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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH MEETINGHeld at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 6 January 1989, at 10.30 a.m.President: Mr. RAZALI

(Malaysia)

Members: Algeria
Brazil
Canada
China
Colombia
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Nepal
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Mr. FORTIER
Mr. LI Luyue
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. TADESSE
Mr. TORNUGG
Mr. BROCHAND
Mr. RANA
Mr. BA
Mr. BELONOGOV

Sir Crispin TICKELL
Mr. WALTERS
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 4 JANUARY 1989 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20364)

LETTER DATED 4 JANUARY 1989 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SAUDI ARABIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20367)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken by the Council at its 2835th meeting, I invite the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cuba, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Al-Shaker (Bahrain), Mr. Dah (Burkina Faso), Mrs. De Florez Prida (Cuba), Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic) and Mr. Karoui (Tunisia) 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, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Nicaragua, the Sudan and Uganda 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, I propose, with the consent of the Council, 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. Dost (Afghanistan), Mr. Madarshahi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Khamsy (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. Rakotondramboa (Madagascar), Mr. Sevilla Boza, (Nicaragua), Mr. Adam (Sudan) and Mr. Kamunanwire (Uganda) 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.

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

Mr. KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda): I have the pleasure to extend to you, Sir, the warm felicitations of the Uganda delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We have great admiration and respect for your country, Malaysia, for its objectivity and precision in dealing with various international issues. Your wealth of experience and skills will undoubtedly enable the Council to deal judiciously and justly with the urgent complaint now before it.

We should also like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Ambassador of Japan for the able manner in which he steered the work of the Council in the month of December 1988. He has left us with an indelible impression of his sagacity and tirelessness for the cause of peace and security throughout the month of his presidency.

The Council is considering yet another situation created by a defiant policy based on deliberate aggression by a major Power, resulting in the downing by its Sixth Fleet of two Libyan planes conducting regular reconnaissance patrol in the Mediterranean waters off the Libyan coast on 4 January 1989.

The aspersions cast by that major Power as a justification for its action are unfortunate, let alone regrettable. We had always hoped that as a permanent member of the Council the United States had a special responsibility to refrain from acts which are intimidatory and provocative. Such acts are a direct violation of the United Nations Charter and the obligations under it. They remain a grave danger to the peace and security of the region and of the international community as a whole. They should, therefore, not be condoned but rather condemned.

(Mr. Kamunanwire, Uganda)

We have always opposed the military presence, activities and manoeuvres of major Powers on the land, in the airspace and the territorial waters of the Mediterranean and any other region. Such acts have remained the major root causes of tension and instability, and they pose threats of intervention against the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of small developing countries.

The United States action against the two Libyan planes is politically reprehensible and militarily criminal. It was carefully contrived and premeditated for the purpose of committing aggression against a defenceless small State under the pretext of manoeuvres.

Neither evidence before the Council nor the recent disinformation campaigns and threats orchestrated by many, including high-ranking United States Government officials, can persuade the international community that such an armed attack on Libyan planes was within the meaning of Article 51 of the Charter. That Article neither gives any country unlimited freedom to strike at another sovereign State in the name of defence nor justifies aggression, arrogance and disrespect for international law. Rather, it renders the right of self-defence to a Member State which is actually being attacked, until the Security Council takes appropriate action.

The Ugandan delegation fully stands behind the position taken by the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their meetings on 3 and 5 January 1989. We join in the condemnation of this unprovoked aggression, which constitutes an act of State terrorism and a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The international community, the United Nations and especially the Security Council have obligations under the Charter to ensure that such incidents cease forthwith.

(Mr. Kamunanwire, Uganda)

The present United States military build-up off the Libyan coast is evidently for aggression and not for manoeuvres. The international community, particularly the Council, should demand the urgent withdrawal of United States naval forces in the region. This would prevent the outbreak of a conflict of wider proportions and unforeseeable catastrophic consequences for peace and stability in the region and the rest of the world. Such timely action by the Council would go a long way towards guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and other small peace-loving countries in the region.

Uganda joins the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other peace-loving countries in reaffirming its full support for and solidarity with the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in safeguarding its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is our earnest appeal that wisdom will prevail among all countries to give peace a chance in the region.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Uganda for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil): Let me extend through you, Sir, our congratulations to your country, Malaysia, as a new member of the Council and also congratulate you personally on your assumption of the high office of President of this body for the month of January. I should also like to extend to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Japan, our appreciation for his performance as President of the Council during the month of December. Allow me also to extend through you, Sir, to the other new members of the Council - Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland and Canada - and their representatives our warm welcome.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

The Brazilian Government noted with concern the incident in the Mediterranean Sea which resulted in the shooting down by the United States air force of two Libyan military aircraft on 4 January 1989.

