



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 52nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ROCHE (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 71, 72 and 73 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE, CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ITEMS

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): Our debate on the basic questions of international security is taking place in conditions characterized by new positive features. It is clear that the improved international atmosphere is creating favourable prerequisites for the further development of constructive dialogue and co-operation among States in all spheres of mutual relations.

We think it is important that many relevant statements and documents, including those of the General Assembly at its current session, are inspired more and more directly by a recognition of the interdependent nature of today's world and by the interplay of the processes at work in the world. This evolution of ideas has taken the form of a new political thinking based on the priority of the interests of all mankind, which makes it possible to surmount ideological, social and other barriers to mutually beneficial co-operation. Hence, this also considerably restrains the elements of confrontation.

Concurrently, the need for new attitudes to a whole range of complex international problems is emerging. In this context an especially prominent place belongs to in-depth joint consideration of questions of international security and to the need to reflect the generally acceptable new elements of that approach in the ways and means of strengthening security on a comprehensive basis.

One of the underlying concerns of every State has always been to safeguard its own security. Security was and is indivisible. A number of times, history has taught the lesson that no country can ensure or strengthen its own security at the expense of other countries or peoples. Too costly in this regard was the tragic experience of Czechoslovakia, which fell victim to the Munich dictate 50 years

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

ago. This only proves that singling out any element in the overall system of security is the road to catastrophe.

Security in today's conditions means both the existence of guarantees that there will be no armed attack or other form of aggression and the creation of favourable prerequisites for successful all-round development and for meeting the needs of every country and people. This can be achieved only in the framework of multilateral efforts and through the interconnection, so to speak, of the horizontal and vertical co-ordinates of security. By this I mean the interrelationship both of countries and of key world problems. Consequently, we believe that an effective solution of security issues should result from and be based on a comprehensive approach. Such an approach is possible within the broad framework of existing United Nations machinery. The full employment of that machinery would also strengthen its role and importance.

In the relationship among the principal purposes of the Charter, involving the maintenance of international peace and security, security is a dynamic element which is developing and taking concrete form simultaneously with the overall development of international relations.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

To the global assets of security in the military field has been added this year the historic Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. The implementation of the Treaty, which is now taking place, gives substance to the idea of strengthening mutual security at reduced levels of armaments and is a completely new experience in the history of mankind. The conclusion of a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons would be another decisive step in this direction. Of basic importance would be a speedy conclusion of the convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. We expect a very positive impact on the strengthening of international peace and security to result from the productive negotiations on measures of confidence-building, security and disarmament in Europe. The interests of international security are well served by increasing transparency in military matters. Of course, all these questions must be resolved according to their specific subject-matter by adequate bilateral and multilateral negotiations. We believe, in this context, that a deeper understanding of the close relationship between disarmament and security will stimulate and facilitate the transition to a more broadly conceived process of real disarmament.

In the process of reducing the level of armaments the guaranteeing of security necessitates a strengthening of the political and legal instruments for the peaceful regulation of relations between countries and the preservation of stability based on a balance of interests. This in our view entails also a further and considerable increase in the role of the United Nations as a universal mechanism of co-operation and security. In this framework special attention should be given to the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in the peaceful solution of disputes.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

It has been becoming increasingly apparent in recent years that the strengthening of international security cannot be divorced from consideration of pressing international economic problems. Serious disproportions in the level and trends of economic development, growing debt and international economic instability, food problems and a whole series of other disturbing and long-outstanding questions increase the polarization of the world and are an element of tension of a potentially explosive nature. In contrast, with the adoption of resolute international measures providing for the development of developing countries and with the establishment of a just international economic order, an essential step would be taken towards the strengthening of global security. The relationship between international security and development is organically rooted in the structures of the present world and an understanding of it is an even more important prerequisite of the effectiveness of any efforts to resolve the questions of both development and security.

In this framework, in our view, and worth a thorough examination by competent United Nations bodies, is also the possibility of implementing such measures for strengthening the security of economic development as the enhancing of the predictability of world-wide economic processes.

The task of tackling the increasing degradation of the environment has become unexpectedly critical. It is one of the priority international problems considered during the present session of the General Assembly. In conditions that are not suitable for life any thought of ensuring security by military means loses all meaning. The need to make a breakthrough in efforts with a view to environmental protection has become the call of the day and should become a task for the competent United Nations bodies that deal with the subject of environment.

The modern perception of security rightly embraces also the relationship between universal security and generally recognized human values, including, first,

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals as well as of the legitimate rights of nations. Without such a link, international security could not be based on a solid foundation.

As one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1 the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic attaches great importance to a non-confrontational continuation and further enrichment of the dialogue on a comprehensive approach to strengthening international peace and security.

In this context, we appreciate the ideas in the memorandum of the Soviet delegation, document A/43/629. It proposes the opening of discussion in three specific areas: first, on increasing the effectiveness of the main organs and of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on questions relating to international security; secondly, on strengthening the United Nations peace-keeping operations; and, thirdly, on ensuring the primacy of international law in relations among States.

In our opinion, such a discussion could take place step by step in the Main Committees, in the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, in the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations or in other subsidiary bodies, according to the respective categories of the questions considered. The General Assembly could also recommend that some issues relating to the activities of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council should be discussed directly by those bodies. The discussion would not have to be linked to the inclusion of new items or sub-items in the agenda and the methods of informal consultations could be widely applied. We proceed from the assumption that all relevant proposals made by States Members of the United Nations would be the subject of dialogue in this framework on an equal basis. Therefore we believe that, as before, security questions should, on the whole, be dealt with by the First Committee on the basis of its mandate. We

are of the opinion that this working pattern would correspond to the need for a broader application of the principle of multilateralism in the consideration of basic international questions and would permit a flexible approach through the method of individual, generally acceptable, partial steps. At the same time it would accommodate some delegations which prefer an approach whereby the examination of the specific, generally acceptable proposals relating to international peace and security would be requested.

We understand all this as a natural continuation of the endeavours embarked upon already through the elaboration and adoption of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security in 1970. I wish to take this opportunity to confirm the adherence of Czechoslovakia to the principles and objectives of that important international document. My country is working actively for the implementation of all the provisions of the Declaration.

