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2581st MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 21 May 1985, at 11.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Siddhi SAVETSILA (Thailand).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Australia, Burkina Faso, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, India, Madagascar, Peru, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2581)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in the Middle East:
Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/17177)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East:

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/17177)

1. The PRESIDENT: Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force [UNDOF] for the period 17 November 1984 to 13 May 1985 [S/17177]. Members of the Council also have before them a draft resolution [S/17202] which has been prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

2. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously [resolution 563 (1985)].

3. The PRESIDENT: In connection with the resolution just adopted on the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF, I am authorized to make the following complementary statement on behalf of the Security Council:

"As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/17177) states, in paragraph 26, that 'Despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the

Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached.' That statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council."

4. Mr. LING Qing (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of the resolution just adopted by the Council. We also agree with the view expressed in the President's statement that the dangerous situation is likely to continue unless and until a settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached.

5. I wish to take this opportunity to extend our warm welcome and sincere thanks to you, Sir, for presiding in person over the work of the Council this month. Your presence fully demonstrates the concern of the Thai Government and people for, and their positive attitude towards, the maintenance of international peace and security. You are a prominent diplomat enjoying high esteem in Thailand and South-East Asia. We deeply admire the strong will and outstanding diplomatic talent you have displayed in the handling of international affairs. We are convinced that with your guidance and assisted by Mr. Kasemsri, the work of the Council for this month will be crowned with success.

6. Mr. SORZANO (United States of America): This is the second time that the Council has been convoked this month under the presidency of Thailand. The first time, the Council was privileged to have as its presiding officer the representative of Thailand. I want you to know that he enjoys an admiration among his colleagues in the Organization which is second to none.

7. The Council is exceptionally honoured to have you in the Chair as its President today. In your capacity as Air Chief Marshal and Secretary-General of the Thai National Security Council, as well as Minister for Foreign Affairs, you have established a well-deserved reputation as one of the senior statesmen in South-East Asia. Your leadership on regional and global issues, including issues of war and peace which continue to preoccupy us here at the United Nations, has been extraordinary. My country has enjoyed and benefited from working closely with you in the positions of leadership which you have exercised over the last two decades. The close working relationship between senior officials of the United States Government and you, Mr. President, mirror the warm relationship between our respective peoples.

8. My fellow countrymen hold in the highest esteem Thailand's extraordinarily rich culture and the tolerance and generosity that have made Thailand the home for close to half a million dispossessed refugees in recent years. My delegation takes great pleasure in welcoming you to the Council.

9. Mr. WOOLCOTT (Australia): It is a particular pleasure to be meeting today under the presidency of so distinguished a representative of Thailand as you, Sir. It is also a special pleasure for the Australian delegation, because Thailand is both a regional neighbour and a long-standing and close friend of Australia. Echoing the words of previous speakers, we admire the role which you have personally played in trying to bring peace and stability to South-East Asia.

10. The presence of the Foreign Minister of Thailand in this chamber is also a testimony to the importance which Thailand attaches to the Security Council. My own country shares this view, and you may be assured, Sir, of the continued and complete co-operation of the Australian delegation.

11. It is particularly fitting that you should be directing the Council's affairs on the occasion when it has been asked to address the future of one of the Organization's successes. For UNDOF is certainly that. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, the Force has, with the co-operation of the parties, performed its functions most effectively. Pending the negotiation of a just and durable peace settlement in the region, Australia agrees that UNDOF should continue to perform these functions.

12. My country is, as you know, an active supporter of the concept of peace-keeping under United Nations auspices. Australian servicemen and policemen have served with a number of peace-keeping operations over the past four decades and continue to do so in a number of areas and theatres today. It is against this background that Australia readily joined in the adoption of the Council's resolution 563 (1985).

13. Sir John THOMSON (United Kingdom): Though I do not have a great deal to say about the resolution we have just adopted, other than to underline my Government's continuing support for UNDOF in its valuable work, to express our thanks to the officers and men of the Force and to welcome General Hägglund as the new Commander, I should like briefly to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing Thailand in the presidency of the Council and our appreciation to you, Sir, for coming to New York on this occasion.

14. Thailand was one of the first countries, outside the original group of founders, to take up membership of the United Nations. The country brought to the Organization a distinctive approach to international affairs, based on centuries of sturdy independence, on a proud and glittering culture and on a profound religious and philosophical tradition.

15. The tenth anniversary of Thailand's membership found as President of the eleventh session of the General

Assembly, Sir, one of your predecessors, Prince Wan Wai-thayakon. Now, as we approach the fortieth anniversary of your country's membership in the Organization, Thailand has been elected as one of Asia's representatives in the Security Council. Given Thailand's valuable contribution to the United Nations and to the South-East Asian region, I feel that we have had to wait too long to welcome you to the Council. The quality of Thailand's participation in the Council's affairs over the past few months can only reinforce this feeling, and I look forward to benefiting from the wisdom and perspective of Thailand's representatives in the year and a half ahead.

