



## General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.19  
7 October 1988

ENGLISH

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Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 5 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CAFUTO (Argentina)  
later: Mr. RANA (Nepal)  
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statement made by:

Mr. Tsering (Bhutan)

Address by Mr. Son Sann, Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea

Statements made by:

Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi (Algeria)  
Mr. Gombosuren (Mongolia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. TSERING (Bhutan): I have the honour to convey the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, to you, Mr. President, and through you to all the representatives for the success of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

May I also extend the hearty felicitations of my delegation to you, Sir, on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly. Given your outstanding credentials, I am confident that you will lead this session to fruitful conclusions.

I also wish to put on record our deep appreciation for the skill with which Mr. Peter Florin guided the forty-second session. His fine stewardship of the General Assembly has earned for him and for his country, the German Democratic Republic, the respect of the international community.

We express our thanks to our Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his incisive report. The exciting possibilities outlined in it stem in large part from his inspired leadership and his work as an apostle of peace. During this past year especially, he was omnipresent, and his labours and those of his colleagues have borne abundant fruit. His tenure is a milestone in the history of the United Nations.

We are entering the dawn of a new era. The United Nations has generated the momentum of peace on a number of fronts, bringing long-standing conflicts to an end and creating new opportunities. In this past year alone we have been witnesses to the success of the peace-making process. Never have the prestige of the world Organization and pride in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter stood higher. Undeniably, the efficacy of multilateralism has been borne out. The

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awarding of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is a just albeit belated recognition of the effective role that the United Nations has played in maintaining peace in the world's trouble-spots during the past 40 years.

The easing of East-West tensions has created a more favourable international political climate and has contributed to the resolution of several regional conflicts. We applaud the two great leaders who signed the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - in Moscow last spring, and express the hope that this will lead to further agreements on the reduction and eventual elimination of strategic nuclear arms.

My delegation also applauds the agreement on Afghanistan sponsored by the United Nations. This breakthrough will, it is hoped, lead to a lasting peace for that war-torn land, ending nine years of bitter fighting. The withdrawal of foreign troops is now taking place, but much work remains to be done in terms of reconciliation, repatriation of refugees and the building of a national consensus. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations for Afghanistan's economic reconstruction. We are, however, deeply concerned by the continued internal struggle and foreign intervention that could jeopardize the very fragile basis on which the current initiatives have been taken. We urge all parties concerned to honour and abide by the Geneva accords.

The cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, mediated and arranged by the United Nations, is another cause for the rejoicing of the world community. Eight years of this fratricidal war have taken an appalling toll - some 1 million dead, 1.7 million wounded and 1.5 million refugees. All in all, it has been one of the century's most brutal wars. Therefore, we commend the United Nations Secretary-General for his efforts to achieve an honourable agreement between the two parties within the framework of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

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We observe with satisfaction the development of encouraging signs concerning the future of Kampuchea. We welcome the initiative taken by Indonesia to bring all the leaders of the opposing sides together for the first time. We support the commitment and effort of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to facilitate a durable political settlement, and are heartened by the indications of an early withdrawal of foreign troops.

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In southern Africa the recent cease-fire between the belligerent parties involved in the war in Angola is yet another development of great significance. Bhutan hopes that a firm schedule for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Angola will soon be established. Of related and equal significance is the outcome of the talks between the parties concerned on the independence of Namibia, which is illegally occupied by South Africa, in flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions. In this context we express our full support for the Secretary-General in his efforts to ensure that implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) begins next month.

In spite of South Africa's apparent willingness to negotiate the independence of Namibia and the beginning of its troop withdrawal from Angola, the situation in southern Africa remains highly volatile. This is because South Africa continues to wage two wars - the war on its own people and the frequent incursions against its neighbours.

The racist régime continues to hold the majority of its people in subjection under apartheid. This brutal system, colonialism at its worst, is an affront to the whole civilized world. Atrocities are committed daily in its name: arrests, torture and intimidation of thousands, mass deportations, and press censorship amounting to a strangulation of the news. The régime remains utterly intransigent in refusing to negotiate with black leaders or accept United Nations mandates. Unless steps are taken to alleviate the situation, a bloodbath will inevitably follow.

We call upon South Africa to release Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and to dismantle the institutionalized inhumanity known as apartheid. We state categorically that we are not deceived by the cosmetic so-called reforms. Until such time as real and constructive changes are brought about, we call for

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comprehensive economic sanctions and an arms embargo against South Africa, for it is the responsibility of the world community to put pressure on the régime and to work for the establishment of a non-racial society in a united South Africa.

There are certain areas of tension that have sadly withstood the pacifying winds of change. The recent uprising in the occupied territories has only added greater bitterness to the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the other hand, while absolute solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their inalienable rights is essential, the discord among themselves continues to be a source of concern to their well-wishers. We nevertheless express the hope that the recent separation of the West Bank from the Kingdom of Jordan will enhance the cause of the Palestinian people and their rightful claim to a sovereign homeland.

That said, we wish to make it clear that we support the security and right to exist in safety of all States in the area, including Israel.

The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon continue to be violated by foreign forces. At the same time, its people remain torn by religious bigotry. Saddened by the increasingly apathetic attitude of the world to the plight of this nation, we urge that renewed efforts be launched to resolve the question of Lebanon in a manner that will enable the Lebanese people to determine their own future, free from any foreign interference.

During the recent XXIV Olympiad in Seoul, the best and most universal summer Olympic Games in history, the world witnessed the extraordinary economic accomplishments of South Korea. The Korean people, however, continue to remain tragically divided. In our view, the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula can best be brought about through the building up of mutual confidence between South and North Korea. In this connection we welcome the special declaration of President Roh Tae Woo made in the interest of national self-esteem,

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unification and prosperity on 7 July 1988. This new policy initiative of the Republic of Korea will create a favourable atmosphere for the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, by promoting dialogue and negotiation between South and North Korea. We also support the admission of both South and North Korea to the United Nations, in keeping with the accepted United Nations principle of universality of membership.

Beyond these regional discords and conflicts, problems that know no boundaries have been forced on our attention with increasing urgency. I refer to the degradation of our physical environment. "Will earth survive man?", a recent article asks with pointed relevance. Mass deforestation, depletion of the planet's ozone layer, the poisoning of rivers, lakes and sections of the oceans, the destruction of whole ecosystems - these and related problems seem to be of insurmountable proportions. Have we turned our planet into a vast dumping ground? Furthermore, those who experienced this past summer in New York know about the greenhouse effect at first hand. However, such reports as that of the World Commission on Environment and Development, entitled "Our Common Future" - the Brundtland report - outline constructive steps to halt, and even reverse, present trends.

Our gravest threat by far, however, remains that of nuclear holocaust. While the historic signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - and the recent destruction and removal of missiles are cause for hope, we cannot afford to be complacent. The current supply of nuclear weapons could destroy the planet many times over. We are still not free of the spectre of Star Wars or of the testing and stockpiling of new nuclear weapons.

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It is our collective responsibility to work for general and complete disarmament. The first three special sessions on disarmament pointed us in positive directions and were initial steps on the road to our ultimate goal of comprehensive disarmament. However, we must look forward to a fourth special session to build on our progress. Let me add here that Bhutan welcomes the establishment of the third Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, to be located in Kathmandu, Nepal. Beyond this, my delegation once more calls for a complete halt to the testing of new nuclear-weapon systems and for a freeze on the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. We call for a halt to the production and proliferation of conventional weapons and, in particular, for a total ban on chemical weapons.

World expenditures for military purposes are now in excess of \$900 billion a year and could, if present trends continue unchecked, reach the astronomical figure of \$1 trillion a year - this while fully two thirds of the world's people live below the poverty line. What a distorted sense of priorities, what a twisted perspective! So many of the world's scarce resources are poured into the technology of destruction, with no return in terms of either real security or an enhanced quality of life.

This problem is part of the larger picture of the fundamental injustice of current economic relations, of the growing disparity between rich and poor nations. In almost no sense could the global economic outlook be called healthy.

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The problems are legion and interrelated: deteriorating terms of trade, increasing protectionism, reduction in the flow of financial assistance to the developing countries, volatile exchange rates, mounting interest rates, and the collapse of the prices of primary commodities, which are at their lowest level in 50 years. All these factors feed into the overwhelming debt problem that has crippled the development levels of so many of the poorer countries. Overall, it has been said that the 1980s have been a lost decade of development. The results have been appalling. In 1986, 850 million people lived in countries that experienced no increase in per capita output. What this means in real terms is that not only has economic development suffered an enormous setback in these countries, but that progress in the social sphere has been severely hampered as well. For these things are intertwined. We must add that the least developed countries have suffered these shocks the most.

How can we reverse the downward spiral? The solution must be found in the resumption of the North-South dialogue and the implementation of the New International Economic Order. As a first step, we renew our call for the early convening of an international conference on money and finance for development. Clearly, there is an ever greater need for a more equitable world economic infrastructure - for a comprehensive approach to the interrelated problems of money, finance, debt, trade, and development. The developed nations cannot continue to flourish at the expense of the developing countries; in the end, this proves counter-productive for everyone. In our increasingly interdependent world, there is no alternative to effective co-operation. The kind of creative partnerships we envision would impart a new dynamism to the global economy and promote self-reliance through co-operation, thereby creating opportunity for all.

