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**President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
(Algeria).**

AGENDA ITEM 109

The situation in the Middle East (*concluded*)*

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): As members are aware, this plenary meeting has been convened for the purpose of closing the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly.
2. As a result of the consultations I held, I gathered that the general feeling is that agenda item 109, which is the only item remaining on the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, should be included in the provisional agenda of the thirtieth session. If there are no objections, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the draft agenda of the thirtieth session.

It was so decided.

Closing statements

3. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who have expressed a desire to speak at this stage of our proceedings.
4. The first speaker is the Chairman of the group of African States, Mr. Abdel Meguid, upon whom I now call.
5. Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. President, it is a great honour for me to speak as representative of the African group, to which we both belong, and to express our appreciation for the great effort you have made in guiding the work of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. In fact, your presidency over the work of the twenty-ninth session and the seventh special session which followed it, was meaningful and produced guidelines that are clear to all, near or far.

6. In addition to the fact that your assumption of this high office was an affirmation by the world community of your efficiency and capacity as well as a tribute to the Arab States and the African continent, to which you belong by race and culture, it is also world recognition of the important role of the non-aligned countries now and in the future within the ambit of international relations.

7. Undoubtedly, Algeria's great assets in the form of experience of armed struggle and of active diplomacy, in addition to internal economic and social achievement and relations of good-neighbourliness, were behind your success and contributed to the view that the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly was one of the most important and outstanding sessions of the General Assembly and one that has really touched the core of matters in economics, politics, social sciences and law.

8. If we in Egypt and in the other African countries are proud of our contributions to the work of the twenty-ninth session and that of the seventh special session, a great part of our pride and appreciation is due to your co-operation with us and our co-operation with you. It is also due, and in no less measure, to the co-operation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who, together with his colleagues in the Secretariat, deserve our gratitude and appreciation.

9. Mr. President, I know that the links between our countries in Africa existed before and will continue to exist after the conclusion of the work of the twenty-ninth session. Therefore, let my final words be no more than words of greeting.

10. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the Chairman of the group of Asian States, Mr. Ghorra.

11. Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon): Mr. President, in my capacity as Chairman of the Asian group for the month of September it is my privilege and pleasure to express to you on behalf of the group and of my delegation our admiration for the outstanding leadership you have provided us with in conducting the deliberations of the twenty-ninth session and the seventh special session of the General Assembly. Today the emphasis is more on the seventh special session, which we have just concluded. The role that you have played in the many successes achieved in both sessions was a new confirmation of the brilliant statesmanship which has characterized your efforts as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria and as a dynamic, resourceful and dedicated spokesman of the third world and of the Non-Aligned Movement, and a creative architect for the realization of their aspirations for peace, progress and justice.

12. Algeria's great leader, President Boumediène, took the initiative in calling for a new international

* Resumed from the 2325th meeting.

economic order. His vision of a better world was a source of inspiration for the international community. The dialogue which was generated and the meaningful and fruitful results achieved by the sixth and seventh special sessions and the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly have confirmed the soundness of that initiative.

13. Asia, the cradle of so many civilizations, cultures and values, and the most populous continent in the world, suffers immeasurably from the inequities of the present international economic situation. The realization of that fact prompted the Asian Member States among the developing countries to participate energetically in and contribute positively to the proceedings of the earlier sessions and of this session. Similarly, the developed and financially endowed Asian States among them have made and are making significant and positive contributions. They all realize that in a spirit of solidarity and co-operation they can tackle the tremendous problems they face in eradicating illiteracy, mass poverty, unemployment and under-development.

14. At the same time, it is our firm belief that the disturbing political conditions which continue to beset some areas of our vast continent must be settled on the basis of justice and the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations. Their settlement will not only strengthen international peace and security but also provide the conditions conducive to the progress of mankind.

15. The seventh special session was a step in the right direction for the improvement of the conditions of man. What makes it distinctive is the fact that the developed world has realized the need for sharing in the resources and taking part in the measures required to improve the conditions of life and development in the developing countries, with special emphasis on the needs of the least developed nations among them.

