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**President: Mr. Mongi SLIM (Tunisia).**

## AGENDA ITEM 9

### General debate (continued)

1. Mr. FALCON BRICEÑO (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): In unanimously electing Mr. Slim to preside over its sixteenth session the General Assembly has made an excellent choice, for in him are united all the qualities needed to guide the thinking and the action for which the peoples look to the United Nations at this turning-point in history.

2. The President's intelligence and tolerance, his moderation and impartiality, will, we are sure, do much to bring about at this session the understanding needed to restore to mankind the faith, optimism and joy that are today at a low ebb owing to the ominous threat of war.

3. May I congratulate the President on this well-deserved mark of confidence which the General Assembly has conferred upon him.

4. This sixteenth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly is opening under the violent shock caused by the tragic loss of Dag Hammarskjöld.

5. The Secretary-General's incredible death by accident has sown dismay in the hearts of the international community. Representatives, Secretariat members, Government leaders, newspapermen, the general public and even his opponents appreciate this irreparable loss to the ranks of the best of humankind, those who hold tolerance, reflection and serenity above violence, the rule of law and reason above force; those who fight for peace and want all men to be happy. For although his opponents might perhaps have been able to tax him with mistakes, no one could deny Dag Hammarskjöld's worth in dedicating himself body and soul to the achievement of those ideals as he saw them, to the point where his own death constitutes in some sort the crowning martyrdom to that devotion.

6. As a result of the Secretary-General's demise, we are now faced with the need of appointing a successor to him. Article 97 of the United Nations Charter states: "The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council". My Government takes the view that this appointment should be made, if not immediately, with the least possible delay, as legally should be the

case, but not for that reason alone; politically speaking, it is not in the interest of the vast majority of the peoples represented here to delay too long in filling the vacant post. Needless to say, Venezuela is thinking in terms of a single Secretary-General.

7. Apart from the fact that the Charter so provides, there are practical reasons for maintaining the unitary character of the Secretariat. We believe that a change in its structure would not benefit the Organization in any way; that, on the contrary, its action might thereby be paralysed and the performance of its normal functions impeded. The argument that the international character of the Secretariat would be best safeguarded by a change to allow of representation of the main political divisions of the world is not, in our opinion, valid. Rather than to ensure the predominance of truly international interests and purposes, the result would be to subject that organ to daily disputes. In this respect, we agree with Mr. Hammarskjöld's ideas, as expressed in the last document put out by him (Introduction to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization):

"The exclusively international character of the Secretariat is not tied to its composition, but to the spirit in which it works and to its insulation from outside influences . . ." [A/4800/Add.1, page 6].

8. All over the world men are watching, stunned, the latest worsening of the international situation, a situation which never before in history has been fraught with such peril for mankind. We have acclimatized ourselves to the cold war and learnt to breathe in its oppressive air, in the confident hope that Governments and their international organizations would find a road to understanding that would ensure the peaceful co-existence of nations.

9. But all the professions of sincerity, all the expressions of good will and all the pledges of greater effort to seek the way to peace are being frustrated, one after the other, by what can only be regarded as frenzied preparations for war.

10. Mankind is looking on in stunned dismay while, instead of progress being made in the talks for banning nuclear weapons and for ending atom bomb tests for all time, the disarmament negotiations reach a deadlock and one of the great Powers responsible for the maintenance of peace without warning suddenly decides—and whatever the reasons adduced this is obviously iniquitous—to renew the testing of nuclear weapons of the most destructive kind.

11. Not only has this action served to increase the danger of a world holocaust whereby civilization would be wiped out but, in the immediate present, it is of itself helping to weaken the chances of survival of the human race by daily increasing the contamination of the earth's atmosphere with harmful radiation which, according to scientists, is injurious to man and to all living creatures on earth.

12. Hence, in speaking before this Assembly on behalf of the people and Government of Venezuela, my first duty is to record our profound consternation at the renewal of the nuclear tests. I am making this protest on behalf of a country that cannot use the language of threats but whose truly democratic domestic policy and peaceful tradition in international relations is the guarantee of its word.

