



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/46/PV.12

2 October 1991

ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 27 September 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. SHIHABI

(Saudi Arabia)

- Address by Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. de Michelis (Italy)

Mr. Mock (Austria)

Mr. Loncar (Yugoslavia)

Mr. Brahimi (Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. GEORGE VASSILIOU, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): This morning the Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. George Vassiliou, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President VASSILIOU: Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you warmly on your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Your election is clear recognition of the importance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the world of today in general and in its own region in particular. I am confident that your many years of experience at the United Nations will prove invaluable in guiding this most important session to its fruitful conclusion. I also wish to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, for the skilful manner in which he steered the work of the forty-fifth session.

(President Vassiliou)

I would further like to welcome to our ranks the seven new Member States. We look forward to closely cooperating with them for the furtherance of our common objectives. Not since 1960, when the Republic of Cyprus was among 16 new Members, has the United Nations admitted so many Members at one session.

During the last 12 months, the vast changes set in motion on the international political scene have continued at a pace which defies imagination. The forces of democracy are marching forward, brushing aside those who wish to cling to the past. This process has freed the international community from the handcuffs of the former East-West divide and created a new spirit of international solidarity and cooperation.

This spirit of cooperation successfully passed its first major test posed by the aggression of Iraq against Kuwait. The human suffering and destruction caused by the occupation of Kuwait and the ensuing Gulf war proved to us all that even more important than addressing aggression is the need to create a system of making such acts of aggression impossible and of helping to reverse similar situations that still persist. Conflict prevention and conflict resolution have always been and continue to be major objectives of the United Nations. In this respect, I would like to emphasize the historic significance of the Charter of Paris and the role that the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe can play in the future in safeguarding peace and respect for human rights in Europe.

We all know that a just world is one in which international law is respected and applied. Therefore, we all have an obligation to apply the rule of law and the appropriate process of peaceful settlement of disputes, including recourse to the International Court of Justice, and to refrain from imposing the will of the stronger.

(President Vassiliou)

We are witnessing daily scenes of suffering, loss of innocent life and blatant violations of human rights in the name of asserting misguided nationalist aspirations. If this process is left unchecked, we run the danger of seeing the mosaic of existing international order being shattered into a multitude of micro-entities. It is an illusion to believe that the creation of entities with an exclusive ethnic, religious or tribal character is the way to a world of happiness and prosperity. On the contrary, human experience has shown that greater progress has been recorded by those multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies in which all groups were enjoying equal opportunities in a democratic environment.

The international community must not hesitate in sending out a resounding message to those tempted to exploit or exacerbate ethnic grievances as a means to power. Differences must be settled by peaceful means and we must never forget that it is through democracy and strict respect for the human rights of all individuals, irrespective of their ethnic identity, that we can redress the grievances of the past and build a new free world society.

However, if extreme nationalism is not to be condoned, the exploitation of ethnic and religious differences in order to promote one country's own strategic or other interests against a smaller one is unforgivable and should be condemned. Yet in Cyprus, for 17 years now we have continued to suffer the results of the invasion by Turkish forces, which continue to occupy nearly 37 per cent of our territory, thus dividing our country in two and creating the present status quo. The facts are that 200,000 people - equivalent to a third of the population - were uprooted from their ancestral homes and properties; 1,619 missing persons are still unaccounted for. Around 70,000 illegal Turkish settlers, brought over to the occupied area to alter

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the demographic character of the island, by the sheer magnitude of their number threaten the very existence of the Turkish Cypriot community. These are the realities of the Cyprus problem, and this is why the status quo has been and continues to be condemned by the whole world as unacceptable.

This is also why the United Nations and the Secretary-General have been labouring hard in order to promote a solution. At no time during the last three years was the world community as hopeful that a solution of the Cyprus problem was close at hand as it was this summer. The Cyprus problem was promoted from the back burner to the forefront of global affairs. I would like on this occasion to express my thanks and appreciation to all the world leaders who have taken a personal interest, and in particular to President George Bush for his determination to act as a catalyst and contribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. His determination in this regard, as well as that of many other leaders, was reiterated from this very rostrum at this session.

(President Vassiliou)

It was on 2 August this year, on the anniversary of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, that President Bush, after consulting the Secretary-General, President Ozal and Prime Minister Mitsotakis, announced the holding of an international meeting on Cyprus by the end of September. There were two provisos in President Bush's announcement: that the meeting would take place only after adequate progress was registered, and that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, would determine the composition of the meeting. We assured the Secretary-General of our determination to abide by the process agreed upon and in earnest pursued our cooperation with him and his Representatives. The Secretary-General's representatives visited Ankara twice. They brought ideas and views from Ankara which we started to discuss. It soon transpired, however, that the Turkish Cypriot leadership was raising augmented preconditions for the continuation of the process. All the members of this Assembly will recall that a high-level meeting held under the mandate of the Secretary-General in February and March 1990 collapsed when the Turkish Cypriot side set forth unacceptable preconditions claiming a separatist right to self-determination, which were completely rejected by the Secretary-General in his report and the subsequent Security Council resolution 649 (1990). This time they added a new dimension to their untenable positions by claiming sovereignty, in complete contravention of all relevant Security Council resolutions and particularly resolutions 541 (1983), 550 (1984) and 649 (1990).

Almost in parallel, the Turkish Prime Minister publicly reneged on all the commitments of his Government to the United Nations and others concerning elements for progress towards a solution of the Cyprus problem, at the same time announcing that the September date for an international meeting was no longer feasible - not surprising in the circumstances.

(President Vassiliou)

In a vain attempt to justify their behaviour, they supplied the media with a barrage of suggestions for contacts and high-level meetings. Let me tell the Assembly that for years the Turkish military authorities have been forbidding Turkish Cypriots to have any contact with their Greek Cypriot compatriots. Dozens of groups comprising doctors, teachers, trade unionists, youth groups and politicians are the victims of a heartless application of separatism. Even sick persons are often prohibited from visiting a hospital to obtain special treatment. Let me also explain that whenever the international community points an accusing finger at the leadership of the Turkish side for non-compliance with the agreed process, they attempt to get out of their commitments by making alternative proposals on procedure, ignoring the fact that the first rule of negotiations is to stick to agreements.

All these years we have spared no efforts in the quest for a solution and have shown the maximum degree of cooperation with the Secretary-General and his representatives. We are motivated in our efforts by the belief that solution of the Cyprus problem will benefit not only the Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike but also Turkey and Greece and, in addition, promote security in the Mediterranean and Europe. What is even more important is that a solution will demonstrate that differences can be bridged and trust can be repaired. We are steadfast in our objective of promoting a solution which will allow the two communities to live and work together in peace and security in a united federal Cyprus, where economic prosperity will be shared by all and human rights and fundamental freedoms will be universally applied.

Unfortunately, the anticipation of a change in the Turkish attitude and policies, which the international community was led to believe was at hand,

(President Vassiliou)

turned out to be a mirage. In all its positions, the Turkish side unyieldingly insists on the maintenance and legitimization of the status quo. One cannot but feel that the guiding principle of Turkish policy remains that the military power shall impose its will. It is the continuous presence of Turkish troops that perpetuates the Cyprus problem. At a time in history when the world has demanded and secured the withdrawal of foreign troops from all countries, it is an anachronism for the Turkish forces to remain and continue the forcible division of the island.

Are we frustrated by the lack of progress? Yes, we are. Will we give up? No, certainly not. We are in duty bound to the people of Cyprus, to the people of our region and to the people of the world to continue to strive for a just and viable solution which brings peace, security and a better life to all Cypriots throughout the island. To this we remain committed and we shall not be derailed from our ultimate goal.