16. We are gratified to note that wisdom, co-operation and participation through dialogue and mutual good faith, which are the best means of serving the interests of developed and developing countries alike, have prevailed in our deliberations. A landmark has been established in the work of the United Nations in the process of the realization of its purposes and objectives. The planet Earth, which is the home of all of us, poor and rich nations, cannot but benefit, so as to become the better world of which we all dream.

17. The Asian States are determined to continue to work among themselves and with other developing nations to find adequate solutions to their economic, social and political problems and, at the same time, to stretch out their hands to the developed nations in the world in order to build that better world together. In that effort we must continue to join hands. The fact that we are closing for business this morning and reopening for business this afternoon is proof that we cannot relax in our work. Our ideals must be translated into action through sustained work.

18. In closing I should like, on behalf of the Asian group and of my own delegation, to pay a vibrant tribute to our esteemed and able Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, for his dedication and perseverance in the service of the cause of peace and progress in the world. His genuine and tireless efforts to assert

and strengthen the role of the United Nations contribute immeasurably to the promotion of international co-operation. Because of him and his efforts, and because of the work of his able assistants, our delegations have been able to work, sometimes round the clock, to enable us to achieve concrete results.

19. Finally, may I address to the staff of the Secretariat our gratitude for the various services they have provided for us.

20. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the Chairman of the group of Eastern European States, Mr. Florin.

21. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to have the honour of speaking once again under your presidency of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly and of assuring you again, in my capacity as Chairman of the group of Eastern European States, of my warmest feelings.

[*The speaker continued in Russian.*]

22. The twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, of which this is the concluding meeting, has made an important contribution to the intensification of the process of *détente* and the implementation of peaceful, equitable and mutually advantageous co-operation of peoples and States. You personally, Mr. President, have contributed largely to the achievement of the results characterizing the session that is closing today, which have made it an important and historic event in the development of the world Organization. It is a particular honour for me to be able to express to you, Sir, the gratitude and thanks of the group of socialist States of Eastern Europe. You have displayed energy and farsightedness in your discharge of your important functions and have to a great extent determined the course of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. That is only in keeping with the great authority that the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria enjoys in the world.

23. Under your presidency there was also held the seventh special session of the General Assembly on development and international economic co-operation.

24. Entirely in keeping with the purposes and tasks laid down in the United Nations Charter, the Assembly at its twenty-ninth session, which took place at a time of many international events, under your experienced presidency, adopted resolutions and decisions designed to strengthen universal peace, international security and co-operation free from discrimination in the economic field.

25. Today, Sir, you will open the session marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Organization and hand over the mantle of your high office to another President. On the day of the opening of the thirtieth session we can see that the world Organization has taken a further step towards successfully learning the historical lessons, enshrined in the Charter, of the struggle and victory over fascism 30 years ago at the cost of so many victims of the peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition and the resistance movements of many countries.

26. Now the process of *détente* is entering a new phase: the stage of its implementation. As a representative of a group of European States I should like to

point out that an outstanding contribution to the intensification of this process was made by the results of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The decisions of the Conference are of great significance not only for Europe. The right to peace belongs to every inhabitant of our planet, in every continent and in every region. *Détente* should be extended and intensified and should spread to all parts of the world.

27. At the final meeting of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, as Chairman of the group of socialist States of Eastern Europe, I must express my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim. We acknowledge with respect and gratitude the work of the Secretary-General and his staff, work connected with the implementation of the purposes and principles of the world Organization, who have done so much to promote the success of the session of the General Assembly. The complexity and extent of our activities over the last few months have required a great expenditure of effort by the staff of the conference services. I should like to take this opportunity to express to the ladies and gentlemen of the conference services our gratitude for their selfless work, which has often gone on late into the night.

28. The group of socialist States of Eastern Europe will continue to support the strengthening of the United Nations, which plays such an important role in the practical implementation of the peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems. I venture to express my conviction today that at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, which is at hand, we shall make further progress in resolving the multifaceted political and economic problems confronting us, and that the United Nations will make its contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security throughout the world.

29. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Chairman of the group of Latin American States, Mr. Consalvi.

30. Mr. CONSALVI (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, on behalf of the group of Latin American States and on my own behalf, it is a pleasure and an honour for me to express to you our warmest congratulations on the wisdom and effectiveness with which you have guided the work of the twenty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly and that of the seventh special session which has just ended.

