



Security Council

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ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 31 March 1986, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. BIERRING

(Denmark)

Members: Australia
Bulgaria
China
Congo
France
Ghana
Madagascar
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Venezuela

Mr. HOGUE
Mr. GARVALOV
Mr. LI Luye
Mr. ADOUKI
Mr. de KEMOULARIA
Mr. GBEHO
Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA
Mr. KASEMSARN
Mr. MOHAMMED
Mr. DUBININ
Mr. AL-SHAALI

Sir John THOMSON
Mr. WALTERS
Mr. AGUILAR

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The meeting was called to order at 4.20 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 25 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17940)

LETTER DATED 25 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17941)

LETTER DATED 26 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17946)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with decisions taken by the Council at previous meetings on this item, I invite the representative of Malta to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Algeria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mongolia, Poland, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Agius (Malta) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Djoudi (Algeria), Mr. Maksimov (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Oramas Oliva (Cuba), Mr. Cesar (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Al-Ashtal (Democratic Yemen), Mr. Dinka (Ethiopia), Mr. Ott (German Democratic Republic), Mr. Endreffy (Hungary), Mr. Krishnan (India), Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Abdulhasan (Kuwait) Mr. Somvorachit (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. Azzarouk (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Nyamboo (Mongolia), Mr. Noworyta (Poland), Mr. El Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Bui Xuan Nhat (Viet Nam) and Mr. Golob (Yugoslavia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Mozambique and Nicaragua in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice and with the consent of the Council, I propose to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Zarif (Afghanistan, Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique) and Miss Astorga (Nicaragua) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/17954, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Bulgaria and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The first speaker is the representative of Democratic Yemen. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

MR. AL-ASHTAL (Democratic Yemen): On this last day of your tenure as President of the Security Council for the month of March, Sir, may I extend to you my felicitations on the admirable manner in which you have conducted the Council's proceedings thanks to your superb qualities as a distinguished diplomat hailing from Denmark, a country with which Democratic Yemen enjoys good relations.

The crisis over the Gulf of Sidra may be over by now. Reports have it that United States naval forces have been pulled from the scene after having committed a premeditated and calculated act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. United States spokesmen have boasted of striking a missile battery, sinking two patrol boats and killing scores of people in the process. The damage to the Libyan people has been done; it was both unjustified and unforgettable. But the damage to civilized international conduct shamefully lingers on. The United States, a super-Power, has resorted to the use of crude force to resolve a legal dispute with Libya, a small developing country thousands of miles away from the shores of the United States. Notwithstanding its status as a permanent member of the Security Council with special responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, the United States has once again manifested its arrogant disdain for the norms of decent international behaviour.

What will become of the world if nations resort to force to settle legal disputes of this nature, and what crises will unfold if the United States alone lets loose its naval armada to assert its freedom of navigation in disputed waters elsewhere on the globe? Surely there must be better ways to settle such disputes. Under the Charter of the United Nations, States have undertaken to refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations and to seek solutions to their differences through methods of negotiation, arbitration or judicial settlement. For many years now, the United Nations has been expounding the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes as a cornerstone of international

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Democratic Yemen)

relations. By deploying its naval forces in the Gulf of Sidra, the United States has undermined that cherished principle and flouted the Charter of the United Nations at the same time.

In the White House these days, power politics supersedes international law. The decision to instigate a military encounter with Libyan forces in the Gulf of Sidra had been taken long before the United States Sixth Fleet started its military manoeuvres in the Mediterranean Sea. The timing had to coincide with the raging debate on United States military appropriations, for obvious reasons. Then came the act of bravado of 24 March: a pitiful mismatch between the United States Sixth Fleet and a few Libyan boats. Here in the Security Council the United States had to defend its atrocity by invoking Article 51 of the Charter, claiming the right to self-defence in the Gulf of Sidra, whither it had dispatched its armada, intentionally looking for trouble. In a sense this has become a pattern in the foreign policy of the Reagan Administration. Some like to call it "Rambo politics" but, whatever it is, the world is no safer when a nuclear Power gratuitously engages in petty wars merely to gratify the appetite of a military establishment intent on going all the way to the stars.

My Government vigorously condemns the aggression committed by the United States against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, a friendly Arab country that pursues an independent and anti-imperialist policy in international relations. It is clear that the dispute over the Gulf of Sidra was only a pretext to undermine the independent policy of Libya. The Yemeni people express their full solidarity with the Libyan people, and my country categorically supports the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in its just struggle to safeguard its independent policy and to resist imperialist and Zionist designs aimed at the Arab people.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Democratic Yemen for his kind words addressed to my country and to me.

