

D.L.: Mr. Petrovsky, can you describe the ties and interactions that exist, firstly between the UN and the city of Geneva, and secondly between the UN and Switzerland?

V.P.: One of my major functions here as Director-General is to serve as a communication link between the Geneva-based UN agencies and programmes, and the diplomatic community, on the one hand, and the city of Geneva and the Governments of canton of Geneva and Switzerland on the other. Soon after my arrival here I opened a dialogue with the Geneva and Bern authorities. Now it has become regular practice to have annual meetings with the President of the Swiss Confederation, and the Foreign Minister, as well as the State Council of Geneva. The last time I went to Bern on 13 June, I had talks with the President, Kaspar Villiger, and with the Foreign Minister, Flavio Cotti. In our talks with the Swiss authorities we discussed questions relating to the diplomatic community in Geneva.

The diplomatic community here is very special. In fact, there are four diplomatic corps. First of all, 156 diplomatic missions are assigned to the UN. Then we have dozen ambassadors working on disarmament. There are ambassadors to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and still other special ambassadors appointed to the Commission on Human Rights. Above all this, we have a diplomatic committee that represents the interests of the diplomatic community as a whole.

The main concern of the Geneva diplomatic community is the application of the UN Convention on Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities, and I am very happy to be able to tell you that we have reached an understanding with both the federal and city authorities that this convention will be applied in its full scope to the diplomats in Geneva. The diplomatic community is not asking for any special privileges. But it wants Geneva, which is the birthplace and the primary location of international organizations, to keep the highest standards possible with regard to the diplomatic community. When I was in Bern, the Foreign Minister informed me that the WTO agreement on the status of diplomats will be applied in its full scope to the diplomatic community in Geneva.

I would like to mention also the developing interaction with the Swiss and Geneva authorities on other issues of common concern. I am particularly grateful that these authorities have provided us with assistance and encouragement for the organization of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

This event is extremely important, it is a milestone for our organization. We are not only

going to hold festivities, but also serious discussions and brainstorming on UN issues and on the role of our organization. All the necessary arrangements have been made, thanks to the considerable support from local authorities. Otherwise, we would not have been able to go ahead with some of the plans, such as the very important Youth Forum held here in Geneva with the participation of the UN Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He has also opened a series of lectures on the role of the United Nations in the Twentieth Session of the Institute of Foreign Affairs. And I am looking forward with great interest to the discussion on the question of national minorities, which will be organized by the Swiss Committee this coming September in Basel. It is tremendously important that we solve ethnic conflicts, and to do so we need more than just theory, we need very concrete examples. It seems to me that the Swiss democratic model could serve this purpose. It is a success story and is also a good example for others.

We are also working with the authorities to overcome the feeling that there are two communities in Geneva; an international diplomatic community and a local one. To me, there is to be no such division. Diplomats and international civil servants living here, should feel part and parcel of the city of Geneva. That is why I made the decision to open the Palais des Nations to the Genevans during the UN50 commemoration on 15 October with an open-house. It will give Genevans a better feeling for what we are doing. Things are going well and it is tremendously important that Geneva be one united community. The division between *la rive gauche* and *la rive droite* should only be a matter of geography, without any other implication. This is the spirit of Geneva, a city which has become not just one of the major centres of multilateral diplomacy but which also enriched international activities with its traditions such as tolerance and respect for others, and with the heritage of the great thinkers who lived in Geneva. The Swiss tradition of democracy and equality in relations between different groups of population is very important for the diplomatic community. We want to further advance these traditions and create new conditions wherein Geneva could strengthen its position as the Europolis of the United Nations.

D.L.: What message would you like to send out during the festivities celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the San Francisco Charter?

V.P.: The first message is that this is not so much a day for festivities, but rather a day for serious thinking and for realistic understanding of the role of the United Nations. We need to

learn from the lessons of the past, take stock of the present, and look towards the future. And when you look into the future, you should remember that the UN Charter starts with the words: "We, the Peoples of the United Nations". Thus we are open to, and actually need, dialogue with all social groups. We are now entering a transitional period in world history, and in this period I think that all governments and all citizens should combine their efforts in order to create the conditions for change in a non-violent, evolutionary and democratic way.

D.L.: It's clear that the UN's role has changed more over the last five years than it had during the 45 preceding years. What is your assessment of the 1990-1995 period, in terms of the UN's credibility and actions?