The anachronism of the continued division of Cyprus is highlighted even more when contrasted with the reunification of Europe and the substantial progress made towards finding solutions to the problems in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Western Sahara and El Salvador.

The Republic of Cyprus welcomes the recent developments in South Africa as definite steps in the right direction but maintains its belief that only when South Africa is fully transformed into a non-racial, democratic and unified country, where basic human rights and freedoms are enjoyed by all, can South Africa truly enjoy peace.

We are also encouraged by the fact that in the Middle East there have been positive developments in a number of areas. Substantial progress has been made towards the convening of an international peace conference, which

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will, it is hoped, pave the way for the people of Palestine and Israel to enjoy peace and security. We are further encouraged by the ending of civil strife and the dismantling of barricades in Lebanon, as well as the anticipated end of the tragedy of the remaining hostages. I am certain that members here all share with me the feelings of appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in this direction.

Whatever progress we have made on the road to democracy and the consolidation of world peace will not be built on sound foundations unless we come to grips with the disastrous repercussions of the growing gap between North and South.

(President Vassiliou)

Figures may not mean much, but I should like to point out that behind the statistics showing that 77 per cent of the population of this planet accounts for only 15 per cent of its income is hidden the continuing tragedy and suffering of more than one billion human beings living in abject poverty and destitution. In recent years we have all talked at length about the debt crisis. However, the debt problem not only persists but is becoming far worse. What counts even more than the fact that the total debt is in excess of \$1.2 trillion is that during the last three years the net transfer of resources from developing countries to developed countries accounted for nearly \$200 billion. I do not know who is helping whom! Equally catastrophic, in its effects, is the wall of protectionism that is erected. For agricultural and textile products alone, this costs the developing countries approximately \$150 billion annually and further reduces their share of the world market, which has declined by about one fifth in recent years.

Three years ago, from this very rostrum, I suggested that we could address the problem of development only by diverting funds from military expenditure. At that time this may have sounded like a Utopian's dream. Today we all know that military expenditure, both in the developed world and in the developing world, can be dramatically reduced. Let us now translate what was then a dream into reality.

Whatever sums of money we may spend on development, however, will bring no results unless we make sure that the products that we help the third-world countries to produce are allowed to reach consumers in the developed world. We know that free trade is the precondition for a healthy world economy, but the sad reality is that the Uruguay Round has still to be completed - with a delay of more than a year - and in the last few years, whilst the poor

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countries have been opening up their markets, the rich countries have been erecting more and more barriers.

Environmental destruction is the other major danger that humanity is threatened with. Ironically, this is a result of both uncontrolled development in the industrialized world and inadequate development in the developing world. Available data leave us no room for complacency, as the deteriorating situation must be arrested and reversed immediately. The environment is the common heritage of mankind, transcending national boundaries. Its global nature requires global solutions. The Conference on the Environment and Development planned for 1992 is particularly important as it is expected to identify and develop global strategies to safeguard the future of our planet. To achieve this, however, we need not only resolutions but also large sums of money, which can be secured only through the establishment of an environment fund.

The United Nations today enjoys a position of prominence in world affairs - no longer impeded by the East-West divide. In order to fulfil its role and meet the many challenges we are facing, the United Nations must not only have the support of all Member States - such support is indispensable - but also restructure and revitalize its organization. We are heartened to note that in the area of peace-keeping we have seen the United Nations become actively involved in previously uncharted areas. The Republic of Cyprus knows better than most the invaluable services that the United Nations peace-keeping missions offer, and I wish to take this opportunity to express again our thanks and appreciation to the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and to all involved with its mission.

(President Vassiliou)

Over the last decade the United Nations has been fortunate to have as its Secretary-General Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. Throughout his tenure the United Nations has been steered by an experienced and seasoned diplomat, whose dedication in advancing the purposes and principles of the United Nations is recognized by all. We congratulate him and wish him every success in the future. Cyprus has first-hand experience, over many years, of the skills and devotion that characterize the Secretary-General, and I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our unflinching support for his efforts to find a solution for the Cyprus problem.

Our generation is witnessing an unprecedented acceleration of history, which affects all the fields of human experience. The end of the cold war has freed the world from the narrow confines of Power-bloc considerations. Yet permanent peace is not fully in our grasp. An international community working within a metamorphosed United Nations can combat the ills and inequalities of our society. The United Nations, however, can be only as effective as the input that it receives from each and every one of us.

Let us, then, show, here at this General Assembly, that the remnants of the past order of inequality and strife have been buried. In its place, permanent peace, security and development for all must be the guiding force of our future actions. We ourselves are the jury, and our verdict will determine whether we shall be freed to a better future or condemned to a more dismal past.

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

Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I wish once again to remind representatives that I am doing my best to call our meetings to order on time every day. If we are not committed to the decisions to which the Assembly itself agreed earlier this session, we shall be unable to complete our work on schedule.

When I called this morning's meeting to order, at 10.05, only 35 delegations were in their places. Those delegations were: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Mauritania, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan, Thailand, Ukraine, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yemen.

I thank those delegations, and hope that other delegations will follow their example.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. de MICHELIS (Italy): Allow me first of all, Sir, to extend to you the warmest congratulations of the Italian Government on your election as President of the Assembly, which reflects the international prestige enjoyed by your country, with which Italy has close and long-standing ties of friendship. Your personal qualities and experience augur well for the progress of work at this session of the General Assembly, which will have to deal with matters of pressing concern to the international community.

I would also like to offer our most sincere good wishes to the seven new Member States, whose admission promotes the principle of universality of the

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

United Nations, to which Italy completely subscribes. We therefore warmly welcome the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Permit me also to express my deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for the continuous efforts he has made during the past year, as in the preceding nine years, to promote international peace and justice and the principles of the United Nations.

During the year that has elapsed since the last General Assembly session, the changes set in motion by the welcome development of the reunification of Germany have been further consolidated and amplified. The collapse of communism has been reshaping Europe. A massive political and institutional restructuring is now in progress, and it will have profound repercussions in the economic field as well.

The threat of nuclear holocaust that overshadowed our planet has now abated. Armaments are no longer the main point of reference in relations among States. The ideological struggle - the competition for world supremacy - which fostered the arms race has ceased to exist. This bears out the truth of the ancient maxim, not always heeded, that weapons in themselves are not the cause of wars and tensions; rather they are a reflection of our ambitions and our fears.

Recent events in the Soviet Union mark an irreversible step forward on the road to democracy and new-found unity in Europe. They open up a new era in global cooperation and creative friendship among peoples.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

The Gulf war defeated the strategy of Saddam Hussein, based on the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and on aggression. The success of the coalition and the action undertaken by the United Nations justified the difficult choice we all made. Failure to confront the Iraqi dictator would have merely encouraged him to embark on new adventures. The United Nations conferred the seal of legitimacy on the international coalition and provided the instruments of an embargo and an ultimatum. To the Organization we entrust the implementation of measures to eliminate completely a military Power capable of inflicting further destruction and committing new acts of aggression. We also hope to derive from this experience the incentive for a more generalized control over the transfer and proliferation of sophisticated weaponry and weapons of mass destruction.

In the case of regional crises such as Cambodia, a solution is in sight, while the situations in Cyprus and Afghanistan remain difficult. And the moment of truth has arrived for the parties involved in the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict, revolving around the question of Palestine, continues to be a central issue, both politically and strategically. Forty years of refusals and denials on both sides have erected a barrier that cannot be torn down overnight.