13. Freedom, respect for human dignity and social justice are no longer mere provisions in the Constitution and the laws of the Venezuelan Republic: today, they have become a fecund reality, part of day-to-day existence, lacking which the nation's life would be unthinkable.

14. The principles of representative democracy and the rights of the individual, both as person and as citizen, have been enshrined for us in our Constitution and incorporated into our daily life.

15. Venezuela, in putting forward at the international level its ideas for advancing the common weal of mankind, in demanding observance of principles and respect for rules, in asking other States to comply with international law and the obligations they have freely assumed, is asking nothing more than it is itself doing or is ready to do.

16. It is not therefore with the arrogance stemming from the possession of massive armaments—which, indeed, it does not possess—but with the moral strength conferred on a people by steadfast fulfilment, out of respect for its own sovereignty and its proven peaceful intentions, of its international obligations that Venezuela is come to this Assembly to ask for better faith and stricter and more honest adherence to the rules of international law on the part of the Governments represented here, for that is the most direct way of safeguarding peace and of working in concert for the well-being and advancement of mankind.

17. Governments that deny the most elementary rights to their citizens, countries that violate by force the rules governing coexistence in the international community, come here with inflammatory slogans with the intent of covering up the intolerance in their internal régimes and of confusing world public opinion. The intent is likewise, by resorting to subterfuge based on distorted interpretations of the Charter of the United Nations and of the constitutions of the regional bodies, to place obstacles in the way of the peoples' advancement and their right to make the economic and social changes essential for the achievement of maximum levels of well-being.

18. Too often the fact is expressly ignored that the existence of effective rules of international law alone is capable of bringing about the general and genuine undertaking on which a lasting peace may be based. The peoples of the world will gradually lose faith in the efficacy of international law and of the constitutions of world universal and regional organizations if the very Governments committed to ensure their observance hold them in contempt.

19. There are signs that the United Nations, having been established under the best auspices and with the lofty purpose of safeguarding the security of all peoples within a framework of harmonious coexistence, is in danger of being swept away, carrying with it the last hopes of mankind.

20. As early as April 1948, the present President of Venezuela, Mr. Romulo Betancourt, in his then capacity

of head of Venezuela's delegation to the Ninth Inter-American Conference, sketched the ideas that have guided Venezuela's foreign policy, in delivering the closing speech of the Conference. At that time, he said that the effectiveness of multilateral agreements depends on the degree of true democracy in the signatory States and that "the fact that a distinction continued to be made between binding and non-binding obligations would detract from the moral authority of the system of relations that we have put together as well as from the ability to inspire confidence in the peoples of the world".

21. Thus, I wish above all else earnestly to appeal to this Assembly, to the great and the small Powers alike, to see to it that our efforts to find the answer to grave international problems are made in the spirit of harmony that inspired those systems of law—appeal for return to rule of law, to respect for principle and regulation, to fulfilment of obligations and of the pledged word, with the interest of mankind and its higher destinies in mind.

22. The principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other Governments has been zealously and consistently applied by Venezuela. In faithful and unflinching adherence to that principle, no armed expedition to overthrow the régime of another country has been or is being organized in my country. This stand is well known to the many groups of political exiles who have taken refuge under our flag and sought the hospitality of our land. This is not incompatible, but rather in keeping with our constant efforts, by word and deed, within our regional framework, to assure through concerted and collective action, compliance with the basic principle of the Charter of the Organization of American States, the general interpretation of which is that only Governments freely elected by their people and guaranteeing individual liberties and respect for human rights may be members of the OAS.

23. In conformity with this principle of non-intervention, Venezuela condemns the attempts of certain Governments, acting in collusion with disaffected political groups which serve as their fifth column for propaganda and for stirring up violence, to upset law and order and seek to change by force the political structure of other countries. It is our firm belief that, if international agreements are observed in good faith, changes in the political structure of any society should, in conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, be decided upon by the people, in exercise of their right to self-determination.

