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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 15 January 1987, at 4.10 p.m.

President: Mr. AGUILAR

(Venezuela)

Members:

Argentina
Bulgaria
China
Congo
France
Germany, Federal Republic of
Ghana
Italy
Japan
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Zambia

Mr. DELPECH
Mr. TSVETKOV
Mr. LI Luye
Mr. ADOUKI
Mr. de KEMOULARIA
Mr. LAUTENSCHLAGER
Mr. DUMEVI
Mr. BUCCI
Mr. KIKUCHI
Mr. BELONOGOV
Mr. SHIKIR

Mr. BIRCH
Mr. OKUN
Mr. NGO

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The meeting was called to order at 4.25 p.m.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council held in the new year, I should like to extend greetings and best wishes to all those assembled here today.

EXPRESSION OF WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): It is a particular pleasure for me to welcome the newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council - the Permanent Representatives of Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia. I know that I am reflecting the sentiments of the other members of the Council in expressing the conviction that the participation of the new members in the Council's work will be an invaluable contribution to the search for solutions to the complex issues which the Council confronts in the discharge of its important functions.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I wish also, on behalf of the Council, to express our gratitude to the outgoing non-permanent members for their important and invaluable contributions to our work. The representatives of Australia, Denmark, Madagascar, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago won our esteem and friendship and contributed their talents in immeasurable ways to the Council's work. I am sure that we will continue our fruitful co-operation in the future.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Council, I wish also to pay a well-deserved tribute to the retiring President of the Security Council, Ambassador Vernon A. Walters, who conducted the Council's work in December with great talent and in a most effective manner. Ambassador Walters evoked our admiration and respect for the personal qualities and consummate diplomatic skills which he displayed in a month when the Council had to deal with many important questions.

EXPRESSION OF WELCOME TO THE NEW UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): It is also my great pleasure to welcome Mr. Vasilii Safronchuk, who has just assumed his functions as Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs and is with us for the first time in that capacity in a formal meeting of the Security Council.

Mr. Safronchuk has had a distinguished career in his country's Foreign Ministry and is well known to us since not long ago he served as the First Deputy Permanent Representative in the Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations here in New York. He was previously the Head of the Middle East Department and Deputy Head of the Second European Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union. He has also served his country as Ambassador, and most recently was a member of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts established by the General Assembly to review the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

I am sure that I reflect the feelings of all the members of the Security Council in bidding him a warm welcome.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY COUNCIL AFFAIRS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, who wishes to make a brief statement.

Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, most sincerely for the warm words of welcome addressed to me on the occasion of my appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs. I wish to assure the members of the Security Council that in this capacity I shall do my best to facilitate the Council's work and assist the Secretary-General in the discharge of his responsibilities in the political field. I look forward to close co-operation with all the members of the Council.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr. Viacheslav Ustinov, and wish him continued success in the future.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (S/18581 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Ireland and Lebanon 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 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. Fakhoury (Lebanon) took a place at the Council table; Mr. McDonagh (Ireland) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period 11 July 1986 to 11 January 1987, contained in documents S/18581 and Corr.1 and Add.1.

In that report it is mentioned that during the current mandate period 15 members of the Force lost their lives. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council in extending sincere condolences to the Governments and families of the deceased who gave their lives in the cause of peace.

In addition to the Secretary-General's report, members of the Council have before them the following documents: S/18580, letter dated 6 January 1987 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, and S/18597, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now. There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Argentina, Bulgaria, China, Congo, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America
Venezuela and Zambia

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has therefore been adopted unanimously as resolution 594 (1987).

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. de KEMOULARIA (France) (interpretation from French): In keeping with customary practice - and with great pleasure - I should like to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Mr. President, conducting the work of the Council for this month. I say this because of the long-standing, cordial, friendly relations of trust that exist between our two countries, and also because we are well acquainted with you and are familiar with your personal qualities, one of which - your authority - you have just demonstrated by the brisk manner in which you have gavelled this meeting to order. My delegation wishes you the fullest success in the discharge of your presidential duties.