Mr. ADOUKI (Congo) (interpretation from French): Before stating Congo's views on the situation in the Mediterranean and in particular in the Gulf of Sidra, Sir, I should like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the Security Council and to congratulate you on the able way in which you are guiding its work.

The delegation of Congo takes special note, Mr. President, of the lavish tribute you were kind enough to pay me - specifically, I must observe, in my capacity as outgoing President of the Council. My delegation is extremely gratified, and it thanks you.

Today the spasms of the turbulent seas hold no further mystery - at least, not the deadly spasms seen in the Mediterranean on 24 and 25 March in the Gulf of Sidra. They are clear evidence of a hard line of military "containment" in a conflict which is in fact highly complex, and in a region which is in constant flux.

The strategic option - a major locus of attention, which reveals the deficiencies of diplomacy and dialogue - appears to come to the fore with each new development in the Middle East. Faced with a situation in which all sorts of serious problems cannot be resolved and the needed participation of all the parties concerned remains minimal or even excluded, Congo can only reiterate its profound concern and reject a future for the States of the region which consists, as before, of the threat of periodic confrontation.

In the bitter confrontation between the United States and Libya there was much talk in the past of the Libyan aircraft shot down in 1981, and recently of economic sanctions. Curiously, announcements of various measures tend to spotlight irritant factors, thus fueling fiercely the growing tension.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

It would be difficult not to view the attacks of the United States naval forces against Libyan ships and territory on 24 and 25 March of this year as part of the disquieting logic of military confrontation and political destabilization.

Because they seriously threaten not only the security of the region but also international peace and stability, such attacks in the Mediterranean, or anywhere else for that matter, will never earn the Congo's approval. They are contrary to the fundamental principles governing international relations, which exclude the threat or use of force or coercion.

My Government reaffirms its solidarity with the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the safeguarding of its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is, I believe, appropriate to remind the Council that the international community has available plenty of machinery and appropriate procedures for the settlement by peaceful means of any justified complaint of one State against another.

With regard to the freedom of the high seas, Congo shares the view that the status of maritime spaces subject to non-exclusive rights should be determined within the framework of the conditions envisaged in the 1958 and 1982 Conventions on the Law of the Sea and other rules of international law.

In any case, any State, be it coastal or land-locked, may for peaceful purposes invoke this principle, a fundamental and venerable one, which governs the whole of the Law of the Sea.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Congo for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic):

Mr. President, I would not wish this month of March to end without my congratulating you formally and praising you for the competence you have demonstrated during your term, which has shown the importance your country, Denmark, attaches to international affairs.

I should also like to thank our friend and colleague Mr. Adouki, Permanent Representative of the Congo, on the lucid way in which he dealt with the problems we had to discuss last month.

Allow me also to congratulate the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union and to wish him every success in his endeavours. I express the hope that he will co-operate in the discharge of the tasks of this Council.

Before addressing the item under discussion, I would hail the International Year of Peace, the first quarter of which has just come to an end.

I believe we can easily ascertain the truth of the facts that have been submitted to us. We need only consult articles and publications that have appeared in the United States in the last three months, or even just last week, to see what is happening. I should like at this time to pay tribute to United States newspapers for their objectivity on this score. Those newspapers have discussed the goals of the United States in the Gulf of Sidra, goals quite different from those that were announced.

Plans for the premeditated attack against Libya were hatched as early as last December - indeed, many years ago; all possible scenarios were considered. That is why the United States Government imposed an economic boycott on Libya and asked all United States companies and citizens in Libya to leave that country. The United States has also been conducting four naval manoeuvres facing the Libyan coast, and even now the American authorities are publicly discussing how best to put an end to the Libyan régime. Thus the problem before us today is one involving the use of

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United
Arab Emirates)

force in international relations. In flagrant violation of the provisions of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, the United States has threatened and used force against Libya in order to impose its political and strategic goals. In so doing the United States has invoked international law to achieve other purposes; I do not believe that the assertion of freedom of navigation was its top priority. Many States, even allies of the United States, have stated that the mechanism used for the settlement of this dispute should have been arbitration by the International Court of Justice, and not the use of force, because if those States that did not agree with Libya on the legal status of the Gulf of Sidra were all to send their navies towards that Gulf, we should certainly be on the brink of the third world war.

