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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1341)	1
Statement by the President	1
Expression of thanks to the retiring President and to the retiring members of the Security Council, and welcome to the new members	1
Adoption of the agenda	1
Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902)	6

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/. . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements of the Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

Held in New York on Wednesday, 24 May 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. LIU Chieh (China).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, India, Japan, Mali, Nigeria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1341)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902).

Statement by the President

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to say how much I regret that circumstances did not permit me to have fuller consultations with my colleagues personally and individually, as I should have liked to do. In view of the urgency of the request for a meeting and in accordance with the precedents of the Council, I felt that I had no alternative in the circumstances but to call a meeting this morning. I hope that my colleagues will not consider my action in any other light than as indicating my desire to serve the Council to the best of my ability.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President and to the retiring members of the Security Council, and welcome to the new members

2. The PRESIDENT: Before proceeding to the consideration of the agenda of this meeting, it is my privilege, in accordance with the Council's pleasant custom, to say a few words of appreciation to my predecessor in the Chair, Mr. Ignatieff of Canada. Although no meeting of the Council took place during the past months, the world was not altogether free from tensions and disturbing developments in April. Mr. Ignatieff's vast knowledge and experience in world affairs have enabled him to steer us through many hidden hazards. I had the privilege of knowing him for many years, when I was posted in his great country. I count myself among the many admirers of his great qualities, which I am sure will again be brought to bear in our present deliberations. On behalf of the Council, and on my own behalf, I wish to extend our grateful thanks to the outgoing President, Mr. Ignatieff.

3. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): I should like, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President, for the very kind words you have

addressed to me as your predecessor. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all the efforts made by those who preceded both of us in the Chair during the months of January, February and March. They all shared the responsibilities which I know fall upon the President in peculiar fashion with regard to international disputes and troubles. I would only add that I also appreciate the efforts which you have made through consultations to bring about this meeting today.

4. The PRESIDENT: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in 1967, it falls upon me to express the Council's appreciation to those representatives who served with great distinction to the end of 1966. I refer, of course, to Mr. El-Farra of Jordan, Mr. de Beus of the Netherlands, Mr. Corner of New Zealand, Mr. Kironde of Uganda and Mr. Berro of Uruguay. They contributed greatly to sustaining the high traditions of this body, and we thank them sincerely.

5. It is my further pleasant duty to welcome the new members of the Security Council who are present today for the first official meeting since their election. They are well known to all of us for their outstanding services in other organs of the United Nations, and we look forward with pleasure to having their support and co-operation in our future work together. Let me bid a warm welcome to Mr. Sette Camara of Brazil, Mr. Ignatieff of Canada, Mr. Tabor of Denmark, Mr. Makonnen of Ethiopia and Mr. Parthasarathi of India.

Adoption of the agenda

6. The PRESIDENT: This meeting of the Security Council has been called at the urgent request of the representatives of Canada and Denmark. They addressed that request to me yesterday evening in a letter which has been circulated as document S/7902.

7. The provisional agenda of the meeting is contained in document S/Agenda/1341, which is before the Council. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the agenda is adopted.

8. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): Fellow-members of the Security Council, the Soviet Union delegation deems it necessary, in the first place, to reaffirm the Soviet Union's fundamental position with regard to the Chiang Kai-shek group's illegal occupancy of a seat in the United Nations, including the Security Council—a seat which by rights, of course, belongs solely to the People's Republic of China.

9. The Soviet Union delegation also deems it necessary to point out that it sees no adequate grounds for such haste in convening the Security Council and for the artificial dramatization of the situation by the representatives of the Western Powers, which are obviously relying on the method of piling up the stage effects. It is highly significant that—not without suitable stage direction, naturally—it was two NATO countries nowhere near the Middle East, rather than any of the parties directly concerned, which took the initiative in having the Security Council urgently convened.

10. The question involuntarily arises: is it not a case here of a hidden desire to interfere in someone else's business, rather than a true concern for peace and security in the Middle East?