We consider also as a concrete contribution to this goal the proposal put forward on 20 February of this year by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Milos Jakes, on the establishment of a zone of co-operation, confidence and good-neighbourly relations along the line of contact between the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) States. Also aimed at enhancing international peace and security are the earlier proposals of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic, addressed to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor and a chemical-weapon-free zone in Central Europe. In those proposals we proceed from the complementary nature of global and regional confidence, security-building and disarmament measures.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

The delegation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic appreciates the report of the Secretary-General on possible ways and means of developing discussion on comprehensive security, document A/43/732. From the report it is clear that there are possibilities of a broad and constructive dialogue in this field.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

At the present session of the First Committee has before it draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1, the main thrust of which is to make precisely that kind of dialogue possible without prejudice to the positions of any other State or group of States on any specific issue. During the elaboration of the draft resolution, the greatest possible account was taken of the experience gathered over the previous two years in the consideration of the question of comprehensive security and of the observations and comments made this year. The sponsors also took into consideration some observations of principle and incorporated them into the revised text. The text is to be understood and considered as formulated in document A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1.

The Czechoslovak delegation expresses the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted on the basis of the broad support of Member States. We also believe that its adoption will be facilitated by the discussion at this session which, thanks to its businesslike nature, has contributed to a deeper and more precise understanding, free of all distortion, of the ideas embodied in the initiative.

In conclusion, allow me also to express the full support of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for the other draft resolutions introduced under international security agenda items, specifically draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.88 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, introduced by the delegation of Yugoslavia; draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.86 on the strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region; draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.85 concerning the need for a result-oriented political dialogue to improve the international situation; and draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.87 on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, introduced by the delegation of Poland. We regard those draft resolutions as a contribution to the further development of dialogue on questions of security.

Mr. YU Mengjia (China) (interpretation from Chinese): As we come once again to consider the question of international security, we are pleased to see the positive changes that have taken place in the international situation over the past year, a surging trend towards the peaceful solution of international disputes and an emerging tendency for dialogue to replace confrontation.

Over the past year, some issues that have long been causes for concern have begun to move towards solution. The Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles signed by the United States and the Soviet Union after years of negotiation is being implemented. Agreement has finally been reached on the question of Afghanistan, which for eight years has been of serious concern to the international community, and the Soviet Union has already withdrawn a part of its troops from Afghanistan. Iran and Iraq have agreed to a cease-fire. A ray of hope has at long last appeared on the horizon that Namibia may be able to shake off its colonialist shackles. There have also been some positive developments in the situations in the Horn of Africa, Western Sahara and the eastern Mediterranean. Not long ago, at a special session, the Palestine National Council adopted the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine. That is an historic choice which the Palestinian people have made, a positive step conducive to the promotion of the Middle East peace process.

Those positive turns of event are the results of the prolonged and joint efforts of the peoples of every country in the world. They also reflect a profound historical trend. Power politics, once so rampant, are increasingly unable to hold sway in the contemporary world. The cry of the peoples for peace and against war resounds throughout the world and even the super-Powers have had to admit that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. More and more third world countries have come to understand that the major task before them is to develop their national economies and improve their peoples' standards of living and that

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

armed conflicts amongst them go against their fundamental interests. All this has helped States to usher in a trend towards the search for the peaceful settlement of their disputes through dialogue.

Even with all the encouraging developments we have seen in the world in recent years, the plain truth is that today's world is by no means tranquil and trouble-free. The root cause of the world's volatility has yet to be eliminated and the maintenance of international peace and security continues to require the unremitting efforts of all peoples.

First, despite the elimination of their intermediate-range missiles, the United States and the Soviet Union still possess their respective large nuclear arsenals. Far from coming to a halt, their arms race is now shifting its focus to the qualitative improvement of weaponry and to extension into outer space. Thus, the task of disarmament remains quite arduous.

Secondly, although the move towards the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts through dialogue is gaining momentum, the flames of war of some regional conflicts have not died out and there has been no substantive progress in the dialogues on some issues.

Thirdly, non-military threats to international security still exist. The difficulties arising from the heavy debt burden, the reduction of financial in-flows, the worsening terms of trade and the rise in trade protectionism are seriously impeding the economic growth of the developing countries.

On the basis of an analysis of the above-mentioned factors in the international environment, we are of the view that effective measures should be taken in the following spheres in an effort to maintain international peace and security:

First, it is necessary to promote the disarmament process further, to check the arms race, including the race in the area of qualitative improvement, and to

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ensure that the armaments of all countries are strictly maintained at a reasonable level for self-defence. To that end, the countries that have the largest arsenals should effectively assume their special responsibilities for disarmament, conduct negotiations in earnest, and take the lead in adopting practical disarmament measures.

(Mr. Yu Mangjia, China)

Those countries should now speed up attempts to reach agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons.

As disarmament concerns the security of every country, all countries, big or small, strong or weak, are entitled to participate on an equal footing in the discussion and solution of disarmament questions, and can play a positive role in this regard. The role of the United Nations and other multilateral disarmament agencies should be strengthened. Disarmament efforts at multilateral, bilateral and regional levels should complement and further one another.

Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate hot spots by achieving a just and reasonable settlement of all regional conflicts. The key to this lies in whether or not the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are respected, and in whether or not the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence are observed in the conduct of international relations by all States, whatever their ideology. Historical experience has shown that hegemonism and expansionism will lead nowhere. In the current situation, it is imperative first to check aggression, effect the unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops, respect the sovereignty of all nations and ensure conditions for the people in the countries and regions concerned to solve their own problems, free from outside interference. It is China's hope that hot spots will all be resolved properly, in line with the United Nations Charter and the spirit of the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

Thirdly, on the question of economic and social development, it is necessary to take practical action to help solve the difficulties facing the third-world countries so as to eliminate non-military threats to international peace and security. Peace, security and development are inseparable. Peace is the premise

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of development, but peace cannot last without development. Turmoil and lack of tranquillity in the world cannot be eliminated without the elimination of poverty and backwardness on Earth. At present, three quarters of the world's population are still in a state of underdevelopment, which not only is inimical to world peace and security, but will have an unfavourable impact on the economic stability and prosperity of the developed countries as well. In our view, it is a pressing task in the field of the international economy to improve the external environment of the developing countries by taking effective measures in such areas as commodities, trade, debt, financial resources, currency and finance with a view to helping restore growth and expansion in their economies. To do so will also benefit the stable growth of the world economy and contribute to the maintenance of world peace and the strengthening of international security.