The statement that the United States undertook this action on behalf of and in the name of the international community prompts us to wonder which international community has given the United States that mandate. My country, as a member of the international community, has given no one a mandate to carry out any such acts.

The thirst for power requires no legal or logical justification; it creates its own logic and its own justification whether the pretext involves "international terrorism" or "national interests" and so on - the list is very long indeed. Even if we were to view this problem from a strictly legal standpoint, the record of respect for international law would discourage us from engaging in any discussion in that regard. International law is not a garden from which one can pluck the flowers of one's choice: it is indivisible, and it comprises rights and obligations. One cannot choose the parts of international law one likes and ignore the rest - especially when one has not signed the Convention on the Law of the Sea. My country is a signatory to the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and we believe that any dispute that might arise in connection with it should be settled within specialized bodies.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United
Arab Emirates)

My country does not believe the United States is a direct party to a conflict with Libya; nor does my country believe any individual State can arrogate to itself responsibility for imposing respect for international law.

In terms of common sense, an example has been mentioned and I should like to repeat it in the same context. Let us assume that someone stops his car on a public highway, in front of your house and points his shotgun towards your house to prevent you from leaving or entering. Can that individual say he is using the public road, when it is known that he has already said that he wants to kill you and destroy your home? Suppose he is using 30 tanks instead of a shotgun: does that mean he is engaged in peaceful activities on that public road?

The American authorities have said that the Libyan vessels were destroyed as a pre-emptive measure, but we cannot believe that. Even if we were to believe that Libya had launched six missiles that missed their target, the United States response was out of proportion to the attacks. That confirms the real objective of the entire undertaking.

Furthermore, the manoeuvres came to an end five days before the scheduled date, after the United States authorities announced that they had achieved their objective. Thus the question arises: What were the real objectives that came to an end in that fashion after the attack against Libyan port facilities and vessels?

All of that goes to show that the American manoeuvres in the Gulf of Sidra were in fact designed to provoke, that the attack against Libya was premeditated, that the entire action was unlawful, illegal and unjustifiable, and that the use of force was totally out of proportion to the situation. That is why my country, in deploring the situation, issued the following statement on 26 March:

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United
Arab Emirates)

"The United Arab Emirates is greatly concerned at the dangerous military escalation in the Gulf of Sidra stemming from United States aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The United Arab Emirates condemns that aggression in flagrant violation of Libya's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We reaffirm our solidarity with the Jamahiriya and express the hope that an end will be put to this escalation, which is threatening the security of Arab States, their territorial integrity, and the security of the eastern Mediterranean, not to mention the security of the international community as a whole."

The concerns expressed by States about the approach taken by the United States to solve this problem deal not only with the technical aspects of the situation; above and beyond that, political issues and relations between States are involved. Here the problem is the arbitrary use of force by a major Power against a small State. From past experience, as well as from the present, we know that the use of military force as a means of conducting foreign policy will continue and be even more prevalent in the future. The sole criterion here is the extent of the damage that may result from the resort to force rather than to international law. This takes us back to the theory of the balance of deterrence. But as long as third-world countries, particularly the smaller countries, do not have the military strength to enable them to safeguard their independence, such small States will be victims of international polarization and they will be compelled to choose between losing their independence and complete annihilation for themselves and their peoples.

The Charter assumes that certain States have special responsibilities vis-à-vis the international community and has given them certain powers. However,

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

those States seem to have exceeded those powers and used force to impose their domination over small States. Thus, international law and the United Nations Charter have been violated with the impunity of might. Apparently the Charter must be respected only by the small States which cannot defend themselves. That is why the Security Council must give the most serious consideration to the problem that is before us.

The events which have taken place this year prompt us to reconsider certain concepts and, I believe, this year should be referred to as the "international year of arrogance" rather than the "International Year of Peace".

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Arab Emirates for the kind words he addressed to my country and to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Afghanistan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ZARIF (Afghanistan): Although this is your last day in office as President of the Security Council for the month of March, I should, nevertheless, like to express our felicitations both on the assumption of your responsible duties and on the skilful manner in which you have guided the Council's work this month.

I wish also to pay a tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Congo, for his able leadership during the month of February.

Under normal circumstances, the wanton act of aggression carried out by the United States against Libya would have brought shock and astonishment. However, that seems not to be the case for certain reasons - mainly because the source of aggression is all too familiar and the verdict of imperialism on progressive, independent countries is no longer a secret.

