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President: Mr. Corneliu MANESCU (Romania).

*In the President's absence, Mr. Benitez (Ecuador),
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (continued)

1. NGOUBOU (Gabon) (translated from French): I should like first of all, Mr. President, to express the satisfaction felt by the delegation of Gabon at your impressive election to the Presidency of the twenty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly and to offer you my warmest congratulations on its behalf. In our eyes, this election is more than the affirmation of the just principle of geographical distribution applied to the system of rotation of the Presidency of our Assembly; it is also a tribute to your great country, Romania, whose firm determination to safeguard genuine independence fills us with admiration. In addition, apart from the fact that your cultural language is the same as ours—and we French-speaking Gabonese brought up in the Latin culture regard it as a source of fellow-feeling and understanding not to be underrated—your qualities as a statesman and diplomat are well known to us. They are a sure indication, as far as we are concerned, not only that you will guide the deliberations of the Assembly with the competence required, but also that your great authority will be behind the efforts of a number of delegations, including my own, to rescue certain vital issues from the sterility and stagnation into which they have sunk over the years and to find concrete and viable solutions, in keeping with our ideals and acceptable to the parties concerned, for the problems facing us.

2. In that connexion, Gabon was whole-heartedly on your side, Mr. President, when in your inaugural address you stressed certain fundamental principles governing this Organization, principles to which all subscribe and pay lip-service, though they are honoured rather in the breach than in the observance, so that their practical application leaves much to be desired.

3. The issue, as you so neatly expressed it, is the right of peoples to determine freely their own future without any interference from outside, and the obligation on the States Members of this Organization to proscribe armed conflict and to promote harmonious and peaceful coexistence.

4. In response to your appeal, the Republic of Gabon will do all in its power, here as elsewhere, to see that self-determination and peaceful coexistence are not mere idle words but living realities, the outcome of the application of the rules of a system of international morality which the United Nations must establish in all its details, interpret if need be and to the fullest possible extent put into practice on a strict and equal footing all over the world.

5. For Gabon, a young country which achieved independence only a few years ago, a general climate of peace is indispensable if we are to solve our development problems and improve conditions, as are also assistance and co-operation from the wealthy countries, as well as the understanding and friendship of all.

6. My delegation would also like to express its sincere gratitude to your predecessor, the outgoing President Mr. Pazhwak, who so skilfully directed the debates of the twenty-first session, the special session on South West Africa, and the emergency special session on the Middle East, at a critical moment when the peace of the world was seriously threatened.

7. In his annual report on the activities of the Organization [A/6701] Secretary-General U Thant, to whom a warm tribute is due for his indefatigable and devoted efforts, analyses with the utmost lucidity the reason why, in the performance of its task, the United Nations has been faced with difficulties it could not resolve and constant obstacles which at times it could only overcome or turn aside by dint of patient endeavours and at the cost of compromise with the basic principles of the Charter most unpalatable for the many idealists still among us, and even for men of simple goodwill everywhere.

8. These failures, these delaying tactics, this slow progress against opposition, this humming and hawing and apathy, this surrender of the best in international morality to vested interests, leading by an ineluctable process to death, ruin and misery, or to imperialism, oppression and exploitation of the weak, are unfortunately the pattern of events and of human society for a long time to come.

9. It is not surprising in these circumstances that, after twenty-two years of discussions without much to show, of underlying impotence, of pigeon-holing and procrastination, and after a most disillusioning

special emergency session, the dominant note of the present concert of nations is disenchantment and frustration.

10. Yet it is not my intention to use this rostrum for an admission of failure by the United Nations and a declaration that it is useless. It would be both unjust and wicked to do so, for some positive results, however meagre, have been achieved in maintaining an admittedly uneasy peace in certain critical areas of the world, in protecting human rights, and in promoting the progress and welfare of the developing countries.

11. These successes, achieved at the cost of such effort, are after all something to be thankful for in a hard and selfish world. Even if they were still more meagre, they would justify our joint endeavours and spur us on to redouble our efforts. They encourage the hopes of the Gabonese for a better future and renew our confidence that the United Nations, with the participation of all of us, will strengthen the means at its disposal and improve its organization.

12. But these partial results can only be corroborated and supplemented if the leaders of all nations bear in mind in their actions and their decisions the great principles embodied in the Charter we have voluntarily adopted, and accept them as true commandments governing their behaviour and their acts; and above all if, imbued with this resolve and this sense of duty as human beings, they make sacrifices and are prepared to renounce their own private, individual interests.

13. Many will no doubt think I am being simple, indeed naïve, in stipulating such an obligation in the relations between nations. But I speak in the name of a people and a Government which prize very highly simplicity and uprightness. Gabon has faith in reason and truth. It cultivates tolerance and rejects hypocrisy and subterfuge. It believes that a man's word is his bond. We are not without a sense of self-interest. But we realize that the general interest is likewise our own interest, and we are willing to give in to it. We are puzzled and shocked when the spirit of the United Nations Charter is flouted, though I hasten to add that we are well aware that these things take time, and that we must keep a sense of proportion.

14. In that connexion, I cannot do better than recall a voice of greater authority than mine, that of our Head of State, the father of the State of Gabon and one of the wisest, most heeded and respected men of Africa, President Léon Mba. On the occasion of an anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, which in our country is celebrated with joy and solemnity, President Mba spoke as follows:

"In the Charter signed on 26 June 1945 at San Francisco, the founders of the Organization proclaimed their faith in the dignity of the human person, in the equality of people belonging to different races and religions, of nations large and small, in freedom under all its essential forms—freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of association. And all the signatories of the Charter, all the Members of the United Nations, have undertaken to respect these fundamental rights.

"The main aim of the United Nations is to maintain peace in the world. To achieve that, the Organization lays down the principle that all disputes must be settled by peaceful means, by negotiation, by arbitration, by good offices.

"But the Organization has likewise assumed the task of combating poverty, ignorance and disease, which it declares to be the main determining factors of social disturbance, of economic competition and rivalry, and finally of war.

"As far as we are concerned, the United Nations is a human endeavour, and as such, at once imperfect and perfectible.

"But all in all, it strives constantly towards its goals, and gives men more confidence in the future."

15. Yes, we maintain complete confidence in the ability of the Organization to play the decisive role it has to play, not only in the field of international security but in the defence of human rights, be it the freedoms for which men yearn in the police State or material equality based on the gradual elimination of differences in living conditions and standards which are intolerable because they keep human beings in servitude, and dangerous because they lead to misunderstanding, envy and resentment and are the negation of the fellow-feeling which should be the hallmark of the human race.

16. The evolution of international thinking since the last great world conflict and since the birth of the United Nations justifies this feeling of optimism despite the clash of ideologies, the emergence of opposing blocs, the craftiness and manoeuvring of some, including only too often those referred to as the "great" Powers. The prestige of the latter could only increase and their reputation could only be enhanced in the great ledger of history if their power and their wealth were placed, whole-heartedly and without petty haggling, at the service of justice and solidarity.

17. But this reasoned optimism must not obscure the magnitude of the task which remains to be accomplished, the gravity and complexity of the problems which the United Nations must overcome if it is not to shatter the hopes that go out to it from so many countries all over the world.

18. My country is a young one. It is small and its resources are modest. Like all those countries which in the last few years have taken over the management of their own affairs and achieved national sovereignty, our energies are feverishly concentrated on building up the nation, on economic and social progress, on developing and raising the standard of living of our people. But our presence in this forum confirms that we are not isolated, that we can find support, and gives us the courage to face our destiny.

19. If at every session my country proclaims its solidarity with the United Nations, the reason is that we feel that here we have found where we belong—to a family in which, as in all families, quarrels do occur, but where at the same time it is unthinkable that relations will be permanently broken off, and where the instinct of collective self-preservation and the wisdom of its members, whether they be the oldest,

or the most experienced, or those most likely to be heeded, will succeed in overcoming the threat of total destruction from the misuse of the marvels of scientific and technological progress today.

20. It is in this spirit and with this conviction that my country would like to say what it has to say concerning the disquieting occurrences in certain parts of the world, and to express our views on the major problems confronting the world.

21. I shall do so in its name, in respect of three basic matters which fall within the purview of the United Nations and embrace the many items on our agenda, namely: international security and the maintenance of peace; man's right to freedom and dignity, and the right of peoples to self-determination; and agreement and solidarity among nations with a view to achieving a balanced development and prosperity in which inequalities in standards of living will disappear.

22. On the first point, even though the two super-Powers, with their different social and economic systems, may succeed in achieving peaceful coexistence, the fact remains that there are causes of tension which permanently threaten to upset the world's equilibrium. In certain cases this tension has reached breaking point and armed conflicts have occurred.

23. In the Far East, several countries are at war, and fire and sword are ravishing that part of the world, while the Middle East has just passed through a serious crisis of which the convulsions are still being felt all the time and which is not yet settled.

24. One of the causes of tension is undoubtedly the partitioning of certain countries.

25. Thus in Europe, one of the leading countries, Germany, is condemned to be divided and kept outside our Organization. I have already stated that Gabon is firmly devoted to the fundamental principles of the Charter and particularly to the right of peoples to self-determination. We therefore believe that a just solution of the German problem—in many respects a prerequisite for a real easing of tension on the European continent—would be the free consultation of the entire German people to lay the foundations of an agreement ending partition and reunifying the country.

26. The problem of Korea is no different. It can only be solved, in our opinion, by the free consultation of the entire population, under the auspices of the United Nations.