It is our view that all efforts aimed at enhancing international peace and security should also be beneficial to the strengthening of the international security system embodied in the United Nations Charter. The post-war experience of more than 40 years has demonstrated that the tension and turbulence in the international situation are caused not by any major defect in the Charter or some loose ends in the security system, but by the violation or obstruction of the Charter and the principles of the security system by some countries. What is important, therefore, is to enhance the authority of the Charter and put the principle of the collective security system into practice with truly feasible and effective measures in all related fields, rather than seeking to set up, directly or indirectly, new systems or approaches.

It should also be pointed out that in order to allow the United Nations organs - the Security Council in particular - to play their role in preserving and strengthening international security, every country, especially the permanent

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members of the Security Council, should first, through its own deeds, abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter and fully discharge its duties in ensuring international security.

To safeguard international peace and security is the common goal and lofty duty of all the people in the world. Although the danger of war still exists, a world war can be averted and lasting peace can be achieved. We are convinced that as long as the people of all countries persist in their joint efforts the future of the world will be bright, with the people being the master of their own destiny, dialogue taking the place of confrontation and peace prevailing over war. The Chinese people are determined, together with the people of all other countries, to strive for the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world based on equality and co-operation.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The events of this year, which have had a positive effect on the political situation throughout the world, are evidence of the fact that a comprehensive approach to the strengthening of international peace and security is increasingly realistic. In the new international situation the role of the United Nations itself takes on a new significance. The United Nations Charter forms a basis for the collective action of States. Our Organization also has the appropriate machinery within whose framework it might be possible to make efforts to guarantee international peace and security, on the basis of a balance of the interests of all States.

The task is to ensure that the purposes and principles of the United Nations are fully realized and that the machinery for the maintenance of international peace and security is made fully effective.

The comprehensive approach to ensuring international peace took form 43 years ago, when, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,

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the peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition decided to unite their efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security, and to that end established the United Nations.

Article 1 of the Charter sets out the Organisation's purposes: the maintenance of international peace and security; the development of friendly relations between nations; and the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and promoting and encouraging respect for human rights.

(Mr. Gudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Thus, the United Nations, whose primary purpose, as stated in the first Article of the Charter, is to maintain international peace and security, was also created to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. That Article embodies the Charter's comprehensive approach to the strengthening of international peace and security, and the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1, the revised version of which was introduced in detail at yesterday's meeting by Ambassador Belonogov of the Soviet Union, were motivated by it.

The sponsors of the draft resolution do not view the comprehensive approach to strengthening international peace and security as something short-lived. We see it as a long-term, ongoing process in the course of which the energies of the international community, instead of being squandered on sterile confrontations, will be devoted to the joint solution of global problems. In that connection we hope that the political conduct of States will be brought more and more into line with the realities of today's world.

With the entry into force of the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - the process of genuine nuclear disarmament was begun. The adoption of that Treaty will give new impetus to other steps that are being taken to realize a secure and non-violent world.

Those steps include the elaboration of an agreement on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons, in strict compliance with the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the conclusion of a convention on the elimination of chemical weapons, the cessation of nuclear testing, the reduction of conventional weapons and a reduction of the naval arms race.

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Recent positive developments in the world have led to progress in the settlement of regional conflicts, with an increasingly active contribution by the United Nations. It is therefore no accident that the Secretary-General in his report to the forty-third session of the General Assembly, speaks of a return of confidence and a resurgence of interest in the Organization. In our view, the resurgence of interest in the Organization is closely linked to the resurgence of interest in the comprehensive approach to strengthening international peace and security.

In that connection the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR would point to the processes taking place in Europe. On 23 November of this year the representative of Greece, Ambassador Stephanou, speaking in the Committee's general debate on international security items on behalf of the 12 members of the European community, stated:

"The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process is a positive example of what can be achieved through multilateral co-operation within the regional context. This process remains the central element of an East-West policy aimed at peace and security based on co-operation and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." (A/C.1/43/PV.47, p. 24-25)

Subscribing to that positive appraisal of the CSCE process, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR also wishes to point out that the comprehensive approach is an integral part of that process. Given the fact that positive results must be achieved on various fronts - political, military, economic, environmental, humanitarian - the CSCE has made it possible to achieve a notable improvement in the European political climate. Progress has been made in strengthening security on that continent, whose post-war history has been largely determined by the threatening confrontation between the two most powerful military and political

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blocc. The CSCE process has been successful because of a balance of interests and a growing awareness of the indivisibility of international security.

Eastern Europe cannot feel secure if the security of Western Europe is not secured, and vice versa. The same applies to international security in the world as a whole. In other words, global security must be comprehensive, both with regard to States and in terms of their spheres of interest. The comprehensive approach enables us to take a broader view of the relationship between disarmament, security and development - between the quality of international relations and the quality of human life.

That linkage was clearly set forth in the statement by the Brian Mulroney, the Prime Minister of Canada, during the general debate in the General Assembly this year, when he stated:

"I have said that we must devote the energies freed by greater security to two equally pressing problems. One is poverty; the other is environmental protection." (A/43/PV.11, p. 62)

The strengthening of international peace and security must rest upon a solid foundation. In our view, the efforts of the international community will be effective only to the extent that the United Nations functions effectively and that the Secretary-General, the Security Council and other international institutions can play their roles. The United Nations system was envisaged by its founders as the only acceptable alternative to the settlement of disputes between States by armed conflict. Indeed, provided that there is total and sincere utilization of the United Nations peace-making potential, that is still the case. It is for that reason that in draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1 on this item the sponsors affirm

"that the system of security embodied in the Charter is the fundamental and

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

irreplaceable mechanism for the preservation or restoration of international peace and security."

In the maintenance of international peace and security the Charter provides for the taking of effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace. The consolidation and further development of the positive experience and practice of conducting peace-keeping operations could decisively improve the implementation of that provision of the Charter. United Nations peace-keeping operations, which were awarded the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize, could be used more extensively in implementing Security Council resolutions as well as for the prevention of potential armed conflicts.

(Mr. Qudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

For the maintenance of international peace and security the Charter requires also that international disputes and situations that could lead to breaches of the peace be settled by peaceful means and in accordance with the principles of justice and international law. Increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations and its principal organs, the active use of Charter machinery and procedures and the enactment of measures to prevent crises and conflicts must produce the conditions necessary for productive co-operation among States within and outside the United Nations. In the political climate of the late 1980s, in an increasingly interdependent and interrelated world, there is a tangible need for intensive international co-operation on the basis of equality and democracy. We think that strengthening relations among States on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter must gradually decrease the significance of the military factor and increase the significance of international law as the basis for relations among States.