There is still a long way to go, but clearly the next step is the conference on "territory-for-peace", a phrase which represents the only possible outcome if due account is to be taken, inter alia, of the need to affirm, in this case as in others - and giving equal weight to other principles at issue - the right to self-determination, to which we Europeans are particularly sensitive. It would be a pity if the two sides persisted in maintaining dogmatic positions now rendered obsolete by reality. The wrongs

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

suffered by the Palestinians must not be a pretext for violence, while the violence endured by the Jews throughout so much of their history should be a prelude only to peace. Israel's task will be to take the first step towards normalising relations with surrounding countries. A constructive attitude on the matter of settlements in the occupied territories would be an important step too. In turn, the Arabs will have to terminate the campaign aimed at Israel's liquidation. The territories are not an Israeli conquest but the outcome of aggression perpetrated against Israel. They are its ultimate defence. They can, however, be replaced by other guarantees. The war waged by the Arabs against the Jews must end in a draw, and agreements must be stipulated which the peoples can accept and respect in the interest of peace and security.

It is to be hoped that no one will want to take responsibility for undermining the efforts of President Bush and my colleague, Secretary of State Baker. Those efforts must be supported until they achieve the success that has eluded previous attempts.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

The new order still has to be built. We are keenly aware that we cannot shirk our responsibility in this regard, and also realize that we have reached a point where, for the first time in the history of mankind, the problems of our planet can be tackled only on a global scale.

The new order is inevitable, because the old one is gone. This new order will have to be based on rules, principles and institutions accepted by all, and capable of ensuring the protection of fundamental human rights, the development of democracy, the peaceful settlement of disputes, united opposition to aggression, the reduction of armaments, and freedom and justice for all peoples. In other words, the new order must reflect the logic of integration as against the logic of disintegration, dissension and intolerance.

The choice of disintegration may be justified in the light of reactions inspired by fear and insecurity in the wake of the collapse of the old order, while the new one that will succeed it is still uncertain. We see the two philosophies of integration and disintegration confronting each other in the very centre of Europe, where structures are falling apart, and trying to reorganize on the basis of new rules and principles. In Eastern Europe millions of people are paying dearly for the disastrous consequences of false myths and ideologies. It would be an illusion to think that mere reversion to democracy and a market economy can lead to rapid recovery in those countries, as long as their society is in a state of dissolution. We West Europeans must first make available the wealth of experience and material resources we have accumulated over the years.

It would be inappropriate for us, as countries committed to liberal and social democracy, to erect a new wall to keep out others. We must be prepared for substantial financial sacrifices, whose dimensions Italy has repeatedly tried to quantify.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

The main danger facing the new world order is, in fact, the creation of an impassable gulf between rich and poor countries, between the northern and the southern hemispheres. A truly new order must come to grips with the poverty and underdevelopment that lie at the root of the disarray we see in the world today. Otherwise, the flow of poverty-stricken masses towards the industrialized world, from both the East and the South, will become unstoppable. This flow, spurred by uncertain economic prospects or uncontrolled demographic growth, would upset social balances that are fragile and promote hostility among the poor and egotism among the rich.

The Europe that has emerged from the cold war has sufficient resources to help build a credible order capable of providing an acceptable life, in their country of origin, for the multitudes who are massing on its borders.

If we hesitate we could witness the emergence of an international coexistence that is even harsher and more pitiless than that experienced during the cold war years. We could also fail to attain our objective of an integrated system to replace the tragic divisions of the past. The trends towards fragmentation which we see around us are numerous and dangerous. Indeed, we are only too familiar with them.

First there is the problem of nationalism, which could plunge the restructuring of Europe - from the Soviet Union to Yugoslavia - into chaos. Europe is particularly vulnerable, as it is haunted by historical memories, verging at times on the obsessive. These memories make the very principle of self-determination hard to administer and harmonize with other equally important principles. Everything was simpler in the days of the balance of nuclear power, and everything becomes more complex in the transition from détente to integration. When the central authority of a totalitarian party

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collapses, local nationalism and ethnic conflicts resurface, and they threaten to make society ungovernable.

In Europe nationalism has caused bloodshed and destruction in the past, partly because there was no political or moral authority capable of arbitrating conflicts. Today the situation is different. We have the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Community and the Council of Europe, which are capable of reconciling solidarity with independence and integration with respect for national identities, and which, as in the case of the Twelve, serve as a model for new federations.

We must support those who are trying to form associations or confederations of free nations. Within individual countries, respect for the rights of minorities will assume a central role in synthesizing the demands of self-determination and the needs of integration. Within our own borders, and specifically in Alto Adige, Italy has constructed a model of autonomy which will be completed in the next few weeks, hopefully even before the end of this session.

The Gulf war has revealed another possible source of fragmentation and discord between the West and the Arab world. We are not yet free of the danger of new holy wars and new types of intolerance on the part of fundamentalists using religion as a political means. Here, too, we must make a distinction between a justifiable need for an identity, which serves a unifying function, and the belief that one is a besieged minority holding the only key to enlightenment. This feeling produces a siege mentality, fear of the outside world and the idea that evil is embodied in a single clearly identifiable enemy - either the State of Israel or the West as a whole.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

Racism as a statutory norm will disappear with the demise of apartheid. But it poses a continuing threat to society, including our Western societies that are receiving a host of new immigrants flocking to our cities in search of refuge, protection and hope.

The pronouncement once made by the United Nations equating Zionism with racism is particularly unacceptable at this juncture. It was made at a time when our Organization was dominated by automatic, Manichaean majorities, hostile in principle to the State of Israel. Any resolution that equates the quest for a homeland, an aspiration common to many European cultures undergoing a Risorgimento of their own, with an act of genocide is, to our way of thinking, an aberration. We must ensure that this outrage is expunged from the annals of our Organization. We, for our part, are committed to seeing that this happens during the present session.

Protectionism is the other grave danger threatening our future. If the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade were to fail, regionalism would prevail over multilateralism, reducing trade to bilateral relations that could marginalize the poorer countries completely. If the current round of negotiations is not completed by the end of this year, the door will be open to all kinds of protectionist and autarchic schemes, somewhat tempered by fragile bilateral agreements that are subject to revision whenever there is a change in the economic situation. In a climate of protectionism it would be even more difficult, if not impossible, to undertake any major effort to integrate the third-world countries into the world economy or to give the newly emerging Eastern democracies easier access to free markets. The sacrifices demanded of these countries would appear even more unfair when compared with the selfish rivalries between the rich of this world.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

The involvement of the Security Council and the Secretary-General in the management of the Yugoslav crisis is in itself a sign of the new times we are living in and of the need for a dynamic interpretation of the role of the United Nations in situations which depart from the classical pattern of inter-State conflicts.

The way in which the leading world Organization handles the crisis will test the United Nations capacity to play a peacemaking role even in such complex cases as that of Yugoslavia.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

The same obviously applies to the European Community, which immediately realized the risks arising from the Yugoslav crisis, and from the very outset has been seeking a peaceful solution in the framework of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and developed in the Charter of Paris, namely, the right to self-determination, the preservation of territorial integrity, and the protection of the rights of minorities.

The adoption of resolution 713 (1991) by the Security Council reflects the broad international consensus on the need to try all possible means of containing the Yugoslav crisis and encouraging the search for political means of settling it. It also completes, in an exemplary manner, a process that is clearly indicative of the growing complementarity of the various organizational levels at which international decision-making is conducted.

First proposed by the Twelve, subsequently endorsed by 35 States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and further developed with the involvement of the Western European Union, the initiative to promote peace in Yugoslavia is now enriched by the very important contribution of the Security Council, and there is no doubt that with this development the international community's desire to see the Yugoslav crisis channelled into paths of peace will have been fully satisfied.

