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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWELFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 12 June 1982, at 10.30 a.m.

President:

Mr. KITTANI

(Iraq)

- Address by His Excellency Mr. Giovanni Spadolini, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic

Mr. Giovanni Spadolini, President of the Council of Ministers of Italy,
was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have great pleasure in welcoming the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, His Excellency Mr. Giovanni Spadolini, and in inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SPADOLINI (Italy) (spoke in Italian, English text furnished by the delegation): More than ever in recent months local wars have shattered the dream which mankind has pursued since the end of the Second World War of re-establishing a certain international order. These local wars are all linked to outbreaks of long-standing national resentments and the re-emergence of boundary disputes, which are no longer linked with the ideological assumption on which the destabilizing initiatives of some years ago were based.

(Mr. Spadolini, Italy)

We are confronted with an absolutely new situation which links to some extent the war between Iran and Iraq, the new war tensions in the Middle East and the armed conflict in the South Atlantic, in the Falkland Islands.

In the face of these obvious disturbances on the world scene, in the face of the disquieting reaffirmation of nationalistic tendencies which have their roots in disputes which date back hundreds and even thousands of years, man is asking questions about the basic instruments for maintaining peace within a pattern, perhaps unattainable, of a series of world balances. Not even the search for coexistence between the super-Powers appears to be adequate for the neutralization of this type of dispute.

During the 20 years between the two wars, and before the emergence of the Nazi barbarism, many attempts were made to build, upon the ashes of the first world conflict, a guaranteed international order. During those years, after enormous but unfortunately unfinished labours, mankind worked out plans for the League of Nations. After the Second World War and the nuclear epilogues which marked its conclusion, we succeeded in advancing beyond the narrow and paralyzing structures of the League of Nations and established this Organization this community, to which I pay a sincere and profound tribute on behalf of the Italian Government. In particular, I salute Mr. Ismat Kittani, the President of the General Assembly, to whom I wish to express my personal satisfaction at his election to the presidency of this twelfth special session, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, with whom I recently had a meeting in Rome, which I still remember vividly.

The United Nations is the direct outcome of the great movement of the eighteenth century which blossomed in the enlightenment and reached its highest philosophical peak in the thought of Immanuel Kant. It was designed to impose the laws of reason on the laws of war and to rediscover in the common dignity of man a remedy capable of neutralizing the germs of violence, domination and hatred.

This enlightened and rationalist philosophy, which embodied the highest expression of the Christian conquest of the individual conscience and its perennial celebration, gave rise to a whole series of movements which were together defined, during the nineteenth century and a great part of the twentieth century, as pacifist and humanitarian ones.

(Mr. Spadolini, Italy)

Pacifism and humanitarianism are two sides of the same coin, two moments of the same reality. Constantly humiliated by the course of events, constantly contradicted by a tumultuous succession of wars, from the French Revolution to the second world conflict, those principles of peace and individual dignity, based on tolerance and mutual respect, have sustained the efforts of humanity for two centuries; they have constituted a defence against the unleashing of primordial hatreds, a bulwark against the most brutal violations of the international order and an anchorage for the human spirit in its efforts to withdraw into itself and those permanent values inherent in it.

It was not by chance that Benedetto Croce was able to speak of peace as the supreme perception of our spirit and as the highest conquest which mankind, guided and sustained by reason, could achieve in its perpetual struggle against the forces of evil and the forces of sin - to use theological language - which are multiplying around us and within us.

The Italian Government considers that the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is of extraordinary importance, because it seeks to redirect world attention to an objective of absolute priority for the civilized and peaceful growth of mankind and, indeed, for its very survival.

We intend to grasp the deeper significance of this meeting, of this initiation of a massive and carefully planned offensive against the arms race and against man's self-destruction. We exhort all States Members of the United Nations, and primarily the major nuclear Powers, to give proof of their firm determination to unite their efforts and their best abilities and mobilize all their intellectual and spiritual energies, which are essential for the success of this peace offensive.

We have all been called upon to live through one of the most tragic phases of the 35 years which separate us from the last world catastrophe. Recourse to the use of force for the settlement of international disputes is becoming more and more frequent, while intolerable violations of human rights and of international law continue to be perpetrated, and while new

(Mr. Spadolini, Italy)

conflicts are being perversely linked with ancient crises, giving rise to new and disquieting sources of tension. All these are signs of the gradual erosion of international trust, understanding and mutual respect.

Distrust, fear, the obsessive search for military security and attempts to divert the attention of public opinion from internal failures towards international objectives are increasing the use of armed force as a major means of meeting national needs and satisfying national aspirations.