We are sincere in our appeal for dialogue on an equal footing on ways and means of strengthening security. What is the essence of draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1, which is sponsored by 10 delegations? It is a call to join together in considering how we can ensure a solid peace without infringing the security of any State. In these matters no one wants to make a mistake or to find himself at a disadvantage.

In scientific and social circles in our country we have had and continue to have heated discussions on formulating the best possible position on global processes. What should prevail in foreign policy: class interests and narrow national interests, or the urgent universal human need for the survival of the world community and the task of solving the pressing economic and ecological problems that have taken on global significance? Is international law to be given

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

a functional role? Is international policy to be confined within the commonly accepted rules of international law? Are we - have we always been - blameless in the international arena, and if not in what respect?

In our heated debates on such subjects, the new political thinking grew stronger, and we became further convinced of the need to strengthen the primacy of law in international relations and relations among States, in such a way that the binding norms of international law would exclude war and the use of force from relations among States. Here again, to quote the preamble of the Charter, we are determined

"to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained".

There can be no excuse for violating the provisions of the United Nations Charter and universally recognized rules of international law; that was just stated by the representative of China. Obligations under international treaties should be the principles underlying the international community's actions.

In putting forward the concept of a comprehensive approach to international security in the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of its Charter, the sponsors of this initiative do not claim to be the repository of absolute truth with respect to these problems, and are open to constructive proposals from any quarter.

An extensive dialogue on the question of comprehensive security and peace would deepen mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. That was brought out with special clarity during the recent meeting between Mr. M. S. Gorbachev and the President of France, Mr. Mitterrand. Speaking of the fact that Europe must and will play its role in world policy, Mr. Gorbachev stressed that

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"At the same time, one should count on the internationalization of dialogue. There are many actors on the international stage; not one of them should remain on the sidelines, much less backstage, in world policy. Given these realities, the role of the United Nations and other forums for the collective consideration and solution of problems is of particular importance".

That was echoed also in the report (A/43/732) of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on the agenda item under discussion, which noted that Member States were clearly in agreement on the desirability of strengthening the United Nations and increasing its effectiveness in strengthening international security.

Reliable guarantees for a comprehensive, rather than a selective, security are to be found in the United Nations system acting to the fullest extent of its possibilities and in the Security Council effectively fulfilling its functions: in other words in the maximal utilization of the potential of the United Nations for safeguarding and keeping the peace. For the foreseeable future, international relations will be a combination of co-operation and competition: No one can simply repeal the conflictual side of things. But together we can, and must, make a decisive choice in favour of a peaceful future guaranteed by disarmament, trust, co-operation and the effective functioning of the international machinery of the United Nations.

When the General Assembly endorses draft resolutions adopted under agenda items relating to security matters, it will be a sure demonstration of the international community's readiness to continue the active search for ways and means of guaranteeing a peaceful future for all peoples throughout the world. All peoples have every reason to expect improved economic and social conditions in an atmosphere of solid peace and security.

Mr. ESZTERGALYOS (Hungary): As we look back and try to appraise developments over the past year, we cannot but express cautious optimism. We have witnessed the improvement of East-West and Soviet-United States relations, with all its important concrete results. We have seen the first steps aimed at resolving regional hot-beds of tension with the active involvement of the United Nations.

As far as the United Nations itself is concerned, its principal organs have increasingly functioned in the manner envisaged in the Charter: There has been a marked improvement in co-operation among the members of the Security Council, and the working relationship of the Security Council and the Secretary-General has been closer than ever before.

Even though world politics is still characterized by a great number of grave and pressing problems, on the whole we have witnessed, and have acted to achieve, a psychological breakthrough during the past year.

We are quite convinced that these favourable changes have resulted from the growing recognition that the mutual dependence or interdependence of States and peoples is a fact: a reality of our age.

(Mr. Estergalyos, Hungary)

If we accept, as we must, this reality we can draw only one conclusion and that is that the only possible path of international co-existence is the strengthening of mutually advantageous international co-operation and of confidence among States. The Hungarian Government shapes the course of its foreign policy and participates in international relations in accordance with this spirit: rejecting the use of force or the threat of force, regarding security as a complex notion with closely interrelated military, political, economic, human rights and humanitarian aspects; and maintaining that not a single State is able to guarantee its own security solely by military-technical means or to the detriment of other States and that security can be built only by political means, taking into account the interests of all States and by joint action resulting from a dialogue. That has been a long-standing policy of ours; we advocated, and practised, dialogue even in the early 1980s, when relations were quite tense among countries of East and West as a result of the deployment of medium-range missiles. We were of the view that that situation must not prevent contacts; on the contrary, a dialogue was even more necessary than before. In comparison with those days the situation is much improved. There has been a considerable narrowing of our differences on how to ensure international security not by military measures and countermeasures but by taking into account each other's interests.

These considerations motivate our co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1, which is essentially a call for the continuation of the international dialogue aimed at (a) strengthening the system of security laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and (b) enhancing the role and effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security in all aspects.

(Mr. Estergalyos, Hungary)

Frankly speaking, we are somewhat puzzled by the reservations and doubts expressed by certain delegations as to whether our initiative might undermine or rival the Charter. Please do not read anything into the text which is not there! Even if some notions in the original initiative might have created problems for quite a few delegations, they are not in the text any more. This evolution, if you will, was the result of the dialogue we have had on this issue and we are quite certain that if we continue this dialogue we will be able to overcome any remaining difficulties.

It is difficult not to see that the positive changes on the international scene that so many of us rightly welcomed came about not by accident but as a result of the change in the attitude or outlook we all have.

Recent experience has shown that member States accord growing importance to the United Nations in attempting to find co-operative solutions to outstanding world problems, including that of ensuring security. We agree with the Secretary-General, who, in his report on the work of the Organization, document A/43/1, stated at page 7:

"... we may be witnessing a transition ... towards a new pattern of relationships at the global level. The transition has the logic of necessity behind it. It is certainly justified by the insupportable cost and the incalculable dangers of a self-perpetuating arms race ... It is, or can be, propelled by the need for greater attention to the problems of economic modernization or to the social problems that economic growth has left untouched ... All these factors ... seem to call for radical adjustments of outlook on the part of the world's leadership."

The essence of the "adjustment of outlook" is the substitution of confrontation by co-operation; unilateral approaches to problems by joint efforts.

