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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 23 September 1987, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

- Address by Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica
- General debate [9]: (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Raimond (France)
Mr. WU Xueqian (China)
Sir Geoffrey Howe (United Kingdom)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): The General Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President ARIAS SANCHEZ (interpretation from Spanish): I come from a country you know well. You know our values, our struggle for development, our striving for peace. I come to ask you for help, to tell you that we need the support of all countries of good will if peace is to prevail in Central America.

I have come to appeal for the strength of enduring principles in order to achieve peace, freedom and democracy in Central America. I have come to appeal for the political and diplomatic might of the world's nations, to enable us to set out together upon a new course that can ensure peace in the region.

A year ago I came here to say that the fate of Central America hung on a decision between war and peace. Now I can tell you that the five States of Central America have cast their lot with peace. To end the war, political democracy must be established in all the countries of our America; freedom must be enjoyed by all citizens and human rights must be scrupulously respected within our borders.

In the peace plan we signed in Guatemala, we asked for dialogue and amnesty. We want a cease-fire as soon as possible. We want an immediate beginning to democratization. We want free elections that reflect the true will of the majority of our peoples. We call on any Powers intervening in the region to suspend

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military aid. We want a guarantee that territories will not be used to stage attacks on other States. We seek a reduction in armaments. We request national and international supervision by the Contadora Group, the Support Group and the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. We propose guidelines to evaluate progress toward peace. We state that in an atmosphere of democracy and freedom development can take place that can enable us to enjoy a lasting peace. Those points represent years of effort by the Contadora Group and express the force of a century of democracy and freedom in my Costa Rica.

Some are fearful of the peace agreement signed by the Central Americans. They say that what we are seeking to achieve has never been done before. They say that dialogue is impractical where hatred is so deep-rooted. They say that reconciliation is impossible when differences have been so pronounced for so many years. They say that it is not possible to walk side by side when such extreme ideologies divide our people. They say that the word of a liar cannot be trusted. If we had to renounce anything that had never been done before, America would never have been discovered, nor would mankind ever have reached the moon. We would have to resign ourselves forever to accepting the impossibility of curing certain diseases, to accepting the persistence of war, to accepting a future of everlasting cruelty for Central America.

I maintain just the opposite. We are obligated to try something different. We cannot relinquish imagination and courage in promoting the changes society requires. We cannot continue to pass through history in the shadows, bowed down by poverty and tormented by war. We cannot set out upon a new course gropingly, hesitantly, hoping that others will guide us. We demand peace, democracy and freedom, for we know where we want to go, and we know the kind of future we hope to

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build. We are tired of shedding tears. We yearn to share our ideals in order to work together for development. We want to take the fate of our region into our own hands.

In the agreement signed in Guatemala we committed ourselves to work for peace in good faith. We have established, as a basis for dialogue, guidelines to be observed and goals to be achieved by all of the nations involved. We have set deadlines for achieving them. All of us agree that we must take immediate steps toward those goals. To the extent that we attain them, credibility will grow and confidence will build among ourselves and in the eyes of the world. The sooner the guns are silenced, the sooner hatred will wither. The faster freedoms are re-established, the sooner our people will be able to enjoy democracy and the greater will be their respect for human rights.

Let us be clear. No one has the right to judge the success or failure of the Central American path to peace in terms of artificially imposed deadlines. Some of the purposes of the agreement may be accomplished in less time than has been estimated; others may require more time. So long as real progress is being made toward national reconciliation, toward the enjoyment of freedom and toward an end to domestic warfare, so long as such progress is part of a new political reality, the plan will survive, the plan will continue in effect, and hope will spread everywhere.

We are aware of the enormous scope of the obstacles we propose to overcome. We know that there are enemies at home and abroad who oppose the course charted by the Central Americans. But no failure to meet an unrealistic schedule can close the door to the rule of reason and to the elimination of war in Central America.

(President Arias Sanchez)

The plan will no longer be valid or honest if any of the regional or non-regional players act with the deliberate intention to betray the agreement reached in Guatemala. It will no longer be valid or honest when there is clear evidence of an unwillingness to lay down arms, to move toward democracy or to seek national reconciliation. No one has the right to judge exclusively on the basis of past conduct. None of the players, none of the great Powers has the moral authority to cast the first stone. A new political reality is emerging in Central America. We ask for respect for regional self-determination. We ask for understanding. We ask for help in overcoming obstacles and moving closer to peace.

(President Arias Sanchez)

The problems in Central America result from entrenched dictatorships and grievous social injustice. Decades of hunger and cruel suffering were and are evidence of the poverty-stricken lives led by millions of men and women in the region. We are certain that the restoration of democracy to the Central American republics will promote a shared, appropriate development that can meet the basic needs of the people promptly and reliably.

We realize that we ourselves must take the primary responsibility for restructuring our economies. A significant part of that responsibility will be to make peace, for without peace there can be no development. We have begun to move towards peace and we are willing to make every effort to attain it. It is of vital importance that we should revive sustained development in order to ensure a better international position. We also need access to new markets and more favourable terms for the payment of our debt. It is essential for us to secure more stable prices for our exports.

Central America has not been granted all the economic concessions it needs. The world economy is afraid of making exceptions on the premise that if they are extended to some countries they must be extended to many others also. That argument is a pretext for not making exceptions even to alleviate the sufferings of poverty and the anguish of those who are struggling to maintain democratic systems at a time when peace is at stake and when more favourable economic conditions could help to bring war to an end.

It is inconceivable that the calculating coldness of financiers should govern international relations. We have not made sufficient progress in renegotiating an external debt that we are unable to repay on the terms originally stipulated. Very little progress has been made in opening up new markets and in stabilizing prices for our primary products. We must continue to insist on an international economy concerned with the poverty of certain countries. We need an international economy

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conducive to the strengthening of emerging democracies. There must be an international economy sensitive to the agonies of war and always allied to the hope for peace. We believe that the economy cannot be divorced from the political concerns of mankind designed to eliminate poverty and guarantee a stable peace among nations.

In a world that presents a complex and sometimes hostile panorama, Central America stands today at the dawn of a new political era. Dialogue among the presidents of the five nations is re-emerging. Their ministers and their experts are talking. Armed rebels and Governments alike are engaging in dialogue. Reconciliation commissions have been set up. Many individuals are beginning to think about forgiving and being forgiven, about working together again. The men and women of our countries are doubtful about the policy of peace. There are powerful reasons for many to doubt. The task at hand is now to overcome obstacles and enrich dialogue, to ensure that every effort will lead to a little more freedom, a little more democracy, a little less violence.

I should like to assure this Assembly that Costa Rica is firm in its determination to work for peace.

Today a new climate is evolving in Central America. A waning faith is being reborn: it must be helped to flourish. We must believe again in freedom, in dialogue, in free expression of the will of the people. I have come to ask you to share this undertaking with us. I have come to appeal for your help.

The Costa Rican delegation to this Organization will present to the Assembly the peace plan signed in Guatemala. We shall ask for approval of that plan in a resolution of the United Nations and for its adoption by this Assembly. We shall ask that it be backed by the full political force that the nations of the world bring to bear on identifying and supporting just causes in this forum. I am confident that we shall receive that support. I am certain that, together, we can

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say that the power of diplomacy and the validity of political accords undertaken in good faith will always be more effective than weapons, that they will always be stronger than war. I am certain that we shall walk the path of peace together in order to banish war from our region once and for all.

The great French historian and statesman, Francois Guizot, said that "pessimists are merely onlookers; it is the optimists who change the world". I have come to invite this Assembly to participate with high optimism in this struggle to establish in Central America a territory of freedom, justice, democracy and peace.

We for our part will redouble our efforts on behalf of all the noble causes in which this Organization is involved. With renewed vigour we condemn all manner of racial discrimination. We condemn the practice of terrorism, regardless of where it originates or how it is expressed. We indignantly condemn drug traffic. We should like to see international co-operation strengthened to combat these terrible threats, and we should like to see more severe punishment meted out to offenders.

We should like to see the beginning of a dialogue designed to solve the problem of sovereignty in the Falkland Islands. We should like to see the door opened, by means of dialogue, to reconciliation of the two Koreas. We should like dialogue to ensure the prompt and unconditional independence of Namibia. We should like to have dialogue serve as the instrument for securing the prompt liberation of Kampuchea and Afghanistan. We applaud the intensification of talks between the two Germanys and we support with renewed faith the efforts of the United Nations to secure peace in the Middle East.

I reaffirm here my country's stand in favour of creating special financial arrangements to combat hunger in Africa, to mitigate the suffering of exiles, to expedite the consolidation of emerging democracies, and to promote peace efforts through the world.