16. Perhaps I may be forgiven for adding a personal note. Your country and my own have been partners in the United Nations for nearly 40 years, but the partnership between Britain and Thailand stretches back for nearly 10 times that period. It was as far back as 1612 that King James I of England and VI of Scotland sent a letter of greeting to King Songt'am at Ayut'ia. Though we may have had occasional differences in the intervening four centuries, I think both countries can look back on their historic relationship with pride and with pleasure. This is due in no small part to Thailand's extraordinary skill, if I may say so, in dealing with other nations. The Thai approach was epitomized by the instructions sent by King Mongkut in 1864, telling his ambassador at Paris how to handle potential difficulties with Britain and France: "The only weapons that will be of real use to us in the future will be our mouths and our hearts, constituted so as to be full of sense and wisdom for the better protection of ourselves."

17. These qualities persist to this day. In the years of Thailand's United Nations membership, not least in the five years in which you have been Minister for Foreign Affairs, the people of Thailand have had to cope with tense and burdensome questions. In so doing, they have continued to demonstrate that their mouths and their hearts are full of sense and wisdom for the better protection of themselves. The way in which, in co-operation with United Nations agencies and with the support of my own and many other countries, Thailand has continued to cope with a major influx of refugees and its concomitant humanitarian problems, is a shining example. So, too, are the remarkable restraint and statesmanship and the openness to dialogue and negotiation which Thailand has manifested in very difficult circumstances.

18. It is fitting that you should be here to preside over the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF, which has quietly and effectively helped to maintain the peace. My delegation looks forward to continuing to benefit from the wisdom with which you, Sir, and your able representative have led the Council's deliberations.

19. Mr. de KÉMOULARIA (France) (*interpretation from French*): Availing myself of the circumstances which have prompted the Council to meet today, may I say what a privilege it is for the representative of France to welcome to the presidency Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand. You were right in making a point of coming, Sir, thus emphasizing by your presence here the importance of our work.

20. But let us return to you: your outstanding military and then political career is an expression of your great professional qualities. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of your country for six years, you have conducted your country's diplomacy skilfully and effectively. In the image of the Thai people, who are known throughout the world for their religious feeling and their moderation, you have acted in accordance with a long tradition of national independence and the search for negotiated solutions to regional problems.

21. A member of the United Nations since 1946, Thailand has worked hard to make its presence felt in the main bodies of the Organization. Its international prestige and its devotion to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations paved the way for your country's becoming a member of the Security Council, where it has just taken a seat for two years.

22. Directly affected by the conflict in Cambodia, your country, faithful to its tradition, has spared no effort to achieve a negotiated settlement. Here I should like to pay tribute to what Thailand has done for the refugees of Indochina; its considerable assistance has never weakened, even in the most tragic circumstances. I myself witnessed this, when I visited the refugee camps, having had the privilege of establishing the French National Committee for Refugees from Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam.

23. Proud of its national identity, Thailand has for long been open to the outside world. Its relations with the West are among the most long-standing on the Asian continent.

24. My country, France, and your country, Thailand, countries of ancient civilizations, have a long common history. In fact, this year is being marked by events recalling the tricentenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between them. All young French people have a mental image of the Siamese delegation coming to Versailles to visit the Sun King.

25. Our two countries maintain extremely cordial bilateral relations, as demonstrated by the many recent high-level meetings. You yourself have visited France as Minister three times: in April 1982, at the time of the visit of the Prime Minister of Thailand; in April 1984; and two months ago, in March, when you had useful talks with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country.

26. Mr. Minister, diplomatic talents and negotiating skill often have the opportunity to be employed in this prestigious chamber. Your authority and competence are welcome here, and I am happy to greet you in the name of France.

27. Mr. BIERRING (Denmark): May I join previous speakers, Mr. President, in saying how greatly honoured we are to have you presiding over our meeting today. Your presence underlines in a most timely fashion the impor-

ance that Thailand attaches to the Security Council as the organ bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

28. It gives my delegation special pleasure to see you in the Chair, Sir, as you represent a country with which Denmark has over the centuries maintained very special ties of friendship and co-operation, in spite of the great distance that separates our two countries. Most recently we have collaborated in connection with our common efforts to safeguard the security and well-being of the thousands and thousands of refugees in the strife-ridden region of South-East Asia. We greatly admire the sacrifices that your Government and the Thai people have made to safeguard those refugees and to alleviate their plight.

29. I should also like in your presence to express our admiration for the masterful way in which the representative of your country, Mr. Kasemsri, has guided our proceedings during the month of May.

30. Finally, may I say that we voted for the draft resolution on the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF; my country, like yours, has always strongly supported UNDOF, it being one of the most successful achievements of the United Nations.

31. Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): This being the first time I have had the honour to address the Council on behalf of Egypt this month, under Thailand's presidency, it is a great honour to me, on behalf of my country, which has enjoyed the closest relations with yours, Sir, to express our pleasure at seeing you personally presiding over the Council. We believe that this is a testimony to, and an expression of, the importance Thailand has always attached to the role of the Security Council as the prime organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

32. We are gratified that under your presidency the Council has unanimously renewed the mandate of UNDOF. Your presence here and your participation in the continuation of one of the peace-keeping operations in which the United Nations has achieved undeniable success are further proof of the importance you attach to the Council.

33. I cannot fail to express in your presence, Mr. President, our admiration for and appreciation of our colleague, the representative of your country, who during this month of Thailand's presidency continues to make his well-known efforts to achieve the Council's success.

34. The PRESIDENT: The Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

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