

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NINTH SESSION

Official Records



491st PLENARY MEETING

Wednesday, 6 October 1954,
at 10.30 a.m.

New York

CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 9:	
General debate (<i>continued</i>).....	209
Speeches by Mr. Eban (Israel) and Mr. Azmi (Egypt)	

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

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (continued)

SPEECHES BY MR. EBAN (ISRAEL) AND MR. AZMI
(EGYPT)

1. Mr. EBAN (Israel): Mr. President, I wish you success in the high office to which you have been called. Your election illustrates the central responsibility which falls upon the free societies and ancient cultures of Europe for the preservation of world peace. The confidence which we have expressed in your personal qualities is deepened by the tribute which we owe to the people of the Netherlands, in whose midst the vision of a community of nations guided by universal law has been cherished in thought and action for over three hundred years.

2. We come together in the ninth session of the General Assembly to review an international situation still heavy with tension and pervaded by dark fears. It would be idle to pretend that the United Nations faces this moment of challenge in good heart or in vigorous condition. The great-Power conflict has diminished the effectiveness of all United Nations organs, and the main streams of international action now take their course outside this forum, either in regional groups, or in special conferences, or through direct diplomacy.

3. It is true that impressive achievements in international conciliation and security have recently been recorded through efforts made outside the United Nations framework. In the present international tension, any agreement achieved, any misunderstanding alleviated, any conflict averted, is a victory for the United Nations cause, and our satisfaction need not be qualified by any scruple of organizational patriotism. Nevertheless, it is legitimate to feel concern at the growing disuse into which the machinery and processes of the United Nations are falling. This is a world where science has annihilated distance and confronted mankind with dangers and opportunities of universal scope. Multitudes of people in every land are uplifted by the ideal of a world community of nations bound together by a recognized code of rights and obligations. There is no permanent substitute for such a universal system of security.

4. Recent diplomatic negotiations affecting Europe and Asia have, quite properly and necessarily, dealt with the business of how to live within the existing East-West conflict; how to prevent or withstand the eruption of that conflict into violence; how to regulate the conflict by devising clear limits of jurisdiction and clarifying the conditions of resistance. The starting point of these efforts, however, has been the necessity to take the world tension for granted, and to find means for pursuing life as securely as possible within its shadow. But there remains the great dream of dispelling the shadow, of uprooting the conflict, of eliminating the heavy atmosphere of global strife. This dream will find its fulfilment only, if at all, within a universal system of international relations. Towards this destiny, when its hour strikes, the United Nations should fortify its spirit and perfect its institutions.

5. The condition of the United Nations is thus an international issue of high importance. It is a subject in its own right. Just as the world's leading statesmen have come together urgently at various times to review such problems as Korea, Indo-China and European security, so might they well regard the efficacy of the United Nations and the prevention of its decline as a subject worthy of discussion between governments at the highest levels of their responsibility.

6. This is not to say that the record of our first nine years is written solely in terms of disappointment and frustration. There is also the story of outbreaks prevented; of conflicts localized and curtailed; of a memorable beginning in collective resistance to aggression; of swift progress in the emergence of dependent communities into the full dignity of sovereign States. There are proud chapters of success in technical assistance and economic development, where a broad human solidarity has asserted itself above the conflicts of power. These achievements, it is true, fall far short of our total aspiration; but there was little reason ever to expect the full structure of a world community to spring into existence overnight. If we understand that we are here embarked upon a patient process of evolution which may take decades to complete, the achievements of our Organization in these past nine years will appear to us in a truer and brighter perspective.

7. In normal circumstances we might have been content to watch the habits of international co-operation develop at a slow pace. But our circumstances are desperately far from normal. The headlong advance of the human mind towards the mastery of natural forces makes it impossible to acquiesce in a sluggish rate of progress in international conciliation. On the one hand, atomic power has increased man's destructive capacity beyond the dreams of all past generations. On the other hand, the governments which command these deadly forces are divided by deep conflicts of outlook and interest at almost every point of their contact. In these circumstances, the pursuit of agreement on the control

of atomic power and of conventional armaments is the central duty of the United Nations towards the peoples in whose name it speaks. While making the settlement of political disputes its main concern, the United Nations must simultaneously persist, despite all past discouragements, in the attempt to secure agreement on the control both of atomic weapons and of conventional armaments. A comparison between the proposals [DC/53, annex 9] submitted by France and the United Kingdom to the Disarmament Commission in June of this year with the important address delivered by the Soviet Union representative from this rostrum last week [484th meeting], conveys an initial impression that the viewpoints of the great Powers are, in theory and principle, not irreconcilable. At any rate, there is a sufficient prospect here to encourage the First Committee to approach this subject in greater hope than seemed reasonable last year.

8. In past ages, each new discovery in natural science was hailed as a stage in human progress and a portent of greater welfare and abundance. It is no credit to the present generation that its sovereign command of new capacities and powers casts a deep shadow over human life. There is nothing intrinsically evil in atomic power, were it not that its image has been distorted into fearful shape in the spectrum of modern international rivalries.

9. It is important to challenge the equation which has grown up in men's minds between nuclear physics and human disaster. We, therefore, join in praising the statesmanship of President Eisenhower's initiative in the United Nations in December 1953 [470th meeting], when he called our attention to the need for international co-operation in the peaceful use of atomic energy. The proposals outlined by Mr. Dulles on 23 September [475th meeting] will have my delegation's cordial support. It is our hope that the item inscribed on our agenda by the United States will lead to the establishment of organs and processes in which all Members of the United Nations will agree to participate. The peaceful use of atomic power opens out exciting vistas for countries, such as mine, which face heavy tasks of development without abundant sources of conventional power. Some of our leading scientists in Israel have given much serious thought to the problems implicit in the applied use of atomic power; and they will be glad to learn much, and perhaps to contribute something, in a United Nations scientific conference such as that envisaged in Mr. Dulles' proposals.

