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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 27 September 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)

later: Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Barre (Somalia)
Mr. Mahmud (Bangladesh)
Mr. Manglapus (Philippines)
Mr. Eyskens (Belgium)
Mr. Arens (Israel)
Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalem)

- Organization of work

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statement made by

Mr. Bin Abdullah (Oman)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the fact that, in accordance with the decision taken by the Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1989, the list of speakers for the general debate will close at 6 p.m. today. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. BARRE (Somalia): It is a great privilege for my delegation to participate in the deliberations of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I bring to you, Mr. President, and the delegations assembled here the warm greetings of the President, the Government and the people of the Somali Democratic Republic, and best wishes for the success of this important session of the General Assembly.

Permit me at the outset, Sir, to extend to you the sincere felicitations of my delegation on your unanimous election to the high office of President of this session. Somalia has close brotherly ties with your country, Nigeria, which continues to play a leading and constructive role in furthering the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and in promoting world peace, freedom and development. We assure you of our fullest support and co-operation as you discharge your onerous responsibilities. I take this opportunity also of extending our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

We express our deep appreciation also to Mr. Dante Caputo for the valuable contribution he made to the cause of international peace and co-operation during his term of office as President of the forty-third General Assembly session.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

Similarly, we pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his total dedication to upholding the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and his untiring and relentless efforts to strengthen the Organization as an instrument for the promotion of world peace, security and development. His illuminating report on the issues before us constitutes in our view a significant input to the deliberations of the current session of the Assembly.

With the founding of the United Nations, mankind for the first time established a permanent institutional arrangement for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and co-operation among States. The Charter of the United Nations brought about fundamental changes in international relations, with far-reaching consequences. It expressed the determination

"... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person ... and of nations, large and small ...".

It thus recognized that for world peace to be lasting, it must be underwritten by the attainment of human rights. The Charter also established a new concept of international morality based on peace and justice among nations. No longer can we accept that force alone should determine disputes between nations. Each dispute must be judged in terms of its relative content and merit, and measured in the context of international law.

The Charter of our Organization, in Article 1, upholds the right to self-determination of peoples under colonial rule, and enshrines it as a basic principle.

A watershed in the history of the Organization's involvement was marked by the adoption in 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

Declaration left no doubt about the position of the world community on the question of decolonization. Subjection of people to alien domination and exploitation was proclaimed a denial of fundamental human rights, contrary to the Charter. It also recognized the right of all peoples to self-determination and therefore the right freely to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Further, the Declaration made it clear that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated with it.

The achievements of the United Nations in the fulfilment of the hopes and the aspirations of colonized peoples in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific and other areas to gain the independence of their homelands have indeed been historic. The threefold increase in the membership of the Organization is eloquent testimony to its great success in the field of decolonization. However, the final goal of making this body universal is yet to be attained. In direct contravention of the provisions of the Charter and the Declaration, in various parts of the world forces are dominant that oppose the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and are thus blocking their emancipation. There are numerous examples of the violation of human rights by the brutal forces of occupation and repression. Powers and régimes that make the forcible denial of the fundamental right of peoples to self-determination the foundation and philosophy of their policy continue to hide their positions behind the shield of certain "principles" which they conveniently use to prevent action by the world community against them.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

The United Nations is under an obligation to oppose those forces and take concerted action in support of the legitimate aspirations of oppressed peoples. Somalia firmly believes that complete and full realization of the noble task of the total elimination of all forms of colonialism must continue to be a high priority of the United Nations in order to ensure justice and freedom to all peoples still languishing under the yoke of colonial domination and oppression.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

The Charter does not just stop at aiming at the creation of instruments of human rights, decolonization and peace. It also recognizes that the struggle against hunger, disease, deprivation and illiteracy would have to be waged on a global basis through the collective efforts of all nations. Peace would be fragile at best if the problem of economic and social injustice is not adequately addressed. The words "global interdependence" are no longer merely a fashionable term; they have become a key to the solution of many problems confronting our planet at the present time.

In this context, it is a matter of deep concern to us that most of the developing countries continue to remain outside the mainstream of progress achieved in the world economy in recent years. They are in the throes of severe crises, which tie down their economies and strangle their development process. In most of Africa, for example, per capita incomes have continued to fall. Many of the poorest countries, particularly the least developed countries, have become even poorer. Unemployment in the developing world as a whole has increased enormously. The recovery in the price structure of primary commodities continues to be insufficient to lead to a fundamental change in the overall trend in commodity markets. The debt crisis which erupted simultaneously in many developing countries in the early 1980s, continues unabated, thereby severely straining their development efforts. Real interest rates have remained exorbitant, seriously affecting the economies of developing countries. A resurgence of protectionism in the developed countries continues to impede exports from developing countries. Official development assistance has stagnated and the private flow of resources to developing countries has fallen sharply. A newer and even complex dimension of the development crisis has emerged with accelerated degradation of the global environment, often caused by acute poverty. Thus, developing countries continue to

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

remain prisoners to a system which is outside their control and which has only contributed to deepening and complicating their development crisis.

Undeniably, the required acceleration of growth in the world economy and the integration of the developing countries in that process in an effective and long-term manner requires a supportive international environment. This should include an increased net flow of resources on concessionary terms to developing countries, to meaningfully supplement their own development efforts. This is necessary in order to facilitate the implementation of their structural adjustment programmes, modernize and diversify their economic bases, eradicate poverty, improve their environment and develop their human resources. The reactivation of growth in the developing countries will also depend on their ability to solve the serious debt burden. This acute problem must be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner without any further delay.

The development crisis is dramatized by the plight of the least developed countries, which have been facing formidable structural handicaps and experienced extreme deterioration in their overall socio-economic situation. During the 1980s, despite significant domestic policy measures undertaken by them pursuant to the Substantial New Programme of Action, the effects of their adverse external economic climate have been further exacerbated by the failure to implement the recommendations of the Programme and its mid-term review. In this context, we would like to underscore the significance of enhanced international efforts to reactivate the growth and development of the least developed countries. We would also emphasize the importance of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in 1990, which should adopt a substantial plan of action for the sustained development of the least developed countries for the 1990s.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

The prevailing economic situation in Africa calls for more effective implementation of commitments by developed countries to permit full realization of the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action for the Recovery and Development of Africa, 1986-1990.

The socio-economic crisis that engulfed many developing countries, and particularly the least developed among them, has been further exacerbated by certain developments that have strained the capacity of these countries to survive. Somalia, for example, has become a host to large numbers of refugees, whose number has been swelling in large proportions. The international community has always recognized the Somali people as being the biggest donors to these refugees, who have been provided asylum at a considerable cost to the national economy and social development.

Unfortunately, of late, refugees in Somalia have been experiencing drastic shortages of food, medicine and other relief aid which have created serious hardships and made their very survival almost impossible. While there is a need for a long-term refugee programme in Somalia, which my Government fully supports, we believe that the decision recently made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme to suspend food aid to refugees is unjustified and will have serious implications for their survival. Humanitarian assistance to refugees must not be linked with political considerations. The long-term durable solution of the refugee problem should be the goal that we seek to achieve. Pending the attainment of that goal, the international community is under a moral obligation to continue to provide the refugees with the humanitarian assistance and support they need.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

The efforts of Somalia to promote socio-economic growth and development has been further impeded by the grave humanitarian situation that has developed in some of the northern districts of Somalia. Besides significant loss of human life caused by attacks against government installations and administrative centres by armed bandits, the situation has resulted in a massive displacement of the population and widespread destruction to public and private property. We are concerned about this grave situation.

My Government is indeed grateful to the Secretary-General for his prompt decision to dispatch a fact-finding mission to the area to assess the humanitarian needs of the affected population. We would like to thank the United Nations mission which was entrusted with that task for the diligence with which it carried out its work and for the report which it has prepared and which is now before this Assembly.

On its part, my Government has taken appropriate measures to deal with this grave disaster situation.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

Within the limits of its meagre resources, the Government extended all possible assistance to the affected population in terms of food, medical supplies and other basic needs. In view of the gravity and magnitude of this human problem a great deal of international assistance will be required. Unfortunately, the response of the international community so far has not been adequate. My Government appeals for the necessary support so that the programme for rehabilitation and reconstruction, as recommended by the United Nations mission, can be fully implemented.

A review of current international developments would reveal that the relaxation of East-West tension and ongoing moves to deal peacefully with regional conflicts have had a sobering impact on the overall international situation. However, while the constructive role played by the international community in promoting solutions to the major problems facing the contemporary world could be a cause for satisfaction, there still remain many intractable problems and areas of conflict that continue to threaten international and regional peace and security. Somalia believes that disarmament is a moral imperative in this nuclear age. It is a sine qua non for attaining the most important goal of the Charter, namely the maintenance of international peace and security. The unrestricted arms race has rendered international peace and security ever more vulnerable. The situation calls for dialogue and meaningful negotiations and it was in this context that we expressed our satisfaction at the new spirit of rapprochement between the two super-Powers. It is our earnest hope that the recent changes in East-West relations will have a favourable impact on global disarmament efforts and the lessening of world tension.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

We are gravely concerned at the continuation of the conflict in the Middle East, which is a direct result of historic injustices and brutalities suffered by the Palestinian peoples who were forcibly expelled from their homeland. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem in the Middle East. The courageous uprising, intifadah, of the people of the West Bank and Gaza is an eloquent reminder that there will be no peace in the region unless the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully restored.

The position of Somalia on this question is firm and consistent. We have always extended unequivocal support to our Palestinian brothers in their struggle for the restoration of their inalienable rights to self-determination, freedom and independence, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - their sole and legitimate representative. We welcomed the establishment of an independent State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council last year and were among the first States to recognize it. Somalia is one among the many countries which have consistently supported the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of Palestine on an equal footing with other parties. We believe that the Conference will provide a unique opportunity for negotiations on the basis of the constructive resolutions of the General Assembly on the Middle East. This session of the General Assembly should undertake a decisive course of action in support of the peace process in the Middle East.

Another area of major international conflict is southern Africa. It is imperative for all of us to do everything possible to wipe out the last vestiges of colonialism, racism and apartheid in southern Africa. Somalia, an active member of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, is irrevocably committed to the cause of the oppressed people of Namibia and South Africa in their just and legitimate struggle for freedom, liberty and human dignity.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

Somalia welcomes the commencement of the implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia. The Secretary-General deserves our deep appreciation for his historic contribution to the Namibian cause. However, in this context I should like to enter a caveat in respect of the backdrop of the rapidly unfolding events in Namibia arising from manipulations and manoeuvres by the racist South African régime, including widespread intimidation and harassment of the civilian population aimed at frustrating the process of Namibian independence. We call upon the international community immediately to ensure conditions in Namibia that would enable the Namibian people to participate freely in the electoral process under the supervision and control of the United Nations leading to the early independence of the territory. Somalia urges the Secretary-General to do everything in his power to ensure that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is implemented in its original and definitive form.

The responsibility of the international community to promote human rights and remove threats to peace is nowhere heavier than in the case of South Africa. The Somali Government welcomes the increasing application of measures which demonstrate the world community's abhorrence of the policies of apartheid pursued by the Pretoria régime. Regrettably, however, the apartheid system remains essentially in place and, as recent events show, institutionalized oppression against the majority of the population and against all those who oppose apartheid continues unabated. Member States must undertake concerted global action to ensure the complete eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic society in a united, democratic South Africa.