31. We realize that your mission was not an easy one. You have served as President during a crucial stage in the history of the United Nations, a stage during which, through the efforts of the third world, significant changes in the political and economic relations of mankind have occurred or are about to occur.

32. You have presided over these sessions of the General Assembly as a representative of the third world. You come from Algeria, a country which has distinguished itself not only through its heroic history but also through the ideas it has expressed and the initiatives it has taken in the struggles of our countries. It was President Boumediène of Algeria who proposed the convening of the sixth special session, and it was from then that the United Nations, in adopting the

Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order [*resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI)*] and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States [*resolution 3281 (XXIX)*] embarked on the changes which will make it an organization destined henceforth to play a role of equal or greater importance than it has played during the 30 years which have elapsed since it met at San Francisco.

33. At the seventh special session, which has just ended, the third world once again demonstrated its unity and cohesion and its irreversible decision to strive for the establishment of a just and harmonious world order in which the violence of hunger and poverty will no longer be a prevailing force. As representatives of Latin America we should like to express our appreciation to the Group of 77, whose negotiators were able fully to reflect the aspirations of the third world.

34. Twentieth-century western civilization has been characterized by the voracious consumption and waste of raw materials and non-renewable natural resources extracted from our countries—resources for which there are no immediate substitutes, and whose existence and rational use are vital to all mankind.

35. We, the countries of the third world, are here in the United Nations to seek a new international economic order, certain of our rights and convinced that through our ideas and our aims we are defending not only our own present and our own future, but also the future of those peoples which are now geographically placed in the present centres of economic power.

36. Mr. President, on behalf of the countries of Latin America, I should like once again to express our thanks to you. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, and to the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, Mr. Bradford Morse, for their invaluable contribution to the work of these historic sessions which you have guided with such firmness and wisdom.

37. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Chairman of the group of Western European and other States, Mr. Akiman.

38. Mr. AKIMAN (Turkey): Mr. President, it is my privilege and honour, acting in my capacity as Chairman of the group of Western European and other States for the month of September, to convey to you, at this closing meeting of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, our deep appreciation for the able and distinguished manner in which you have presided over the work of this session. As you are relinquishing the high office of the presidency of a session marked by many and various international events, it is a pleasure for our delegations to recall your leadership, which we are sure will stand out as a very important presidency in United Nations history. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, a country which plays such a crucial role in our world in the establishment of peace, prosperity, equity, development and international economic co-operation, you have injected a new inspiration into our Organization, enabling it to keep up with the pace of our era, characterized by rapid and fundamental change. You have discharged this task with great wisdom, skill and

experience, and your contribution to the achievements and success of the United Nations during this period has been decisive.

39. We cannot fail to express, once again on this occasion, our most sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim. Motivated by their devotion to the objectives and purposes of the United Nations, he and his colleagues in the Secretariat have made every possible effort to enable us to cope with the multitude of problems confronting us.

40. Mr. President, we are preparing to open the thirtieth session with renewed hopes. I am sure that the momentum our work has gathered during your presidency will enable us to tackle the problems of the thirtieth session with renewed vigour and with dedication to the principles of international co-operation and solidarity.

41. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I call now on Mr. Jamal, the representative of Qatar, to speak on behalf of the Arab group.

42. Mr. JAMAL (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. President, it is my pleasure, as the Chairman of the Arab group, to extend to you on behalf of the group our warmest thanks, gratitude and appreciation for all your efforts during the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, a session which stands out from other sessions because of the important topics it has dealt with and the historic resolutions it has adopted.

43. I should also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General and his assistants for their efforts during this session, as well as to all others who have contributed to the success of the session.

44. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I call now on Mr. Mitchell, representative of the host country.

45. Mr. MITCHELL (United States of America): Mr. President, and ladies and gentleman of goodwill from throughout the world who also have gathered here for high purposes, it is my pleasure and my honour as representative of the host country of this General Assembly to bid it farewell and to prepare for the welcoming of its successor. It has been a session at times most productive, and at times frustratingly slow, in the accomplishment of the tasks we have set for it, but I think that one thing can fairly be said of this past year of the Assembly's existence: that it has been a year in which we have seen renewed signs of hope, both for a calming of at least some of the political issues and strains which perennially plague us, and for an equitable treatment of the vast economic problems which have come to occupy the attention of the international community.