24. Venezuela has firmly upheld this principle, which should serve to ensure the free expression by vote of the sovereign will of the peoples and not become a pretext for the seizure of power, through violence or usurpation, by dictatorships or régimes of force which withhold civil liberties. In this connexion, it is always in doubt that a régime that denies individual liberties and civil rights to its citizens, clamps down on freedom of the Press and information and on the right of minorities freely to form and operate as political parties, and obstructs the effective exercise of representative democracy, can be regarded as the legitimate outcome of the principle of self-determination of peoples.

25. The Government of Venezuela has been constantly active and on the alert to ensure that human rights, as formulated in the Charter of the world and regional systems of nations to which Venezuela belongs, are safeguarded and it is a cause of profound



concern to us that there are still countries today where those inherent rights of the individual are cruelly and shamefully vitiated and violated.

26. I would therefore ask that the Assembly should, by resolution, instruct the Commission on Human Rights to submit an open report annually on any violations of the guarantees inherent to human life and dignity on the part of States Members of the United Nations. The conscience of the civilized world cannot rest in peace so long as this Assembly has not taken proper steps to lay down sanctions against Governments which until now have been offending against human rights with impunity—those human rights respect for which is generally regarded, within the international system under which we are living, as essential for the maintenance of peace.

27. I now want to focus my remarks on the subject among those before the Assembly that is of most vital and general interest. My purpose is to reiterate the fervent appeal of my Government and people to the great Powers asking them to make once again a sincere, a supreme effort to reach agreement on the banning of nuclear weapons and on world disarmament.

28. The President of Venezuela, as "Head of State of a small Latin-American country", desired at his first meeting with the diplomatic corps at Caracas, to put on record that Venezuela stands for disarmament. On that occasion, President Betancourt said: "No people of any continent can be free from the fear that unresolved problems may lead to the holocaust of a third world war, which in this atomic era will be a war between continents rather than peoples and whose consequences for mankind no one can foresee."

29. At every session of this Assembly, the Venezuelan delegation has pressed this petition in defence of the survival of mankind, and will go on pressing it, with the utmost strength and persistence. My country is ready to unite its efforts with those of other peace-loving countries for the purpose of seeking a positive settlement of the problem of general disarmament, under effective international control.

30. Needless to say, our appeal implies that the atomic Powers should at the earliest date come to terms for the conclusion of an agreement on the immediate cessation of nuclear testing for war purposes. Mankind has the right to demand that it should at least be guaranteed against contamination of the air it breathes.

31. Nowadays, no one in his right mind can look on war as a means of settling a serious current problem. Negotiation is the only answer and it is the United Nations itself, where the voice of the peoples can be heard and the weight of world public opinion can make itself felt, that is the body best suited to establish the requisite climate and bases for negotiation.

32. There is another matter of grave concern to all States Members of the United Nations, because of the possible danger it presents to world peace, and that is the Berlin question, which is one part only of the more general problem of the reunification of Germany. My delegation is of the opinion that this matter should be settled by negotiation, bearing in mind, however, that in the final analysis the right to determine its fate lies with the German people itself, in accordance with the principle of self-determination of peoples expressly written into the Charter of the United Nations.

33. Before concluding, I should like once again to reaffirm my country's steadfast and unequivocal posi-

tion on the colonial problem and the question of racial segregation. Venezuela, whose policy is rooted in its own attainment of independence, will continue in this world Organization to defend the right of the peoples still living under colonial or semi-colonial rule to full political and economic self-government. Likewise, we once more go on record as opposing all forms of racial discrimination.

34. In conclusion, I wish this Assembly the fullest measure of success, for the sake of the peoples represented here and for the sake of all mankind.

35. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The next speaker is the President of the United States of America. Would members of the General Assembly kindly remain seated while I go out to meet the President and escort him to the rostrum.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.*

36. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): It is an honour for me to welcome Mr. John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America. He may be assured that we shall listen with the greatest attention to what he is kind enough to say to us in these early days of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly. Nowadays, whatever may be said by the Head of a great State takes on a particular significance; I would therefore express the hope that the words of the President of the United States of America will be helpful in furthering our work, bringing about the much-desired slackening of tension in international relations, paving the way to an era of effective co-operation, and further strengthening the adherence of our Organization to the lofty principles enunciated in its Charter, with a view to the attainment of both its immediate and its long-range goals.

