



C O N T E N T S

Agenda item 9:	
General debate (<i>continued</i>).....	149
Speeches by Mr. Leme (Brazil) and Mr. Recinos (Guatemala)	

President: Mr. Eelco N. VAN KLEFFENS
 (Netherlands).

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (*continued*)

SPEECHES BY MR. LEME (BRAZIL) AND MR. RECINOS (GUATEMALA)

1. Mr. LEME (Brazil) (*translated from French*): The ninth session of the General Assembly has indeed an arduous task to perform. But let us be optimistic; the Assembly will do its duty in spite of all the present difficulties.
2. As I have already pointed out in the Security Council, we are on the road towards general peace. An armistice has been signed in Korea, a truce has been concluded in Indo-China, peace has been restored to Guatemala and, for the first time in a long, long period, no war is raging on our planet.
3. It is true that a number of questions remain to be settled. At this very moment representatives of the great Powers, meeting in London, are seeking ways and means of establishing such close co-operation as will ensure calm and happiness for Europe. Furthermore, in his speech yesterday [484th meeting], Mr. Vyshinsky affirmed the Soviet Union's determination to endeavour with the rest of us to come to some agreement on the question of atomic weapons and disarmament in general which would provide the basis for a convention that would include also the international control proposed by the Western Powers in the plan they submitted to the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission and to the Commission itself. The agenda of this session includes also an item entitled "International co-operation in developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy" [item 67], proposed by the delegation of the United States, which will be submitted to the First Committee for consideration.
4. We have, therefore, no grounds for pessimism. But we must remember that freedom, like peace, demands constant vigilance. The United Nations is still far from being the splendid edifice of which its founders dreamed. Under the auspices of this Organization, which was designed to be used in the service of peace, we are seeking to attain a political ideal, although we have not yet achieved it. International negotiations whose objectives are precisely those which are to be found in the

Charter, are, in fact, being conducted outside our Organization. It would have been vain, however, to hope that perfection would be achieved in less than ten years.

5. The experience we have acquired since the San Francisco Conference and the results which United Nations efforts for the maintenance of peace and for economic and cultural development have achieved are, however, such as to enable us to have confidence in the work we have already done and in the work which we still hope to accomplish. The need to set up the United Nations, expressed for the first time in the Moscow Declaration of 1943, was consecrated at Dumbarton Oaks and, with the signing of the Charter, the Organization became a reality.

6. The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the United Nations. The powers vested in it are proof of the importance which has been attached to it. Side by side with the General Assembly, the Security Council has been assigned an executive role, and the Charter has placed upon it the lofty responsibility of the "maintenance of international peace and security". In discharging its duties the Security Council shall act "in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations". A basic principle of the Charter is set forth in Article 2, paragraph 1, which recognizes the "sovereign equality of all its Members". That is the principle which was defended by Mr. Ruy Barbosa, the Brazilian representative at the Second Peace Conference in 1907. This legal equality of all Members of the United Nations conflicts, however, with Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, under which the permanent members of the Security Council are given the right to exercise the veto on all questions of substance. That, as Mr. Basdevant has said, is a right granted to certain States to use a negative vote to prevent the Security Council from taking a decision; it is in fact the power of preventing the United Nations from taking the most important decisions.

7. At the San Francisco Conference the Brazilian delegation accepted the principle of the veto. It was necessary to draft the Charter and secure its adoption, which would not have been possible if this principle had not been recognized. The Chairman of the Brazilian delegation at the fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly clearly explained our attitude in this connexion [279th meeting]: we placed our full confidence in the great Powers to which this privilege was granted, for we were convinced that they would not abuse it.

8. The experience which we have acquired since the earliest meetings of the Security Council have now convinced us, however, that this Council will never be able to discharge its duties satisfactorily so long as one of its permanent Members is able to nullify the other Members' efforts to maintain peace and security. The sixty vetoes which the Soviet Union has exercised against decisions of the Council show clearly that the matter will have to be closely studied when the Charter is

revised in 1955. We must begin our work now. If it is not yet possible to abolish the right of veto, it will undoubtedly be necessary to regulate it by reserving its application to exceptional cases.

9. Brazil is a member of a regional organization which does credit to the nations of our hemisphere. The Organization of American States fits into the structure of the United Nations, but its origins are earlier and its history goes back, in fact, to more than a century before the adoption of the Charter at San Francisco. The Treaty of Rio de Janeiro finally completed the ties of solidarity which unite the peoples of our continent.