I would ask Ambassador Okun of the United States of America to convey my congratulations to your predecessor as President last month, Ambassador Vernon Walters, who brought to that office the full measure of his personal experience, his humor and human warmth and his skill in conducting our work. Please convey to him our thanks and appreciation.

It is a pleasant tradition that a welcome be extended to those who are beginning their terms of office as members of the Security Council. I should like to begin with Italy, our Latin sister as it were, and to tell our Italian colleague how pleased we are to see him sitting in the Council.

To his neighbour, the representative of Japan, let me recall the cultural affinities that exist between France and Japan, affinities that may not be well known outside our two countries. Nevertheless, between France and Japan there has been a community of interests for some years, and we are pleased to see you here.

(Mr. de Kemoullaria, France)

Zambia is a part of Africa, and France and the French Government cherish their African ties. I cordially welcome the representative of Zambia to this Council, where I am sure he will play an important role.

My eye now travels to Ambassador Delpech of Argentina. To him, I should like to say how pleased I am, along with the other members of my delegation, to see him sitting at the Council table. Relations between France and Argentina are of long standing. Our own personal relations are newer, having existed for only one year, but during that time we have enjoyed fruitful co-operation with him and we welcome him for the good of the Council.

The representative of France's large neighbour, the Federal Republic of Germany, is, by alphabetical chance, sitting next to me here at this table. Our mutual history has been marked by many brutal events, but one of the most remarkable features of modern European history is that the present relations between France and the Federal Republic of Germany are marked by trust and friendship. They are close and well co-ordinated. His presence represents a pledge of fruitful co-operation in the Council's work, and I am very happy to see him here.

It has also been traditional to pay a well-deserved tribute to members who have departed the Council. I do not see my friend Mr. Woolcott in the room, but I should like to express to the representative of Australia, to my former neighbour from Denmark, to the representatives of Madagascar, of Thailand and of Trinidad and Tobago, the great value my delegation put upon their co-operation in the work of the Council for the past two years. We do not belittle the merit of those who have just taken their places here when we say how much we will miss those who have departed.

I should also like to welcome the arrival as Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs of Mr. Safronchuk, whom we have known here

(Mr. de Kemoularia, France)

as a colleague on the Council, in which he frequently spoke as a colleague and often participated in the Council's debates. His assumption of this post is an assurance that his thoroughness and high standards will be put to the benefit of the Council. I should like to express our high esteem for his predecessor and to say to him how pleased we are to see him undertaking his responsible duties.

(Mr. de Kemoularia, France)

I have yielded to tradition, but I have done so with the greatest pleasure.

The Security Council has just decided once again to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a period of six months and 12 days, thereby acceding to the request made to it by the Government of Lebanon. France supported that request, voting in favour of it, as it has always done in the past. The steadfast nature of my country's attitude gives sufficient proof of its dedication to the United Nations Interim Force and its role in the context of the situation in southern Lebanon, despite the difficulties that UNIFIL has encountered in fulfilling its mission.

That dedication has naturally led us to be constantly concerned about the security of the contingents making up the Force. The Council hardly needs reminding that my country took the initiative in this regard by drawing the Council's attention, in April 1986, when France assumed the presidency of the Council, to the difficult situation being experienced by UNIFIL and its consequences for the security of the men of the Force. On several occasions during the year that has just ended we asked the United Nations and the international community to give the fullest attention to that grave situation. In his latest report the Secretary-General has recalled the incidents that have unfortunately occurred in the past six months. Do I need to recall the figures? Fifteen members of the Force - five French, four Irish, three Fijians, one Finnish, one Nepalese and one Norwegian - have lost their lives, and 43 soldiers have been injured in the hostilities.

I wish to take this occasion to reiterate our sympathy and solidarity with the delegation of Ireland, which my Government has already officially expressed since the new and particularly revolting and shocking incident on 10 January, which cost the life of an Irish non-commissioned officer.

(Mr. de Kemoularia, France)

After the successive acts of violence of recent months the Security Council expressed its position clearly by adopting on 23 September 1986 resolution 587 (1986), in which, in particular, it condemned in the strongest terms the attacks committed against UNIFIL. Our Council also took note of the preliminary security measures decided on by the Secretary-General and requested him to take any further measures needed to enhance the security of the men of the Force in their peace mission.