(Mr. Esstergalyos, Hungary)

In the renewed search for ways to strengthen international security and to enhance the role and effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security many concrete ideas and suggestions have already been put forward. One category of proposals refers to the United Nations: to restore the peace-making capacity of the Security Council; to increase the role of peace-keeping activities; to find ways and means for the prevention of conflicts; and to use more extensively the potential of the International Court of Justice, to name only a few. Another category of proposals refers to actions to be taken in various fields that directly or indirectly relate to security: disarmament; the promotion and protection of human rights; co-operation for economic development, etc.

In the context of the joint search for strengthening international security on a comprehensive basis, we ourselves have worked out proposals or positions that are likely to dispel distrust, to create confidence and thereby to advance our common goals: first, in the field of military security we see a possibility and a necessity to co-operate on questions such as the reconciliation of military doctrines and to convert them to a defensive character on the basis of joint agreement. We see the need for openness and verification, including an international verification network within the framework of the United Nations. We advocate a ban on selling offensive arms. We attach great importance to the regional approach in disarmament and are ready to take part - following the successful conclusion of the Vienna follow-up meeting - in talks on conventional disarmament; secondly, in international economic relations we attach fundamental importance to the predictability of world economic processes and the co-ordination of economic policy decisions both at national and international levels. We are for the gradual elimination of politically motivated and all other forms of economic

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discrimination, including protectionist barriers; and, thirdly, as far as human rights and fundamental freedoms are concerned, we are firmly of the view that the promotion of their exercise and the development of international co-operation in this field are determining factors in building mutual confidence among States and are therefore indispensable elements of international security. Non-compliance with internationally recognized norms and violations of human rights have harmful effects on relations among States, therefore they cannot be considered as exclusively internal matters of individual States. Consequently we feel the need to have an effective system of international control over the compliance of States with their obligations in this field. The expansion of international co-operation and contacts in the fields of culture, the arts and education play an outstanding role in the process of implementing human rights, just as do the free and unrestricted travel by individuals and the flow of ideas and information.

In our experience, there is a growing willingness to co-operate on practical issues, such as the ones referred to above. On the other hand there are still divergences of views as far as the approach is concerned.

While we welcome the readiness to co-operate on practical matters, we feel that even this practical co-operation would be greatly facilitated if we could find a sense of common purpose. This goal would best be served by a continuation of the dialogue on these and related issues, and I am quite sure that the result would be a further narrowing of our differences, more concrete and action-oriented proposals and more progress towards strengthening international peace and security.

Miss RAZAFITRIMO (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): As regards one of the paramount objectives assigned to the United Nations by the Charter, namely the maintenance of international peace and security, 1988 has been full of noteworthy events for the international community and has seen wide spread acknowledgement of the efforts undertaken in that direction by the Organisation since its creation, evidence of which is the award this year of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. Only a year ago it would have sounded presumptuous to say that United Nations efforts were finally being given their due.

The various trends and events that have successively occurred in the past twelve months indeed give us renewed hope in international relations and justify optimism regarding the rediscovered and growing credibility of the United Nations and its main bodies, which to a large extent have contributed to the positive concrete results recorded in the settlement of certain regional conflicts. I might mention the Geneva Accords negotiated under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which are a decisive step towards the peaceful settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan and a solution allowing all Afghans to exercise their right to self-determination; there was the cease-fire on 20 August in the Gulf war in compliance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and the initiation of direct talks between the two parties in a mood of confidence and understanding; there has been improvement in the prospects for Namibian independence and the beginning of a negotiated settlement on the problem of Cyprus; there has been progress achieved in the elaboration of a framework for a comprehensive political settlement in South-East Asia; there have been encouraging steps in the implementation of United Nations and Organization of African Unity resolutions as concerns the situation between the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic and Morocco.

(Miss Razafitrimo, Madagascar)

Any local conflict bears the seeds of a general conflagration, but the recent developments mentioned above, together with pressure brought to bear by public opinion on Governments to bring about security through disarmament as a result of a recognition of the impossibility of establishing security on an exclusively military basis or by military force have contributed to the creation of conditions favourable to a relaxation of international tensions.

Moreover, mention might also be made of the significance and impact of the positive developments in relations between the two super-Powers on the dynamic of international relations. They are determined, as they state, to put an end to the arms race and confrontation and to pursue their negotiations and dialogue in the meetings which are soon to take place at United Nations headquarters in New York. In that regard, we reaffirm that it would be highly desirable for the United States and the Soviet Union to conclude an agreement soon on the agreed objective of a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic nuclear arsenals as part of a search for a genuine nuclear disarmament process, which is a sine qua non for the establishment and strengthening of peace and security in the international community.

In other areas, we are happy to note the efforts made by the parties to reach an understanding preserving the authority of the anti-ballistic missile Treaty while guaranteeing security.

There is a growing awareness of the role and scope of conventional disarmament in the area of international arms transfers, resolutions on which subject, adopted in the First Committee, are eloquent in themselves. There is general agreement in favour of the French proposal to organize in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989 a conference among the States Parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the States interested, taking into account the pressing urgency of the problem of the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.

(Miss Razafitrino, Madagascar)

Finally, the past year has seen an intensification and increase in the number of international meetings and consultations on questions linked to disarmament and international security. We seem to be on the verge of an era of dialogue and exchanges in an atmosphere of détente and on the basis of a consensus on the necessity for joint efforts, co-operation and understanding.

After that introduction, one might be tempted to be overcome by a heady euphoria as regards the future of international relations. But one must recognize that, the positive trends that I noted notwithstanding, no radical change towards the "institutionalization" of peace, co-operation and mutual trust has really taken place, as was emphasized yesterday at the Committee's 50th meeting by the representative of Romania. Certain conflicts remain of concern to the extent that national expediency or ideological and strategic rivalries take precedence over the most elementary rights. That was recently demonstrated in the case of Palestine, to whose Declaration of Independence the Democratic Republic of Madagascar pays tribute; it is also true of situations relating to Central America, Korea, the Middle East and southern Africa and apartheid.

As regards apartheid, we believe that the danger and challenge posed not only to Africa but to the entire international community of a South Africa possessing a nuclear capacity should prompt us all to consider soon the conclusion and implementation of a binding legal instrument guaranteeing the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, as is recommended by the relevant draft resolution adopted in the First Committee on 10 November last. Without such a document, to which all nuclear-weapon States should adhere, the efforts of countries in denuclearized zones or regions would be in vain and the spectre of a nuclear war will not be definitively removed.