10. When my delegation proposed to the Security Council that the question of Guatemala should be submitted to the regional organization, it did not wish to imply that the Security Council could not deal with the matter. It was obviously necessary, however, to await the results of the inquiry and the measures decided upon by the regional organization before asking the United Nations to find a final solution for this problem. We still think that regional organizations cannot fail to make United Nations action more effective and to enhance the prestige of the Charter.

11. Our obligations towards the peoples of our continent cannot make us forget the duties which all States owe to the peoples of the whole world. The ties are closer and more intimate between neighbouring countries, but only the solidarity of all nations can bring happiness to mankind as a whole.

12. The Brazilian delegation is convinced that the political progress and social well-being of the peoples are fundamentally dependent upon the development of their potential resources. As contemporary experience proves, we cannot really achieve this objective, within the framework of the modern State, without a large measure of participation by all the Members of the community of nations. The destiny of man has willed that the economic factor shall be the constant by which political thinking is governed—we might almost say preponderantly governed. It necessarily follows that the well-being and security of the individual and of communities are condemned to feel to a considerable extent the repercussions of defects in the economic system. In point of fact it will not be possible to establish and maintain peace unless care is taken, in formulating the principles upon which peace rests, to impart to the economies of the under-developed countries the dynamism which will enable them to benefit in the future from the vigour and enterprising spirit of our age.

13. We are today called upon to study programmes of work relating to the financing of economic development, technical assistance, land reform and the establishment of a world food reserve. My delegation is prepared to make a contribution to these studies in the belief that all the efforts which are co-ordinated here may lead us, if not to concrete results, at least to the firm hope—even to the certainty—that the work of the ninth session of the General Assembly will really constitute a valid contribution to the solution of these problems.

14. There is no doubt that the question of the economic development of under-developed countries will play a preponderant part in the work of the Second Committee. This is, in point of fact, a problem which retards that social and economic stabilization of international life which, in the spirit of the Charter, is a condition of peace. The agenda items relating to economic questions show that we are trying to free the peoples represented in the United Nations from the anxiety which weighs on their Governments in their

efforts to create social well-being. It is essential that we should succeed in this task if we are to prevent mankind from losing faith in its own creative ability.

15. We are certain, therefore, that we shall be able to devote ourselves, without ever giving way to disheartenment, to laying the foundations for such international co-operation as is likely to lead us in the fairly near future, once we have set up the machinery by means of which it will be possible to integrate the characteristics and the differing types of national and regional economic development, to that lofty level of civilization which the United Nations envisages. This instrument must be sufficiently well designed to be able to be applied smoothly, and without disturbing the equilibrium of world economy, to the general task of maintaining peace, a task whose purpose will always be the spiritual and moral betterment of mankind.

16. With regard to social, cultural and humanitarian questions, and more particularly to the drafting of the covenants on human rights, my country has given, and will continue to give, its support and co-operation to the work of the Third Committee which, though it may appear to be vague and idealistic, is of unquestionable value in the gradual achievement of the purposes of the United Nations.

17. I should like to mention in particular the questions concerning freedom of information, refugees, and the unwarranted existence of forced labour, which is assuming immense proportions in many parts of the world. The concern we feel for these questions is in the tradition—indeed I will go so far as to say that it is of the essence—of our democratic, Latin and Christian culture. Respect for human dignity and for man's fundamental freedoms is in our view a necessary condition for the peaceful coexistence not only of individuals, but also of nations. Our position in this field is founded on a moral rather than on a political concept. The violation of freedoms and fundamental rights, wherever it occurs, constitutes, as it were, an attack on and a threat to the integrity and dignity of each one of us as an individual. It also threatens the foundations of the rights and freedoms in each of our countries.

18. The United Nations will also have to consider the complex problems relating to the provisions of Chapters XI, XII and XIII of the Charter which founded our Organization. I do not think it necessary for me to stress further the importance which my Government attaches to the role which this Organization is called upon to play in the colonial field. Under the Charter, all the Members of the United Nations have collectively stood surety for the application of the principles and the attainment of the purposes assigned to the action of the administering Powers through the provisions regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories. In carrying out this duty, therefore, we must give our frank and loyal co-operation to the Member States which have assumed responsibility before the international community for the political, economic and social development of peoples which have not yet attained a full measure of self-government.