27. With regard to the armed conflicts now taking place which we witness with deep concern and a bitter sense of the impotence of the Organization to prevent or stop them, my country believes that dialogue, arbitration and conciliation are the only means of reaching a settlement and that to make headway in the difficult task of safeguarding peace we must arm ourselves with patience which will survive any test, seize upon any favourable factor which arises, and use a great deal of imagination in seeking formulas which will be, if not entirely satisfactory, at least acceptable to the parties concerned.

28. In Viet-Nam it seems to us that what matters before all else is that the frightful carnage should be stopped, that this insensate destruction should

cease, that this confrontation which could draw other peoples into the maelstrom of death and ruin should be ended.

29. The representative of the United States has told us here [1562nd meeting] that his country seeks a political solution by negotiation and has appealed to the States Members of the United Nations to use their influence to end the war by peaceful means.

30. On the Viet-Name side we are told that negotiations could be started if the bombing of North Viet-Nam territory ceased unconditionally.

31. Does not this realization on both sides that a military solution is impossible, this desire which both share to agree to stop the fighting—since fighting is an act contrary to all morality, repugnant to the human conscience, and incidentally very costly—does it not create an opening which could lead both parties to the conference table?

32. We would appeal to the great and powerful country of America to give fresh proof of that genius it has always had for combining realism with generosity, and to make the first gesture; and we would assure North Viet-Nam that it has given sufficient proof of its heroism and that it will grow in stature, and its supporters likewise, by giving proof likewise of sincerity, which no one can mistake for surrender to an ultimatum backed by bombs.

33. For as we see it, the only way of settling the problem once and for all is through the 1954 Geneva Agreements. It is only by negotiations carried out within the framework of those Agreements that a treaty is conceivable which will neutralize that part of the world and allow the two Viet-Nams, once they are clear of all outside interference, to return to peace and independence, either as two separate States with whatever régime they choose or, if they so decide, as a single State.

34. In putting forward this view, Gabon considers that it is abiding not only by the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes but also by that of the right of peoples to self-determination.

35. With regard to the Middle East and the conflict between the Arabs and the Israelis, at the recent extraordinary special session my country took a stand which it feels is in keeping both with justice and with the principles to which we subscribed when Gabon became a Member of the United Nations. Respect for the territorial integrity of States and the peaceful settlement of disputes are two of those principles, and they are no less valid for Israel than for the Arab States.

36. No one can subscribe to the idea of a negotiated solution of a conflict on the basis of territorial gains made by one of the parties. Hence, just as we recognize that Israel is a State which has the right to exist and whose integrity must be respected, so we call for the withdrawal of Israel's troops from the occupied Arab territories, both parties refraining from any belligerent act prolonging the latest crisis or calculated to perpetuate the unstable situation existing prior to the crisis.

37. There will be no appreciable easing of tension in this notorious trouble-spot unless all the parties concerned keep cool heads and show common sense. We call upon Israel to rise above its victory and on the Arabs not to entrench themselves in extreme and irreversible positions and not to lose sight of the possible benefits of peaceful coexistence with Israel as their neighbour.

38. The United Nations has for twenty years done all it could to prevent a complex and delicate situation from flaring up and causing an explosion. Its efforts have not been highly successful, though the responsibility cannot be laid at its door.

39. The present task of the United Nations, with the peace-keeping means at its disposal, is to encourage the search for a balanced situation based on concessions by both sides, and thus to bring the maximum degree of calm to the Middle East. Above all, it must act with perseverance and firmness in order to remove the root causes of the conflict by finding solutions to the problems which three times already have brought the Arabs and the Israelis face to face in combat and might well drive them again to war.

40. We are somewhat sceptical as to the possibility of direct negotiations between the States concerned; hence we feel that the only way of finding a solution to the basic problems of the refugees and passage through the Strait of Tiran and the Suez Canal is by concerted international action.

41. As I said just now, in spite of all its efforts, the United Nations has not been able to prevent the Middle East from becoming a cauldron always at bursting-point. But it must be said to its credit that in a matter of a few days it was able to arrange a cease-fire, thus preventing the conflict from spreading, saving many lives and reducing material destruction.

42. Apart from all this, what the United Nations is doing in Cyprus, India and Pakistan fully justifies the existence of the Organization and the effort we must make to strengthen and consolidate it. From this point of view there are those who feel that an essential factor in strengthening the United Nations and one calculated to further the efforts to promote peace in the world is the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations.

43. The Government of Gabon considers this question of admission as of the utmost importance, calling for specific action under Article 18 of the Charter, and since the intransigence of the leaders in Peking, and the belligerent attitude they adopt all the time, do not create a favourable impression as to their ability to strive for peace and the solidarity of peoples, whatever their political system, my Government continues to give its support to the Republic of China, a founding Member of the Organization.

44. To close this chapter on international security, let me say once again that it is not sufficient to settle any differences which may arise and to be contented with peaceful coexistence brought about by a balance of present world power and the fear of mutual atomic destruction. Everything must still be done to exorcise once and for all the spectre of war; and this will really be done only if the United Nations in the end reaches agreement on general disarmament.

45. Disarmament is, very properly, one of the vital concerns of this Organization, and Gabon will unreservedly support any move in that direction, particularly in regard to the prohibition of nuclear tests, since it is a signatory of the 1963 Moscow Treaty, and also in regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are pleased to see that a treaty for the banning of nuclear weapons in Latin America has come into being,^{1/} and I would recall that Gabon is one of the sponsors of an Assembly resolution on the denuclearization of Africa [2033 (XX)].

46. But while we are anxious that atomic energy should not be diverted from the peaceful purposes it must serve and become an instrument of war, and while we unequivocally condemn the use, testing and proliferation of atomic weapons, our opposition extends also to the production and dissemination of all weapons of mass destruction, even the so-called "conventional" weapons.

47. I need not dwell on the bitterness and disappointment we feel when we realize the enormous share of their resources and their energies which nations great and small expend on the manufacture and acquisition of armaments. Other speakers have already done this; some in fact have quoted precise and enlightening figures on the subject.

48. And while all this capital, this manpower, this intelligence, are sacrificed because of fear and suspicion, my country along with many others in the same boat as ourselves is being bled white; we are putting ourselves into debt for generations to come, stretching out our hands to receive, from one quarter or another, aid doled out parsimoniously, to build the hospitals and schools so badly needed, to grow subsistence crops and develop our import trade so that we can feed our people and live a decent life, and to create the infrastructure urgently needed to improve the economic situation on which the standard of living of the people depends.

49. But although the United Nations has something to its credit in regard to the maintenance of peace and the easing of the situation in the Middle East, and although its disarmament efforts have made some headway in respect of nuclear weapons, it has not succeeded in outlawing racism and colonialism, particularly in the continent to which my country belongs.

50. We are deeply concerned about the situation being perpetuated in South Africa, where a whole population is being deprived of its most elementary rights and kept literally in slavery under the rod of an insensate policy of discrimination and racial segregation. In spite of the repeated appeals by session after session of the General Assembly, in the form of resolutions, and in spite of the urgent entreaties of the Security Council, the Government of Pretoria not only has not renounced one title of its policy of apartheid; it is determined to reinforce that policy.

51. The inevitable is occurring. The oppressed and downtrodden Blacks, prevented from expressing their opinions lawfully and peacefully, have no other choice but to resort to illegality and violence, against which their so-called masters, who deny them their ordinary

^{1/} Signed at Mexico City on 14 February 1967.

rights, react with the most severe and brutal oppression. Storm-clouds are therefore gathering at the southern extremity of Africa.

52. What can we do to prevent the storm from breaking and to enable the United Nations to take more effective action than it has had to be satisfied with hitherto, in order to bring to an end a situation shameful for the civilized world? It is not enough to denounce apartheid; we must also take positive action. Here, the great Powers alone possess the economic and other means of bringing South Africa to its senses. We venture to hope that they will not fail in their duty.

53. Apart from this, it must be admitted that likewise in Africa, seven years after the adoption of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, a number of territories are still under colonial domination and millions of men are denied the free exercise of their political rights. The General Assembly and the Security Council have dealt with this situation at great length but, alas, without success, though it raises the question of the recognition, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of the dignity and freedom of all men and their entitlement to exercise their civil and political rights. This being so, it cannot be denied that there is violation of the Charter, and that its objectives—world peace and prosperity—are being gravely jeopardized.

54. With regard to Rhodesia, the General Assembly has twice condemned any arrangement which would transfer the authority of the administering Power to the Rhodesian rebels in such a way as to infringe the right of the indigenous population to self-determination and independence. Last year the Security Council imposed a system of mandatory selective sanctions, covering certain Rhodesian exports and imports. Unfortunately, it would appear that these sanctions have not hit the illegal Government of that country unduly hard, and that Rhodesia has found, in South Africa and Portugal particularly, accomplices to help it to carry on its export trade.

55. How can this impotence be remedied? By applying more severe economic sanctions and resolving to use coercion and force in order to apply them? By putting pressure on the United Kingdom to restore constitutional legality in Rhodesia? Here again, we can only turn to the great Powers, since they alone possess the key to these distressing problems.

56. The feeling we have, if not of total impotence on the part of the United Nations, at least of the fact that its action very rapidly reaches its limit, is equally valid in respect of South West Africa. In resolution 2145 (XXI), the General Assembly declared that South Africa had failed to fulfil its obligations in respect of the administration of the Mandated Territory to ensure the moral and material well-being and security of the indigenous inhabitants of South West Africa. Consequently, the General Assembly terminated the Mandate which had been conferred on His Britannic Majesty to be exercised on his behalf by the Government of the Union of South Africa and decided that henceforth South West Africa would come under the direct responsibility of the United Nations. Furthermore, under resolution 2248 (S-V), a United Nations Council for South West Africa was set up to

administer the Territory, and a United Nations Commissioner was appointed.