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At the same time, security at the global level is compromised today by numerous non-military threats, such as poverty, inequality, injustice, malnutrition, illiteracy, underdevelopment, the deterioration of the environment, racial and religious discrimination, failure to respect human rights, the flagrant inequality of resources and drug trafficking. Given the complexity and growing interdependence of those issues, their eradication requires joint efforts on the part of the entire international community.

When they joined the United Nations, Member States assumed a collective responsibility as set forth in Article 1 of the Charter. For its part, Madagascar intends to respect its commitment to contribute to the maintenance of

"international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

We shall do so through the United Nations, which is and remains for us the appropriate universal forum responsible for preventing and eliminating threats to international peace and security.

We view that commitment in terms of strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Organization, its main bodies and the Secretary-General, with respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter with a view to ensuring the Organization a rational and productive use of its means in the face of new challenges of all kinds brought about by changes in the world environment. We remain convinced that the United Nations is the best framework for constructive dialogue with a view to maintaining international peace and security. Recent events have shown that the

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United Nations can make an effective contribution when, with a little good will, selfish interests are set aside in the interests of the international community.

Peace and security mean the absence of war, but they also mean development and equity, with all their corollaries. It can never be repeated enough: history has shown that security results from the interdependence of military, political, economic, ecological and humanitarian variables. The cessation of the arms race, for example, the creation of a new international economic order and the eradication of apartheid also require international security. To ensure collective security presupposes a global, multidimensional approach based on broad solidarity among nations and close co-operation among all people in a climate of mutual trust and understanding.

In that respect, the Democratic Republic of Madagascar unreservedly supports the draft resolution presented under agenda item 73, which calls for an over-all approach to the strengthening of international peace and security with respect for the Charter.

Mr. HONG (Singapore): In 1986, when a draft resolution on the item before us was first proposed, many delegations were genuinely puzzled and perplexed by its vagueness. They were unsure of its thrust, and how it related to the existing United Nations structures. Over the last two years, there has been more clarification. The draft resolution this year has become more procedural, and significant changes in the text have been accepted by the sponsors.

At the same time, many representatives have noticed several important trends which have a bearing on the issue: first, the world trend towards détente and reconciliation; secondly, the significant progress on regional conflicts; thirdly, the growing prestige of the United Nations arising from its successful mediation efforts in those regional conflicts; fourthly, the growing debate on how to strengthen the peace-keeping capabilities of the United Nations, in view of the greater call for such peace-keeping operations in many different regions; and, fifthly, the ongoing intellectual exploration and debate on how generally to strengthen the United Nations - for instance, on its financial stability - and to prepare the United Nations for the next decade and even into the next century.

Two quotations aptly summarize the changing trends in the world and the key obstacle to world peace and a more effective United Nations. The first is:

"The notion of a bipolar world has long since gone, and we will have a diverse world where capability is widely dispersed This spread of capability and capacity is going to change the structure of the world economy and the strategic situation."

The speaker was United States Secretary of State Mr. George Shultz, addressing the Iran-Contra Congressional Committee in July 1987.

The second quotation is:

"The political and moral core of the problem is whether States and peoples

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trust one another, whether there is respect for international agreements and institutions." (A/42/574, p. 12)

The source is President Gorbachev's important article entitled "Reality and safeguards for a secure world", which appeared in Pravda on 17 September 1987.

Many political theorists and philosophers have continuously addressed the issue of world peace and have proposed various solutions, ranging from philosopher kings to world government. Of all those proposals, the only intergovernmental organization dedicated to world peace that has actually been set up and that has functioned fairly effectively for several decades is the United Nations. Despite this, there have been many critics of the United Nations who have criticized its "programmes without impact and its resolutions without consequences",

a phrase taken from a Ditchley Conference report, No. D88/8. The most effective answer to such critics is that the fault lies in the Member States. The United Nations can only be as effective as its Member States allow it to be. The United Nations is thus a mirror of the world, reflecting all its faults and weaknesses.

Whatever the praise and criticism, in any case the United Nations is a fact of life for most nation States, many of which were established after the United Nations itself was created in 1945. These new States have adapted to what was for them a given factor in international relations. For four decades or less they learned to operate within the United Nations framework, with its balance of interests between great Powers and little States, between the veto in the Security Council and the equal vote of all States in the General Assembly. The United Nations Charter and its principles served as a moral guide in international relations for these young States. The United Nations, for all its imperfections, was "mother" or "universal nanny".

This imperfect but tolerable state of affairs was challenged in 1986 by the new and vague proposal submitted under the title, "Comprehensive system of

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international peace and security". Many of the new countries were confused and confounded. Should they believe the West, which claimed that the comprehensive system of international peace and security aimed at duplicating the United Nations? According to the Ditchley Conference Report, entitled "Existing International Organisations: Present Realities and future Needs", the West was running an active campaign to persuade the non-aligned to reject the comprehensive system of international peace and security as a back-door attempt at Charter revision.

However, another Western publication, entitled "The State of the UN, 1988", by D. J. Puchala and R. A. Coate, argued that the comprehensive system of international peace and security was not a bid to seize leadership of the United Nations, nor to refashion the Organization to serve Soviet purposes. These authors felt that controlling the United Nations and restructuring its agenda to accommodate a global peace campaign aimed at disarming the West and dismantling its security system was an obsolete cold-war aim. Furthermore, this was not consistent with a whole inventory of new-look Soviet actions. These actions include better relations with the United States; concrete steps towards strategic arms control; and helping to resolve regional conflicts. Similarly, with specific regard to the United Nations, the Soviet Union called for strengthening the Secretary-General's role, revitalizing the Security Council and so on. It is interesting to note that, in the assessment of the authors, those latter objectives were far less compatible with the Soviet Union's seizing control of the United Nations than they were with Soviet officials courting condominium with the United States. From these two publications alone, it is clear that there was great confusion over the comprehensive system of international peace and security.

A further survey of the relevant literature might include Mr. Lincoln Bloomfield's article in Harvard Magazine of November/December 1988,

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entitled "Twilight of Autarchy". This article describes the world trend towards interdependence, which was a theme stressed in President Gorbachev's seminal article, "Realities and Safeguards for a Secure World", and which provides the conceptual framework of the comprehensive system of international peace and security. Interestingly, Bloomfield claims that the United Nations concept of collective security has not worked, and neither has super-Power intervention. Could the comprehensive system of international peace and security concept be directed to address this dual failure?