11. The PRESIDENT: As the representative of the Soviet Union is well aware, this is not the first time that I have had the honour of presiding over meetings of the Security Council when important decisions have been reached, with my participation. At this grave juncture of world developments, I shall not allow myself to enter into arguments over a question that was very clearly pronounced upon by the entire membership of the Organization only a few months ago. There can be no question as to the right of the Republic of China, as a Member State in good standing, to send representatives to the competent organs of the United Nations—and, in this case, under specific provisions of the Charter.

12. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): In answer to the remarks which my Soviet colleague has just made as to the reason for this meeting, I can be very brief in explaining why I, on instructions from my Government, and my Danish colleague requested an urgent meeting of the Council to consider what action should be taken in the present grave circumstances in the Middle East. I need only refer members of the Council to the Secretary-General's report of 19 May 1967, now before you, which states that "the current situation in the Near East is more disturbing, indeed, I may say more menacing, than at any time since the fall of 1956" [S/7896, para. 19].

13. In calling for this Security Council meeting we are suggesting that the Council should exercise its responsibilities under the Charter to deal with the kind of threatening situation which the Secretary-General has not only reported to the Security Council but has regarded as sufficiently serious to require him to assume the responsibility for undertaking a personal mission to the area.

14. The situation, as the Secretary-General rightly reported to the Council, has shown signs of "increasingly dangerous deterioration" [*ibid.*, para. 1] for some time. I was only too keenly aware of this, Mr. President, when last month I had the responsibility which you now have. Steady reports of deterioration along the frontier lines between Syria and Israel were reported in correspondence which I received and which I, as President, forwarded to my colleagues. The efforts of General Bull to secure the resumption of the United Nations Mixed Armistice Commission meetings on disputed cultivation problems reached an impasse. Tension also grew as a result of sabotage and terroristic activities on the borders of Syria and Israel, and the Secretary-General reported that the functions and

resources of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization had not enabled that organization to arrest these activities.

15. In recent days statements have been made by the President of the United Arab Republic and by the Prime Minister of Israel which confront us with the possibility of the danger of direct confrontation between the United Arab Republic and Israel over the question of access to the Gulf of Aqaba.

16. In the face of this rising and dangerous state of tension, the means for bringing influences of moderation to bear in the area through the United Nations, far from being increased, have actually been decreased, at the very moment of crisis, by the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force.

17. The principal means now before us to balance this deteriorating situation through the United Nations has been the mission of the Secretary-General himself.

18. I believe, and I believe my Danish colleague shares this belief, that at this stage the most useful contribution which the Council can make in this grave situation is to reinforce the current efforts being made by the Secretary-General to preserve peace in the area. This is the purport of what we are suggesting that the Council should proceed to do. We should at the same time urge that no Member State of the United Nations take any action which would either prejudice the success of the Secretary-General's mission or worsen the situation.

19. In taking this initiative of asking the Council to convene, we are willing, I must stress, to consult with all our colleagues, of course, as well as with the countries most directly concerned, to try to find agreements which will reverse the drift towards the worsening of the confrontation which now exists and which has been drawn to our attention in so dramatic a way by the Secretary-General and by his mission.

20. Therefore, in the face of the grave facts, in the face of the mounting threats and the *faits accomplis*, how can the international community discharge its collective duty unless the full influence of the Security Council, which is charged under Article 24 of the United Nations Charter with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security precisely "to ensure prompt and effective action"—I underline those words—is brought to bear upon the seriously deteriorating situation in the Middle East?

21. That, in sum, is the aim of our initiative. Canada is a friend of all the nations of the area and has always striven to help, by whatever means we could employ, to maintain peace and stability in the area and to assist those in trouble and distress. That is my reply to the representative of the Soviet Union as to our interest in this matter. What we now ask is that the Security Council, and in particular all—and I emphasize "all"—of its permanent members, who bear special responsibility, add the weight of their influence collectively by asking that no Member of the United Nations take any action that would worsen the situation or jeopardize the efforts of the Secretary-General to preserve

peace. That is what we ask the Security Council to do at this stage. We believe that it can do no less.

22. I of course reserve the right to intervene further in regard to any specific proposals that may be put before the Council.

23. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the Soviet Union on a point of order.

24. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): We have just heard a rather lengthy explanation by the representative of Canada, who, instead of speaking on the substance of our remarks, embarked on disquisitions on the substance of the problem, all of which is contrary to the rules and procedure applying in the Security Council. That is my first point.

25. Secondly, the representative of Canada thought fit to refer to a well-known statement of the Secretary-General, U Thant, without in the least being bothered by the nature of the mission in which the Secretary-General is now engaged, and by his present whereabouts.

26. If the Canadian representative really attaches importance to the words he has quoted, the question arises as to why he disregards even the simple fact that it would be advisable to have first received the information deriving from the Secretary-General's mission once he has returned to Headquarters.

27. All this sounds very paradoxical, and reminds us of the Oriental proverb, "You point to the moon, but all he looks at is your finger".

28. Mr. KEITA (Mali) (*translated from French*): The Republic of Mali wishes to make the best contribution it can to the work of the United Nations, to whose noble ideals it has subscribed.

29. My delegation wishes, at this stage, to remind the Council of the following. As all here know, the United Arab Republic, a Member of our Organization, responded favourably to a request from our Organization by yielding to it a part of its national territory for peaceful purposes. That assent was lawfully withdrawn by the United Arab Republic as a sovereign State. Everyone knows also that the Secretary-General of the United Nations took note of the decision made by the United Arab Republic and in turn took a lawful decision himself.

30. In the opinion of my Government, it is doubtful whether this abrupt convening of the Security Council will lead to any lessening of tension in the region in question—if that is really what we are concerned about. My delegation, which is most anxious that the work of the United Nations should be effective, therefore considers that holding a meeting at this time can only be most inopportune.

31. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) (*translated from French*): At the very outset of its statement, the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria would like to state its position of principle, namely, that it regards the occupation of the seat of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, and in the Security Council in particular, by the Chiang Kai-shek clique and its representatives as unlawful.

32. The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria believes that at the present time there was really no need for an urgent meeting of the Security Council, as our colleague from Mali has just said and as was said earlier in the statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union, at the beginning of this meeting. The only purpose of such a meeting, as of all the activity during the last few days on the part of certain Powers and certain representatives, is the false dramatization of a situation which these countries and certain of their representatives have helped to create by their previous activities. For some time, we have been witnessing events in the Middle East which have left these countries and their representatives unconcerned and even, apparently, quite cheerful. You are familiar with the reports which we have received here, at least those appearing in the Press. Now that those events have met with a response—as was to be expected—these same Powers are seeking to create an atmosphere charged with excitement, which will serve their interests and prepare the ground for and perhaps camouflage future intervention in the affairs of the peoples of the Middle East.

33. The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria does not wish to be a party to these manoeuvres. Indeed, our country has a particular interest in maintaining peace and security in the Middle East. We are immediate neighbours of that region, where the imperialist Powers are now seeking to intervene under one pretext or another, in one form or another. My delegation is thus opposed to all these manoeuvres and we believe that holding a meeting of the Security Council at this time will only serve the interests of the forces of intervention and aggression in the Middle East.

34. My colleague to the left, the representative of Canada—with whom I have, incidentally, been on friendly terms ever since he came to the United Nations—has made several references to the report by the Secretary-General. It is, however, interesting to note that the Secretary-General, whose report has been quoted here in this way, did not himself request a meeting of the Security Council—as he had the right to do—because he did not consider that the situation called for such a meeting at the moment.

35. We were amazed also to hear the outgoing President of the Security Council, who presided over the Council during the month of April, tell us that he had received very disquieting reports. We wonder why he did not take action at the time when he received those disquieting reports and when the situation, which certain Powers are now trying to dramatize, was systematically building up. This is really amazing. It is a further reason not to hold a useless meeting—which might even be detrimental to peace—at this time, when the seat of the President of this Council is occupied, as we have said, by someone who represents nobody, or, at least, does not represent the country which he claims to represent.

36. Mr. PARTHASARATHI (India): I should like to state briefly the position of my delegation in the matter of the representation of China in the United Nations.

