaped by the Soviet-United States agreement on preventing dangerous military activities and by a series of agreements with the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany and France on the prevention of incidents on the high seas.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Along the same lines, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have agreed to start talks shortly on putting an end to their military stand-off. The Soviet Union expresses the hope that other States too will engage in this process.

A civilized world is an open world. Breaking the seals on many secrets, the Soviet Union has revealed to the international community detailed data about all reductions in its armed forces and armaments, their strength, the size of its military budget, and so on.

We reaffirm here the position of the Soviet Union. Our ultimate goal is to have not a single Soviet soldier outside the country. But, speaking of equal responsibilities, let us roundly condemn the continuing encirclement of our country - and not only our country - by military bases of other States.

The Soviet Union attaches fundamental importance to a transition from individual measures of confidence-building, openness and glasnost in international affairs to a global policy of openness, which would become an integral part of comprehensive security and international peace. The President of the United States, Mr. Bush, has proposed the idea of open skies. We like that idea. In welcoming and supporting the initiative, the Soviet Union calls for the opening up of the lands, the waters and outer space. Let us also have open lands, open seas and open space; only then shall we attain absolute transparency and the necessary level of confidence.

While we duly include in the records of foreign policy such accomplishments as the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan, the process of granting independence to Namibia, the termination of hostilities on the Iran-Iraq front, and the constructive dynamics in the dialogue on the problem of Cambodia, we cannot yet say that the positive trends are irreversible.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Let us pay a grateful tribute to this Organization for its peace-keeping operations. Let us recognize its unique role, which goes beyond simply localizing conflicts and achieves a qualitatively new level in ensuring stability in the world order. But today's world order is of a far broader category. We have firmly established economic security as one of its pillars.

The Soviet Union shares the entirely justified concern about, and it supports, measures to overcome the crisis in the world economy - measures that were proposed at the Belgrade summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. There are a few who continue to dictate to the many the terms of their economic existence. The devotees of diktat should understand that perpetuation of the current situation is fraught with the danger of a catastrophe that would spare no one - and that is no exaggeration.

It would seem that the world of the rich has nothing to worry about since its economy is in good shape. It would seem also that the rich are beyond reproach since, ostensibly, their wealth breeds generosity. In 1988 the aggregate amount of the developed nations' assistance to the developing countries amounted to \$US 90 billion - an impressive sum indeed - but in the same year the developed nations received from the developed world \$US 50 billion more in debt servicing and interest payments. That was the largest flow of capital in history from the poor to the rich man's pocket.

Thus the prosperity of the rich is achieved not without help from the poor. There is more to it, however, than this obvious injustice. Such disparities cannot for ever keep testing the strength of the world economy and world politics.

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The health of the world economy is also being undermined by the enormous cost of military production, which siphons off vast material and intellectual resources from the civilian sector. Now that there is a prospect of limiting the military-industrial complexes, the problem of conversion has to be addressed. This can be done only by working together and relying on the experience of all States.

Before the very eyes of just one generation the sphere of politics has linked up with environmental conservation to give mankind the science of political ecology. No one can master it alone, enchained in the fetters of narrow national interests.

Political ecology requires urgent planetary decisions at the highest political level and the thorough internationalization of national efforts through the United Nations, through consolidation of its leading environmental branch, the appropriate agency of this Organization. And, since we are speaking of a major component of international security, I would add that political ecology requires the involvement of the Security Council in solving problems and activating such tools as transparency and strict international monitoring.

The United Nations conference on environment and development, to be held in 1992, will undoubtedly be a watershed in establishing universal co-operation and working out a code of civilized ecological behaviour. We call for the holding of this conference at the level of Heads of State or Government.

Defining for itself the main principles of the concept of ecological security, the Soviet Union considers disarmament, the economy and ecology as an integral whole. While participating in implementing conservation strategies, the Soviet Union has programmes for speeding up the integration of its economy, on an equal and mutually beneficial basis, into the world economy, the modern international division of labour and international exchanges in science and technology. To that

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end we should like to participate actively in the work of international economic organizations and to establish contacts with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, being convinced that our co-operation with them, as well as with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will be useful both for us and for the community as a whole.

In the building of new international relations, our foreign policy looks ahead to a positive evolution of today's world and to its stability. That orientation remains unchanged, even in the face of certain changes which affect our immediate interests and the interests of the community to which we have the honour to belong. But we remain faithful to our avowed principles and continue to affirm that nations' choices cannot and must not be overridden by force and that stability cannot be achieved by threatening the use of force or by intervention, blockade or other sanctions.