(Mr. Zarif, Afghanistan)

The United States, which has developed a curious attachment to the role of defendant before the judgement of world public opinion, has broken by far all previous records set by it in the past for arrogant behaviour. Its ominous and bloody hands are stretched to virtually all corners of the world with only one illusion in mind: to mould the world on a pattern drawn up in Washington. To see that illusion materialized, Washington is out to acquire ultimate and unquestioned supremacy over any and all nations. Thus trillions of dollars have been dumped into the military-industrial monopolies in a lust to muster, quantitatively and qualitatively, greater destructive potentials.

In this unbridled striving, all legal, political, moral, terrestrial and space boundaries have been brazenly violated; signed treaties have been shelved and conspiracies hatched to erect barriers to the conclusion of new ones.

A preposterous jingoism and "Ramboism" have dominated the sick minds of the cliques in charge of affairs in militarist quarters. The concept of the so-called new globalism has brought about a recrudescence of violence, aggression, interference and intervention. Economic blockade, political and military intimidation, subversion and destabilization, and the use of proxies and mercenary legions have become routine means in imperialist foreign policy which are publicly debated in the centres of power in the imperialist countries.

What is interesting is that no effort is made to disguise these undeniable realities, leaving no shred of doubt about the arrogant and aggressive essence of imperialism.

Although in the long run all humanity will fall victim to these policies, for the moment it is a few carefully selected nations which are prime targets. Libya, alongside many other progressive countries, is a natural object of imperialist machinations by virtue of its independent and anti-imperialist stance. Libya's steadfast and vigorous rejection of imperialist and Zionist designs against the

(Mr. Zarif, Afghanistan)

Palestinian and other Arab peoples and its consistent support of the forces of liberation and independence in the Middle East are a matter of record. Such a posture would inevitably occasion fluster and outrage in the White House. Hence, the naked act of aggression perpetrated by the United States against Libya is by all indications a premeditated act within the United States overall global policy of State banditry and terrorism.

Some would naively have us believe that what happened in the Gulf of Sidra on 24 and 25 March this year was in exercise of the right of free navigation in international waters or was based on the right of self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. There can be no denying the pervasive differences of mindset that identify the opposing positions and underly the conflicting arguments. But what has been adduced by the aggressor, namely, United States imperialism, is nothing more than the political balderdash it is attempting to shove down the throats of a watchful international community. The United States Administration should be reminded that its undignified and impolitic endeavours to deceive - to put it mildly - the world public resembles the desperate efforts of some one to hawk his fake wares on a street of very unlikely customers. The ignominy of the American act is most demonstrably unveiled by the United States Administration's stark adoption of a double-standard on the Law of the Sea, in general, and on territorial waters, in particular.

It is indeed a low-down absence of morality on the part of the United States Administration to bully small independent nations with impunity. What was committed against Libya was nothing less than outright aggression, a grave violation of all norms and principles of international law governing inter-State conduct and a blatant affront to all humanity, which is struggling to strengthen international peace and security. No matter how hard the United States may try to the contrary, these facts cannot be swept aside.

(Mr. Zarif, Afghanistan)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, having carefully analysed the situation, has vigorously condemned the United States act of aggression and called for an immediate end to United States aggression and provocation. The statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is being issued as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council, has expressed fraternal solidarity with the people and leadership of Libya in these difficult times in their history.

It is our expectation that the Security Council will also uphold justice and condemn the aggressor for its totally unjustifiable act against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and call for the payment of appropriate compensation for the material damage and loss of life inflicted on Libya.

Before concluding, Mr. President, allow me to thank you and, through you, the other members of the Council for the opportunity you have given my delegation to present its views.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Afghanistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MAKSIMOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): First of all, Sir, I wish to congratulate you on your successful discharge of the important functions of President of the Security Council and to thank you and, through you, the other members of the Security Council for the opportunity afforded our delegation to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda.

(Mr. Maksimov, Byelorussian SSR)

For a long time now, the United States Administration has been carefully and purposefully carrying out a provocative policy of stepping up hostility against Libya. Apart from naked, inadmissible attacks against that country and its leadership, the United States, with clearly provocative intent, has been carrying out uninterrupted naval exercises off the Libyan coast with the participation of air force units. Obviously, the United States militarists could not wait to strike at Libyan targets.

