

But if the independence of Belize represents an event to celebrate, how depressing it is to contemplate again on the agenda of this General Assembly the same issues affecting Southern Africa that this organization has been pronouncing itself on for decades. I was speaking earlier of the dynamics of change in human affairs, and of the futility of resisting the strength of human aspiration for self-determination. But in South Africa, in 1981, resistance to change has increased. I have no doubt that justice will come for the victims of racism in South Africa, for the majority, whose human dignity is abused in an affront to us all. I sympathize with the impatience of those who shudder at abiding any longer -- for another generation, another decade or two -- the oppression of apartheid. But I counsel wisdom in choosing methods of promoting the freedom of these people for we must not let differences over tactics serve to weaken our unity in that purpose.

In Namibia, too, Mr. President, the intransigence of the South African government remains the sole obstacle to a negotiated settlement. Our only goal is to enable the Namibian people to gain their independence at last and the right to a free and fair election in which all Namibians can take part under U.N. supervision. Canada supports unconditionally Security Council Resolution 435 and the U.N. Settlement Plan, and we have been active, particularly in the contact group and with African states, in pursuing this goal.

In the Middle East, there is also conflict, and at its centre the Arab-Israeli dispute, as old as the U.N. itself. We cannot afford further delay in moving toward a negotiated settlement to this generations-old conflict, in which all the interested parties must participate. Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate rights and concerns which must be taken into account. Israel's quest for security and recognized boundaries, and the right to be fully accepted by its neighbours, can be met only in a political, not a military, framework. The same holds true for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to a homeland within a clearly-defined territory, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

I therefore urge all the parties concerned to summon the vision and will required to take decisions which are as necessary as they are difficult. Among the areas where progress is urgently needed, none is more pressing than measures to ensure that the Middle East will remain free of nuclear weapons.