(President Arias Sanchez)

Costa Rica places high hope in disarmament negotiations between the super powers. We encourage the reduction of arms in every corner of the planet. As a country without weapons, we know that security does not reside in force or in threats, much less in the use of violence. Security resides in progress towards shared development, in the prevailing of co-operation over selfishness, in respect for pluralism, in the rejection of imperialistic designs.

This time compassion will not suffice to ease the pain of countries that choose to make war, for whoever encourages war by word or deed will in the end be himself mortally wounded when his own sons are sent to die in it. Fear of freedom causes many to seek refuge in arms. Fear of dialogue causes some to take refuge in dogmatism. We cannot turn our backs on history. How many times have we overcome one hatred only to develop another! How many times has a tyrant fallen only to be succeeded by another! How many times has democracy trembled before the treachery of disloyal armed forces!

(President Arias Sanchez)

Let us now embark upon a new course. Let us confront the uncertainties involved in development. Let us assume the risks inherent in achieving peace, freedom and democracy.

My country has invoked the most cherished principles and the loftiest values of mankind to put an end to war. It has invoked those principles to call for a more equitable international economy, to build a new economy with less poverty and more proprietors, to say that we are weary of dictatorships crushing the human spirit in many parts of the world, to repeat to the world that it is injustice that drives human beings to violence, and to proclaim that we must no longer commit the same mistakes over and over again.

We are not apprehensive because everything seems more difficult at this time. Let us not be afraid because the problems are multiplying. Let us not be afraid because the solution of our difficulties may at some point be beyond our control or because hatred may temporarily prevail over love. It is up to us to explore the way to a new dawn of understanding and peace.

Our poet Isaac Felipe Azofeifa left us a message of hope in the following inspiring words:

"Yes, my child,
The stars have all disappeared.
But it is always darkest
Just before the dawn."

We have an opportunity to rewrite history. I should like to say, in all humility, that it is our duty to do so. We must not see the past whenever we look towards the future. The time has come now to forge a better destiny for our peoples. I am certain that, with your help, with the efforts of all peoples and nations of goodwill, we will succeed. We are determined to try. Let us do it, now, together.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I wish to remind members that, in accordance with the decision adopted by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers in the general debate will be closed today at 6 p.m.

Mr. RAIMOND (France) (interpretation from French): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly.

Mr. President, I am pleased to extend to you France's congratulations on your election, which is testimony to the confidence all delegations have in you. We are convinced that under your presidency the work of the Assembly will be pursued with authority and efficiency. I wish you every success and assure you of our full co-operation.

In the time that has elapsed since the last session of the General Assembly the international situation has been marked by three principal characteristics.

First, there has been a disturbing lack of progress in resolving regional conflicts. Not only has none been resolved - either the situation is still blocked, as in southern Africa and Cambodia, or progress that had been announced, as in Afghanistan, or broached in outline, as in the Middle East with the proposal for a conference, has failed to be translated into action - but, even worse, in some instances the situation has deteriorated. That is the case with the conflict between Iraq and Iran, which, beyond the serious confrontations it periodically produces, threatens to spread to the whole of a strategic region whose equilibrium is important for the entire world.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

The second characteristic is the persistence of major economic and financial problems. In this respect too the period has not produced much to give rise to much satisfaction. The issue of indebtedness, despite some adjustments that have been introduced, continues to compromise the situation in a good many third-world States. Instability in the prices of many raw materials has continued to disrupt both international trade and, even more serious, the courageous efforts of countries whose fate is closely linked to the prices of those products. In these conditions, the development of those States continues to be handicapped, with demographic pressures still a factor even as the legitimate aspirations of the populations concerned grow.

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The third characteristic that currently has centre place in international attention is the opening in American-Soviet relations. Along with the concerns and disappointments that I have just mentioned, 1987 will probably be marked as the year in which East-West relations were given renewed impetus. Each of us is naturally aware of the prospects that have been opened up, both in respect of an agreement on dismantling American and Soviet medium-range missiles, which now appears close, and in developing contacts among the peoples of Europe's divided continent, as witnessed - and you, Mr. President, are more aware of this than anyone - by Mr. Honecker's visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. In this same context is the work of the third meeting of the follow-up Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which will be able, we hope, to complete its work in Vienna between now and December with balanced results, including gains in the area of human rights and contacts among individuals.

However positive, the improvement in relations between Washington and Moscow remains for the time being confined within precise limits: United States-Soviet talks on disarmament have yet to focus on reducing the huge strategic arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States. They have centred above all on Europe.

Given the world situation as it now stands, three important questions have to be asked: How far can United States-Soviet talks go towards improving the climate between East and West? Can the change in East-West relations affect regional crises? Will we be more capable of grappling with ways to resolve the economic and financial problems confronting the world?

France believes that the international community must meet these three challenges: by encouraging progress but also by reaffirming the conditions for genuine détente between East and West; by bringing about conditions conducive to the search for solutions to regional crises by the countries concerned; by bringing

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imagination and courage into play to devise new ways to help resolve the problems of indebtedness and development.

A world of greater stability and interdependence must also be a safer world. France is well aware of the stakes, such as the ramifications of the present normalization of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. We hope that this will not result in decreased security for other countries, especially in Europe.

France has followed very attentively the preparation of the treaty to eliminate American and Soviet intermediate-range missiles.

It has welcomed, as was fitting, the decisions by the Soviet Union to remove the obstacles that country had placed on the road to an agreement, whether concerning the link between the various aspects of the bilateral negotiations in Geneva, the claim to take into account British and French independent nuclear forces, or the request to maintain a number of SS-20s facing Asia.

Nevertheless, we must continue to keep our vision clear. More disarmament does not automatically mean greater security. We cannot, in particular, disregard the threats to Europe that come from the substantial imbalance in conventional and chemical weapons.

This is why as early as 1978 France took the initiative for a conference on disarmament in Europe and welcomes the gains made a year ago in Stockholm. Together with its partners in the Atlantic Alliance and in the context of the multilateral process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, it will spare no effort to enable the second phase of the Conference, which, we hope, will begin in 1988, to advance towards greater stability in conventional arms on our continent.

For this reason also, we attach the utmost importance to the Geneva negotiations to ban completely the manufacture of chemical weapons in the world and

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to destroy existing stockpiles. But until there is progress towards the destruction of those stockpiles known to be the largest, it is advisable to maintain the option of a minimum stock for security. Western Europe cannot be disarmed in the area of chemical weapons 10 years before the Soviet Union itself completes the verified destruction of its stockpiles.

With the proposed elimination of medium-range nuclear forces we should not lose sight of the fact that Europe will continue to be subject, without limitation at this stage, to the threat of a far more considerable number of intercontinental systems, which are also capable of reaching targets on our side of the Atlantic. France, therefore, hopes that the United States and the Soviet Union, without neglecting those aspects related to defensive systems and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, will at long last return to the real priority of arms control, namely, the strategic systems of the two countries.

In this spirit, France welcomed the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in Soviet and American strategic arsenals that was set at Reykjavik last year. Admittedly, halving these arsenals merely brings the Americans and Soviets back to the level prevailing at the end of the preceding decade when SALT II was signed. Nevertheless, this would clearly be a step in the right direction and would establish, as a real priority, not the illusory quest for denuclearization but the gradual and verified reduction of the excessively huge central arsenals. There is virtually no other serious alternative and it seems scarcely reasonable to envision the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within the foreseeable future.

France will not decline to participate, when the occasion arises, in multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Such talks, however, would be justified only as a later phase of a process of nuclear-arms reduction in which the two super-Powers would already have made very substantial progress. The President of the French Republic, speaking here in September 1983, enumerated the conditions

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for his country's participation. I would like to repeat those conditions: Soviet and American arsenals must be reduced to a level at which the disparity between their arsenals and those of other nuclear Powers changes in nature; the defensive systems that could destabilize the current bases of deterrence must not be strengthened; the imbalance in conventional weapons must be eliminated; and the elimination of the chemical threat must become a fact.

Until such time as these conditions are met, France will not agree to its forces being taken into account, directly or indirectly, in negotiations to which it is not a party.

As the Prime Minister, Mr. Jacques Chirac, indicated from this rostrum last year:

"As long as French security rests on nuclear deterrence, the first requirement for my country is to maintain the credibility of its strategic forces at the necessary level. For that reason, France has naturally declined to go along with any form of planned obsolescence of its forces while other Powers retain a huge excess nuclear capacity. It will accept neither a quantitative nor a qualitative freeze on its arsenals nor will it halt its nuclear tests. That arsenal does not exceed the level considered indispensable for our security and our independence. The nuclear tests are being carried out in unquestionably safe conditions ..." (A/41/PV.8, p. 71)

These have been acknowledged as such by independent experts from Pacific countries whose concerns for the environment we understand and share.