The successful achievement of integration will be contingent on the acceptance of rules and principles and the existence of institutions capable, not only of establishing them, but also of enforcing them. This is the constructive innovation that has been made possible precisely by the changes in Europe and other parts of the world. The prospect of universality supporting the United Nations is based on the affirmation of a new scale of common values, the first prerequisite of a democratic world order. We are

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

witnessing the application, also in inter-State relations, of that freedom defined by Kant as the option not to obey any laws other than those to which one has freely consented. We are gradually moving from guarantees within the State to guarantees against the State, overcoming the discrepancy, too frequently encountered in the past, between promises and fulfilment.

This objective is being attained at the regional level, and indeed is being effectively achieved in the European context, but it is increasingly becoming the main task of the United Nations. As we have seen in the aftermath of the Gulf war, the right to intervene for humanitarian ends and for the protection of human rights is gaining ground. This type of intervention has become an idée-force, and the most truly innovative concept of the remaining decade of this century. This must be the focal point of our efforts through the United Nations, which is also the main forum of the new world order. Intervention that is primarily aimed at securing protection of human rights and respect for the basic principles of peaceful coexistence, is a prerogative of the international community, which must have the power to suspend sovereignty whenever it is exercised in a criminal manner. The international community must be on the side both of democratically elected parliaments and of oppressed nationalities, whether those emerging within the new Europe, or the Kurds.

It would be both understandable and useful if this process first occurred in a smaller geographical area, among more homogeneous countries, such as those belonging to the European Community and those participating in the CSCE. There is no conflict here. In fact, this regional approach and the global approach represented by the United Nations are complementary.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

The European Community is making its own original contribution to this process and is bent on consolidating and improving the effectiveness of its own organization. If one half of Europe, committed to adopting a democratic political structure and a market economy is redesigned, the other half cannot maintain the same old balances and preserve the institutions of the past.

The time has come also to adjust the structures and tasks of the United Nations. Of course, this is not the first time the question has been raised, but now discussion of it has become inevitable in the light of the following considerations:

First, the end of East-West rivalry, which paralysed the Organisation's activities, and the risk, instead, of a more explosive North-South confrontation;

Second, the achievement of universality by the United Nations, enhanced by the most recent admissions of new Members;

Third, the restructuring of the international community. Such new forms of supranationality as the European Community are emerging; a country such as the Soviet Union, which will also become one of the supporting structures of the new order, is being radically transformed;

Fourth, the need to involve in our collective responsibility countries that have hitherto played a role not commensurate with their importance, and that are now acquiring a new political and economic dimension and a new awareness of their tasks;

Fifth, the need to ensure that no single country or small group of countries can assume responsibility for constituting a sort of military arm of the new international order;

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

Sixth, the dissemination of rules and principles that are finally gaining universal acceptance and could be enforced at a level above national sovereignties;

Seventh, the transition to the globality of a world system governable only by a renovated United Nations, complemented by other groups of limited geographical dimensions, which will help to apply the same principles and rules.

These ideas could provide the basis for a possible reorganization of the United Nations, which should be gradual in nature but entail changes in certain important provisions currently in force. As structured at present, the United Nations affords a guarantee of, but sometimes imposes limits on, the governability of the world. An initial partial contribution is already contained in some proposals presented informally by a group of countries, which we appreciate. But we clearly need to go further. Italy, in pursuance of some earlier suggestions, considers that the following major goals should be sought.

One should be the elimination of all discriminatory language from the Charter, especially that deriving from the Second World War, which seems even less acceptable now that the cold war is over. I have in mind the references to the so-called "enemy States", which means those that were defeated at that time. We intend to launch a specific initiative in that connection, in consultation with the countries concerned, at the earliest opportunity;

A second goal should be the expansion of the Security Council, with the increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, which would not necessarily entail extending the right of veto to all the new permanent members. We propose that the selection of the latter should be made

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

on the basis of objective criteria, such as the size of the country's population and its gross national product. The Security Council was first expanded in 1963 to take into account the increase in the number of Member States. Since then, the membership has risen from 113 to 166 - a 50 per cent increase. This factor is in itself sufficient to warrant - and indeed to make necessary - an expansion of this decision-making body of the Organisation. Since it is required to make choices of major importance, the Security Council must fully reflect developments in international society;

A third goal should be the revision of some Chapters of the Charter, such as Chapter VII. Here, too, on the basis of recent experience ranging from the Persian Gulf to Yugoslavia, and with the emergence of the principle of active intervention for humanitarian purposes that I referred to earlier, there is ample scope for innovation;

A fourth goal should be the introduction of a system of weighted voting, in both the General Assembly and the Security Council. This is not a problem to be dealt with now, but a distant prospect that cannot be overlooked if we are to take more timely and effective decisions. Various proposals have also been made on this point in the past, and they could be usefully studied.

On questions regarding the removal of references to "enemy States", the expansion of the Security Council and the revision of the Charter, Italy will be submitting some written comments in the course of this session, as a contribution to our joint deliberations.

(Mr. de Michelis, Italy)

We realize how difficult it is simply to contemplate the changes I have just outlined. I know it means retreating from established positions, giving up some prerogatives, and undertaking a redistribution of international power to reflect the changes that have taken place in the world in recent years, particularly since 1989.

But we believe that the task must have seemed just as daunting to those who, nearly half a century ago, defined the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and participation, not entirely free of illusions, at the end of the two conflicts that have divided the world during this century.

Today, international realities and the expectation they generate give us a similar mandate, at the conclusion of a third world war, which was incomparably less bloody than those that had preceded it but which has left us a legacy of risks and dangers no less serious. We would be remiss in our duty if we continued to apply the same rules and used the same tools as before. If there is to be a renewal, the United Nations must be overhauled. We should like this to be one of the messages sent by the General Assembly at its present session.

Mr. MOCK (Austria) (interpretation from French): Austria takes great pleasure in welcoming seven new Members to the United Nations. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania displayed admirable courage and persistence over more than half a century and were finally able to recover their independence. We also hope that the joint admission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations - something we had supported for several years - will facilitate the unification process. Similarly, the admission of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of

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Micronesia has brought us closer to the ultimate goal of attaining true universality of membership in the United Nations.

We seldom have an opportunity such as the one we have today of witnessing profound change all over the world. We all still have fresh in our minds the historic events that occurred in Moscow, resulting in what we hope will be a decisive victory of democracy, human rights and pluralism over dictatorship and totalitarianism. The breakdown of totalitarian ideologies offers vast opportunities for shaping a new universal consensus on international cooperation and peace. We are entering a new era in international relations. At the same time, we must respond to new challenges while the world is still bedevilled by old, chronic problems.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms have now been generally accepted as central principles for the future institutional evolution of the society of nations. In many societies, we can observe a basic reorientation towards broad participation by the people in decision-making processes, towards a free eco-social market economy and towards democracy and political freedom.

Within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the principle has been established that interest shown in the safeguarding of human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot be rejected as interference in the internal affairs of another country. Austria has always vigorously supported this position. We shall endeavour to have this principle applied on a universal level as well.

Violations of human rights, wherever they occur, cannot be tolerated. The United Nations should have the possibility to react quickly to serious human rights abuses and to prevent any escalation of such abuses. I propose that the Commission on Human Rights adopt an emergency procedure based on a

(Mr. Mock, Austria)

permanent register of experts - who could be called "white helmets" - at the Commission's disposition.

Such an intersessional emergency procedure could contain the following elements: Upon the receipt of information on gross, massive human rights violations, the Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights would send a team of "white helmets" into the country in question as quickly as possible, which would be asked to examine the situation rapidly. The team of "white helmets" would submit a report to the Bureau of the Commission together with conclusions and recommendations, in order to initiate speedy action on the basis of existing mechanisms. Finally, the report of the "white helmets" and the comments of the Government concerned would be inscribed on the agenda of the next session of the Commission, which would decide on follow-up measures.

