



**Security Council**

PROVISIONAL

S/PV.2648  
28 January 1986

ENGLISH

---

**PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND  
SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 28 January 1986, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. LI LUYE

(China)

Members: Australia  
Bulgaria  
Congo  
Denmark  
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. WOOLCOTT  
Mr. TSVETKOV  
Mr. ADOUKI  
Mr. BIERRING  
Mr. de KEMOULARIA  
Mr. GBEHO  
Mr. RABETAFIKA  
Mr. KASEMSRI  
Mr. ALLEYNE  
Mr. SAFRONCHUK  
Mr. AL-SHAALI

Sir John THOMSON  
Ms. BYRNE  
Mr. PABON

---

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the Security Council.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.

**EXPRESSIONS OF CONDOLENCE**

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): We have just learned of the tragic incident of the explosion of the United States space shuttle "Challenger" this morning. We are saddened by this heavy loss to the space endeavours of the United States. As President of the Security Council and on behalf of the members of the Security Council as well as on my own behalf, I wish to convey through the United States delegation our heartfelt condolences to the Government of the United States on the loss of the crew of the space shuttle and our deep sympathy to the bereaved families.

Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. President, permit me on behalf of the Soviet delegation to convey through you our profound condolences to the delegation of the United States on the tragic accident that occurred this morning to the space shuttle "Challenger". We would request the United States delegation to convey our sympathy and condolences to the bereaved families of the members of the space shuttle who perished.

As the representative of the country which blazed the way to outer space and has developed a broad programme of exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes, more than any other country we understand the difficulties and problems connected with this enterprise and we sincerely sympathize with the United States.

Mr. de KEMOULARIA (France) (interpretation from French): I thank you, Mr. President, for expressing the feelings of all the members of the Security Council.

My country, France, a space Power, was also deeply moved by the news of this tragic accident. I have been informed that the French Government and people learned of the tragedy with profound emotion.

I wish to convey this profound emotion felt by the Government and people of France directly to the United States delegation.

Ms. BYRNE (United States of America): I should like to express the deepest appreciation of the Government and people of the United States for the condolences expressed by the President of the Security Council and other members of the Security Council. We also are stunned and shocked at this very sad and totally unexplained event.

I shall convey the sympathy of the Security Council to my Government in Washington, to the people of the United States and to the families of those who perished in this catastrophe.

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

#### THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

- (a) LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17740)
- (b) LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17741)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): In accordance with the decisions taken at the previous meetings on this item, I invite the representative of Morocco to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Israel, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, the Libyan

(The President)

Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alaoui (Morocco) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Kaddoumi (Palestine Liberation Organization) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Zarif (Afghanistan), Mr. Djoudi (Algeria), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Haji Omar (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Shaker (Egypt), Mr. Camara (Guinea), Ms. Kunadi (India), Mr. Wiryono (Indonesia), Mr. Netanyahu (Israel), Mr. Rajaie-Rhorassani (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Kasrawi (Jordan), Mr. Azzarouk (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Zain Azraai (Malaysia), Mr. Ould Boye (Mauritania), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Kawari (Qatar), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Birido (Sudan), Mr. El-Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Bouziri (Tunisia), Mr. Turkaen (Turkey) and Mr. Basendwah (Yemen) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cuba, Iraq and Nicaragua in which they request 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 those representatives 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. Oramas Oliva (Cuba), Mr. Kittani (Iraq) and Mr. Chamorro Mora (Nicaragua) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The Security Council will now resume consideration of the item on its agenda.

I draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following document: letter dated 27 January 1986 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (document S/17765).

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

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): I should like to begin by expressing, on behalf of the people and Government of Israel, to Ambassador Byrne and the entire United States Mission to the United Nations our profound grief at the terrible tragedy that occurred today during the launching of "Challenger". Before the eyes of all mankind, seven brave men and women, seven dauntless heroes, gave their lives in the quest to expand man's frontiers. We extend our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of the United States, to the United States Mission and, most of all, to the families, who surely must be experiencing immeasurable pain.

I turn now to the item on the Council's agenda.

Any serious debate, however heated, must be based on fact. There ought to be, at the very least, a kernel of truth from which one develops argumentation. I have to admit that I have found myself in the peculiar position of having listened to or read some 20-odd speeches in this debate, most of which - indeed virtually every one - developed a stream of argumentation that had no basis in fact.