It is no secret that we were not enthusiastic about the Polish Communists' election set-back, nor should it be a secret that we hope they can overcome the crisis. Nevertheless, we see nothing threatening in the fact that a coalition Government has been formed, in accordance with the will of the Polish people. We are in no way prejudiced against that Government. We wish it every success and are ready to co-operate with it most actively.

Tolerance is the norm of civilized political behaviour. But if it is mandatory for us in our attitude towards the current Government of Poland, why are others so intolerant as regards, say, Cuba? And if a non-Communist Prime Minister is possible in a Socialist country, why should the appearance of a Communist as head of a Western Government be perceived as heresy? That is something we should not exclude either.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The days of traditional demarcation lines are numbered. Only one line remains, to be pursued by all of us together moving to a common goal.

It is not the expression of popular will that threatens countries, but, rather, political and ideological intolerance, chauvinism and extremist excesses of imperial or nationalist mentalities. It is only when they engender violence and destabilize the life of countries and peoples that the machinery of legitimate defence must be activated.

However different may be our ideas of preferable ways of social development, we also have an overriding understanding of our common responsibility for the future of mankind and the survival of civilization. We know that only together can we step back from the brink, because an isolated island of development and prosperity would inevitably sink in the ocean of backwardness and poverty, because peoples and nations cannot be well when mankind is sick.

There is only one way out of those fateful correlations. As we see it, it is for the world community to move consciously towards harmony between universal and national principles. It is difficult to attain, but it is possible. It is possible because the collapse of the world is unthinkable. It is possible because we all share a place where individual national efforts unite in a single "energy field".

The United Nations is that place. It offers a forum for everybody to talk about his own country and its links with the rest of the world. I should like to take this opportunity to say a few words about my country.

We are building a new model of society, a new model of relations between peoples and nations, a new model of socialism. As a great concept, socialism is by no means a spent force; indeed, it is revealing its humanistic potential in the bitter and often dramatic confrontation with the forces and flaws that are organically alien to it.

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We in our country are not just repainting the facade, but are rebuilding the entire structure, in which the rules of living together must and will be based on the supremacy of law, people's power, openness to the outside world, inter-ethnic harmony and friendship.

In every sphere of the common life of our State and our people - the national economy, the political system and the people's intellectual endeavour - rejection of the ossified relics of the past goes hand in hand with the enthusiasm of new construction. Even though, in the words of a poet, we may have a gloomy day or two, we are confident that perestroika, which began as a revolution of hopes, will keep those hopes alive. Our people, our nation, will keep perestroika going, for it embodies the aspirations that they cherish.

Today, when some Cassandras hasten to make gloomy predictions, we make our own forecast. We want this historical optimism to be shared by all those who understand that the destiny of the world is inseparable from the future of our perestroika. So we say to them: our determination to make it irreversible is matched by our belief in victory, a confidence grounded in the democratic institutions, which are ready to assert their genuine and full authority.

We are moving along that path guided by, not least, our awareness of the historic nature and magnitude of our goal, which we must attain ourselves, while not rejecting the support of the world community.

Believe me, we feel that support not only during the tragic days of natural disasters and national misfortunes. I say to representatives: it has been voiced in your statements at this Assembly; it manifests itself every day in your compatriots' generous gestures, their deeds and actions. So I ask you, the envoys of your Governments and nations, to convey to them our warm gratitude.

Mr. DUMAS (France) (interpretation from French): I am speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community.

Mr. President, allow me in my turn to extend to you on behalf of the European Community and its member States warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to the office of President of the General Assembly. Your experience in international affairs, your perfect familiarity with the United Nations system and your personal qualities particularly qualify you to occupy that important office. We have no doubt that those attributes will enable you to work wonders.

Let me also include in this tribute your predecessor at the head of the Assembly, Mr. Dante Caputo. The energy and efficiency with which he discharged that office merit the gratitude of the entire Organization.

I should like also, on behalf of the Twelve, to assure the Secretary-General of our unswerving and unqualified support in his weighty task, and to express our admiration for his untiring activity throughout the world in favour of peace.

The European Community and its member States have always considered that they have a special contribution to make to the efforts being made to build a more just and peaceful world bound by ever-closer ties of solidarity.

I should now like to put forward a few thoughts about the main thrust of our external action, by pointing to our common struggle for peace, the outlook for economic development and the fight against the scourges inflicted on our societies by human rights violations, terrorism and drug abuse.