10. The agenda contains many items, old and new, which reflect political and territorial disputes between Member States. We are not required to determine our specific attitude to these questions in the general debate. It would, however, be salutary to define the main principle of United Nations responsibility and action in such controversies. Surely the role of the United Nations is not the waging of verbal warfare, but the promotion of negotiated agreements.

11. Even if the enforcement provisions of our Charter were fully applied, there would be a strong case for the view that pacific settlement is the primary objective of the United Nations system. A settlement based on agreement would always be preferable even to a settlement successfully enforced. But in any case, the United Nations lacks any effective capacity of enforcement at the present time.

12. We thus become by necessity what we should be by choice—an agency to promote agreed settlements.

To fulfil this mission, the United Nations must be on constant guard against the temptations of an excessively authoritarian approach, against a disrespect for sovereign equality, against any tendency to seek rapid resolutions instead of gradual solutions. Such attitudes can only lead our Organization into failures and disillusionments which its prestige can little afford. Therefore, nothing more sagacious has been said in this general debate than the prudent warnings of the eminent Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Lange, when he said [476th meeting, paras. 71-72]:

"Over the years there has been an increasing tendency to substitute voting for negotiation, obviously on the assumption that a resolution adopted by a majority is tantamount to a solution of the particular problem under consideration. It is hardly necessary to stress that this very often is a fallacious assumption. With the exception of Security Council resolutions in certain specifically defined cases, no resolutions of any United Nations body can obligate Member Governments . . . the very limitations of the obligations of Member Governments constitute a challenge to their willingness and ability to seek solutions, not through the adoption of resolutions by varying majorities, but through sincere and patient negotiation."

13. The need for the United Nations to regard pacific settlement by negotiation as its chief function is well illustrated by recent events outside our Organization. The only successes in international relations in the past decade have arisen from processes of direct negotiation. Such procedures of negotiated agreement by the parties directly concerned terminated the hostilities in Korea last summer. A year later, at Geneva, an end was brought to the fighting in Indo-China, which had laid such heavy burdens on that country and upon the people of France. At Colombo and at Manila groups of Asian States have consulted together on their common problems and mutual interests.

14. In London last week, the Governments of Western Europe negotiated earnestly and arduously on the intricate problems of European security. Like other countries not directly involved, Israel was merely a spectator of these momentous discussions. Nevertheless, the people of Israel have a passionate interest in any measures or arrangements which may be devised with the purpose and effect of preventing any recurrence of the eternally unforgettable horrors of the Nazi decade in Europe.

15. Would it not be a strange irony if the United Nations were to be left behind by this momentum of negotiated agreements, and to become the only place in which quiet negotiation was precluded by the strident echoes of public denunciation? The danger that negotiated agreements will be driven outside the United Nations, while vehement propaganda warfare prevails within it, is not an unreal danger. It is a prospect worthy of our deep preoccupation. One problem which arises is whether public debate, with all its evident advantages, should remain, in effect, the only technique available to the United Nations in its work. There is nothing in our Charter which confines us to public debate as the only authentic United Nations process. My question is whether the facilities of contact available in the United Nations are sufficiently used for bringing disputing parties together for serious bilateral negotiation. Such a role would be fully in accord with the purpose of our Organization as "a centre for harmoniz-

ing the actions of nations in the attainment of . . . common ends".

16. It is clear that the United Nations would be more effective in the discharge of its functions if its composition were more fully representative. The greatest anomaly in this respect is the unresolved controversy concerning the representation of China. My Government could not oppose the view that little useful purpose could have been served in discussing this question in circumstances which were bound to lead only to bitterness and to failure. The question of untimeliness, however, does not affect the ultimate issue of principle. The interests of the United Nations would be best served by the participation of the Central People's Government of China in its membership and its work. The postponement which we have voted should be used not to lay this burning question aside, but rather to prepare for its serious and orderly discussion in conditions likely to bring about a positive result.

17. Processes of pacific settlement have left their mark also in the Middle East, where problems affecting Iran and the defence of the Suez Canal zone have advanced towards a solution. Against this background of general advance towards the pacific settlement of disputes, the refusal of Arab Governments to bring their relations with Israel under any process of negotiation, review or settlement stands out in unique isolation. It is an attitude out of accord with the prevailing mood and spirit of contemporary international life. The speeches of the representative of Iraq [479th meeting] and Syria [489th meeting] appeared to us, quite frankly, as a deplorable example of the negative result achieved when governments use the United Nations as a forum for intemperate denunciation, while refusing to employ it as a centre for conciliation and agreement.

18. I doubt the necessity or wisdom of a detailed reply to the picture presented by Mr. Al-Jamali and Mr. Shukairi of shining Arab virtue and indelible Israeli guilt. The Syrian suggestion of setting up a five-Power commission to resurrect past recommendations and to impose the Arab will upon Israel is really too frivolous for me to occupy the General Assembly with its refutation. Nor, I think, will the pride of Israel's modern rebirth be tarnished by words of abuse. The efforts of our pioneering community to build an independent State and a free society on its ancient soil, within the shelter of democratic institutions and under the inspiration of the Hebrew past, has evoked a world reaction far different from that to which the Iraqi and Syrian spokesmen have given such immoderate expression.