37. My country recognized the People's Republic of China soon after it came into existence. Ever since then, my delegation to the United Nations—in the Security Council,

the General Assembly and other organs of the world Organization—has consistently supported the right of the People's Republic of China to be represented in the United Nations. My delegation continues to adhere to that position of principle.

38. Mr. President, I should like to recall your kind words of welcome to India on our taking our seat in the Security Council, words for which I thank you most sincerely. In this, my first intervention in the Council, I cannot but quote some parts of a statement made by my Prime Minister on 13 November 1966, two days after India's election to the Security Council. She said that India would use its membership in the United Nations to promote peace and peaceful coexistence in the world. Referring to the struggle for freedom of African-Asian countries and the repressive measures being adopted by colonial Powers, she said: "We are on the side of those struggling for their freedom and fighting for the right of self-determination." She continued by saying that all nations should aim towards the peaceful settlement of international problems and work towards renunciation of war. "We are willing," she said, "to join with any nation prepared to renounce the use of force for settling disputes."

39. The Security Council is the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of peace and security. To be elected to it is a great honour; but in the critical times we are passing through we are more conscious of the responsibility that goes with our membership. Our late Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, said in an address to the United Nations in 1960:

"I do believe that the vast majority of people in every country want us to labour for peace and to succeed. Whether we are large or small, we have to face large issues, issues vital to the future of humanity."¹

40. It is in that spirit of dedication to the cause of peace that my delegation will endeavour to discharge its duties as a member of the Council, with the co-operation of our colleagues.

41. My colleagues from the Soviet Union, Mali and Bulgaria, who have already spoken, have touched upon the manner in which the decision to call this meeting of the Council was taken. We note that it has now been correctly pointed out that it is not merely a question of the convenience of the members of the Council but there is also the rather vital question of the political aspects of any problem before the Council which may become clarified through prior informal consultations, which invariably precede the decision to hold any meeting of the Council. It is for the latter reason that that practice has grown to be a time-honoured one in this Council. Naturally, we are unhappy that there has been an attempt to ignore that practice and bypass it. Let me say, so that the record may be straight, that, had we been consulted, our advice would have been against the holding of this meeting of the Council this morning.

42. My country shares the concern of members of the Council at the recent developments in the Middle East. In a statement on 21 May the Prime Minister of India drew attention to the situation. We understand the measures of preparedness taken by the United Arab Republic to fulfil its obligations to assist another Arab country.

43. At this stage we do not wish to go in any detail into the causes of the present tension in the region. We should prefer to await the report of the Secretary-General on his trip to Cairo. We believe that the Secretary-General is doing his best to maintain peace and we have confidence in his dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. As members of the Council are aware, U Thant left New York only on Monday evening and reached Cairo on Tuesday. Before leaving, he held extensive individual consultations with members of the Council, in particular with the representatives of the permanent members. He is thus fully aware of their views. Members of the Council will agree that the Secretary-General has had so far only a few working hours since his arrival in Cairo and he could not have had any discussions in depth with leaders of the United Arab Republic. We have had no official or unofficial reports on those talks. My delegation is of the view that the Council should await a personal report from the Secretary-General before proceeding with discussion on the agenda.

44. In suggesting that procedure, our purpose is not to minimize the potentially explosive nature of the current situation but to suggest the most logical and reasonable way of handling it. The Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace, is not inactive in the matter. Members of the Council are constantly in touch with one another. However, any precipitate action by the Council at this stage, far from being helpful, can only complicate the mission of the Secretary-General.

45. We must state, with the utmost confidence, that the United Arab Republic, a founding Member of the United Nations, has been and is a firm believer in co-operation with the United Nations. It is also noteworthy that it so readily agreed to receive the Secretary-General. Therefore the Council should take advantage of the United Arab Republic's spirit of co-operation and not undertake to air in public the very matters which the Secretary-General is pursuing through personal diplomatic contacts. Such airing of issues is only likely to exacerbate the situation and inflame passions. Moreover, the situation on the ground, while potentially dangerous, is still not clear. No incidents—certainly no serious incidents—have been reported. Therefore an urgent and immediate discussion is unwarranted. Thus my delegation would have preferred that the Council first hear the Secretary-General's account of the results of his visit to the United Arab Republic before proceeding further with the matter.