In the area of information, France is prepared to take a new step. After welcoming several Heads of State or Government from the region to the test site on Mururoa this year, it now invites the leaders of the Andean countries bordering the Pacific. Other States regularly carry out far more tests than France does, and have been doing so for a longer period. None, we believe, has so far offered such guarantees.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

The improved climate of East-West relations has had no effect to date on the principal regional conflicts. Recognizing this fact, the international community must increase its attention and its effort, in particular to bring about conditions favourable to the search for appropriate solutions by the parties directly concerned. Yet we must make a distinction among the different types of crises confronting the world.

In some cases, the situation continues to be stalemated. This is true of southern Africa. With its sense of community with all of Africa, and especially with countries close to it because of history, language and exceptional human ties, France believes that new impetus can and should be given to the reduction of tensions, the resumption of dialogue and the restoration of peace in southern Africa. France has already taken action along these lines, for example regarding the unprecedented exchange of prisoners that recently took place following a French initiative and after the many contacts France had over a period of months with various States in the region. We hope that this exchange will be followed without delay by new developments as envisioned. The official visit to Paris at this time by the President of Angola, and the visit next week by the President of Mozambique, both of whom played a key role in effecting the exchange, will make it possible to assess the prospects that have been opened up.

But there can be no return to peace in the region in the absence of dialogue in South Africa itself among all the components of South African society that have together built that country. The release of political prisoners and the renunciation of violence and of preconditions are the prerequisites for this necessary dialogue. Its purpose can be none other than the dismantling of apartheid. The French Government whole-heartedly condemns the system of apartheid, which is intolerable. It has consistently supported, particularly within the

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European Community, the implementation of restrictive measures designed to make the South African Government begin such a dialogue.

Somewhat different is the conflict in Western Sahara; although no visible progress has been observed, it does perhaps offer more promising prospects for a solution, given the mediation attempts under way. The combined efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and friendly Arab leaders should at last lead to a settlement within the framework of the right to self-determination of the populations concerned. No country would welcome more whole-heartedly than France a solution that brings closer together the countries of North Africa with which it maintains truly privileged relations.

At the other end of the Sahara, the conflict between Chad and Libya has gone through a dramatic change over the past few months, but the final outcome has yet to be determined. Combining determination, courage and audacity, the Chadian army succeeded, under the authority of President Hisssein Habre, in liberating from foreign occupation almost all the provinces in the north. There remains the dispute over the Aouzou Strip. Clearly, this dispute, with which the OAU and its ad hoc committee have been seized, will find a lasting solution in the present context only when it has been settled according to law. France, which brought Chad to independence and thus bequeathed to it its borders, considers this territory to belong to Chad. It is ready once again to communicate the documents in its possession to bodies that so request. For the rest, true to its commitments, France will keep the purely defensive and deterrent military arrangements it now has there for as long as it believes necessary.

In Cambodia, despite the efforts of the ASEAN countries, the situation remains deadlocked. Nothing, however, warrants the foreign occupation which, by its continuation, has increasingly assumed overtones of colonization. Viet Nam should

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understand the deadlock in which it now finds itself. It must try to find, together with its neighbours and with help from all, particularly Prince Sihanouk, whom France is pleased to be welcoming again, the paths towards a political solution. For the people of France, who are linked to the Khmer people by an old and ever-present friendship, such a solution can only be the restoration of a Cambodia that is free from all foreign occupation and free to determine its destiny.

There are other situations in which stated intentions have unfortunately not been translated into concrete actions. It is therefore incumbent on the international community to redouble its efforts and its firmness.

Covering Afghanistan, certain Soviet statements led to the assumption that the new team of leaders in Moscow had perhaps understood that the invasion, followed by the occupation, of this independent non-aligned country, which was not at all hostile to the Soviet Union, was a grave mistake. It is a fact that eight years of fiercely waged war have not shaken the determined resistance of a courageous people. Their unyielding determination, the sweeping condemnation of the aggressor by the international community and the resolute support for the cause of Afghanistan, and also for Pakistan, which has generously welcomed on its soil 3 million refugees forced into exile, should convince the Soviet Union that it cannot rely on time to impose a solution by force. While the conditions for a settlement have already been largely defined, thanks to the efforts of the Secretary-General and his special envoy, Mr. Cordovez, the fact remains that the Geneva talks on a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops have still not achieved their objective. If the Soviet leaders sincerely wish to embark upon the path to a negotiated solution, they should act accordingly and, in order to end promptly this conflict of another age, fully accept the right of the Afghan people freely to determine its future. That is what France and almost all the countries

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represented here expect of them. To a considerable extent the evolution of the international climate will depend on this.

In the Middle East, after years of deadlock, the Israeli-Arab conflict recently showed renewed and hopeful signs of progress towards a comprehensive settlement in the revised framework of an international conference which would bring together the parties to the conflict and the permanent members of the Security Council. Since the beginning, France has been favourable to such a project, in which it hopes to take an active part. To our mind, such a conference should serve for reflection and advice, without imposing itself on or taking the part of the parties themselves. It should serve to sanction and enrich the dialogue which, thanks to the bold initiatives of certain Arab and Israeli leaders, has begun to take hold. The movement towards peace, unfortunately, appears to be at a standstill at this time. It is essential for its momentum to be restored, naturally on the initiative of the parties directly concerned, but also with the encouragement of the international community as a whole, and particularly States that have special responsibilities and therefore special duties. After 40 years of confrontation, it is more than time to ensure Israel's right to live in peace within secure and recognized borders, and that of the Palestinian people to choose its future by means of self-determination, with all that that implies.

At the centre of this conflict, against its wishes, Lebanon, a torn and ravaged country, is paying an ever heavier tribute to the crises of the region on which it has no influence. To the tragedy of war are now added the effects of an unprecedented economic crisis. France has decided to continue its presence in Lebanon in spite of the risks and dangers. It continues to be a part of the United Nations Force which, despite its shortcomings, embodies the commitment of the international community to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The entire world should now mobilize and make an exceptional effort on behalf of all

(Mr. Raimond, France)

the populations of Lebanon without exception. France, for its part, has increased its aid again this year. It calls on everyone to contribute to the special fund set up by the recent summit of French-speaking countries. Lebanon, however, will find peace only in the reconciliation of the Lebanese themselves and the establishment of normal relations with the countries of the region. This is the position which we have consistently conveyed to each of Lebanon's leaders and each of the neighbouring States.

Lastly, one crisis, far from abating, seems likely to spread to an entire region. The devastating war between Iraq and Iran has been going on for seven years. In terms of the number of victims and ferocity of the fighting, this war must already be counted among the deadliest of this century. Forms of warfare have been resorted to that are particularly to be condemned, such as the use of chemical weapons and sending to the front children who are barely in their adolescence.

Today the fighting directly threatens other countries and seriously impinges on the principles of the freedom and safety of navigation endorsed by the international community.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

France, along with the majority of States represented here, calls for an end to a conflict that can be dealt with only in its entirety. Over and above the cruel suffering of the two peoples, France is particularly sensitive to the concerns of riparian States of the Gulf and intends to demonstrate in concrete terms its commitment to freedom of navigation. Some of our ships are present in the region where they are ensuring the protection of our interests. But we are deliberately maintaining this action within specific limits and have declined to participate in any multinational actions that could give the situation the overtones of an East-West confrontation.

With a tenacity to which I should like to pay a tribute, the Secretary-General nine months ago called on the Security Council to try new efforts. After close consultations among the five permanent members of the Council and a constructive debate among all the members, these efforts led, on 20 July, at a meeting at which I had the honour of presiding, to the unanimous adoption of resolution 598 (1987). This balanced resolution should be implemented in its entirety, starting with the decision on the cease-fire it imposes.

Two months have since elapsed. The Secretary-General has been to Tehran and Baghdad. It appears that one of the two belligerents has confirmed its acceptance of the resolution in its entirety while the other seeks to impose its own reading of the text and its own conditions. The authority of the Security Council, which has acted under Chapter VII of the Charter, and the authority of our Organization as a whole are at stake. Great firmness is called for because, as our Prime Minister, Mr. Jacques Chirac, emphasized a year ago from this rostrum the stubborn pursuit of this absurd war, beyond the suffering it imposes on the two peoples, threatens to shatter the equilibrium of a region of strategic importance for the whole world.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

Other regional crises in addition to those I have just mentioned remain unresolved and continue to retain our full attention. In Cyprus, a de facto situation, which France does not recognize, persists despite the efforts of the Secretary-General, who is in the best position to help bring forth a solution. In the Korean peninsula, where a remarkable process of democratization is under way in the south, we hope that direct contacts between Seoul and Pyong Yang will be resumed at an early date and that the Korean people as a whole will at last be represented in our Organization.