(Mr. Maksimov, Byelorussian SSR)

On 24 and 25 March this year those threats were carried out, with military strikes leading to loss of human life and considerable material damage.

Washington resorts to all kinds of sophistry and trumped-up pretexts to justify its policy of intervention in the affairs of sovereign States, in disregard of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the universally accepted norms of international law. Washington would have us see its acts in the way it presents them.

The most recent act of aggression against Libya is just one more link in the long chain of acts of aggression carried out by American imperialism, acts that simply represent State terrorism.

Why does official Washington hate Libya so violently and pour down on that sovereign State a veritable torrent of slander and opprobrious invective that is intolerable in a civilized world? It is simply because the Libyan people is implementing its chosen programme of social and political reforms, and its leadership has been taking an independent, anti-imperialist position in international affairs. Washington - particularly the current Administration - has been pursuing a policy of neo-globalism, and is setting its face against progressive social and other reforms, against the national liberation movements and against all those who do not agree with its aggressive foreign policy.

Furthermore, the policy of adopting a position of strength - the policy of the big stick, economic pressure and blackmail - now enjoys official status. No one is to contradict the United States in any way. That is the essence of the current Administration's policy. The policy of adopting a position of strength now pursued by the United States Administration, an outrageous example of which was the acts of aggression against Libya, is a serious source of international tension and a threat to international peace and security. In particular, it is leading to a heightening of existing conflicts and is fanning the flames of fresh conflicts.

(Mr. Maksimov, Byelorussian SSR)

The piratical actions of the United States militarists have been condemned throughout the world. They have, for example, aroused the profound concern of the Non-Aligned Movement. A communiqué of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement adopted on 26 March states:

"these acts of aggression ... created a serious threat, not only to regional security, but also to international peace and stability. The action by the United States was all the more condemnable since, by virtue of its position as a permanent member of the Security Council, it has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and stability and to abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". (S/17947, annex)

Facts are obstinate things. They have made it abundantly clear that, unfortunately, the deeds of the United States Administration in the world arena are diametrically opposed to its widely advertised statements about its commitment to peace. A commitment to peace as interpreted by Washington simply translates in practice into acts of aggression against those States that are unwilling to do what the United States tells them to.

However, history will take its course; no matter how much the leaders in Washington try to divert it, they will be unable to do so. The peoples of the whole world demand the renunciation of the policy of force, and call instead for a policy of the peaceful resolution of disputes, in the interests of regional and global security and the strengthening of international peace.

On the basis of what I have said, the Byelorussian delegation associates itself with the indignation expressed here in the Security Council over the United States acts of aggression against Libya, and the vigorous condemnation of them, and demands that they never be allowed to recur. We trust that the Council will take the necessary measures to achieve that end.

(Mr. Maksimov, Byelorussian SSR)

In these difficult times for Libya, we assure the Libyan people and the Government of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya of our solidarity and support.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nicaragua. I invite her to take a place at the Council table and to make her statement.

Miss ASTORGA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me first, Mr. President, to thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to take part in the debate on the item before it. I also wish to congratulate you most sincerely on your assumption of the presidency for this month. Your country's tradition of peace and respect for international law and your personal convictions have been a guarantee of the success of the Council's work. By the same token, I congratulate Ambassador Martin Adouki, permanent representative of the Congo, who presided over the Council's work last month with great wisdom.

We are meeting today to consider once again a situation created by the defiant policy, based on the threat and use of force, of a major Power, which, as a permanent member of the Council, entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, has a special responsibility to refrain from carrying out acts involving force and intimidation and to settle its disputes by the peaceful means set forth in the Charter.

Acting contrary to the responsible opinion of the international community, the United States decided to mobilize its fleet to conduct naval exercises off the Libyan coast in the central Mediterranean, with a clearly intimidatory and provocative intent. It also decided to impose trade sanctions on Libya. Now it has decided to attack vessels and missile bases in Libyan territory. Those

(Miss Astorga, Nicaragua)

unjustifiable acts of provocation and aggression by the United States against - yet again - a small, independent, non-aligned Nation not only violate the spirit of the United Nations Charter and the obligations under it, but also endanger the stability of the region and international peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly expressed the view that the Mediterranean should become a zone of peace, security and co-operation, but those aspirations of the international community are openly thwarted by the arrogance of the United States in the case before the Council.