Our concern is heightened by the fact that this regrettable incident took place at a moment when the international community is reasserting its confidence in recourse to peaceful means for the settlement of disputes, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Under prevailing conditions, there is a clear need for all involved to behave prudently and in conformity with their international obligations.

The Brazilian delegation considers it appropriate that this serious incident has been brought to the attention of the Security Council. It thus provides the international community with an opportunity to exercise a good-offices role by encouraging the parties to enter into dialogue in order to reduce and eventually eliminate the tensions between them which occasion such incidents.

The Brazilian delegation would thus be prepared to join the Council in an appeal to the parties for a serene and objective assessment of each other's intentions, in addition to strict compliance with the principles of the Charter regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes. We would also be prepared to consider favourably the possibility of requesting the Secretary-General to explore with the parties ways and means for achieving a peaceful solution of the differences between them.

The elimination of these tensions would also allow the international community to concentrate its efforts on the peaceful solution of outstanding questions of a broader nature to which both countries are in a position to make significant and positive contributions.

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

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. President, at the outset I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wish to express the conviction that your impressive professional abilities will enable you successfully to guide the work of the Council during this month. I wish also to voice my appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Kagami of Japan, for his able guidance of the Council's work last month.

I should like to greet the new members of the Security Council - Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland and Malaysia - and wish the representatives of those countries every success and fruitful participation in the work of the Council.

May I also extend to the representatives of Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Zambia our appreciation for the genuine contribution they made to the work of the Council and for their co-operation in solving the matters before it.

The Soviet Union considers the request made by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for an urgent meeting of the Security Council fully justified. The incident that occurred off the coast of Libya in which two Libyan aircraft were shot down cannot but elicit feelings of extreme concern. As was stated by the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR:

"News that Washington's anti-Libyan campaign had produced an armed clash over the Mediterranean ... has been received with indignation in Moscow."

There was absolutely no reason for the United States to use armed force, for nobody had attacked the aircraft or the ships of the United States in the region. We cannot agree to the argument that the military aircraft of one State - in this instance the United States - are entitled to open fire on the aircraft of another

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

State simply because those aircraft had come close to them in international air space. If we accept as proper the actions undertaken by the two United States aircraft, how are we to avoid arbitrary action, further armed clashes and utter anarchy in international air space? The reference by the United States representative to Article 51 of the Charter, relating to self-defence, is absolutely unfounded.

Another source of our concern is that the incident off the coast of Libya took place against the background of a marked build-up in the American naval forces in the Mediterranean and an extensive anti-Libyan campaign by the United States which has been developing in the last few weeks and open threats of dealing a new blow against Libya. In view of past experience, such threats cannot simply be disregarded.

In an attempt to justify its threats against Libya, Washington invokes that country's alleged intention to produce chemical weapons. The American mass media have also clamoured for punishment of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for its supposed involvement in the downing of the American airliner over Scotland. As is well-known, however, Tripoli has issued frequent official denials that it wants to acquire military toxic substances.

The Secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Relations of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mr. Jadalla Azzouz Talhi, addressed a letter to the Secretary-General (S/20348) referring to this matter. The leader of the Libyan revolution, Muammar Qaddafi, has suggested that representatives of the diplomatic community and foreign journalists should visit the complex in Rabta which has aroused such doubts in the United States. Mr. Qaddafi has also rejected affirmations about his country's participation in the downing of the Boeing 747.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

In such circumstances, talk about the use of force against Libya is puzzling, to say the least. As was emphasized in the statement of the representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR:

"One cannot agree to a situation where the United States, which is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, usurps the right to pass sentence on this or that sovereign State which does not suit it - Libya in the given case. Irrespective of pretexts, the use of force contradicts international law and runs counter to the efforts of the world community to find political solutions to the existing conflict situations".

The military action undertaken by the USA is not in any way in accordance with the processes now occurring in the international arena. It is also in clear contradiction of the general trend towards breaking the deadlock in the Middle East settlement process. Such prospects, which had been opened up, inter alia, thanks to the initiation of an American-Palestinian dialogue, apparently are not pleasing to some.