V.P.: The earlier period is of course very important, because these were the first years of the United Nations. Unfortunately, immediately after the birth of our Organization, at the end of the Second World War, we became involved in another war, the cold war. And under the conditions of the cold war, the UN was unable to fulfil its major mission, which is to serve as the centre of actions approved by the Member States. There have been confrontations, but still the UN has played a very important role. It has prevented confrontations from extremes, minimized the use of force. It has helped to avoid several conflicts, and what's more it has taken a number of important initiatives, like peace-keeping operations which were not envisioned in the UN Charter. In addition, processes such as decolonization have been dealt with by the UN. Much progress has also been made over this period in the field of social and economic development. But as I mentioned, the UN was not able to work as a centre for concerted actions in the fullest sense. And only after the end of the cold war, in the new political environment was the UN able to undertake agreed actions and to provide Member States with expertise and knowledge in promoting peace, development and democracy.

It is also very important that the UN, in particular the Secretary-General, has vision and strategy for action. This is essential with regard to the programme of conflict resolution which is contained in his report "An Agenda for Peace". This also concerns disarmament which is the subject of the Secretary-General's report "New dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post-Cold War Era". Of no less importance is "An Agenda for Development". In other words, the reports of the Secretary-General give blueprints for the activities of States and set norms in the international community. As a result of the changes

today the United Nations has both the vision and the instruments to deal with the pressing problems of this transitional period.

D.L.: Does it have the means to deal with them?

V.P.: We have the means in the sense that we have the expertise and the knowledge, in all the spheres of international cooperation, but difficulties arise in regards to financial and material resources. We have severe financial constraints: they are a major part of our current reality.

D.L.: In his Agenda for Peace, the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, presented several different solutions for correcting the organization's budget deficit, including a proposal for taxing arms sales. What is the standing of these proposals?

V.P.: These proposals are open for discussion and we are considering them with Member States. Numerous other proposals are being advanced on how to finance the UN. For example, recently the Secretary-General has suggested that some Member States issue bonds against their arrears, and that other Member States accept these bonds in payment of amounts owed to them by the Organization.

I think that despite all the complications, the UN has proved that it can serve, at least in this transitional period, as a kind of safety net. It is able to minimize the damaging effects of the changes and channel events in a non-violent way. That's why I expect Parliaments to consider how they could help and to loosen their purse-strings. Some people say that the parliaments and governments are today much more concerned about their domestic affairs. Personally I don't see anything wrong with that. I think it's only natural that governments have the well-being of their citizens or their domestic affairs as their top priority. But to do this, governments need a favourable international environment, and that can be provided by the UN through the collective action of Member States.

During the cold war, the international community did not want to hear the words "world police". But today, we need some kind of world police. What's wrong with this idea? It is already part of our vision. More than that, we need an organization to provide assistance in development, which means promoting economic growth and social and environmental protection, as well as helping countries to establish democratic constitutions to promote human

rights and so on. And our Organization has the expertise to do this provided that it has appropriate financial support. I deeply believe that in the long run it does not cost very much to support this Organization.

D.L.: What is being done about the countries that are behind in their UN contributions?

V.P.: You know that there are certain rules in the UN Charter. If the country's debt is more than two years contributions, it is supposed to be deprived of its vote. There are other articles which apply to this matter.

D.L.: So according to you, some of the major contributors should be deprived of their rights?

V.P.: Our major contributors have never reached this stage of course. However, the rules of the Charter should be applied to all without exception. But I hope that actions will be taken to provide the necessary financial support for the UN, and first of all Member States will start to pay on time and in full. But in the meantime, the Secretary-General is using his persuasion to explain our needs to his interlocutors. And in many high-level discussions he has received their support. We hope that it will be translated into practical results.

D.L.: The role played by the future Secretary-General is another subject that is often brought up during discussions on institutional reform. In your opinion, how could the function of Secretary-General be changed?

V.P.: This is a question asked of all major bodies. The Office of the Secretary-General is one of five major organs of the UN and it is clear today that the Secretary-General is the head of the executive arm of the organization. He takes an active approach within the sphere of his competence.

D.L.: But don't you think that reforms are badly needed?