I should like first to say a few words about the hopes that have been kindled by developments in the year gone by. While the progress made is still too fragile for the international community to be certain that it will soon see the dawn of peace break upon the world, and while tensions still exist or are worsening here and there and indeed new conflicts are emerging, the fact is that, all in all, the cause of peace has advanced more than it probably ever has done in recent times.

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In relations between the eastern and western parts of Europe, recent developments suggest that the deep wounds of history, once considered as incurable, are now beginning to heal. On both sides, a common language is enabling us to talk to one another, negotiate and reach agreements that only a short time ago seemed beyond our grasp.

The European Council has sought to give fresh impetus to East-West relations, as this is warranted by the changes towards greater political and economic freedom that have taken place in the Soviet Union and several Central and Eastern European countries, notably Poland and Hungary. While we must regret that there remain serious violations of human rights in some of those countries, how could we fail to welcome the reforms on which they have embarked and support and encourage them when they are quite plainly contributing to overcoming the divisions of the last War at a pace and on a scale hitherto unprecedented in Europe.

The proceedings of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe are closely bound up with that prospect. Since the adoption of a closing document last January in Vienna, two key meetings - the Information Forum in London and the first session of the Conference on the Human Dimension in Paris - have made it possible to take greater advantage of the scope of the Helsinki process to advance the cause of fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and the values of democracy.

As for the negotiations on measures aimed at building confidence and security and on conventional forces in Europe, whose purpose is to remove the imbalances liable to undermine the stability and security of the continent, they have taken a decisive turn, and there are hopes that in the coming months significant progress can be made which would have major importance for the future of East-West relations.

In the broader setting of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, there have been encouraging results following the impetus created by the Conference on

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chemical disarmament held in Paris in January 1989. The Twelve would like to see the conclusion at the earliest possible opportunity of a comprehensive, verifiable treaty banning chemical weapons. The results achieved in that field at the recent United States-Soviet meetings are a most encouraging sign in this respect.

By the same token, I welcome the progress announced yesterday by the President of the United States and moments ago by the Soviet Foreign Minister with regard to their bilateral negotiations on reducing by half their stockpiles of strategic weapons. We hope there will be an early outcome to these negotiations and that the significant gains of the past, such as the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, will be preserved.

But Europe is not the only theatre in the struggle for peace, to which our Organization attaches universal significance.

Encouraging signs have emerged in many parts of the world, holding out promise of the settlement of some conflicts. The utmost must be done to give added impetus to those favourable developments, and the Twelve are setting about that task.

In Namibia, the process towards independence and peace is under way. The Twelve unreservedly support the action of the Secretary-General and earnestly call on all the parties not to impede the movement towards peace. The European Community stands ready to welcome an independent Namibia among its partners under the Lomé Convention.

The rewarding dialogue started with the front-line States, notably in Luxembourg last June, shows that everyone aspires to an early settlement of these long-standing conflicts which have delayed or thwarted the region's development plans. Here again, the Community is more than ready to foster reconstruction and, whether it be in Angola, Mozambique or elsewhere, to help the population build a new era of peace.

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In that connection, the Community and its member States have always insisted on the need to put an end to the apartheid system and bring about the establishment of a just, democratic society in South Africa. I shall come back to that basic demand.

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The Twelve are particularly attentive to the implementation of the Secretary-General's peace plan for Western Sahara, which is expected to lead to a referendum on self-determination and holds out hopes for a settlement of this issue. They are convinced that the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union will contribute to that end.

Through the recent Tela agreements, the countries of Central America have demonstrated their determination to take their destiny in their own hands. This is a source of satisfaction to us. The success of the exercise will depend on the different parties abiding by the undertakings they have given. It is also envisaged that the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) will lend their support to the implementation of the peace agreements.

The Community and its member States wish to pay a tribute to the sense of moderation and dialogue displayed by the Central American Heads of State, moved as they have been by the spirit of democracy. The San Pedro Sula Conference, held in February 1989, showed the determination of the European Community and the Contadora group of countries to give their support to the process of negotiation and economic integration which the Central American Governments have set as their goals.

The Twelve also note with satisfaction the progress made by democracy in South America, and especially the prospect of positive developments in Chile, heralded by free elections.