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The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) is an attempt at South-South co-operation. This is an association of which Bhutan has been a proud member from the beginning. Increasingly, the seven member nations, with a total of 1 billion people among them, have expanded their areas of co-operation. In spite of our widely differing cultures and historical experiences, we work together in a fraternal spirit to promote the objectives of individual and collective self-reliance and to further the cause of peace, progress and stability in South Asia.

The goal of self-reliance has been the cornerstone of Bhutan's development policy. Bhutan has been a member of the world Organization only since 1971. However, in that short span of time the various specialized agencies and affiliated bodies of the United Nations, working closely with our Government, have rendered invaluable assistance. They have played a pivotal role in all aspects of our development - in such diverse areas as road and communication infrastructure, health and educational services and, above all, human resources development. In particular I should like to express our deep gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNDTCD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The United Nations has proved its efficacy, both in the day-to-day operations of the specialized agencies and affiliated bodies, and in its role as peacemaker,

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negotiator, mediator. Its dramatic successes in resolving a number of long-standing conflicts this year have put the world Organization in the limelight. Yet at the very moment when its prestige is at its zenith, and the principles of the Charter have at last gained truly universal acceptance, the United Nations faces an unprecedented threat. Unless the fiscal crisis is relieved in the immediate future, the United Nations will be forced to shut its doors forever. Even if it were merely a forum for the communication of ideas and for blowing off steam, the United Nations would be invaluable, for nothing comparable exists. But the world Organization is so much more than this. It is our last best hope. How tragic it would be if this were realized only after its disappearance.

This world cannot do without the United Nations. At this critical juncture - most especially when peace-keeping forces are about to be dispatched to far-flung parts of the globe - we cannot sit idly by and watch the United Nations collapse. We therefore call upon all nations to fulfil their financial responsibilities at the earliest possible date.

The present system of assessments, made on the capacity of nations to pay, is equitable. It is the result of the wisdom that prevailed at the time of the founding of the United Nations.

But times have changed. The present financial crisis has opened our eyes to the vulnerability of the world body to the pressures of a few nations that currently bear the brunt of the payments. Herein lies the inherent weakness of the United Nations. Indeed, we can easily foresee the possibility of the United Nations being similarly held to ransom again unless the assessment of dues can be established through a new formula. The financial burden must be shared in a different manner.

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The United Nations provides equal political opportunities to all nations, thus earning it its distinction as the parliament of nations; but it is the poorer and less developed countries that enjoy greater benefits in terms of expertise and financial assistance. Therefore, the developing nations may have to pay a larger share of the United Nations operating costs. This may sound like a radical proposal, but the benefits we reap from the world Organization should enable us to accept this idea with a greater sense of responsibility and willingness. Above all, we must ensure the survival of the United Nations.

Yet today we are presented with opportunities as never before. The United Nations is in the ascendant and is brilliantly carrying out its appointed work, healing wounds and making a constructive difference in the lives of people everywhere. In times past, men sought the Golden Fleece or El Dorado. We seek something nobler and more realistic: a renewed commitment to the vision of the Charter to bring to birth a prosperous and equitable world order, a new and better life for all mankind.

ADDRESS BY MR. SON SANN, PRIME MINISTER OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea.

Mr. Son Sann, Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea, Mr. Son Sann, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SON SANN (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French): Sir, it is a pleasant duty for me to address to you, on behalf of the Khmer people and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and on my own behalf, our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at the forty-third session. Your political and diplomatic experience and your personal abilities constitute pledges for the successful outcome of our work.

I also wish to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, for the skilful manner in which he carried out his important duties in presiding over the General Assembly at the forty-second session.

Lastly, I take special pleasure in paying a warm tribute to our very distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, whom my people and Government continue to hold in the highest esteem. I am pleased to have this opportunity to pay a tribute to the tireless and meritorious efforts he has unceasingly made for peace throughout the world, which have helped to strengthen the confidence we have always had in him. His faith in the Charter and his dedication to the fulfilment of his mandate, which is complex, arduous and often thankless, have done much to strengthen the role of the world Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Some 10 years ago, on 25 December 1978, the Vietnamese troops of aggression occupied by country, Cambodia. Since 1982, the date of the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, as President of Democratic Kampuchea, has emphatically denounced the acts of coercion committed by the Vietnamese occupation troops against the unfortunate Khmer people.

There can be no political solution for the Cambodian situation unless Viet Nam sincerely wishes to reach a negotiated settlement with the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and desists from delaying tactics. In order to block the

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process of a political settlement of the Cambodian situation, Viet Nam has sought to link the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia to the non-return of the Khmers Rouges to power, and the cessation of all aid to the armed forces of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea.

The present situation in Cambodia was brought about by the invasion and occupation of that country by Vietnamese troops, who are still there today. Our top priority, which is also that of the United Nations resolutions on Kampuchea, continues to be the withdrawal of all Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, whether their presence is officially acknowledged or disguised. As for the other problems, they are internal matters which will have to be resolved among the Cambodian parties. The solution has already been implicitly mentioned in the resolutions adopted annually since 1979 at the United Nations: self-determination of the Cambodian people, through the organization of free general elections without pressure or coercion.

A genuine peaceful solution can be arrived at only in the following conditions: first, withdrawal of all Vietnamese occupation forces from Cambodian territory, which must be carried out not unilaterally but within the framework of a general negotiated agreement, under international supervision and in keeping with a precise time-table; secondly, the dismantling of the Phnom Penh régime installed by Viet Nam and the State of Democratic Kampuchea; thirdly, the formation of a Quadripartite Provisional Government of National Reconciliation; fourthly, the establishment of machinery for international supervision in the form of a United Nations commission or any other international commission or whatever other measure may be necessary, such as an international force for the maintenance of peace and security; and, fifthly, the organization of authentically free general elections under international supervision.

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Peace in Cambodia depends on genuine national reconciliation based on equality among all the political parties of the coalition and on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, within the framework of a liberal democratic régime. Thus, it is not a question of trying to isolate, still less eliminate, anyone. We are talking about a movement of national reconciliation, that is, the Quadripartite Provisional Government of National Reconciliation, whose task it would be to prepare and organize general and free elections under international supervision.

After the general agreement on the total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia, an international conference will be convened with the participation of all the countries concerned, the five permanent members of the Security Council and the United Nations Secretary-General. That conference will adopt all necessary measures to guarantee the agreement, as well as the independence and neutrality of Cambodia, and prevent any possible return of Vietnamese forces and the illegal and violent seizure of power by one of the Cambodian parties.

The Jakarta Informal Meeting, which was held at Bogor from 25 to 28 July 1986, was the first of its kind to bring together the three Cambodian parties of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, that of Phnom Penh and Viet Nam, and also the other parties in the region concerned with the Cambodian conflict, who were able to exchange views. We hope that the Working Group, which is to meet soon in Jakarta, will prove able to achieve more concrete results.

The Khmer people was deeply moved by the words of compassion towards them spoken by the President of the United States, Mr. Ronald Reagan, and also the words of solicitude spoken by Mr. Qian Qichen, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, and other heads of delegations of friendly countries.

To return to a normal situation and restore peace, security and justice in my country, the total withdrawal of the Vietnamese occupation troops has become an

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imperative necessity. However, for greater credibility, I have proposed that this withdrawal be negotiated and internationally monitored. National reconciliation will have to take the form of the establishment of a quadripartite provisional government. This Quadripartite Provisional Government of National Reconciliation must be formed on a new basis, because the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea cannot agree to take as a basis the pro-Vietnamese communist régime of Phnom Penh.

In order to facilitate the formation of the Quadripartite Provisional Government of National Reconciliation I have proposed to the two other parties in my Government the changing of the name of Democratic Kampuchea and its flag and national anthem. His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sihanouk has already given his agreement in principle to these changes. I believe that these changes - or rather this return to the national names and symbols adopted by the whole Cambodian people - are going to be a prelude to national reconciliation, a prelude to the new national unity that is needed for the restoration of peace in Cambodia and for the establishment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia, in keeping with the wishes of the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and, in particular, to the ending of the sufferings of our people.

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I take this opportunity to reiterate, on behalf of the Khmer people, my respectful gratitude to His Majesty the King of Thailand for the kind compassion he has shown our refugee compatriots, and to His Majesty's Government for the hospitality accorded to them in border camps.

We are grateful also to all the friendly countries that have given constant, valuable support in all spheres to the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and all the Khmer people in their national liberation struggle against the Vietnamese invaders and occupying forces.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the personal interest he has taken in the Cambodian question, and for his tireless quest, in the framework of his mandate and assisted by his Special Representative, Mr. Rafeuddin Ahmed, for a just and lasting solution to the problem of Kampuchea in conformity with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

I must say again how grateful we are for the important role being played by the United Nations and the Secretary-General, and extend our gratitude also to his Special Representative, Mr. S.A.M.S. Kibria and the Director of the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO), Mr. Y. Y. Kim, and all the UNBRO staff, who have proved so able in helping those of our unfortunate compatriots who are considered to be displaced persons.

If Cambodian society is to be truly democratized, if human and individual rights are to be respected, it is essential to promote the education of Khmer children at all levels, both in border camps and within the country.