37. I call on the President of the United States.

#### ADDRESS BY MR. JOHN F. KENNEDY, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

38. Mr. John F. KENNEDY, President of the United States of America: We meet in an hour of grief and challenge: Dag Hammarskjöld is dead. But the United Nations lives. His tragedy is deep in our hearts, but the tasks for which he died are at the top of our agenda. A noble servant of peace is gone. But the quest for peace lies before us.

39. The problem is not the death of one man—the problem is the life of this Organization. It will either grow to meet the challenges of our age, or it will be gone with the wind, without influence, without force, without respect. Were we to let it die—to enfeeble its vigour—to cripple its powers—we would condemn our future.

40. For in the development of this Organization rests the only true alternative to war; and war appeals no longer as a rational alternative. Unconditional war can no longer lead to unconditional victory. It can no longer serve to settle disputes. It can no longer concern the great Powers alone. For a nuclear disaster, spread by winds and water and fear, could well engulf the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the committed and the uncommitted alike. Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind.

41. So let us here resolve that Dag Hammarskjöld did not live—or die—in vain. Let us call a truce to terror. Let us invoke the blessings of peace. And, as

we build an international capacity to keep peace, let us join in dismantling the national capacity to wage war.

42. This will require new strength and new roles for the United Nations. For disarmament without checks is but a shadow—and a community without law is but a shell. Already the United Nations has become both the measure and the vehicle of man's most generous impulses. Already it has provided—in the Middle East, in Asia, in Africa this year in the Congo—a means of holding man's violence within bounds.

43. But the great question which confronted this body in 1945 is still before us—whether man's cherished hopes for progress and peace are to be destroyed by error and disruption—whether the "foul winds of war" can be tamed in time to free the cooling winds of reason—and whether the pledges of the United Nations Charter are to be fulfilled or defied: pledges to secure peace, progress, human rights and world law.

44. In this hall there are not three forces, but two. One is composed of those who are trying to build the kind of world described in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter. The other, seeking a different world, would undermine this Organization in the process.

45. Today of all days our dedication to the Charter must be maintained. It must be strengthened, first of all, by the selection of an outstanding civil servant to carry forward the responsibilities of the Secretary-General—a man endowed with both the wisdom and the power to make meaningful the moral force of the world community. The late Secretary-General nurtured and sharpened the United Nations obligation to act. But he did not invent it. It was there in the Charter. It is still there in the Charter.

46. However difficult it may be to fill Mr. Hammarskjöld's place, it can better be filled by one man rather than by three. Even the three horses of the troika did not have three drivers, all going in different directions. They had only one—and so must the United Nations executive. To install a triumvirate, or any panel or any rotating authority, in the United Nations administrative offices would replace order with anarchy, action with paralysis, confidence with confusion.

47. The Secretary-General, in a very real sense, is the servant of this Assembly. Diminish his authority and you diminish the authority of the only body where all nations, regardless of power, are equal and sovereign. Until all the powerful are just, the weak will be secure only in the strength of this Assembly.

48. Effective and independent executive action is not the same question as balanced representation. In view of the enormous change in the membership of this body since its founding, the United States delegation will join in any effort for the prompt review and revision of the composition of United Nations bodies.

49. But to give this Organization three drivers—to permit each great Power to decide its own case—would entrench the cold war in the headquarters of peace. Whatever advantages such a plan may hold out to my own country, as one of the great Powers, we reject it. For we prefer world law, in the age of self-determination, to world war, in the age of mass extermination.

50. Today, every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by ac-

cident or miscalculation, or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us.

51. Men no longer debate whether armaments are a symptom or a cause of tension. The mere existence of modern weapons—ten million times more powerful than any that the world has ever seen, and only minutes away from any target on earth—is a source of horror and discord and distrust. Men no longer maintain that disarmament must await the settlement of all disputes—for disarmament must be a part of any permanent settlement. And men may no longer pretend that the quest for disarmament is a sign of weakness—for in a spiralling arms race a nation's security may be shrinking even as its arms increase.