57. In this matter, therefore, the Organization has fulfilled its obligation to take a decision and to create the means of implementing the decision. But implementation came up against one further obstacle: the South African authorities have refused to co-operate in the application of the resolution. They are strengthening racial segregation in the Territory and have adopted retaliatory measures against the leaders in South West Africa. Can we allow the United Nations to go on being flouted in this way? Is it not time for the Security Council to propose the sanctions that are needed if our decisions are to be respected?

58. The situation is no different in the African Territories under Portuguese administration, where Portugal is trying to impose its will, by force and terror, against the wishes of the indigenous peoples, and denying them their right to freedom, the management of their own affairs, and independence. These inadmissible claims, this refusal to yield to the great wave of liberalism that has swept away the colonial empires, this lack of realism and generosity, this short-sighted clinging to sordid interests, have incited Portugal to fierce repression of resistance by those whom it has subjugated and oppressed for 400 years.

59. A war without quarter is being waged in Angola, in so-called Portuguese Guinea and in Mozambique, and as the Security Council stated in 1965, it is a serious threat to international peace and security.

60. We appeal to the Members of the Organization to endeavour to convince Portugal that it is on the wrong track, and that there is no example in history where aspirations to freedom and justice have not triumphed in the end. We pray that, in the case of the Portuguese possessions today, success will not be won at the price of a heavy tribute in human lives and destruction.

61. As far as Gabon is concerned, we will continue to apply the strictest boycott against Portugal, and we hope that all who voted in favour of such sanctions will do the same; we shall likewise, as far as lies in our power, give succour to the freedom-fighters in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau).

62. The purpose of this part of my statement was to demonstrate, if that were necessary, that the forces of evil are still rampant on the earth, and that on the African continent imperialism and colonialism continue to impede the aspirations of men to self-determination and a life of dignity as they understand it.

63. The fact that today a handful of godless and lawless mercenaries can stand up against the legitimate Government of the Congo (Kinshasa) is at once an eloquent and a saddening testimony to this state of affairs.

64. But apart from the old-style colonialism, apart from the effects of a diehard imperialism, there are other more insidious practices disguised in the alluring garb of an ideology of salvation and a revolution whose benefits are to be shared out in a spirit of brotherhood. These aspirations are reflected mainly in interference in the domestic affairs of other States, particularly through incitement to subversive activities there and backing for any subversion arising

against the régime in power. We denounced such hostile and intolerable interference to our fellow-Africans at the recent summit conference of the Organization of African Unity.^{2/}

65. I should like to state once again, from this rostrum, that all those who belong to our Organization, and have signed the Charter, are in duty bound to respect the sovereignty of States, their territorial integrity, and the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs, and to condemn subversive activities which create unrest and conflict and thus threaten the peace of the community of nations.

66. I shall conclude my statement by outlining the crucial problem of the economic and social gap between the well-to-do or developed countries and those which we need not hesitate to call under-developed, since that is what they are.

67. The Organization has reason to be proud of the fact that, under the banner of international solidarity, it has for the last few years kept this problem in the forefront by instituting, in 1961, the United Nations Development Decade. Organizations financed by contributions from States, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, UNESCO, and the United Nations Development Programme, have furnished and continue to furnish considerable assistance to many countries of the Third World for their economic and social development.

68. I must not miss the opportunity to express from this rostrum my country's profound gratitude to the United Nations for its contribution to the efforts we are making, unremittingly and using our own resources to the full, to promote a healthy and prosperous economy which will bring social progress to the people of Gabon and give them a decent standard of living.

69. But for all the tribute due to this international aid, we can only regret its inadequacy and particularly its stagnation, not to say shrinking, sharing the sentiments expressed by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his report:

"Again this year, I am constrained to express my great concern regarding the loss of momentum in international aid and its adverse effects on the results of the current Development Decade." [A/6701/Add.1, para. 61.]

We are therefore pinning our hopes on the mobilization of more funds, commensurate with the task to be accomplished in connexion with the second Development Decade now being prepared.

70. In the meantime we attach great importance to the possibility of aid from the United Nations Capital Development Fund which the General Assembly decided at its last session to establish [resolution 2186 (XXI)]. In the framework of our first economic and social development plan, which is due to be completed in 1970, and of the second plan, which will supplement the first, Gabon has undertaken to carry out large-scale capital development projects which should set

it economically on its feet, such as a deep-water harbour, a railway, the exploitation of its water-power resources, and the extension and improvement of its infrastructure—roads, airports, schools, etc. In addition to technical assistance, we need considerable capital, and we hope to find part of it in the form of long-term loans from the Capital Development Fund.

71. We are also greatly interested in any co-operation we may receive from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Unlike many small countries, whose principal resource is agricultural production, Gabon has great wealth beneath its soil, and hence we have an industrial future; and as everyone knows, the creation of a modern industrial sector is the surest means of promoting a dynamic economy and providing the people with the benefits of the industrial society of today.

72. For the moment, Gabon is in the unstable and perilous position of a country with a primary economy, which has to sell the raw materials it produces on the world market. Since the first UNCTAD Conference held at Geneva in 1964, we have hoped for great things from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the way of concrete and rapidly applicable solutions calculated to offset a deterioration in our terms of trade which seriously harms us and is undoubtedly the most powerful obstacle to our economy and our progress in general.

73. We must regretfully point out that although agreements arrived at through the Kennedy Round provided the developed nations with a device beneficial to their trade machinery, and an increase in their trade, the agreements have brought the developing countries nothing more than minor advantages and have done nothing to meet our basic needs.

74. It is to be hoped that the second session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held at New Delhi in February and March 1968, will furnish the developing countries with more solid benefits: liberalization of trade in primary products; preferential treatment for manufactures and semi-manufactures, financing of buffer stocks and, in a more general way, economic co-operation on the part of the developed countries.

75. If this should materialize, and if the highly-developed peoples feel the responsibility they have to remedy the inequality suffered by two thirds of mankind and devote part of their resources to combating poverty and need; if they organize to integrate into their way of life and bring up to their level other nations hitherto kept in the background, then the new era of justice, peace and happiness we dream of will come to pass, and the developed peoples will have earned the heartfelt gratitude of mankind.

Mr. Manescu (Romania) took the Chair.

76. Mr. BOUATTOURA (Algeria) (translated from French): The twenty-second general debate is drawing to a close. The unprecedented magnitude of the participation in this debate hardly leaves room for a statement pretending to say something new. I therefore propose to put before you, without any illusions but with profound concern, a few observations prompted by the state of international affairs and by the lining-

^{2/} Fourth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Kinshasa, 11-14 September 1967.

up process which has marked the present debate. Our feeling is that the General Assembly seems to be meeting under the threefold sign of paradox, contradiction and misunderstanding.

77. Paradox, Mr. President, because your election constitutes the most eloquent tribute to the solidarity in action of progressive forces and to economic development based on social justice—in a word, a policy of change and realism. That tribute is all the more appropriate in that, as a leader of Romanian diplomacy, you have been one of the main advocates of this trend.

78. It is not paradox-seeking to observe that the homage paid to the eminently positive role assumed by the socialist Powers from the outset has been to a considerable extent due to the colonized countries of yesterday which today, while being integrated in the United Nations, still experience segregation on the part of those who do not really work for the community of nations.

79. Of course, there is also relaxation of tension between the Powers of the East and those of the West, which today, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution, recognize the eminently positive contribution of nations which at one time were ostracized. In addition to this self-evident fact, it must be made clear that, because of the upheavals it brought about, this Revolution sparked off a dynamic movement whose end is still far from being in sight. But this outlook is largely tempered by the new challenges to these very principles over most of the world.

80. Contradiction between words and deeds: where the word spells liberation, it is called aggression; where the act is aggression, it is called liberation; where there is a spontaneous revolutionary uprising it is called foreign intervention; where there is foreign intervention, it is described as legitimate self-defence; where it is legitimate self-defence, the talk is of subversiveness.

81. Finally, misunderstanding: for the Charter, the rules of law and international relations are no longer construed as was originally intended, nor applied to the full. This downgrading amounts to querying every aspect of our principles and is reflected in a reappraisal of the equilibrium on which the United Nations was founded.

82. A sober analysis of the situation is bound to lead to the general observation that international relations are in a state of imbalance which, though it has come about gradually, is none the less general in scope. The primary cause of this is the prodigious development of the economic, technological and military strength of one of the leading Powers; the second is the refusal of some Powers to accept all the premises and all the implications of the policy of peaceful co-existence; and the final cause is to be seen in an equivocal search for formulas to maintain a stepwise balance of armaments.

83. This analysis of the situation can be illustrated by the fact that sustained efforts to bring about the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to stake out the ground for a nuclear defence system have occurred almost simultaneously, a fact which will inevitably create two categories of nuclear Powers.

84. Algeria's opinion is that this important question should be considered from a completely different angle, by accepting various political commitments and bearing in mind the proper interests of all States, nuclear and non-nuclear, considered not in isolation or by kindred groupings, but as a whole, since solidarity is the only option for all.

85. In the same connexion, we cannot but welcome the proposals to ban the use of nuclear weapons and the suggestions for a much-needed curb on armaments. The latter suggestions must be made within an appropriate political and strategic framework where the curbs will be inescapable.

