

imperil the security and independence of states in the area, or make it more difficult for the UN to help in achieving a settlement.

In Cyprus the United Nations Force still faces a difficult situation. The parties to the dispute are no closer to agreement now than before. The situation on the ground remains tense and dangerous. It is generally agreed that the UN force plays a vital role but the costs of the Force are running \$40 million over the contributions collected. We believe strongly that all member states, in particular the permanent members, should make appropriate contributions to duly authorized UN peacekeeping operations. The fact that only a dozen or so governments have made payments to the UN Special Account for the first six months of this year is not a record of which we can be proud. I can only conclude, Mr. President, that unless the dispute moves toward settlement soon my Government will have to review its position as a troop contributor in Cyprus.

We are concerned as well about continuing acts of terrorism throughout the world and about innocent people who have been threatened or killed.

The General Assembly established a committee four years ago to study both terrorism itself and its underlying causes. The committee came to no conclusions, and the Assembly has not even studied its report. We believe the Assembly should now concentrate on a single aspect of the problem in an effort to achieve concrete results.

I therefore support the proposal of my colleague from the Federal Republic of Germany that priority should be given to action against taking hostages, and that international agreement be reached to ensure the punishment of those who engage in such acts wherever they seek refuge. But we must not forget that conventions against aerial hijacking already exist. If all states were to ratify them we could be more confident that such hijackings would stop.

My predecessor spoke last year of the "totally unsatisfactory rate of progress in achieving disarmament measures" and said that the General Assembly must continue "as a spur to action in the field of disarmament". A year later the record is little better. In the words of our distinguished Secretary-General "the problem of armaments continues to present the most serious threat to a peaceful and orderly future for the world community". We should be ready to explore new avenues, and in this spirit my Government is prepared to consider sympathetically a proposal to convene a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament in 1978.

We must not delude ourselves however that the principal obstacles to progress on disarmament will be removed by discussion in this Assembly. These obstacles are the differences of view among states as to the best ways of ensuring their security. Our examination of ways of improving the role of the United Nations in the field of arms control and disarmament will have achieved little unless member countries redouble their efforts to overcome these differences.

At this mid-point in the Disarmament Decade the responsibility to address the real obstacles to progress is shared by all members of this organization. But this responsibility falls most heavily on the nuclear-weapon states and other states of military significance. Progress will be meagre unless we re-examine traditional assumptions, take adequate account of the security concerns of others, and seize all opportunities for concrete action.

Economic and Social Development

All of us acknowledge that the money spent on weapons might be put to better use. Few of us reduce our defence budgets. To do so requires better understanding and mutual confidence. Such understanding and mutual confidence is difficult to achieve in the best of cases and not least in a world divided between wealth and poverty. That is why a common effort to accelerate the process of development and to reduce disparities is in the interest of all states.

Yet, our difficulties should not obscure the fact that we have made significant progress towards agreement on the nature of our agenda and priorities, despite the apparent lack of concrete achievement. If our preparation is thorough, and our approach to it sincere, achievement will be more likely to follow, provided that the requisite political will exists on all sides. It is now my earnest hope that the present phase of the Paris Conference will bear fruit.

The work of the Paris Conference is proceeding in parallel with work in the larger international bodies associated with the UN system. Its participants are aware they must retain a global perspective on the problems before them if non-participants in the Conference are to have confidence in its results, and if these are to influence the actions of governments in the longer term.

The Conference is part of a continuing process of negotiation aimed at narrowing the gap between rich and poor.