46. Mr. SEYDOUX (France) (*translated from French*): Since the question of China's representation in the United Nations, and in this Council in particular, has been raised, the French delegation wishes to state once again that, in the opinion of its Government, only the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China is competent to represent that country.

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session (Part I), Plenary Meetings, Vol. I, 882nd meeting, para. 162.

47. Throughout the various informal consultations which preceded the request for a meeting of the Security Council by the representatives of Canada and Denmark, my delegation expressed doubts as to the usefulness of holding an urgent meeting of the Council. In expressing this view, my delegation is not seeking to question the role which the Security Council must play in the matter which it is proposed should be entered on its agenda. Our fear—our only fear—is that, by engaging the Security Council in public discussions at this stage, we might make the consultations now taking place between the various countries concerned even more difficult. In the opinion of the French delegation, we must avoid anything which might only serve to aggravate the present climate. The main thing is that the holding of consultations be allowed under the least unfavourable conditions possible. We should therefore not have been opposed to a request for an adjournment for twenty-four hours or forty-eight hours, if such a request had been made.

48. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): The matter the Council has been convened to consider in emergency session is clearly of such overriding urgency that I do not intend to take up the time of the Council by elaborating the views of my Government on the matter which has been raised concerning the competency of the President to occupy his seat. My Government continues to hold that the Republic of China, a founding Member of the United Nations named in the Charter, is properly represented in the Council by its distinguished representative, Mr. Liu, and, furthermore, notes that, as is well known to everyone here concerned, he has represented his country in the Security Council with great distinction since December 1962, when his credentials were formally presented to the Council and were not challenged.

49. Words have been spoken on the question of the advisability of discussing this matter at this time in the Council and, since they have been spoken, I shall say a brief word on the subject. It has been said, for example, that one of the possibly adverse effects of a discussion at this time would be to dramatize a situation better left quiet. But this Council would be burying its head in the sand if it refused to recognize the threat to peace implicit in the developments which have occurred since the Secretary-General left New York two days ago.

50. It is precisely because of these developments, not known to him or to any member of the Council, that we have been called here today urgently to consider what the Council ought to do in the discharge of its responsibility to further his efforts—and not to impede them.

51. This Council meeting cannot dramatize a situation which at this moment is at the centre of the stage of world concern. It can, however, play a role, as we hope, in drawing the curtain on a tragedy which potentially threatens the peace and well-being of all the people in the area and, indeed, of all mankind. And it is a reflection, if I may say so, on the members of the Council to believe that any member of this Council is so irresponsible that he would want to say anything here that would in any way militate against the Secretary-General's mission or against a pacification of the tense situation in the area.

52. Mr. MAKONNEN (Ethiopia): Mr. President, I wish first of all to thank you, in my name and in the name of my delegation, for the kind and generous words of welcome you were good enough to address to us. We can assure our colleagues in the Council that the Ethiopian delegation will spare no effort in discharging its mutual responsibilities connected with the work of the Council.

53. I would also say for the record that our participation in the meeting of the Council, under its actual presidency, should in no way be prejudicial to the policy of my Government with regard to Chinese representation in the United Nations.

54. My delegation shares the regret expressed by the representative of India that the traditional consultations of members of the Security Council did not take place, the kind of consultations that are usually held in important matters having to do with the convening of the Council. This tradition of prior consultation is not, in the view of my delegation, a mere formality, but an exercise aimed at seeking the co-ordination and harmonization so essential to our work in the Council. However, should the Council wish to take up this item, my delegation would not be opposed to a discussion as such. But we must repeat that we would have thought it best to allow time for consultations and for hearing from the Secretary-General with regard to the talks that he is having with the Government of the United Arab Republic at the moment. To start a discussion at this stage would seem to us only to lead to a situation where we would run the risk of working in the dark. We would also run the risk of working at cross-purposes with the Secretary-General in his present efforts in the Middle East.