86. Is it appropriate, is it indeed necessary to refer here to the decisive factor we perceive when we observe the absence, either intentional or condoned, of the People's Republic of China from our deliberations and our search for solutions to international problems?

87. A similar imbalance is evident between the great nuclear Powers as a whole and those which are at the pre-nuclear technical development stage. Those Powers today face conditions which tomorrow could lead them to the stage where their full sovereignty, their capacity for development, and their security could be challenged, or at the very least jeopardized. This imbalance could give rise to serious upheavals in Asia, in Latin America, and perhaps even in Europe.

88. The disparity between the developed and the developing countries as a whole has two main manifestations: first of all, that inherent in developing societies, and consisting not so much in the establishment of independence as in the consolidation of independence. The former step has led to a clash between national liberation movements seeking to solve their structural problems, and imperialist forces. The other step reveals the temptation either to curb and control the development of new Powers or to impose a kind of domination, not in a formal way but no less effective for all that. The second form has to do with colonial problems. This is all the more acute in that decolonization no longer responds to the classic formula of unimpeded implementation of the principle of self-determination of peoples and the struggle against foreign domination and unqualified national sovereignty.

89. These two phenomena are tragically illustrated by two crises which, if allowed to develop, could turn this imbalance into a total collapse of the international edifice. The two crises are, of course, those of the Middle East and South-East Asia. Strategic concepts cannot conceal the bitter reality of the problems and their true nature. In either case, a certain parallelism has been suggested between the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam and the evacuation of the occupied Arab territories. In both cases what is sought is an end to belligerent actions or provocative statements; in both cases the parties claim to be ready for direct negotiations.

90. It is not surprising, therefore, to find both protagonists in these conflicts adopting an identical stand with regard to the problems common to them. Together, they make a great show of procedures superficially attractive, the better to disguise the substance of problems which disturb public opinion and frustrate

the Organization. These procedures, call them negotiations, mediations, non-military solutions, what you will, are designed to create the impression that there is agreement on the essential issues. To put forward fancy agreements, in the one case, or high-sounding treaties, in the other, is tantamount to regarding the problems as settled. The will to negotiate cannot possibly precede, let alone replace, the will to face the real problems, in their true nature and proportions, with political courage and intellectual probity. Thus, and only thus, can headway be made towards satisfactory solutions.

91. As far as the Middle East is concerned, as in the case of Viet-Nam the problem has two aspects: that of the inalienable rights of a nation, and that of aggression against its territory. This aggression has brought out the relationship between the occupation of the territories of sovereign States and what we must still continue to call the Palestine question.

92. For this question is still the backcloth for any thorough-going analysis of the Middle East crisis. We ourselves believe that for a proper understanding of the problem, certain hard facts must be recalled. The hard fact is that the Palestine problem raises all the questions involved both in colonialist settlement and in the antithesis of liberation and domination. The hard fact is that Israel constitutes a now classic example of the colonialist phenomenon which by implanting a foreign population, by its way of life, by the organic links it maintains and develops with foreign elements, constitutes a provocation, an invitation to strife, a seed of evil which continues to afflict a part of mankind. The hard fact is that this Zionist implantation in Palestine engendered the tragedy of Palestine. The problem of Palestine is in origin a problem of national liberation, one which brings a people driven out of their homeland face to face with population of foreign origin. It follows that the role of the Arab States is nothing more than that of supporting the national cause of the people of Palestine.

93. This is the context in which we must place Israel's aggression against the United Arab Republic, Syria and Jordan, on 5 June 1967. It need hardly be recalled that this aggression, premeditated on the part of Israel and encouraged by certain Powers, resulted in the occupation of vast areas of sovereign States, Members of this Organization.

94. The fact that the United Nations, once the matter was brought before it, was unable to assume its responsibilities under the Charter and condemn the aggression and insist on the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Israel troops from the occupied Arab territories was because certain Powers, to safeguard strategic interests, blocked the normal functioning of the General Assembly convened in emergency special session. The lessons to be drawn by the international community are to be found in the clearly expressed will of those same Powers not to deal with the substance of matters concerning world society on a strict footing of equality, with the participation of the new nations.

95. Today, the urgent task before this Assembly must be to make every effort to remove the consequences

of Israel's aggression and to demand the immediate withdrawal of the Zionist troops from the occupied Arab lands. To impose prior conditions for such withdrawal is tantamount to condoning the aggression, endorsing the policy of the aggressor, and leading the United Nations to renounce the basic principles of the Charter and reach an impasse. In insisting on unconditional withdrawal, the United Nations will be doing nothing more than fulfilling an international obligation.

96. In this connexion, we must recall that the reason why the situation in that region has always been unstable is because Israel has systematically boycotted the Mixed Armistice Commission set up by the United Nations and has constantly violated the General Armistice Agreements, the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. I need hardly repeat that Israel's policy of expansion beyond the armistice lines has been merely the beginning of its systematic violations.

97. Conquest as a means of acquiring territory is a practice condemned by the United Nations Charter. This means that occupation does not create any right for the aggressor State, let alone authorize it to lay down conditions for the evacuation of the territories it occupies. By a shocking euphemism, this war of aggression and occupation has been dubbed a "struggle for survival".

98. The survival of men has since been followed up by the survival of the motivation of the expansionist policy: more and more immigrants, more and more territory, more and more centres of colonization, more and more arrogant obstinacy in completely denying the identity of Palestine. If we are to talk of recognizing the right to live, is it not high time, precisely when the people of Palestine are yearning for a new lease of life, to grant it this right, elementary perhaps, but nevertheless absolute? The state of tension that generates war will continue to threaten the Middle East so long as this right to existence is denied.

99. On this point, Algeria has always considered that the problem of Palestine is essentially political in nature, and that its solution is therefore bound to be political. The object of the struggle of the Arab peoples is first and foremost the restoration of a lawful right that has been ignored. It is useful to recall that this attitude, which has been deliberately distorted, has never involved, as has been alleged, the liquidation of the population living in the territory of Palestine.

100. Today more than ever before, the United Nations must take all appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of its resolutions concerning the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland. My delegation considers that these measures are a step in the direction of a just and peaceful solution of this distressing problem.

101. To stress the shortcomings of the United Nations is not to question its motives; on the contrary, we wish to induce the Organization to face the problems, drawing the lessons to be learned from its own trials and tribulations, and from its failures. It would not be incorrect to state that there is in this Assembly an

almost unanimous consensus as to the imperative need for the occupation forces to withdraw from the territories of the United Arab Republic, Syria and Jordan.

102. This brings us to another aspect of the problem which dominates the Middle East situation: that of security. The main cause of the insecurity felt by the Arab world can be traced to the creation of Israel as a foreign body in the area. Hostile and powerful propaganda has painted the picture of a territory encircled and menaced by its neighbours, so as to falsify any objective appraisal of the problems arising in the region. The periodic upheavals which have shaken that part of the world have thrown light on the true extent of the insecurity which pervades all the Arab States. Who is in a state of insecurity today? First of all the Palestinian people, who have had to choose between Israel reservations and UNRWA camps. Next the United Arab Republic, whose eastern sector is still occupied. Then Syria, whose capital, Damascus, continues to be threatened with occupation; and Jordan, where a veritable military colonization is in operation.

103. We have been told that "collective suicide is not an international obligation". But the very ones who hawk these wares are the advocates of the collective liquidation of the Palestine national community. Can it not be argued that the state of tension and war into which the Middle East has been plunged is the outcome precisely of this collective liquidation? Can it not be realized that the Palestine nation, mutilated as are its limbs, is none the less alive? Cannot the evidence of resistance whose echoes, although stifled, reach us every day, be assessed at their true value? Is it not a known fact that the preservation and re-affirmation of national identity inspires the most sacred quest a people can embark on? Can the Arab peoples be expected to participate in the final liquidation of a sister nation? Can anyone believe that because the Palestine entity has been erased for a time from the map of the Middle East, it will disappear for ever? If that were the case, what happened in Poland could happen in Palestine. You have been told, time and time again, that the Arab Governments come to the United Nations to complain of the obstinate refusal of Israel to disappear. Do they not understand, or do they refuse to understand, that the only request of the Arab peoples is the one put forward by the Palestinian people?

104. If the phenomena which led to the Middle East crisis are not entirely to be found in Viet-Nam, we certainly find all the other factors there. For the struggle waged by the Viet-Nameese people for more than twenty years is the result of the denial of the right of the Viet-Nameese nation to consolidate its independence on the basis of the principles to which a tribute was paid by electing you, Sir, to the Presidency. What do the people of North and South Viet-Nam want but to develop, in a necessarily unitary framework, a national sovereignty without partitioning, and to build up a democratic, peaceful society without interference of any kind?

105. Admittedly, for reasons peculiar to the Viet-Nameese conflict, the United Nations could not in any

event claim the right to intervene in this vexatious problem through formal channels.

106. However, we cannot and must not shirk our obligations towards world peace. On the contrary we must manifest our deep concern, for side by side with the intensification of massacre without precedent in the history of Viet-Nam by the most up-to-date armaments, North Viet-Nam, a small country, has for nearly three years been hammered by the air and sea armadas of the United States. Who would dare to question that this conflict is leading, as things are at present, towards a conflagration of incalculable magnitude?