I feel encouraged to make this proposal by the very important address delivered by the Secretary-General at the University of Bordeaux earlier this year. There, as well as in his annual report to the General Assembly, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar referred to a shift in public attitudes owing to heightened international interest in universalizing a human rights regime.

The question of human rights and fundamental freedoms has become essentially international; it is of fundamental importance for the community of nations. Respect for human rights must be one of the pillars of the international order. Therefore, concerns over human rights violations and inquiries with a view to safeguarding these rights cannot be considered interference in the internal affairs of a State. On the contrary, expressing concern in the area of human rights constitutes an important and legitimate element of international dialogue.

(Mr. Mock, Austria)

Article 1 (3), in conjunction with Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter not only permits but obliges the United Nations to monitor respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in all parts of the world. The practice of the United Nations to intervene in the case of serious human rights violations as they occur in many countries corroborates that view.

The Security Council, in an unprecedented resolution, has thus described the repression of the civilian population in Iraq as a threat to international peace and security. This decision is in my view a milestone in the history of our Organisation. It will set an important precedent for our future work.

Major progress has been achieved during the past 12 months with regard to making our global system of collective security more effective. Austria has actively cooperated with the international community in promptly implementing the Security Council's decisions with regard to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In this context, Austria allowed coalition forces to fly over and transit through Austrian territory.

The liberation of the individual now under way in Central and Eastern Europe is accompanied by the rising quest for national identity. Liberation from an oppressive system must not, however, be followed by renewed subjugation to the destructive forces of nationalism and ethnic hatred. We deeply deplore the bloodshed, human suffering and destruction caused by the fighting over the past months in Yugoslavia, especially in Slovenia and Croatia where the peoples have pronounced themselves in a democratic vote in favour of independence. We demand that the escalating spiral of violence, which may also be reaching Bosnia-Herzegovina, be stopped without further delay. The initiatives of the European Community, which has taken the lead to contain the crisis, have our full support. Ultimately, however, the entire

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international community shares in the responsibility to bring the armed conflict in Yugoslavia to an end.

In the years 1987 to 1989, Austria, together with the other members of the European Free Trade Association, supported the Yugoslav efforts to reform their economy, which was to be the fundamental basis for a democratic State. Regrettably this process of democratization has unfolded at uneven speed. Its advancement was speedier in the various republics than it was at the federal level, where it was not possible to hold democratic elections. Thus, already in early 1991, Mr. Jovic, then Chairman of the Yugoslav Presidency, had to state that the constitutional organs of Yugoslavia were no longer functioning.

The balance sheet of the current tragedy in Yugoslavia amounts to 220,000 refugees; numerous towns and villages have been destroyed; the aggression by Serbian irregulars in collusion with the federal army has caused untold suffering to the civilian population in Croatia. The army is no longer under the political control of the Government, as was stated by Mr. Markovic, Prime Minister of the federal Government.

Faced with this intolerable situation the current Chairman of the Presidency, Mr. Stipe Mesic, felt obliged to turn to the President of the United Nations Security Council asking for the intervention of the world Organization.

This state of affairs led us to conclude that this situation constitutes a threat to international peace and security. On 19 September 1991 Austria therefore brought the matter before the Security Council. The unanimous adoption of resolution 713 (1991) confirms once again, after the Gulf conflict, the capacity of the Security Council to act quickly in the case of a grave international crisis. The supreme organ of collective security decided

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to impose an embargo on all arms shipments to Yugoslavia. It also issued an urgent appeal to all parties to the conflict to observe the cease-fire. This strict observance of the cease-fire is essential since it makes it possible for the European regional mechanisms to continue their efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis. Thus the Security Council has also indicated that its action cannot relieve the European regional organisations of their responsibility.

The swiftness and determination with which the Security Council took its decision in this matter confirm that the Austrian initiative to bring the heart-rending crisis of Yugoslavia before the world organ of collective security was well-founded.

We are convinced that the future coexistence of the peoples of Yugoslavia will have to be based on the following principles: absolute priority for strict compliance with the obligation regarding the non-use of force; realization of the right to self-determination in line with the desires expressed by the Yugoslav peoples; renunciation of any change by force of borders between the Yugoslav republics; full and integral application of the obligations contained in the Paris Charter for a New Europe concerning pluralism and democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights; and binding agreements concerning protection for all minorities and effective guarantees for the equal participation of all sectors of the population in the political process.

Austria supports the efforts to launch the peace process in the Middle East and especially welcomes the announcement made by the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union that they intend to convene a peace conference in the coming month. At this stage, where there are still

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important obstacles, we must redouble our efforts to overcome them. We deem it vitally important to develop a positive dynamism towards peace. For this reason we appeal to all parties concerned to become part of this process and to show a maximum amount of flexibility and responsibility.

We are perfectly aware that such a conference would constitute only the first step on the way to a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In our view, in addition to the core issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question, a lasting solution would have to include the following elements: a discussion of all problems in the region in a broadly based political dialogue; efforts towards arms control and disarmament in the field of conventional arms, as well as the elimination of weapons of mass destruction; endeavours to control and reduce international arms exports; and renewed efforts to revive the dialogue between the European and Islamic worlds.

(Mr. Mock, Austria)

I should like to turn now to our relations with our neighbour Italy, and specifically to the application of the Agreement between our two countries signed on 5 September 1946 in Paris, concerning the protection of the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol. On the basis of resolutions 1497 (XV) and 1661 (XVI) adopted by the General Assembly at its fifteenth and sixteenth sessions, Austria and Italy agreed in 1969 to adopt a new autonomy status for South Tyrol. The two countries agreed upon 137 measures to be taken in favour of the minority, of which three essential measures still await implementation. Furthermore, agreed solutions remain to be found to several basic claims that originated after 1969, and that, in view of internal developments which occurred in Italy, have an impact upon the effectiveness of the 1946 Agreement.

Over the last years, I was able to inform this Assembly that Italy had given proof of an increasing understanding of the aspirations of the South Tyrolean minority. During the last months, however, very little substantial progress towards bringing this controversy to a formal end was made.

There are many voices in Europe today calling for self-determination and increased regional autonomy. Therefore, it is all the more necessary to implement those last measures which I have just mentioned and which have been so often promised. If we take into consideration the profound changes that have occurred elsewhere in Europe, it should be possible, on the basis of the mutual confidence between Italy and Austria, which has grown stronger over the years, to create autonomy for South Tyrol and to secure it against any unilateral modification. Austria would then finally be able to certify to the United Nations that the controversy dealt with in the aforementioned resolutions has been resolved. This model for the protection of an ethnic

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group could serve as an inspiration for the settlement of similar problems, as has just been mentioned by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Mr. Gianni de Michelis.

The new atmosphere of cooperation which we are witnessing in international relations, especially in East-West relations, offers additional opportunities for multilateral disarmament negotiations. We have welcomed the initiatives taken this year in the field of chemical weapons. The unconditional renouncement of any use of chemical weapons upon entry into force of the chemical weapons convention will represent an important step towards the global abolition of this category of weapons. Austria has intensified its efforts with a view of contributing to the conclusion of the negotiations in Geneva by the middle of next year. In this context, I should like to reiterate that Austria would be pleased to be host to the organization on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Conventional disarmament efforts will be globally effective only if the resulting excess stocks of conventional weapons do not enter the international market. Austria supports, therefore, the initiative taken by member States of the European Community to establish within the United Nations a register of conventional arms transfers. Austria stresses the non-discriminatory character of such registers. By contributing to confidence-building, such a register would also make for greater transparency in the international arms trade.