52. For fifteen years this Organization has sought the reduction and destruction of arms. Now that goal is no longer a dream—it is a practical matter of life or death. The risks inherent in disarmament pale in comparison to the risks inherent in an unlimited arms race.

53. It is in this spirit that the recent Belgrade Conference<sup>1/</sup>—recognizing that this is no longer a Soviet problem or an American problem, but a human problem—endorsed a programme of "general, complete and strictly and internationally controlled disarmament".<sup>2/</sup> It is in this same spirit that we in the United States have laboured this year, with a new urgency and with a new, now statutory, agency<sup>3/</sup> fully endorsed by the Congress, to find an approach to disarmament which would be so far-reaching yet realistic, so mutually balanced and beneficial, that it could be accepted by every nation. And it is in this spirit that we have presented, with the agreement of the Soviet Union—under the label which both nations now accept of "general and complete disarmament"—a statement of newly agreed principles for negotiation [see A/4879].

54. But we are well aware that all issues of principles are not settled, and that principles alone are not enough. It is therefore our intention to challenge the Soviet Union, not to an arms race, but to a peace race, to advance together step by step, stage by stage, until general and complete disarmament has been achieved. We invite them now to go beyond agreement in principle to reach agreement on actual plans.

55. The programme to be presented to this Assembly—for general and complete disarmament under effective and international control—moves to bridge the gap between those who insist on a gradual approach and those who talk only of the final and total achievement. It would create machinery to keep the peace as it destroys the machinery of war. It would proceed through balanced and safeguarded stages designed to give no state a military advantage over another. It would place the final responsibility for verification and control where it belongs—not with the big Powers alone, not with one's adversary or one's self, but in an international organization within the framework of the United Nations. It would assure that indispensable condition of disarmament—true inspection—and apply it in stages proportionate to the stage of disarmament. It would cover delivery systems as well as weapons. It would ultimately halt their production as well as

<sup>1/</sup> Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held from 1-6 September 1961.

<sup>2/</sup> Final Declaration of the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, para. 15.

<sup>3/</sup> United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, established on 26 September 1961.



their testing, their transfer as well as their possession. It would achieve, under the eyes of an international disarmament organization, a steady reduction in force, both nuclear and conventional, until it had abolished all armies and all weapons except those needed for internal order and a new United Nations peace force. And it starts that process now, today, even as the talks begin.

56. In short, general and complete disarmament must no longer be a slogan used to resist first steps. It is no longer to be a goal without means of achieving it, without means of verifying its progress, without means of keeping the peace. It is now a realistic plan, and a test—a test of those only willing to talk and a test of those willing to act.

57. Such a plan would not bring a world free from conflict and greed—but it would bring a world free from the terrors of mass destruction. It would not usher in the era of the super-State—but it would usher in an era in which no State could annihilate or be annihilated by another.

58. In 1945 this nation proposed the Baruch plan to internationalize the atom before other nations even possessed the bomb or demilitarized their troops. We proposed with our allies the disarmament plan of 1951 while still at war in Korea. And we make our proposals today, while building up our defences over Berlin, not because we are inconsistent or insincere or intimidated, but because we know that the rights of free men will prevail—because, while we are compelled against our will to rearm, we look confidently beyond Berlin to the kind of disarmed world we all prefer.

59. I therefore propose, on the basis of this plan, that disarmament negotiations resume promptly, and continue without interruption until an entire programme for general and complete disarmament not only has been agreed upon but has been actually achieved.

60. The logical place to begin is a treaty assuring the end of nuclear tests of all kinds, in every environment, under workable controls. The United States and the United Kingdom have proposed such a treaty that is both reasonable and effective and ready for signature. We are still prepared to sign that treaty today.

61. We also proposed a mutual ban on atmospheric testing, without inspection or controls, in order to save the human race from the poison of radio-active fallout. We regret that that offer has not been accepted.

62. For fifteen years we have sought to make the atom an instrument of peaceful growth rather than of war. But for fifteen years our concessions have been matched by obstruction, our patience by intransigence, and the pleas of mankind for peace have met with disregard.