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For instance, the comprehensive system of international peace and security could be defined as combining the political power of the great Powers with the universal approval and diplomatic support of the United Nations in enforcing collective security. When the great Powers intervened by themselves in unilateral action it was perceived as gunboat diplomacy or neo-imperialism. Conversely, when the United Nations was urged to take action it was hamstrung either by vetoes or by great-Power opposition in some form or other.

We might usefully bear in mind other important points made by Bloomfield. Those were, first, that a coalition of moderates might help save the United Nations, a point made also in the book I mentioned earlier, The State of the United Nations, 1988. Secondly, Bloomfield says that the state of international relations is now affected not just by the actions of Government but equally by such non-State actors as multi-national corporations, such international organizations as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), such world figures as the Pope, and by terrorist networks and fundamentalist movements. Thirdly, Bloomfield called for a new policy to insulate and isolate local conflicts.

To clarify the confusion about the comprehensive system of international peace and security and its relationship to the United Nations, one might also refer to the Ditchley Conference report I mentioned earlier. It is an interesting document that reports the views of distinguished and knowledgeable experts gathered to discuss the state of international organizations, including the United Nations. The report's conclusion is worth citing. It reads:

"We are at an interesting crossroad in thinking about international organizations, reluctant to jettison what has been created, but pessimistic, with large exceptions for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund,

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about the capacity of the United Nations to shake itself into the twenty-first century. Some believe that events such as the Soviet Union's move towards active participation in multilateral diplomacy will conspire to rectify their weaknesses in personnel and leadership. But might it not also lead to a coalition of the North, multilateralism without universality?"

Those are sensitive issues raised at an international gathering and worth pondering. For the sake of balance, we shall now take a look at the other side of the coin. Perhaps the most authoritative and positive view of the United Nations can be found in two recent United Nations publications. They are, first, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization to the General Assembly at its forty-third session (A/43/1) and, secondly, a speech by the United Nations Secretary-General entitled "Must we live with conflicts? - the role of the United Nations", delivered at the Graduate School of International Studies at Geneva in April 1988.

The first document spells out the successes of the United Nations in the following terms:

"On matters of international peace and security, the principal organs of the United Nations have increasingly functioned in the manner envisaged in the Charter. The working relationship of the Security Council and the Secretary-General has rarely if ever been closer." (A/43/1, p. 2)

The Secretary-General pointed out that the United Nations has managed, "with ingenuity and realism, to find ways of defusing conflicts".

In his Geneva speech the Secretary-General pointed out that the United Nations can intervene only when Member States deem it opportune on political rather than juridical grounds. Another limitation is that the United Nations is an

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organisation of States jealous of their sovereignty. Two other limitations pointed out by the Secretary-General in his 1988 report include the United Nations dependence on Member States' financing and the fact that the United Nations is not always able to apply the means available to it under the Charter.

The most important point spelt out by the Secretary-General, however, is that the United Nations is based on the idea that the five great Powers have a common interest in peace and that they are capable of reaching agreement to restore and preserve it. The Secretary-General stated that co-operation was possible between the members of the United Nations Security Council and that it would tend to be strengthened if détente were consolidated. In that context the comprehensive system of international peace and security has rightly focused on strengthening the role of the United Nations Security Council along with the role of the United Nations Secretary-General. Since the comprehensive system of international peace and security also refers to peace-keeping operations, it would be useful to note the comments of the Secretary-General in that connection.

In his view, successful peace-keeping depends on obtaining the consent of parties involved; on the consistent support of the United Nations Security Council; on getting a clear and practicable mandate; on the readiness of Member States to supply funds and troops; and on accompanying negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement of the dispute.

The Secretary-General also pointed out that certain salient facts would affect future peace-keeping operations. First, the problem of civil wars poses a greater threat than do wars between States. Secondly, the dividing line between civil war and inter-State war will be increasingly more difficult to define as the external actors and sources of arms and funds become more diversified. Lastly, the nature

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of current conflicts, which are mostly civil wars, limits the possibility of United Nations intervention. Those are all important points to remember as the world's attention has become focused on peace-keeping in the current context of the settlement of various regional conflicts.

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We have referred to various issues related to a comprehensive system of international peace and security, such as the trend towards interdependence, the successes and weaknesses of the United Nations, peace-keeping and various measures proposed for reform. We have seen how conflicting are the views expressed on the United Nations and on a comprehensive system of international peace and security. In the current debate, attention has been focused on certain key areas, which tallies with the concrete suggestions advanced in the proposal for a comprehensive system. It is a fact that the system includes important suggestions on strengthening the United Nations' peace-keeping capability, on greater resort to the International Court of Justice, whose decisions would be binding, and on strengthening the role and powers of the Secretary-General and the Security Council. The comprehensive system of international peace and security is therefore both timely and relevant in the search for ways and means of improving the United Nations.

From this survey of the literature it is clear that the issues are complex and that solutions are not easy to find. There is, however, a golden opportunity now before us, which must be seized. That opportunity is provided by the changing and increasingly positive attitude towards the United Nations, symbolized by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. The international climate is supportive of an increasingly effective United Nations. There is renewed great-Power interest in the United Nations. World public opinion is favourable to the United Nations in view of the recent mediation successes of the Organization. The time is right to discuss ideas and suggestions on how to improve the United Nations. The comprehensive system of international peace and security falls into that category.

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In the spirit of reconciliation and compromise that has strengthened the world's progress towards peace and stability, we should discuss the comprehensive system of international peace and security to see how it could help strengthen the United Nations. There is no nation or individual which has a monopoly on wisdom; good suggestions and ideas can come from all quarters. A positive spirit of open-mindedness and a willingness for dialogue and discussion will help in our mutual efforts to strengthen the United Nations. As we have no historical precedents in building multilateral co-operation based on the trust of States and peoples in one another and on respect for international agreements and institutions, the comprehensive system of international peace and security provides the first test of the new détente and good will between nations.

Mr. MAKSIMOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR is one of the sponsors of the proposal for comprehensive security, and we note with satisfaction that the invitation to a dialogue on this important question is meeting with increasing understanding in the United Nations and among the widest circles of the international community. A new thinking, with humane and universally human criteria and values, is seen in the most diverse quarters. Awareness grows of the indivisibility of the world and the need for a future community for all peoples. The idea of new political thinking is supported by practical, tangible action.