The French Government wishes to put on record today its satisfaction with the range of measures taken by the Secretary-General within the framework of UNIFIL's redeployment.

My Government, which has closely studied the Secretary-General's report of 12 January, agrees with the observations it contains, particularly those concerning the implementation of resolution 425 (1978) having to do with UNIFIL's mandate and its positive role. France has no doubt that the United Nations Interim Force in southern Lebanon continues to be, to use the Secretary-General's own words,

"an important element of ... stability" (S/18581, para. 34)
in the region.

By its very presence, the Force manifests the will, expressed yet again today by the international community, to see Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity restored and respected.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom): I wish first, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You bring to your important task great experience, skill and distinction. We look forward to working with you.

I also wish to pay tribute to Ambassador Walters, who conducted our affairs in December with such good humour, skill and precision.

I fear it is beyond me to give a lecture on the history and geography of members of the Council. But that makes our welcome to the new members no less warm. In the same way, we are sad to say "Goodbye" to the members who have left the Council.

We also welcome our old friend, Under-Secretary-General Safronchuk to his new and important responsibilities.

My delegation welcomes the unanimous decision by the Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to 31 July 1987, in accordance with the request made by the Government of Lebanon. We are grateful, too, for the report of the Secretary-General (S/18581).

My Government continues to support the deployment of the Force, with the aim, set out in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), of securing the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory, the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the Lebanese Government's effective authority in the area.

It must be a matter of serious concern to us all that, since the Council last renewed UNIFIL's mandate, no progress has been made towards the implementation of resolution 425 (1978). We believe, as does the Secretary-General, that the main problem remains Israel's refusal to complete its withdrawal from Lebanese territory and its retention of a so-called security zone in the area.

(Mr. Birch, United Kingdom)

The increased violence affecting the civilian population in the area generally is also a serious development, and is strongly to be condemned. We urge all parties to the fighting to respect accepted humanitarian norms and to take all steps to safeguard the lives of civilians. The work of the relief agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Red Cross, must be allowed to continue unhindered. The murder of a female staff member of UNICEF on 18 December was particularly deplorable.

The violence directed against UNIFIL is equally unacceptable. We extend our condolences to the family of Corporal McLoughlin, of the Irish contingent, killed on 10 January by fire from Israeli forces, and to the families of all those members of UNIFIL who have similarly lost their lives. All parties must co-operate fully with the Force in the exercise of its mandate from the Council.

My delegation has consistently drawn attention to UNIFIL's worsening financial situation. It is wholly unreasonable to expect the troop-contributing countries to sustain a heavy and unfair financial burden in addition to the sacrifices they are already making. It remains essential that those Members that currently are not paying their contributions, or are in arrears of payment, should pay what they owe.

It remains for me on behalf of my Government to thank the Force Commander, Major-General Hägglund, and all those under his command for the skill and courage they continue to bring to the task entrusted them by the Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. KIKUCHI (Japan): Mr. President, let me at the outset express my sincere thanks for your kind words of welcome to the Council, as indeed also for those uttered by previous speakers. Japan deeply appreciates the trust and confidence the States Members of the United Nations have demonstrated by electing Japan to the Security Council. In response, I wish to assure the Council that Japan will spare no effort in faithfully discharging its important responsibilities.

At the same time, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of January. I am confident that your outstanding diplomatic skills and experience, together with your illustrious career as Minister of Justice of your country, will greatly facilitate our work.

Japan has been a strong and steadfast supporter of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) ever since it was established in 1978. We have the highest regard for this peace-keeping operation, whose officers and soldiers have under extremely difficult circumstances courageously endeavoured to maintain peace in the tragic land of Lebanon. We should like to take this opportunity deeply to mourn the loss of those members of the Force who have given their lives in the cause of peace.