I should like finally to mention the situation in Central America, of which Costa Rica's President has just underlined the hopeful aspects. After more than four years of persevering effort at the initiative of the Contadora Group, the Presidents of the five countries of the isthmus have reached an overall agreement. Admittedly, no one supposes that the road ahead is without obstacles. Nevertheless, an important step forward was made with the summit in Guatemala. The Central American countries themselves have demonstrated their determination to break the cycle of confrontation and settle their disputes themselves. The hopes occasioned by that meeting should be sustained. The commitments made should, by involving all the interested parties, make it possible to extend democracy to the whole region and lay the foundations for a lasting peace.

It is obvious that the improvement in East-West relations does not, of itself, imply a solution to regional crises. Solutions can result only from the efforts of the countries directly concerned and action by the international community to bring about conditions conducive to the success of those efforts. Europeans, who in the past have been torn by fratricidal wars and are today resolutely committed to building a common future, know this well. France, for its part, is ready to contribute to any regional attempt to settle conflicts and to act in a way that may allow Europe to contribute.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

The serious economic and financial problems besetting the international community reveal the extent to which all too often selfish, short-term responses still prevail over awareness of the necessary interdependence and shared interests. In this respect the European experiment is showing the way.

The European Community is growing stronger. Its enlargement in January 1986 to include Spain and Portugal has enhanced the Mediterranean dimension of the Community. The Single European Act, in effect since July 1987, has opened up new areas for action, while setting for the Community a key objective: the completion in 1992 of a huge internal market. Since its establishment nine years ago the European monetary system has become a pole of stability in an international monetary system in crisis. Technological Europe, lastly, has distinguished itself by achievements that at times go beyond the Twelve, as in the case of Ariane and Eureka.

Encompassing 320 million Europeans and open to the world, the Community is determined to acquire both a political and a security dimension enabling Europe to regain its rightful place.

Like its partners, France is convinced that this movement towards Europe's unity would lose its significance and thereby its force, if it led Europe to turn inwards on itself. The Twelve have demonstrated their firmness in the face of rising protectionism and continue to favour the development of foreign trade. The world's leading exporter, the Community is also one of the most open markets. The majority of its imports are exempt from all customs duties or levies, the exemption being applicable to 90 per cent of the products from the developing countries. The Lomé Convention, which governs the privileged relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, has established an exemplary form of North-South co-operation. The system of generalized preferences offers other countries important guarantees with respect to the flow of their products to the Community's markets. Finally,

(Mr. Raimond, France)

Europe has concluded association and co-operation agreements with regional organizations and numerous States, particularly Mediterranean States.

We are now prepared to go further, and accordingly the Twelve are entering on a new round of trade talks. These will include, as everyone knows, the sensitive area of agriculture. The Community, including France, are prepared to address seriously the imbalances of world agricultural markets, but we cannot be asked to call into question the principles and achievements of the common agricultural policy. The new round of trade negotiations that I have just mentioned offers an opportunity for considerable trade liberalization. World economic expansion is based on the further development of international trade, which should largely benefit the poorest countries, with each country or group of States doing its share.

There has been a greater awareness over the past year that the disorder in the international monetary system since the end of the 1960s has undoubtedly been one of the causes of the mediocre performance of the world economy. France has worked consistently for greater stability in exchange rates and the reduction of interest rates. In this respect 1987 has been characterized by changes in the right direction. The Louvre agreement, concluded in Paris last February and confirmed by the Venice summit, comprises, as we had hoped, specific objectives for the stabilization of exchange rates of the principal currencies and the convergence of economic policies. Such agreements have produced encouraging initial results, but clearly everyone realizes that much remains to be done to ensure a stable international monetary order.

We have long advocated concerted action in the area of commodities. Prices for these commodities continue to be unstable and low. Apart from sound market organization, diversifying the economies of the producer countries is a necessity. One of the headings of the Common Fund meets this objective. France hopes that this agreement will enter into force at an early date.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

Of all the evils troubling the world economy, the most serious and the most fraught with danger is, of course, the issue of third world indebtedness. For some States the situation has become critical. France is aware of the difficulties they are encountering in this respect, especially in Africa; it is familiar with the adjustments and restructuring many of them have courageously undertaken, and the painful consequences that can result for the populations. These States should benefit most particularly from the international community's support, and the conclusions of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the African continent should not be allowed to remain a dead letter.

France has made proposals regarding debt that would extend the grace period and time-frame for repayment in the case of the poorest countries. These recommendations have since begun to be implemented by the Paris Club. Financial flows to the developing nations should be substantially increased. All lenders should contribute, and the participation of banks is more necessary than ever, especially in Latin America. The multilateral institutions should also step up their efforts to help the third world. It is, therefore, indispensable for the resources of the World Bank to be enlarged and for the discussions on tripling the resources of the Structural Adjustment Facility to be completed before year's end so that concessional loans to the poorest countries can be speedily increased.

Increasing official development assistance remains an imperative need. In the case of France, it has been decided to raise aid for development to 0.54 per cent of the gross national product in 1988. We are continuing to move closer to the target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product for development assistance. Our effort will be directed as a matter of priority to the poorest nations, whose situation should be examined anew by the international community. Accordingly, we have offered to host the next conference of the least developed countries in Paris in 1990.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

Without consultation and dialogue control of the international economic situation will not be attained. For this reason we welcome the results of the recent United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), at which the European Community made a substantial contribution, as my colleague from Denmark, current President of the Twelve, has recalled. That Conference revealed the existence of a general resolve to address the third world's problems realistically, in a spirit of openness and generosity.

(Mr. Raimond, France)

Efforts to come up with solutions to the problem of underdevelopment and, by the same token, to improve the material situation of the majority of human beings, cannot be separated from the international community's struggle to ensure greater respect for human rights in the world.

Human rights transcend East and West, North and South. At issue is the dignity of each man. It is inadmissible to say that one can look at the human person differently depending on place or circumstances, or to think that liberty may have several faces or that certain fundamental rights should have priority over others. France will never be silent so long as human rights are trampled underfoot, whether it be in South Africa or Cambodia, Afghanistan or Chile. It will always be on the side of those who want democracy to live despite threats, whether in the case, today, of the Philippines or Haiti.

Precisely because France wishes to be above reproach on this score, it recently organized a vote on self-determination in New Caledonia. The New Caledonian population made a clear and indisputable choice, in conditions that were calm and beyond dispute, in favour of the territory remaining within the French Republic. In the spirit of open-mindedness that has always been its hallmark, the French Government is proposing, after broad consultations with all Caledonians, a statute for broad autonomy that should be acceptable to all.

Among attacks on individual rights, one of the most odious is terrorism because it systematically targets innocent people and resorts to the most cowardly actions - from a bomb thrown to kill in a place of worship or in a department store, to the taking of hostages, accompanied by blackmail for their lives, thereby submitting the victims to interminable torture and their families to unbearable anguish. Experience has shown dramatically that no State, however powerful, no person, however well protected, is safe from this scourge. No struggle, however legitimate, can justify resorting to such crimes which constitute, along with the

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intolerance and fanaticism that feed them, an ongoing threat to the entire international community.

The measures that must be taken at the national level to prevent, fight and punish terrorism cannot be totally effective unless they are backed by a more concrete co-operation among States. The efforts against this outrage should be accompanied by unequivocal condemnation: no encouragement or complicity, even passive, should be tolerated. France urges all countries of the world to pursue this fight unsparingly, unceasingly, with absolute determination, until this leprosy of our age is completely rooted out.

In conclusion, whether we are talking about East-West relations, the settlement of crises or responses to the major issues of our time, much still remains to be done. Were the international community, out of weariness or discouragement in the face of constantly new obstacles, to give up in one or another area, all our efforts would be reduced to nothing.

These are the responsibilities of the United Nations. It is easy to highlight the shortcomings, the defects, the red tape of the United Nations. There is nothing surprising about this since these deficiencies are our own and pertain to each and every one of us.

First we must adapt our Organization to the changes taking place in the world and undertake the necessary reforms while preserving the indispensable balances. We should be distrustful of reforms that would undermine the foundations of the system put in place in San Francisco: it has proved itself irreplaceable. Real reforms should have as their objective a better implementation of the Charter and a better functioning of the machinery. This is why we believe the prompt implementation of the conclusions of the Group of 18 is desirable, and we are hoping for a settlement of the financial problems weighing over the life of our Organization and its specialized agencies. This is also why we, together with all

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the French-speaking nations recently represented at the Quebec Summit, are asking for the strict application of the regulations regarding the use of languages, especially French.