In the event that the Pretoria régime should continue its policy of internal repression and external aggression the Security Council should take immediate action in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and impose comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the racist South African régime.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

On Afghanistan, Somalia has always looked forward to an early settlement of the conflict in that war-torn territory. We were heartened by the agreements reached by the concerned parties in Afghanistan last year. The phased withdrawal of foreign troops also heightened expectations for an early resolution of the conflict. However, we are deeply dismayed that the situation in Afghanistan is not yet resolved and the incessant suffering of the Afghan people continues seriously to affect peace and stability in the region. We urge all parties concerned to undertake every effort in the search for a peaceful settlement of their differences on the basis of full and consistent implementation of the Geneva Agreements.

On the question of Cyprus, we would like to emphasize the need for dialogue and intercommunal talks which are the only way to reach a just solution by peaceful means. We commend the Secretary-General, whose patient efforts to promote a negotiated settlement have been a major factor in the search for an end to the conflict. We are heartened by the recent meetings conducted at the highest level between the concerned parties, which we consider a positive step forward.

(Mr. Barre, Somalia)

We urge the Secretary-General to continue with his mission of good offices and appeal to all parties involved to co-operate fully with him in a constructive spirit to find a just and lasting solution, taking into account the fundamental rights of both communities.

Somalia firmly believes that the conflict in Cambodia should be settled by peaceful means on the basis of the withdrawal of all foreign forces therefrom, and by ensuring the right of the people of Cambodia freely to determine their destiny without outside interference. While the recently held Paris Conference on Cambodia did not fully translate the expectations of the world community into reality, we trust that all parties involved will continue to exert their influence towards an early resolution of the conflict.

On the question of Korea, my Government supports the peaceful reunification of the Korean people. We hope that the contacts that have taken place between the representatives of the parties concerned will bring about greater understanding and create the necessary conditions for a peaceful resolution of this long-standing problem. In conformity with the principle of universality, which is a fundamental feature of the United Nations, we support the aspiration of the Korean people for membership in the United Nations in order to contribute to the furtherance of international peace, security and co-operation.

As the world enters the third millennium, we, the family of nations, have no option but to face the challenges of the contemporary world. The need of the hour is for fresh and bold action. We must undertake concerted efforts towards a better and nobler life for all of our peoples. Collectively, the nations of the world have enough resources to underwrite our endeavours. The human genius and potentials, which are almost without limit, can provide us with newer and imaginative options at every stage of our journey towards a better world and a

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meaningful common future. Only if we choose to pursue the path of mutual understanding and co-operation can our collective efforts succeed. I most sincerely hope that we make the right choice at the right time, and the time is now.

Mr. MAHMUD (Bangladesh): Mr. President, I am immensely pleased to be able to participate in a United Nations session, whose stewardship rests in the able hands of such an illustrious son of Africa. The Bangladesh delegation shares the pride that our Nigerian colleagues must feel, as our two countries enjoy such close friendship. May I also felicitate the Bureau upon their election and wish them success in the discharge of their responsibilities. Rich tributes are due to your distinguished predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, for the leadership he provided us during the last session.

I must commence my statement with some words of well-deserved praise for our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. His quiet but inspiring diplomacy, his patient endeavours, his courage and perseverance, have helped advance the cause of peace in our times. He has not only carved for himself a niche in our hearts, but has also reserved for himself a place in the pantheon of history.

There is much the United Nations system has achieved, though more remains to be done. None the less, in recent months, the credibility of our Organization has not only been enhanced but the confidence of the global community in its institutions has also taken firm root. Today there is widespread belief that the United Nations has the unique potential and capacity, not only to adjust and accommodate, but also to fashion a concerted response to the multidimensional contemporary problems through a co-operative approach and management.

Last year Bangladesh was devastated by the worst floods in living memory. This Assembly reacted quickly to offer timely succour to the stricken. To help raise resources for longer-term measures a special meeting on assistance to

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

Bangladesh was convened here last year. Since then, vital remedial action has been initiated. A massive national effort was mobilized, under the direct supervision of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, to rehabilitate and reconstruct the affected areas, and to readjust and revitalize their economy. A comprehensive flood-protection programme was formulated. Unparalleled international response, together with the courage and resilience of the people, helped avert the famine and epidemic and the negative growth that were predicted.

We are determined to do all that is possible nationally. However, there is now implicit recognition that disaster control involves co-operation beyond our borders, and resources beyond our modest means. Thus, sustained efforts have been launched bilaterally, regionally and internationally to supplement our national efforts. Special emphasis has been given to the preparation of studies for a durable solution. An international conference on floods in Bangladesh, convened by the World Bank, is scheduled to be held in December this year in London. We hope for your co-operation with a view to its success.

Many of Bangladesh's serious economic problems, severe development constraints and other formidable challenges, exacerbated by environmental degradation, are problems we share with others in a comparable milieu. The decade of the 1980s has thus been a decade of serious disappointment, bordering on despair, for a majority of the developing countries. The gap between the developed and developing nations during this most turbulent period has increased. Although richer nations were able to pull out of a serious economic recession to enjoy the longest period of economic expansion since the Second World War, the crisis in a vast majority of the developing countries has continued unabated.

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Countries in Latin America and Africa have thus remained deeply entrenched in a critical situation. The world's poorest, the least developed countries, continue to be mired in a serious development crisis. Growth in these countries has continued to be either sluggish or even negative. The proportion of "hard-core poor" in these countries has increased staggeringly. Underlying this precarious situation is the reality that all the important elements for sustained development of developing countries are stalling. Commodity prices, so important for these countries, still remain at an unacceptably low level. External indebtedness continues to take a heavy toll on their economies, and the flow of resources continues, paradoxically, to go from the poor of the developing South to the rich in the North.

The reality of interdependence makes these concerns the concern of every country. In Belgrade, earlier this month, President Hussain Muhammad Ershad had underscored, as an undeniable priority, the need for a global consensus on the approaches towards the solution of these problems.

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

Only such a consensus can lead to a solution. This also requires the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive set of measures that address all aspects of the problems that stifle the development of the developing countries. Substantial opportunity exists during the coming months to spell out elements of such a consensus. I speak of the formulation of a development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation, and the second United Nations conference on least developed countries, scheduled for 1990 in Paris. In those important events we should start from the fundamental premise that no unilateral solution to our problems is possible. The end to the crisis calls for a global dialogue and readiness to act decisively on a wide front.

Bangladesh, to improve the global economic climate, would call for concerted and urgent action on the following points:

First, there must be a substantial increase in concessionary financial flows to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, and the flow of the world's investible surplus must be reversed to meet the need for investment in developing countries.

Second, measures must be adopted and implemented to reduce and restructure the crushing debt burden. A growth-oriented debt strategy should be directed towards reduction in interest rates, lowering of interest payments, decisive and substantial reduction of debt obligation and outright cancellation of debt of the least developed countries.

Third, ways and means must be found to improve the export-earning potential of developing countries through the expansion of markets, trade liberalization by means of fulfilment of the standstill and roll-back commitments undertaken in the Punta del Este Declaration, stabilization of export earnings, and linkage of debt repayment terms to commodity price and interest rate fluctuations.

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

Fourth, the crucial link between trade, development, and debt must be recognized.

Fifth, the developing countries must strengthen their efforts to step up the process of scientific and technological development and their consequent ability to adapt to and absorb new technologies.

Sixth, we must concentrate on improving the condition of the least developed countries and on drawing them into the mainstream of the international development process. In that respect, the 1990 United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries should adopt a comprehensive plan of action.

Seventh, food security must be ensured, including emergency measures to expand food production in the least developed countries, ensuring adequate food reserves, access to food, and the creation of a nutrition, employment and health network for the most vulnerable groups.

Finally, human-resource development must be harnessed and mobilized, especially through concentration on an effective basic-needs framework. This should include emphasis on the disadvantaged segments: women, children and the handicapped.

While greater co-operative and urgent action are demanded on the economic front, we can draw comfort from progress made on a number of political issues. These are taking place today on the matrix of a far more relaxed global political backdrop, owing largely to the commendable initiatives and efforts of the super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - their leaders, Governments and peoples. This has created a congenial climate in which the United Nations system can address some specific problems.

Guns have fallen silent in the Gulf region, and the bloodletting entailed in the eight years of fierce fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq has finally ended. Bangladesh is proud to be a part of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

Group which today is helping keep the peace. We hope that direct negotiations between the parties will succeed in achieving a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement as envisaged in Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union deserves to be praised for its commitment to the cause of peace, amply demonstrated by the withdrawal of its troops by 15 February this year. But the suffering of the Afghans has not ceased. Five million refugees, so generously hosted by Pakistan and Iran, have yet to return home. The people of Afghanistan has yet to exercise its inherent right to a system and Government of its choice. The United Nations co-ordinating role must be strengthened in the repatriation of the refugees, the reconstruction of the war-battered country, and the channelling of humanitarian assistance, and in the facilitating of a comprehensive, peaceful settlement in accordance with the Geneva Agreement.

In Cambodia, Viet Nam's offer to withdraw its troops by 30 September, the Jakarta Informal Meeting negotiations, the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and all the parties to the Paris Peace Conference have given rise to a hope for an imminent breakthrough. The recent set-back in Paris must not be allowed to reverse the process. Urgent new attempts need to be made to allow the people of Cambodia freely to determine its own future.

In Namibia, the dawn of freedom is about to break. Its independence has always been a priority item on the United Nations agenda. Bangladesh's total identity with and support for the struggle of the Namibian people have been unswerving. We have been an active participant in the Council for Namibia. As I speak, our soldiers and civilians are on the soil of Namibia as an integral part of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group. The leader of our military observer groups died in Namibia in a tragic accident in the performance of his duties. His supreme sacrifice will be vindicated when the yoke of suppression is

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lifted forever from Namibia. If need be, the United Nations must provide the Secretary-General with the total resources he requires to bring his efforts to fruition.

In divided Cyprus, we welcome the initiation of talks between the two communities without pre-conditions with a view to reaching a negotiated settlement. We hope that the manifest differences will be narrowed. We hope that the contacts between the two Koreas will lead to a reconciliation and a peaceful solution in accordance with the aspirations of the people of that peninsula.

In our own region, South Asia, the fourth summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation in Islamabad in December last year successfully fulfilled its essential mandate in enhancing and consolidating socio-economic co-operation in many new and meaningful directions.

Sadly, some problems remain intractable. In the Middle East, Israel's continued occupation of illegally acquired territories has created an explosive situation. The valiant intifadah of the Palestinian people today serves as a clarion call to mobilize world public opinion against a brutal suppression of freedom. Israel must give up all the Arab territories, including the Golan Heights, that it so wrongly holds. We reiterate our support for the early convening of an international peace conference, of which the Palestine Liberation Organization must be an equal and integral part. The problem of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East crisis and its resolution is a sine qua non for peace in the area.

The hateful system of apartheid continues to bleed South Africa. The pain of the black majority grows more excruciating as thousands, including Nelson Mandela, continue to languish in prison. If Pretoria wishes to attempt to practice what it has now begun to preach, these thousands must be set free and apartheid must be dismantled. The path to freedom may be long, but for the South Africans the

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journey has begun. Bangladesh endorses the need for sustained support to the front-line States. We endorse the call for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the racist régime.