107. To persist today in placing on the same footing the intervention of a foreign Power in Viet-Nam and the perfectly natural solidarity between the parts of a single country and a single people is not merely to compound an injustice but also to reject any scale of recognized values. Whatever the trials and tribulations of the Viet-Nameese people, it remains one and indivisible. The unity of people and territory are two privileges which the people of Viet-Nam are entitled to enjoy, like any other people in the world. Moreover, is this right not explicitly stated in the 1954 Geneva Agreements?

108. So long as the escalation against North Viet-Nam is continued and the prospects of an invasion by American armed forces are likely, and so long as it is obstinately denied that the people of South Viet-Nam, led by the National Liberation Front, are fighting for their national rights and for an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous South Viet-Nam, any prospect of a political solution emerging will remain problematical.

109. In this connexion, as in the case of the Middle East, the importance of the methods used has been stressed rather than the political objectives. This misunderstanding is no chance occurrence. It rests on the fact that the United States is trying to convince itself that it is fighting the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and not the people of South Viet-Nam, that is to say, not the whole of the Viet-Nameese nation. Having convinced itself of that basic premise, the United States proposes a kind of deal which would restore Viet-Nam to a state of perpetual partition. This is what is meant, seemingly, by a "return to the Geneva Agreements". This error must be corrected. The main obstacle to be avoided in the search for peace in Viet-Nam is that of allowing the apparent similarity of phraseology to conceal differences in substance. The point is not so much a return to the Geneva Agreements as the unequivocal acceptance of the unrestricted implementation of those Agreements.

110. This implies the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam is a categorical obligation which by its very nature is not negotiable. It implies the evacuation of foreign, that is to say non-Viet-Nameese, troops and bases. It implies also the ultimate recognition that the National Liberation Front is an obvious, indispensable and valuable participant in any dialogue.

111. Algeria therefore shares the view that the restoration of peace and unity to Viet-Nam necessarily presupposes the re-establishment of all the conditions laid down in the 1954 Geneva Agreements and the

implementation of all their clauses. Restoration of peace likewise presupposes the recognition of the National Liberation Front, with which, short of perpetuating a state of chaos, peace formulas will have to be worked out. A reasonable and workable platform for the emergence of a peaceful, independent and neutral South Viet-Nam has recently been devised by the emergency congress of the movement.

112. With the accession of Aden to independence in the near future, the international community will then be confronted, not with "administrative and economic" colonization, but with the colonization of settlement. This will inevitably lead the United Nations to reconsider, if not the guiding principles, at least the measures of implementation of its decolonization policy.

113. In this connexion, the Organization will have to consider the best ways and means of coping with the type of problem raised with particular acuteness by southern Africa. Until now, despite praiseworthy efforts, it has not been possible to examine this problem in its proper context. Moreover, a wide-ranging examination should enable us to discover ways and means which, however gradual, could stimulate a favourable dialectical process within the country concerned provided they were applied in time. This should in no way be regarded as an adventure, but should rather be undertaken in the quiet conviction that a society founded on racial superiority is doomed to failure.

114. Refusal to countenance these inevitable confrontations or to adopt an equivocal attitude is tantamount, whatever anyone may say, to succouring the present masters of southern Africa. But if there was any peaceful solution, it would undeniably be due to the fact that the Western world, either in its own interests or to adhere more closely to the picture it draws of itself, had finally undertaken to assume with the international community the responsibilities which no one can escape.

115. Clearly the foregoing lengthy analysis implies repercussions not confined to the political sphere as such. The international situation I have described has consequences in the social and economic fields as well.

116. Mr. Philippe de Seynes, Under-Secretary for Economic Affairs, stressed this a few days ago when he inaugurated the work of the Second Committee [1109th meeting]. He intimated that if the year 1966-1967 had on the whole been a good one for the industrialized countries, the same had not always been true of the developing countries.

117. Thus, as regards trade problems, the Kennedy Round did little or nothing to extend the benefits of its provisions to the countries that need them most. Even if the intention was expressed of resuming this task—which can only be described as uncompleted—at a later date, it would only underline once again the concern of the major and the medium Powers to work out among them a common stand to be taken in due course vis-à-vis the pressing requests from their less favoured partners.

118. This is why it is becoming more and more evident, precisely because of the concerted stand of the developed countries, which amounts to a crystallizing of supposed differences of interests between the northern and southern hemispheres, that the unity of the poorer countries is an imperious, vital and decisive need if excessively vulnerable economies are to be maintained and developed.

119. The Kennedy Round merely illustrates this strategy founded on the aristocratic club notion; but it is evident that the obstinate defence of certain vested interests is also found in great international bodies, which are often less concerned with the general interests of international society at the level of trade relations or financial settlements than with being a meeting-place for oligarchies wishing to mould these permanent institutions to the needs arising out of the evolution of their relative strength at a given moment.

120. Whether it be the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the International Monetary Fund or other institutions, one feels only too often that the settlement of the problems most vital to mankind, which are surely understood and stressed by the very ones who postpone them year after year, is only likely to come about in the framework of new negotiations and not in further petty squabbles which in the final analysis do not redound to anyone's benefit.

121. As far as GATT is concerned, the problem is not so much to modify its spirit as to remodel its structures so as to adapt them better to the realities of the system on which trade has been based up to the present, and to facilitate the access of the new nations, which ardently desire it, to a world economic circuit where alone the problems of hunger and under-development can gradually be disposed of.

122. With regard to the International Monetary Fund, which the recent agreements have shown to be of great importance, it is high time it tried to apply the conclusions drawn from its studies, namely that the close interdependence characteristic of monetary phenomena, and the Fund's incalculable responsibility at the world level in respect of factors of development, fully justify a review of its machinery and in fact the implementation of its decisions, in the interests of the developing countries.

123. The question must be asked why, in this second half of the twentieth century, the great majority of the nations belonging to the Organization are still excluded from the international economic circuit which they helped at one time to develop.

124. It must be ascertained whether, really and truly, the fundamental role of the developing countries is for ever to serve as suppliers of raw materials to the industrialized countries, or whether they are not rather meant to rise within a reasonable time to the status of major partners in the world-wide economic dealings which will develop sooner or later.

125. It is because they are concerned about this knotty problem that many developing countries will be participating next February, at New Delhi, in the Second Conference on Trade and Development for which preparations are now being made by a ministerial committee of the Group of 77 at Algiers.

126. I need hardly stress with what interest and what hopes the countries of the Third World look forward to this great meeting and how greatly it could contribute, at the international level, towards smoothing out conflicts and anomalies which, unless care is taken, affect and are likely to affect more and more adversely the fate of millions of human beings.

127. The essential observation prompted by the state of international relations is, first of all, that there is a confrontation between two forces. One force is waging a bitter struggle for national independence, and gathered round it are the peoples engaged in anti-colonial liberation movements and opposing neo-colonialist domination. The other force unites those who are trying desperately to maintain the status quo, in other words to perpetuate all forms of domination. The fact that the former are in a minority today can only incite them to intensify their efforts. This is what has always happened.

128. The balance of forces as seen here in the Assembly constitutes a twofold lesson on the distance we have still to travel. It need hardly be said that this state of affairs cannot go on in the world for the obvious reason that an organized international community is not possible when there is a lack of balance which challenges the very principles of an international order accepted by all.

129. If I may impose on the good nature of this Assembly a moment longer I would say that if history has a meaning, it is the meaning given to it, in spite of failures and setbacks, or perhaps because of these failures and setbacks, by the community of men struggling and working to better, to alter, and to transform the existing state of affairs.

130. Mr. ARIKPO (Nigeria): Mr. President, the Nigerian delegation cordially associates itself with the warm sentiments that have been expressed by previous contributors to the general debate in regard to your election as President of the General Assembly at its twenty-second session. In our view, as in that of many other delegations here, the fact that this is the first time that the General Assembly has elected the representative of a socialist country to the Presidency reflects two facets of the United Nations itself. It reflects past intolerance and present broadmindedness. That you and your country should be the happy instruments of removing what was a blot upon the sense of impartiality of our Organization is something of which you can justly be proud. The manner in which you are discharging the duties of this high office confirms the wisdom of those, including Nigeria, who felt that it was time the ice was broken and that it should be broken with your election. We offer you our heartiest congratulations and we gladly assure you of our complete co-operation throughout your tenure of office.

131. We should like at the same time to congratulate all those who have had the honour of being elected to constitute, along with you, the General Committee of the Assembly; that is to say, our seventeen Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees of the Assembly.

132. It gives us particular pleasure to place on record the Nigerian delegation's appreciation of the services rendered as Assembly President during the

last year by Mr. Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan. The spokesman for Nigeria in last year's general debate described Mr. Pazhwak [1423rd meeting] as one whose occupancy of the presidential chair would be a great credit to his own country and enhance Afro-Asian standing and reputation in the United Nations. Mr. Pazhwak, by the accident of events, was called upon to convene more sessions than any other President in the last few years. He was called upon to help tackle very explosive world crises. He was called upon to deal with an unusual crop of delicate issues and delicate situations. It is a measure of the quality of this man that at the end of such an exacting presidency, he succeeded in retaining the confidence of us all and gaining our whole-hearted applause.

133. Our esteemed Secretary-General, in his report to the Assembly [A/6701], and particularly in the introduction to his report [A/6701/Add.1], has given us a message on the state of the United Nations that contains a dispassionate, objective and competent analysis of world events in the last twelve months. The Nigerian delegation is grateful to him for this and other services. It will gladly join in giving his recommendations the careful consideration that they obviously deserve at the hands of the Assembly.