Since the announcement of the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, which was welcomed by the entire international community, the Secretary-General has, with the Twelve's support, pursued his endeavours to ensure that the negotiations move progressively towards a final settlement. But we should not be content with the current "no war - no peace" situation. The Twelve accordingly wish to launch an appeal to the Governments of the two countries to contribute to the efforts of the

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Secretary-General and his colleagues to transform the present armistice into a lasting peace and to lose no more time in fully implementing Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

The Twelve express the hope that the Iranian leaders will demonstrate their readiness to contribute to international life in a constructive and peaceful manner consonant with the norms governing relations among States, so that that country can again take its rightful place in its region and in the international community at large.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a political solution. As long as the conflict continues, there will still be a need for all the Afghan parties to seek ways and means of bringing about a genuine process of self-determination, leading to the formation of a fully representative government and the existence of a truly independent and non-aligned Afghanistan. The Twelve confirm their support for the United Nations Secretary-General in the efforts he is making to facilitate a settlement. In the hope that the refugees will be able to return to their homes in freedom and dignity, the Community and its member States stand ready, once a settlement has been reached, to contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, in the same way as they are already contributing to the humanitarian assistance being provided for the long-suffering people of that country.

In Cambodia, signs have emerged in recent months, albeit tentatively, of a possible return to peace. The Twelve have welcomed the decision of Viet Nam to withdraw its troops and consider that their withdrawal has made it possible to seek an overall political solution to the Cambodian conflict. The Twelve's support could not but encourage France to take the initiative of convening an international conference in Paris, with the co-presidency of Indonesia, bringing together all the

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Khmer parties and the countries most directly involved, in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General.

Although that meeting did not make it possible to reach an agreement, it can be said to have marked a very important stage in the search for a peaceful solution. The process which has now been started should be pursued, with the requisite determination, with the aim of arriving at last at an overall settlement guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and neutrality of Cambodia and enabling the Cambodian people to control its own destiny through free and internationally supervised elections. The temptation of the different parties involved to seek a solution in the field still by force of arms could lead only to a stalemate. The Twelve are convinced that the only way out of this long-drawn-out conflict lies in dialogue and national reconciliation.

The continuing instability in that region is also adding to the tragedy of the Vietnamese boat people. The Twelve share the determination of the Secretary-General and the international community to find a solution to this problem.

In the case of the Korean peninsula, we should like again to voice the hope that, in accordance with the principle of universality enshrined in our Organization, the Korean people may enjoy full representation in the United Nations at an early date.

The progress that has been accomplished and the stronger conviction we now have that peace is possible everywhere can only strengthen our resolve to work towards settling the conflicts that are still going on, and first of all that in the Middle East.

In the Middle East, at a time when, on the Palestinian side, a number of important decisions have opened up fresh prospects for a realistic search for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question, no real

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progress has yet been made in responding to those moves. Yet the passage of time is not working to anybody's advantage. Let us beware of the disappointment that is bound to be aroused by such missed opportunities.

The Community is making the same message plain to one and all: if a peace settlement is to be reached, then it is necessary to recognize, both in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, the right of all States, and of Israel in particular, to security and the right of all peoples to justice - in other words, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with everything which that implies. In the Community's view, the appropriate way to attain those goals remains the organization of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

The situation in the occupied territories provides a dramatic illustration of the effects of the lack of progress in seeking a settlement. The measures taken against the population in those territories - the continued closure of the universities, the expulsions, the extension and increase in the number of detentions on administrative grounds - have prompted the Twelve to appeal yet again to the Israeli authorities to abide by their obligations as the occupying Power, in accordance with the Security Council resolutions.

The Twelve, in the Madrid Declaration, have made their position known on the Israeli plan for organizing elections and granting provisional self-governing status to the territories. For the impact of such elections to be really meaningful, they should form part of a comprehensive settlement process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the application of the principle of land for peace, and they should be held with adequate guarantees of freedom throughout the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.

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In the same spirit and on the basis of the same principles, the Twelve welcome Egypt's contribution to the promotion of the peace process, as set out in the 10 points which President Mubarak has put forward. The Twelve hope that this will make it possible, in particular, to set in motion the necessary dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Without waiting for the settlement which they so earnestly desire, the Community and its member States plan to step up their co-operation with the occupied territories and to develop their programmes of assistance to the population, which has suffered so severely from the continuing occupation and its attendant restrictions.

I now wish to refer to Lebanon. In Lebanon, the tragedy of a nation that has been torn apart has lasted for 14 years now. Never has the suffering been so great as over the past few months, nor the battles so bloody, nor the ordeals borne by everybody so horrendous.*

* Mr. Madrigal Nieto (Costa Rica) took the Chair.