Disarmament remains, as always, in the forefront of our agenda. The Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles has been a historic step forward. A vital follow-up should be the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons by at least 50 per cent and significant cut-backs in conventional forces. As for Bangladesh, a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we are constitutionally committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

We believe, while nuclear disarmament is a priority item, a restraint in conventional arms is both urgent and necessary. We must continue to work towards a comprehensive test ban treaty. The United Nations role in monitoring compliance and verification must be strengthened. Naval arms limitation must be resolutely pursued. A convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States should be concluded. Of vital importance is the need to strengthen security assurances, both positive and negative, to non-nuclear-weapon States. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the globe should be encouraged. We must avoid the urge to make weaponry more sophisticated and thus improve its precision and accuracy and increase its propensity for use.

There is a widespread acknowledgement today of the pressing and urgent need for a convention banning chemical weapons. Important progress in the Conference on Disarmament at its summer session must be pushed to an early conclusion. The Paris Conference and the just concluded meeting in Canberra will certainly supplement pressure to that end. The decision to expand the Conference on Disarmament should be given effect. On the question of the Indian Ocean, we firmly believe that the Ad Hoc Committee should speed up preparatory work so that the Conference can be held in Colombo next year.

After years of ignoring alarm signals, concern over environment has now entered deep into our consciousness. The litany of causes and consequences has now become the jargon of everyday mass media usage. Concerns are growing on the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, greenhouse effect, sea-level rise, acid rain, toxic waste, desertification and deforestation. Affixing blame is an inevitable fall-out. We must not, however, run the risk of being detracted from our goals to protect our planet. The point must not elude us that poverty and

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environmental degradation are inextricably linked. The proposed United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 should be able to draw up a blue-print for combined action, taking due note of the development aspects of the environmental problems. I wish to underscore the call of the Non-Aligned Summit based on the proposal of our President, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, in Belgrade, for an international convention on protection and conservation of global climate. We hope for follow-up action in this Assembly.

Today we are confronted with some social ills that have assumed gigantic proportions. Drugs have invaded our communities and homes, imperilling our societies, our national economies and even international peace and security. Terrorism and mindless violence strike at the very foundations of our society. We believe that only under the central management of the United Nations can we rally together for effective counteraction. This would mean an expanded role for the United Nations system, a role which has become both appropriate and relevant, and will, I am convinced, be performed with vigour and determination.

The Secretary-General has underscored the "social mission" of the United Nations. All our efforts to achieve economic growth would be meaningless if social aspects of development were ignored. High rate of population growth, low literacy, lack of primary health care and safe drinking water, malnutrition, high infant mortality rate - all seriously affect the process of development and even have wider implications for the stability of international relations. Integrally linked with these issues is the need for improvements for vulnerable components of our societies - women, children, the aged and handicapped. In recent years, the United Nations has been the catalyst for international action in this area, and it should promote a global social strategy. In this context, we look forward to the adoption of the long-awaited United Nations convention on the rights of the child by this

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

session of the Assembly. The proposed world summit on children is another commendable initiative that should receive the whole-hearted support of us all.

In the final analysis, all our efforts are directed towards improving intrinsic human worth. The contribution of the United Nations has been to draw up the rules that constitute human rights and give them authoritative definition. The task today is to translate them into reality. The dilemma is to keep pace with rising expectations along a broad and complex range of fronts. To many Member States like us, the right to development is inalienable and deserves topmost priority. It is unacceptable to us that, when over a billion people live on the bare margins of existence, any other right can take priority over the amelioration of their condition.

We must take full advantage of the potential of multilateral co-operation in order to assure a better future. The United Nations is the most universal focal point for such co-operation. To the founding fathers of this world body, the prevention of another global conflagration was the primary objective. Today, in a changed world situation, socio-economic underdevelopment poses an even greater threat to our societies. As the Secretary-General has said in his report this year, the progress we have achieved in the global political climate can prove precarious if the economic climate remains adverse for the majority of the world's population. Environmental degradation on a global scale is another related area of great concern to all of us. The focus of the United Nations in the coming decade should therefore appropriately be directed to these areas. We believe that any issue that affects humankind as a whole should receive priority attention by the Organization. That would not only make the United Nations more relevant and dynamic; through understanding and co-operation, this complex world would be a better place in which to live.

(Mr. Mahmud, Bangladesh)

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of Bangladesh's admission to the United Nations. We are proud to be a part of this world forum. In reaffirming our total commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, we are governed by the vision it conjures of a peaceful and secure world where people can pursue without hindrance or coercion the objective of a fulfilling and acceptable quality of life, consistent with human dignity in larger freedom. In his address at its fortieth anniversary session, President Hussain Muhammad Ershad very eloquently charted the role of the United Nations as being an organization in which "the deepest aspirations of mankind can be fulfilled".

Mr. MANGLAPUS (Philippines): Before you began to occupy that exalted seat, Mr. President, you were already discharging a noble international mandate, having presided for years over the Special Committee against Apartheid. Under your direction, the global counterattack against that insult to the race of man has gained signal victories. And now, there you are, Mr. President, a friend of the Filipinos, who visited us in 1987, a friend of our late martyr, Ninoy Aquino, having worked with him at Harvard. We Filipinos rejoice that it is you who will preside over this body of nations for the next 365 days.

And to Mr. Dante Caputo, the former Foreign Minister of Argentina, let me say how much our prediction of success for his presidency last year has been proved correct. His expert hand steered us through the proceedings without conflict, without incident, without delay. We had faith in him as an outstanding human leader, and he justified that faith.

(spoke in Spanish)

Filipinos can take added pride in the fact that Dante Caputo, our successful outgoing President, is a man who, like us, has his roots in the world of Hispanic culture.

(continued in English)

Last year, I came to this rostrum to bring the Assembly a message from the poor of my country. I said that they are poor not because they come from an indolent race. For, I said, our countrymen now cover the earth: 2 million of us in the Americas, half a million in the Middle East, a quarter of a million in Europe, half a million in Asia and the Pacific - seekers all of toil and life, teachers of nations, physicians of men, builders of industry, designers of modules that challenge the stars and settle on the moon, men and women of skill and diligence, like those of Europe who settled America and here built a new world.

(Mr. Manglapus, Philippines)

I said they are poor not because they do not know how to fight for their rights. For they were the first in Asia to shed their blood against Western colonialism and produce their own republic. Ninety years later, they were the first nation in the world to mass by the millions to confront guns with rosaries and bring down a dictator without the shedding of blood. In those four bloodless, spectacular days of February they raised, under Corazon C. Aquino, the new peaceful rallying cry of people power, which even now is resonating, sometimes unsuccessfully, always gloriously, in the streets of nations in transition on more than one continent of this earth.

I said they are poor not because they multiply too fast. And they know that in rich nations it is the building of cities and industries, not the extermination of human instincts, that has reduced this multiplication.

I said they are poor not because their nation does not grow. For our country does grow. Now that we are free again, although we remain harassed by the extremes of right and left, we have kept to our democratic course and our economy is growing again: last year by 6.8 per cent, last semester by 5.3 per cent.

They are poor, I said, because they have inherited an external debt from the dictator - now \$30 billion - and in order to service it their country must divert about 20 per cent of its annual budget and send out annually \$1.7 billion more than it receives. All these years the countries of the North have insisted that one may not talk of debt relief beyond the boardrooms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Yet international debt forgiveness became a reality just about the time the IMF and the World Bank were born, for both these institutions were conceived by the same bold, victorious, visionary leadership that, remembering the stubborn mistake in 1919 at Versailles, forgave in 1947, in London, 70 per cent of the German debt.

(Mr. Manglapus, Philippines)

And so I called last year for the formation of an international debt and development commission in order to recapture that original vision. The Group of 77 responded quickly, and two resolutions were drafted. The first called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue using his high offices towards a common understanding on a solution to the international external debt. That resolution was passed by the forty-third session of the General Assembly with only one member voting against, and one abstaining.

This year the second resolution, submitted as a draft decision by Tunisia on behalf of the Group of 77 - the one calling for the establishment of the commission on debt and development that I had the privilege of proposing last year - is on the agenda of this Assembly. The draft decision calls upon this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly

"To establish, under the aegis of the Secretary-General, an Advisory Commission on Debt and Development composed of eminent persons from the academic, political and financial sectors with knowledge and experience in international finance, trade and development, to develop innovative approaches and evolve specific proposals related to all types of debt in order to solve the debt problem of developing countries in a manner consistent with their sustained growth and development." (A/C.R/43/L.19).

The draft decision provides that

"Debtor and creditor interests shall be represented in the membership of the Commission, which shall take into account the need for appropriate geographical representation and regional balance." (ibid.).

(Mr. Manglapus, Philippines)

It commands that "The Commission shall take into consideration the various existing studies and recommendations on the subject, including the views of the Secretary-General set out in his report entitled 'Towards a durable solution of the debt problem' and those expressed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the Trade and Development Report, 1988." (ibid.). Finally, it gives this Commission a life of three years and commands it to submit annual reports to the General Assembly. A commission of this kind was proposed by the non-aligned summit in Belgrade early this month.

The Assembly must adopt this draft decision, for the global attack on debt must be pressed. The Assembly must adopt it because you yourself, Mr. President, have articulated the economic, political and social consequences of the international debt. The Assembly must adopt it, for the time is come when original rigidities are yielding to flexibilities. In 1987 Japan suggested IMF-funded bonds to buy out debtors' loans. At the 1988 Toronto summit France proposed the forgiveness of debts of the poorest of the poor in the sub-Sahara. At the forty-third session of the General Assembly last year, French President François Mitterand proposed an IMF-guaranteed conversion of loans into bonds to reduce financial charges of debtor countries and urged creditor countries to finance this scheme. Last year, as we were delivering our opening statements in this Hall, the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States - at the annual IMF-World Bank meeting in Berlin - was standing firm against the use of international aid funds for private-debt reduction.

(Mr. Manglapus, Philippines)

A week later, as I negotiated in Washington a review of the Philippine-United States military bases agreement, the same Secretary of the Treasury began to show flexibility. He agreed to the Philippine position that a portion of United States compensation money could be used for a debt-reduction component of the bases compensation package.

It was for us - and perhaps for all international debtors - a historic breakthrough, a budding promise of universal relief. Four months later the bud blossomed into a full-fledged plan. On 10 March 1989 United States Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady announced that plan, which allows - nay, encourages - the financing of international debt reduction and debt service by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Because of the plan, our Philippine negotiators may soon sign with private banks a debt-relief agreement that could be unprecedented. It will be voluntary, for the extent of debt relief is determined by the willingness of commercial banks to agree to substantial discounts on debts repaid. It will be a substantial debt reduction, possibly up to half of the debt to banks which choose to exit from our borrowing programme. And there will be new resources - up to \$1 billion from the hard core of institutions that will continue to support us.

I spoke to the Assembly last year of our poor. They are still poor, and they are still there, but they may now look hopefully to new horizons.

Flexible minds make new horizons possible. It is the flexible and creative mind of Secretary Brady, bending with the international reality, that has given us this new horizon.

It is, indeed, thank God, the new age of flexibility. I saw it happening in the Soviet Union, too, last month, when I met with Mr. Gorbachev in Moscow, where flexibility is pronounced perestroika and glasnost, and includes the ability to change, to admit past imperfections and to dream of new perfections.