134. One of those recommendations is the holding of special Security Council meetings as provided for in Article 28, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter; that is to say meetings at which any member, if it so desires, may be represented by a member of the Government or some other specially designated representative. The Secretary-General's hope is that representation at a higher than ambassadorial level would enable the Council to discuss broader issues, achieve a greater meeting of minds and foster a consensus approach to matters [*ibid.*, paras. 157-159]. Nigeria, as a current member of the Council, supports the Secretary-General's proposal in principle and will co-operate in implementing it if the Council as a whole is agreeable. At the same time, we wish to make the comment that the crux of the problem of decision-making in the Security Council is inflexibility of positions taken by individual representatives on the instructions of their respective Governments. If the Foreign Ministers or other specially designated representatives who attend special Security Council meetings come there to advocate inflexible positions on behalf of their Governments, the Secretary-General's hope of a breakthrough will be frustrated and the game will not have been worth the candle.

135. The Secretary-General has called the Assembly's attention to the situation created by what he calls micro-States [*ibid.*, paras. 161-166] and some other people call mini-States. The Nigerian delegation shares his view that this is a matter that needs inquiring into. Pending such an inquiry, we find the Secretary-General's specific proposals interesting and deserving of consideration but we should like to reserve our opinion on their practicability.

136. The ugliest international crisis since the twenty-first regular session has been, of course, the Middle East war. Nigeria has for some time been closely involved in endeavours to tackle the Arab-Israeli dispute. As a member of the Security Council it has

raised its voice continuously against the tendency to regard first the 1949 and later the 1957 armistice as permanent features of Middle East life, instead of transitional arrangements pending a final settlement. Nigeria has deplored the tendency to deal with the Middle East question on the basis of incidents occurring in alleged violation of the General Armistice Agreements; it has deplored the tendency to deal with the Arab refugees on the basis of grants which do little more than enable them and their children to eke out a living in camps all their lives; it has deplored the tendency to think that time will, as it were, help remove the Arab-Israeli dispute from the agenda of the Organization. These illusions have now been shattered, and shattered at a heavy price: a short but bitter war resulting in tens of thousands more refugees and a more complex political conundrum than we faced in the Middle East, say, a year ago.

137. A long and arduous special session failed to find an agreed solution, but it was none the less a useful session. The gap in thinking is narrower today than it was at the start of that session. It is now generally agreed that no country should be allowed to achieve territorial gains by military conquest. It is also agreed that we must help create a political climate in the Middle East in which all the inhabitants in that area of the world will live hereafter in reasonable peace and security. How to achieve those ends so as to satisfy both our conscience and the requisite majority of the Member States of the United Nations is the unfinished task to which we are going to devote more energy this session, and a task to which Nigeria stands ready as usual to make its contribution both in the Assembly and in the Security Council. Incidentally, we are favourably disposed towards the Secretary-General's suggestion that he should be authorized to designate a special representative who would serve *inter alia* as a reporter and interpreter of events in the area [*ibid.*, para. 48].

138. The Nigerian delegation rejoices with those who rejoice that the United States and the Soviet Union have been able to harmonize their views regarding certain provisions to be included in the proposed treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.^{3/} But our joy is sadly tempered by the feeling that the harmonization seems to have been achieved partly at the expense of the non-nuclear Powers since, significantly, both of the drafts put forward by these super-Powers ignore completely the claim by the non-nuclear Powers of a *quid pro quo* for their renunciation of the right to nuclear acquisition or manufacture. As Nigerian spokesmen in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and at previous sessions of the General Assembly have stated time and again, the least that the non-nuclear States can demand is an undertaking, written into the non-proliferation treaty, that a nuclear Power shall not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear signatory. We are happy to note that one of the super-Powers has declared its readiness to sign a convention containing this undertaking. We hope that the other super-Power will follow its example, in which case a suitable provision for the undertaking can be entered in the non-proliferation draft.

139. The Nigerian delegation continues to feel that it cannot be fair to ask non-nuclear countries to sign away the right to conduct nuclear explosions for peaceful technological purposes unless the conduct of such explosions can be taken away from individual nuclear Powers and entrusted to an international agency. Otherwise, the proper course would seem to be to leave every country the right of peaceful exploitation of nuclear science but to provide safeguards, including inspection, against its abuse for military purposes.

140. There are other significant omissions in the non-proliferation drafts of the Soviet Union and the United States to which we shall call attention when the relevant item is taken up in the First Committee, unless by that time a re-draft has emerged which remedies the gaps. Nigeria has pointed out before and wishes to stress again that a non-proliferation treaty that does not do justice to the legitimate claims of the non-nuclear countries will not last very long or enjoy a broad enough acceptance for the attainment of its purpose.

141. Last year from this podium the Nigerian delegation, with the muted voice of a small country, suggested that the best instrument for tackling the Viet-Nam question was "quiet and confidential diplomacy" [1423rd meeting, para. 203]. Instead, the battle of words has gone on, with unabated fury, outside of and within this forum. It has not helped to achieve the aim of all of us, which is to stop the fighting and get on to the conference table. The Nigerian delegation solemnly appeals to the principal parties to help make this possible. To the United States, which states that it will stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam if it is satisfied that North Viet-Nam will in that event be prepared to enter into meaningful talks, our appeal is that it should accept as satisfactory for this purpose the repeated statements of our Secretary-General and others to that effect. In circumstances of the present kind, it only makes negotiations difficult to require direct evidence from the other party. Our appeal to North Viet-Nam and the National Front for the Liberation of South Viet-Nam is not to let down the Secretary-General and the rest of us in the event of cessation of bombing by the United States. They should co-operate in such a way that negotiations can start as expeditiously as possible. In this connexion my delegation welcomes Ambassador Goldberg's reaffirmation in clear terms [1562nd meeting] of his country's acceptance of the principles of the Geneva Agreements, which we believe must form the basis of any meaningful talks.

142. The situation in southern Africa gets progressively worse. That is of course the consequence of the half-hearted nature of the handling of African decolonization issues by the United Nations. The Portuguese Government is unrepentant with regard to its colonial hold upon Angola, Guinea and Mozambique. In fact, in pursuit of its evil intentions in Africa, it has permitted the African territories under its domination to become the spring-board for mercenaries and war materials to undermine the legitimate Governments of a number of independent African countries. Ian Smith in Southern Rhodesia is more intransigent than ever; more bellicose and more ruthless in sup-

^{3/} Documents ENDC/192 and ENDC/193.

pressing the human rights of the African majority of Zimbabwe. Dr. Vorster continues with undiminished ferocity his racist policies in South Africa. Thus we see Dr. Vorster, Ian Smith and the Portuguese Government constituting an unholy triumvirate which has no regard for human decency and the provisions of the Charter of our Organization.

143. When in the past we said this, we were told that we were wrong. We were told for instance that we should, while applying sanctions against Southern Rhodesia, be careful not to cause offence to South Africa. We were told that kowtowing to South Africa would enable us to deal more successfully with the Rhodesian situation which has been declared by the Security Council to be a threat to world peace and security. What has been the result? Recent events have proved this advice of timid action to be mistaken, as they have other optimistic prognostications regarding the removal of the illegal régime of Ian Smith. As everyone knows, the South African Whites recognize that they share a common interest with Southern Rhodesia, namely, the perpetuation of white racist minority rule in southern Africa. They have never hidden the fact that they would give Southern Rhodesia their full support in its open rebellion. They have been doing so all the time, although certain countries have either refused to acknowledge this or have connived at it. The Government of South Africa not only now gives that support quite overtly by sending its armed forces into Southern Rhodesia to help murder Africans in their own country—to help murder Africans who want nothing but what our Charter and the resolutions of this august Organization have decreed for all mankind; it also now declares that it is doing so and that it will continue to do so, whatever anybody may say or do, whatever Great Britain, the country still juridically responsible for the maintenance of law and order and good government in Southern Rhodesia, may say.

144. It remains to be seen whether Great Britain will accept this challenge to its authority; whether it will take this defiance of its constitutional rights lying down; whether it will merely allow matters to rest with its verbal protest to the Government of South Africa. It also remains to be seen whether the United Nations will rise to this occasion and call upon South Africa to stop this nefarious violation of international law and of the resolutions of the competent organs of the United Nations. The United Nations must accept responsibility for the continued obstinacy of the Government of South Africa. To those who do not care to deceive themselves it has been obvious for a long time that the longer this Organization shies away from its responsibilities and obligations, the bolder the South African Government becomes in defying world opinion and all the norms of civilized behaviour.

145. The world-wide grave concern over the explosive situation in South West Africa was evidenced by resolution 2145 (XXI), adopted almost unanimously last October, by which the General Assembly terminated South Africa's Mandate over the Territory and declared that South Africa had no other right to administer it and that thenceforth South West Africa had come under the direct responsibility of the United

Nations. At its fifth special session last May this august Organization again adopted by an overwhelming majority resolution 2248 (S-V), calling on South Africa to turn over the administration of South West Africa to a duly constituted United Nations Council for South West Africa.

146. Drawing courage from those who, when it suits their convenience and interests, say that the United Nations resolutions only raise false hopes, South Africa has persisted in ignoring these important and historic resolutions in respect of South West Africa. To emphasize its contempt of the United Nations, South Africa has gone ahead to integrate South West Africa into itself; it has gone ahead to export more and more into that Territory those policies of apartheid and "Bantustanism" which this Organization has unequivocally condemned; and it is now conducting a mock trial of thirty South West African nationalists whose only crime is that they support the decision of our Organization. How much longer is the United Nations going to tolerate this state of affairs? We hope that it is not for long.