The people of Nicaragua is well acquainted with that policy of threats, blackmail, provocation and aggression, which we have had to face up to for the past five years. Therefore, we condemn - as the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement did a few days ago - the actions of the United States against the sovereignty, independence and security of Libya. The United States is not only arrogating to itself the right to use force when it sees fit, violating the norms of international law, but also, on the basis of an alleged right to self-defence, is perpetrating acts of aggression and blackmail, trying to impose its will by force of arms, forgetting that the power of reason is stronger.

(Miss Astorga, Nicaragua)

The Government of Nicaragua, profoundly respectful of international law and committed to peace, a country that has suffered from similar aggression as that perpetrated against the people of Libya, issued a communiqué dated 26 March 1986 in connection with the grave events in the Gulf of Sidra, which states the following:

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in connection with the situation prevailing in the Gulf of Sidra, makes the following public statement:

"The Government of Nicaragua categorically condemns the military manoeuvres ordered by the Government of the United States in the vicinity of the continental territory of Libya and the penetration by United States aircraft of the Gulf of Sidra, which constitute an unjustifiable and irresponsible act of intimidation and provocation.

"Such manoeuvres and other acts of intimidation constitute a clear display of force which is prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations and a provocation against Libya, action which has led to military incidents, including unjustifiable attacks with ensuing loss of life in Libyan territory, all of which is a threat to international peace and security.

"The Government of Nicaragua condemns the threat or use of force against Libya and demands the cessation of the provocations and military actions by the United States and, at the same time, recalls the obligation of all States to use peaceful means for the settlement of disputes."

My delegation believes that the international community now has another opportunity to display its responsiveness to the will of the international community, which calls for a cessation of hostilities against a sovereign State, for respect of the United Nations Charter and of the rule of law, which must guide inter-State relations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nicaragua for her kind words addressed to my country and to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia): I should like first of all to extend to you, Sir, my heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of March. Given your diplomatic skill and wide experience, I have no doubt that you will steer the deliberations of the Council towards a successful conclusion.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my delegation to His Excellency Ambassador Martin Adouki, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations, for the commendable manner in which he conducted the affairs of the Council during the month of February.

The issue under discussion, namely, the situation currently obtaining in the southern Mediterranean, is a matter of serious concern to my Government, and indeed to all Governments, for which the strict observance of the basic tenets of international law and the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter remains unequivocal and total. What is at stake is not only the provocative actions against the non-aligned African State Member of the United Nations and a violation of its territorial integrity by a permanent member of this Council, but also the systematic erosion of the rule of law, which constitutes the very fabric of inter-State relations as defined by enlightened humanity.

The Government and people of Socialist Ethiopia believe that problems among States should be solved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations. They believe further that to resort to sabre-rattling, State terrorism or gun-boat diplomacy is certainly to fail to grasp the lessons of history. It is with this in mind that my Government issued the following official communiqué on 27 March 1986 in

(Mr. Dinka, Ethiopia)

Addis Ababa, regarding the aggressive and illegal acts perpetrated against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the United States Administration.

"It is to be recalled that the Government of Socialist Ethiopia issued a statement on 29 January 1986 on the provocative military manoeuvres by the United States Sixth Fleet near the Libyan coast and the threat of the use of force against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the United States Administration.

"On that occasion, Socialist Ethiopia, while indicating the dangerous possibility of a military confrontation, called on the United States Administration to desist from provoking the Jamahiriya and to call off the aggressive military manoeuvres against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya.

"Since then, not only has the United States Administration continued with its provocations against Libya, but it also, not surprisingly, last Monday launched an armed attack against the vessels and installations of the Jamahiriya. It has now become crystal clear that the United States Administration has all along been planning to commit aggression against Libya.

"It is indeed regrettable to observe the continued flagrant violation of international law and morality by the United States Administration through the launching of unwarranted attacks on a non-aligned developing country. The Government of Socialist Ethiopia condemns these acts of military provocation and aggression against the Jamahiriya and wishes once again to call on the United States Government to refrain from its lawless acts which cannot but endanger peace and stability in the entire Mediterranean region of North Africa.

(Mr. Dinka, Ethiopia)

"While expressing its militant and revolutionary solidarity with the people and Government of the Jamahiriya, Socialist Ethiopia calls on peace-loving and democratic forces the world over to prevail upon the United States Administration to terminate forthwith its premeditated aggression against Libya."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for his kind words addressed to me.