(Mr. Manglapus, Philippines)

Let us aid this new flexibility; let us speed its momentum by providing it with global underpinnings, underpinnings which can emanate only from the peaceful processes of the United Nations and the instruments that awaken its talent to create.

One such instrument could be the proposed Advisory Commission on Debt and Development. The Commission will come to life, not as a challenge to the creditor nations, but, indeed, as a tribute to them and as a move of collaboration by debtor nations in that new openness which creditors have begun to display.

The Brady plan sees forgiveness as essential to revitalizing adjustment and making us credit-worthy again. The Brady plan can jump-start the stalled engines of development of debtor nations. The Brady plan is a beginning, and it must answer still other questions.

Is there no criterion, for instance, with which to judge the application of debt-reduction or relief, except that they should be pursued?

Must we wait until all the physical levels of production and productivity potentials are obliterated for the debt to be written off or forgiven?

Are not meaningful reductions possible only when there are new facilities that are not caught up in the inertia of the international bureaucracy or of strongly held philosophies and interests?

Otherwise, will the focus ever go beyond sub-Sahara?

Should not the Government major actors of the plan be mobilizing their leverage and adjusting their financial regulations? Is it enough to lay out the bare bones, which lose their flavour in the broth of rhetoric?

Should not the Commission be advising not only on how to persuade creditors to reduce debt but also on how to help debtors produce in order to pay debt?

(Mr. Manglapus, Philippines)

There is, for instance, the generation of power - power produces goods; goods pay debts. The Commission could stimulate power-generation and raise the power capabilities of debtor countries. It could ask the question: if rich countries have often been ready to underwrite slum clearances, cannot they launch a programme to underwrite power equipment on concessional terms for the development of a slum-cleared economy that in time will develop the capacity to repay these concessional loans?

Let the world take note that the most outstanding success of the United Nations is the United Nations itself.

The United Nations cap is full of feathers these days. There is a feather for putting Namibia irreversibly on the road to independence and to becoming the 160th Member of the United Nations. There is another feather for the Secretary-General's mediating a cease-fire and bringing fighting between Iran and Iraq to an end. There is a special feather: the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize for the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

There are still other feathers perhaps soon to be pinned on that cap - for United Nations campaigns on drug abuse, on the environment and on terrorism. Can there be United Nations campaigns any more urgent than those against these universally recognized evils - drug abuse, abuse of the environment, terrorism? I submit that there can.

There is a conventional theological faith that every human being is born with original sin. There is a new theology, a theology of bondage, not liberation.

Today a human being is born not only with original sin but also with original debt. To quantify it, the third world now owes \$1.3 trillion to creditors, so every child in that world is indebted up to \$1,000 at the moment of birth. At an

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annual rate of interest of 10 per cent compounded, these human beings at the age of 21 will each owe \$7,000, and if they marry at that age, husband and wife will begin their married life with a joint burden of over \$14,000. Is not that a challenge worthy of 159 Members of the United Nations to take up?

Is not this campaign worthy of being launched now, now that the momentum of flexibility has stirred the ranks of the lenders?

Is not this the moment for the debtors to extend the hand of collaboration to the creditors, in a Commission, as the draft decision puts it,

"of eminent persons from the academic, political and financial sectors with knowledge and experience in international finance, trade and development, to develop innovative approaches and evolve specific proposals related to all types of debt in order to solve the debt problem of developing countries in a manner consistent with their sustained growth and development"?

(A/C.2/43/L.19, para. (a))

Let the Commission be the next feather in the United Nations cap. It will be a timely and elegant feather. A world of hungry debtors awaits its pinning in the United Nations cap.

Mr. EYSKENS (Belgium) (interpretation from French): First of all, allow me warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I am confident that you will carry out the lofty duties of your office with consummate skill and diplomacy, and my delegation will be happy to join in your efforts and co-operate fully with you.

I should also like to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo. The manner in which he guided our activities during the last session has earned him the unanimous esteem of the Assembly.

Following the remarkable statement delivered by my French colleague, Mr. Roland Dumas, on behalf of the European Community and its member States, there is little need for me to taking up every subject in the wide range of concerns shared by the Twelve in today's world.

Some 40 years ago, Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak, then Foreign Minister of Belgium, addressed the third session of the United Nations General Assembly in a remarkable speech that had a world-wide impact. Mr. Spaak, who was also President of the Assembly's first session just after the Second World War, stated in 1948 that Belgium's foreign policy, as well as the foreign policies of other Western democracies, was governed by fear, fear of the totalitarian way of government, fear in the face of territorial expansionism, fear of an ideology of world domination. His famous exclamation - "We are frightened" - characterized the prevailing international climate at that time, the climate that led to the cold war - a kind of "glasfrost" in East-West relations - and, ultimately, to the lowering of an almost hermetically sealed Iron Curtain.

Owing to that fear, the political question of East-West relations was for many years to come to be couched mainly from a military perspective. East-West antagonism exacerbated some third-world conflicts, and an arms race ensued that took on surrealistic dimensions.

(Mr. Eyskens, Belgium)

It is a fact of history that equilibrium based on mutual deterrence has been the contributing factor in the prevention of a third world war. Today, however, we find that the arms race has put a considerable strain on our economies and has swallowed up tremendous sums that could otherwise have been channelled into social benefits or into development assistance. In addition, new technologies in modern armaments, as well as the proliferation of all kinds of weapons, seem even to have increased the danger of a sudden conflict's escalating beyond control.

It has now become obvious - although the obvious is not always apparent - that peaceful co-operation is an infinitely more secure, more moral and less expensive basis on which to build peace than are relations expressed in terms of pure military strength.

The political and economic reforms now being introduced in various socialist countries fill us with hope - hope for courageous policies of renewal, hope for more democratic and prosperous societies and, in particular, hope that the old feelings of fear and mutual distrust may gradually be transformed into ever-growing mutual trust through enhanced East-West co-operation. Reforms in Eastern-bloc countries have become absolute necessities under the pressure of various factors that have shown themselves more powerful than even the best-equipped ideologies.

The media and other modern means of communication have shrunk our world to village proportions. At the end of the day no State can afford to live in isolation, ignoring the outside world. New technologies, offsprings of creativity, research and the exercise of the critical spirit, meet with difficulties when trying to expand in centrally planned systems. The market economy, however imperfect, appears to be better suited to bringing about the third industrial revolution. As President Mitterrand recently stated, it is no coincidence that the countries with a democratic, pluralistic political system and a market economy

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based on free competition, subject, of course, to social correction, are also the ones in which the greatest degree of political and economic freedom for the greatest number of citizens goes hand in hand with the highest level of well-being and social justice. More than subtle ideological hair-splitting, hard facts demonstrate that a Western social and economic model of development, linked with the principle of pluralistic democracy, exerts an immense attraction for many countries in the world. That is given further confirmation in Europe by the continuous flow of refugees and immigrants from East to West.

It is clear that efforts made in the field of armaments, which in certain countries has accounted for up to 15 per cent of gross national product in recent years, have completely precluded the pursuit of economic policies that can effectively address the needs of the populations. Consequently, economic and political reform must be accompanied by arms control and arms reduction if political decision-makers want to avoid a number of vicious circles.

We realize how difficult and delicate the implementation of such a process of political reform can be. The complementarity of economic and political liberalization entails striking an extremely fragile balance. As Foreign Minister Roland Dumas stated on behalf of the Twelve, the fact that China has not acknowledged this fact and this parallelism has given rise to a tragic reversal.

We welcome the favourable developments that have emerged from the disarmament negotiations in Vienna and Geneva. The numbers now on the table can be qualified as quite spectacular. The reduction of the level of armaments must be established in a balanced and reciprocal manner, and it must be accompanied by absolutely trustworthy verification mechanisms. Those are the prerequisites for an even more comprehensive disarmament process.

(Mr. Eyskens, Belgium)

We also welcome President Mikhail Gorbachev's reference to the possibility of a "defensive defence", that is, a disarmament process that renders any attack impossible and that, at the same time, continues to guarantee effective defence utilizing the most modern weapons at the lowest possible level of deployment. That is precisely what we have always tried to achieve. Indeed, our primary goal is to arrive at a state of defence that is mutually and sufficiently deterrent with the smallest possible arsenal, thereby creating maximum stability and security.

(Mr. Eyskens, Belgium)

Belgium hopes that new disarmament agreements between East and West can be very rapidly concluded, and that as a consequence major financial resources can gradually be freed so that we can pay more attention to other priorities. In the Eastern bloc as well as in Western countries, these financial resources could be spent on modernizing economic and industrial structures and on improving social conditions. Also, we must not forget conservation of the environment and the establishment of a suitable policy on the environment. A major conference on this subject is to be held shortly in Sofia as part of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The United Nations also has an important role to play in this field, particularly in respect of preparing universal rules and standards. In this context, the important Conference on Environment and Development, which is to take place in 1992, will be a real challenge, one which we must meet. We did not receive our planet Earth, which is getting smaller every day, as an inheritance from our parents: rather, we have borrowed it from our children. Our responsibility here is enormous, irrespective of what our economic and political systems may be.

Disarmament and better understanding between East and West can also have a decisive influence on the North-South dialogue and can shed a fundamentally different light on what the approach should be to the problems of the third world.

If confidence between East and West grows, many regional conflicts, which are in fact tragic side-effects of the tensions between the two great Powers, can probably be ended. We cannot but rejoice at the progress made in this area and at the many efforts made by all sides toward solving, peacefully through talks and negotiations, a whole range of regional conflicts and chronic tensions. It is none the less true that there are situations still persisting which provide heart-rending examples of violence and repression, such as Lebanon - until

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recently - and the Middle East and various other regions. Belgium pays a tribute to the Arab League and to the three mediators for the positive role they have played in the Lebanese question, and hopes that the peace process in that region will enable us to bring a speedy end to hostage-taking and to the inhuman fate that has befallen five of my compatriots whose names have been added to the long, sad list of hostages from other countries.

Improved East-West relations and better economic conditions in the industrialized countries are vitally important in our relations with the third world countries. At the special session of the General Assembly in 1979 and at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Manila, I submitted a proposal, on behalf of Belgium, for the implementation of a pact for growth in solidarity between the industrialized countries and countries in the third world which wished to join. The pact envisaged a substantial increase in development aid in direct proportion to the economic growth in each participating country and was geared to generating growth within the third world itself. Now that the world economy is healthier and East-West relations are developing in a positive direction, I think that this Belgian proposal could be brought up to date and submitted to the appropriate United Nations organs for thorough examination.

If we could unite our forces to usher in a post-cold-war era, other proposals and ideas could be envisaged. Why, for example, should it be inconceivable to implement triangular development projects, to be carried out, in a third-world country, by a Western country in association with an Eastern-bloc country? Why, indeed?

Concerning the explosive problem of the indebtedness of the third-world countries - although other countries are also facing the snowballing, devastating effects of debt burdens - Belgium supports the multilateral approach of the

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International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Belgium recently decided on cancellation, pure and simple, of the State-to-State loans made to 13 African countries. Moreover, Belgium and Zaire have concluded an agreement for Belgium to waive payment of a third of Zaire's commercial debt to Belgium and to reschedule the outstanding interest payments. The package was coupled with the establishment of a reutilization fund in Zairian currency for local development projects. We hope that this agreement between Belgium and Zaire will set an example to other creditor and debtor countries.