The thrust of sustained, common efforts by the entire international community, with the United Nations as catalyst, to prevent a nuclear holocaust has led to recognition of the fact that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought. The world has welcomed the ratification by the two super-Powers of the

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Treaty on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range land-based missiles and the improvement in East-West relations. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan under United Nations supervision and within the framework of a signed agreement, the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq after eight years of war, the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola and the prospect of the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), on Namibia, and the acceptance by the parties to the Western Sahara conflict of a peace plan submitted by the United Nations have led to some relaxation of regional tension and strengthened the hopes that world tension will gradually ease.

However, the genuine, persistent political will of all and the constant vigilance of all countries and peoples which cherish peace and justice are necessary if further progress towards the maintenance of international peace and security is to be made.

International peace and security continue to be threatened by numerous local and regional conflicts generated by policies of power, domination and expansion that trample under foot the purposes and principles of the Charter, including the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, respect for the right of peoples to self-determination, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Until these conflicts are resolved on the basis of respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter, it is illusory to hope for a climate of international trust conducive to the limitation or reduction of armaments.

In Afghanistan, the heroic struggle of the Afghan people and its mujahidin, combined with international pressure and the tireless efforts of Pakistan and the United Nations and its Secretary-General, finally compelled Soviet forces to withdraw from that country. But that does not mean the war is over. By continuing, through its military assistance and advisers, to keep alive the régime

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it has installed in Kabul, the Soviet Union persists in its interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, prevents the Afghan people from exercising its right of self-determination, and continues to fuel tension in that region of southern Asia. The Afghan people and its mujahidin are being compelled to pursue their just struggle to restore Afghanistan's independence, sovereignty, non-aligned status and territorial integrity. The international community must continue its assistance and support in that struggle.

We who are fighting for the same cause reaffirm our complete solidarity with and strong support for the the Afghan people and its mujahidin in their valiant struggle until the attainment of their noble objectives. We wish also to pay a heartfelt tribute to the Government and people of Pakistan for their great compassion for and generous assistance to the Afghan refugees, and for their important contribution to the efforts that led to the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

In Asia, the mounting tension in Korea makes clear the increasing urgency of adopting practical measures that will make possible the independent, peaceful reunification of the country. In this connection, it is important to prevent a military confrontation and reduce the tension between the two parts of the country by the adoption of a declaration of non-aggression. We welcomed the negotiations last August at Panmunjom between parliamentary delegations from the North and the South, and are pleased that these will be resumed soon.

Still in Asia, we assure our close neighbours to the north, our Lao brothers and sisters, who for years have endured and struggled against repression and coercion under the Vietnamese yoke, of our unswerving support and fraternal solidarity.

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In the Middle East, the situation has deteriorated everywhere. In the occupied Arab territories, the violence and high passions that have been growing for months are clear proof that it is vitally necessary for a negotiated settlement of the entire Middle East and Palestinian problem to be pursued within the framework of an international conference, under United Nations auspices, and with the participation of the representative of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Peace can be restored only through the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights, with strict respect for the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of foreign territory by force and for the right of all States of the region to live and coexist in peace and security.

In Lebanon, despite the presence of United Nations forces, foreign armed intervention continues to fan the flames of discord. It is of the highest importance that all foreign troops be withdrawn from Lebanon and that the Lebanese people finally regain the cohesion and national unity that will enable it to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its country, restore peace, and rebuild the economy.

The cease-fire between Iran and Iraq has permitted a relaxation of tension in the region. Without underestimating the considerable and numerous problems that remain unresolved, it may be said that the cease-fire, which was achieved thanks to the praiseworthy, dedicated efforts of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, opens the way for the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). We hope that with political will on all sides it will be possible to move towards a settlement of that painful fratricidal conflict.

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In Africa, the economic situation remains a source of great concern. We reaffirm to all brother African countries and peoples our complete solidarity and assure them of our warmest congratulations and deep admiration for their courageous and noble efforts to implement Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. But those efforts are hampered by the problem of external debt and the excessive debt-servicing burden. Moreover, Sudan, in particular Khartoum, has been stricken by unprecedented floods, which have caused widespread devastation, and sub-Saharan countries continue to face drought, floods, plagues of locusts and conflicts, with the consequent millions of refugees, malnutrition and famine.

We call upon the international community, especially developed creditor countries, to support and adopt the measures advocated by the Organization of African Unity to resolve Africa's external-debt crisis, including the convening of an international conference on this problem.

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We should emphasize that the economic and social crisis of the African countries has been further aggravated by the rising tension in southern Africa which has had harmful consequences throughout the continent. The aggravation of tensions is due to the policy of apartheid and the illegal occupation of Namibia by the Pretoria régime, which, utterly disregarding universal condemnation of its actions, has not only refused to release Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, but is also even further intensifying its bloody repression, prolonging the state of emergency, condemning to death and threatening to execute anti-apartheid blacks in South Africa - in particular the Sharpeville Six - mistreating religious figures and banning all the political activity of anti-apartheid organizations, having representatives of South African anti-apartheid movements abroad assassinated, and committing an increasing number of acts of aggression and destabilization against front-line countries. Southern Africa will know peace and stability only when apartheid is eradicated as that will make possible the establishment of a non-racial, democratic government in South Africa and the advent of the independence of Namibia within its territorial integrity.

In this respect we believe that the development of the anti-apartheid struggle has amply demonstrated the need for global mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria régime accompanied by a plan of assistance to the front-line States. We ardently trust that the quadripartite negotiations to restore peace in Angola and to eliminate obstacles to the decolonization and independence of Namibia will succeed in compelling South Africa to give effect to Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

Lastly, we whole-heartedly welcome the successes scored by the Government and people of Chad under the guidance of President Hissain Habre in their attempts to consolidate the independence and sovereignty of Chad, to restore their territorial

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integrity and to embark upon the reconstruction of that country in peace, stability and harmony with all its neighbours. We renew our fraternal solidarity to them.

In Central America the situation continues to be grave notwithstanding the progress achieved in the field of verification of the obligations arising from the Esquipulas II agreements. This progress highlights the real possibilities of establishing peace and democracy in the region through dialogue and negotiation. We wish to pay a tribute to the five Presidents of the Central American States who declared in San José their political willingness to press ahead with dialogue and negotiations in order to fulfil the Guatemala commitments and we welcome the work done by the Contadora Group and the Support Group, which decided to continue to co-operate in this process of peace and democracy in this region. This is the only road to peace and stability and the only way to preserve the interests of the region as a whole.

Now that the Organization is preparing to celebrate at the end of this year the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, now that the hope of better times is burgeoning with the approach of the new year and the dawn of a new century, and with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, an award that was very well merited, let us hope that the millions of our human brothers who are seeking change and renewal in their lives will see their dreams come true thanks to the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in what the Gitanjali, the lyrical offering of the Bengali poet, described so aptly in the following words:

"In this paradise of freedom, my father, let my homeland awake."

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea.

Mr. Son Sann, Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. TALEB IBRAHIMI (Algeria) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the Algerian delegation I should like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the post of President of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. In so doing I extend to you my personal best wishes for success in the onerous but lofty task ahead of you. Your election is justified by the range of talents we have come to appreciate; it is also a well-deserved tribute paid to the friendly nation of Argentina and a recognition of the great contribution made by Latin America to our joint endeavour for peace and co-operation among our peoples and nations.

The President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session, Mr. Peter Florin, also earned the appreciation of the United Nations. He fulfilled his office skilfully, with devotion, ability and farsightedness. The Algerian delegation would like to join in the unanimous tribute paid to him.

The United Nations collectively, and our own nations individually, will remember Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar as the invaluable craftsman responsible for restoring the standing of the Organization and for winning it back its rightful place in contemporary international relations. I should like to express to him Algeria's congratulations and encouragement and assure him of its continuing and whole-hearted co-operation in any place and at any time that he may be engaged in the quest for peace, justice and co-operation, which he is pursuing in the name of and for the better well-being of mankind.

The Organization is emerging from a grave period of crisis; it has gone through a time of doubt, suspicion and dereliction; it has been afflicted by introspection and by the abandonment of multilateralism.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

However, in the darkest hours my country never ceased to believe, and to say, that the United Nations is the manifestation of an act of hope - and a strong, righteous hope never dies. The United Nations embodies this hope, which, in turn, represents the sustenance, the very well-spring, of the Organization.

Are our joint endeavours geared now to the triumph of the values and ideals we set for ourselves when the Organization was founded?

We see the beginning of an improvement in international relations. Is this due to the dawning recognition that mankind is a whole and can have no future or destiny without understanding, co-operation and peace? Have we finally faced the fact that it is better to build together than to develop the tools for destruction - that mistrust and the thirst for domination are not inevitable, but rather that mankind has a collective genius in which are to be found the resources that can ensure well-being and happiness for all? Are we ready at last to use our ingenuity and ardour to construct a world of security for all, and to wage the real struggle, the struggle for development?

These are the challenges, and they must be met.