It is clear that any further military action, from whatever source, would in these circumstances be a blow to the improvement of the international situation. Our planet is not yet so big that tension in any particular region does not have a negative impact on what occurs in the international community as a whole.

I should like to draw attention to one other thing which, in our view, is an extremely important aspect of the incident that occurred off the coast of Libya. According to the American version, the Libyan aircraft were shot down, owing, supposedly, to a general impression that they were approaching the American aircraft with hostile intent. In 1988, an Iranian passenger airliner was shot down, also because the commander of the American warship considered the aircraft to have hostile intent. In other words, in both cases, even if we disregard the theory of intentional destruction, those who fired the weapon were laboring under

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

the stereotype of the "face of the enemy". And so the question naturally arises: isn't it time to put an end to such dangerous approaches and assumptions? As was emphasized in his statement at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, the General-Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Sergeivich Gorbachev, the building of a new world assumes in particular:

"... tolerance, a willingness to perceive something different as not necessarily bad or hostile, and an ability to learn to live side by side with others, while remaining different and not always agreeing with each other".

(A/43/PV.72, p. 12)

And even if the régime in Libya is not pleasing to some in the USA, the modern interrelated and interdependent world requires self-restraint and the complete renunciation of the use of force, primarily on the part of those that have particularly great force available to them.

The Soviet delegation should also like to emphasize that the tragic incident that has occurred once again highlights the question of the adoption of practical measures to strengthen security in the Mediterranean. Guided by the unbreakable link between security in the Mediterranean region and security in Europe, the Soviet Union has proposed that agreement be reached on joint measures of agreement in the Mediterranean so that the armed forces in the region might be reduced with a view to the withdrawal of nuclear-armed ships from the area and to their non-deployment in the territory of non-nuclear countries in the Mediterranean, and so that the nuclear Powers would undertake not to use such weaponry against any Mediterranean country that does not allow such weaponry to be deployed in it. The Soviet side has no need of a permanent Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean. If the USA were to withdraw its navy from the Mediterranean, the Soviet would immediately do the same.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet side is prepared to act together with all interested countries to advance the transformation of the Mediterranean into a zone of peace and co-operation by collectively searching for constructive solutions and for the further development of a non-confrontational dialogue on these matters.

We hope that this conflict will not broaden and that it will not lead to an escalation of confrontation. We believe that, in the circumstances, what is required is a responsible and carefully thought out approach and a demonstration of maximum restraint.

The Security Council, which bears the principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace, is called upon to give a proper evaluation of what has occurred, to take measures for the swift normalization of the situation and to avert any repetition of such illegal actions.

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

Mr. RANA (Nepal): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your assumption of the high office of the presidency of the Secretary for the month of January 1989. You represent a country with which Nepal has extensive ties of friendship and co-operation and shares a common commitment to the ideals of non-alignment, international peace and development. I am well aware of your many personal qualities and feel confident that you will guide the work of the Council with wisdom and skill.

I also take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the delegations of Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland and Malaysia to the Council. The new members bring to the reconstituted Council a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to serve the cause of international peace and security. We look forward to working with them in close consultation and co-operation.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express our great admiration for the excellent manner in which Ambassador Mr. Hideo Kagami of Japan conducted the business of the Council during the month of December. I wish also to pay a tribute to the delegations of Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia for their constructive role and contributions as members of the Security Council over the past two years.

We have received the report of the downing of two Libyan aircraft by United States naval fighter planes with great concern and apprehension. The Council had the opportunity to listen yesterday to the statements and explanations of the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the United States of America on the subject. Although the views and versions of the two sides involved in this unfortunate incident were different and conflicting, all of us agree that it has raised the sense of insecurity and tension in the area - and it is this aspect of the situation that calls for the serious attention of the Council.

While my delegation would like to believe that the shooting down of the Libyan aircraft, though highly unwarranted, was an isolated incident, it none the less has overall implications for international peace and security. As such, it cannot be considered a closed chapter unless effective measures are taken to defuse tensions heightened by the recent military activities in the region, particularly in the light of the threat to use force against the alleged chemical-weapons plant in Libya. Nepal has always been strongly opposed to the production and use of chemical weapons by any State and has supported all United Nations initiatives to this end. However, we believe that this matter should be resolved within the context of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which is being reviewed by the international community at the Paris Conference beginning tomorrow.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The final elimination of chemical weapons can be achieved only through the conclusion of a global and adequately verifiable convention, now being negotiated in Geneva. We are against the selective singling out of countries for pressure and punitive action. In this context, we welcome the readiness of the Libyan authorities to allow an international inspection of their plant. My delegation also feels that such a recourse to force has long-term implications for peace in the Mediterranean region, which is already beset with unresolved crises and open conflicts. This is why the non-aligned countries are actively engaged in the effort to transform the region into a zone of peace and co-operation. Furthermore, the incident has the potential to subvert the prospect for peace process in the Middle East, which has begun to show some movement forward in recent times.