19. The General Assembly, I feel sure, will hardly accept this version of Arab nationalism with its eight new States, its two and one-half million square miles of territory, its countless riches, and its 40 million of people, harbouring a just grievance because another people has won its freedom in a hallowed little strip of land less than one two-hundredth of the Arab domain. The memory of the events which led to our present crisis is envisaged in the records of the United Nations. Those records tell how Arab Governments took up arms to destroy the State of Israel by force; how this was the first attempt in post-war international history to overthrow a legitimate international situation by armed aggression; how those Governments conducted military operations outside their frontiers against a small neighbour in disregard of successive cease-fire orders by the Security Council; how a heavy burden of sacrifice and suffering, of bereavement and

anguish, of flight and panic, was thus imposed upon the peoples of our region; how Israel, though hard-pressed and heavily out-numbered, resisted the onslaught and vindicated its nationhood; how those who once decided to launch the war have, unfortunately, since refused to make a peace; how a fierce and purposeful hostility is still directed against Israel by political attacks, armed marauding, constant harassment of embattled frontiers, a stringent boycott and an illegitimate blockade; and how, alone among the Members of the United Nations involved in any dispute, the Arab Governments refuse to apply to their dispute the processes of negotiation which are universally practised among sovereign States.

20. The original decision to make war and the subsequent refusal to make peace—these are the two basic causes of the present Middle Eastern tension. Every other disturbance in our immediate region goes back ultimately to one or the other of those two primary facts. Accordingly, Israel has every reason to await with confidence the verdict which history will pronounce on the epic story of its modern resurgence.

21. It is important, however, that we do understand the present political and legal position which has, I fear, been misrepresented in constant Arab references to previous recommendations of the United Nations. The General Assembly is aware that its original recommendation affecting our region seven years ago was rejected and violently opposed by our neighbours: that, as a result, it was frustrated and set aside; that subsequently the Arab States and Israel, responding to a United Nations call, reached their own agreements setting out the limits of their jurisdiction and the definition of their mutual obligations; that these agreements, and no others, now prevail, and that nothing in them can be changed without mutual consent.

22. There is therefore not the slightest moral or juridical force in the contention that Israel is under some obligation to renounce its rights under existing agreements, in an attempt to restore the arrangements which Arab violence overthrew seven years ago. I never cease to be astonished at the annual spectacle of Governments which once deemed themselves entitled to overthrow a United Nations recommendation by armed force, now invoking that recommendation as a sacred thing possessing supernatural validity. There is probably no other example in international history of such a cynical jurisprudence as that which kills a certain policy by violence—one year—and then claims its resurrection seven years later. The obligation of Israel and the Arab States towards each other are exclusively defined by the contracts on which they have agreed, and not by the previous recommendations which were the subject of their disagreement. Israel intends to uphold all its rights to territorial integrity and sovereignty, and in particular to resist any intimidation by violent words and deeds.

23. In the respect I have mentioned the current relations between Israel and its neighbours are juridically identical with all other international relationships based upon treaties or contracts. There is nothing special or unusual about them. The principle involved is precisely that outlined in another context by the representative of Colombia when he spoke here on 24 September [477th meeting], namely, that existing treaties cannot be revised except by the consent of their signatories. In our case such a stipulation is explicitly included in each

of the four Armistice Agreements. The leader of the United Kingdom delegation, Mr. Lloyd, expressed the same idea when, in another context, he stated as a general thesis last week [477th meeting, paras. 129-130]:

“The Charter does not contain any provision which obliges one Member State to cede its territory to another in any circumstances . . . Consequently, when a treaty lays down a definite frontier, or places territory under the jurisdiction of a Member State, the provisions of that treaty must necessarily prevail.”

24. There can be no doubt at all—and I believe that this was proved two years ago—that the majority of the Members of the United Nations ardently desire to see the Arab States and Israel extend their existing agreements by free negotiation into a more durable system of relationships. The United Nations may not be able, despite its deepest wish, to overcome the inhibitions which impel our neighbours to adopt a position of ostracism and boycott. But this is no reason for ceasing to articulate the objective of an Arab-Israel peace negotiation as a most important international aim. I seriously doubt the wisdom of an excessive realism which would invite the United Nations to “recognize” an Arab-Israel peace settlement as an impossibility, or which would fail to emphasize the unconditional and immediate desirability of such a settlement. For our part we shall not be responsible for surrendering this vision or despairing of its fulfilment.

25. But if the vision is to be kept alive, it must be nourished by some evidence of faith. So far such evidence has come, I fear, from one side alone. Two years ago, during the seventh session, we suggested a blueprint for extending each of the present Armistice Agreements into peace treaties, thereby establishing a broad pattern of regional co-operation in security, economic progress, social and technical development and freedom of intercommunication.

26. In the same spirit, though on a more restricted scale, we took the initiative a year ago in asking the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene a conference between Israel and Jordan for the purpose of reviewing the security of our frontier, which had been the scene of so many perilous events. Although the text of our agreement makes attendance at such a conference obligatory, the Government of Jordan unfortunately rejected the Secretary-General’s call. In the summer of this year we attempted to solve the frontier problem by recourse to the Security Council, in its role as a centre for conciliation. We wished to exchange with Jordan the undertakings for pacific settlement prescribed in Articles 35 and 37 of the Charter. The undertaking was refused.

27. In its 1953 report, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency refers appreciatively to my Government’s action in effecting the reintegration of some 40,000 refugees at that time in United Nations camps into Israel’s economy.