There are already some portents of a better morrow for all. However limited they may be, these signs and developments are encouraging, and we hope that they will be matched by others of even greater scope and implication. In this respect Algeria once again hails the conclusion of the Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear weapons. In so doing we hope that this first act of nuclear disarmament will be consolidated and expanded, and that negotiations on strategic nuclear weapons will follow the same path of wisdom and lead to a similarly welcome conclusion.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

Disarmament is an essential factor in the peaceful world order that we hope to build, and all of us have a contribution to make. Consequently, my country has always considered that bilateral measures in the disarmament field, measures we welcome and commend, should not rule out multilateral action, let alone be considered as a replacement for such action.

The regrettable failure of the third special session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament was an ill omen in this respect. We trust that this was simply an unfortunate incident on our route, a perverse development that will shortly be corrected. When the safety and peace of all mankind is at stake, unity in action and resolution is the order of the day.

The first disarmament measure to which I have just referred, as well as the other measures of which it is the forerunner, and to which we look forward, were possible only because of major changes that have taken place in the doctrines, policies and strategies underlying modern international relations. Heretofore these have been founded solely upon the free exercise of the balance of forces and competition in pursuit of a decisive position in an arms race - to sum up: a view of the world and a logic both based on confrontation.

The Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries was founded at the time when this vision and this logic prevailed. It has constantly warned of the dangers and perils of such an approach for world peace. In the changes coming about today it cannot but find confirmation of the rightness of its arguments and of the positions it has taken at a time when there seemed to be no other alternative to the policy of strong-arm politics enshrined with the emergence of the two opposing alliances.

We have not yet seen the end of power-bloc politics, to which the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries was founded as an alternative 40 years ago, nor have we

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

seen the end of great strategic rivalry. But we do see the first signs of change, and this suggests a possible alternative: an alternative of dialogue, trust and respect for the interests of others that offers the possibility of founding a new world balance upon a safer, stabler and fairer set of relations.

Let us find the wherewithal for this alternative option. Let us have faith in it and find the political will-power that is required. Let us avoid the errors and miscalculations of the past, which suggested that a limited reshuffling of East-West relations would be sufficient for the establishment of a peaceful order. That faith did not stand up to the test. It was not enough to bring about a lasting relaxation of tensions between the two opposing military alliances. Rather, regional and local hotbeds of tension proliferated and grew worse.

Mankind is a single species, and peace must therefore also be indivisible. International relations will not be strengthened in terms of security, stability or duration unless all the countries in the world join in the task of building a peace that is unrestricted and has room for all. It is gratifying that today there is growing recognition of this vital need and that efforts are being made to improve East-West relations and to resolve regional and local conflicts, crises and tensions.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

That is the right approach, the only one to be followed, unswervingly, whatever the obstacles and whatever sacrifices have to be made. The road to peace will be long and difficult, whether we are dealing with an armament, the establishment of trust and understanding between East and West or putting an end to the tragedies of the Middle East, the Gulf, southern Africa, Central America, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Cyprus or Western Sahara, but there is no alternative to peace; it is the only option.

As I told the Assembly last year, the contribution we intend to make to this collective enterprise for peace consists of the construction of the Great Arab Maghreb. Since I spoke last year this enterprise in which we are engaged with our partners in the region has been launched, and I think I can say that it has been well launched. The holding of the Maghreb summit in Algiers last June was the starting-point for the enterprise upon which we are setting out together, with imagination, determination, and whatever else it takes. Our peoples and our countries have waited too long, and therefore our first concern now must be to make up for lost time. We are determined to do so, and we have the wherewithal. We are now working to equip the Maghreb entity we are establishing with the institutions, trained manpower and machinery which will then permit political co-ordination and economic integration on a rational, progressive basis, without thereby losing any opportunity to make further progress.

A dynamic and united Maghreb is therefore on the march. We are keeping the momentum going, thanks to a political resolve unaffected by ulterior motives or reservations. For the first time in its long history the greater Maghreb enjoys all the necessary conditions for unity. However, we are aware of the obstacles on the way ahead. We shall overcome them, because we have no other choice at a time when international events are calling for a pooling of efforts and resources.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

There can be no doubt that the resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara will help speed up the construction of a united Maghreb. The acceptance in principle by Morocco and the POLISARIO Front of the proposals put to them by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the conditions for the holding of a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara is a good omen in this respect.

It is only just that a people that has shed its blood for freedom should have the right to choose its own future; it is right that the people of Western Sahara should determine its own destiny.

The international community has understood that, and a consensus has emerged within the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement and this Assembly clearly spelling out the conditions for a resolution of the Western Sahara conflict. That consensus took the form of resolution 104 adopted in 1963 by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the OAU in Addis Ababa. Subsequently endorsed by the United Nations, it is the basis of the joint United Nations-OAU good offices. Direct negotiations to conclude a cease-fire and to organize a referendum on self-determination, free from administrative or military constraints, are the two key requirements for a just and lasting solution to the conflict in the Western Sahara.

Those who are fighting each other today need to be able to talk together tomorrow, and it is a good thing for the Moroccans and Saharaouis to go to the referendum hand in hand rather than back to back. Fraternal dialogue will lead to brotherly reconciliation, and thus the Maghreb will gain in stability, security and unity.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

In the Middle East there is still no end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people, which has missed out on the wave of peace affecting other crises, conflicts and sources of tension. The tragedy of the Palestinian people continues to be the tragedy of this century.

The uprising in occupied Palestine reminds us that the Palestinian's national identity is still alive. It shows that the Palestinian people has not abdicated its national rights and that its claim to its own State on the land of which it was robbed will not be defeated. The uprising serves to identify the requirements for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference held in Algiers in June defined the common Arab position on the nature, competence and aims of the international peace conference on the Middle East, and on who should participate. Because the question of Palestine lies at the heart of the conflict in the region, the international peace conference would fail if it did not consider it as such, and face up to the subject squarely. To seek to reduce the Arab-Zionist conflict to a succession of bilateral territorial or security disputes, and hence to obscure the central Palestinian element in the conflict, would be to doom the conference to failure.

Because the Palestinian people has chosen those whom it wishes to speak on its behalf and to express its aspirations, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole and legitimate representative, cannot be deprived of its place at the international peace conference. Attempts to find other representatives will be unsuccessful.\*

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\* Mr. Rana (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

Lastly, we know of the fate that has befallen the search for an alternative home for the Palestinian people. We have to recognize that the destiny of the Palestinian people is only going to be fashioned on the soil of its own historic land, Palestine.

In the same region, Lebanon has suffered setback after setback. Occupation was followed by fratricidal divisions, and today its very institutions are under threat. We are firmly devoted to the independence, unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of that brother country. Lebanon has other battles to fight. It cannot allow itself to be divided against itself. National reconciliation is vital, and it is the first battle that will determine its victory in the other fights ahead. It must win it and win it with our assistance. It can rely upon my country's aid in this respect.

In the Gulf the noise of battle has died down, giving way to dialogue and negotiation. We congratulate Iraq and Iran in a brotherly fashion. Eight years of conflict have left too much suffering, misunderstanding and distrust for us to imagine that the path to peace will be an easy one to follow, but we do trust that courage, a sense of responsibility and wisdom will finally prevail.

The apartheid system lies at the heart of all the tragedies in southern Africa. Its full and complete dismantling will be the only way to bring peace back to that long-suffering region. The independence of Namibia, the restoration of all the rights of the South African people and a guarantee for the security, stability and territorial integrity of the front-line States are a collective responsibility which we must all fully live up to. My country, for its part, wishes to assure the South West Africa People's Organization, the African National Congress and the front-line States of its solidarity and support until the triumph of the causes of justice and freedom which they defend.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

In Central America the hopes aroused by the Arias plan and the Esquipulas and Sopoa agreements are proving sadly slow to bear fruit. The Contadora and Lima Groups are making a valuable contribution to the cause of peace in the region. They deserve our full support. The peoples and the States in the region must be able to live in understanding, co-operation and mutual respect, free from outside interference and with respect for each other's political, economic and social choices.

In the Group of 77 a few days ago I expressed a few thoughts on the subject of international economic relations, thoughts which I should like to share with the Assembly today.

I observed that the real path to genuine peace must be one whereby all the peoples of the world enjoy not only their right to equal security but also their right to development. I observed that the genuine peaceful order we aspire to should not simply spare mankind from destruction: it must ensure his fit and proper survival once and for all. I observed that humanity would one day have had enough of gambling with death and would build for its future, that development would become the new name for peace and be its key ingredient.

In the light of those comments I made a number of observations and drew some conclusions.

First of all, underdevelopment is the worst of the wars which mankind is currently waging against itself. Are not more people dying of famine, malnutrition, epidemics and the lack of a medical infrastructure than as a result of open, armed conflict? Clearly, more people are dying from underdevelopment than from war. Secondly, underdevelopment is - and if no solution is found it will continue to represent - a threat to international peace and security just as much as open armed conflict. Surely the international community has a duty to put an

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

end to a process which is so menacing to mankind's future. Thirdly, the international community must mobilize for the triumph of human rights. We must mobilize to ensure that no citizen of the planet is deprived of his civil rights, his right to express an opinion, his right of assembly, his right to be heard and his right to defend himself in the name of all the rights which he legally enjoys. Yes, we must mobilize so that no citizen of our planet dies from the denial of his rights. I might add, however, that besides these rights we have a duty, and it is one which has not yet been fulfilled: the duty to ensure that no citizen dies or suffers from neglect of his vital needs. We have acted together so that development is considered in terms of rights for our peoples. I might say today that the right to the development of peoples is a key element in human rights, because when one talks of underdevelopment one is talking of matters of life and death. This calls for collective solidarity and a collective sense of responsibility. Lastly, at a time when we are welcoming the fact that mankind has begun to tread the path of disarmament, let us not forget that, while much remains to be done under this heading, the hardest task ahead of us is the challenge of underdevelopment, and everything that that implies.