In respect of Africa, and primarily Rwanda and Burundi, Belgium is pursuing a coherent policy towards reaching imaginative solutions to debt problems, with firm emphasis on joint management of the funds allocated to development.

The problems of the third world have been considerably aggravated by the scandalous traffic in arms, itself too often financed by the even greater disgrace of the traffic in drugs. Belgium favours an effective international embargo on all arms exports to belligerents, and we welcome the remarkable and extremely courageous efforts of the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, and the President of Colombia, Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, in combating drug production and trafficking.

The international community will understand that the countries of the European Community attach great importance to respect for human rights and that our aid and co-operation are assessed in terms of the progress made in human rights. Indeed, we believe that all people, as individuals, as human beings, wherever they are in the world, have the right to the full enjoyment of their inalienable rights and the exercise of their fundamental freedoms. In saying this, and in acting as we do, we Europeans cannot but be modest and self-critical. This year, 1989, is the year we

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are commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War on our old continent, which saw the most terrible and complete negation of human rights in the history of mankind.

(Mr. Eyskens, Belgium)

Belgium would like to pay a tribute to the unrelenting efforts of the United Nations and fully associates itself with them. Thus Belgium is participating in the United Nations action in Namibia and has sent people there as part of the peace-keeping operations to assist in monitoring the independence process. I wish to pay a tribute to the tireless efforts and devotion of the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and of his staff, which have led to the achievement of solutions to many conflicts through negotiation and conciliation.

We also fully support the efforts that are being made within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to reach an agreement on the banning of all chemical weapons. We must all work together to enable the United Nations to work even more effectively. Theoretical and ideological debates are not getting us far enough; only programmes of concrete action are worthwhile.

The European Community - with its common market soon to be achieved, with economic and monetary unity, having in view a political unification, hence a common foreign and security policy - this Community, comprised of 12 member States, hopes to become an increasing factor in stability, peace and co-operation in the world, especially in Europe.

I sometimes wonder whether this Europe we are striving for is being perceived correctly abroad. There are those who fear the Community, others who encourage it, and still others who ignore it.

The Europe of today was born of dreams but also of a sense of the realities which, 40 years ago, gave rise to the first attempts at integration. Europe is neither a self-centred fortress nor a mill open to all passing winds. Rather it seeks to be a magnet and a model for progress, generating freedom and happiness for its citizens. This Europe of the Twelve is not a Power; it is a potent force.

(Mr. Eyskens, Belgium)

This Europe which is ours and which we are continuing to build day by day prefers co-operation to confrontation in all its affairs. We firmly believe that a strengthened European Community can contribute significantly to the establishment of genuine co-operation between East and West, so that the last scars left by the Second World War can finally be healed in our hearts and in reality.

A common European house is conceivable only if it is indeed a truly democratic house, where every citizen will be free to enjoy his fundamental political and economic freedoms as well as adequate social protection - where State authorities serve the individual and not the contrary.

"Everybody is somebody" must be the humanist maxim of Government in our modern societies, where the growing complexity tends to overwhelm the individual. We must therefore give priority support to those countries that effectively implement policies of reform based on those values. That is the reason for our present aid to and co-operation with, countries such as Poland and Hungary.

The common European house - that of co-operation between East and West - need not result in a Europe of uniformity. It may have different rooms in which each separate people may organize itself as a State, according to its right to self-determination. But it is obvious that such a European house is unthinkable as long as a Berlin Wall continues to divide Europeans.

There are many signs of hope appearing on the horizon. Let that hope not be deceived. After decades of fear and mutual terror, reciprocal confidence must increase. It is not too early; indeed it is high time.

Mr. ARENS (Israel): The United Nations was founded by the nations that had fought and won the most terrible war mankind has known - a war against racism, fascism, and man's inhumanity to man. This war began with Hitler's onslaught on Poland.

(Mr. Arens, Israel)

Fifty years ago this week, after intense fighting, the German army entered Warsaw. It was the inevitable outcome of the agreement reached at Munich a year earlier, in which Britain and France surrendered to Hitler's demands and sacrificed democratic Czechoslovakia in the name of self-determination and for the sake of what they thought was "peace in our time".

The month of September 1939 marked the beginning of the greatest and most terrible war known to mankind. That war will for ever be associated with the Holocaust - the systematic attempt by Nazi Germany to annihilate the Jewish people. Six million Jews - almost all of Europe's Jews - were murdered, first by being starved, beaten and shot to death, and later by being gassed in industrialized murder factories designed and installed for the express purpose of mass murder of Jews at Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Sobibor, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen and other now infamous sites. Wherever the German army reached, no Jewish community escaped. In every town and village occupied by the Wehrmacht scarcely any Jews survived.

At first, no one knew; and then no one believed. And then when it was already known in the capitals of the Allied Powers that day by day thousands of Jews - men, women and children - were being put to death, nothing was done to help. Many still prefer to believe that nothing could have been done - that the German army was too powerful, the Allies too weak, the distances too great. But now we know. Much could have been done; many could have been saved.

(Mr. Arens, Israel)

In April of 1943, the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto revolted. A handful of men and women, almost unarmed, facing impossible odds, they held out against the German army for one whole month. At that time, von Paulus' army had already been crushed at Stalingrad, Rommel had been defeated in the Western Desert and Allied armies had landed in North Africa. Allied forces were bombing the cities of Germany by day and night. The Allies were winning the war on land, at sea, and in the air.

But no help, not even a sign of encouragement, was extended to the Jewish fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto.

It was in the two following years, leading up to the Nazi surrender, that the Nazi murder machine moved into high gear and millions of Jews were murdered. In the closing months of the war in Europe, while the German army was reeling in defeat on all fronts, the crematoria continued to devour their victims.

It was during the very last months of the war that Hungarian Jewry perished.

Many of those Jews who succeeded to escape Hitler's Europe and tried to reach the shores of Palestine were turned back to certain death.

The Holocaust, the murder of six million by Nazi Germany and its henchmen, the abandonment of the Jews by the rest of the world, remains engraved forever in the heart and soul of mankind.

In November 1947, the Holocaust still a vivid memory, the United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed a decision taken by the League of Nations 26 years earlier. Then the League had given international recognition to the Zionist movement and its goal - the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. In 1947, the United Nations called for the establishment of the Jewish State in a fraction of the territory originally designated for this purpose by the League of Nations.

That decision was rejected by the Arab world, just as the Arab world had over the years consistently denied the rights of the Jewish people in their ancient

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homeland. As the British Mandate expired on 15 May 1948 and Israel's independence was declared, Israel was invaded by the armies of the surrounding Arab States. In those days, Israel stood alone, 650,000 Jews fighting for their lives only a few years after Europe had been turned into a Jewish graveyard.

Israel had no choice but to win that war, just as it had to win four succeeding wars launched against it by the surrounding Arab countries.

The United Nations resolution of 1947 is today part of Israel's history, an expression of support for Zionism - the right of the Jewish people to their own State in their ancient homeland. But in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly, greatly enlarged, but unfortunately not grown in moral stature, adopted the infamous "Zionism is racism" resolution that makes a sham of the United Nations resolution adopted 28 years earlier, and that continues to this day to be a stain on the record of the Organization. As long as this resolution is not revoked, no moral authority can accompany United Nations decisions, and an air of hypocrisy continues to envelop its debates.

Israel has learned to be in the minority at the United Nations, just as we have learned to exist in the dangerous environment of the Middle East. We live in a constant state of alert, allocating a great part of our resources to defence, determined to fight terrorism and ward off aggression.

Some say that this is paranoia - a paranoia engendered by the Holocaust, the Jews still living in fear of their very existence, preparing to defend themselves against imaginary enemies. But is this really a figment of Israel's imagination?

The Arab armies surrounding Israel maintain an inventory of modern weaponry - tanks, aircraft, missiles, artillery - larger than all the weaponry of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. During the past decade, military equipment valued at about 100 billion dollars was purchased by the countries of that area. We

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ask ourselves, why is this weaponry there, most of it directed against Israel? Is it possible that these weapons might be used against Israel, and against Israel's civilian population?

We have already experienced five wars; we have lost thousands of our sons in Israel's defence. We see around us a Middle East that is brutal and fanatic, where no mercy is shown even to civilians. A million soldiers were killed in the Iraqi-Iranian war, where the most modern weapons of mass destruction were applied, including chemical warfare used on a massive scale by the Iraqi army. The universal agreement against the use of chemical warfare was broken not only in attacks against combatants, but also against Kurdish civilian villages. These outrages went almost unnoticed by the world, but not by us in Israel, remembering our own experience and knowing that Iraq is closer to Israel than New York is to Washington.

In recent months, the civilian population of Beirut and the Christian enclave north of Beirut were under fire from Syrian army artillery. The killing of innocent civilians went on day by day, the attackers gaining confidence that they can continue the killings with impunity. Is it then paranoia when Israel, in this environment and under these circumstances, feels itself threatened?

Are we aspiring to a needless luxury when we put forth the claim to secure and recognized boundaries? Are we wasting our resources when we maintain an army capable of defending ourselves? Are we imposing on the great nations of the world when we plead with them not to arm those of our neighbours that daily announce their hostility to Israel? Are we wrong when we ask that no encouragement be given to terrorists who in their war on Israel have committed some of the worst atrocities the world has seen since the Second World War?

(Mr. Arens, Israel)

And yet Israel, embattled and beleaguered, continues in the quest for peace. Many of the Arab rulers seem to have no desire for peace with Israel, no matter what the conditions. Worse yet, it is the aim of these rulers to prevent others from making peace with us.

As a result, the peace process in the Middle East moves at a glacial pace. It took 30 years before Egypt reached out to meet Israel's outstretched hand - 30 years and five wars. Israel paid a tremendous price for the Israeli-Egyptian peace Treaty, a price unprecedented in the annals of conflict resolution between nations. With the signing of that Treaty 10 years ago, we had hoped that the other Arab States would quickly enter into negotiations with us, but this has not happened - at least not yet.

In May of 1983 we signed an agreement with Lebanon that would have normalized relations between our two countries and that entailed the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces from Southern Lebanon. But that agreement was scuttled by Syrian interference. They had other plans for Lebanon.

(Mr. Arens, Israel)

Six years have passed and the Lebanese tragedy continues. Southern Lebanon is still a staging-ground for terrorist attacks by the PLO and the Hezbollah against the towns and villages on Israel's northern border.

This is the threatening nature of our environment, and we ignore it only at our peril. However, we will not resign ourselves to this cruel reality. We will leave no stone unturned in our quest for peace.

That is why, in April of this year, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir unveiled Israel's four-point peace initiative.

We call for a common Israeli-Egyptian effort to build, on the foundations of the Camp David accords that brought about the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, a comprehensive peace for the Middle East.

We call on the 20 Arab countries, at present in a state of war with Israel, to cease hostile propaganda and economic boycott and begin a process of normalizing their relations with Israel.

We call on the international community of nations to participate in an effort to rehabilitate the Palestinian refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

We call on the Palestinian Arab population in Judea, Samaria and Gaza to cease acts of terrorism and violence, and we announce our readiness to hold free democratic elections so that they can choose their representatives for negotiations with Israel on an interim agreement and eventually on the terms of a permanent settlement.

There is no alternative way to move the Middle Eastern peace process forward. Rejection of this initiative is synonymous with rejecting progress towards peace.