46. That we see such signs is due, in large measure, to the fact that we are learning again to speak to one another, and that we are once again rejecting the language of divisiveness that inevitably leads us to dissension and decline. Our awareness of the dangers of that course has made us all stop and listen to one another, and speak to one another in a common language about the concerns of mankind. This session has seen the first fruits of this new effort at co-operation. In the session to come, let us hope for an even richer harvest.

47. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): With the decision taken by the General Assembly on the question of the Middle East, which had been held over, our twenty-ninth session comes to an end. I should not like to close the session officially without repeating that I am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me in electing me, with what I believe is a unanimity unique in the annals of our Organization, to the presidency of this session. I should be lacking in modesty and wisdom were I to take credit for this, because I am well aware that it is, above all, to the people of Algeria and the African continent that you intended your tribute. I consider that fortune has favoured me particularly because, like my illustrious predecessor, President Benites, the duration of my tenure as President has continued up until today, and, moreover, I have been given the opportunity of presiding over the proceedings of the seventh special session. This is something which would satisfy even grander ambitions than my own, and I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to you for it.

48. As I approach the end of the term of office that you were so generous as to confer upon me, I must, as a token of gratitude, repay your confidence by sharing with you some of the thoughts that have occurred to me as I look back at the twenty-ninth session. With the benefit of hindsight, each of us, I am sure, will be better able to make an objective assessment. Such detachment is particularly necessary when we attempt to draw lessons from a session which, it is unanimously agreed, was lively enough to have prompted practically everyone to ask some fundamental questions about what will become of our Organization.

49. The resulting renewal of interest in our work should, in my view, be numbered among the more positive aspects of this session, which had the merit of reminding the world and international opinion, which had become indifferent and disillusioned, of the existence of a United Nations that had begun to sink into oblivion. Whether it be a matter of criticism or of praise, the comments made about our work have been encouraging in that they have revealed the importance which has suddenly been accorded to your decisions.

50. Some have said that this session was different from all the others; some have gone so far as to predict that it has introduced such changes that the atmosphere of previous sessions will never return. Those who have credited me with this, or blamed me for it, no doubt wanted to exaggerate the influence which a President can really exert over the Assembly. After all, he is only its faithful servant, and its every wish is his command.

51. I do not think it is necessary to dwell on my own role as President of this session nor on what has been said about it by various people. Suffice it to say that my views concerning our Organization were expressed at the beginning of the session, and, in the course of exercising the responsibilities you entrusted to me, I have been at pains to respect and observe the provisions of our rules of procedure, deferring to your verdict whenever controversy might have arisen. My purpose, then, is not to explain what motivated the conduct which sought to reconcile deeply held convictions with the duties of my office and which always

scrupulously respected the principles and rules governing the General Assembly. No one will forget that the life of this Organization and its substance are, above all, shaped by the will of Member States and the activities of their delegations.

52. The twenty-ninth session, however, did not derive its originality from the items on its agenda, which, on balance, hardly differed from those that habitually appear on the agenda at every session. Some of them are very well known to all those who regularly follow the work of the Assembly and who are aware that these problems can only be resolved slowly and gradually as men's thinking evolves and as the international context changes. Other questions, however, relating to much more immediate threats to the well-being or security of mankind, or directly at the centre of serious conflicts, obviously and inevitably gave rise to bitter discussions, without leading to a unanimous decision or at least one sufficiently broad to provide a solution.

53. The fact that some of our debates seemed lively is not surprising, for everyone knew in advance that disagreements would arise and, to some extent, could even anticipate the decisions that would be the outcome. It is comforting, however, to note that, whatever the passions aroused by the discussions, these were nevertheless always marked by the greatest courtesy and were always imbued with that dignity which is so natural to a prestigious international body such as ours.