My delegation supported the extension of UNIFIL's mandate as contained in draft resolution S/18597. Japan urges all parties concerned, especially Israel, to extend their full co-operation so that the peace-keeping Force can fulfil its mandate in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as stated in paragraph 4 of the resolution we have just adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. LAUTENSCHLAGER (Federal Republic of Germany): At the very outset of my first statement, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the first month of this

(Mr. Lautenschlager, Federal
Republic of Germany)

year. I am sure that your high diplomatic skills and your long experience at the United Nations will make your presidency extremely successful. Our two countries are linked by a long history of friendship and co-operation. Hence I consider it a very fortunate coincidence that our membership in the Council should begin under your presidency.

Let me also pay tribute to Ambassador Walters, who presided over the Council in such an admirable way during the month of December.

Mr. President, I feel encouraged by the kind words of welcome you and other members of the Council have addressed to me - and a very special word of thanks goes to my friend and neighbour the Ambassador of France. As a member of the Security Council my country will have to assume an increased share of global responsibility. We shall base our work on the established principles of our foreign policy and thus consistently advocate the safeguarding of peace, the renunciation of the use of force for the attainment of political objectives, the right to self-determination and human rights. By pursuing this line we hope also to fulfil the expectations of member countries that have expressed their confidence in us by giving us their votes at the elections held in the General Assembly.

With regard to the issue on our agenda today, I shall limit myself to a few points. We fully support the role the United Nations has assumed for the promotion of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Twelve years after the outbreak of civil war, the suffering and plight of the people of Lebanon continues from day to day. The Federal Government remains very concerned about this situation. It shares the view of the Secretary-General expressed in the 12 January report that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) continues to contribute to stabilizing the situation in south Lebanon.

(Mr. Lautenschlager, Federal
Republic of Germany)

We therefore consider it of major importance for all Member States to meet their financial obligations with regard to UNIFIL, and we support the appeal contained in the Secretary-General's report.

We highly appreciate the contribution of those Member States that have detached contingents to UNIFIL. We pay tribute to the officers and soldiers who have lost their lives in fulfilling their duty as members of UNIFIL. In particular, we are shocked and saddened by the most recent incident that cost the life of a young Irish corporal. We extend our deep sympathy to the bereaved family and to the Irish Government. We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report. We expect that this incident will be investigated properly. Such tragic events must be avoided in the future.

We support the prolongation of UNIFIL's mandate to 31 July 1987; hence we voted for the draft resolution in document S/18597. At the same time, we expect that UNIFIL will at long last be given the possibility to fulfil this mandate in its entirety.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. BUCCI (Italy): It is a particular pleasure for me to begin Italy's term of duty on the Council under your presidency, Sir. I need not recall here the close and longstanding ties of friendship which exist between our two countries and which have made of Venezuela a new home for large numbers of my fellow citizens. For your part, you are an outstanding representative of your Government, and I am confident that your diplomatic and legal skills will be of great help to the Council in discharging its responsibilities this month.

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

May I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Walters of the United States, on the masterly way in which he directed the work of the Council during the month of December. Given his well-known political and human qualities, we could hardly have expected less of him. Still, he deserves high praise for the able and constructive way in which he handled the delicate issues with which the Council was confronted last month.

I should like also to thank the outgoing members for the outstanding contribution they have made to the work of the Council over the past two years. Their absence from the Council's table will certainly be felt and regretted.

Finally, let me convey a warm welcome to Under-Secretary-General Safronchuk, who has just joined the Security Council.

Since this is the first time I have spoken as a member of the Council, allow me to express my gratitude for the kind words of welcome addressed to us by you, Mr. President, and other members of the Council today. Let me say a special word of thanks to our friend the French Ambassador for the thoughtful remarks he just addressed to my country.

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

We are aware of the heavy burden which has been placed on my country as a member of this body, which the Charter entrusts with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are also aware that that responsibility will be even heavier at a time when the United Nations as a whole is going through a critical stage of its existence and when the strengthening of the Council's role is of crucial importance. For our part we are prepared to co-operate fully with the other members of the Council in the search for effective means to achieve that goal.