55. That having been said, it is of course not for my delegation to insist that discussions not be held. My delegation is willing to abide by the wisdom of the Council in any decision it takes. We can only appeal to all our colleagues, and particularly to those who are inscribed to speak at this stage, to refrain from adding petrol to the fire by making any statement or taking any position that will make our task and the task of the Secretary-General more difficult and complicated. That is the earnest appeal we respectfully make to the Council.

56. Mr. ADEBO (Nigeria): I have but a short contribution to make to the discussion at this stage. I wish to state for the record that, in regard to this meeting, I find myself in the same position as the representative of Ethiopia. I feel that in the situation that exists just now in the Middle East, everybody must show very great caution in what he does, and, in particular, the organ of the United Nations which is charged with the peace of the world must exercise great caution in its own proceedings so that an act which is intended to do good does not in fact result in doing harm.

57. Subject to that, the Nigerian delegation is very anxious that the organ which is charged with the maintenance of the peace and security of the world should be seized, as soon as possible, of this matter. We have held the view, in the discussions in which we have participated, that this organ could not possibly proceed to take any decisive action in this matter until some sort of report had been forthcoming from the Secretary-General. On the other hand, we have always adhered to the principle that if any

member of the Council asks that a meeting of the Security Council take place because, in his own view—correct or not—the situation demands it, we should, having made our own position clear, allow that discussion to go forward.

58. I shall therefore end by joining in the appeal made by the representative of Ethiopia that in these discussions here today nothing should be done, nothing should be said, that would in fact make the situation in the Middle East worse than it is today, and that everybody should remember that the objective of us all is to make things easier, not more difficult, for the great servant of peace who is now dealing with that matter in Cairo at this moment.

59. The PRESIDENT: If there are no other comments, and unless there is a formal request to the contrary, I shall declare the agenda adopted.

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902)

60. The PRESIDENT: Letters dated 24 May have now been received from the representatives of Israel [S/7903] and the United Arab Republic [S/7904] requesting that they be invited to participate without vote in the consideration of the matter that has just been inscribed on the Council's agenda.

61. In accordance with the usual practice of the Council, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to take places at the Council table in order to participate in this discussion without the right to vote.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. G. Rafael (Israel) and Mr. M. A. El Kony (United Arab Republic) took places at the Council table.

62. Mr. TABOR (Denmark): Since the question of Chinese representation has been raised, I wish to state for the record that in my Government's view only the representatives of the People's Republic of China are entitled to occupy the seat of China in this world Organization.

63. I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your cordial words of welcome to Denmark as one of the new members of the Security Council.

64. May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing members of the Council and in particular to the Netherlands. It is a privilege to succeed a State and a representative whose constructive participation in the Council's work gained such respect and confidence from its members.

65. Since Denmark last served on the Security Council in 1953 and 1954, the membership of the Council has been increased in order to make it more representative of the different trends in the international community. We fully realize, however, that this development in no way changed the over-all balance of the composition of the Council, in which the permanent members still hold particular powers

and—as a correlate to those powers—must accept particular responsibilities.

66. The provisional agenda for today, as well as our deliberations, demonstrate the primary responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. We wish to assure the members of the Council that they can always rely upon the full co-operation of my delegation in this, as in all other tasks which will be conferred upon us. Finally, we wish to assure you that as a member of the Security Council Denmark shall seek to act not in the interest or to the detriment of any given country or group of countries, but will be guided alone by our responsibility under the Charter, and, on the basis of our own assessment of the merits of any particular case, will endeavour to act to the best of our abilities in the common interest of equity and reason.

67. I shall now turn to the item on our agenda for today: the very serious situation prevailing in the Middle East. I shall, implicitly or explicitly, reply to some of the remarks made on the substance of the question during our discussion of the inscription of the item on the agenda.