With regard to what has been done, as well as what remains to be done, we know that the Organization has been and will be able to rely on the man who is at one and the same time its soul and its principal officer, the Secretary-General. I should like to express again to Mr. Perez de Cuellar the French Government's high regard and appreciation for the remarkable services he renders the international community with a skill, talent and courage that has earned him the esteem and the constant support of all of us.

This mission, more than any other, is performed in the service of peace. Over-used and often misused, the word "peace" must remain the expression of our greatest ambition and, at the same time, the expression of the greatest reason. Our highest priority, of course, is to put an end to conflicts: solutions imposed by force will never be as enduring as a settlement freely negotiated and consented to. Efforts to bring about peace must also include organizing an effective and controlled disarmament that ensures our security. Working for peace, lastly, means addressing the causes of conflicts and bringing about the conditions that lessen tension. Security, disarmament and development, as was shown by the recent United Nations Conference devoted to this relationship, remain interdependent. Hence the reasonable ambition which is ours: namely, a genuine peace that is not dissociated from the reduction of inequalities in the world, nor from aid to development and co-operation.

Here again, we find the central role of the United Nations, together with all the specialized agencies of the United Nations family, in ensuring that the immense wealth engendered by modern technology should benefit not a few peoples but the greatest possible number. There, transcending quarrels often inherited from centuries past, lies the true challenge of our age.

Mr. WU Xueqian (China) (interpretation from Chinese): In the name of the Chinese delegation, may I begin by warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly. I am sure that with your ability, wisdom and experience, you will fulfil this noble mission with distinction. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Humayun Choudhury, for his positive contribution to the work of the previous session.

Over the past year, people of the world have made unremitting efforts on various fronts in pursuit of peace and development and achieved new and encouraging results. The third world and many small and medium-sized countries have played an active role in international affairs, exerting an increasingly great influence. This shows that the forces for peace have grown in strength. There have been ever-stronger demands for a halt to the arms race and to aggression and expansion, and for genuine disarmament and an early settlement of regional conflicts. Under the circumstances, the United States and the Soviet Union have kept up their dialogue and there has appeared a somewhat relaxed atmosphere in East-West relations.

However, factors causing international tension and turbulence are still present. The arms race, far from coming to a halt, is extending into outer space and other high technology fields. None of the hot-spots in the world has been removed, and certain regional conflicts even threaten to escalate. The world economic situation remains grim. Many developing countries are faced with increasing difficulties and the North-South contradiction has become more acute than ever. All this cannot but cause grave concern to China and all the other countries which uphold justice and strive for peace and development. In order to join in a common search for effective solutions to those problems, I now wish to set forth the Chinese Government's position and propositions.

(Mr. Wu Xueqian, China)

It is the universal demand of the world's people and the consistent stand of the Chinese Government to stop the arms race and to remove regional conflicts.

Effective disarmament constitutes an important link in the efforts to ease international tension and to maintain world peace. Since the resumption of the Geneva arms control talks between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1985, we have all along hoped that they would, through serious negotiations, reach agreements conducive to world peace and not detrimental to the rights and interests of other countries. Now there has been progress in their intermediate nuclear forces (INF) talks. The two sides have reached agreement in principle to adopt the global "double-zero option" on long range intermediate nuclear forces and short range intermediate nuclear forces. We hold that dialogue is better than confrontation, and relaxation better than tension. World peace is indivisible, and European security and Asian security are equally important. If the United States and the Soviet Union could formally conclude an INF treaty and implement it by thoroughly destroying all their long-range intermediate nuclear missiles and short-range intermediate nuclear missiles deployed in Europe and Asia, that would be a first step towards nuclear arms reduction and would undoubtedly be welcomed.

Of course, there is still a long way to go and much work to do before genuine disarmament can be realized. Even with the long range intermediate nuclear forces and short range intermediate nuclear forces dismantled, the nuclear weaponry of the United States and the Soviet Union would only be reduced by less than 5 per cent and each would still retain a nuclear force capable of destroying the world several times over. To maintain world peace and security, there should be complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all types of nuclear, space, chemical and biological weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction, and a substantial reduction of conventional arms.

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The people of all countries long for development in peace. Disarmament is an urgent task, but the disarmament talks have been proceeding very slowly. Since the INF talks alone have dragged on for almost six years, negotiations on strategic arms reduction or other disarmament issues will be even more difficult. If things move along at this pace, when could the approximately 50,000 nuclear warheads ever be destroyed completely? When could the above disarmament goals ever be reached? Naturally, the international community strongly hopes that the United States and the Soviet Union will drastically reduce their armaments as soon as possible, and that after reaching an INF agreement they will proceed to conduct earnest negotiations on disarmament in other areas and reach agreements followed by effective implementation. They should not stand still, let alone vie with each other in developing new types of even more sophisticated weapons in the wake of an agreement to dismantle INF missiles.

In order to promote disarmament, the Chinese delegation last year submitted to the General Assembly two draft resolutions on nuclear and conventional disarmament, which were adopted with the broad support of other United Nations Members. The two draft resolutions emphasized that the countries possessing the largest arsenals bear a special responsibility for disarmament and should take the lead in drastically reducing their nuclear and conventional armaments. This is the key to progress in disarmament. In the world today, it is the United States and the Soviet Union that possess the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, and they alone are capable of launching a world war. If they could take the lead in drastic arms reduction, the threats to world peace would be greatly diminished.

China has not only actively put forward its views and proposals on disarmament, but has also taken a series of concrete actions towards disarmament. On the very first day when China came into possession of nuclear weapons, in 1964, we declared unilaterally that at no time and under no circumstances would China be

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the first to use nuclear weapons. We have also undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-free zones. We neither advocate nor go in for nuclear proliferation; we do not help other countries develop nuclear weapons. China respects and supports the countries and regions concerned in their endeavour to establish nuclear-free zones or zones of peace on the basis of voluntary agreement to be reached through consultation among themselves. We have signed the additional protocols of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Furthermore, in recent years we have stopped atmospheric nuclear testing, reduced the size of our armed forces by one million and cut down our military expenditures. We have also shifted some military industrial facilities to civilian production and put some military installations to civilian use or dual use.

Disarmament is an arduous and complicated task. Progress in disarmament requires the good faith of the countries concerned and, more importantly, the persistent efforts of all peace-loving countries and people. On the question of disarmament, which concerns the future of the world and the destiny of mankind, all countries, whether big, small or medium-sized, nuclear or non-nuclear, should have an equal say, and each has a positive role to play. Europe experienced the holocaust of two world wars and is now a place of direct confrontation between the two major military blocs. East and West European countries are particularly concerned about disarmament, which is closely related to their own security, and have played an important role in promoting the United States-Soviet arms control talks. When addressing the question of disarmament, the legitimate rights and interests and reasonable proposals of every country should be fully respected and taken into serious consideration. Disarmament agreements of any kind should help to enhance the security of every country and region in the world and not to weaken it.

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Here I should like to refer to the recently concluded International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which unanimously adopted the final document through the concerted efforts of all sides. That Conference is of positive significance in heightening the international community's awareness of the close relationship between disarmament and development.

A fair and reasonable settlement of regional conflicts and the elimination of hot-spots are of great importance in easing international tension and safeguarding world peace. Despite the efforts made by the United Nations and by many justice-upholding countries towards this end in the past year, no substantive progress has been made so far. That is essentially because certain countries, in disregard of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the basic norms governing international relations, have refused to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and have persisted in their policies of aggression and expansion. They have continued their occupation of other countries' territories and have kept encroaching upon others' sovereignty and interfering in others' internal affairs. As a result, regional conflicts have been continuing and it is difficult to remove the hot-spots in the world.

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China is consistently opposed to the threat or use of force in international relations and is all the more opposed to acts of aggression and interference against other countries by any country under whatever pretext. It is our view that the commission of aggression by one country against another is the most serious international crime, which must in no way be confounded with the internal problems of the country under aggression. China has always maintained that the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence should be strictly observed by all countries in the world. We are in favour of a fair and reasonable political settlement of any regional conflict, because it is in the fundamental interests of the countries concerned and of world peace.

To achieve a fair and reasonable political settlement of a regional conflict, the primary requirement is to stop aggression and expansion against, and terminate military occupation of, other countries. Foreign troops must immediately and unconditionally withdraw from the territories they occupy, and the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the countries under aggression must be restored. No country can get away with keeping the gains of aggression and expansion under the pretext of a "political settlement".

To achieve a fair and reasonable political settlement of a regional conflict, it is also necessary for the people of the countries or regions concerned to solve their own problems, free from outside interference, and to observe the principle of genuine self-determination. Disputes between States should be settled by the countries concerned through negotiations, in line with the basic norms governing international relations. Internal disputes of a country should be settled by its own people.