28. In 1952, the Palestine Conciliation Commission expressed the view that the atmosphere would be improved by a liberal gesture such as the release to absentee Arab depositors of accounts held in Israel banks. My Government acceded to this suggestion, and considerable foreign exchange was thus transferred from Israel to territories from which active hostilities were maintained against us. In its report to the General Assembly [A/2629 and Corr.1, para. 5], the Pales-

tine Conciliation Commission welcomed this action as “an important step toward the settlement of the differences existing between Israel and her neighbours”. In recent days we have extended the scope of these agreements in such manner as to provide for the total liquidation of all such accounts held in Israel banks, thus making considerable progress beyond the achievements hailed by the Conciliation Commission a year ago. We have similarly agreed to release the contents of deposit boxes.

29. Some of these acts and gestures over the past years have admittedly been of relatively modest scope, but we hoped that in their aggregate they would do something to evoke a gentler atmosphere than that which now prevails. The Arab Governments have also been made aware of other ways in which Israel would be able and willing to contribute to regional co-operation and intercommunication in the Middle East if only our neighbours would join us in constructive and conciliatory thought.

30. Let us hope that these approaches will evoke a due response. But in the meantime it is essential to keep vigilant watch over the armistice system and to avoid its degeneration into attitudes of hostility incompatible with its letter and spirit. To this end we have made repeated attempts to bring the situation in the Suez Canal waterway into conformity with international law, with existing conventions, and with the Egypt-Israel Armistice Agreement. Three years ago, the Security Council [558th meeting] called upon Egypt to terminate all restrictions upon international commercial shipping in the Suez Canal, wherever bound, and rejected the doctrine of belligerent rights on which Egypt based its discriminatory restrictions and active intervention against shipping bound to or from Israel.

31. It is profoundly disappointing that Egypt, which enjoys the high privilege of propinquity to this historic maritime route, should continue to maintain these hostile and wasteful practices. The verdict of the Security Council in favour of unconditional freedom of passage for the ships of all nations, wherever bound, has been reinforced by the representations and protests of the leading maritime powers, including the signatories of the Suez Canal Convention, signed in Constantinople in 1888. Yet these restrictions continue in unabated force and, as a result, more than 90 per cent of the traffic which would normally pass to and from Israel through the Suez Canal has been effectively deterred, while the ships of several nations exercising their right of innocent passage have been subjected to seizure, confiscation or other interference.

32. The Security Council has now been convened for next week to review the problem again, with special reference to the latest act of flagrant seizure affecting an unarmed Israel merchant vessel proceeding on its peaceful course from Massawa to Haifa. Our concern at this grave breach of international law is reinforced by indignation at the absurd charge that this vessel, which carried no weapons of any kind except the master’s pistol, had fired and caused casualties in an Egyptian coastal post. On second thought, confronted by the absence of visible evidence on shore, the Egyptian propaganda ministry transferred the non-existent casualties from dry land to the open sea, in whose depths this unworthy fiction has been swallowed up. The incident would have been grave enough without this misrepresentation. Surely there is a universal interest in applying to international life, and even to

international disputes, the ancient doctrine forbidding men to bear false witness against their neighbours.

33. My Government is convinced that all nations for which free navigation upon and between the high seas is a condition of their welfare or security wish to see the observance of international law in this international waterway joining two seas. We appreciate the solidarity and support which have come to us from many maritime countries and which have encouraged us in our pursuit, for several years, of this vital principle of free navigation.

34. It is not easy to plan for peace amongst such hostilities. Yet we continue to cast about in an effort to effect some transition toward the emergence of peaceful relations. To that end, my Government authorizes me now to present the following suggestion to the attention of those directly concerned.

35. It is clear that there is a deep crisis of confidence between Israel and its neighbours. The existing tension, which increases dangerously from time to time, is basically due to the refusal of neighbouring Governments to make peace and their persistence in maintaining a state of war, conducting hostile propaganda, imposing boycotts and blockades, and continuing to resort to acts of armed aggression by land and sea. This state of affairs results in deep anxiety on Israel's part. We frankly fear lest the main trend of Arab policy be directed toward the resumption, at some suitable stage in the future, of the war of aggression against Israel halted in 1948. We cannot avoid the apprehension lest arms now to be supplied to Arab countries be used by the recipient States for renewing the onslaught against us.

36. On the other hand, it is sometimes alleged that the Arab States, which exercise their sovereignty over a vast and under-populated subcontinent, are nevertheless seized with fear of a small and lonely Israel embarking upon expansionist adventures against them all.

37. The only conceivable way of allaying such fears, in so far as human fears can be allayed at all, is the conclusion of peace treaties placing the relationship between neighbouring States on a permanently normal footing. However, as a preliminary or transitory stage toward this end, it might be useful to conclude agreements committing the parties to policies of non-aggression and pacific settlement. Such agreements would include undertakings to respect each other's territorial integrity and political independence, to refrain from all hostile acts of a military, economic or political character, and to settle all existing and future differences by pacific means. It is our thought that, by allaying mutual suspicion, such undertakings could prepare the ground now for the settlement of outstanding issues, and thus keep open the way to the harnessing of the resources of the area for the general welfare and progress.

38. The grave tension which prevails in the Middle East entitles us to address some earnest reflections to States outside our region which undoubtedly desire to see peace preserved. Faced by this hostility and vulnerability, are we not entitled to suggest that the precarious balance of our region's security be scrupulously respected; that all Powers, as a matter of elementary prudence and justice, refrain from weighting the scales against us, for this would inadvertently strengthen the prospect of a renewed assault; and that there is neither prudence nor wisdom in provoking an arms race by premature, and especially by one-sided, military

arrangements? We are compelled to express anxiety at the failure so far to devise security guarantees and arrangements or to offer Israel compensating strength in such manner as to prevent the new Egyptian settlement from overthrowing the present equilibrium. And we earnestly hope that it is everywhere realized that any tendency to create or sanction security arrangements in the Middle East based on the exclusion of one State—and the most vulnerable State at that—would be contrary to any balanced regional concept within the spirit or letter of the United Nations Charter.