Indeed, to the extent that these statements refer at all to the actual events on 8 January on the Temple Mount, they contradict each other on the specifics. For example, the Jordanian letter of 9 January speaks of 20 Knesset members, while the United Arab Emirates' letter of 10 January speaks of 5. Another example: some representatives speak about "the Jews entering the Moslem Mosque", while others are noticeably vague about this point.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Those have not been the only instances of conflict, contradiction, inaccuracy and distortion in this debate; there have been plenty of others. Some speakers, for example, indulged in sweeping revisions of ancient history as well, such as the claim - flatly untrue - that no building was done on the Temple Mount since the Arab conquest. Those who revise history with such facility should read, for example, the direct evidence to the contrary in Ibn Al-Athir, the noted Arab historian, writing in the 1100s; and there are many other Arab historians that one could cite. There was the equally absurd claim that the Philistines, a seafaring people of Greek origin who settled on the coast of Israel in 1200 BCE, are the ancestors of the Palestinian Arabs, who are descendants of the Arabs who invaded the country nearly 2,000 years later and those Arabs who migrated in their wake.

I am not going to take the time to correct each of these historical falsehoods. I do not think there is any use in doing so. Indeed, what is the use if we cannot even get the facts right about something that happened a few days ago?

But I have no doubt that if we do not correct the facts and these warped and distorted versions turn that minor incident - as some have tried to do - into "a violent religious desecration valiantly resisted by the faithful", this will go down as yet another fabrication in that endless stream of fabrications that some here are so proficient at. So I am forced to come back to the starting point of my first statement in this debate - and that is the facts of the incident as it occurred.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

On 8 January 1986 members of the Knesset Interior Committee conducted a tour of the Temple Mount. I stress again: that was a routine visit. Similar visits took place last year and two years ago. The Knesset's custom is to co-ordinate such visits with the Waqf, the Moslem religious authorities that administer the Islamic Holy Places, and the Waqf representatives accompany the Knesset members their tour. As the group prepared to descend into one of the historical sites on the Mount, the site known as Solomon's Stables, the Waqf representatives objected to the group's entry because of the presence of a Jewish photographer. Their objection, as I have pointed out, did not extend to the photographer of the Arab newspaper Al-Fajr who was not interfered with.

At that point somebody took control of the loudspeaker of the nearby Al-Aqsa Mosque - it is a very loud loudspeaker - and began broadcasting such calls as: "Al-Aqsa is in danger", "The Jews are marching on our Holy Mosque", "The Jews are invading the Temple Mount", and so on. At those calls hundreds of Arab youths armed with knives and clubs began to close in on the visitors, shouting the anti-Semitic incitement in Arabic "Itbakh al-Yahud!" - slaughter the Jews! The small police contingent present barely held back the mob until the reinforcements arrived to evacuate the group - they did so in a police van. The police acted with the greatest restraint; they prevented any bloodshed and any spread of violence. Again, no one was hurt and no property was damaged.

Following that incident, another visit was co-ordinated with the Waqf for the following Tuesday, 14 January. On that occasion, too, scores of Arab youths were present at the time of the visit. That time the pretext for disturbances was the reading of psalms from the Bible by one of the Knesset members who happens to be a rabbi. Again, the group was denied entry to Solomon's Stables and had to leave under threats.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

That is the sum total of what took place: no violence, no damage, and certainly no profanation.

Since then the Temple Mount has been completely quiet. There are thousands of people who have visited it in the intervening days - thousands - including some well-known diplomats and international figures, who have all attested to the calm prevailing there.

Therefore, I have a simple question: Given the facts and the present quiet, what is all the fuss about? I ask that not in denegration but in absolute seriousness. What is the fuss about? Is it the selective indignation at the presence of one photographer, so obviously singled out? Or the reading of psalms outside, in the open air? I voice those questions because I should like to appeal to the fair-minded people around this table, to their sense of proportion, their sense of balance, their sense of truth.

To illustrate what I am talking about, this so-called crisis is brought before the Security Council in the same week in which the old City of Aden has been obliterated. The Washington Post reported on 23 January: "Scarcely a single building in Aden remained intact." I mention that because what has not been mentioned but should be mentioned here is that several of the old mosques of Aden which are very ancient - perhaps among the most ancient mosques in the Arabian Peninsula - have also been damaged and some destroyed. Since this is a discussion on religious sites, I do not dwell on the human tragedy of over 10,000 people who have been killed in the fighting.