63. Finally, as the explosions of others beclouded the skies, my country was left with no alternative but to act in its own interests and in the interests of the free world's security. We cannot endanger that security by refraining from testing while others improve their arsenal. Nor can we endanger it by another long, un-inspected ban on testing. For three years we accepted those risks in our open society while seeking agreement on inspection. But this year, while we were negotiating in good faith in Geneva, others were secretly preparing new experiments in destruction.

64. Our tests are not polluting the atmosphere. Our deterrent weapons are guarded against accidental ex-

plosion or use. Our doctors and scientists stand ready to help any nation measure and meet the hazards to health which inevitably result from the tests in the atmosphere.

65. But to halt the spread of these terrible weapons, to halt the contamination of the air, to halt the spiralling nuclear arms race, we remain ready to seek new avenues of agreement. Our new disarmament programme [see A/4891] thus includes the following proposals:

First, signing of the test-ban treaty, by all nations. This can be done now. Test ban negotiations need not and should not await general disarmament;

Second, stopping the production of fissionable materials for use in weapons, and preventing their transfer to any nation now lacking in nuclear weapons;

Third, prohibiting the transfer of control over nuclear weapons to States that do not own them;

Fourth, keeping nuclear weapons from seeding new battlegrounds in outer space;

Fifth, gradually destroying existing nuclear weapons and converting their materials to peaceful uses; and

Finally, halting the unlimited testing and production of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, and gradually destroying them as well.

66. To destroy arms, however, is not enough. We must create even as we destroy—creating world-wide law and law enforcement as we outlaw world-wide war and weapons. In the world we seek, United Nations emergency forces which have been hastily assembled, uncertainly supplied and inadequately financed will never be enough.

67. Therefore, the United States recommends that all Member nations earmark special peace-keeping units in their armed forces—to be on call to the United Nations, to be specially trained and quickly available, and with advance provision for financial and logistic support.

68. In addition, the United States delegation will suggest a series of steps to improve the United Nations machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes—for on-the-spot fact-finding, mediation and adjudication for extending the rule of international law. For peace is not solely a matter of military or technical problems—it is primarily a problem of politics and people. And unless man can match his strides in weapons and technology with equal strides in social and political development, our great strength, like that of the dinosaur, will become incapable of proper control—and, like the dinosaur, will vanish from the earth.

69. As we extend the rule of law on earth, so must we also extend it to man's new domain: outer space.

70. All of us salute the brave cosmonauts of the Soviet Union. The new horizons of outer space must not be driven by the old bitter concepts of imperialism and sovereign claims. The cold reaches of the universe must not become the new arena of an even colder war.

71. To this end, we shall urge proposals extending the United Nations Charter to the limits of man's exploration in the universe, reserving outer space for peaceful use, prohibiting weapons of mass destruction in space or on celestial bodies, and opening the mysteries and benefits of space to every nation. We shall propose further co-operative efforts between all the nations in

weather prediction and eventually in weather control. We shall propose, finally, a global system of communications satellites linking the whole world in telegraph, telephone, radio and television. The day need not be far away when such a system will televise the proceedings of this body to every corner of the world for the benefit of peace.

72. But the mysteries of outer space must not divert our eyes or our energies from the harsh realities that face our fellowmen. Political sovereignty is but a mockery, without the means of meeting poverty, illiteracy and disease. Self-determination is but a slogan if the future holds no hope.

73. That is why my nation—which has freely shared its capital and its technology to help others help themselves—now proposes officially designating this decade of the 1960's as the "United Nations Decade of Development". Under the framework of that resolution, the United Nations existing efforts in promoting economic growth can be expanded and co-ordinated. Regional surveys and training institutes can now pool the talents of many. New research, technical assistance and pilot projects can unlock the wealth of less developed lands and untapped waters. And development can become a co-operative, and not a competitive, enterprise—to enable all nations, however diverse in their systems and beliefs, to become in fact as well as in law both free and equal nations.

74. My country favours a world of free and equal States. We agree with those who say that colonialism is a key issue in this Assembly. But let the full facts of that issue be discussed in full.