54. This did not of course prevent some people in the Assembly from expressing their dissatisfaction with our proceedings; criticisms were levelled, and still are, at the behaviour of the majority and the resolutions it was able to adopt. This disillusionment, sometimes accompanied by ill-intentioned insinuations or even by thinly-veiled threats, was felt by delegations which, either by their number or by their influence, long dominated the Assembly and imposed upon it their own views. The pretext for those accusations was specific decisions adopted in spite of their opposition, but the underlying problem that they revealed goes, of course, much deeper. It would therefore not be of much use to confine ourselves to these questions of detail, hoping thereby to limit the undeniable malaise they have revealed.

55. I cannot take the place of the representatives of the members of the majority to reply to the criticisms that were levelled at them. The wide-ranging debate held here on the question of strengthening of the role of the United Nations gave all sides an opportunity to express their fears or to justify their respective positions, and I do not believe it is necessary to repeat the arguments that were exchanged. But we have to come back to these arguments if we really want to understand the true nature of the misunderstanding which has been developing in our Organization.

56. It is clear to me that this situation in no way calls into question the attachment we all feel to our institutions and to the principles of our Charter, because through this debate, which saw the clash of different concepts of our working methods, the will of us all better to ensure the authority of our Organization and to make of it the pre-eminent instrument of international co-operation was confirmed with force

and conviction by everyone who took part in it. This at least is reassuring for the future, because our differences must never reach the stage where they might become a genuine threat to the very existence of our institutions. This will also enable all of us to approach, in good faith and with good will, the discussion of our different points of view.

57. In the final analysis, what underlies all the controversies that have arisen in the course of this session is the emergence of a new majority which has shifted the centre of decision in the direction of the smaller countries, the weaker countries, the least wealthy. It is in fact a problem of authority or, if you prefer, of the free play of democracy, because the existence of a majority and a minority here in an assembly like ours is quite natural and not at all surprising in itself. That the minority should seek to put over its own views, and that finally the decisions should be taken by the majority, is likewise completely in keeping not only with the traditions of parliamentary democracy but also with the most customary practice of all international conferences. And is it not just such a fundamental rule that has governed the work of our institutions up to now? What, then, has aroused concern in that section of the Assembly which claims to hold democratic traditions and which has enjoyed a majority position ever since our Organization was first founded?

58. The new majority has been described as mechanical, and its decisions arbitrary, which would suggest that the Assembly is now being subjected to some new form of imperialism, which we, of course, would be the first to oppose. But if this is the sincerely held fear of the members of the minority, it does not seem to me difficult to convince them that their apprehensions are not justified. For first of all, and contrary to the idea which some people persist in spreading, the countries of the third world do not constitute an ideologically homogenous bloc, disciplined in its action. These countries prize their freedom and independence too highly to submit to any foreign domination, and the notion that they would agree to submit to the authority of any one of their number betrays an ignorance of what they stand for. Their solidarity is not the result of any imposed constraint but springs from their free adherence to principles common to them all, because they face the same problems, confront the same difficulties and pursue the same objectives. It is in their true interests to unite their efforts in the defence of positions affecting their future. But it is wrong to think that this unity is becoming an instrument of hostility and aggressiveness, blindly applied in all fields of international action.

59. The third-world countries, and the non-aligned group in particular, do not form a dogmatic grouping imprisoning its members within a rigid framework of doctrine. Though the debates during the twenty-ninth session have provided examples of the unity of those countries when the issues involved were such that their positions could not differ, they have also revealed situations in which those countries were not all in agreement. In any case, just as we cannot hold them responsible for their poverty and economic backwardness, so too it is not reasonable to reproach the third-world countries for their unity at a time when they

are still vulnerable and, above all, are having to contend with the short-comings of the international system.

60. If it is wrong to describe the majority as mechanical, it is no less tendentious to regard their decisions as arbitrary, for to do so would be to attribute very little intelligence and wisdom to the members of that majority. They are sufficiently realistic to be guided in their attitude by the twin imperatives of seeking their own interests and of realizing the limitations of their means. This indeed leaves very little room for arbitrariness, which is based rather on a blind disregard of the realities or on an arrogant display of power.

61. Nothing could be more absurd, in any case, than the idea of a third world thirsting for revenge and using its numerical superiority to carry out I know not what kind of reprisals against those who really possess the power and the wealth. Yet this is the impression derived from certain statements we have heard in this very Assembly or that have been widely reported in the press. It cannot be seriously thought or contended that the third-world countries have so far lost their sense of proportion and their appreciation of their own real interests to such an extent as to engage in a trial of strength whose outcome would be in no doubt. The confrontation they are accused of seeking could never be of their own choosing, and it is quite wrong, in my view, to attribute to them any such aggressive intent.