39. The political problems upon our agenda—I have referred to some of them—are difficult and complex, and it is clear that no sudden, drastic transformation is in sight. It is all the more important, therefore, that the United Nations should utilize every possibility of extending the areas of co-operation in the non-political field.

40. We can look back with pride on the progress achieved under United Nations influence in the liberation of dependent territories. The advance of dependent communities towards self-determination continues from year to year. Deep satisfaction can be felt at the statesman-like settlement made by the French Government in Tunisia. This event fully confirms the confidence which the majority of the United Nations expressed in the historic French instinct for national freedom. My delegation will continue to sympathize with all proposals for the orderly evolution of dependent peoples towards independence. We should, however, ponder seriously on the distinction between the grant of independence and the transfer of sovereignty from one Member State to another. It is clearly not within the scope of the Charter to ordain such transfers. Furthermore, it is important to realize that, in territories containing more than one ethnic or cultural group, the principles of self-determination cannot be applied by satisfying the desires of one group alone and subordinating those of the others. By acting within due limits of prudence and of law the United Nations can continue to advance its role as the liberator of dependent peoples.

41. The ninth session will have many opportunities to promote the economic development of under-developed countries. In many areas the primary condition for such development is the availability of investment capital. It is to be regretted that the United Nations has made such little progress in this field. The creation of a special United Nations fund for economic development has been discussed in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for three years, with little result. My delegation hopes that real progress towards the establishment of such a United Nations fund may be achieved at this session.

42. The technical assistance programmes of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies continue to serve as a model for fruitful international co-operation. Israel has participated in the Expanded Programme since its inception—first as a recipient of aid and later as a contributor also. Our appreciation of the assistance which our country has received in the development of its agriculture and industry is now mingled with pride in our ability to contribute, however modestly, to helping other countries in various continents to solve some of their technical problems. This constant interchange of ideas and processes is a valuable international enterprise, and my delegation will support any measure designed to improve its efficacy.

43. We welcome the completion of the draft international covenants on human rights which are before the General Assembly for approval. These covenants express a deep faith in the dignity and worth of the individual. The obligations and responsibilities which they would impose on signatory governments would contribute significantly to the development of peaceful international relations.

44. My delegation will again affirm its support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a remarkable example of international co-operation for humanitarian ends. We note that investments by governments in UNICEF projects have already exceeded the sums made available by the Fund itself. The continuation and expansion of the UNICEF programme would fully conform with some of the most cherished principles of the United Nations.

45. Appreciation is due to the staffs of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the many non-governmental organizations which have co-operated so effectively in these economic and social programmes.

46. In thus inaugurating my delegation's contribution to the work of the ninth session, I desire to reaffirm Israel's devotion to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. I speak for a small people which has striven throughout its history to maintain a universal outlook and tradition, while clinging tenaciously to its own specific values of life and thought. At this moment we are preoccupied with and inspired by the task of reviving a land and moulding the character of a people into the unity of a new national life. We do this amidst many difficulties and in a regional situation close to siege. It is an effort that testifies to the potency of will power and tenacity in human affairs. But much of the will power and tenacity which all the peoples of the United Nations have generated in the most challenging moments of their national history will be needed for the tireless journey towards international peace.

47. If this ninth session marks a stage, however short, in the progress towards that eternal goal, we shall have justified our labours in the eyes of the multitudes of peace-loving peoples whom we are assembled here to serve.

48. Mr. AZMI (Egypt) (*translated from French*): The last session of the General Assembly took place in an atmosphere of confidence and serenity. The fortunate settlement of the Korean war turned all eyes towards new horizons and prospects of general peace and security.

49. On the eve of the opening of the present session, the international situation looked disquieting. The great Powers had emerged from the Geneva Conference divided. Any agreement on European peace and security was a long way off. There was little prospect of accord between the main Powers concerned in the discussions on the organization of disarmament. Efforts within the Disarmament Commission to reach an agreement on the need for imposing restrictions on the development of armed forces which would be acceptable to the great Powers had been fruitless. The idea of solidarity had thus been jeopardized. The United Nations, established to promote justice and freedom, found itself buffeted by the conflicting currents which divide the world; a beacon of hope at its outset, it found itself threatened by doubt, scepticism and, more serious still, by mistrust.

50. It was therefore natural that the confidence which filled men's hearts at the beginning should crumble away, and it was fatal that attention should thus be diverted and solutions found outside the sphere of the United Nations. While a settlement to the Indo-China war could be achieved only by other means, further international agreements of great importance have now been added to those already concluded outside the framework of this body that is international above all. Defence systems have been set up without recourse to the Organization which, by its very essence, constitutional provisions and spirit, was designed to extend to the various parts of the world an effective security network and to constitute a solid and cohesive link between all Member States. Thrust on one side, the United Nations, which was designed as a meeting place where ideas of fruitful co-operation between peoples could ripen, ceased to be a vehicle of concord and solidarity.

51. This conflict of ideologies and this clash of interests, which engender psychoses of mistrust and unreasoning fear, have led Egypt and the Arab States to a policy based essentially on respect for spiritual values and on a genuine desire to find the means of strengthening the idea of peace and security so dear to these peoples.

52. The League of Arab States, a free association of States inspired by common aspirations and united by bonds which are not only geographical but are rooted in a spiritual heritage, constitutes the best safeguard of security.