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To achieve a fair and reasonable political settlement of a regional conflict, all parties concerned must observe the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

The key to the settlement of the Kampuchean question lies in Viet Nam's cessation of its aggression and the speedy withdrawal of all its troops from Kampuchea. The United Nations General Assembly has adopted many resolutions in this regard. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other justice-upholding countries have also made sustained efforts to seek a political settlement of the question. Under the pressure of international public opinion, the Vietnamese authorities have over the year talked a lot about a "political settlement" but have in fact failed to show any sincerity. Their stubborn position of aggression and expansion has remained unchanged. Up till now, they have continued with their military occupation of Kampuchea under various pretexts, in defiance of the relevant United Nations resolutions. Being clearly the aggressor, the Vietnamese authorities bear an unshirkable responsibility on the question of Kampuchea. Yet, they brazenly try to disguise themselves as an outsider, insisting that Kampuchea's "national reconciliation" must come before their troop withdrawal. The kind of "political settlement" they have proposed is, to put it bluntly, designed to make the international community accept the Vietnamese aggression and occupation of Kampuchea as a fait accompli, prop up a Vietnamese-controlled "government" and ensure the Vietnamese vested interests gained through aggression and expansion. This is of course unacceptable to the coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, the ASEAN countries and all justice-upholding countries and people.

China seeks no self-interest in Kampuchea. Our principled position on the Kampuchean question is to safeguard the norms governing international relations, oppose aggression and uphold justice. We consider it essential to implement in

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earnest the relevant resolutions of the previous sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. We support Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the ASEAN countries and the United Nations Secretary-General in their efforts to seek a just and reasonable settlement of the Kampuchean question. The eight-point proposal on a political settlement of the Kampuchean question put forward by the coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk is fair and reasonable. It has won extensive sympathy and support from the international community and should serve as the basis for the settlement of the Kampuchean question. We are confident that provided Viet Nam withdraws all its troops from Kampuchea under international supervision, the Kampuchean people, led by the prestigious, great patriot Prince Norodom Sihanouk, will solve their internal problems through consultation free from outside interference, effect true national reconciliation and choose their new government through United Nations-supervised free elections, so that Kampuchea will become an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned country. This will be in the interest of peace and stability in that region and in the rest of South-East Asia. Once the parties concerned reach agreement on a settlement of the Kampuchean question, China will be ready to join other countries in a relevant international guarantee.

The "cease-fire" declared by the Kabul régime has not put an end to the war in Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, the encirclement and suppression of the resistance movement, the killing of innocent civilians and incursions into Pakistan have been going on all the same. As long as the foreign aggressors do not withdraw, the war of resistance to aggression will not stop. It is clear that "guarantee first, troop withdrawal next" or "reconciliation first, troop withdrawal afterwards" are nothing but excuses for putting off the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. If the Soviet Union really wants a political settlement, it should comply with the relevant resolutions of successive sessions of the United Nations

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General Assembly and withdraw all its troops from there as soon as possible. This is the key to the settlement of the Afghan question and the only way to heal the "bleeding wound". We support Pakistan and other countries concerned and the United Nations in their efforts for a fair and reasonable settlement of the Afghan question. It is our hope that Afghanistan will regain its status as an independent, sovereign, neutral and non-aligned country at an early date.

The convening of an international conference on the Middle East question under the auspices of the United Nations is a feasible way to seek a peaceful settlement of the said question. The Chinese Government supports the United Nations Secretary-General's efforts towards this end. We hold that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), recognized internationally as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has the right to participate in the conference on an equal footing with other members. China is always opposed to the Israeli policy of aggression and expansion and firmly supports the just struggle of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to recover the occupied territories and restore their national rights. We sincerely hope that the Arab countries and the PLO will remove their differences through friendly consultations, close their ranks and co-ordinate their actions in a common endeavour towards an early, just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question.

At present, the situation in the Gulf is becoming more turbulent, with sharp confrontation in the region. The Chinese Government has expressed grave concern over this. We have all along taken a position of neutrality and of promoting reconciliation between Iran and Iraq and have urged them to bury the hatchet as soon as possible, engage in peaceful reconstruction and strive for further development rather than wearing themselves out in the war. Security Council

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resolution 598 (1987) adopted unanimously in the Security Council through concerted efforts by all its members reflects the strong desire of the international community for a speedy end to the Iran-Iraq war and has provided a good basis for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

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We appreciate the valuable contributions made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the implementation of this resolution and support him in his continued endeavours to ensure this. China has made and will continue to make efforts to promote comprehensive implementation of the resolution. With the desire to see an early end to the sanguinary conflict and the restoration of peace, stability and prosperity in the Gulf region, the Chinese Government once again calls upon Iran and Iraq to stop immediately all their military actions and to implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in real earnest, in co-operation with the Security Council and the Secretary-General, so as to seek a just, reasonable and comprehensive settlement of the Iran-Iraq dispute. The Chinese Government also calls on the parties concerned to exercise restraint and ensure free and safe passage in the international waterways in the Gulf. It further calls on the big Powers to stop their military involvement in the Gulf so as to avoid escalation of the conflict, leaving the littoral countries of the Gulf to solve the Gulf problems themselves through consultations.

Over the past year there has been an ever-surging mass movement in South Africa and Namibia, with a steady growth of the struggle against the racist rule and for national liberation and independence. The South African racist régime, though more and more isolated, is clinging obstinately to its apartheid system and brutally suppressing the South African people. It has kept Namibia under its illegal occupation and wilfully harassed its neighbours, trying hard to delay and obstruct settlement of the problem of southern Africa. The Chinese Government strongly condemns the perverse acts of the South African authorities. We will, as always, firmly support the just struggle of the peoples of South Africa, Namibia and the rest of southern Africa. We call on the international community, and particularly countries that have influence with South Africa, to support the

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struggle of the peoples in southern Africa and, through further pressure and effective sanctions, force the South African authorities to abandon their policies of apartheid and of destabilizing the neighbouring countries and implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978) unconditionally, thus paving the way for the early independence of Namibia.

Recently, an important step forward has at last been taken in the peace process in Central America after repeated setbacks. The document entitled "Process for the establishment of firm and lasting peace in Central America", signed more than a month ago at a summit meeting of five Central American States, is of positive significance in easing the tension and turbulence in the region. That document gives expression to the desire of the Central American States for peace and is a result of the peace mediation of the Contadora and Lima groups. We sincerely hope that all the parties concerned will respect the hard-won achievements of the meeting so as to facilitate the smooth implementation of that accord and bring about peace and stability in Central America at an early date without interference from outside.

Tension on the Korean peninsula can be eased only through reduced military confrontation and increased contacts and dialogue between the north and the south of Korea. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has recently put forward successive proposals, such as phased disarmament by both the north and the south, withdrawal of United States troops and tripartite talks by the north and south of Korea and the United States at the Foreign Minister level. Those proposals are constructive and reasonable and we hope that they will receive a favourable response from the parties concerned.

The present world economic situation is yet another major issue about which the international community is deeply concerned. Over the past year economic

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growth in developed countries has remained slow and the economic friction among them has been exacerbated. The developing countries are faced with unprecedentedly serious difficulties owing to their worsening external economic environment. The prices of many of their primary products have remained at the lowest level since the end of the Second World War, while the export of their manufactured goods has been hindered by ever-increasing trade protectionism. The export earnings of the developing countries have plummeted, while the inflow of funds has dropped drastically. The debts of developing countries, which exceeded \$US 1 trillion last year, are weighing more and more heavily on them. Under the circumstances, their economic growth on the whole remains very slow and their difficulties are mounting, although they have made strenuous efforts to achieve economic readjustments or reforms. In the case of the least developed countries, there are even more difficulties.

The world economy is an integral whole. The North and the South need each other and are interdependent. The economic stagnation and growing poverty of developing countries are bound to affect the world economy as a whole and, naturally, the economic growth of the developed countries. Those that benefit the world will benefit from the world. The developed countries should do their best to improve the world economic environment and help developing countries overcome their economic difficulties. To this end, we wish to put forward the following propositions.

First, the developed countries should adopt measures to stabilize the prices of primary products and provide financial assistance to the developing countries for diversifying their export commodities so as to help stabilize and increase their export earnings.

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Secondly, the developed countries should honour their commitment to reduce and stop protectionist trade practices. They should also expand the treatment granted to the developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences. The interests of the developing countries should be taken fully into account in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Thirdly, the developed countries should try to fulfil as early as possible the official development assistance quotas set by the United Nations and provide more funds to the developing countries in other forms. International financial bodies should also make efforts to provide funds to the developing countries on favourable terms in the light of their actual conditions.

Fourthly, debtor and creditor nations, international financial institutions and commercial banks should share the responsibility for the solution of the debt problem and agree upon practical measures through continued dialogue so as to reduce as much as possible the debt burdens of the developing countries.