19. This co-operation may sometimes take the form of rather severe criticisms of the policy practised in certain fields by the colonial administrations. This conscientious examination of problems must not, however, be regarded as having any intention other than the constructive one of frank co-operation in the accomplishment of the "task of civilization," the paramount purpose of which is the preparation of dependent peoples for self-government or independence.

20. In this field, honest criticism is a mark of our confidence in the administering Powers. If we sometimes fail to agree with them in the interpretation of principles, we sincerely believe that collaboration between administering and non-administering Powers is always possible in the United Nations. This exchange of ideas will always be useful provided that questions are considered on their merits and that our attitude towards each other is not determined by any factors alien to the objective which we are all seeking to achieve, namely the welfare of the dependent peoples.

21. In view of the importance the Charter attributes to the Secretariat, the Brazilian delegation has always been particularly concerned with the problems of its organization and functioning. Although we believe that the Secretary-General is primarily responsible for dealing with such questions, we have never denied him our support and co-operation in his efforts to develop to the highest degree of efficiency the administrative machinery through which the political, economic and social purposes of the United Nations are to be carried out. At this session, as at the last, we are prepared to examine in a constructive spirit the Secretary-General's administrative and budgetary proposals, particularly his plan for the reorganization of the Secretariat and its work, and to provide him with the necessary means to bring about more and more changes, so that the Secretariat may become an effective and economic instrument in the service of the United Nations.

22. With regard to legal questions, the Brazilian position at several international conferences has already revealed our way of thinking. Brazilian jurists have for long been concerned with the question of the codification of international law as will be shown by reference to the works of Mr. José Hygino and to the "Draft Code of International Public Law" by Mr. Epitacio da Silva Pessoa. Nevertheless, we must face international facts. The representatives of Brazil will accordingly propose measures which take those facts into account and are therefore somewhat less than ideal rules: they will be rules which are likely to be accepted by the greatest number of States. Political, economic and social problems are not the same everywhere. We need to find a formula that will cover them all. It is better to confine ourselves to modest remedies rather than to choose others which may be closer to the ideal but could not be generally acceptable.

23. Together with the United States and other countries, Brazil has submitted to the General Assembly the questions of the continental shelf and the economic development of fisheries, both of primary importance. If we cannot complete our examination of these questions at this session, we shall doubtless be able to make some progress, so that we may submit the most satisfactory drafts possible to the tenth session of the General Assembly.

24. Two more very delicate problems have also been submitted to the Sixth Committee: that of defining aggression and the establishment of international criminal jurisdiction. How shall we find a suitable formula for the first? *Omnis definitio periculosa est*. Will it be possible to overcome the technical and institutional difficulties in order to allow of the establishment of the second? We think not.

25. Brazil's attitude on the subject of racial discrimination remains unchanged. That is for us an obligation under our constitution. We shall always do everything in our power, within the limitations of the Charter, to prevent any kind of discrimination with regard to re-

spect for the fundamental freedoms of all "without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion".

26. In the First Committee, we shall have to examine the report of the Disarmament Commission [DC/55] concerning the "regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments". The problem has been considered in all its aspects in the Disarmament Commission. I stated my Government's views there too. But no positive results were achieved. It is regrettable that no agreement can be reached on a subject which concerns not only France, or the United Kingdom, or Canada, or China, or the United States, or the Soviet Union, but the entire human race. All States realize that some way of agreement must be found if the whole world is to be given the right to live free from fear and if mankind is to achieve peace and happiness.

27. The United Nations listened eagerly to President Eisenhower's appeal in his historic speech of 8 December last [470th meeting]. The Disarmament Commission worked unrelentingly to reach a general agreement on the prohibition of the manufacture and use of atomic and hydrogen weapons and the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, in a proportion to be determined. It might have been successful if the question of method had not arisen. The Soviet Union refused to conform to the programme of international control established in the Franco-British proposal of 11 June 1954 and so the Commission's report to the General Assembly simply passes the question from one organ to another.

28. In his speech in the general debate yesterday [484th meeting], Mr. Vyshinsky announced to the Assembly, on behalf of his Government, that he was prepared to participate in an agreement on disarmament, involving the creation of an international control organ responsible for supervising the observance of the rules of whatever convention might be adopted. We are delighted to hear this. My delegation will study the proposal put forward by the representative of the Soviet Union with interest, in all good faith and in the belief that it is sincere.