We call on all nations to support Israel's peace initiative, and we call on the Arab world to respond favourably to it. This is not the time to attempt to

(Mr. Arens, Israel)

wring concessions from Israel that relate to the permanent settlement. Our immediate objective must be to put an end to violence and to get negotiations going. Putting the cart before the horse can only stall the process itself.

If the representatives of the Palestinian Arab population in Judea, Samaria and Gaza will come to the negotiating table cognizant not only of the rights and aspirations of the population that will have freely chosen them, but also aware of Israel's rights and legitimate concerns, there is an excellent chance that negotiations will lead to agreement. Moreover, the democratic experience not as yet prevalent in the Middle East will no doubt serve as an example to all nations of the region. That in itself will be an important contribution to peace in the area, because war and terrorism do not flourish in democratic societies.

I urge all member nations of this Organization to lend their support to Israel's continuing efforts to end warfare and bloodshed in the Middle East.

I call on the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to utilize the opportunity of our presence at the United Nations General Assembly and to meet with me to discuss how we can move from belligerency to peace, and from hostility to friendship.

I call on the Palestinian Arab population in Judea, Samaria and Gaza to desist from violent acts and to make every effort to help establish the conditions that will permit the holding of free, democratic elections.

The peace process in the Middle East requires courage, patience and perseverance. We in Israel are dedicated to the peace process. We shall continue to pursue it despite all obstacles. We expect your support.

Prince Mohamed BOLKIAH (Brunei Darussalam): At the very outset, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Your election to this high office is an expression of confidence in your great diplomatic skill and your wealth of experience that will contribute to a successful conclusion of our work. My delegation and I are confident that you will be able to give this session wise guidance.

I also wish to extend our congratulations and thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his excellent service as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

Our congratulations and appreciation also go to the Secretary-General for his unceasing efforts and devotion to his work for the United Nations.

As 1990 approaches, we are leaving behind a decade much of which has been characterized by a succession of international crises in many parts of the world. However, many fundamental changes and developments have also taken place in the closing years of the 1980s. The easing of tension between the super-Powers has gained momentum, as demonstrated by the summit meetings between the United States and the USSR and between the USSR and China. The drive for peace in many parts of the world has led to attempts by the United Nations and other regional organizations to resolve problems which in the last decade seemed insoluble.

In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has withdrawn its troops, although a political settlement and durable peace remain to be achieved. In Namibia, the terms for a settlement have been agreed. We hope that very soon Namibia will be able to hold a free and fair election, and we look forward to welcoming Namibia in our midst as a fully independent and sovereign nation. The Iran-Iraq war has

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

stopped but the process of reconciliation has been very slow. As for South-East Asia, there are ongoing regional as well as international efforts to resolve the Kampuchean problem. We should continue to strive for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

It is encouraging to note that the international situation has changed, bringing a new attitude to solving conflicts. There is a more conciliatory trend now. This is in line with the principles of the United Nations that call on its Member States to settle disputes by peaceful means. Hence, the principles of the United Nations have increasingly gained in importance as instruments promoting peace and stability in the world today.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

Furthermore, the current improvement in the world situation has been effected by the responsible attitude of Member States of this world body in respecting those principles. These developments should offer better prospects for peace around the world.

It is a sad fact that the negotiation of disputes does not always guarantee complete peace and stability. In a number of cases, while negotiations have taken place, violent hostilities or rivalry between the parties concerned continue, and thus hinder a comprehensive solution, thus perpetuating the misery of the ordinary citizens. We have arrived at just such a position in the attempts to settle the problems in the Iran-Iraq war, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Kampuchea and in other cases. This does not augur well for the further improvement of the general world situation. In those conflicts where a comprehensive solution remains elusive, owing to failure at the negotiating level, the scourge of war will remain a threat. Peace is not merely the absence of war. Unless it is realized that the cessation of hostilities must be accompanied by a genuine desire to resolve disputes at the negotiating table, conflicts around the world will be far from being settled.

I am particularly concerned that despite increasing international efforts, peace and stability have not been achieved in such areas as the Middle East, South Africa and Kampuchea.

The Palestinian problem remains a matter of great concern to the international community. The cries for justice and freedom in the occupied Palestinian territories continue to fall on deaf ears. Despite world condemnation, Israel still continues to pursue its aggressive policy and to refuse to recognize the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Such a negative attitude,

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Brunei Darussalam)

especially towards the convening of an international conference, will only lead to the escalation of violence and fighting in the occupied territories. My delegation feels that the International Conference would be useful in bringing all parties concerned to the negotiating table. We also wish to reaffirm our view that the Palestine Liberation Organization should be included in the Conference as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

The intensity of the conflict in Lebanon saddens us. The international community watches in horror as the population endures daily carnage. While there is no simple solution to the 14-year-old conflict, we should not leave Lebanon to its own fate either. In the name of humanity, we urge those who have influence with the opposed parties to continue to find a way to end the conflict. In this regard, I welcome the effort of the Arab League to appoint a tripartite commission.

Another depressing problem that continues to challenge this world body is the apartheid system of the racist régime in South Africa. The régime not only arrogantly and stubbornly refuses the international calls to dismantle its evil system but also uses a policy of aggression to oppress the black population. Thus, we would like to repeat our support for the international community in calling on South Africa to stop its racist policy of apartheid and to grant the black majority of the South African population their basic rights to equal opportunities and equal participation in the political process. In this connection, we would also like to reaffirm our support for the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions on South Africa in order to put greater pressure on the régime to end its oppressive policy of apartheid.

In our own region of South-East Asia, it is regrettable that the recent International Conference in Paris did not succeed in bringing about a comprehensive

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

settlement of the problem of Kampuchea. Once again, the parties concerned in the conflict could not agree on the elements and terms for a lasting peace. The unilateral withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea this month will not guarantee peace and stability in Kampuchea, unless there is an answer to the question of the provisional or interim authority, from which the process of national reconciliation and assurances of the observance of the peace process should evolve. At the Paris Conference the parties concerned did not speak the language of reconciliation; rather suspicion and rivalry predominated.

The lack of success should be attributed as much to the absence of political will and unwillingness to compromise as to the failure to subordinate sectional interests to greater national interests. Testing each other's strength on the battlefield in order to arrive at a solution is a dire option which would have disastrous consequences. However, despite the absence of progress in the recent International Conference on Kampuchea, the fact that it has taken place reflects the continued commitment of the international community to resolution of the long-standing problem through peaceful means. It is vital that we should not abandon that commitment to the finding of a peaceful comprehensive settlement.

Today I have pointed out some areas where some progress has been made and where disputes could be settled peacefully through negotiation and I have stressed the importance of pursuing negotiation as a better means of ending conflicts than settling them by force. We are all aware of the attendant difficulties, but it is our wish that this option of settling disputes by peaceful means should prevail. And so we call on the parties concerned to show the necessary political will and we call on all members of this body to support the United Nations efforts to achieve the peaceful solution of conflicts wherever they may occur.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: With reference to agenda item 28, entitled "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa", I wish to inform the Assembly that I have received a letter, dated today, from the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, reading as follows:

"On behalf of the African Group of the United Nations, and as Chairman of the Group for the month of September 1989, I am urgently requesting that the Assembly consider, in plenary meeting and under agenda item 28 of the current session of the General Assembly, entitled 'Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa', a draft resolution entitled 'Death Sentence of a South African Patriot'".

The letter was signed by Alfredo Lopes Cabral, Chairman of the African Group for the month of September.

(The President)

With the concurrence of the Assembly, therefore, and at the request of the Chairman of the Group of African States this item will be considered tomorrow as the second item at the morning meeting. The text of the relevant draft resolution will be issued later this afternoon and will be circulated in the General Assembly Hall.*

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BIN ABDULLAH (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like at the outset to offer Ambassador Garba of Nigeria our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We are fully confident that with his wide experience and eminent expertise he will conduct the work of the session with the greatest skill. I should also like to thank his predecessor, representing the fraternal Argentine Republic, for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

One of the most conspicuous and distinctive features of the United Nations is the work of the General Assembly at its regular annual sessions, together with the valuable discussions that take place in the search for the optimum means of preserving international peace and security and promoting international co-operation as the major objectives that the principles of the United Nations and its Charter strive to achieve.

It can be said that a greater measure of peace prevails in the world at present, despite the continued existence of focal points of regional and international conflicts and disputes resulting from the fact that a number of

*Mr. Navajas Mogro (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

Member States fail to honour their international commitments and obligations. Our efforts must therefore focus on eliminating the difficulties that prevent the resolution of those situations so that such peace as we now experience will not once more be transformed into a state of heated confrontation.

Taking this as our point of departure it is necessary for us to expand the scope of international consultation with regard to all remaining problems. We must encourage or bring pressure to bear on parties that continue to ignore the role of the United Nations and finally to agree to work within the framework of international legitimacy.

With the easing of formerly strained relations between the forces of East and West, and in particular between the two super-Powers, a global dialogue has been instituted so that the message of peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes have begun to make their presence felt from Kampuchea to Afghanistan and from the Arabian Gulf to southern Africa. This positive climate and the international momentum generated by the beginning of the end of polarization have both opened up new prospects that must be sustained by one and all and by all available means.

Peace will continue to be the pre-eminent goal that my country strives to achieve through its policies in general. In the light of that attitude, the Sultanate has devoted all available resources to alleviating tension in the region in an endeavour to secure a peace built on good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence among all peoples. The Sultanate of Oman has from the outset adhered to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes in its relations with its neighbours as one of the principal foundations of its foreign policy. We are happy to see that that principle has now become a positive phenomenon at the international level and is becoming prevalent in endeavours to contain numerous regional problems and disputes.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

It is evident that the momentum produced by the global dialogue has given hope to the peoples of the Gulf region for the consolidation of peace and co-operation. Under the auspices of the Secretary-General, the negotiations between Iraq and Iran on the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) are still continuing with a view to bringing about a durable peace between those two countries. However, despite the lapse of more than 12 months since the first round of negotiations began, the only provision of resolution 598 (1987) to have been implemented is the provision requiring the commitment of both parties to a cease-fire. At the forty-third session of the General Assembly, we were hopeful that by the present session the Secretary-General and the two parties to the conflict would have been able to secure the full implementation of resolution 598 (1987) which we believe to be binding since both parties concerned have pledged that they will meet their international obligations.

We are fully aware that each party faces difficulties and that each of them has compelling grounds for adhering to its own viewpoint and its own interpretation of the provisions of the resolution. We nevertheless believe that the need to achieve peace, as well as adherence to the spirit of international legitimacy, to the principles that underlie the rules of international law and to the accepted precedents with regard to regional conflicts, must be adopted as the paradigm for the thinking of the two sides as well as in the negotiations between them. We believe that it is the responsibility of the Security Council to assist the two parties to the conflict to reach an understanding of the principles on which Security Council resolution 598 (1987) is based because that will enable the Secretary-General to present a uniform concept to both parties to the dispute instead of having each of the parties present him with a conflicting perception of the same resolution.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

It is incumbent on us all to urge both Iraq and Iran to co-operate with the Secretary-General and with the Security Council in order to ensure the implementation of the resolution in question. We are prompted to make this assertion by the belief that the leaders of both countries have a strong desire for peace and that the climate of public opinion in both countries and the deep sentiments and common interests that link the peoples of Iraq and Iran are all factors that go to form a fitting backdrop for co-operation which must inevitably have a positive influence for peace.