68. I shall not go into a detailed survey of the long history of the problems in the Middle East. We are all familiar with the fact that the area has for a very long time been troubled by conflict and strife, which twice within the last two decades have erupted into open war. The last time when this happened was in 1956. On that occasion the United Nations, through energetic action, succeeded not only in bringing an end to the hostilities, but also—by the establishment of a United Nations presence in the area, the United Nations Emergency Force—in creating a certain stability and balance. This, as we all know, did not imply that any solution to the underlying political questions had been found; neither did it bring a complete end to local incidents and disturbances. But it was possible for a period of more than ten years to contain those incidents and to prevent them from leading to major military actions.

69. Last week, however, the function of the United Nations Emergency Force was suddenly brought to an end. In the words of the Secretary-General in his report of 18 May to the General Assembly, this has restored “the armed confrontation of the United Arab Republic and Israel” and has removed “the stabilizing influence of an international force operating along the boundaries between the two nations” [A/6669, para. 13].² If anyone could have had any doubts before as to the very useful role played by the Emergency Force, that could hardly be the case any longer. We do not wish to dramatize the situation, but I dare say that this is not necessary because, since the beginning of the withdrawal of the Emergency Force, the situation along the borders between Israel and the United Arab Republic has been constantly deteriorating, and at an alarming speed. There has been a military build-up along the borders of Israel and the United Arab Republic, and there is no way of denying that the stage is set for a major military clash. The development has now reached a point where it seems as if the slightest miscalculation, the slightest misunderstanding

² Same text as A/6730; see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Emergency Special Session, Annexes, agenda item 5.*

of one or the other of the opponent's intentions, could lead to large-scale hostilities.

70. It was our hope that U Thant's decision to go to the area would in itself have had a pacifying effect. However, we have to admit that the urgency and the danger of the situation have become even more obvious since then. Only two days ago the President of the United Arab Republic declared that Israel ships and other ships carrying certain cargoes to Israel would be prevented from passing through the Strait of Tiran; and the Israel Government on its side has stressed that it would consider such a move as an attack.

71. Now what should be our attitude in the face of this grave danger? Should the Council just stand by, see what happens and hope for the best? That is hardly, I believe, what world public opinion would expect of us. It is, of course, most helpful indeed that certain great Powers have urged restraint. If, however, we believe in the United Nations, can it then be disputed that a call expressing the collective will of this body will carry even greater weight? It is fortunate, indeed, that the confrontation between the parties has so far not gone beyond the level of mutually hostile declarations, but let us not forget that the most important task of the Council is the preservation, not the restoration, of international peace and security.

72. At this very moment our esteemed Secretary-General, in whom we have absolute confidence, is making great efforts to bring about an easing of the tension. Generally speaking, it would have been preferable to defer any action by this Council until we had before us the Secretary-General's report on his current efforts. However, we have to live with the facts of life such as they are, and not as we wish them to be. And the facts are that even since the Secretary-General left New York there have been alarming developments, and the mission of the Secretary-General,

which we fully support, cannot relieve this Council of any of its responsibilities.

73. For those several reasons my Government has considered it necessary, together with the Government of Canada, to ask for an urgent meeting of the Security Council. In doing so, it has not, of course, been our intention to take sides in the conflict. We have not prejudged the issue. Our only concern has been the preservation of peace.

74. The actual question before us, the dangerous trend in the Middle East, represents only the latest phase in a long development. Obviously it would have been preferable if the Council could have had the possibility of tackling the real political problems which underlie the tension in the area. At the moment, however, we shall have to confine ourselves to more limited tasks. But I take it that we all are deeply concerned about the situation in the Middle East, that we all wish war to be avoided, that we are all prepared to reinforce the endeavours of U Thant and that we all here accept the responsibility of the United Nations, and in particular of the Security Council, in this matter. Would it then be too much to expect the Council to express its full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to pacify the situation in the Middle East and to request all States to refrain from any steps which might worsen the situation?

75. That would be, in our opinion, the first measure which the Security Council could profitably take in order to ease the tension. That would be an approach impartial and limited in scope and, we feel, in the present situation the minimum of our responsibilities.

76. We hope that other members will share our thoughts and that it will prove possible for the Security Council to act on the strength of a unanimous opinion.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

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