My conclusions, therefore, would be as follows.

First, a crisis in international economic relations does exist and is a reality. The developed world felt that it had found its own short-term remedies, but those remedies are the product of short-sightedness. Real interdependence proves daily that development and underdevelopment are interrelated in many aspects and that the panaceas advocated heretofore are no longer effective.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

To separate development from underdevelopment, to portray the first as a result of the ability of one group of countries and the second as a result of the fecklessness of others, is not acceptable. There is a system operating today which serves to nurture the developed countries at the cost of the underdeveloped nations.

Secondly, changes are taking place, and an alternative is being pursued so that the underdevelopment of our countries does not serve to foster the development of nations which established the prevailing system and which led them to act in pursuance of the objectives they set for themselves in the past. That was short-sighted. The North-South split is intolerable and will become more so. As East and West are brought together, it will become increasingly clear that a peaceful future depends upon development.

Thirdly, underdevelopment comes with an economic price, but still more with a political and social price, and it is one we have to pay. But how long can this go on? This is a matter that must be of concern to all. As members of the international community we have assumed the responsibility to put our houses in order. We recognize this and it is proving beneficial, but it is not enough; far from it. Structural adjustments which have been advised or imposed upon our countries are not the remedy for underdevelopment; far from it.

Fourthly, in the formation of underdevelopment, factors beyond the control of our countries were at play. The international environment was - and still is - a handicap for us. Internal structural adjustments will only work if the same structural adjustments are made at the global level. Whether with reference to the budgetary health of our countries, a fair price for our commodity exports, access to international trade, currencies and finances or technology, the present system of international economic relations frustrates all our hard efforts.

(Mr. Taleb Ibrahimi, Algeria)

The system must change. Such a change must be part of an overall change in global and regional relations. Global peace can no longer continue with a two-tier system in which the question of international security has priority and development is relegated to a secondary place. An overall approach is required and we must seek to correct all the existing imbalances.

Do these encouraging notes which we are hearing from so many directions now herald a new age of reason? They may, if mankind can finally meet the overriding requirement: a sense of global conscience.

Mr. GOMBOSUREN (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to associate myself with the greetings and congratulations extended to Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina on his election to his high office. The Mongolian delegation wishes him great success in discharging his responsible duties.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to his predecessor, Comrade Peter Florin, for his skilful handling of the work of the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly and that of its third special session devoted to disarmament.

The present session of the United Nations General Assembly is taking place at a propitious time in history, a time when the growing trend in world politics is the recognition of the common destiny of peoples, the interdependence of countries and the need to resolve urgent current problems in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of constructive co-operation and mutual respect for the legitimate interests of the parties concerned.

This is borne out by a generally positive development of recent events in the world. The improvement in the political climate and the strengthening of mutual understanding and confidence between East and West are increasingly felt. As a result, the threat of a nuclear war is diminishing. The first steps towards

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

genuine disarmament have been taken. There are promising signs of an end to regional conflicts on the basis of a national reconciliation policy and a realistic approach.

The role of the United Nations in resolving international problems is increasing considerably. The tangible results of the peace-making activities of the United Nations and the purposeful efforts of its Secretary-General are evident. The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is further evidence of the support which the world community is now lending to the Organization.

The Soviet-American dialogue is assuming new aspects; it is becoming more dynamic and stable. The exceptional importance of this dialogue arises from the role played by these two Powers in world politics. It might be said that the Soviet-American interaction has generated many positive changes of global dimensions. In this context, the Moscow summit meeting deserves special commendation.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as an independent and influential force in today's world, is playing a positive role in the solution of pressing international issues. This is evidenced by the outcome of the Havana and Nicosia meetings of foreign ministers of non-aligned countries.

Public demand is making an increasing contribution to the struggle for cessation of the arms race, the elimination of the threat of a nuclear war, and the strengthening of mutual understanding, trust and co-operation among peoples.

While duly acknowledging the positive changes that are taking place in the world, we cannot overlook the fact that the situation still remains complex and in many respects contradictory.

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

The emerging plans for "compensation" through the modernization of various types of weapons, both nuclear and conventional, are a sign of the reluctance to give up an obsolete concept of "nuclear deterrence". This means that the policy of acting "from a position of strength" still remains the main postulate of those who are preparing such plans.

One can hardly agree with those who claim that the policy of acting "from a position of strength" has brought about the present positive shifts in the world, when it is precisely that policy that at one time gave rise to an unbridled nuclear arms race, holding the world hostage to nuclear intimidation. It is not the policy of acting "from a position of strength" but the policy of reason, of realism and of a responsible attitude towards universal human values that is now needed to guide mankind onto the path towards a secure and non-violent future.

The inherent danger of continuing work on the "Star Wars" programme is that it could thwart the Soviet-American negotiations on deep cuts in strategic offensive armaments and of frustrating the efforts to prevent the militarization of space. The deployment of weapons in space would not only signify a qualitatively new stage in the arms race, but would in itself pose a grave threat and contradict the logic of disarmament that has already been set in motion by the realization of the INF Treaty. Space weapons would hang like the sword of Damocles over every country, regardless of its location, since such weapons would be an omnipresent threat. Outer space should serve peaceful purposes only. Specific guarantees are needed to ensure that life on Earth is not threatened from space. In our view, the realization of the proposal to set up an international organization on the peaceful uses of outer space would greatly help to promote the attainment of this objective.

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

Universal security should be fully guaranteed on Earth as well. As we see it, the notion of security is made up of a number of interrelated factors - above all, military, political, economic, humanitarian and ecological. In other words, the problem calls for a comprehensive approach to collective security, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations. This is the main thrust of the proposal by the socialist countries regarding the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

Disarmament is one of the main roads to a secure world. The most difficult but the most essential step on that road was made by the conclusion of the Soviet-American INF Treaty and the commencement of its implementation. This should be followed by other more significant steps in reducing strategic arms, steps that should not be episodic but that would result in an irreversible and continuous process. In this regard we look forward to the early attainment of an agreement on the 50 per cent reduction on strategic offensive armaments.

It is pertinent in this regard to emphasize the importance of preventing a situation in which disarmament in one field would lead to an arms race in another. This question is important from both the political and the military technological point of view.

The most important task has been and continues to be a complete ban on nuclear tests, the further strengthening of the non-proliferation régime of nuclear weapons and the establishment of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world.

The need for a ban on chemical weapons is of particular urgency at the present time. The Government of the Mongolian People's Republic actively supports the early completion of the work on the elaboration of an international convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. We

(Mr. Gombcsuren, Mongolia)

shall continue to support measures aimed at the strict observance of the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

One of the priority tasks in the field of disarmament is the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces. In this respect the ongoing active search for ways of reducing the military confrontation in Europe is a matter of satisfaction. The constructive proposals of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization to this effect serve, in our view, as a sound basis for the achievement of mutually acceptable agreements.

The Government of the Mongolian People's Republic shares the view that the sale and supply of conventional weapons must be placed under international control.

Although the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament was unable to adopt a final document, it has nevertheless provided an impetus to the practical consideration of ways and means of attaining the goals of disarmament.

The political settlement of conflicts in the world constitutes one of the crucial prerequisites for the building of a solid foundation for universal peace and security.

Tangible progress has been made in resolving some of the conflicts. However, a long and difficult road still lies ahead.

The conclusion of the Geneva Agreements on the settlement of the problems relating to Afghanistan has become an extremely important issue. The implementation of these Agreements demonstrates how important it is for all the parties strictly to observe their obligations. My delegation supports the proposals to consider the implementation of the Geneva Agreements and the questions concerning the cessation of their violation.

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

As in the past, the Mongolian People's Republic is in favour of turning South-East Asia into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation. We welcome the intensification of dialogue between the countries of Indo-China and the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) with a view to finding a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. We welcome the outcome of the informal meeting held in Jakarta between the representatives of four Kampuchean parties and the countries of South-East Asia. In our view, the proposals put forward at the meeting by the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic would serve as a good basis for the settlement of the problem of Kampuchea and for stabilization of the situation in the region.

Another positive event is the cessation of the Iran-Iraq war. My Government sincerely welcomes the beginning of talks between the two parties and expresses the hope that they will lead to a final settlement of this conflict.

A hotbed of tension persists on the Korean peninsula. The Mongolian People's Republic consistently supports the withdrawal of foreign troops and nuclear weapons from South Korea and the conversion of the peninsula into a zone of peace. We support the proposals by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a view to laying the foundation for the peaceful reunification of Korea. The obstacles that prevent Korea from occupying its rightful place in the United Nations as a full-fledged Member should be eliminated.