The concept of security has long transcended the narrow definitions of military security. Economic, social and environmental factors play an increasingly important role.

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The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is of eminent importance in this context. The acceptance of environmental considerations not only as a constraint but as a central objective of development will have a profound impact on our economies, energy use systems and economic relationships. It will, therefore, be helpful to concentrate on concrete proposals in the preparation of this conference. I am thinking, for instance, of our proposal made during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly to send "Green Helmets" to intervene under a system of dispute prevention and settlement concerning the environment.

We understand the appeal of "returning to San Francisco" as an invitation to look more creatively at the basic provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Secretariat plays an important catalytic role as the very soul and spirit of the world Organization. I wish to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who has most skilfully steered the United Nations to a central position in the community of nations.

The General Assembly would need a better scheduling and organization of its work, a reduction of its agenda and an improved institutional response to the growing need for the intersectoral and interdisciplinary analysis of issues.

We highly appreciate President de Marco's initiatives in this respect and hope that they will be followed up.

The Economic and Social Council has been the subject of reform efforts for a long time. Important improvements have been achieved. New opportunities may offer themselves for considering and monitoring the issue of

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"environment" and "development". Imaginative thinking and constructive policy will be required in the context of the Rio Conference.

In view of the challenge that man-made and natural disasters constitute to mankind, it is essential that the United Nations machinery be made more responsive to these needs. Austria is reviewing its own national structures in order to provide more effective support to United Nations operations.

(Mr. Mock, Austria)

Austria welcomes the enhanced role the United Nations has recently assumed in the area of social development, crime prevention and, above all, international drug control. Drug problems in particular afflict all members of the international community and all classes of society. Comprehensive and determined measures are required to combat this curse of modern society.

In order to facilitate a further extension of the United Nations activities in Vienna, Austria has decided to construct at its own expense additional office space in the Vienna International Centre for the use of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I should like to offer my congratulations and very best wishes to you, Mr. President. I am certain that under your able leadership the Assembly will accomplish its important deliberations most efficiently.

Mr. LONCAR (Yugoslavia): I should like first to extend my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Shihabi, a good friend of mine and a prominent diplomat, on his election as President of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I should also like to express my highest appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his outstanding report, which outlines our hopes and dilemmas and charts our future courses. In the same spirit, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his exceptional and tireless endeavours over the course of the past 10 years in favour of peace and better understanding among all human beings, peoples and nations throughout the world.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

It is also with great pleasure that I join in welcoming seven new States to the world Organisation. I congratulate the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Estonia, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands on joining the great family of the United Nations.

The events that have taken place in the world since the last session of the General Assembly are dramatic and imposing, indeed. Today, I have chosen to speak about today's world of great expectations and new vistas and about new challenges, risks and uncertainties; about Yugoslavia as an integral yet sombre part of European and world changes; about the new world order and global stability at the close of the twentieth century; and about the United Nations, as the key instrument of a world that is being integrated on a new basis.

We have entered a new era in international relations. The changes on the world political scene are far-reaching and irreversible. The end of the cold war has ushered in an altogether new age of freedom and democracy. Bipolar ideological, political and military confrontations belong to the past. However, this new epoch raises new questions. It is incumbent upon us to find proper answers.

The dramatic days in the Soviet Union that shook the world brought about a major turnabout of this century. The fundamental transformations in that country that led to the birth of the "new thinking" have accelerated the pace of history, but they have also shed light on the complexity of the options for peace and progress, freedom and democracy.

New realities call for new answers. How do we bridge the enormous disparities in the social and economic spheres? How do we affirm the new

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values and remove the causes of new divisions and retrogressive trends? How do we carry out the much-needed social transformations and overcome the often concomitant extremism, nationalism and other degenerative tendencies? How do we meet the demands of a propulsive economy, human rights and social justice and avoid the undercurrents of new totalitarian systems that feed on human misery and poverty?

The challenges are many. They call for political, economic and intellectual efforts at all levels - national, subregional, regional, continental and global.

You have all known Yugoslavia well, ever since the time when, as a member of the victorious anti-nazi coalition, it was among the first to sign the United Nations Charter, or when it was the "first dissident" of Europe. You knew it in the period of the cold war as a non-aligned State not part of any bloc. You also remember it from the days of the contemporary world's and Europe's major trials and challenges. You recall it as a country that has for decades been a factor of European stability.

Now, Yugoslavia has become a matter of concern for many international forums and for its friends worldwide.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

As is well-known, the Yugoslav crisis was on the Security Council's agenda two days ago, and a resolution was adopted. At that meeting, I stated that today's Yugoslavia was a great threat to itself and thus, in a way, was a threat to a larger area. It could hardly be expected of a representative of a country actually to accuse himself. However, I find nothing unusual about that. This Organisation and its Security Council stand for and protect peace, freedom and prosperity for all peoples, nations and countries of the world. That is exactly why we should speak up here even about our own problems and challenges and, on this basis, seek support and help.

I presume that the main points of the resolution on Yugoslavia are generally known: the Security Council fully supported the efforts undertaken by the European Community - under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and consistent with its principles - to restore peace and dialogue in Yugoslavia, through the Conference on Yugoslavia and the mechanisms set forth within it; the Security Council appealed urgently to, and encouraged, all parties in Yugoslavia to settle their disputes peacefully and through negotiation within the framework of The Hague Conference; the Security Council decided that all States should immediately implement a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia; and called on all States to refrain from any action which might contribute to increasing tension and to impeding or delaying a peaceful and negotiated outcome to the conflict in Yugoslavia.

As can be seen, we both initiated and welcomed the peace action of the European Community, the CSCE and the United Nations. It certainly did not imply that we harboured hopes that someone else would take over our responsibilities. On the contrary, for us, it merely implied an additional commitment to do only what we should, and must do for ourselves.

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We do not wish to justify, nor could we justify and explain the current Yugoslav drama even with some undeniable facts: first, that it is an integral part of the turmoil that has beset Central and Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and other parts of the world in recent years, and that, due to the historical, political and ethnic differences involved, the Yugoslav crisis has an additional and most tragic component; and, second that the tragedy of my country is the sum and substance of the problems that plague Europe and the world of the post-cold-war era.

After all that has happened it is obvious that Yugoslavia should be redefined. We have to find a formula that would both recognize legitimate national aspirations and contemporary needs for integration on a new basis. I believe that there is hope for such an outcome. Though still fragile, the breakthrough made two days ago, through the agreement on the implementation of a cease-fire, is an encouraging step forward.

As I said the day before yesterday, we fully recognize that our crisis should in no way endanger anyone, particularly not those closest to us, our neighbours. But it implies that it is our neighbours who should, for their part, be understanding and patient where our problems are concerned. Only the day before yesterday, a colleague of mine, the Foreign Minister of Albania, Mr. Kapllani, did just the opposite. He poured oil on the flames. Although Mr. Kapllani devoted three full pages of his statement to my country, I myself will make no further comment.

At the end of this part of my speech, I am genuinely prompted to thank, once again, all those who showed friendly concern and feelings for the Yugoslav peoples at the hard times they are going through.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

Perhaps the Yugoslav crisis, a test for the new European and world architecture, could best mirror the interdependence of national, regional, continental and global stability. The Europe of the Paris Charter, concerned so much with the individual and his rights, is stable only in interaction with the entire world. That is Europe's authentic contribution to the emergence of the new civilization of peace. The process of global restructuring is under way. It requires utmost sensitivity not only in the spheres of political transformation, but also in the economic and social ones. Otherwise, the existing disparities might be further deepened. Therefore, even after the bipolar world has ceased to exist, the goals and potentials of the policy of non-alignment are not exhausted. Quite the opposite, the non-aligned policy now has new motivation.