V.P.: Of course reforms are needed. I think that all structures, not only the UN Secretariat needs reform. Reform is not a one-time action, it's a permanent process. When the Secretary-

General came to the organization he immediately started reforms within the Secretariat. He reduced the top echelon of the organization and started to readjust the structures of the UN Secretariat to the new conditions. When I came to Geneva, I also had to begin with adapting the existing structures to the new demands. We are now trying to reduce the Organization's expenses which is also part of the reforms. This falls within the scope of our mandate and at the same time it is good for the Member States. However, it seems that the reform will take longer to implement than it was anticipated.

D.L.: Is the 50th anniversary a good opportunity for comprehensive renewal?

V.P.: It could be, but I know that there are still a lot of differences between the Member States. I believe that more time is needed before new ideas can be implemented. I don't think this will be accomplished this year in full scope, but these ideas will be the subject of thorough discussion. The Member States understand that the UN's 50th Anniversary is a good opportunity for brainstorming on these problems and inciting practical implementation.

D.L.: Over the last decade, two other major forces in international relations have grown in importance: non-governmental organizations and regional or economic organizations. To what extent should the UN welcome and cooperate with non-governmental organizations? What are the UN's main guiding principles in its relations with regional organizations?

V.P.: First of all, let's consider regional structures. If we are speaking about regional inter-governmental structures, they are already part of the UN system, because we have a special chapter VIII that deals with regional arrangements. In this respect, immediately after taking office, the Secretary-General included this problem in his "Agenda for Peace", and also raised the issue of the necessity of giving new life to Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, and of developing closer ties with regional structures. We have instigated a sort of "division of labour" based on our complementarity with regional organizations. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) gives one example of complementary areas, for example in the former Soviet Union. In Tadjikistan, Georgia, the UN is playing the leading role, while the OSCE is playing the leading role in Nagorno-Karabakh. But in all these matters, we are trying to coordinate our activities very closely and exchange information. Here in Geneva,

on the operational level, we have initiated close cooperation between the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the International Committee of the Red Cross. We can delegate for example humanitarian activities. Many missions are being dispatched. We are currently looking deeper into this issue to avoid duplication and tailgating of the missions. We are cooperating not only on the level of the Directors-General, but also holding target-oriented meetings on the level of the Directors of corresponding divisions of our organization. In other words, our ties with regional organizations are becoming closer and closer. I mentioned to you the example of the cooperation between the UN and the OSCE, but we are also developing this kind of complementary action with other regional structures. The Secretary-General is very supportive of regional organizations. He had a special meeting last August in New York and defined a political approach to this matter in the supplement to "An Agenda for Peace".

He stressed, in particular, that the capacity of the regional organizations varies considerably and it will not be appropriate to establish a universal model for interaction with them. Nevertheless, he identified four principles of cooperation between the UN and the regional organizations in peacemaking and peace-keeping. They include: establishing mechanisms for consultations; the primacy of the UN; clearly defined division of labour; and consistency by members of both the UN and the regional organizations in dealing with the problems of common interest.

For non-governmental organizations, it's a little different, but our action is moving in the same direction of closer cooperation. The UN is an inter-governmental organization that cannot function efficiently without relying on the network of the citizens' organizations. As Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, I am in constant contact with these organizations. They were very active during the last Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference in New York. These organizations have their own viewpoint, which is important for government strategy. My own experience, when I dealt for example with human rights in Europe as the Secretary-General of the CSCE Conference on Human Dimension proves this idea. Human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, were very instrumental for bringing information not only to the public, but also to the governments, which are not always aware of what is happening in different parts of their own countries. So I am encouraging the activities of NGOs very strongly and I think that the ECOSOC meeting, which is being held in Geneva, will also deal with this issue. The Secretary-General gives particular importance to developing a dialogue with the new constituencies that are part of international structures. First of all, the mass media has become

a very important part of international life and we are developing a dialogue with the media. We have also started a dialogue with the business community, which was frowned upon during the cold war. Nowadays, we are open to dialogue and welcome any type of communication with different business organizations and different structures. The Davos Forum is very encouraging. During the last meeting this Forum presented a very innovative approach to preparing meetings and special workshops to promote "entrepreneurship in the global public interest". Last, but not least, we also consider it very important to start a dialogue, with all religions. This is a new dimension for the UN.

D.L.: What do you think of the European Stability Pact initiative?

V.P.: I represented the Secretary-General during the two conferences on the Stability Pact in Paris. It is a very important initiative. What has been done goes very much along the lines of preventive diplomacy, which is the UN's major aim in its dealing with crises. The pact itself, and the agreements which were reached during the last meeting in Paris, are tremendously important for prophylactic purposes. It's a very impressive example of cooperation between the UN and a regional structure.