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

As in the past, the Mongolian People's Republic supports the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and its non-aligned status. We welcome the present dialogue between the representatives of the two communities of Cyprus under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The situation in the Middle East has recently further deteriorated. Such a development emphatically underlines once more the urgent need for a comprehensive solution to the crisis. The road to such a solution lies through the convening of an international conference with the participation of the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination should be ensured. Israel must relinquish the occupied Arab territories.

The unresolved situation in Central America is a cause of grave concern. The open interference of the United States of America in the internal affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua constitutes the main obstacle to the realization of the Guatemala agreements and of the national reconciliation policy of the Sandinista Government. We express full support for, and solidarity with, the struggle of the Nicaraguan people for the realization of their inalienable right to follow the path they have chosen. No one has a right to encroach upon the freedom of choice of any people.

The current efforts with regard to the granting of independence to Namibia kindle hopes for a speedy solution to this problem. My Government welcomes the quadripartite negotiations of Angola, Cuba, the United States of America and South Africa designed to remove the seat of tension in the south of Africa.

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

We resolutely condemn the apartheid policy and practices of the South African racist régime and advocate the imposition on it of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions, as provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The general tendency towards improvement of the political climate did not fail to include the Asian continent. At the same time, most of the above-mentioned regional conflicts exist there. Apart from that, the Asia-Pacific region is becoming the arena for the increasing military build-up of the United States of America and its allies. These and other factors testify to the complexity of the situation in the region.

It is therefore in the interests of the peace and security of the Asia-Pacific region actively to seek ways and means of combining the efforts of all the States situated here. As our leader, Comrade J. Batuunkh, has pointed out, the Mongolian People's Republic consistently advocates the strengthening of confidence and the development of co-operation between the Asian States and endeavours, within its means, to contribute to the achievement of the overall Asian security objectives. This desire has led to the proposal made by Mongolia for the establishment of a mechanism ruling out the use of force in the relations between the States of the Asia-Pacific region. The implementation of this proposal would foster the consolidation of the universal principle of peaceful co-existence in the relations between the States of the region.

The recent proposals made by Comrade M.S. Gorbachev in Krasnoyarsk reflect the spirit of the new political thinking. They have further developed the Vladivostok initiatives and are specifically designed to reduce the military confrontation in the Asia-Pacific region, to broaden good-neighbourly relations among the countries and to consolidate peace and stability in this part of the world. We welcome the further intensification and improvement of relations between the Soviet Union

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

and the People's Republic of China as a factor the importance of which cannot be overestimated in strengthening confidence and co-operation, peace and security in Asia and throughout the world.

The Mongolian People's Republic stands for the restructuring of international economic relations on a democratic and equitable basis and for the establishment of a new international economic security.

The seriousness of problems such as the underdevelopment and external indebtedness of the developing countries and the upsetting of the ecological balance as well as other issues calls for urgent actions designed to solve these problems. In this context the implementation of effective measures in the field of disarmament and the transfer for development purposes of the resources thereby released would be of great significance. The specific ways and means of resolving the problems afflicting world economic relations should be reflected in the United Nations international development strategy for the 1990s.

The Mongolian People's Republic submits that international problems, including humanitarian issues, should be resolved in a spirit of co-operation on the basis of full respect for the principles of the national sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Though 40 years have elapsed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we are still witnessing mass violations of these rights. The right of whole nations to self-determination has not yet been realized. The conflict situations and the arms race impede the implementation of the right of peoples to peace and development. In this connection, the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace remains topical. Consideration, at this session, of the implementation of the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace will once again draw the attention of the world community to this important question.

(Mr. Gombosuren, Mongolia)

Permit me, in conclusion, to express the hope that at the present session the General Assembly will make a specific contribution to the consolidation of positive changes and to the search for ways and means to eliminate negative phenomena from today's international life.

Ms. GRANT-WOODHAM (Jamaica): This forty-third session of the General Assembly takes place against the backdrop of a number of important developments in the international environment. The bipolarity of the world of aggressive confrontation and competing military alliances has begun to attenuate; old assumptions and attitudes have begun to crumble. What has emerged is a new phase of co-operative dialogue between the super-Powers and a new thinking about themselves and their relation to each other. This has encouraged considerable lessening of international tension and a concerted effort to seek urgent negotiated solutions to pressing international problems and areas of regional conflict. The United Nations as an instrument to manage the settlement of disputes is back in fashion.

It is therefore our good fortune that Mr. Dante Caputo, Foreign Minister of Argentina, has been elected to conduct the affairs of the General Assembly at this time. As a distinguished representative of our region of Latin America and the Caribbean, he will be able to bring his undoubted skills to the affairs of this body at this important transitional period. We are also indebted to his predecessor, Foreign Minister Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, who so ably guided the forty-second session of the General Assembly as well as its several resumed sessions.

Last week the Nobel Peace Prize was conferred on the peace-keeping forces of the United Nations, a fitting and worthy tribute. To all of them, including those who have died in the service of peace, Jamaica pays homage, as it does to those Governments which have given such tangible support to the high ideals of the United Nations. As we recall the recent successes of the United Nations we cannot forget the direct involvement, patience and persistence of the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives. We wish to commend Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's dedication and unstinting efforts in the cause of the United Nations.

(Ms. Grant-Woodham, Jamaica)

Jamaica, happily outside of regional conflicts, is nevertheless prone to the harsh and unpredictable vicissitudes of nature. Our vulnerability was brutally displayed on the eve of this session when Hurricane Gilbert traversed the island from east to west, leaving in its wake massive destruction and some loss of life. As requested a separate item entitled "Emergency assistance to Jamaica" will come up in the plenary Assembly, but we wish at this stage to thank all those countries, organizations, agencies and individuals who responded so generously and so rapidly to the tragedy that befell our country. Our sympathy goes to the other victims of Gilbert - the Cayman Islands and Mexico - as well as to the victims of the floods in Sudan, Bangladesh and India. Natural disasters humble the rich and poor, the strong and weak alike, and make us all one.

Perhaps at no other time in the post-war years has the climate of international relations been so favourable. As we reflect on the changes taking place, we have to acknowledge that they are testimony to the capacity of States to act decisively and meaningfully in critical situations, provided the necessary political will is applied. As Member States of the United Nations we have a collective responsibility to ensure that these achievements are nurtured into sustained co-operation based on mutual respect and realistic understanding of often conflicting interests, for we must be cognizant of the fragile and sometimes tenuous nature of the accommodations we seek.

Initiatives by Member States have contributed significantly to the improved international environment. Special note has to be taken of the greater degree of accommodation among the permanent members of the Security Council, which enhances its effectiveness. We have welcomed the agreements reached on Afghanistan; the agreement between Iran and Iraq on the cessation of hostilities; the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Somalia; the ongoing talks between Angola, Cuba and South Africa, with the mediation of the United

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States, on issues in south-western Africa; recent contacts between the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and the Vietnamese authorities; the prospective breakthrough on Western Sahara; the renewal of talks between representatives of the Greek and Turkish communities on the situation in Cyprus. All these developments seem to signal a new era in relations among Member States of the Organization. We have also noted that North Korea and South Korea, currently Observers within the United Nations, are seeking the support of Member States in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula. In several of these the role of the United Nations has been, and will continue to be, significant.

The United Nations is at its best when States are willing to use it. This is especially true of the major Powers. So it is for this very reason that the present feeling of euphoria must not be overdone. The multilateral system is still subject to changes of mood. Yet there is much on the international agenda that requires our sustained collective effort. Even if we put aside for a moment regional conflicts, we still have before us the problems of the environment and ecology, drug trafficking, refugees, humanitarian and economic assistance, the array of economic problems and human rights.

This year we will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but still the world bears witness to the continued and increasing violation of human rights in different countries and regions. Summary arrests, detentions, mass executions, torture and disappearances have all become deplorable features of life. When the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it provided international standards for measuring the behaviour of States in their protection and promotion of human rights as a permanent obligation.

Although legal force has been given to the principles so eloquently and so boldly expressed in the Declaration, and despite its remarkable influence on the

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further development of innumerable human rights instruments, we cannot but be saddened by the fact that injustices and prejudices founded on race, colour, political ideology and sex continue to find sustenance in many countries and regions. As we commemorate this year as the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is our hope that Member States will give full support to the work of the Organization in this area.

Disarmament and arms control is another issue that is always with us.

Notwithstanding the Treaty between the two super-Powers on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles - the INF Treaty - the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament did not turn out as well as was expected. What was particularly disappointing was the marked reluctance of the nuclear-weapon States to contribute to the efforts to enhance the multilateral process and to strengthen the role of the United Nations in this regard. However, it did at least underline the appropriateness of the priorities established in the 1978 Programme of Action in favour of nuclear disarmament and urgent steps for the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and conventional weapons. There continues to be a growing sense of urgency regarding the need to conclude a convention on chemical weapons, an agreement on a verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world.

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The arms control process must be broadened from nuclear delivery vehicles to a total resources constraint on nuclear weapons through limitations on fissionable materials for military purposes. For we must emphasize, both the INF Treaty and the proposed 50 per cent cut deal with control of delivery vehicles, not nuclear weapons.