29. It was Russia which, in 1899, convened the Powers to the first Peace Conference. The single idea of the reduction of armaments was the basis of its original programme. At that time, the world had not yet been exposed to the threat of nuclear weapons. We do not believe that the Soviet Union will wish to be less pacific than the Tsar's Government. One single gesture on its part may shed lustre upon its place in history or may jeopardize its future, together with that of the entire human race.

30. I call upon you to outlaw, with mutual safeguards which I hope it will be possible to provide, both the manufacture and the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons. Let us study the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes; let us seek to discover in this natural force all the rich possibilities for human welfare which may lie therein.

31. Brazil has been concerned with this problem for some years. Considerable progress has been made in the faculties and laboratories of our universities, and the National Research Council has been encouraging scientific work in all possible ways. Our country will bring to the international organ to be established the contribution of its natural resources and its labours.

32. The results obtained by science in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes are already very

impressive. Scientists of all nations must unite their efforts in a task which will safeguard the future of the universe. Atomic energy as an instrument of destruction must be abhorred, but its emergence as an instrument of peace, of that peace which is the highest aspiration of humanity, of which the Gospel speaks when it blesses the work of the peace-makers, must be acclaimed.

33. The Brazilian delegation is taking part in the work of this session of the General Assembly in the hope that we may this year achieve considerable progress towards the purpose which we have set before us. We hope that when the session is over the people of all nations may see in our efforts a pledge of the love which we bear them and the contribution of our experience to the cause of civilization and peace.

34. Mr. RECINOS (Guatemala) (*translated from Spanish*): The delegation of which I am chairman has the honour to convey the respects of the Government and people of Guatemala to the General Assembly.

35. The ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held in circumstances of vital importance to the world. In recent years it has become clear that a constant danger threatens the peace and security of the free peoples of the world. Great undertakings for the development and prosperity of nations are being held back because States must first look to their own defence.

36. Strictly speaking, the Second World War has not yet ended because, although ten years have elapsed since the cessation of hostilities, several countries which participated in the war have not yet recovered their freedom and, moreover, the world has been unable to find the road to a firm and lasting peace. Acts of aggression, both direct and indirect, have continued and the outlook for the world is far from comforting.

37. Several representatives in this Assembly have already pointed to the dangers which confront the freedom and security of the peoples as a result not only of direct aggression, but also of internal subversion provoked by external influences striving for destruction of the established order. Acts of internal subversion have been committed in the American countries and have aroused the legitimate concern of their citizens and Governments, who considered the introduction of elements of discord and of ideologies alien to the democratic system to be prejudicial to their peaceful and prosperous existence.

38. As is well known, my country in recent years suffered the misfortune of domination by agents of international communism who, by a process of infiltration and propaganda, succeeded in dominating the various branches of the Government and the trade unions and in disseminating their disruptive views in the schools in order, at an early stage, to enlist the support of future generations for their doctrines.

39. In view of the importance of recent political developments in Guatemala, and their repercussions in the United Nations and throughout the world, I should like to explain the true situation as it existed before the liberation movement of June this year.

40. Under the 1945 Constitution, activities by international or foreign political organizations were prohibited. Flouting this constitutional precept, a group of citizens under foreign leadership established a political party, the avowed purpose of which was to infuse into the country the doctrine and practices of international

communism, to stimulate the class struggle, and to divide the land, ostensibly under a land reform scheme; all this was conceived with sectarian politics in mind, and applied unlawfully through regimentation of the productive activities of the people by the State.

41. The Guatemalan people's efforts to prevent the growth of the Communist party failed when the Government of President Arbenz, unmindful of its duties under the Constitution, bowed unhesitatingly to that party's will; it not only prevented public demonstrations against the party, but persecuted citizens who demanded that the law should be upheld, subjecting them to cruel tortures in prison and thus creating an atmosphere of anxiety and fear and a sense of personal insecurity. This persecution, carried out by Arbenz's agents, culminated in the mass assassination of peaceful citizens, an act from which that Government, in violation of every human right, did not shrink in its desperate attempt to instill terror and avert its own downfall.

42. The other American nations, sensing a threat to their freedom and security in the infiltration of extremist ideas, repeatedly adopted resolutions for their common defence. At the Caracas Conference in March this year they subscribed to an historic declaration which met with opposition only from the Guatemalan Government, dedicated to the protection of the Communist party, which it considered its only support in the country.

43. The States represented at the Tenth Inter-American Conference which met at Caracas took the position that "the domination or control of the political institutions of any American State by the international Communist movement . . . would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American States, endangering the peace of America . . ." I am quoting the actual words of the Declaration.