Nepal is convinced that the threats to peace and security can be removed only through joint efforts of all States and by political and peaceful means, taking into account the legitimate security concerns of all countries. Nothing should be done to jeopardize the sustained improvement in the international climate over the past few years. This progress has opened up the possibility of discussing common issues and seeking a resolution of conflicts in an atmosphere of understanding and accommodation. The security of one State at the expense of others is inconceivable and unacceptable. Common and equal security for all can only be realized through mutual respect, confidence and co-operation.

The Security Council has the duty to ensure strict adherence by all States to the fundamental principles of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, we reiterate our appeal to all States to abide by the principle that force or the threat of force will not be used against the territorial integrity and political and economic independence of States. The

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

problems like those in the Mediterranean region can be resolved only through dialogue and not through pressure or the use of force. The United States, by virtue of its position as a permanent member of the Security Council, has even greater responsibility in ensuring the application of these fundamental principles.

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

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

Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and wish you every success as you discharge your mandate. We are sure that your extensive knowledge of international affairs and your outstanding qualities as a diplomat will be a valuable contribution to the settlement of problems before the Council.

We wish also to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to all the members of the Council for being so kind as to allow us to participate in this debate.

We learned with dismay of the incident that had just occurred in the central Mediterranean, in which two Libyan aircraft on reconnaissance were shot down by two United States aircraft. We will not go into the details of this tragic occurrence, which were amply described by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in his statement yesterday to the Council. Instead, we shall draw attention to the dangerous consequences to peace and security in the region of this latest act of force by the United States of America against a brother non-aligned country, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Indeed, the incidence was no mere chance occurrence. It was an unprovoked and premeditated act of aggression, part of the policy of destabilization carried out by the current United States Administration against the Libyan people and its leaders since it came to power. We all recall what happened in 1981 when two Libyan aircraft were shot down off the coast of Libya. In March 1984 the Security Council once again had to take up the question of attacks against the sovereignty and independence of Libya. In addition to all that, one has to bear in mind the various provocative and threatening military manoeuvres by the American Sixth Fleet, on a standing basis, off the coast of Libya.

In January 1986 the United States Administration flagrantly violated the most elementary norms of international law when it imposed comprehensive economic sanctions against Libya. In April of that same year the United States air force and navy bombed the Libyan cities of Benghazi and Tripoli, causing the death of innocent civilians.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

All those acts of violence were condemned by the international community when they occurred, in particular by the twenty-second Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Eighth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, at Harare, and the General Assembly in resolution 41/38.

We all agree that 1988 has seen a relaxation of international tension and a propitious atmosphere for a just and lasting settlement of regional conflicts. Imagine then our astonishment to see a resumption of the disinformation campaign carried out by certain circles against Libya in respect of a pharmaceutical factory being built by the Libyans. Concerned with the intensity of this hostile campaign by the United States and with the imminent danger of a further show of force against Libya, the non-aligned countries on 3 January issued a communiqué urgently appealing to the American Administration to renounce all acts of aggression and provocation against Libya in violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.

Our concern and apprehension were indeed justified, for we all know what happened the day after the issuance of that communiqué.

This hostile policy against Libya deserves to be appropriately condemned by the international community, and we hope that the Security Council, which has the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, will so condemn it.

True to its principles, the Democratic Republic of Madagascar - which has always condemned any show of force by the more powerful - strongly condemns this latest act of violence and wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm its full solidarity with the Libyan people and their leaders.

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

In conclusion, I should like to read out the following message sent today by His Excellency Mr. Didier Ratsiraka, President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar, to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, following upon this act of aggression against Libya:

"This latest resurgence of aggression, officially announced, which was perhaps premeditated and which has now taken the form of the aerial incident in the Mediterranean against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, cannot permit peace and justice-loving countries to remain silent. At a time when the United Nations quite rightly feels proud of its outstanding achievements in the settlement of deadly international conflicts and continues to make a contribution to the establishment of international peace and security by way of negotiations, the Democratic Republic of Madagascar deeply regrets the emergence of this new hotbed of tension, the justification for which is based on ill-founded allegations and a deliberate will to resolve a political dispute by violence.