The situation in southern Africa admits of no relaxation. The persistence of the repugnant apartheid system and the systematic campaign of violence unleashed by the racist régime against the oppressed majority and also directed against the neighbouring States in the region, and the evolution of events that we hope will lead to the termination of Pretoria's illegal occupation of Namibia and the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) call for continued vigilance to ensure that international pressure on South Africa is maintained to preclude the possibility of any violation on its part of the commitments which it freely entered into under the Accords.

We strongly endorse the proposals of the front-line States for the early convening of the Security Council to authorize the timetable for the implementation of its settlement plans for Namibia, and for the emplacement of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG).

Despite the renewed hopes for a settlement of the Namibian problem, the pressure of sanctions against South Africa must be maintained and intensified so long as the Pretoria régime refuses to release all political prisoners and engage in real dialogue with the majority population, with a view to terminating the obnoxious apartheid system.

In this hemisphere, prospects for a resolution of the Central American crisis were significantly increased by the signing of the Esquipulas Agreement a year ago. Although that agreement sets out the procedures for the establishment of

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peace in the subregion, repeated truce violations and the deadlock in negotiations between the respective parties are causes for serious concern. The Government of Jamaica therefore joins the international community in urging the parties concerned to settle their differences through the process of dialogue and negotiations.

We support the United Nations Special Plan for Economic Co-operation for Central America, which addresses, on an immediate and long-term basis, the economic and social problems of all the countries of the area. It is our hope that this plan will help in establishing a firm and lasting peace through the promotion of economic and social development throughout the region.

Jamaica remains deeply concerned about the effects of the escalation in illicit trafficking of drugs on international, social and political stability. Drug-related activities, particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean region, demonstrate the inordinate influence of drug traffickers in destabilizing political and economic establishments. The Government of Jamaica pledges its full co-operation to the United Nations in the international campaign against drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

We urge all Member States to implement the recommendations of the first United Nations Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking held last year and to lend full support to the adoption of the new International Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances later this year.

The Government of Jamaica has always attached great importance to the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. We remain fully committed to the principles laid down in the Charter. Unfortunately, the role of the United Nations has been undermined and weakened over the years as a result of the violation of its principles, the erosion of multilateralism and disregard for its resolutions and recommendations. Although United Nations efforts at resolving problems and

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conflicts have not always met with the degree of success anticipated, it has consistently served as a centre for harmonizing divergent viewpoints on the thorniest of issues. The United Nations has been able to bring warring factions to the negotiating table to facilitate the search for acceptable solutions, and that in itself is a significant achievement. We are firm in our conviction that there is as yet no alternative to this global system.

It is ironic that at a time when the United Nations is playing a more active and constructive role in world affairs, the Organization is threatened by a desperate financial situation primarily due to the non-payment and the withholding by some Member States of their assessed contributions. The Government of Jamaica strongly rejects attempts to manipulate the United Nations system through the deliberate denial of financial support. We note with satisfaction, however, that some countries have now indicated their intention to reduce outstanding arrears and release funds previously withheld.

It is clear that the current cash flow and other problems demand a long-term solution so as to eliminate the risk of recurring short-term financial crises. Jamaica is ready to co-operate in the efforts to achieve a permanent solution to the budgetary problems facing the Organization and to seek reform of the United Nations system particularly within the framework of the recommendations of the Group of 18.

Only a strong and vibrant United Nations can continue to play a central role in world affairs. The attitude of Member States will, however, be critical to the future role of the Organization and its ability to initiate constructive action for the preservation of international peace and security as well as social and economic progress.

And now I turn to the international economic scene in which a number of important issues have engaged our attention over the past year.

(Ms. Grant-Woodham, Jamaica)

The grave problem of international debt has been discussed in many forums, and a number of decisions have been announced which are aimed at mitigating various aspects of the problem. We welcome these decisions, and acknowledge them as sincere efforts to deal with a problem that is now clearly recognized by the international community to be a matter of grave global concern. But we are constrained to point out that, despite these decisions, the debt burden of the developing countries still continues to grow. In 1987 developing countries had their debt increased by about 6 per cent and the outflow of resources from developing countries continues.

In such circumstances, the developing countries will simply sink deeper under an increasing burden of debt; they will be frustrated in their efforts to raise the level of their economies and improve the well-being of their people; and the international economy will continue to falter because an important segment of potential demand continues to be stifled.

This situation is in part caused, and certainly aggravated, by the weakness in commodity markets which seriously affects the export earning capability of practically all developing countries. It is aggravated by protectionist arrangements in many markets, and by threats of protectionist measures which inevitably inhibit investment planning.

It is therefore a range of problems that must be dealt with if we are to find a real solution. Central to everything, however, is the simply stated proposition that economic growth in developing countries must take place and must be facilitated. It is only by that means that they will be able eventually to cope with the burden of debt that now inhibits all their economic and social planning. This central fact is coming to be increasingly recognized and accepted internationally; but, of course, the question that must be answered is, How is growth to be achieved?

(Ms. Grant-Woodham, Jamaica)

An important part of the answer is that developing countries must undertake whatever adjustments and changes are needed within their own economies in order to increase production, widen their productive base and improve their production efficiency. This will probably involve adjustments, and even reforms, in the fiscal and monetary areas, in order to facilitate and encourage the desired developments. The need to achieve efficiency cannot be over-emphasized. It is only by this means that developing countries can be assured of their competitiveness in international markets and thus of their ability to enhance their export earnings.

Regardless of the details of adjustment, however, it is of the utmost importance that the adjustment process, though specific to each country, involve the social sectors as well, and that these sectors be an integral part of the adjustment planning. The need for skills training, the need to ensure productive activity for youngsters coming out of the school system and the need to have programmes in place to sustain the needy in the society, including those whose earning capacity may be temporarily disrupted through the adjustment process, are examples of the necessary elements.

Another integral issue is critical poverty, which is becoming an increasingly serious scourge in many of our countries. Within the past few years the high rates of inflation, the adverse terms of trade, the problems of the debt crisis and many of the economic adjustments that have had to be made have all contributed to the growing incidence of extreme poverty in many developing countries. This is a matter to which many developing countries are now being obliged to give very serious attention in an effort to cope with the human, social, economic and political problems that are involved. In the carrying out of our structural adjustment programmes, therefore, this issue of critical poverty must also be part of the planning equation in which we seek to ensure the well-being of the most vulnerable in our societies.

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The basic objective of the whole process, therefore, is to achieve economic growth while seeking to protect and to improve the well-being of the most needy and to create a stronger and broader economic base which brings increasing numbers of the population within the mainstream of the national economy.

The need for structural adjustment is now widely accepted, and a number of countries are carrying out reform measures. Jamaica's own experience shows that the social well-being of the population and the problem of critical poverty must be seen and dealt with as integral parts of the adjustment process.

Consequently, regardless of the menu of options already in place, the overriding principle that must guide all involved in dealing with the problem of developing countries' debt must be that the developing countries are assisted to achieve economic growth within the context of realistic adjustment programmes, and that the flow of resources to these countries must not be engineered in such a way that they are prevented from achieving real growth in their economies. Failure to do this will simply sink them further into debt, with all the added problems that that implies. In addition, it will deny the international economy a potentially large new demand for goods and services which the developing countries represent.

The economic advancement of developing countries is also severely hampered by the many problems emerging from the 1970s, including loss of foreign exchange earnings due to low commodity prices and the deterioration in the terms of trade.

This situation has been made worse by the instability and unpredictability of the world economy and the resort to protectionist measures despite professed commitments to open trade.

It was against this background that the current Uruguay Round of trade negotiations was launched in September 1986, to liberalize and further expand world trade. Negotiations are proceeding, but it is still too early to predict whether

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results will place developing countries in a position to participate more fully and on an equitable basis in the world economy. The mid-term review to evaluate progress in the negotiations scheduled for Montreal in December will serve to demonstrate to the international community how far commitments made at Punta del Este are being translated into concrete action.

Jamaica, together with other developing countries, hopes that significant progress will be made in the negotiations, particularly in areas of major export interest, such as tropical products, cited for special attention in the Ministerial Declaration of the Round. The implications of subsidies on agricultural products and their removal are also of concern and will have to be carefully assessed. In addition, we look forward to parallel advancement in the interrelated issues, such as tariffs and non-tariff measures, safeguards and respect for the standstill and roll-back commitments to halt and reverse protectionism. At the same time, the principles of non-reciprocity and differentiated treatment must continue to be respected.

Jamaica remains convinced that a successful outcome of the negotiations will not only help to create a more viable and predictable trading environment but also add credibility to the multilateral framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

It is encouraging to note that, despite the uncertainty in the world economy, significant developments have been made in two areas in which developing countries have been specifically involved. We welcome the adoption in April this year of the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries, which is aimed at promoting and sustaining mutual trade among developing countries through the exchange of concessions, with the participation of some 48 countries. The Common Fund for Commodities, after eight years of negotiation, has completed its ratification process and is expected to become fully operational soon.

(Ms. Grant-Woodham, Jamaica)

Recent successes of the United Nations must not obscure the imperative need for similar efforts and progress in the economic arena, where developing countries are being buffeted daily. Jamaica expects that more attention will be focused here so that the goal of the Charter "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" will be achievable.