44. The action which the American States took at the Caracas Conference did not deter Arbenz's Government from its purpose of imposing the Communist system on Guatemala and extending it to adjacent countries by stirring up political agitation and unrest among the workers. Finally, in May this year, the world was surprised to learn that a secret shipment of arms from a country behind the so-called iron curtain has arrived at a Guatemalan port. The size of the shipment and the secrecy with which it was taken to its destination aroused a fear of aggression in the neighbouring countries.

45. As the danger to peace had become more acute, the threatened Governments, in accordance with the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance of Rio de Janeiro, called for an advisory meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in order to consider what measures should be taken to meet the threat.

46. That was the situation in Guatemala when a group of citizens, after several years of careful preparation, resorted to an armed movement, every peaceful effort to restore the constitutional order having failed. The Guatemalan people rallied to the support of this purely national movement, in which people from all walks of life, who had fought for their country's freedom and the restoration of the constitutional and democratic order, took part.

47. Aware that it lacked the support of public opinion, Arbenz's Government falsely accused the leaders of the liberation movement of having recruited foreign troops to invade the country and appealed to the United Nations Security Council, accusing the Governments of

several friendly republics of having committed acts of aggression against the Guatemalan Government.

48. Fortunately, the people's movement led by Colonel Castillo Armas achieved a rapid and decisive success and brought to an end a regime and a situation which were detrimental to Guatemala's interests and a source of anxiety and danger to all the American nations.

49. As the United States Secretary of State said in his statement to the Assembly [475th meeting], collective action by the American countries was not required in this particular case because the Guatemalan people themselves eliminated the threat hanging over them.

50. Peace having been restored, the present Government is engaged in the reorganization of the country, with the full support of the people. It has arranged for a plebiscite to be held on 10 October this year to elect a Constituent Assembly which will set the country on a democratic course, free from any external influence, whatever the source, which might seek to impose itself upon national opinion. The new Government is also attempting to repair the damage which the country's economy has suffered during the past ten years by safeguarding the freedom and security of the individual and improving labour conditions and the relationship between the various social groups striving to develop the country's resources.

51. The new Guatemalan Government intends to maintain the social advancement so far achieved and to reconcile the just aspirations of the working class with the interests of capital. The labour legislation will be retained and, pending the enactment of the final land reform through which the problem will be settled on the basis of true social and economic justice, a land reform statute is being enforced temporarily.

52. In reviewing the labour laws and the land reform act my Government will take into account the studies made by the International Labour Organisation, and the co-operation which it hopes to receive from the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

53. In international affairs, the people of Guatemala are glad to have returned to the community of free and democratic nations. One of our Government's first acts was to resume relations with all friendly countries and to restore Guatemala to the American regional system. It acceded to the Caracas Declaration and returned to the Organization of Central American States as an expression of our faith in the effectiveness of agree-

ments among sister countries. It is also proceeding with the ratification of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance of Rio de Janeiro and the Charter of the Organization of American States.

54. In our view, and in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the interests of a country are best served by a harmonious relationship and co-operation among regional groups and the organs of the United Nations. That is also the Guatemalan Government's aim.

55. The exceptional action of the two previous Governments in our country in severing its relations with the governments of other nations reflected an attitude based on sectarian politics and was in no way representative of the will of our people. A false sense of democracy and of alleged moral superiority caused those Governments to isolate Guatemala from sister peoples on the pretext that their Governments did not practice democracy; they forgot that it is not within the province of one State to judge or attempt to alter the domestic policy of another State.

56. One of the first measures taken by the present Government was to restore relations with those nations from which we were unfairly isolated. The Guatemalan Government is prepared, at the same time, to co-operate with every nation in this world-wide Organization in order to solve the grave problems which confront the General Assembly during its ninth session and to safeguard the peace. We consider it to be the duty of all men of goodwill to prevent the ills of war and to save our civilization from being engulfed in a conflict of selfish interests. Every nation, whatever its military strength or the extent of its territory, must participate in this effort in favour of world peace.

57. The hopes of mankind are embodied in the resolutions of the United Nations. The delegation of Guatemala is here to participate in the work of the Assembly and to contribute its utmost to the achievement of the Assembly's high humanitarian mission.

58. The PRESIDENT (*translated from French*): The statement you have just heard concludes our work for this afternoon. In accordance with the decision taken this morning, the list of speakers who wish to take part in the general debate is closed. There are thirteen speakers on the list.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.