147. The record of the United Nations in the economic field is, without doubt, more impressive than its political record. Through its Economic and Social Council, via its United Nations Development Programme, and in association with the specialized agencies, it has accomplished a great deal for the world, especially the underdeveloped world. The creation of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) added fresh impetus to the movement for economic co-operation on a truly global scale; but, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, the practical achievements of that institution have been rather disappointing. We hope that at its second session in New Delhi next year, UNCTAD will address itself to a programme aiming at the production of more concrete results.

148. Since we of the developing countries are not anxious to continue being eternal recipients of foreign aid, since we know by experience that in many cases the aid given is more than offset by unfavourable terms of trade, since we are anxious to be on our own feet, economically, as soon as possible, paying our way on normal international commercial terms, we attach a great deal of importance to UNCTAD and to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and we hope that the developed countries will give these bodies a warmer and more practical support than they have done hitherto.

149. The Nigerian delegation shares the feeling of regret, to which several other delegations have already given expression, at the failure of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations to make any real advance towards finding a solution to the problem of peace-keeping. On the other hand, being a member of that Committee and having served on its predecessor, which was charged with the same difficult assignment, Nigeria is only too well aware of the many impediments to progress in this case. Notable among them is the present international climate.

150. This does not mean that we should hold our hand until all the dark clouds on the horizon disappear. Some of them have been there for quite a

while, some will remain for quite a while yet, and fresh ones will certainly spring into view from time to time. But there are clouds and clouds. One or two that we now face—and we all know which of our current crises are here indicated—are of such magnitude that until they have been at least reduced to manageable proportions no real headway can be made in devising a peace-keeping plan for the future that will command the general, not to say unanimous, support of this Assembly.

151. In the circumstances, while one can understand the impatience of those who would like to see quick results in this area, it seems clear that harm rather than good is likely to result from forcing the issue at this time, and the Assembly would, in our view, be wise to give serious consideration to the recommendation of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, which has as its Chairman one of the ablest diplomats at the United Nations. That recommendation is that the Special Committee should remain seized of this item, with the implication that the Assembly should refrain from any attempt to rush through any decision at this session that could prejudice the further work of the Special Committee [see resolution 2249 (S-V)].

152. There is, however, in our view, at least one step that the Assembly can take at this session that would not prejudice the Committee's work but would be a great help to the United Nations. This Assembly can and should renew its appeal to those countries that have not yet done so to pay up their voluntary contributions in accordance with the consensus decision of the nineteenth session of 1965.^{4/} Nigeria made its own payment as long ago as October 1965.

153. The Nigerian delegation wishes to thank those who have taken the initiative to request the Assembly to consider how we might control and utilize underwater resources for the benefit of the world as a whole. They can count upon our whole-hearted support.

154. Before concluding, we should like to state for the record that Nigeria continues to believe that, in the long-term interest of all the world, steps should be taken to enable the People's Republic of China to take its rightful place in the United Nations.

155. This session opened under very ominous clouds. It has on its agenda a number of items which will provoke quite controversial discussion. There are those who, therefore, have already written it off as an abortive session. We must do our best to prove them wrong. The Nigerian delegation will heartily co-operate to that end.

156. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you my sincere congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the General Assembly at its twenty-second session. Your election is a tribute not only to your country and to the group of socialist States of which Romania is a member, but also to your own high qualities of statesmanship, qualities which I have known and appreciated from our frequent personal contacts, especially during my visit to your country last spring.

157. It is a happy coincidence that your election should take place in the jubilee year of the Great October Revolution. I take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Soviet people on the anniversary of this great historic event. I should also like to pay a tribute to the outgoing President, Ambassador Abdul Rahman Pazhwak of Afghanistan, who presided over three strenuous sessions of the General Assembly with great ability and distinction.

158. The Assembly is meeting this year in sombre circumstances. As the Secretary-General stated in the opening sentence of the introduction to his annual report, "the international political situation has not only not improved; it has in fact deteriorated considerably" [A/6701/Add.1, para. 1]. He rightly attributed this deterioration to the recourse to violence and threat of violence throughout the world, and warned that "When unbridled use of force is accepted and intimidation and threats go unchallenged, the hopes of a world order such as the one outlined in the Charter become dim and hollow" [*ibid.*, para. 151].

159. These are words uttered by a man deeply devoted to the cause of human brotherhood and understanding, and I should like to add my voice to those which have preceded me in expressing our appreciation and admiration for U Thant's tireless efforts for peace in the world. The disillusionment and anguish clearly reflected in the Secretary-General's words were echoed by many representatives in this debate. But nowhere has this feeling of frustration and disappointment been more manifest and justified than in the handling by the United Nations of the issues arising out of the war unleashed by Israel against our people last June.

160. Before I deal with this problem which, understandably, is of paramount importance for us, I should like to state that my country's position on the other important questions on the agenda of the present session, such as disarmament, peace-keeping, decolonization, development, human rights and China's representation in the United Nations, will be fully expounded by my delegation when they come before the appropriate bodies. I should, however, like to refer briefly to a question which is of world-wide concern.

161. A cruel war continues to be waged in Viet-Nam, inflicting unimaginable suffering on the people of that unhappy land. It cannot be repeated too often that a military solution imposed from the outside can never solve what is essentially a civil war, fought for political ends. Once it is conceded that a military solution is not the answer—to use the exact words of Ambassador Goldberg [1562nd meeting]—what justification is there for continuing the savage bombing of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam? It is only in the immediate and unconditional cessation of the bombing that there can be any hope for rational and fruitful discussions of the underlying political issues.

162. Ultimately there must be a return to and scrupulous observance of the Geneva Agreements of 1954, which provide the soundest bases for ending this vicious conflict which has brought suffering to millions of people and imperiled international peace and security.

^{4/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, Annex No. 21, document A/5916, para. 2 (c).

163. There is on the agenda of the present session an item entitled "The situation in the Middle East" (item 94), which the Assembly decided to consider as a matter of high priority. Yet the other day we heard the Foreign Minister of Israel suggest [1566th meeting] that the United Nations should take no substantive action but merely content itself with a call for direct negotiations between the parties. This approach found no support in the Assembly, and with good reason. The implications of Israel's proposal are clear. Twenty years of United Nations work and involvement in the region would come to an end, the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly upholding the rights of the refugees would be discarded, the elaborate machinery set up to keep the peace would be dismantled, and all past obligations assumed under the auspices of the United Nations would be nullified. And all this for what purpose? The answer, clearly and simply, is this: to put the stamp of international approval on Israel's new gains at the expense of the Arabs.

164. Israel must have known that the Assembly could not subscribe to such a course, but it presented its ideas none the less, not expecting them to be adopted by this Assembly but in the hope that its intransigence would in the end prevent the United Nations from taking any action, which is really Israel's aim and purpose. The Israelis undoubtedly hope to achieve this negative purpose with the help and support they confidently expect to receive from some of their powerful friends.

165. This situation reflects the deep-seated hostility and mistrust with which the United Nations is now viewed by the ruling circles in Israel. The Israelis consider the United Nations as an interfering nuisance. That is why we hear from Mr. Eban such statements as "the Middle East is not an international protectorate" and solutions "cannot be grafted onto it from outside" [1566th meeting, para. 145]. I wonder, in passing, whether that was the view held by Mr. Eban in 1947 and 1948 when the partition plan was grafted from outside, although every State in the region had voted against it and the great majority of the people of the country whose fate was being decided strongly objected to it. Is this not a typical example of the opportunism which has become the most characteristic feature of Israel's contribution to the work of this Organization?

166. While Israel virtually alone advocated a hands-off attitude, the overwhelming majority of Members felt that the United Nations should continue to play an active role in finding a solution to the crisis. Any other position would condone territorial expansion and make it the sole basis for a political settlement which, in such circumstances, would inevitably be in favour of the side which chose to use military force.

167. The central issue emerging from this debate, as indeed was the case in the emergency session, is the withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied Arab territories. I can do no better than repeat what the Secretary-General said in the introduction to his annual report on this fundamental question of principle. His words express, better than I can ever hope to express, the concern that the military occupation of

territories of Member States has evoked throughout the world. He said:

"There is the immediate and urgently challenging issue of the withdrawal of the armed forces of Israel from the territory of neighbouring Arab States occupied during the recent war. There is near unanimity on this issue, in principle, because everyone agrees that there should be no territorial gains by military conquest. It would, in my view, lead to disastrous consequences if the United Nations were to abandon or compromise this fundamental principle." [A/6701/Add.1, para. 47.]

Further on he said:

"It is indispensable to an international community of States—if it is not to follow the law of the jungle—that the territorial integrity of every State be respected, and the occupation by military force of the territory of one State by another cannot be condoned." [Ibid., para. 49.]

I know that many of my colleagues in this Hall have quoted those passages from the introduction to the annual report, but those words are of such primary importance for the future of the Organization that I considered it my duty to repeat them in this statement.

168. The same serious and urgent challenge which faced the emergency session of the General Assembly faces us today; and it is: will Israel be allowed to solidify its aggression, and will it be encouraged in its avowed aim to annex the Arab territories it has occupied? I do not think there is a single representative in this Hall who is not aware of the ominous implications in this situation for the United Nations and, indeed, for the civilized world order which the Charter seeks to establish. If this drift towards international anarchy is not halted, no State will be immune from attack or from mutilation of its national territory.

169. A good deal has been said about the necessity of linking the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Arab territory to an affirmation of the Charter principle that all Members are entitled to security and freedom from threat of attack—a principle, I might add, which was incorporated in all the General Armistice Agreements signed in 1949, agreements which have been repeatedly flouted, and now denounced, by Israel.