The PRESIDENT: 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 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. ZAMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (interpretation from French): I am taking the floor to respond to the statements made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq during the meeting of the General Assembly on 4 October with regard to the war imposed by Iraq on the Islamic Republic of Iran. I should like to take this opportunity to reject categorically the incorrect interpretation placed by that speaker upon the rules and regulations covering times of war.

(Mr. Zamani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Mr. Aziz claimed to be informing the Assembly about the events of the war since 1980. I would recall that it was Iraq's duty as a Member of the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter to make use of peaceful means for the settlement of the dispute before resorting to war. Disregarding the basic principles of the Charter and article 6 of the treaty relating to the State border and good-neighbourliness between Iran and Iraq, of 13 June 1975, which laid down precisely the procedures for the settlement of disputes about the interpretation and implementation of the treaty, Iraq carried out a large-scale attack against the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 22 September 1980. That surprise attack enabled the forces of aggression to occupy large areas of our territory. It goes without saying that Iraq's use of force against Iran was undeniably an act of aggression within the terms of the resolution on the definition of aggression adopted by the Assembly in 1974.

Security Council resolution 598 (1987) was accepted by the highest authority in our country - the guide of the Islamic revolution. Officials in the Islamic Republic of Iran have stressed the need to reach a comprehensive, just and honourable solution in conformity with that resolution, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has indicated that it is ready to begin negotiations in good faith. To this end, we have co-operated with the Secretary-General since the acceptance of the resolution to ensure the implementation of the resolution.

We note with regret that Iraq has raised pre-conditions in order to sabotage the negotiations.

Iraq claims that ship-boarding operations carried out in international waters by the naval forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran constitute a violation of the cease-fire. The eminent lawyers present in this Hall know perfectly well that acceptance of the cease-fire did not end the state of war, and that until peace is declared the belligerent parties continue to have the right to board vessels.

(Mr. Zamani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The second obstacle raised by Iraq relates to the clearing of the Arvand Rood, which it would like to begin very soon, since it claims that the cease-fire cannot be complete unless Iraq can make use of that waterway.

I must make it clear that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country on that border waterway, is anxious that dredging operations should be carried out in conformity with the 26 December 1975 agreement between Iran and Iraq on regulations relative to navigation in the Shatt al-Arab.

Finally, the impartial body whose establishment is provided for in paragraph 6 of the resolution is, without question, charged with inquiring into responsibility for the conflict. Thus, it will be the primary task of that body to determine responsibility for the breach of the peace. It will have to determine which of the two belligerents was the aggressor. I really do not understand why Iraq, which claims to have been the victim of aggression, should be so concerned about that body being charged with determining the aggressor.

Mrs. GROSS (United States of America): I must speak in response to remarks that the Syrian representative made concerning my country and its policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. We were surprised that he made a direct comment on the election campaign currently under way in the United States. We had understood that Member States of the United Nations refrained from discussing here the domestic affairs of other Members. Whatever his interest in our free and open election campaign and its outcome, we are disappointed that he was clearly so ill informed.

The policy of the United States towards the Middle East is clear. As Secretary Shultz stated last month,

"Our approach seeks a comprehensive and durable settlement grounded in United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It calls for

(Mrs. Gross, United States)

direct negotiations, launched, if required, through an international conference. It requires acceptance of 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and renunciation of violence and terrorism."

That policy is not a subject of contention in our elections because Americans believe it to be the right policy. Direct negotiations are at the heart of any negotiating process. We should all be disappointed that the Government of Syria has so far refused to engage in such negotiations.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq): In replying to the allegations and distortions uttered a few minutes ago by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I will confine myself to the following points.

First, to go back to the beginning, it was Iran that committed a series of acts clearly defined as acts of aggression under the General Assembly resolution, long before the date he quoted. Actually, on 4 September 1980 Iran used force of arms against Iraq, and that was the beginning of the large-scale conflict. Iran started the war, and the Iranians for eight long years insisted on its continuation until, as they hoped, they could impose on Iraq their own system. Only when they failed, when, after eight long years, they reached the conclusion that they could not do it by force of arms, did they accept the resolution.

For eight years we accepted every resolution of the Security Council, including resolution 598 (1987). For eight years Iran rejected every resolution of the Council; Iran vilified the Council; and Iran boycotted the Council. Then, suddenly, after military defeat, one year after it was passed, they said they accepted the mandatory resolution - a resolution that Iraq accepted immediately after it was passed.

We are entitled, the international community is entitled and the Assembly is entitled to ascertain whether Iran really wants peace or wants only a truce until it resumes its hostilities against Iraq.

(Mr. Kittani, Iraq)

There is no doubt in anyone's mind about Iraq's desire for a peaceful, lasting, comprehensive and honourable peace with Iran. It remains to be seen whether the leaders of Iran really have had a change of heart or tactics. When their Imam accepted the resolution he made it very clear that it was like poison. For Iraq it is not poison, it is sweet. The people, country and Government of Iraq went on a celebration when the cease-fire was announced. Only last Friday the Imam told the Iranian people again to keep their anger and revenge in their hearts - until it is time to use it again, I suppose. Such much for the responsibility for the war and its continuation, and who wants peace and who wants war.

The happenings since they have had this change of heart - if it can be called that - are the following. We have made it clear all along that the cessation of hostilities means that both sides must benefit from every step and that Iraq's right to navigate in the Arab Gulf and through the Strait of Hormuz should not be subject to any kind of limitation. We have also said that, since Iran from the first day of the cease-fire has been using its ports and coastlines, Iraq also should as soon as possible be enabled to use its only outlet to the sea. Therefore we have proposed to the Secretary-General that a neutral body should undertake the survey and clearance of the Shatt al-Arab, without prejudice to anyone's claims and counter-claims. It is Iran which is delaying the negotiations, because it does not want these reasonable logical and fair consequences of the suspension of hostilities.

For one whole year the Iranians tried to impose all kinds of interpretations of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). That is another matter that the representative of Iran failed to mention. An agreement was reached on 8 August, as my Minister said yesterday - negotiated by the Secretary-General and put on paper - that the two parties would meet in Geneva at ministerial level to reach a common

(Mr. Kittani, Iraq)

understanding about all the other provisions once the cease-fire was established - I stress "established".

But instead of observing the cease-fire, the Iranians are being absolutely intransigent and are unwilling to accommodate Iraq's legitimate requests. Iran bears the full responsibility for any lack of progress in these negotiations.

We are co-operating fully with the Secretary-General and will continue to do so. But, after all, Security Council resolution 598 (1987) is a formula for peace between two neighbouring Islamic non-aligned countries and in the final analysis we must march down that road so that we, the two countries, may sign a final peace agreement between ourselves. We are not going to sign a peace agreement with Nepal or with the Security Council or the Secretary-General. It is Iran and Iraq that must search in good faith for comprehensive, lasting and honourable peace between them. There has never been any doubt about our attachment to that goal. It is only Iran's intentions, as the whole world knows, that are in doubt. It is up to Iran to remove those doubts, and I hope they will do so as soon as possible.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): I do not intend to reply to the remarks made by the representative of the United States with reference to the statement of the Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, because they contradict the political facts as a whole and in detail. I want to refer to one point in particular relating to the United States representative's statement that Syria refused to enter into negotiations to bring about peace in the Middle East.

Syria's position is quite clear. It is that any peace process aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East must be undertaken within the framework of the International Conference envisaged by the General Assembly and in conformity with the innumerable resolutions adopted by the Assembly, which are based on the need to ensure Israel's total withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Jerusalem, and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, foremost among which are the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent sovereign State. Any attempt to distort this reality would mean, in the final analysis, a desire not to bring about peace in the Middle East. Those who seek peace in the Middle East must seek the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, through the mechanism of the International Conference and under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to ensure the full implementation of United Nations resolutions so as to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights as provided for in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. To single out any one resolution would not lead to or facilitate the process of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. ZAMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (interpretation from French):

Concerning the beginning of the war, the day the war started, I am obliged to re-read the last sentence of my first speech in exercise of the right of reply. I said:

"Finally, the impartial body whose establishment is provided for in paragraph 6 of the resolution is, without question, charged with inquiring into responsibility for the conflict. Thus, it will be the primary task of that body to determine responsibility for the breach of the peace. It will have to determine which of the two belligerents was the aggressor. I really do not understand why Iraq, which claims to have been the victim of aggression, should be so concerned about that body being charged with determining the aggressor."

(Mr. Zamani, Islamic Republic  
of Iran)

It is Iraq that is boycotting the negotiations by setting pre-conditions. What is happening now in New York is the best proof of that, the best proof of Iraq's bad faith. It is Iraq that argues that New York is not a safe place and refuses to negotiate here.

In conclusion, I wish to make it clear once again that we are ready to begin, as soon as possible and in all good faith, negotiations in accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987) under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

Mr. KITTANI (Iraq): First, it was Iraq that originally proposed an impartial investigation as to who was responsible for the beginning and the continuation of the war. I must leave it at that. We are not afraid of that.

Secondly, the best proof that Iran wants to do as its representative has just said would be for him to agree to the date already proposed by the Secretary-General for resumption of the discussions in Geneva. He is aware of the proposed date. If he accepts the proposal of the Secretary-General, as Iraq has accepted it, we will resume on that date, in good faith, our talks towards peace.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.