The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Azzarouk (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): Last Wednesday, we listened to the statement made by the representative of the United States, who emphasized the intention of his Administration to continue to pursue a policy of provocation and aggression against the Jamahiriya. That policy is the same one pursued by the United States against all countries and peoples that refuse to submit to United States policies. It is the case in Central America, the Caribbean, North Africa, southern Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, South-East Asia and Europe. That policy is both covert and overt: it declares that the United States will defy all States that have opposed its maritime policy. We reject the United States distorted logic. In following that policy the United States has made itself an enemy of all those States.

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

Thus, the United States is insolently defying the will and sovereignty of all those States as well as international instruments and rules.

A manifestation of this policy of aggression was the launching by the United States of an act of armed aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. It exercised all kinds of pressure and carried out all kinds of provocative manoeuvres off the Libyan coasts.

The arrogance of the United States has not been confined to those actions: recently, there were acts of aggression by the United States in the territorial waters of the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, in the Black Sea. The United States therefore violated the territorial integrity of those countries as well.

This behaviour constitutes defiance and a breach of the United Nations Charter, which is based on respect for the principles of legitimacy and law in international relations. The United States has not confined its flouting of the Charter to showing and using military force against the peoples that reject its policies; it has also been sabotaging the role of the United Nations and its institutions in many ways. For instance, it has used the veto in the Security Council in order to enjoy impunity from international justice. Even a cursory glance at the records of the Security Council for the past few years shows that the United States has abused this right of veto more than the other permanent member States combined.

Within the United Nations, the United States has become an enemy of all peoples by its use of the veto and its obstruction of any resolution designed to strengthen international peace and security. It has also become an enemy of all peoples by its use or threat of the use of direct military force against any countries that reject United States hegemony.

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

Because of its conduct, which is contrary to international rules and laws, the United States Administration is no longer eligible for permanent membership of the Security Council. The withdrawal by the United States from international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been prompted by the failure of the United States to make those institutions submit to its policies and its will. Moreover, the statement by the United States that it is reducing its contribution to the budget of the United Nations and its organs is a premeditated act of sabotage of the role of the United Nations. The United States made that statement in the light of its failure to contain the Organization and after it had become clear that this Organization was becoming an impediment to the United States policies - policies that are rejected by the international community.

There are now many peoples around the world that are asking themselves how the United States of America can at one and the same time be the adversary and the judge.

Moreover, the United States has become impatient with the United Nations and can no longer tolerate its existence as the living conscience of the peoples; it cannot tolerate the fact that in the Organization the destructive role and the aggression of the United States are crystal clear. For that reason the United States has sought to obstruct participation by Member States in the functioning of the Organization by placing restrictions on their personnel in regard to movement and places of residence, by demanding a reduction in the number of staff members of certain delegations and by fabricating allegations for the purpose of deporting some of that staff.

In view of all that I have just said, it has become imperative to seek to transfer the Headquarters of the United Nations to a State with the moral and

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

political and security conditions that can ensure that the United Nations and its Members can carry out the role assigned to them by the Charter.

In the present case, the argument has been used that we are dealing with an act of self-defence by the United States - thousands of miles away from its borders and involving the use against a small State of three aircraft carriers, 39 naval escort vessels and hundreds of aircraft. That argument serves only to reveal new concepts that have no validity whatever in international law.

The United States representative said that the United States refuses to be given lessons in international law by any other State. But a review of the conduct of the United States, in recent times especially, makes it obvious that the United States needs to learn the most elementary principles of international law.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of the United States wishes to exercise the right of reply, and I now call on him.

Mr. WALTERS (United States of America): The Libyan representative has no other recourse except repetition. But repeating untruths does not turn them into the truth.

The Libyan representative wants to talk about everything except the facts. Why does he not mention who fired first on United States forces, far outside Libyan territorial waters? Not only did Libya fire the first shot, after contemptuously saying that the United Nations had no role to play: we still have seen no report from Libya on its use of its missiles. If the Libyan attack had any legitimacy, there would have been an obligation to report the use of force to the Security Council. Libya has made no such report, because it cannot justify this attack.

Dragging in all manner of irrelevant material will not obscure the basic facts of the matter: Libya fired first. Libya told the Security Council before it fired

(Mr. Walters, United States)

that it would not rely on the United Nations, but would rely on its own strength. Last week it dismissed the Security Council. Why the change?

The PRESIDENT: There are no further names on the list of speakers for this meeting. The date of the next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will be fixed by the President for the month of April, in consultation with members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