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It is this that has prompted the Community and its Member States to call for an effective cease-fire and the lifting of the blockades and for a start to be made towards a process of national reconciliation ensuring the full restoration of Lebanese sovereignty on the basis of fresh institutions. They have constantly given their support to the moves made by the Arab League, which were initially led by the Committee of Six and subsequently by that of the three Heads of State. They welcome that top-level Committee's resumption of its mission, which they fully support, and hope that once the parties have all agreed to its proposals, dialogue and the quest for peace will prevail.

It is now essential that, at a moment when dialogue is being renewed, all Lebanese parties be freed from external pressures so that they may be able to agree on a new system for living side by side, one that takes into account the existing demographic and social situation. Through the introduction of such a system and the withdrawal of all foreign forces - with the exception of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) - Lebanon must regain its full sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

This is what France has been endeavouring to do, and will continue to do with the support of its partners in the Community, while making it its constant concern to support the Arab moves led by the Tripartite Committee until hope is rekindled in Lebanon.

At the same time the Community and its member States have signified their solidarity with the entire Lebanese people by undertaking an assistance programme aimed at alleviating their suffering and at contributing to the restoration of normal living conditions and the resumption of economic and social activities.

We cannot speak of Lebanon without referring to the fate of the hostages, several of whom are nationals of the Community's member States. How can we forget Colonel Higgins, who was serving the United Nations? The Twelve condemn the taking

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of hostages, which must be fought with all the means at our disposal in the spirit of the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council. The Twelve wish to appeal to those countries which might be able to exert some influence in securing the liberation of the hostages.

I should like to state the Community's unchanging position with regard to Cyprus, a member of the European family. The Twelve call on all the parties to co-operate with the Secretary-General and his Representative on the spot with a view to overcoming the existing obstacles and finding the paths to dialogue. The Twelve ask them not to let slip the opportunity now available for a just and lasting settlement that will safeguard the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Cyprus in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

We all know that world peace is a sacred cause. It warrants all the energy and resolve we can devote to it. It calls for determination and obstinacy. We may, no doubt, feel rather discouraged when no sooner has one hotbed of tension died down than others flare up, for we are then dogged by feelings of hopelessness, like those which Sisyphus may have felt at the top of his mountain before the stone started to roll down again.

And yet, hope remains alive when the chain of men and women epitomized by our Assembly are still linked together in the service of peace. We know that that unremitting task is a collective one and that progress cannot be made unless we are all mobilized.

Hence it is with the same determination, the same degree of hope and the same trust in good fortune that we have to tackle other conflicts and other areas of tension, evidence of further rifts here and there.

I should here like to turn to the case of those two countries, Senegal and Mauritania, which were living in harmony and united by a common design, but which

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have suddenly been rocked by violence to the point where they have now become brother enemies. Can Senegal and Mauritania soon return to the path of understanding and dialogue? The Twelve earnestly hope so. This is why they are supporting the mediation efforts of President Mubarak and hope that conciliation and reason will prevail.

Other tragedies are being played out. In Ethiopia, where the civil war continues to rage bringing in its wake a host of displaced populations, suffering and poverty, prospects for dialogue seem nevertheless to be emerging. The Twelve hope to do all they can to pave the way for negotiation and reconciliation. The same holds true for the Sudan and Somalia.

In this connexion I should like to pay a tribute to the action of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose work everyone considers irreplaceable.

Lastly, I should like to mention the hopes aroused by the discussions between the Governments at Colombo and New Delhi in a bid to restore peace and national unity in Sri Lanka.

In the case of East Timor, the Twelve reaffirm their support for the contacts between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General. They hope that early progress will lead to a just and comprehensive settlement, accepted internationally.

The cause of peace is making progress in spite of everything, as we can see, and our Assembly bears special witness to the fact. It is making progress through multilateral and bilateral dialogue, through the readiness of States to renounce war in settling their differences, and through the action of the United Nations in every instance where its mediation is imperative. The Twelve intend to associate themselves fully with this ever renewed task and they will play a major role in quelling conflicts, by reasons, I would say, of their very nature and calling,

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and through the example they are setting through the agreement among them and their prospective union.