75. On the one hand is the fact that, since the close of the Second World War, a world-wide declaration of independence has transformed nearly 1 billion people and 9 million square miles into forty-two free and independent States. Less than 2 per cent of the world's population now lives in "dependent" territories.

76. I do not ignore the remaining problems of traditional colonialism which still confront this body. Those problems will be solved, with patience, good will and determination. Within the limits of our responsibility in such matters, my country intends to be a participant, and not merely an observer, in the peaceful, expeditious movement of nations from the status of colonies to the partnership of equals. That continuing tide of self-determination which runs so strong has our sympathy and our support.

77. But colonialism in its harshest forms is not only the exploitation of new nations by old, of dark skins by light—or the subjugation of the poor by the rich. My nation was once a colony—and we know what colonialism means; the exploitation and subjugation of the weak by the powerful, of the many by the few, of the governed who have given no consent to be governed, whatever their continent, their class or their colour.

78. And that is why there is no ignoring the fact that the tide of self-determination has not yet reached the communist empire where a population far larger than that officially termed "dependent" lives under governments installed by foreign troops instead of free institutions—under a system which knows only one party and one belief—which suppresses free debate, free elections, free newspapers, free books and free trade unions—and which builds a wall to keep truth a stranger and its own citizens prisoners. Let us debate colonialism in full—and apply the principle of free choice

and the practice of free plebiscites in every corner of the globe.

79. Finally, as President of the United States, I consider it my duty to report to this Assembly on two threats to the peace which are not on its crowded agenda, but which cause us, and most of the Members of the Assembly, the deepest concern.

80. The first threat on which I wish to report is widely misunderstood: the smouldering coals of war in South East Asia. South Viet-Nam is already under attack—sometimes by a single assassin, sometimes by a band of guerrillas, recently by full battalions. The peaceful borders of Burma, Cambodia and India have been repeatedly violated. And the peaceful people of Laos are in danger of losing the independence they gained not so long ago.

81. No one can call these "wars of liberation". For these are free countries living under their own governments. Nor are these aggressions any less real because men are knifed in their homes and not shot in the fields of battle.

82. The very simple question confronting the world community is whether measures can be devised to protect the small and the weak from such tactics. For if they are successful in Laos and South Viet-Nam, the gates will be opened wide.

83. The United States seeks for itself no base, no territory, no special position in this area of any kind. We support a truly neutral and independent Laos, its people free from outside interference, living at peace with themselves and with their neighbours, assured that their territory will not be used for attacks on others, and under a Government comparable—as Mr. Khrushchev and I agreed at Vienna<sup>4/</sup>—to those of Cambodia and Burma.

84. But now the negotiations over Laos are reaching a crucial stage, the cease-fire is at best precarious. The rainy season is coming to an end. Laotian territory is being used to infiltrate South Viet-Nam. The world community must recognize—and all those who are involved—that this potent threat to Laotian peace and freedom is indivisible from all other threats to their own.

85. Secondly, I wish to report to the Assembly on the crisis over Germany and Berlin. This is not the time or the place for immoderate tones, but the world community is entitled to know the very simple issues as we see them. If there is a crisis it is because an existing peace in that area is under threat—because an existing island of free people is under pressure—because solemn agreements are being treated with indifference. Established international rights are being threatened with unilateral usurpation. Peaceful circulation has been interrupted by barbed wire and concrete blocks.

86. One recalls the order of the Czar in Pushkin's Boris Godunov:

"Take steps at this very hour that our frontiers be fenced by barriers... that not a single soul pass o'er the border, that not a hare be able to run or a crow fly."

87. It is absurd to allege that we are threatening a war merely to prevent the Soviet Union and East Germany from signing a so-called treaty of peace.

<sup>4/</sup> Meetings held from 3-4 June 1961.

The Western allies are not concerned with any paper arrangement the Soviets may wish to make with a régime of their own creation, on territory occupied by their own troops and governed by their own agents. No such action can, however, affect either our rights or our responsibilities.