In the Middle East the question of Palestine remains without that political solution which would secure the legitimate political and human rights of the fraternal Palestinian people, a people which suffered a calamity some 40 years ago and which continues to confront an unknown destiny. The United Nations faces a severe test of its credibility with respect to the achievement of peace and security in the Middle East.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

One wonders how long the deteriorating situation that portends insufferable consequences in Palestine can be tolerated, and how long it is possible to acquiesce in Israeli policies in the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

By its rejection of Arab and international proposals for the convening of an international peace conference so that a durable solution can be sought guaranteeing peace and stability to all the peoples of the region, Israel is jeopardizing the peace and security of the Middle East. Israel's persistence in pursuing an arbitrary and obdurate policy towards the Palestinian people, Israel's denial of national and human rights of that people whether by direct force of arms or by intimidation, are unacceptable to the civilized world.

In the international information media, the world daily witnesses the bloody and unequal confrontations between defenceless Palestinians - men, women and children rising in revolt in order to regain their usurped rights - and the Israeli army fully equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry and occupying Arab territory in defiance of the will of the international community.

In the declarations made by its leaders, Israel has frequently asserted that it takes no heed of, and indeed has no regard for, the will of the international community whenever that will conflicts with its ambitions and interests. Israel, by its conduct, has also demonstrated that it has no respect whatever for international law and custom. If it had, then what law could it be that accords Israel the right to detain Palestinians for a full year without trial in their own occupied territory? On what code of law does Israel base itself in demolishing the homes of Palestinian citizens and expelling them from their homeland for no other reason than their rejection of Israeli domination and occupation?

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

The international community must act to halt these unlawful and inhuman practices. The time has come for Israel to yield to logic. It is time for Israel to enter into dialogue with the representatives of the Palestinian people; and it is the international conference, enjoying as it does the blessing of the international community, which provides the most appropriate forum for such a dialogue. If Israel persists in rejecting the logic of peace, then the Middle East will constantly remain a cause of concern and a source of danger to international peace and security.

It is a matter for regret that the international community should remain silent before Israel's refusal to implement those Security Council resolutions calling for the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Lebanese territory as a first step towards the restoration of Lebanon's unity, security and stability. We commend the efforts made by the Tripartite Arab Committee set up to resolve the Lebanese crisis, and we call upon our brothers in Lebanon, of all religious and political persuasions, to rally together and to place the best interest of their country above all other interests and considerations so that Lebanon may surmount its constitutional crisis and once again become the symbol of peace, love and brotherhood it once was.

My country recognizes and believes in the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes on a basis of mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and self-determination. It is for this reason that the Sultanate of Oman welcomed and gave its support to the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan signed on 14 April 1988. The Sultanate of Oman hails the completion of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country. We consider the withdrawal an important and fundamental step which has helped bring about a rapprochement of viewpoints among the various factions in Afghanistan, a step which has opened the way for the Afghan people to choose the system that it itself desires without outside interference.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

The Sultanate of Oman is hopeful that the parties concerned will succeed in forming a government that will bring together all segments of the Afghan people and that will endeavour to bring about the return of the Afghan refugees to their homes, preserve the Islamic identity and neutrality of Afghanistan and establish the necessary relations of good-neighbourliness with contiguous States, including the Soviet Union.

The ASEAN States have made exhaustive efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the Kampuchean problem. The Sultanate of Oman, commends those efforts, and particularly those made by Indonesia in this connection and regards the outcome of the international Conference on Kampuchea recently held at Paris as auspicious. We are fully confident that the results will lead to the inception of a new era for the Kampuchean people enabling that people to bring down the curtain on the tragedies of the past and begin to rebuild its country under a system of government chosen by itself for itself. Despite the fact that the Paris Conference did not achieve any concrete progress, it is important that a dialogue continue among all parties so that a political solution to the Kampuchean problem be achieved.

On the threshold of the 1990s, we find ourselves imbued with a sense of optimism with regard to the role of diplomacy and negotiation as valuable and prestigious instruments in international relations. We had hoped that the new turn towards optimism in international relations would make a significant and decisive contribution to the future of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean so that the relevant conference could be held in Colombo in 1990 as a first step towards the implementation of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2832 (XXVI). However, the difficulties raised by some States may prevent this. We call upon those States to

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

adopt a spirit of conciliation and to allow efforts to be stepped up so that the conference can be held as scheduled.

The world has rejoiced that agreement has been reached which will lead to the independence of Namibia. We should therefore particularly like to congratulate the people of Namibia and the African nations on the Namibian people's achievement. After 74 years of colonialism as inhabitants of a mandated Territory, the people of Namibia has now begun to reap the fruits of its struggle and its sacrifices. As we salute and revere the efforts of all those who have contributed to giving effect to Security Council resolution 435 (1978), we should also like to take this opportunity to express our pleasure at the success of the summit meeting recently held in Zaire, at which a settlement was reached by the conflicting parties in Angola. We are prompted by the hope that this agreement will be a good omen not only for Angola but for the region as a whole.

Despite the progress of peace in Namibia and Angola, the prospects for peace in southern Africa remain indistinct because of the South African régime's continued pursuit of the policy of racial discrimination against the black majority. We shall support the international efforts aimed at achieving justice and equality among all members of the population, and we hope that those efforts will achieve tangible progress in the near future.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

Events in Central America have shown that peace can be achieved through diplomacy and negotiation. We are confident that the leaders of the region recognize the importance of ensuring a climate of good-neighbourliness among the States of Central America that would lay the appropriate groundwork to support the efforts of the Contadora Group and implement the Esquipulas II accords so that the long-standing instability in the region may be ended.

Last year, Seoul, the capital of South Korea, witnessed a remarkable summer Olympiad that was most in harmony with the universality that also constitutes one of the major pillars of the United Nations.

In accordance with that principle, and because of the importance of such a step in alleviating tension and promoting the peace process in the peninsula, we welcome any international effort made to ensure the representation of both Koreas in our Organization and to grant them full membership.

With regard to the question of Cyprus, while we express our regret that the two parties to the conflict were unable to reach a negotiated solution to the problem last June, we nevertheless hope that the leaders of the Turkish and Greek communities will show the greatest degree of co-operation and flexibility in the coming rounds of talks, so that the members of both communities may once again live together side by side in peace, security, and tranquility.

The dangers posed by the unsound environmental policies pursued by certain industrialized countries have given rise to a disturbance in the ecological balance, the extinction of certain plant and animal species necessary to maintain natural life on our planet and, in many regions, the pollution of the seas to a most hazardous extent.

My country, following the guidelines laid down by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, accords the utmost importance to environmental protection. My country was and continues to be a pioneer in enacting legislation and adopting initiatives,

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

particularly at the regional level, for the elaboration of optimum methods of solving environmental problems.

The Sultanate of Oman therefore supports the convening of the proposed United Nations conference on environment and development at the earliest possible opportunity. The conference should review and appraise achievements in the field of environmental preservation, formulate solutions to the challenges that mankind will face in that domain, and reassess priorities in such a manner as to ensure the continuity of international efforts to create a better environment for future generations.

Mankind has made unprecedented progress in opening up new horizons in technology. However, most scientific achievements are unfortunately devoted to advancing the arms race and even to the manufacture and development of devices that threaten the survival of mankind itself, such as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The very existence of such lethal weapons is the greatest danger threatening mankind. Therefore, any talk of halting the proliferation of such weapons is out of joint if it is not within the context of their complete elimination. It is the international community's endeavour to achieve this end that prompted it warmly to welcome and support the agreement reached between the two super-Powers at the end of 1987 on the elimination of their medium-range and shorter-range missiles from Europe as a first step towards nuclear disarmament. In that connection, we welcome the measures recently agreed upon by the two Powers with regard to disarmament.

Bilateral disarmament negotiations, although extremely important, should not detract from the role of multilateral negotiations nor be seen as a substitute for them; the two should rather complement each other. The question of disarmament is not one that concerns certain States alone. It is an issue that impinges on the

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

interests and the very existence of all mankind. We must therefore make the greatest possible efforts to support United Nations endeavours relating to disarmament issues and especially those involving the future of mankind, such as the prevention of the outbreak of nuclear war and the imposition of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Agreement on those questions can release enormous resources which if used in the proper manner - for development - would change the world situation and make it more secure, more peaceful and more prosperous.

It is saddening that the momentum produced by recent United Nations successes in solving regional problems has not been exploited for the achievement of corresponding progress and success at the level of the international economy.

The economies of the developing world are suffering grave problems. Average annual rates of real growth in those countries fell from 5.5 per cent in the 1970s to less than 3 per cent in the 1980s. The share of third-world countries in the developed market economies fell from 38 per cent in 1970 to only 19 per cent in 1987, while that of the industrialized countries rose from 65 per cent to 71 per cent over the same period. If to the problem of reduced income are added the indebtedness problem of the developing countries, which has now surpassed the \$1 billion mark, the deterioration in the terms of trade to their detriment, the drop in the prices of the primary commodities on which the economies of those countries depend and the protectionist measures imposed, then it is abundantly clear that we remain far from achieving a better economic order that would narrow the existing economic gap between developing and developed countries.

The factors that have prevented the international community from realizing the economic achievements to which it might have aspired during the 1980s must, on the threshold of the 1990s, provide us with the strongest motivation to make the greatest possible efforts to establish a just economic order that takes account of

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

the economic conditions of the emerging developing countries. Among the priorities for such efforts must be the formulation of a fair and thoroughgoing solution to the debt crisis, which still threatens to undermine stability at the national and international levels. We regard the three-point plan of action, presented by the brotherly State of Kuwait and delivered by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah at the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, as an important initiative that must be supported. Action should be taken to implement it in order that a solution to the international debt crisis be found. We must here commend the policy announced by the French Government absolving the least developed countries of all their debts, and we can only welcome the agreement recently reached on Mexico's debts. This constitutes an auspicious precedent with regard to the problem of indebtedness in general.

We support the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development in the developing countries. Such a session will provide an opportunity to initiate a dialogue on the reversal of the present downward trend in the world economy, which will only come about through a strong demonstration of collective political will, and of the belief that it is not possible for the world to live in peace if a tiny minority of the human race possesses all the attributes of affluence while the majority lacks even the most elementary requirements of life.

(Mr. Bin Abdullah, Oman)

We are living in an epoch in which the United Nations has begun to contribute with increasing effectiveness to the solution of a number of international problems, and we call for support for efforts to continue this positive momentum. We are also hopeful that, through this Organization, we will be able to devise just and peaceful solutions to the various issues which are a source of concern to the international community and which threaten international peace and security, such as the question of the Palestinian people and the conduct of the racist régime in South Africa. We further hope that increased and more earnest efforts will be made to channel the enormous scientific and technological progress being made into building a better tomorrow for future generations instead of the contrivance of ever more means of destruction.

The Sultanate of Oman believes that the United Nations has the necessary attributes to enable it to play an important role in this field, and we shall spare no effort to contribute to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we hope that the deliberations of the present session will strengthen co-operation and promote détente in international relations and that the resolutions adopted by the Assembly will be of a practical character so that they may contribute successfully to addressing the issues included in this session's agenda.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon. I shall now call on the representative of Portugal, who wishes to make a point of clarification.