It is logical that the old system should be dismantled, first and foremost, by those who built it on the postulates of ideological influence and military might. However, the emerging system of international relations should not be overshadowed by new supremacies. World forces and influences are neither expected to be, nor could they be symmetric. But globally the new world architecture will not be sustainable without due inputs and influences of all factors.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

A new world order based on peace and democracy, freedom and equality, stability and development should apply to all. Only universality can ensure its lasting nature; and only participation of all, its viability.

The order that guarantees peace and security to the entire international community requires both participation and responsibility of the world's majority embodied in the non-aligned countries. My colleague the Foreign Minister of Ghana, Mr. Asamoah, spoke about this with competence only yesterday.

The world of economic development and prosperity is incompatible with the poverty and stagnation of the developing world, to which most of the non-aligned countries belong. It is illusory to expect an even and perfectly balanced global development, but equally unrealistic to project a world development if some lack opportunities for expansion.

A civilization having the individual and his human and civil rights as its supreme values needs free and stable societies - democracy, but also sound economic and social prospects. And last but not least, the environment, which has been taken for granted for so long, now, in the new world order, requires true global concern and common protection.

For all these reasons, I have recalled the purpose and the potential of the policy of non-alignment. The name given to that policy and to the movement behind it might be outdated, but the principles and goals it stands for certainly are not. They are compatible with all ongoing positive processes in today's world - with the progress in the field of disarmament and the signature of the START Treaty; with the progress of negotiations on chemical weapons; with the general approach in favour of enhanced controls of conventional arms transfers; with the ongoing processes of defusing the

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regional crises and with the constructive dialogues underway; with the effective role played by the United Nations, under the Charter, in cases of threats to peace, breaches of peace or acts of aggression, as in the case of the recent Gulf crisis; and with the painstaking efforts invested in the longest lasting world crisis - the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian question - so that we may now already speak in terms of a peace conference, a meeting of all the factors involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Today we speak of the rebirth of the United Nations and its return to the blueprints of 1945. By putting an end to bloc confrontation and embarking upon the process of negotiation, the major world Powers have made an enormous contribution to the revitalization of the world Organization and its Charter. Now the United Nations has a unique opportunity to become an even more important forum absorbing momentous world changes and channelling the positive tendencies, a forum dealing with all fundamental and crucial issues affecting the interests of the entire international community - in short, to become the linchpin of the new world order.

The United Nations can truly be a place for accommodating interests in establishing and expanding regional organizations and mechanisms in the field of security and cooperation, as well as in the political, economic, environmental and cultural spheres. Today security is integral not only in its global and regional, political and military character, but also in its economic and social character, including human rights in particular.

Through the world Organization, the great Powers and the developed countries can effectively coordinate mutual efforts to eliminate the vestiges of the cold war, in particular in the field of nuclear and any other

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disarmament. Through the world Organization we can all influence effectively the resolution of regional crises, the creation of integrative structures and mechanisms, and comprehensive economic and technological development.

In brief, through the United Nations, and more specifically through the cooperation of the General Assembly and the Security Council, we can all join in establishing the new world order, and thus in translating the common option for peace, security, stability, democracy and development into reality - not a reality for some, excluding the others, but a reality for all. We have the rich experience of the past 46 years to draw upon. We believe that the world can and must change for the better. This is why we are here today.

Mr. BRAHIMI (Algeria) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a pleasure and an honour for me to extend to you, Mr. President, our congratulations on your assumption of your office, which reflects our unanimous recognition of your qualities. This is a tribute said to you by the forty-sixth session, as an expression of the high esteem with which it regards the values you stand for, and a reaffirmation of the Organization's confidence in your country, in recognition of the outstanding role it has been playing in this Organization from the very beginning.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

This is a happy opportunity for me to convey the congratulations of Algeria to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to which we are bound by a heritage of culture, a common destiny and ties of constructive fraternal cooperation. As head of the Algerian delegation, I and my delegation will always be at your side to support you in the discharge of the noble and major task entrusted to you.

You have succeeded your predecessor, Mr. de Marco, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, who had demonstrated exemplary devotion in the service of world peace at one of the most critical times in the history of the Organization, and I would sincerely commend him for his efforts.

I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who has spared no effort in upholding the values of peace throughout the world and who has lent his outstanding style to the work of the Organization. Because of his tireless efforts in the service of the purposes and principles of this Organization, he deserves the thanks and appreciation of the entire international community.

Our Assembly at this session has seen the admission to membership of seven new Members, and we warmly welcome the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. We wish their peoples stability and prosperity and we will cooperate with them within this Organization and in all fields.

The rapid events that we have seen recently remind us of the well-known idea that change is the only constant element in history. Indeed the collapse of the Berlin wall, the disappearance of an enormous military bloc overnight and the intensive endeavours to reconstruct the European home in an atmosphere that is charged with hope and danger at one and the same time - all these and

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many other events as well have brought to an end an historic phase that was based on bipolarity in international relations. Thus change has become the decisive word in all that is written or said in assessing the world situation. The terminology and ideas of the cold war era are no longer valid in describing that situation. However, while there are now peoples that are masters of their own fate, peoples that are able to chart their own future and ensure their security and prosperity, we must admit that there are vast regions of the world whose peoples are at the mercy of crises and problems and even wars. Those peoples, which wonder what the future holds for them, constitute the overwhelming majority of humanity. So far, they have not seen positive changes in their material or moral situation as a result of the historic changes that have taken place. Therefore, the question that is being asked insistently is: how can we move forward from the cold-war era, which has ended, to the new international order of which there is so much talk nowadays? We believe that the United Nations is at the same time the proper framework and indeed the only means that we can use if we wish to attain the goals and realize the aspirations of all and defend everyone's interests in an atmosphere of trust and equality between all countries, whether rich or poor, strong or weak, preserving absolute respect for the principles on which this Organization was built, and the goals it has set for itself.

Turning to the Gulf crisis, this was a sore trial for the United Nations, because it led to an upheaval in the Arab world and has left an aftermath in the region which will be felt by the region and its peoples for a long time, because this aftermath is not confined to the bloodshed and the destruction of tremendous material resources. The United Nations is now working to deal with the causes which led to the eruption of that crisis in the Gulf, so as to

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avoid the repetition of a similar tragedy, to safeguard the sovereignty of all States of the region and their independence, to repair the damage that has been done and to restore rights.

However, the credibility of the Organization requires urgently that actions that are undertaken within the framework of the Organization do not lead to the punishment of a people which has been the primary victim of this tragedy whose consequences the international community is trying to eradicate. To be clear, we appeal to this Organization and all States working in this context to see to it that the suffering of the people of Iraq is alleviated and that the sanctions that have been imposed on it are lifted as soon as possible.

We have known for a long time now that the question of Palestine and the question of South Africa are two problems which have a colonialist character. The consideration of this question is more difficult than the examination of any other similar questions. The two crises have seen parallel developments over the years, but now we are witnessing positive changes, which are very encouraging, in the case of South Africa, whereas the situation remains critical and complicated in the case of Palestine. I call upon this Assembly to consider this disparity. I also call upon the Assembly to analyse the causes of this disparity and to draw the necessary conclusions. Personally, I believe that the main cause of this disparity stems from the fact that the firm position of collective solidarity adopted by the international community vis-à-vis the minority in South Africa was the reason that made the Pretoria regime bow to the will of the international community, change its policies and move towards a position that is more compatible with the requirements of the age and international legality.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

As for Palestine, the policy of tolerance and connivance adopted by the major States - States that have influence on Israel and its daily excesses - has encouraged the Israeli leaders to persist in this well-known intransigence and to disregard all resolutions and international conventions. Thus, on the one hand, the international pressures that were brought to bear on the white minority in South Africa have led to the independence of Namibia, the release of Nelson Mandela, the abolition of the basic laws of the apartheid regime, the closing down of the infamous Robben Island prison, and the emergence, as a result of all this, of a political climate that justifies optimism with regard to the future of that country, even if the skies there are not completely cloudless. On the other hand, Israel persists in its extremist intransigent policies. Its repressive practices are being escalated daily. Some time ago, Arab Jerusalem, as well as the Golan Heights, were annexed, and southern Lebanon is still under occupation. The Geneva Conventions are still being flouted. Palestinian lands are being confiscated every day. Thousands of Jewish immigrants are coming in from the Soviet Union and other regions. Settlements are being erected in all the occupied Arab territories, and every time the Palestinian and Arab sides make concessions, Israel, for its part, imposes conditions and makes new demands.