"In so far as it may still be possible to prevent irreparable actions, and rather than the Security Council being seized of an intractable situation after the fact, I appeal to you to do everything possible - as is your wont - to ensure that the United Nations can reverse a process which may indeed prove to be fraught with dangerous consequences.

"In any event, the question of the production and use of chemical weapons cannot be a matter of concern to one country only. The soon to be convened Paris Conference is undoubtedly the proper forum to discuss the issue democratically without any one State, whatever its size or responsibilities, arrogating to itself the right to settle unilaterally a matter which concerns the international community as a whole."

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

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

Mr. SEVILLA BOZA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all let me say how pleased our delegation is to see your country, and you personally, presiding over the work of this lofty body this month. We also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work accomplished by Ambassador Kagami of Japan last month.

We had hoped that the dawning of 1989 would usher in a new era of peace and prosperity. The process of détente begun with the arms reduction agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the progress made towards a solution of certain regional conflicts, gave rise to cautious optimism in the international community which was broadly reflected in the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly in a general climate of understanding that often led us to think that there were real possibilities of reducing international tensions.

Less than a month ago there was genuine hope for peace in the Middle East, and the international community strongly supported efforts in that direction.

But that hope for peace was too good to be true, and it seems that it faded away after Christmas, for little more than 48 hours ago we witnessed an act of armed aggression against a State Member of this Organization and of the Non-Aligned Movement. Once again military force has been used against the integrity, sovereignty and independence of an Arab sister State.

(Mr. Sevilla Boza, Nicaragua)

Once again the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations has been ignored, and the country which has flagrantly violated this fundamental principle of international coexistence and others was not a small or underdeveloped country but one which, on the basis of its economic and military might, has proclaimed itself the judge and executor of law in the world, using for that purpose its own law, the law of force.

The attacked country is again the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the aggressor Power is again the United States of America, which, violating fundamental principles of international law, has heightened tensions in the Middle East and the Central Mediterranean, thus endangering international peace and security.

(Mr. Sevilla Boza, Nicaragua)

It is with grave concern that we appear before the Security Council today to denounce the downing of two Libyan air force reconnaissance aircraft by United States combat aircraft belonging to the Sixth Fleet, stationed in the central Mediterranean.

Nicaragua believes that it was not an isolated or chance incident; it was a premeditated terrorist act, part of a larger plan to conduct systematic attacks against the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. We say that it was not a chance occurrence because the United States Government itself had recently publicly threatened the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya with military force, alleging that that country was building a chemical weapons plant. Just as on 15 April 1986, when the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi were attacked by the United States, the threats have been carried out. In both cases they were preceded by a campaign of disinformation and systematic threats designed to confuse international and United States public opinion.

If the international community were to accept unilateral accusations and the illegal and arbitrary actions of the United States against Libya, it would be condoning a dangerous precedent - that of a super-Power, shielded by its military might, claiming the role of global policeman and, with no regard for international law or principle, taking justice into its own hands, on the basis of groundless accusations and pretexts.

The recent action by the United States against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is from all points of view condemnable - all the more so since the Libyan Government had shown flexibility and goodwill by its willingness to have an international investigation to the United States allegations.

(Mr. Sevilla Boza, Nicaragua)

The aggression against Libya, the latest in a series of attacks and threats since 1981, is even more serious and condemnable bearing in mind that the United States, as a permanent member of the Security Council, has the fundamental responsibility of preserving international peace and security and of totally respecting the principles of the Charter. However, its attitude comes as no surprise to us, since it has been the basic characteristic of the present United States Administration over the past eight years.

Nicaragua is an excellent example of that policy of aggression and destabilization, which has claimed more than 50,000 victims and has caused incalculable damage to our economy. Because we are very familiar with this policy of threats, blackmail, provocation and acts of aggression, we condemn, just as the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement did yesterday - this new act of aggression against Libya, which undoubtedly constitutes an act of State terrorism and is a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter.

The Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly advocated making the Mediterranean a zone of peace, security and co-operation, but those aspirations of the international community have been openly obstructed by the arrogance of the United States.