Fifthly, special preferential treatment should be given to the least developed countries in respect of trade, funds, assistance and debt, and effective measures should be adopted to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, approved unanimously by the special session of the United Nations General Assembly last year.

During the Seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held not long ago there were extensive discussions on such questions as the development of resources, commodities, world trade and the least developed countries, thereby creating favourable conditions for the furtherance of the North-South dialogue. We hope that at the current session the General Assembly will make new progress on this basis in its deliberations on the questions concerned. We hold that the developed and developing countries should continue and

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step up dialogue and work together to establish a new type of North-South relationship, a just and rational relationship based on equality and mutual benefit, so as to strengthen international co-operation and revitalize the world economy.

China is marching forward along the road of building a socialist society with Chinese characteristics. Now, stability and unity prevail throughout the country. Reform and the open policy are being implemented steadfastly. The Chinese economic registers a sustained and steady growth, and the people's living standards keep improving. Of course, we are fully aware that China's productive forces are comparatively weak and its economic relatively backward. China is still at the initial stage of socialism. During this fairly long historical period, our main task is vigorously to expand the productive forces so that China will gradually lift itself out of poverty, backwardness and underdevelopment.

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To this end, we must persist in reform and opening up at home and to the outside world, work hard to develop a planned commodity economy and continue to expand our economic and technological exchange and co-operation with other countries in the world, leading to a dynamic and rapid development of the productive forces. The forthcoming thirteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China will review the historic changes that have taken place in China in the past nine years, reaffirm a series of fundamental principles and policies that have proved effective and give a theoretical exposition of reform and the open policy. The Congress will draw up new plans aimed at accelerating and deepening the economic structural reform, and work out a blueprint for political structural reform with a view to promoting the cause of socialist modernization.

Like reform and the open policy, China's independent foreign policy of peace is also our fundamental State policy which will remain unchanged for a long time. By pursuing this policy, China aims at both securing a lasting international environment of peace for our socialist modernization drive, and fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations for world peace and development in tune with international developments. The policy is in keeping with the fundamental interests of the people both of China and of the world as a whole. By persisting in reform and the open policy as well as in the independent foreign policy of peace, China will develop faster and contribute more to mankind.

As the most important global organization of our time, the United Nations is playing an important role in maintaining peace, promoting development and strengthening co-operation. We are glad to see that such a role is being further strengthened. At its last session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted - through efforts on various sides - the resolution on the strengthening of the administrative and financial efficiency of the United Nations. At present, the

(Mr. Wu Xueqian, China)

United Nations is at a critical juncture of its reform. We support this world body in its efforts to introduce necessary and rational reforms so as further to improve its efficacy and give better expression to the purposes of the Charter. The United Nations is the Organization of all the countries in the world, and it needs the support of all its Member States. It is our hope that the big Power directly responsible for the current financial difficulties will fulfil its obligations as provided for by the Charter. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China will, as always, strictly abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and discharge its obligations in real earnest. We are ready, together with other Member States, to make our contributions to further strengthening of the role of the United Nations in its many areas of endeavour.

Sir Geoffrey HOWE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, let me first extend to you my congratulations on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly, and at the same time express my country's warm appreciation to the outgoing President, and representative of a fellow Commonwealth country, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh.

The General Assembly meets this year at a moment of great hope for the world, yet also at a moment of grave and mounting danger: hope because, after years of effort, an historic arms agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union is within sight; and grave and mounting danger because the conflict between Iran and Iraq poses daily a more serious threat to wider peace and security.

In the Gulf two proud, independent countries, themselves both founding Members of the United Nations, have been mauling each other relentlessly for seven years. That is almost twice as long as the First World War. We have before our eyes the image of hundreds of thousands of corpses, young people blown up, gunned down or gassed to death, civilians on both sides mercilessly bombed. The combatants have

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moreover extended this senseless destruction and loss of life into the international waters of the Gulf. Only two days ago another British vessel, the Gentle Breeze was attacked with loss of innocent life. This was a disgraceful and unprovoked act of aggression against an unarmed vessel, the sixth attack on a British ship in the Gulf.

Ships have sailed this great seaway for centuries. It is an international thoroughfare: no State may dictate who uses it. As it has done throughout its long history, the United Kingdom will continue to champion freedom of navigation. Individual States that take action to uphold that freedom are entitled to support from the entire community of nations. Yet today, and for many months now, freedom of navigation in these waters is threatened - threatened by indiscriminate attacks on unarmed vessels, by harassment of innocent merchant shipping and, most reckless of all, by the laying of random mines. The world saw another example on Monday, as Iran sowed mines in the path of a convoy in international waters. The response of the United States to that insane act was fully justified, and it should be supported by all those who wish to bring this conflict to an end, for the stability of the entire region is menaced by this escalating threat to peace.

The challenge to this institution and all it stands for could not be more direct. The blunt truth is that the way in which the United Nations handles the conflict between Iran and Iraq must have a decisive effect upon its reputation in the eyes of all the peoples whom we represent.

If the United Nations is to rise to this challenge, to help end this grotesque slaughter, then we must strive for and maintain a degree of unity that has hardly ever been achieved before. Other international groupings can give a powerful lead, by condemning the conflict and mobilizing all their energies in the cause of peace. That is why we value the mounting weight of support from the Organization

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of African Unity, the Arab League, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In the same sense, the twelve members of the European Community are giving their united backing.

All this shows how deeply the world cares about ending the Gulf conflict. But caring is not enough. The Security Council has a particular responsibility to act. That responsibility has been unanimously accepted by the Council, and that unanimity has been built on the collective determination of the five permanent members. Each permanent member has resisted the temptation to put its national interest before the cause of peace - and must continue to do so, for there is an overriding need for the five to continue working together, as the motor of action by the whole Security Council.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

No one has understood and emphasized that need more than the Secretary-General himself. So it was particularly fitting that he personally should have undertaken the difficult and delicate mission recently entrusted to him by the Security Council. For this, as for all his service in the cause of peace, he deserves our warm thanks and admiration.

As a result, we now know the views of the Iraqi and Iranian Governments on resolution 598 (1987). That resolution, legally binding, demanded that both Iran and Iraq should cease fire. It paid due attention to the legitimate concerns and grievances of both Iran and Iraq. And, quite rightly, it provided that in the absence of compliance the measures necessary for enforcement would be put in place. The Security Council's determination to ensure compliance must remain firm. What we now have to decide is whether the Security Council should move without further ado to an arms embargo.

After Iran's deeds and words this week, can anyone still believe that it intends to comply with the resolution? Monday's two unprovoked attacks, with missile and mine, show Iran's true intentions. So do the words of its President from this rostrum yesterday. He described the Security Council as "a paper factory for issuing worthless and ineffective orders". He invited the world to conclude that "the only option left is to use violence" (A/42/PV.6, p. 57).

The United Kingdom therefore thinks it essential now to start work on the further measures foreseen in resolution 598 (1987). The first step should be an arms embargo, to prevent the flow of arms to those wishing to ignore the United Nations and to prolong the conflict. For action is needed - action to show that the Security Council is neither worthless nor ineffective, that it will uphold its authority.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

We in Britain will not hesitate to take the steps at home which we judge necessary. I can announce today that we have decided to close down the operations of the Iranian military procurement offices in London. For us, the cynical attack on the "Gentle Breeze" was the last straw. The United Nations as a whole should learn the same lesson from what Iran has said and done this week.

The Gulf conflict is the most imminent danger. But it is not the only threat to world peace. The Arab-Israel dispute has already dragged on for decades. But the present deadlock is no solution, no panacea. Far from it: it is highly unstable. In the occupied territories, misery and repression persist. In Israel itself, the Palestinian population is rapidly expanding. Already two generations of Arabs and Israelis have lived out their lives under the shadow of war and insecurity. Yet the basis for the settlement that must one day be reached is plain to see: Israel's right to a secure existence; and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Virtually the whole world now accepts the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices. The United Kingdom is convinced of the need for it. An international conference will provide a framework for negotiations. It will not be a trick or a trap. It will not impose solutions, nor have the right to veto agreements reached between the parties. It need not be feared by any man of goodwill.

Nor can the international community ignore Lebanon, where the United Nations Interim Force needs our full support. The Lebanese must be left to tackle their problems free from outside interference. All foreign forces should withdraw, and Lebanon's international borders must be respected.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

There are far too many innocent victims of all these conflicts. They include those who have been taken hostage, some of whom, alas, are citizens of my own country.

We have some experience of defending ourselves against terrorism. Our position is clear and quite unshakeable. We will do no deals with terrorists. That is the only policy that makes sense. Every sordid deal by a Government, every ransom paid, makes another terrorist act worthwhile and increases the threat to all our citizens.