88. If there is a dangerous crisis in Berlin—and there is—it is because of threats against the vital interests and the deep commitments of the Western Powers, and the freedom of West Berlin. We cannot yield these interests. We cannot fail these commitments. We cannot surrender the freedom of these people for whom we are responsible. A "peace treaty" which carried with it provisions which destroyed the peace would be a fraud. A "free city" which was not genuinely free would suffocate freedom and would be an infamy.

89. For a city or a people to be truly free, they must have the secure right, without economic, political or police pressure, to make their own choice and to live their own lives. And, as I have said before, if anyone doubts the extent to which our presence is desired by the people of West Berlin, we are ready to have that question submitted to a free vote in all Berlin and, if possible, among all the German people.

90. The elementary fact about this crisis is that it is unnecessary. The elementary tools for a peaceful settlement are to be found in the Charter. Under its law, agreements are to be kept, unless changed by all those who make them. Established rights are to be respected. The political disposition of peoples should rest upon their own wishes, freely expressed in plebiscites and free elections. If there are legal problems, they can be solved by legal means. If there is a threat of force, it must be rejected. If there is a desire for change, it must be a subject for negotiation. And if there is negotiation, it must be rooted in mutual respect and concern for the rights of others.

91. The Western Powers have calmly resolved to defend, by whatever means are forced upon them, their obligations and their access to the free citizens of West Berlin and the self-determination of those citizens. This generation learned from bitter experience that either brandishing or yielding to threats can only lead to war. But firmness and reason can lead to the kind of peaceful solution in which my country profoundly believes.

92. We are committed to no rigid formulas. We seek no perfect solution. We recognize that troops and tanks can, for a time, keep a nation divided against its will, however unwise that policy may seem to us. But we believe a peaceful agreement is possible which protects the freedom of West Berlin and allied presence and access, while recognizing the historic and legitimate interests of others in assuring European security.

93. The possibilities of negotiation are now being explored; it is too early to report what the prospects may be. For our part, we would be glad to report at the appropriate time that a solution has been found. For there is no need for a crisis over Berlin threatening

the peace—and if those who created this crisis desire peace, there will be peace and freedom in Berlin.

94. The events and decisions of the next ten months may well decide the fate of man for the next ten thousand years. There will be no avoiding these events. There will be no appeal from these decisions. And we in this Hall shall be remembered either as part of the generation that turned this planet into a flaming funeral pyre or as the generation that met its vow to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

95. In the endeavour to meet that vow, I pledge every effort that this nation possesses. I pledge that we shall neither commit nor provoke aggression, that we shall neither flee nor invoke the threat of force, that we shall never negotiate out of fear and we shall never fear to negotiate.

96. Terror is not a new weapon. Throughout history it has been used by those who could not prevail either by persuasion or by example. But inevitably they fail—either because men are not afraid to die for a life worth living, or because the terrorists themselves came to realize that free men cannot be frightened by threats and that aggression would meet its own response. And it is in the light of that history that every nation today should know, be it friend or foe, that the United States has both the will and the weapons to join free men in standing up to their responsibilities.

97. But I come here today to look across this world of threats to a world at peace. In that search we cannot expect any final triumph—for new problems will always arise. We cannot expect that all nations will adopt like systems—for conformity is the gaoler of freedom and the enemy of growth. Nor can we expect to reach our goal by contrivance, by fiat or even by the wishes of all.

98. But however close we sometimes seem to that dark and final abyss, let no man of peace and freedom despair. For he does not stand alone. If we all can persevere, if we can in every land and office look beyond our own shores and ambitions, then surely the age will dawn in which the strong are just and the weak secure, and the peace preserved.

99. The decision is ours. Never have the nations of the world had so much to lose—or so much to gain. Together we shall save our planet—or together we shall perish in its flames. Save it we can—save it we must—and then shall we earn the eternal thanks of mankind and, as peace-makers, the eternal blessing of God.

100. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I am truly grateful to the President of the United States of America for his address to this Assembly. A statement of such importance will certainly be studied by all with the care and attention it deserves.

101. May I now ask the Members of the Assembly kindly to remain seated while I escort the President of the United States of America from the Hall.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*