Yet peace-making, the reduction of tensions and the banishment of violence cannot be dissociated from the struggle against the inequalities marking international economic development. We must take care - I say again - not to provoke new trouble spots that might be stirred up by the revolt of the poor. We must make sure that growth world-wide is shared more fairly and is more balanced and more geared to coping with the abject poverty of those countries which have few natural endowments or which have been ill-treated by history or crushed by the burden of debt. Action in favour of growth and development is, more than ever, an integral part of the struggle for peace. The Community has made that fact a key feature of its relations with the rest of the world.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, economic growth has recovered and has brought about a sharp increase in trade. Our aim is to consolidate that trend while at the same time continuing the struggle against inflation and unemployment. We have to ensure that everybody benefits from the movement. The fact that whole regions, in particular in Africa and Latin America, are continuing to lag behind would reduce all efforts to naught if priority were not given to North-South solidarity.

As the world's foremost trading power and its leading provider of aid, the European Community considers that tangible steps have to be taken in the three key areas of international economic co-operation, development and the environment, about which I shall now say a few words.

In recent years Europe, together with Japan and a number of other Asian partners, has progressively taken over the momentum formerly generated by growth in the United States. Such growth is healthy and is the outcome of efforts of investment and modernization and the determined and convergent action of member

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States to hold down inflation and, above all, to finalize the establishment of the internal market by 1993.

This internal market will not be self-contained. The Europe of 1993 will be a "Europe of partners". The programme for finalizing the creation of the internal market will not entail any weakening of the Community's international obligations. All its multilateral or bilateral commitments are and will be respected. It is in our very interest to preserve and encourage a free and open trading system.

All Europe's partners will benefit from the single market of 1993 as a result of the dismantling of frontiers, the improvement of access procedures and the greater degree of transparency. The economic growth generated by the merger of 12 markets into a single market of 320 million consumers will work to the advantage of everybody when it is borne in mind that imports, which already account for one quarter of its gross domestic product, are expected to progress even further.

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In more specific areas, the efforts deployed by the Community at the internal level will also have positive effects for third countries. For instance, the progressive accomplishment of economic and monetary union - which will be one of our major priorities in the coming months - will be instrumental in contributing to the stability of the international monetary system.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, on which work started five years ago, is continuing. It is contributing to the improvement of the world market situation. The Community reaffirms the undertakings it gave at the mid-term meeting of the Uruguay Round negotiations in April 1989. The efforts it is making are considerable, and I would recall that it remains the world's largest importer of agricultural products.

In 1989 the Community has continued to strengthen its relations with all the regions of the world.

First, it is making preparations with the European Free Trade Association for a renewed framework for dialogue and co-operation.

Then, a series of agreements have been concluded with the countries of Eastern Europe: with Hungary, Czechoslovakia and, even more recently, with Poland, to which Commissioner Adriaenssen and myself paid a visit. Developments in this last-named country make it increasingly urgent to dispatch the aid that was decided on at the Summit of the Arch and accepted by 24 countries. We must force the pace to respond to the extent of the need.

Negotiations are being conducted with the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, and are being envisaged with the German Democratic Republic. This is the basis on which the Community plans to engage in a variety of forms of co-operation to supplement that in which its member States are already engaging.

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The creation of the Arab Maghreb Union will enable the European Economic Community (EEC) to step up and diversify the already very rewarding relations it maintains with those Mediterranean countries.

Discussions are proceeding with the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council for the purpose of supplementing the Co-operation Agreement signed in 1988 by means of a fresh trade agreement.

In Asia, 1989 has been a year marked by new joint steps taken by the EEC and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in their bid to further industrial co-operation by stepping up investments.

With its Latin American partners, the Community is pursuing its efforts to diversify co-operation and trade. In Central America, it is developing its co-operation under the San Jose Agreements, thereby enhancing the efforts being made by the countries of the isthmus.

Lastly, I should like to express my deep satisfaction at the improvement in the Community's trade relations with its main partners in the developed world, where willingness to negotiate is now the overriding consideration.

This improvement in the climate is fragile, and our best chance of consolidating it is to complete the Uruguay Round negotiations by the date scheduled and to secure substantive results in all areas.

In the coming months, North-South solidarity will be in the international headlines: the renewal of the Lomé Convention; the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on economic co-operation and development; the second international conference on the least developed countries in Paris; and the launching of the fourth development decade.

Let us grasp the opportunity offered by these various occasions, for they will make it possible to take stock of what has been achieved and also to realize that we need to go further.

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Development depends to a large degree on the domestic strategies adopted by the countries concerned themselves. A large number of developing countries have embarked on a courageous adjustment process that is an essential requirement, even though it may sometimes give rise to problems from the social and political standpoints. I wish to pay tribute to their efforts which often demand heavy sacrifices.

However, these efforts will be useful only if they are made in a favourable international environment.

In the first place, it is absolutely essential to lighten the burden of excessive indebtedness which has now become intolerable.