Today, we are told that, in the context of the new international order, and in the wake of the Gulf crisis, the question of Palestine in particular and the Middle East conflict in general will find some solution in total respect for international law and in keeping with the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

From our point of view, the current efforts to achieve dynamic action leading to a comprehensive and just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict are very important, and we appreciate the efforts of all the participants. But, despite all these efforts, the Palestinian people does not find therein even the minimum of its aspirations. We fear that the tolerant attitude that the international community adopts towards Israel may prevent those initiatives from having any positive results.

Today, the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people are meeting in the capital of my country. They are doing all they can to shoulder their responsibility to facilitate the emergence of the solution for which we all hope.

Everyone knows that my country supports the Palestinian people. We have always supported all peoples that have been victims of repression and have fought for their independence and dignity. We recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, just as we recognize the African National Congress, which has raised high the standard of struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. We still give assistance to the PLO, just as we continue to support the liberation movement in South Africa.

We support the efforts to arrive at a just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis. At the same time, we support the work that is being done to lay the foundations for real democracy, under which an end will be put to the domination of the white minority regime in South Africa. We are fully prepared to shoulder our responsibilities by participating in the peace conference on the Middle East if we are firmly convinced that our participation would really contribute to the attainment of a just peace for all and, in particular, for the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

The negotiations on disarmament have led to achievements which we welcome. We sincerely hope that the efforts that are being made in various fields will continue with a view to achieving the goals that are set down in the many General Assembly resolutions concerning disarmament.

It is with satisfaction that we draw particular attention to the major progress that has been made in the Geneva Conference on Chemical Weapons. Algeria expresses its appreciation of these positive developments and takes this opportunity to announce its accession to four treaties: the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare; the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof; the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques; and the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. This is the first stage of Algeria's contribution to the collective effort that is needed if the aspirations of the United Nations and those of the peoples of the world in the various fields of disarmament are to be realized.

For three years now, the countries of the Arab Maghreb have been implementing a constructive project that is of great interest to all countries of the region. It is now passing through a new stage, which seeks to consolidate the basis of the union and its institutional infrastructure, as well as its consultative and executive bodies. The plan for Maghreb unity seeks to consolidate peace in the region, and its goals are influenced objectively by every effort to consolidate peace, stability and cooperation in the Arab world - in Africa and in the Mediterranean basin.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

Due to the adoption by the Security Council resolution 690 (1991) which established the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara to monitor the Sahraoui people's referendum for self-determination, we are moving, at last, towards a final solution to that dispute. It is necessary that the settlement process be carried out within the timeframe established by the United Nations, and the parameters envisaged, that is to say without the exertion of any pressure by any party. Indeed, the entry into force of a cease-fire on the date established by the Secretary-General and the deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Western Sahara have restored trust in the international community and have revived the hope that peace can be achieved.

Algeria reaffirms once more its resolve with regard to the implementation of the settlement plan for Western Sahara and its confidence in the Secretary-General, who has earned the appreciation of the international community through his constant efforts and his patience.

There are conflicts in other regions as well, so we must make every effort to find solutions thereto.

In Afghanistan there is new hope that, between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the situation can be resolved peacefully, in cooperation with neighbouring countries and with the support of the United Nations.

Likewise, everyone views the presence here of a delegation from Cambodia's Supreme National Council, the representative of the sovereign authority in that country, as proof of the confidence felt by the parties to the conflict. This is of great importance to our efforts to achieve national reconciliation in Cambodia.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

Turning to Cyprus, we hope that the Secretary-General's efforts will enable that country to recover its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

In Lebanon the fighting has stopped and peace has been restored. The Lebanese authorities continue the work of national reconciliation and rebuilding national unity through implementation of the Taif agreements. The international community must shoulder its responsibilities vis-à-vis the Lebanese people by ensuring that Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon, pursuant to Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and by establishing an international fund for the reconstruction of Lebanon.

The major transformations we have been witnessing in international relations have not produced similar positive changes in economic relations or international economic cooperation. The heavy burden of external debt and the restrictions imposed on the access to the markets of the developed countries by the commodities of developing countries; inflation; rising interest rates; deteriorating terms of trade; the drop in official development assistance; and meagre flows of foreign investment to developing countries: all these constitute heavy burdens that hamper the work of reform undertaken by developing countries. The deteriorating climate of international economic relations is widening the gap between the North and the South.

Take for example the deteriorating situation in Africa, which is in stark contrast to international commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in Africa. The renaissance of the United Nations can achieve its goals completely only if the demands of developing countries are placed at the top of international agendas. In that connection, the Secretary-General's proposed international conference for development financing deserves support

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

as it would provide the appropriate forum for concerted efforts to solve the basic problems facing us.

We attach particular importance to the decision of the Economic and Social Council that work should be done to ensure that capital is not directed to Eastern Europe to the detriment of the countries of the South.

A genuine recovery of international cooperation through commitments undertaken at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, on international economic cooperation, and through implementation of the goals and policies set out in the International Development Strategy, depends first and foremost on the political will of all Member States. Restructuring the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, revitalizing the Economic and Social Council and efforts to bolster the practical work carried out by the United Nations can all lend credibility and effectiveness to international action. That in turn can stimulate greater political collective will to meet these challenges.

Developing countries know full well that development must depend above all on their own efforts. On that basis, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 have adopted the principle of collective and individual self-reliance for developing countries. For that reason, we have adopted agreements on establishing African economic union and on economic complementarity among the Maghreb countries, free-trade agreements with countries of Latin America as well as the dynamism of the economic groupings in Asia represent efforts to consolidate South-South cooperation, despite the many types of obstacles and difficulties we are facing.

In fact, those efforts do not reflect a tendency on the part of countries of the South towards isolation. Neither are they an alternative to the fabric of international economic relations or to cooperation between all States.

(Mr. Brahimi, Algeria)

That is why those efforts in no way lessen the international community's responsibility to work for the development of the entire international community.

The domestic changes that we have seen in Algeria are primarily a response to what we hope will be the reflection of the aspirations of our society: a democratic, responsible life. The thrust of those changes can have some effect, which we hope will be positive, on peace, stability and cooperation throughout the region. The establishment of political associations, the independence of juridical power and the strict observance of human rights are all factors which affect all strata of society. They are factors that help further consolidate real democracy, which we are establishing in Algeria.

Despite the difficulties involved in such an experiment, Algeria is determined to continue along this path and work for the consolidation of democracy. We hope that these efforts will lead to the achievement of human aspirations with the consolidation of the legitimate rights of individuals and society as a whole, and that this will be accompanied by proper international action breaking new ground to produce effective global cooperation.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to real cooperation with all Member States to establish the new international order to which all peoples aspire, a new order based on consultation and dialogue, democratic practices and cooperation, and not on conditions imposed by the strong on the weak or the rich on the poor.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.