Mr. REINO (Portugal): The delegation of Portugal wishes to make a point of clarification concerning the text of the English translation of this morning's statement made by our Minister for Foreign Affairs. We should like to ask that the

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

following paragraph, which was omitted from page 12 of the circulated text, be inserted. The paragraph reads as follows:

"The territories that share in the Portuguese historical and cultural heritage have evolved in diverse ways. I would like here to make a particular reference to the manner in which the question of Macau has been dealt with by the People's Republic of China and Portugal. With the constant concern of securing the continued well-being and development of Macau, solutions were found that will lead to a peaceful transition of the administration of that territory so distant from Portugal but with which we have been linked by deep ties over the centuries."

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The statement of the representative of Portugal will be duly recorded in the records of this afternoon's meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

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

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): My delegation has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply in order to set the record straight concerning the reference to East Timor by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal in his statement earlier today.

To speak about the situation in East Timor now is illegal and is morally and politically untenable not only because it is far from the prevailing realities, but also because it is patently misleading. As members are aware, the act of

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

self-determination in East Timor was exercised 13 years ago when the people of the province chose to live in unity with their Indonesian brothers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and principles VI, VIII and IX of resolution 1541 (XV). In fact, for the past seven years, including this year, this item has not appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly. This has been so because of Member States' greater understanding of the historical record of decolonization in the territory.

Notwithstanding those developments, Indonesia and Portugal have agreed in principle for a delegation from the Portuguese Parliament to visit East Timor. The terms and modalities for such a visit have been the subject of discussions between the representatives of Indonesia and Portugal. In this context, the Secretary-General's report has expressed confidence in the continuing progress of the ongoing talks. My delegation pledges its co-operation to facilitate the visit in order to obtain objective and first-hand information on the actual situation and conditions in the province.

As in the past, we are again subjected to unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations concerning the human rights situation. Suffice it to say that there is no abuse of human rights, which are safeguarded by due process of law. Beyond the extensive presence of numerous international humanitarian organizations, numerous visits continue to take place to the province by journalists, parliamentary delegations, dignitaries and others.

Finally, my delegation agrees with Portugal to engage in serious and substantive talks in an atmosphere of good faith and characterized by flexibility in the continuing efforts to find a solution. But this would require a degree of mutual confidence, a greater sense of circumspection and realism on Portugal's part at the United Nations as in other forums.

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Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): It is indeed unfortunate that I must exercise my first right of reply to the statement made today by the representative of Cuba.

It is even more unfortunate that the spirit of co-operation and conciliation, which has permeated the halls of this body since the first gravel fell at the opening of the forty-fourth session, has been cast aside by Cuba.

The contentious language and distortions by the Foreign Minister of Cuba deceive no one. Cuba clearly seeks to deflect attention from the failures and shortcomings of its own repressive régime which, after 30 years, has left the Cuban people still yearning for the basic human rights and freedoms now enjoyed by the vast majority of their neighbours.

The Cuban Foreign Minister today in his defense of the illegal régime in Panama accused the United States of attempting to create an atmosphere favourable to the breaching of the Panama Canal Treaties. Minister Malmierca's defense of the Panama régime by itself shows clearly Cuba's disregard for free elections, fundamental freedoms and democracy, and requires no additional comment. My Government intends to abide fully by the terms of the Panama Canal Treaties. We expect to turn control of the canal over to a legitimate, democratically elected government of Panama at the time designated in the Treaties.

Minister Malmierca also criticized my Government's efforts to promote peace and democracy in Nicaragua. Our support for the Esquipulas, Tersoro and Tela accords is fundamental to those efforts.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

If Cuba is sincerely interested in promoting peace in the region, it can best do so by stopping its arms shipments to Nicaragua and to the Salvadorian guerrillas and by encouraging its Sandinista and Panamanian allies to join the wave of democracy and freedom which is spreading throughout the region.

The Cuban distortions on Puerto Rico also cannot go unanswered. The present relationship between the people of Puerto Rico and the United States is the result of a free act of self-determination by the people of Puerto Rico: the 1952 referendum on the constitution establishing commonwealth status. The people of Puerto Rico enjoy free and fair elections every four years - a right which still eludes the unfortunate citizens of Cuba. Once again the United States Congress, with Administration support, is considering legislation for another early referendum of self-determination for the Puerto Rican people, with clear choices for independence, statehood, or commonwealth status. In recognition that the Puerto Rican people had already attained a full measure of self-government, this Assembly removed Puerto Rico from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories in 1953. The General Assembly itself decided that Puerto Rico is not a proper subject for review at the United Nations again when it rejected Cuban requests to inscribe the question on several occasions, most recently in 1982.

The representative of Cuba dedicated a large measure of his address to attacks on the policies of my Government. I hope the delegation of Cuba will reflect seriously on its approach to the United Nations and the tenor of its participation in this body. The world is indeed changing, as we hear on all sides in this body. Now is the time for Cuba to begin to accept the basic principles of the United Nations and the United Nations Charter. It is time for Cuba to put aside shallow distortions, propaganda and demagoguery and join in the new spirit of co-operation and freedom which is becoming a part of the new thinking throughout the world.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on the representative of Cuba.

Mr. MORENO (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Towards the end of the last century, José Martí, the national hero of Cuba, said clearly that all his efforts to secure the independence of our country were intended to prevent the United States from seizing Cuba and, with that increased strength, expanding its dominion over other Latin American lands. Since then, the most brilliant minds of our continent have constantly warned against the hegemonistic designs of the United States.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of this century, the relations between the United States and Cuba have followed various paths. At the beginning, significant segments in the United States advocated the integration of Cuba into the United States, and even organized military groups in support of annexation intended to frustrate the yearnings for independence of the Cuban people. Then, with the Platt amendment, which the United States imposed as an annex to the first constitution of a formally independent Cuba, and with the influence it had on subsequent Governments of Cuba, the United States enthroned neo-colonialism as a constant factor in relations between Cuba and the United States - a situation which continued until 1 January 1959, when Cuba, with the triumph of a liberating revolution, succeeded in recovering its true independence and the power of the people was reflected in the first law of the Cuban revolution.

Since then, the frustration of the empire in having failed to turn Cuba into a colony and to preserve its neo-colonial power turned into unceasing hysteria. Successive Administrations of the United States, as the Foreign Minister of Cuba said this morning, set in motion an aggressive policy which, with certain nuances,

(Mr. Moreno, Cuba)

remains in place today, in order to try to bring the Cuban nation to its knees and oblige it to obey the designs of the American empire.

We do not wish to refer in detail to the events that occurred throughout that time, because the international community is well aware of them. We merely wish our colleagues at the United Nations to think on these matters and reach their own conclusions.

Was it Cuba which, since 1960, imposed an illegal and harsh blockade on the United States in the economic, political and social spheres? Was it perhaps Cuba that for years promoted aggression and subversion in the territory of the United States? Could it have been Cuba, I ask you, that promoted the establishment of written and broadcast media, with subversive goals, to aim propaganda towards the territory of the United States? Has Cuba planned the establishment of a television station aimed against the United States also for subversive purposes, in violation of the most basic principles of international law? Could it be that Cuba maintains a military base on United States territory, in disregard of the will of the United States people? Or is it Cuba that carries out threatening military manoeuvres against the United States and, with every passing day and week, violates the airspace of that country, in an unending act of provocation? Is it Cuba that has military bases all over the world and tries to force its will on the international community? Is it Cuba that tries to impose on independent, sovereign States its views about national or international policy? Obviously, these phenomena to which we have referred are not features of Cuban foreign policy: rather, they are part and parcel of the foreign policy pursued by the Government of the United States of America.

Apart from these general considerations, I should like to refer to the implications in the remarks just made by the representative of the United States in this Hall. First of all, Cuba considers - and I believe that any sovereign State

(Mr. Moreno, Cuba)

worthy of the name must consider - that in the case of the Republic of Panama, non-interference in internal affairs is an essential premise for dealing with problems. Many States and international organizations have considered that non-interference in the internal affairs of Panama is the very basis for the solution of the problems now being faced by that fraternal Latin American nation.

(Mr. Moreno, Cuba)

With regard to Puerto Rico, we believe that the Committee of 24 was clear in the definitions it adopted a few months ago. Puerto Rico is undoubtedly a case coming directly under resolution 1514 (XV) as a colonial Territory, and the provisions adopted by the General Assembly must be implemented in respect of the Puerto Rican nation, too.

Cuba can by no means be accused of resisting the international trend towards political and military détente. On the contrary, Cuba which pursues a policy of peace and détente, of seeking the settlement of conflicts by peaceful means, of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, itself today accused, as it again accuses, the Government of the United States of being an obstacle to improved relations between peoples and nations. It is an obstacle to the improved ability of nations to resolve their differences peacefully through political means, without threats, without coercion, without the use of force, and above all without a desire to dominate.

Those problems are symptomatic of our age. We believe that the United States Government commits systematic violations of the norms. That situation should be rectified with a clear indication that that Government is following today's dominant trend, that it will promote the peaceful settlement of disputes by political means and that it is in harmony with the mood of the whole international community.

Mr. REINO (Portugal): I wish to make some brief remarks about what the representative of Indonesia has just said in exercise of his right of reply to the statement made today by the Foreign Minister of Portugal.

The assertion that East Timor no longer constitutes a decolonization issue cannot be accepted, since the Organization has never recognized that the right to self-determination has been exercised in any valid form. It is sufficient to

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

recall that the United Nations still considers East Timor to be a Non-Self-Governing Territory under Portuguese administration, for the purposes of Chapter XI of the Charter, and that as such the question is included in the agenda of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization.

With regard to worsening of the human rights situation, I would merely call delegations' attention again to the resolution adopted on 31 August by a Sub-Commission of the Commission on Human Rights, which speaks for itself.

Finally, I take this opportunity to reaffirm our deep commitment to discussions under the auspices of the Secretary-General and our willingness to play our part to contribute to their success.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Observer of Palestine has asked to be allowed to reply to a statement made by one of the speakers in the general debate. I shall call on him on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, and particularly on the basis of the ruling made by the President of the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and of the precedents established in similar circumstances during subsequent sessions of the General Assembly.

Mr. TERZI (Palestine): In his statement the representative of Israel called upon the Palestinian Arab population to cease acts of terrorism and violence. I am sure he was referring in particular to the glorious and noble intifadah of our people, which was sparked off on 9 December 1987 in opposition to the continued illegal occupation and the denial of human rights, including the right to life; more than 700 had been the victims of the atrocities committed by the occupying Power, Israel.

I say this at a time when I am honouring the memory of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto. But there is one difference: the Zionist leaders of the Warsaw

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

Ghetto betrayed their people. The Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Herut Party, which form part of the current Government of Israel, were calling for collaboration with Hitler against the Allies. We honour the uprising of the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto, but we wish that that uprising had met with a better response. We also remember that refugees, including survivors of the refugee camps and extermination camps in Europe, were denied entry, not only into Palestine, but into the United States and other places represented here.

The representative of Israel made an appeal to the international community, saying:

"We call on all nations to support Israel's peace initiative." (supra, p. 61)

I wish to remind the representative of Israel that last December, by an almost unanimous vote, the General Assembly adopted a programme and principles for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. I only wish that the United States and Israel, which voted against, had responded to the United Nations call for a comprehensive peace and not only for what the Israelis call their peace initiative, which has nothing to do with peace, but is intended to gain some justification and legitimacy for their continued occupation of our homeland and denial of our people's rights, particularly and primarily their right to live in peace in their own country.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.