Our delegation considers that the international community - and in this specific case the Security Council - must take urgent measures to condemn this act of unprovoked aggression and to prevent the recurrence of such acts and thus avert a deepening of tension in the region.

The aggressor Power must put an end to its acts of force and reduce its naval presence around the territorial waters of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, a presence which so far has served only to increase tension in the Mediterranean, endangering the peace efforts in the region.

(Mr. Sevilla Boza, Nicaragua)

In conclusion, I wish to express the support and complete solidarity of the people and Government of Nicaragua with the people and Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya at this time, when once again they have been victims of an unjustifiable and condemnable act of military aggression.

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

The next speaker is the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KHAMSY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): I thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to speak, Sir, and also congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the important post of President of the Council for the month of January. I extend to you and the other members of the Council my best wishes for a good year; may it be full of success as you carry out your noble work for the strengthening of international peace and security.

I also pay tribute, Sir, to your predecessor, Ambassador Hideo Kagami of Japan, for his efforts and the patience he demonstrated as he guided the Council's extremely difficult and sensitive work last month.

It is indeed regrettable that at the very beginning of a new year, which began just a few days ago full of promise of peace and détente, our world has witnessed a serious event - the shooting down of two Libyan military aircraft on a routine reconnaissance flight over the Mediterranean, not far from the coast of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, by fighter aircraft belonging to a country situated several thousand kilometres from that coast, a country that has invoked the right of self-defence.

(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Taking into account the disinformation campaign waged in the press and official circles of the United States to put the blame on Libya and its leaders, we fear that the incident might well be the prelude to larger-scale armed aggression against that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the very near future. This is confirmed by the efforts made by the Government in Washington to rally to its cause American public opinion and Congress as well as its major allies in Western Europe. As long as the threat of aggression hangs over Libya, this unprovoked attack can in no way be regarded as an isolated act, even though those responsible in the Pentagon have hurriedly declared that the file is closed.

It is said that history repeats itself. This tragic history began in August 1981, when for the first time two Libyan military aircraft were shot down by American fighters in the Gulf of Sirte. In March 1986 ships and other Libyan defence installations were again attacked; on that occasion the attack was followed by the bombing from the air of the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in April that year, causing loss of human life among the civilian population and major material damage.

(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Because of the repetition of such typical acts of aggression against that country and because of the gravity of the present situation my delegation considers that the Government and people of Libya have every right to take steps, even militarily, to protect their industrial installations, in Rabta and elsewhere, and to ensure the legitimate defence of their own territory. The refusal of the United States to exclude use of the military option against the Rabta factory has only served to increase fears of the possibility of an armed aggression against Libya and an escalation of tension in the region.

The international community must therefore make every effort to prevent any further deterioration of the situation in the Mediterranean, which could seriously jeopardize the common hope of making that region a zone of peace, security and co-operation. That deterioration is all the more damaging in that it undermines the present atmosphere of détente and international co-operation.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic condemns and deplores any act of armed aggression directed against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, a sovereign country and a Member of the United Nations, and it calls upon foreign naval forces to withdraw from the region. We deplore the fact that the gunboat policies of the past should still be practised by a major Power in these final years of the twentieth century, and we call upon the Council to take appropriate measures to put an end to such practices, wherever they may occur, in order to open up once and for all the path to better understanding, détente and co-operation among States.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

I should like to inform members of the Council that I have just received a letter from the representative of Mali in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance

(The President)

with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative 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. Diakite (Mali) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I invite the representative of Mali to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali) (interpretation from French): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. I am all the more pleased at your presence in the Council because your country, Malaysia, enjoys excellent relations with mine. There can be no doubt that under your enlightened leadership the work of the Council will be successful. Your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Japan, also deserves our warm congratulations for the outstanding manner in which he guided the Council's work last month.

I should also like to thank the outgoing members of the Security Council for their praiseworthy contribution to the search for peace and the maintenance of international security. My delegation extends its warmest congratulations to the new members of the Council.

On Wednesday, 4 January, according to the initial information furnished to us by the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations, two Libyan reconnaissance aircraft on routine patrol were downed near the Libyan coast by American interceptor aircraft. That incident, which my delegation deplores, was preceded by a series of events that

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

prompt us to regard it as a premeditated act. Indeed, the official American threats to destroy an alleged chemical-weapons plant in Libya, together with the purportedly coincidental concentration of United States warships in the Mediterranean, created a crisis atmosphere that could well have been avoided. Manoeuvres that under normal circumstances would have had no particular significance were interpreted by the United States in this specific instance as hostile acts constituting an armed aggression against the United States forces. If steps are not taken in time by the Security Council, the situation thus created in the region could degenerate and become a grave threat to international peace and security.