In this crucial area, the concerted and constructive approach that has prevailed has already made it possible to overcome the inhibiting factors and to record some measure of progress.

Several of the Community's member States have taken additional steps in favour of the poorest countries by cancelling official development assistance loans. France, for its part, has announced through the President of the Republic an across-the-board cancellation of the debts accruing from development assistance in the case of 35 of the poorest African countries. This measure will come into force on 1 January 1990 and is - I must say here - free of any conditions.

At the same time, other countries which are certainly not as poor but which are grappling with a heavy burden of indebtedness to the banks are having to face difficult political and economic choices. This is particularly the case in Latin America where solving the debt problem should make it possible to consolidate and strengthen democracy in the region.

Two countries, Mexico and the Philippines, have already successfully embarked on that path.

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But progress in coping with indebtedness cannot be sufficient in itself to ensure development, and fresh resources are necessary. Such resources must, in the first instance, be generated by trade. The Community has already, to a large extent, opened up its market to products from the developing countries. Without awaiting the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, it has recently made significant improvements in the access of tropical products to its market.

In the ongoing renegotiation of the Lomé Convention, it will endeavour to improve further an arrangement that is already proving advantageous.

Even so, for the vast majority of the developing countries, dependent as they are on a handful of export commodities, access to the markets of the industrialized countries is not enough. The Common Fund for commodities, should now come into force. For its part, the Community plans to strengthen the STABEX and SYSMIN mechanisms for the stabilization of export earnings under the Lomé Convention.

Alongside these measures, official development assistance still represents a lifeline, and the Community is already making a considerable effort in that regard. The assistance provided by its member States taken together has been quite clearly moving in the direction of the 0.7 per cent target since the early 1980s.

In the final analysis, however, economic development hinges on an unfailing international mobilization of forces to protect our environment.

The heating up of the atmosphere, the deterioration of the ozone layer, the pollution of the oceans and freshwater resources and desertification - all pose a threat to our entire planet.

Contending with this threat at an early date is a responsibility that is incumbent upon all of us.

Many developing countries do not always have sufficient funds for that purpose. An effort by the industrialized countries to introduce new forms of

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co-operation and financing will make it easier for the individual countries in the world to take care of the environment and to manage their natural resources in a common endeavour. This must surely be one of the most necessary forms that international solidarity can take.

Such solidarity is exemplary when it takes the form of protecting the tropical forests, helping Bangladesh to combat the incalculable consequences of flooding, or setting up an observatory in the Sahara.

The planetary scale of the threat is such that international negotiations are needed to spell out the objectives of common interest.

With that prospect in mind, the conference on the environment and development, which the United Nations Secretary-General is convening in 1992, will represent a major turning-point. Before then, the world climate conference which will take place in 1990 should afford an opportunity for making significant progress on the question of the greenhouse effect. The Community earnestly calls for the conclusion of an international agreement on climatic changes, and it would also like a dialogue to be started on ocean-bed mining. The Community has already taken, or is about to take, a number of decisions having immediate effect: the early implementation, and at a faster pace, of the Helsinki decisions on the eradication of chlorofluorocarbons; the launching of a programme of action on the greenhouse effect; accession to the Basle Convention on movements of dangerous waste; the creation of a European environmental agency; and the drawing-up of a tropical forest assistance programme.

These actions, coupled with support for the current international negotiations and with the integration of environmental issues into co-operation with the developing countries, are indicative of the Community's growing commitment to the preservation of our planetary environment.

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There are other threats that also call for our vigilance and decisive action. We likewise cannot keep silent at the violations of mankind's most fundamental freedoms and rights. There are many such violations and they unfortunately continue to exist in too many countries on all the continents.

The Twelve are constantly waging war on behalf of human rights, which are the foundation of the United Nations, for they cannot remain indifferent to the intolerable violations to which those rights are being subjected. It is not that they are trying to behave as a censor; rather their fight is inspired by the values which underpin the Community and have brought its member States together.

The events of Tiananmen Square are still present in our memories. We may ask whether the European Community's relations with Beijing have been compromised for a long time to come. We sincerely hope that this will not be the case. We shall show vigilance, however, in the hope that the leaders of the People's Republic of China will eventually heed the appeals addressed to them by the entire international community.

We also attach considerable importance to ensuring that China fully abides by the undertakings it has given in respect of the constitutional instruments for Hong Kong.

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The Twelve wish to launch a further appeal for the Burmese people to be allowed freely to exercise its right of expression.