62. Nor do I think that our Assembly at present can be regarded as a mere field of combat for opposing groups, when in fact the dialogue among all persuasions has never been so intense or so open. I believe that for the first time since the founding of this Organization there is real evidence of the desire for understanding, just as the need to find a common language has made itself felt, a common language that will make possible true communication among peoples. The problems of under-development are not new, and the demands of the third world with regard to these problems are not new either; but it was never before possible to establish a genuine dialogue on the subject, marked by the desire to understand and the will to act. Today a new context has been created, characterized by a clearer awareness of the solidarity of all the members of the international community, a context that makes possible what was not possible before, namely, the co-operation of all in trying to achieve a world order that will be more just and thus more stable.

63. What the twenty-ninth session has shown is that our world has undergone profound changes since the creation of the United Nations. There have been changes among the great Powers and the super-Powers; giving up their struggle for absolute supremacy, they have based *détente* in their mutual relations on recognition of their respective world prerogatives. This represents progress in the consolidation of international peace. The world has also seen changes among the small countries, which, having first realized their aspirations to freedom and dignity, are today seeking to assume their responsibilities in world affairs. This represents no less an advance in the establishment of a better international balance.

64. These developments, of course, are accompanied by an easing of tensions between East and West and an increase in the magnitude of the problems relating to the small countries, which show more clearly the cleavage between North and South. The East-West

division, which for so long characterized the world—throughout the period of the cold war—is now, unfortunately, being replaced by a North-South division between the wealthy countries and those which are under-developed. Of course, there are obvious historical and ideological considerations which suggest that there are differences in the responsibilities of the West and the Socialist world. Nevertheless, if viewed pragmatically, poverty is inevitably defined by contrast with wealth and will ultimately stand in opposition to it.

65. This situation did not suddenly arise in the course of this session. It was the result of a long period of slow gestation, promoted by the activities of the United Nations itself, and the extent to which these new facts are better understood certainly represents its greatest claim to credit.

66. If a certain malaise has been felt, we should seek the cause in these changes which have been more or less accepted and which entail calling into question former convictions and convenient beliefs of an outmoded order. There is no point in bewailing what is, in fact, inescapable. Wisdom consists in recognizing, in these changes, the inexorable march of history. Instead of seeking to arrest its course or to slow it down, wisdom dictates that we should, on the contrary, move with it and bring it to completion. If the twenty-ninth session has been able to bring out the need for such boldness in our conduct and herald a revolution in our thinking, it will prove to have been without doubt one of the great moments in the Organization.

67. It is not when we so clearly need each other that we should resort to invective and intimidation.

68. Today more than ever, the responsibilities of the great Powers remain intact. Their place in this Organization cannot be challenged and their prerogatives under the Charter itself are accepted by all. The most coherent affirmation of the positions of the third world and its claims do not necessarily mean any denial of the privileges of the great Powers in the preservation of international peace and the maintenance of a harmonious balance in the world. The aspirations of our countries for justice can fortunately be satisfied without depriving the great Powers of the real basis for their greatness. In any case, there is no question of the third world attempting to "extort" anything at all. For the satisfaction of its most obvious rights, it knows that it must rely on the understanding and consent of the great Powers. It is therefore difficult to understand the concern, which in our view is exaggerated and unjustified, of some of them when they see that the third world is a little better able to defend its interests and assert its personality.

69. For their part, the great Powers must recognize that they have not always given the problems of the third world the importance they deserved. The upper hand that they have always had in world affairs has in fact prompted them more to place their concerns in the context of a world strategy, while giving the lowest priority to the aspirations of peoples. This more or less deliberate disregard for the feelings and reactions of others is without doubt as harmful as questioning the role of the great Powers in the modern world.

70. The main lesson that we should learn from the session now drawing to a close is that we must get to know each other better and, rather than view with distrust anything that may seem to be an innovation in our methods of work, we should seek to appreciate the real trends represented by these new currents, which may well be the sign of a regeneration of our institutions. The challenges of the world today are complex enough and no purpose would be served by compounding them with difficulties arising from out-moded sensitivity.