The Charter calls upon all Members to refrain

"in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

Faithful to that principle, my delegation condemns the use of force to settle disputes between States. The security of small countries would be jeopardized were we to return to the law of the jungle.

Regardless of the complaints of the United States against Libya, nothing, in my delegation's view, justifies that great Power's campaign against that small African country, a member of the Organization of African Unity located thousands of kilometres from the shores of the United States.

Its position as a permanent member of the Security Council gives the United States of America a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is for that reason that my delegation appeals to the United States to refrain from any action that could increase tension between the two countries. In that connection the cessation of naval manoeuvres in the

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

Mediterranean not far from the Libyan coast and an end to the disinformation campaign against Libya would be initial steps towards reducing tension in the region.

The Security Council must take the measures necessary to enable the parties to set aside their rancor and realize the futility of violence. The parties should also enter into fruitful dialogue in the interests of safeguarding international peace and security. It is not beyond their capabilities to forgo acts of violence. What is needed is a true political will to arrive at a political solution to the problems between them. In the search for peace among nations, such efforts must be constant. For its part, Mali will spare no effort to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. That is why we call upon the parties to eschew any action that might heighten tension. In these difficult times, I should like to express, on behalf of Mali, my country's complete solidarity with the people and Government of Libya.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mali for his kind words addressed 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. DOST (Afghanistan): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. We have every confidence that under your able guidance the work of the Council will be crowned with success. I should also like to express my appreciation to your predecessor for the manner in which he presided over the activities of the Council during the month of December. I should also like to congratulate the five new members of the Council upon their election to this prestigious United Nations body and express deep appreciation to the outgoing members for their valuable contribution to the work of the Council.

(Mr. Dost, Afghanistan)

The question before the Council - the downing by the United States Navy of two Libyan jet aircraft on routine reconnaissance duty off the coast of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya - is cause for grave concern. The premeditated act of aggression committed by the United States Government is a clear breach of international peace and security, for the maintenance of which the United States, as a permanent member of the Security Council, bears great responsibility. It was an open act of aggression against a small developing and non-aligned country, which is a deliberate violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The explanation that the downing of the Libyan aircraft was an act of self-defence does not hold water, because reconnaissance duty off the coast of Libya is so routine a mission that it cannot possibly be interpreted as offensive and hostile. It is also important to note that, contrary to the claims made by the United States, the incident was not an isolated case at all. It came in the midst of a campaign of disinformation orchestrated by the United States Government against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and clearly indicates a pattern that has been followed in the past.

We may recall that previous United States acts of aggression against Libya have always been preceded by a campaign of disinformation to prepare public opinion in the United States for the planned act of aggression to follow. The downing of the Libyan aircraft is indeed connected with United States propaganda concerning Libya's alleged intention to produce chemical weapons.

The recent United States act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya comes after a long list of such acts of aggression in the past. Suffice it here to recall the downing of two other Libyan aircraft in August 1981 and the United States bombardment of Tripoli and Benghazi in April 1986. But what is more important is the fact that Libya is not the only victim of United States

(Mr. Dost, Afghanistan)

aggression: other small countries feel the same real threat to their sovereignty and independence. My country has been the subject of United States interference and intervention for years which, in spite of the signing of the Geneva Agreements, has not yet stopped; indeed, it has been aggravated further.

It is very clear that today Libya is the subject of United States aggression, and that tomorrow it will be another small non-aligned country. Therefore, we strongly urge the Security Council to adopt measures to put an end to such unprovoked acts of aggression by the United States. The Council is expected by all Members of the United Nations not to fail in preventing aggression and safeguarding international peace and security.

To conclude, I should like to reaffirm to brotherly Libya the full support and solidarity of the people and Government of the Republic of Afghanistan. We join the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement in condemning the act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and demand its immediate and full termination.

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

I should like to inform the Council that I have just received a letter from the representative of Democratic Yemen in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite him to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance 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. Al-Alfi (Democratic Yemen) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I invite the representative of Democratic Yemen to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives us pleasure, Sir, to see you assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We congratulate you and are confident that with your well-known wisdom and skills you will guide the work of the Council successfully.