170. This question of security and national existence has proved to be the most potent weapon in Israel's propaganda arsenal. We are all familiar with the picture that Israel propaganda has presented to the world—of a small country whose very existence is threatened by predatory neighbours—and with the endless repetition of stories about its vulnerability, the danger of its imminent destruction and strangulation, a word which Mr. Eban seems to be particularly fond of using. One who was unaware of the facts would think that Israel had always been in the region and that suddenly and out of sheer malice the Arabs plotted and prepared for its destruction.

171. I think the time has come to explode, once and for all, that myth, which gave Israel so much undeserved world-wide sympathy and made the Arabs, who have for years been the victims of aggression, appear as the aggressors. Mr. Eban read to us copious quotations of warlike statements from various Arab

sources. I can assuredly quote a few choice phrases from some of his more talkative colleagues past and present. But the point is not who talked but who acted.

172. As the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Republic said in his statement:

"War is not a state of mind; war is aggression ... Peace, like war, is made up of deeds, not words."
[1573rd meeting, para. 102.]

The facts, and only the facts, will reveal who is really the aggressor and who is the victim, who should be worried about security and territorial integrity and who is the one whose insatiable territorial ambitions are the principal threat to peace in the area.

173. But we do not have to go far back to get the answer. The recent war in the Middle East has provided us with all the evidence we need. Mr. Eban rightly said that the question of responsibility for the war was a crucial one—a question which has the closest relevance to our present discussion. Now, two questions must be answered before we can determine that responsibility. The first is who started the war, and the second is whether there was any justification for starting it.

174. Regarding the first question, there is hardly any need to state once again that it was Israel which started the war. General Dayan was kind enough to confirm to the world that the Arabs did not attack first, and had to pay for their mistake. Now we come to the second question—was Israel justified in attacking its Arab neighbours? The Charter fully recognizes the right of self-defence in case of armed attack. But no such attack was launched against Israel. Because of its scale and power, the Israeli attack could not possibly be considered as a spontaneous act of self-defence. The element of surprise necessary for military success could hardly have been achieved if the United Arab Republic was on the verge of attacking Israel. There can be no room for doubt, therefore, that that attack, far from being an act of self-defence, was the end-product of a carefully drawn up plan of aggression.

175. Israel justifies its attack mainly on two grounds: the statements emanating from certain Arab quarters, and the closing of the Straits of Tiran. Regarding those statements, no one can seriously suggest that war can be justified on such a flimsy basis. Bellicose statements came from both sides; and, in any event, it is acts and not words that count.

176. As for the Straits of Tiran, neither the interests involved nor the legal controversy relating to the right of innocent passage could possibly justify the launching of an armed attack of such massive proportions. And, in any case, the concept of preventive war is not admissible under the Charter. The only permissible *casus belli* is self-defence against armed attack. And the closing of the Straits of Tiran was not such an act of armed attack. If we add to that the assurances of the Arab States that they would not initiate offensive action, and consider the progress which had already been made at that time to find a generally acceptable formula for the solution of the problem of navigation, can there be any explanation of Israel's attack except in terms of its war aims, which we now know go much beyond asserting the right of innocent passage? If

there were any doubts about that they were entirely removed by Israel's declared intention of annexing the newly-conquered territories—an intention proclaimed to the world a few days after the leaders of Israel had declared on the morning of 5 June that their country had no territorial ambitions.

177. The fifth of June was not the first, and I fear will not be the last, time that the Arab countries will be forced to fight to defend themselves against Israeli aggression, unless the United Nations rises to the challenge facing it today. The true nature of the conflict between Israel and the Arabs bears no resemblance to the picture which Zionist mythology has presented to the world: a picture of the Arabs with their vast homelands and rich resources, maliciously and wantonly grudging a long-persecuted people their little corner of earth which their ancestors had once occupied thousands of years ago. Some well-meaning people who have been brainwashed by Zionist propaganda have attributed this to so-called religious antagonism or traditional Arab-Jewish hostility; others have attributed it to the clash of two nationalisms; still others have laid the blame on the unbridled ambitions of certain Arab leaders. But what are the facts?

178. The conflict arose not because of any historical or religious antagonism between Arabs and Jews. On the contrary, we Arabs can pride ourselves on the fact that throughout our long history and at the height of Arab power in the Middle Ages the Jews found a haven and refuge in Arab lands and their scholars and theologians were able to make their greatest contributions to Jewish philosophy and ethics under the benevolent and tolerant rule of the Arab caliphates of Cordoba and Baghdad. The conflict arose because in the nineteenth century European Jews calling themselves Zionists planned to establish a State in a country which for centuries had been overwhelmingly Arab in population, land-ownership, language and culture. This was not a clash of nationalisms, nor was it the usual antagonism between settler communities and indigenous populations. The new society which Zionism wanted to establish in Palestine was to be completely and exclusively Jewish. Such an aim was bound to be opposed by the Arabs of Palestine for the very simple reason that no nation in the world gives up its homeland to accommodate another.

179. As the Zionist programme could be implemented only at the expense of the Arabs, the interests of Zionism and those of the Arab people of Palestine soon became mutually exclusive, and the issue could be settled only by force. It could not be otherwise, since the Arabs of Palestine could not be expected to co-operate in their own destruction. The story of the implementation of the Zionist programme is well known, and it is this gradual and piecemeal implementation, frequently by force, that is at the heart of the problem and that is the basic cause of the conflict.

180. An important characteristic of Zionist strategy which perhaps more than any other has contributed to the success of the movement is that it never, at any time, has fully revealed its aims. Limited demands which to an outsider seemed eminently reasonable were presented from time to time, and as soon

as they were granted further "limited and reasonable" objectives were proclaimed, until step by step the whole programme would be fully implemented. Thus, at the beginning the early Zionist immigrants came as religious people who wished to worship their God in the land which contains their holiest shrines. Then, when the time came for the establishment of agricultural settlements, the immigrants shed their religious robes and became pioneers.

181. The next stage was the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish National Home. Then, in the thirties, the banner of unlimited immigration was raised to provide a haven for the victims of Nazi persecution in Europe. During the Second World War the demand for a national home changed into a demand for a national State. Thus, partition was advocated so that a State could be established in part of Palestine, preferably with a minimum number of Arabs, whose mass exodus in 1948—largely engineered by the Haganah—was described by the late Chaim Weizmann as a miraculous solution of the major problem facing the State. A further stage in the Zionist programme was reached with the occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan and Syrian and Egyptian territory. Already steps are being taken to go still further. Jerusalem has been annexed despite two clear resolutions [2253 (ES-V) and 2254 (ES-V)] of the General Assembly, and new settlements are being established in occupied Syrian and Jordanian territories, while the cease-fire on the Suez Canal is repeatedly violated, with the wanton and indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians in the heavily populated cities in the area.

182. As can be seen, the story of Zionism in the Arab world is one of continuous advance, gradual but relentless and pursued with fanatical singlemindedness. In view of this record of uninterrupted expansion and violence, are we not entitled to ask: Whose security is really threatened, the Arab States', or Israel's? The United Nations has a special responsibility towards the long-suffering people of Palestine because everything that has happened in the last twenty years has flowed directly from the United Nations decision to partition the country against the wishes of its people, and from the United Nations failure to put an end to Israel's continuous expansion.

183. This is especially pertinent in respect of the refugees, who have been and still are the principal victims of Israel's expansion. They were considered from the beginning to be the special responsibility of the United Nations. Their welfare and their right to return to their homes was guaranteed and accorded priority over and above all the other aspects of the problem—a matter of such importance that

the representative of the United States at the time, Mr. Dean Rusk, stated:

"We could not accept the proclamation of peace as a prerequisite for the return of refugees, and hope the Assembly would not make this a condition ... they need not wait for a proclamation of peace ... these unhappy people should not be made a pawn in the negotiations for a final settlement."

It would be interesting to know whether the United States delegation today shares the views of its Secretary of State.

184. What is the United Nations to do now? Israel tells us to do nothing, to leave it to Israel and the Arabs to settle their conflict by direct negotiation—in other words, to give Israel time to consolidate its occupation and proceed with its plans for annexation. I cannot believe that there is any fair-minded person in this Assembly who would in all honesty and sincerity expect the Arabs to negotiate while their territories are under military occupation. I do not think the Israelis seriously believe that the Arabs will ever engage in such negotiations of capitulation. Their real aim is to keep the situation fluid and unsettled until a new opportunity presents itself to occupy more Arab lands and to render a few more hundreds of thousands of Arabs homeless. That is Israel's programme of peace.

185. We have had no illusions about this, but there are some who are either unable or unwilling to face the facts. However, at long last Israel feels bold enough to reveal a good deal more than it usually does about its real intentions. The mask is off. Actions are finally catching up with all those empty and insincere declarations. To some it is perhaps an unpleasant revelation, especially to those who had convinced themselves that their deep sense of guilt would be expurgated if they permitted Israel to get what it wanted at the expense of the Arabs.

186. If the United Nations fails to act now, then a new outbreak of armed conflict will be inevitable. Let there be no mistake about it; failure to come to grips with the problem will lead to war, because there are limits beyond which no people can endure the humiliation of continued enemy occupation of its territory. If the international community is unable to end that occupation, then there is no alternative left for our people but to fight—a desperate, unequal and hopeless fight perhaps, but a fight that will restore the honour and self-respect of a nation which has lost much, but not its faith.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.