The Soviet programme for a nuclear-free world, proposed in January 1986, helped end the stagnation in the matter of disarmament. We have witnessed the first major breakthrough towards genuine nuclear disarmament in the Soviet-United States Treaty on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. There has been progress between the USSR and the United States on a

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50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons, subject to compliance with the anti-ballistic-missile Treaty during an agreed period. We are striving persistently for a prohibition of chemical weapons and the cessation of nuclear tests. Agreement nears on a mandate for negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe. As stressed in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization,

"Our experience has thus shown that co-operative management of a variety of global problems, reflecting a community of interest among Member States, is an entirely workable idea. We have now come to, or are nearing, a stage where the extension of this approach to resolving some of the major political issues on our agenda is within our reach." (A/43/1, p. 7)

Positive results have been attained also through the application by States of the principles of a new political thinking to the settlement of regional conflicts, with the use of the peace-keeping potential of the United Nations. Of special note here are the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan. There has been a start to the process of settling the Iran-Iraq conflict and of normalizing the situation in south-western Africa, South-East Asia, Cyprus and Western Sahara. We expect that a peaceful settlement, on the basis of a balance of interests and respect for freedom of choice, will come also in the Middle East, Central America and the Korean peninsula.

But it is important not only to quench existing conflicts, but also effectively to prevent the emergence of new hotbeds by means of preventive and control measures, including the use of the United Nations. An important step forward in that respect is the consensus adoption by the General Assembly at its present session of a declaration on the prevention of disputes and situations which could threaten international peace and security and on the role of the United Nations in

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that field. The Byelorussian SSR supports enhancing the preventive and control functions of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Recent unquestionable achievements in the military and political sphere and in guaranteeing comprehensive security are important not only per se, but also as an important factor with a beneficial effect on the entire system of modern international relations. We must turn to this without delay and search for joint ways and means of solving other problems of global comprehensive security, especially with respect to its economic aspects.

The economic characteristics of various countries or groups of countries are extremely diverse, and sometimes even contradictory. It is not easy to find consensus on restructuring international economic relations. This requires a non-confrontational approach, an awareness of the facts as they exist, a sense of responsibility and a desire to reach agreements making it possible to regulate economic interdependence in the interest of all.

The global threat posed by the degradation of the environment is as great as the threat of nuclear annihilation. This problem demands the most careful consideration. At its current session, the General Assembly has elucidated another aspect of the ecological crisis. I refer to the fact that densely populated areas of the third world are deliberately being converted into dumping grounds for toxic materials, which poses a direct threat to the safety of their populations.

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This and other problems involving the maintenance of the health of the planet are now building up more rapidly than we are able to resolve them. The time factor and the planetary nature of the ecological threat require that we urgently merge our efforts as States to prepare and implement a global strategy for the protection of the environment and the rational utilization of resources which would provide in particular for the use of technologies not harmful to humanity or nature.

Relevant in this connection is the introduction by the Soviet Union at the present session of the General Assembly of a proposal to conduct a systematic triple cycle of special meetings on problems of co-ordination of efforts in the field of ecology which could conclude with a second United Nations summit conference on questions of the environment by 1992 or perhaps even earlier.

The situation prevailing throughout the world gives new meaning and relevance to concepts such as human dignity and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Byelorussian SSR proceeds from the premise that a world where human rights are being trampled on cannot be considered to be secure. States in which these rights are flagrantly violated cannot expect to have the confidence of other members of the international community. The interests of comprehensive security require that all States carry out in good faith the provisions of international documents on human rights. It is particularly important for discussions of problems in this sphere to be conducted in a constructive fashion on the basis of respect for the sovereign rights and equality of States and without being used to foment confrontation and enmity among them, even if there are definite mutual subjects for concern.

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In a more secure atmosphere it will be possible also for the international community to give greater attention to such problems as terrorism, the criminal activities of the drug mafia, epidemics and other natural calamities which are not global in character but which could become tragic for whole peoples. Today conditions are being created which may make it possible to take a major step forward in the creation of confidence between States. We view confidence as the primary foundation for everything, including a reliable solution to the questions of disarmament and security. That is why it is so important to pass on without wasting any time from agreeing on confidence-building measures in specific spheres of international relations to an overall policy of confidence, based on a firm infrastructure adequate to the interdependence of States.

In all these directions the international community can activate its work first within the framework of the United Nations.

The question of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations has been raised in numerous statements in the course of the present session of the General Assembly and in a number of documents. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR first draws attention to the memorandum from the Soviet Union entitled "Towards comprehensive security through the enhancement of the role of the United Nations", document A/43/629. That document contains practical proposals related to increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, strengthening the role of the Secretary-General, and ensuring a healthy administrative and budgetary foundation for the Organization. It contains provisions relating to the strengthening and further development of positive experience and practice in conducting United Nations peace-keeping operations and a more extensive use of the resources of the

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International Court in resolving controversial international legal questions and, on the whole, the strengthening of international law and order.

All these proposals, in the view of the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, are aimed at strengthening the United Nations as a fundamental, multilateral mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security. Compliance with the United Nations Charter and other universally recognized rules of international law are brought to the forefront as the most important guarantee for comprehensive security. The United Nations Charter must be implemented by all in good faith fully and totally, without any exceptions.

As was pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive system of international peace and security (A/43/732), although Member States suggested varying approaches to the consideration of the subject, they were clearly in agreement on the desirability of strengthening the United Nations and increasing its effectiveness.

We consider that the United Nations, which is now going through a renaissance, will move towards establishing itself as a unique world centre for ensuring a security that is comprehensive, regional and for every country. For that it is necessary to merge the efforts of all countries and, in the first instance, to achieve the unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council. It is necessary for all States Members of the United Nations to demonstrate tolerance, moderation and self-restraint in accordance with the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter.

An important instrument in international practice is the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security adopted in 1970. There is a clear organic link between the provisions of that Declaration and the significant changes in the

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world that are taking place today. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is in favour of conducting an extensive, constructive and concerned dialogue on the question of a comprehensive approach to the strengthening of international peace and security in accordance with the United Nations Charter. That is the purpose of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1 sponsored by a group of socialist countries including the Byelorussian SSR.

"In world politics", Mr. Gorbachev stated during his visit to India, "dialogue has acquired new significance which is now replacing confrontational attitudes. Not only societies but Governments are beginning to realize the significance of global problems."

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR expresses the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.74/Rev.1, which was elaborated as a result of intensive consultation with numerous States, will be supported by all in the First Committee and in the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.