D.L.: Couldn't this kind of cooperative framework be developed in other parts - and if possible in all parts - of the world?

V.P.: Yes, I think we need to take preventive measures in all regions, and of course this serves as a good example. But of course we should take into account the specific conditions of each region. One more observation in this context is that wherever I travel in the world I am always asked for success stories. So we need to share these success stories with countries in other regions, but only after taking their specificity into account.

D.L.: As a diplomat, and also as a former Soviet official and Russian national, what is your analysis of the situation in the former Yugoslavia?

V.P.: I think it is a very serious crisis, but it is generally agreed that the presence of the UN is of paramount importance in the former Yugoslavia. We have always concentrated on one aspect



only of the UN activities - providing humanitarian supplies. This is indeed very important. For example, in Sarajevo the UN established the longest airlift in history. But the preventive actions of the UN are equally important, and I think that public opinion sometimes forgets that the UN has managed to contain the conflict within the present border. I would like to underline the innovative approach of the UN in using preventive deployment in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. For the first time, we are using troops there as a kind of preventive measure. This is preventive diplomacy in action. So when we analyse the situation, we should keep in mind that the situation not only in Macedonia but in the entire area is very complex. The presence of the UN has been able to contain the crisis and minimize its damaging effect.

D.L.: But don't you think that the price to be paid is sometimes too high?

V.P.: Of course, the images testify to this. But we must have a broader view of what has been done by the UN. Clearly, the problem of the protection of our forces is also very important for us. We all speak about human rights, but our people also have rights, and we need to protect them. And the suggestion by the Secretary-General of the Rapid Deployment Force, working within the structures of the UN, could answer this question. The problem is that our troops in the former Yugoslavia are not sufficient. The new troops will allow to continue the UN mandate, which is not to wage war on one side, but to encourage all parties to agree on a cease-fire and to protect the cease-fire. Another mandate is to help the two millions of refugees.

D.L.: What about the lack of coordination, for example in organizing air strikes between NATO and the UN?

V.P.: Again, such coordination is following rules that have been worked out within the Security Council. Any kind of coordination needs improving. Coordination is a permanently improving process. Naturally we sometimes speak about a mistake, but you can understand that very often we are undertaking actions in extraordinary circumstances. In the cold war, we acted following established precedents. Today, the situations are completely unprecedented. And of course, sometimes mistakes are made. We should not be afraid of mistakes. We should be afraid only if mistakes are made but lessons are not learned. But we should understand that we are in a completely new and unprecedented process. In the cold war, international politics could be

compared to a game of chess. I remember in the cold war in Moscow during the crises, we could foresee further action because there were certain rules. Today, world politics is no longer playing chess. I would compare today's international relations to a game of billiards. There are many, many actors and not only traditional. The world has truly become multipolar.

D.L.: One of your works on international relations dealt with disarmament. You are well qualified to appraise the NPT Review and Extension Conference that was recently held in New York. In this context, what is your view on China's nuclear testing, and the possibility that France will resume nuclear testing?

V.P.: Recent nuclear testings make it necessary to multiply the efforts in order to conclude the CTBT next year. The indefinite extension of the non-proliferation treaty provided political and legal framework for the commitment of all to nuclear disarmament. The failure to reach agreement rapidly on nuclear testing would directly undermine the efforts recently undertaken by the international community. Of course, there remains a number of open questions, which is also very natural. But the tremendously important part of the negotiation is that for the first time in history all five nuclear powers are working together and are working within a multilateral context. In the past, test ban agreement was worked out by two super-powers which was then presented to other countries for signature. In this case, the Treaty is being prepared within the Conference on Disarmament which is a very important sign. It shows that a problem of this scope can be solved in a multilateral context. The successful conclusion of the convention on prohibition of chemical weapons has shown that multilateralism is the most effective and reliable answer to the new challenges in the field of disarmament and arms regulation.

D.L.: But a nuclear test ban does not necessarily imply disarmament, which is the final goal.

V.P.: Of course nuclear test ban is not disarmament as such but it facilitates the achievement of this goal. If we look at the history of disarmament efforts, we can see that we are now on the road to nuclear disarmament. There are those who might argue about how advanced the process is, but progress is there. Slow progress does not mean that there is no progress at all.