71. In the final analysis, we must admit that the twenty-ninth session has not been like any other session. It has been a session marked by questioning and by frankness; it has been possible to go beyond traditional exchanges and conventional compromises in order to bring out problems in their true dimensions, and for each of us to weigh his real responsibilities. The baring of wounds which it was considered good manners to conceal cannot be to everyone's liking and we are not surprised at the violence of the criticisms leveled.

72. The period of change through which we are going is of necessity accompanied by a measure of resistance and bitterness, which could be very much reduced if public opinion were better prepared to accept it and to smooth its path. The dynamism of our Organization and its influence, in any case, need the support of our peoples and need their faith in its mission. We have long deplored the indifference increasingly shown towards our institutions, which certainly demonstrated a decline in the attachment to the principles of the Charter. The twenty-ninth session aroused people from their indifference, and I believe that was a welcome development, even if this renewed interest has brought with it more criticism than praise for our activities. The information media, and the press in particular, have a fundamental role to play in this task of informing and educating the people. Because of its vast facilities and the size of its leadership, even in our countries, the western press, in my view, bears an even greater responsibility in this area. It can—and unfortunately it has to some extent done so—attempt to counteract the present course of events in the world and take the easy way out of flattering the ego of the wealthy and seeing nothing but ingratitude and incomprehension in the behaviour of the poor. It can also—and this is precisely where the greatness of its vocation lies—help the mass of its readership to become aware of the real problems of our world and the danger concealed behind an all-too-complacent prosperity to enable it to gauge the magnitude of the suffering all around it.

73. These are some thoughts which I wanted to share with you as we bring our deliberations to a close and prepare for the thirtieth session. It would be illusory, and even dangerous, to think that the problems which emerged during the twenty-ninth session, and which I have just described, are going to disappear as if by magic. These problems, as I have said, and I believe it necessary to repeat this, call into question such fundamental elements of international life that they cannot disappear merely by simply changing the General Committee of the General Assembly.

74. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the period of change to which I have referred earlier will continue to emerge even more clearly in the

activities of our institutions. The only question which arises is whether we can face this with wisdom and intelligence, and help each other to make the necessary, but often difficult, adjustments, or whether we shall continue, as in the past, to carry on an impossible struggle for the maintenance against all odds of the *status quo* and the now unacceptable privileges enjoyed by the few.

75. So much has been said recently about confrontation and co-operation that in uttering these words I feel I am merely repeating platitudes. But it is not enough just to preach co-operation to prove attachment to it; for those who wield power in particular, it is difficult, and hence more praiseworthy, to choose co-operation and the search for understanding instead of confrontation and intimidation. I hope that the thirtieth session will be marked by a genuine and honest partnership among all Members of our Organization. But the lessons of the twenty-ninth session must not be disregarded and we must all, great and small countries alike, feel ourselves truly bound by our pledge to respect and apply the principles of the Charter.

76. A session such as that over which I have just had the honour of presiding can certainly be regarded as inspiring and complex. I am convinced that without your steadfast assistance and broad support, it could never have become a decisive turning-point in the life of the United Nations. I should therefore like to reiterate to you all the thanks I have already expressed, and in particular to convey my gratitude to all the members of the General Committee, to whom I am personally indebted, and to all the regional groups, whose co-operation has been of the greatest assistance to me.

77. It is with pleasure that I express my sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who placed at my disposal his competence and his dynamic energy, as well as the highly qualified services of the staff of the Secretariat. Mr. Morse has been at my side sharing the cares and difficulties which no President can avoid. Thanks to his smiling good nature, his imperturbable calm and the efficiency of his staff, all our difficulties were finally overcome and we have been able to reach harbour safely. I should also like to express my appreciation to all the staff of the President's Office, whose dedication and skill stood me in such good stead throughout the session. I also wish to thank the Secretariat staff, the interpreters, translators, editors and other staff members and workers without whom our task could not have been successfully concluded.

AGENDA ITEM 2

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

78. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now invite representatives to rise and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members observed a minute of silence.

Closing of the session

79. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I declare closed the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.