So in this debate we have neglect of some facts that are pertinent to the alleged purpose of the discussion - that is, the profanation of Islamic holy sites. I gave Aden merely as a current contemporaneous example. I gave other examples in a previous statement of other such violations throughout the years

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

that were not mentioned - severe violations. There is also, in parallel, a distortion of other facts, and I am afraid that that distortion is not limited to Jerusalem. The Jordanian letter of 26 January makes a charge - which has since been repeated in this Chamber - of Jewish attempts to storm the Mosque in Hebron. That is sheer fabrication. It is a total lie. It never happened.

Surely not by accident, none of the speakers noted the real desecration that took place in both cities of Hebron and Jerusalem and which, I believe, serves as a useful counterpoint to the present reality in both cities. In Hebron, the ancient Jewish community - a community that goes back three and a half millennia to the time of Abraham - was massacred and driven out in the Arab pogrom of 1929. The ancient synagogue there, as anyone visiting Hebron today can attest, still lies in ruin.

In Jerusalem, the focus of this discussion, 58 synagogues were totally demolished by the Arabs in 1948. Those synagogues that were not destroyed were turned into toilets, stables and warehouses filled with dung heap and garbage. Hundreds of Torah scrolls were plundered or burned to ashes. That was followed by the systematic desecration of cemeteries, especially the Mount of Olives Cemetery, the most sacred burial site for the Jewish people. After 1967 we found tombstones used as pavement and flagstones for public latrines - and we counted them: 38,000 out of the 50,000 tombstones were thus torn up and profaned.

Shall I compare now the Israeli record in those cities? It is difficult to do so because the Israeli record in both cities is not merely better, it is beyond comparison. So many figures and so many countries have used so many superlatives to describe the extraordinary harmony that characterizes Jerusalem since 1967 that I could spend the next few hours reading out some of those testimonials - by writers, philosophers, Nobel laureates from all over the world, and many others whose integrity or objectivity is not subject to any discussion or debate.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

A few weeks ago Jerusalem's Mayor, Teddy Kollek, was awarded the prestigious Peace Prize of the Association of German Publishers. He was honoured with these words:

"Even if Jerusalem's surprising serenity hasn't brought a larger Middle East peace, it points the way and shows the possibility."

And yesterday, The New York Times provided another example of interfaith harmony in Jerusalem, this time between Christians and Jews, in a long article that representatives might have seen on page 2.

But why go outside the Middle East for testimonials? I have here a statement by Anwar Nusseibah, a former minister in the Jordanian Cabinet and an old-time Jerusalemite. In The New York Times of 4 August 1985, following warm words of praise for Mr. Kollek, I think he summed up the situation in Jerusalem best by saying: "The fact is, Arabs and Jews coexist here against the nature of things." He was merely echoing what was said a few days ago in Germany. It is the same observation. Everyone observes the same thing: there may be turmoil all around in the Middle East, there is conflict - and we see some of it sparking here - but in Jerusalem there is tranquility.

Again, that is not a miracle; it is not an accident; it is not an aberration. It is the result of a careful and delicate policy of coexistence and mutual respect that the Government of Israel has fostered each day for the past 19 years. I think that policies are based, above all, on intentions, and this policy is based on the best of intentions. It is derived from a profound respect for all religions and a commitment to ensure their freedom of worship. That respect is extended to Islam, as it is to Christianity and all other religions - several of which, I might point out, have found refuge and sanctuary in Israel from persecution elsewhere in the Middle East because of Israel's democracy and climate of tolerance.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

I have read carefully all the statements made here, and more than one speaker has questioned Israel's policy. They said "We did not hear from the Israeli speaker what Israel's policy would be vis-à-vis the future." I would only ask that some of those speakers read as carefully the statements that I make. By the way, I am not going to respond to each one of the attacks levelled against us; that is not my purpose here. But I do want to reiterate once more that our policy of tolerance and respect for all religions will continue. It will be totally unaffected by the attempts at provocation here or elsewhere. Prime Minister Peres said on 14 January:

"All the arrangements made in the past, in regard to the Temple Mount, are valid for all religions, and there has been no change in the Government's policy on this subject."

I hope that puts that one to rest.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

What is the best proof of the success of this policy? It is how people really feel. How do you know how they really feel? What are the best indicators? I would say there are two wonderful indicators of how people really consider a situation: first, how they vote with their feet, and, secondly, how they vote with their pockets when they have the chance. Since 1967, both the Arab population and the Jewish population have increased, markedly increased. In fact, the Arab population has more than doubled itself, and it has prospered, financially and economically, in the best possible way, and it has invested a great deal of its own wealth and imported wealth from the rest of the Muslim world into the religious shrines. This has very much been our policy: to enable the Arabs, the Muslims and all religions to build and rebuild their religious sites. I would say that what has been accomplished in Jerusalem is unparalleled: it is unparalleled anywhere else in the world, and certainly no one has surpassed it. I would put it in those terms.