53. Indeed, the Arab countries which, in the past, were a source of light which shed its rays over the whole Mediterranean basin, have always been faithful to the noble mission which formerly they discharged so vigilantly. These ancient peoples, whose guiding principles are based on considerations of harmonious affinity, seek to strengthen their bonds of solidarity by friendly co-operation with all peoples without exception.

54. It is natural that today these countries, inspired by peaceful aims, should ardently hope that the great Powers will compose their differences and refrain from any act of obduracy which might bring ruin to a civilization built upon centuries of labour and patience.

55. It is obvious that one of the great evils which plagues the world is colonialism. Under cover of the most fallacious arguments, entire peoples have been subjected to an imperialism which deprives them of their most legitimate right—*independence*. After a long period of struggles these exploited peoples have finally established their right to freedom.

56. The principle of the equality of peoples and their right to self-determination, which is inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations, has been one of the determining factors in this development. The obduracy of certain countries in refusing to recognize this natural evolution is powerless to prevent the fulfilment of these peoples' legitimate aspirations.

57. From the outset, Egypt, in participating in the work of the United Nations, has always shown its desire to concern itself with the lot of oppressed peoples of countries deprived of their independence. In the various organs of the United Nations it has made every effort and taken every initiative to achieve a happy solution of the problems which the status of such countries raises.

58. Such efforts, which have brought about encouraging results, were inspired by Egypt's spirit of liberalism and its sympathy with peoples whose sufferings and aspirations have always found echoing and resounding support.

59. Furthermore, Egypt welcomed with great satisfaction the basic idea underlying the formulation of recommendations and resolutions designed to strengthen the principle that all countries, whatever they may be, have the right to self-determination. Egypt considers quite rightly that this principle fully justifies the centuries-old struggle for the progress of mankind and for a future where social justice and political security prevail.

60. We have fought ceaselessly for the application of this same principle in a territory which is complementary to Egypt, and it is with great satisfaction that we have signed the agreement of February 1952 with the United Kingdom, recognizing the Sudan's right to self-determination and establishing a procedure for giving to the Sudanese a free choice between independence and the establishment of a link with Egypt.

61. This agreement has already been applied in the holding of free elections which have led to the formation of the Sudanese Parliament and a Sudanese Cabinet, which is responsible to that Parliament. Furthermore, the transfer of the administration to the Sudanese is going forward satisfactorily, and within eighteen months the Sudanese people will be called upon freely to decide which status they would prefer.

62. The disdain of certain Powers for this fundamental principle is one of the main reasons for the present state of anxiety. In accordance with this principle, Egypt has always been fully alive to the aspirations of peoples struggling for liberation, and it has felt it its duty to raise its voice on their behalf in the United Nations.

63. Thus, the Egyptian delegation was among the first to support the claims of Indonesia, Libya, Somaliland and still has at heart the achievement of the aspirations of the peoples of Morocco and Tunisia. We are following very closely, and with great care and sympathy, the negotiations now taking place in Paris on the Tunisian problem, and we are confident that the same result will be achieved with regard to Morocco. It is our cherished wish that in North Africa concord and stability will prevail, with full recognition given to national sovereignty.

64. Egypt's vote for the inclusion of the questions of Cyprus and West New Guinea in the agenda is in accordance with its traditional policy.

65. In the Fourth Committee, Egypt has shown the same attitude in supporting the efforts of member States who were anxious to ensure respect for individual freedoms in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Egypt has encouraged every move to allow the inhabitants a share in local or municipal institutions, since they represent a stepping stone towards self-government.

66. In fulfilling this rôle, Egypt has not only had the interests of the countries concerned at heart, but also the interests of the Powers which proclaim that they have a civilizing mission in respect of these peoples. These Powers have shown themselves increasingly incapable of fulfilling such a mission and by this very fact have been led to put their own material interests before the legitimate aspirations of the people under

their charge. A certain lack of understanding is developing and is leading to latent conflicts which may constitute a source of danger for the great Powers themselves and thus threaten international peace and security.

67. In the Commission on Human Rights, the Egyptian delegation has played a large part in preparing draft international covenants on civil and political rights and on economic, social and cultural rights. Fully aware of the importance of these draft covenants, whose completion by the Commission on Human Rights is a legitimate source of pride for the United Nations, Egypt expresses the hope that the General Assembly will give to them the attention they deserve and that Member States will finally adopt them, to the satisfaction of world public opinion.

68. Egypt can only pay a deserved tribute to the efforts made by members of the African-Asian group which have likewise shown the same interest in preparing two international covenants on human rights and in formulating recommendations for the respect of the right of peoples to self-determination. This group has been formed at the very moment when the division between the great Powers has prevented international agreement to safeguard world peace. It is made up of States belonging to two different continents, but their common aspirations, common disinterestedness and common idealism have provided a framework for harmonious and useful co-operation.

69. It is small wonder that these countries—cradles of the oldest civilizations in the world, repositories of the richest spiritual heritage—which have drawn their inspiration from the same fruitful source, should combine their efforts to face the dangers resulting from the divisions and rifts among the great Powers. They have been led by force of circumstances to set the seal upon this co-operation because the problems brought before the United Nations and raised outside it, required co-operation between all the countries of this group.

70. They have thus concerted their efforts not only on the international political level, but also in the economic field, in order to find the most appropriate ways and means of promoting the welfare of individuals and of raising the general standard of social life.

71. By the example of this cohesion, they have shown that they respect certain higher values and desire to make an important contribution to the efforts made to safeguard world security. The efforts of the African-Asian group have been supported on several occasions by the Latin-American group, as well as by other delegations which have continually shown great interest in the broad problems in which political and social liberties are involved.