Free elections have been held in Panama also. The Twelve are giving their support to the efforts of the Organization of American States to put forward a solution to the crisis; they reaffirm their reservations about the new régime currently in power, which does not enjoy any form of institutional legitimacy.

I turn now to South Africa - yet again. It has to be asked whether the winds of change blowing over southern Africa as a whole will also have a positive impact in South Africa. The Twelve, which have constantly denounced the particularly odious apartheid régime, have taken note of the statements made by the South African leaders asserting their determination to embark on reforms. However, the Twelve likewise note - and deplore - the extension of the state of emergency, the continuing ban on anti-apartheid organizations, the pursuit of repression and the continued detention of a large number of political prisoners, starting with Nelson Mandela. They will not let up the pressure until the aims being sought have been attained.

Violations of human rights are the blight of international relations, the leprosy of modern times. The Assembly has been witness to the emergence of the most admirable legal instruments and high-minded resolutions, which every State has accepted. How can one not speak here of the emotion of people who are suffering and whose hopes have been suddenly dashed in the face of brute force and the abuse of authority or merely a lack of understanding at man's relentless and courageous march towards freedom? I should like to pay tribute to the Commission on Human Rights, which is striving with all its might to win respect for the values enshrined in the United Nations. This year the Commission has submitted two particularly important drafts to the Assembly, after some years spent on the

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difficult task of putting them together. These are the draft of the second optional protocol covering the abolition of the death penalty and the draft of a convention on the rights of the child. I hope that final consultations will permit the General Assembly to adopt these two drafts by consensus at this session.

Respect for freedom cannot be dissociated from the rejection of terrorism. Resorting to the barbaric practices of terrorism is unwarranted, whatever the circumstances. All terrorists have to be brought to justice. That means that every country must adopt a very firm attitude and that there has to be a concerted response.

With the early prospect of the creation of a Community area without internal borders, there is increased collaboration between the agencies responsible for public order in the Twelve, which consider that, as the threat stands at present, there are no grounds for relaxing their vigilance.

But there is another challenge to democratic values which cannot go unmentioned: the scourge of drug abuse. The tragic events in Colombia last month, when the drug traffickers demonstrated their deadly power, have once again underscored the need to strengthen international co-operation in the fight against drugs. I wish to pay tribute to the authorities of Colombia for their coverage. The Community gives its full backing to them and to the measures taken by the President of the United States. Over and above the action being taken at the regional level, the Twelve consider that an effective solution to drug problems has to be sought in an international context involving producer countries, consumer countries and the countries of transit. It is with that in mind that the Twelve consider that the right forum for this purpose is the United Nations, with its Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, and that they have contributed to the adoption of the new United Nations Convention

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against illicit drug trafficking, opened for signature on 20 December 1988.

The Community attaches the utmost importance to the work of the United Nations, as demonstrated by its very active participation in peace-keeping operations. That is why our first concern is to see the efficiency of the United Nations enhanced and to learn about the initial results of the reforms undertaken for that purpose.

This is the first time that it has fallen to France, which is the current President of the Council of the European Communities, to speak in this capacity before the Assembly on behalf of the Europe of the Twelve. I am conscious of the honour that has been done to me. In France's eyes, the European Community is a very great undertaking whose scope it readily adopts as its own. I hope that the Community's identity will grow stronger as it increasingly opens to the world. Through its voice in international organizations and the presence and action of the "troika" when urgent issues arise, the Community sends out a message of peace from its own peoples to the other peoples of the world. I am happy to have been able to speak on behalf of Europe.

Allow me, in conclusion, to say a few words on behalf of my own country. The ardent desire for peace, the aspiration for progress and the sacred defence of the law all represent, for every man and woman on our planet, the sum total of hope that no force on earth can ever stifle. That is the significance of the steps which France has taken in 1989, with the Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons, action on human rights, action on behalf of Lebanon, and the Paris Conference on Cambodia. That is also why France has resolutely chosen, in the family of nations, to support the most impoverished and least favoured peoples.

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On the threshold of the year 2000, we are faced with and involved in fresh struggles. Let us wage them without beating about the bush and without asking futile questions. Future generations will judge us by the manner in which we have responded to the major challenges of the present, such as the threat to the environment, the crushing poverty of millions of human beings, and the violation of human rights and freedoms. The key word in response to all these problems is this solidarity. It is France's fervent hope that voices will speak out in unison from this prestigious forum to enjoin the international community to give fresh impetus everywhere to dialogue, development and peace.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.