I say to those who are holding Britons hostage: We shall never submit to your blackmail. You will gain nothing. You will only bring your cause into disrepute. Set the hostages free. I urge all those with influence over those holding hostages to say the same. And I urge this whole Assembly, on behalf of the hostages of every nation, to send the same plain and urgent message.

Another problem cries out for a united response from the international community: southern Africa - never off the agenda of this Organization, and rightly so. For although South Africa may not be the only example of racial intolerance in this world, it is unique in the institutionalized domination of other races by the white population. Apartheid is morally repugnant, indefensible, inhuman. But it is indeed more than that: it is also suicidal for those who practise it. All the lessons of history tell us that. Apartheid breeds discontent, violence and revolution. We understand the seething discontent of the black population. Who can fail to be moved by the thought that a whole generation has come of age while Nelson Mandela has remained behind bars?

And yet a prosperous, stable and just South Africa cannot be built by violence; that is the way to ruin, despair and death. Those who rule South Africa must change course before it is too late. There are signs that some of them

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realize that, but reforms so far have been too slow and too limited. The time bomb is in place and the clock is ticking; it must be defused before it is too late.

We all share one common aim: the elimination of apartheid as quickly as possible. What can the world do to encourage South Africa in the right direction? The answer cannot lie in further measures which would serve only to unite the whites against the world, to slow the process of change, to prolong apartheid, and to blight the lives of the very people we wish to help. Yet we must maintain the moral pressure on the rulers of South Africa. They must not be allowed to put their faith in the status quo. We must convince them that peace and security can be achieved only through genuine dialogue with the leaders of the other races, and by comprehensive reform. We are working to that end.

Of course, apartheid afflicts not only those who live in South Africa: it also destabilizes South Africa's neighbours. The United Kingdom is taking a lead in helping the front-line States: for some of them we are giving practical help in training and equipping their military forces to ensure the security of their transport links; for others we have given extensive aid to develop alternative transport systems and to pay for training and equipment. Our aid to the States of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) over the last five years totals more than \$1 billion. Few if any of the States represented here today can match that record.

South Africa is by far the world's worst example of racial intolerance. But very few areas of the world are free from quarrels founded on differences of race, religion or language. Such quarrels need not be insoluble. The European Community is one of the most successful examples in history of making shared values and aspirations rise from the ashes of war and division. Yesterday's speech by the Foreign Minister of Denmark, which now holds the presidency, was eloquent testimony to our progress towards "ever closer union".

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In Sri Lanka there are hopeful signs that ethnic conflicts might be ended. The agreement between President Jayawardene and Mr. Gandhi is a bold step forward. The deplorable terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan President last month underlined the dangers besetting those who work for an agreement of this kind. They displayed great courage. Everyone must now work for its continuing success.

Likewise in Cyprus: we support the Secretary-General's efforts to bring the two sides towards a settlement. The United Kingdom knows that difficult decisions are needed. We call on both sides to show the necessary courage.

And, in Korea, the United Kingdom notes with close interest the recent moves to restart dialogue between North and South. We support moves to reduce the tensions in that divided peninsula. We hope that the Korean people may soon be represented here.

All these political problems demand the urgent attention of the United Nations. So do those in the economic field, which directly affect so many Member States.

One economic burden, one which has featured prominently in many speeches from this rostrum, is the cycle of debt. Here Britain has recently put forward an initiative to help the poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa, which are striving to set their economies on a sustainable basis for development. This means converting aid loans into grants, rescheduling official loans with longer grace periods, and reducing interest rates on official loans. Already in this region we have written off aid debts to the tune of £244 million.

Yet despite all our efforts, glut and famine still disfigure the world. In the industrial countries we subsidize our farmers to produce food nobody wants and sell it below the cost of production. In developing countries, the subsidy, if there is one, goes to the consumer, and price control deprives the farmer of the incentive to produce more. So he leaves the land to find work in the city - and his

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Government has to buy from abroad the food he would have produced. The cost to the world and the waste are enormous.

The huge and urgent task of agricultural reform is to recreate market incentives and progressively to eliminate protectionist measures around the world.

Food must be on the agenda whenever nations gather for discussion. It will be much on our minds at next month's important meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Vancouver, to which Britain much looks forward.

In Europe in the last 40 years we have shown that the divisions of history can be healed by wholly peaceful means, by political co-operation and by economic integration. Military force, as we Europeans know to our cost, seldom brings a lasting solution to anything; it can be only a last resort when everything else has failed.

That is just as true in Central America. Here, too, long-term security can only be assured by a peaceful settlement reached with the free consent of all its peoples, democratically expressed. That is why we welcomed the agreement signed by the five Central American Presidents in Guatemala in August. We wish it every success.

It is true too in the South Atlantic. We shall continue to look for ways of restoring more normal relations with Argentina while upholding the Falkland Islanders' rights to self-determination.

This universal truth applies to Asia as well, and nowhere more than in Afghanistan. During eight years of Soviet occupation, tens of thousands have been killed and 5 million refugees have been driven to leave their country. That is a bitter indictment of Soviet policies and a grave burden for Pakistan, which has shouldered it nobly.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

But the Soviet Union of today is not the Soviet Union which invaded Afghanistan. Since he took over the reins of power, Mr. Gorbachev has made a remarkable effort to reform, to restructure, to let in light and air from the outside. We have publicly applauded this, and we wish him well. We believe that a more prosperous and efficient Soviet Union will be easier for the world to live with and for its own citizens to live in.

I believe that Mr. Gorbachev knows that he needs a stable international environment to carry out his programme of reform. I detect a genuine wish to find a way to end the war in Afghanistan and to bring Soviet soldiers back from the rocky valleys where so many of them have fallen. Of course that is not an easy task. But the Soviet leaders must make the necessary leap of imagination if glasnost and perestroika are to have the effect that they should on Soviet foreign, as well as domestic, policy.

The Soviet Union can reasonably seek to avoid instability or threats to its security on its borders. But it must accept that only when a government emerges in Afghanistan that truly commands the confidence and trust of the Afghan people, only then will Afghanistan be stable. The Soviet Union must grasp the nettle: it must withdraw its troops and let the Afghan people decide their own future.

So yet again we meet in the shadow of numerous conflicts. But the gloom is not unbroken. The arms control agreement announced last week by the United States and Soviet Foreign Ministers has lit a beacon of hope for all those who see in greater co-operation and mutual trust between the super-Powers the key to a less troubled world, for the hope must be that an intermediate-nuclear-force (INF) treaty, once concluded, will have benefits extending beyond the agreement itself. It has always been clear that arms control cannot on its own carry the weight of placing and keeping East-West relations on an even keel. Indeed, recent years have

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shown how difficult it is to make progress in arms negotiations if relations between East and West are generally sour.

But these things do cut both ways. An INF agreement which, for the first time ever, bites into the nuclear arsenals of each side, which, for the first time ever, provides for stringent verification - such an agreement should significantly increase the mutual confidence without which any significant progress in East-West relations is unattainable.

We have not suddenly arrived at some promised land, but an INF agreement will give a shot of adrenalin to the often lethargic and lumbering process of arms control. The next priorities are a 50 per cent cut in the strategic arsenals of the super-Powers, a world-wide ban on chemical weapons, the removal of imbalances in conventional weapons from the Atlantic to the Urals. They are complex and difficult and will test to the utmost the skill, patience and determination of both sides' negotiators.

But an INF agreement will begin to erode the thick ice-cap of mistrust that has accumulated over the years. Of course the melting process will itself release dangerous ice blocks and floes around which we shall all have to navigate with care.

The key is greater trust. If we can see the Soviet Union making a genuine effort to co-operate in solving the world's regional tensions; if we can see them putting the solution of such tensions before the pursuit of national interest; if we can see a more just, free and humane society developing in the Soviet Union, then I think we shall see greater trust between East and West.

I am not unhopeful. The co-operation between the Five on Security Council resolution 598 (1987) may be a sign of better things to come; and the last year has seen real progress on human rights in the Soviet Union. But there is still a long way to go.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

For our part we have worked intensively to build up the East-West dialogue. The visit to Moscow by the British Prime Minister and myself in March was an occasion for unusually deep and valuable exchanges. They will continue.

At the beginning of this statement I spoke of a moment of hope. The INF agreement and the impending summit between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev are indeed reason for hope. I think it will be the prayer of every one of us here that that still faint shaft of light will grow and will drive the shadows of fear and distrust ever backward until they are finally eliminated from this world.

In opening the first General Assembly session in London, Clement Attlee, then British Prime Minister, described the simple truth behind the formation of the United Nations: "The realization by all nations that without co-operation for peace there can be no security for any nation".

That is still the most basic truth. That is why we are here.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.