72. Egypt has also made an effective contribution to the work of the Economic and Social Council and welcomes the Secretary-General's move to reorganize the Secretariat and co-ordinate its activities with those of the Council, its Commissions and the specialized agencies. This move has already had a beneficial influence on the last session of the Council where resolutions were already taken for the purposes of instituting a new method of work.

73. Egypt has supported recommendations to promote a better standard of living for all men and a more equitable distribution of national resources, and was one of the first countries to support the technical assistance programme, which is one of the most fruitful

achievements of the United Nations. Accordingly, Egypt has increased its contribution to the funds allocated for this programme.

74. Experts have undertaken a thorough study of Egypt's resources and its industrial possibilities. We have given complete priority to plans for the production of electric power, both in respect of the Aswan Dam—plans for which are now under way—and for the High Dam which is now in the planning stage, in order to supply both new and existing industries with abundant, cheap power. Important steps have already been taken for the large-scale exploitation of mineral resources, and large sums have been appropriated for the execution of these plans. Other steps have been taken to encourage the oil industry.

75. In the case of new industries Egypt authorizes the free repatriation of profits each year up to 10 per cent of the capital invested and after five years the repatriation of the capital itself up to 20 per cent per annum. Another similar measure is the Act to grant foreign companies appreciable concessions in all these branches of activity. New Egyptian legislation, in addition to facilitating the access of foreign technicians to Egypt, grants them substantial advantages. They enjoy exemption from the payment of taxes on income from foreign sources.

76. Egypt is taking great strides toward the realization of a programme of industrialization and is at the same time attempting to strengthen its economic ties with the other Arab countries. Steps have been taken to introduce more flexibility in various tax and customs regulations which might hamper more extensive trade between these countries. Egypt recognizes the value of the services of foreign experts and technicians and steadily fosters the dispatch of national experts to any neighboring country which might express a desire for their services. It also facilitates the entry into Egypt of study missions from the various Arab and Islamic countries.

77. Economic interdependence is becoming the most noticeable feature of the modern world, but it is hampered by many customs and tax barriers which stand in the way of a better distribution of wealth. Egypt has been called upon to participate in the work of various bodies both in the Economic and Social Council and outside the United Nations and is constantly advocating reforms to ensure economic stability, which is indissolubly linked with the need to improve the international political atmosphere.

78. Egypt has always emphasized the importance of paying greater attention to the needs of the under-developed countries because the social structure there is undergoing drastic changes which threaten to have widespread repercussions. It thus becomes essential to study the most appropriate methods of meeting the wish expressed by the Secretary-General in his annual report [A/2663] when he expresses the hope that the United Nations will support the plan for a special fund to strengthen the economies of the under-developed countries. The Egyptian Government is prepared to contribute to this fund.

79. Egypt, desirous of ensuring respect for the concept of universality, cornerstone of the United Nations, was compelled to associate itself with the efforts made to overcome the obstacles to the application of Article 4 of the United Nations Charter, which provides that membership in the Organization shall be open to all

peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the Charter.

80. The peace and security of nations are linked with respect for the fundamental principles of justice, equality and equity. Mankind cannot progress so long as these fundamental ideas are not recognized and respected. World prosperity can be ensured only by the institution of a reign of equality which excludes all arbitrary discrimination in respect of race, religion or colour. Mankind cannot go forward along the path of progress so long as there are areas in the world where such arbitrary discrimination is still practised.

81. Many high hopes have been placed in the United Nations and accordingly, it should derive the best guarantees of its effectiveness from the principles of the Charter. The requisite guarantees are both institutional and moral. The United Nations could fulfil its role effectively only if it gave full weight to the principles set forth in Article 47 of the Charter, which has remained a dead letter.

82. A simple comparison between the League of Nations and the United Nations is sufficient to illustrate the importance of the introduction of this Article in the Charter. The League of Nations was born of the need of nations to entrust an international organization with the responsibility for the friendly settlement of their disputes, but was undermined and finally foundered, powerless to fulfil its task. The principal cause of this disastrous failure was the failure to create for the League a military force which would be at its disposal to impose respect for its decisions upon recalcitrant member States.

83. The United Nations attempted to fill that gap by the inclusion of Article 47 in the Charter. Unfortunately, this Article has not been applied despite serious and repeated violations by certain Member States of resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

84. At the outset of my remarks I attempted to depict the climate of suspicion and doubt which prevailed on the eve of the beginning of our work at this session of the United Nations General Assembly. As the general debate progressed, the respective positions of each Member State were decided upon, and it became evident that a breath of hope was seeking to dispel the veil of doubt and distrust which had previously cast a shadow of anxiety and pessimism.

85. The United States proposal for the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes has evoked no opposition which might have discouraged an initiative of this kind. The new Soviet proposals permit us to detect some hope for co-operation in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and also leave the door open to negotiations on the possibility of reducing armaments and armed forces. Already it is becoming evident that the ninth session, which threatened to founder in indifference will see its interest revived at the new prospects for relations between the East and the West which have been opened.

86. Egypt is happy to note the new signs of light on the international horizon. It greets with satisfaction any initiative designed to divert atomic energy from its field of destruction into peaceful channels. Our generation has lived through the nightmare of two world wars that have dealt a serious blow to the foundations of civilization, and anxiously awaits the dawn of a new era in which the achievements of human and scientific

genius may guide the way to a brighter path glowing with the gentle light of hope.

87. But unfortunately this note of optimism which we have just sounded has a sombre overtone which should concern all those who are motivated by the legitimate desire to restore prestige and authority to the United Nations.