Jerusalem is the nucleus of hope for peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs. There are those - there are those here - who wish to smash this harmony, who wish to bring it down, who wish to prevent this hope from becoming the path to and the pattern for a broader coexistence. They would like to turn Jerusalem into their model of urban serenity and religious equilibrium, along the lines of what they have done to Tripoli, to Beirut, to Aden, to Hama.

But my purpose here is to appeal to those representatives who remain interested in the facts, and to say to them that there is a simple truth that the Council is facing in this debate, the truth of an incident, a minor incident, blown up and distorted beyond recognition. But I wish to say also that there is a larger truth as well: The consequences of passing a resolution condemning - even questioning - Israel's record on religious sites would be to legitimize and

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

encourage religious incitement aimed at destroying the very peace we are all trying to preserve. Falling in with it would be an intolerable capitulation to intolerance.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are convinced that under your wise and skilful leadership the Council will chart a firm course.

We wish also to express our gratitude to Ambassador Bassole of Burkina Faso for his excellent work as President of the Council for the month of December.

In this International Year of Peace we had all hoped that this important body would not have to be convened - or at least not as frequently as in past years - to consider situations which could disturb or threaten international peace and security. We even believed that those who promoted wars of aggression, those who based their entire foreign policy on the threat or use of force, on interference and intervention aimed at denying other peoples their inalienable right of self-determination, those who had styled themselves the world's policemen - in a word, those who bred hatred and enmity between peoples - would echo the beautiful words spoken at the solemn meeting of the General Assembly when the International Year of Peace was proclaimed, and would contribute with their deeds, not with mere words, to making 1986 a year for easing tension in international relations and for creating the conditions for achieving just, honourable and lasting solutions to the many conflicts besetting mankind.

(Mr. Orazas Oliva, Cuba)

Regrettably, one of those conflicts, the one which has taken up most of this body's time - the question of the Middle East and its central cause, the question of Palestine - has practically begun the Council's work for this year. But that should be a surprise to no one. Why should we be surprised that it was Israel which has already compelled the Security Council to convene twice since the beginning of the year to consider that country's criminal acts against the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples?

The question the Council is considering today - however reprehensible and condemnable it may be to profane the Holy Places of one of the world's universal religions and unnecessarily wound the feelings of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world - cannot be seen as an isolated incident. This act merely shows how far the Israeli authorities are willing to go in their desire to obtain by might what is not theirs by right.

In other words, the acts of desecration in the Al-Aqsa Mosque must be seen in the overall context of the expansionist policy of the Tel Aviv Government, aimed not only against the Palestinian people, but against all Arab countries and peoples. The iron fist hidden behind the back of the desecrators is the same fist which is attempting, through repression and terror, to stifle the Palestinian people's yearning for freedom; it is the same fist which goes beyond the occupied territories to commit aggression and attempt to intimidate other States Members of the United Nations.

We understand that it is no easy task to put an end to this Israeli policy or to make Israel abide by international law and by the very instruments it signed of its own sovereign will, such as the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem. That policy, along with that of the racist régime of Pretoria, is inspired by the

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

strategic alliance maintained by the Government of Israel with the United States and in the unconditional political, diplomatic, economic and military assistance that Government receives from Washington.

But neither that unconditional support from its ally and protector nor Israel's stubborn short-sighted policy will bring to its knees the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole authentic representative. The struggle of that people is a just struggle, as have been the struggles of all peoples which have endured colonialism and foreign oppression, including the resistance of the Jewish people itself against Nazi-Fascist crimes.

(Mr. Oranas Oliva, Cuba)

Unfortunately, the Security Council has been unable to meet its responsibilities under the Charter because of the protective shield provided by Israel's principal ally; however, we wish to express the hope that at this juncture it will adopt relevant measures that will not only help to avoid a recurrence of situations such as the one that is today before the Council but that will also contribute to the attainment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East conflict, and the solution of its central problem, the question of Palestine. We have stated in the past, and we repeat here today, our conviction that an important step in that direction would be the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East. We believe that the members of the Council are uniquely placed to play a role in that connection, and in so doing they will be making their best contribution to ensuring that the International Year of Peace will be a reality.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Cuba 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 its consideration of the item on its agenda will be fixed after consultations with members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