We are also pleased to extend warm congratulations to your friendly country and to the other new members that joined the Council at the beginning of this year. At the same time, we should like to express our thanks and appreciation to the other members of the Council for their contributions to the cause of international peace and security and to pay a tribute to the Permanent Representative of Japan for his dedication in carrying out his functions as President of the Council last month.

The Council faces today a new complaint against the United States of America: the flagrant downing of two Libyan aircraft by United States fighter planes. This, of course, is not the first time that the United States has committed an act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, its people and leadership. It may not be the last time, either, given the United States massive military build-up off the Libyan coast and the invention by several agencies of the United States Administration, as well as by the mass media, of various experts to justify a further act of aggression against Libya.

The Council of Ministers of my country condemns this latest act of aggression by the United States against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and its Arab people - considering it, as it does, a violation of the norms of international law - and expressed its solidarity with fraternal Libya in its opposition to all American

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

provocations. The Council of Ministers also underscored the need for enhancing Arab solidarity in the face of threats to national sovereignty and the legitimate interests of the Arab nation.

I cannot over-emphasize the following points:

First, on many occasions in the past, the United States has submitted incorrect information to the international community, including the Security Council, and then admitted the inaccuracy of that data. An example here is the information given to the Council on the downing of the Korean airliner inside Soviet territory and, more recently, the data regarding the downing of the Iranian jetliner.

Secondly, it is our view that any act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and its people is an act of aggression against the entire Arab nation, and a deliberate attempt to impede any progress towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region by obstructing the convening of an international conference, within the framework of the United Nations. This serves the goals of the imperialist Zionists in the region, who thrive on sustained tensions and the repeated military acts of aggression against our Arab countries and peoples.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

It is no coincidence that the United States aircraft carrier, John F. Kennedy, from which the United States navy fighters took off, chose the port of Haifa, to drop anchor today rather than one of the many other ports in the area. We, in turn, recognize the military significance of that choice, which underscores the strategic alliance existing between the United States and Israel.

In conclusion, we hope that the Security Council will unequivocally condemn this act of aggression committed by the United States of America against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and take immediate and appropriate action in solidarity with Libya and its people so as to deter the aggressor.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Democratic Yemen for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. WALTERS (United States of America): I wish first to express my thanks and my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the function of President of the Council. I should also like to welcome the States that have become members of the Security Council this year and to express our high regard for those that are leaving, in the light of the extraordinary achievements that were recorded during their tenure. Particular thanks are due to Ambassador Kagami, President of the Security Council last month.

In the last two days we have heard some intemperate statements which demand comment. The United States is not really disposed to receive lessons on terrorism from a nation like Sandinista Nicaragua. Nor is it ready to be taught the norms of international behaviour by nations governed by various forms of military or civilian one-party dictatorships.

(Mr. Walters, United States)

At the outset, it was claimed that the Libyan planes were unarmed. We have photographs that prove the planes were armed. The missile pods are clearly visible on these photographs, which I will pass around so that everybody can see for themselves whether there were or were not missiles on those aircraft which were claimed to have been unarmed. The missile pods show quite clearly that there are two different types of missiles on the aircraft - hanging from the aircraft's wings and hanging from the underpart of the fuselage.

These deliberate misstatements of fact tell the story so far as credibility is concerned. Some others seem to have short memories and little foresight. Not very long ago some States asked for and received protection from the United States navy, protection which was vital to their economic well-being and which was provided at a high cost in American lives. We accept such losses as part of the risk that comes from providing protection. The protection would not be available or worth while when needed if it were not for training exercises such as those that were taking place in the Mediterranean Sea on 3 January.

The facts of the incident are as we reported them to the Council in document S/20366 and as we stated them yesterday. Routine operations over international waters well beyond the 12-mile limit of the territorial sea claimed by the Government of Libya were aggressively and hostilely challenged by the Libyan air force. The recordings of the pilots' conversations, which were heard on television, make it all the more clear that we acted in self-defence. On one occasion, the pilot said: "This is is my fifth evasive action".

Reference has been made to the American mass media. They are not, as is well-known, controlled by the United States Government. This, of course, is not the case with some of the Governments whose representatives have spoken here. It does not enhance the cause of world peace or the role of the Council to pretend that the facts are other than what they are.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are no further speakers for this meeting. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on its agenda will take place this afternoon, Friday, 6 January 1989, at 3.30.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.