88. Israel, by its scorn of United Nations resolutions and by its constant defiance of the fundamental principles of international law, is causing a disturbance harmful to security in the Middle East. Important General Assembly resolutions concerning Palestine have never been respected by Israel. The problem of the Arab refugees is the most disturbing case on the world's conscience. The Arab refugees continue to be the victims of Israel's injustice and arbitrariness. This injustice is aggravated by Israel's persistence in its provocative attitude and is encouraged by financial assistance from abroad. By its policy of mass immigration, Israel pursues the dual purpose of preventing the eventual return of the Arab refugees to their original homes and of mobilizing the largest possible number of Zionists for purposes of territorial expansion, to the detriment of the security of the Arab countries.

89. Israel's actions, by provoking frontier incidents, are evidence of its expansionist aims and of its refusal to collaborate with the authorities responsible for the supervision of the truce. These actions have been the subject of reports by Major-General Bennike and Major-General Burns, the former and the present Chiefs of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. Israel's responsibility is fully established in these reports.

90. Israel's provocative attitude was again demonstrated recently in a manner which leaves no doubt about Israel's violation of the Armistice Agreement. An Israel cargo ship opened fire on two fishing vessels in Egyptian territorial waters, between Abu Darag and the port of Suez. One fishing vessel sank and two fishermen are missing.

91. It seems an easy matter to ascertain Israel's true intentions. It acquired the cargo ship *Brima* on 29 August 1954, had it named *Bat Galim* and despatched sailors to Massawa by air, whence the vessel set out en route to Suez. Israel thus made all arrangements to provoke an incident on Egyptian territory.

92. The denial entered by the Israel authorities cannot change the truth or outweigh the evidence of the relevant facts, namely, the loss of human lives. It was thus a matter of a premeditated act to challenge Egypt's sovereignty over its territory and to break the peace.

93. Israel has committed these many violations of the Principles of the Charter and of the rules of humanity and justice while it apparently redoubles its peace proposals to the Arab countries—proposals mentioned even today—so that it is impossible to consider even for a moment that Israel is sincere in its peaceful intentions. On the contrary, it is certain that Israel is contriving to utilize various forms of propaganda to sow confusion in men's minds and to deceive the entire world about its own expansionist aims.

94. Israel is also pursuing another purpose which is only too apparent: that of sowing doubt about the truly peaceful intentions of Egypt and the Arab countries. Egypt is fundamentally attached to the cause of peace and justice and has always shown its desire to collaborate, in so far as is within its means, in the establish-

ment of the rules of security laid down in the United Nations Charter. Egypt has given abundant evidence of its peaceful intentions and should be empowered to fulfil its responsibility in respect of the application of the United Nations Charter. It is for this purpose that it is endeavouring to strengthen its position in the Near East.

95. The new régime inaugurated in Egypt on 23 July 1952, whose main purpose has been to entrust the exercise of its sovereignty to true children of the Nile and of the Valley fertilized by its beneficial silt, has from the very first concentrated on the introduction of radical reforms aimed at ensuring respect for human dignity and social justice.

96. Tremendous efforts have already been made during the two years which have elapsed since this régime took office and Egypt already feels the effects of far-reaching changes in regard to the nation's development and the raising of the people's standard of living.

97. The new régime, aware of the absolute interdependence of national progress and stability in foreign relations also turned its attention from the very first to the elimination of obstacles which hampered its peaceful relations with the United Kingdom.

98. The Sudan question proved to be the great stumbling block, which had always wrecked successive Anglo-Egyptian conversations since 1920, and the new Egypt preferred to start by settling this delicate problem.

99. As soon as it had succeeded in this task with the conclusion of the agreement of February 1952, it turned its attention to the second point of dispute: the liberation of the Suez Canal Zone, the only part of Egyptian territory still occupied by United Kingdom forces.

100. After laborious negotiations, the United Kingdom and Egyptian Governments concluded the Cairo Agreement signed on 27 July 1954. This Agreement contained the principles on which were to be based the provisions of a Convention which the experts of both sides immediately began to draft.

101. I am glad to announce that this convention is about to be signed. In a few days it will be an accomplished fact, and twenty months after its signature no foreign soldier will be on Egyptian soil. The command of the Suez Canal base, in respect of which the Convention lays down the provisions for its transfer to Egypt will henceforth be entrusted to officers of the Egyptian General Staff. The Convention will be in force for the specific period of seven years.

102. This welcome event will have the most far-reaching repercussions, not only in Egypt but also in the Arab countries and throughout the Near East as a whole. For Egypt, a long-festering hostility will end and an era of mutual, equal and general understanding will begin.

103. The obstacles which Egypt has encountered in its political and economic relations with certain countries will be eliminated. Without being hampered by certain prejudices, Egypt will be in a position to play the international role to which she is entitled by her geographic position, her history and her contribution to the cultural and spiritual heritage of the world.

104. It will be able to honour its obligations under the United Nations Charter. Along with the States of the Arab League, Egypt will undertake its own defence. Through the Arab Pact for collective security, the

only pact appropriate to assure the defence of the region, Egypt will stand guard over the security of this vulnerable part of the Near East. It is confident that in the achievement of its task it will receive encouragement from all countries which are devoted to the idea of international peace and security.

105. In the near future, the world will find itself engaged in an era of international activity which may result in the consolidation of peace or the failure of the hopes dimly felt at the outset of this session. At this crucial moment of history all eyes are turned to

our Organization, whose creation evoked a wave of enthusiasm which has spread throughout the world. It is incumbent upon us to prove ourselves equal to the immense task entrusted to us of not disappointing the burning faith in the hearts of millions of human beings. Imbued with a sense of the importance of our task, let us turn our faces resolutely toward the future where, even now, we can discern the glimmerings of a dawn of peace and prosperity for mankind.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.