I should like on behalf of my Government to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the smooth way in which he has conducted and completed the redeployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in a situation fraught with tensions and difficulties in southern Lebanon. That situation continues to be a source of serious concern to my Government. We fully agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report that the

"fears expressed in my earlier reports have been confirmed. The hopes that existed in 1984 and 1985 that it would be possible to negotiate peacefully the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory have not so far been realized. Israel's determination to maintain its 'security zone' has provoked equally determined resistance from various armed groups in Lebanon. An increasingly violent conflict has resulted. UNIFIL is seriously affected by that conflict ...". (S/18581 and Corr.1 and Add.1, para. 27)

The increasing number of incidents that occurred in the area throughout 1986, and even in the past few days, which have entailed casualties both among the members of UNIFIL and in the civilian population, are a clear indication of the extent to which tensions in southern Lebanon remain acute and dangerous. It is particularly regrettable that some of the latest incidents, in which two Irish members of the Force were killed and members of other contingents wounded,

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

were the result of firing by Israeli forces or elements under Israeli control. Such events can only foster the process of deterioration of the situation in the area which has been going on for some time and needs urgently to be brought under control and reversed.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our most heartfelt condolences to all UNIFIL contributor countries that have suffered casualties and to the families of the soldiers who have fallen in the accomplishment of their duty.

My delegation has supported the renewal of the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 July 1987 because we are convinced that in spite of this difficult situation the Force has played a useful role in ensuring relative stability in its area of operations and can continue to do so. However, UNIFIL cannot be confined indefinitely to activities, including humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in southern Lebanon, which are certainly worthy but marginal to the main purpose of its mandate. UNIFIL was deployed in southern Lebanon with the task of assisting the Lebanese Government in ensuring the return of its authority over that part of the country. That is the essence of the mandate of the Force and the primary concern of all those, including my Government, who are deeply committed to the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon.

This result cannot be achieved if the Israeli forces are not withdrawn from the so-called security zone. We are convinced that Israel has a right to protect its northern territory from cross-border violence. However, we do not agree with the Israeli contention that UNIFIL has neither the mandate nor the means to prevent infiltration across the border. On the contrary, if properly deployed, UNIFIL could effectively carry out the task entrusted to it. To perform its mission, what UNIFIL needs is a broad base of support among the Lebanese population, and it must be perceived as an effective guarantor of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

We therefore sincerely hope that the Government of Israel will review its position and recognize that its security interests will be better served if peace and stability prevail in southern Lebanon than if the current process of deterioration is allowed to continue. My Government deeply appreciates the efforts made to that end by the Secretary General, and fully supports them.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Italy for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. President, it is a sincere pleasure on behalf of the delegation of the Soviet Union to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Security Council. We are convinced that your wealth of diplomatic experience will enable you to conduct the work of the Council with your characteristic wisdom and mastery.

Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to the competent manner in which Ambassador Walters conducted our work in December last.

We wish also to express our satisfaction with the co-operation we had with the delegations of Australia, Denmark, Madagascar, Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago as they served as members of the Council in 1985 and 1986, during which they contributed to the Council's work in maintaining international peace and security.

I should also like sincerely to congratulate the delegations of Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia, which have assumed their responsibilities as members of the Council this year. The Soviet Union has well developed friendly relations with them all, and in that spirit we shall co-operate with those countries in the Security Council.

Lastly let me say that all the members of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations regret that in the person of Vassily S. Safronchuk they have lost a

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

colleague. We find some consolation in the fact that now his great talent, experience and high qualifications have been placed in the service of the interests of the whole international community, of all the Members of the Organization.

The year 1986, which the United Nations proclaimed as the International Year of Peace, has ended. It aroused many hopes that mankind would prove able to break out of the succession of years it had spent in the grip of an accelerating arms race and tension in many parts of the world. Never before, perhaps, had the attention of the world community been so acutely concentrated on vital problems of war and peace.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

On 8 January of this year, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Sergeiyevich Gorbachev, addressed a message to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in which he informed the United Nations of the concrete action taken by the Soviet Union to ensure that 1986 would live up to the hopes vested in it. That message of Mikhail Sergeiyevich Gorbachev has been published as an official document of the Security Council (S/18571).

As today's meeting is the first of 1987 I cannot but note that precisely one year ago, on 15 January 1986, the Soviet Union took an initiative which was unprecedented in its objectives and its scope: it proposed a programme for the establishment of a nuclear-free world and for the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction by the end of this century.

Throughout the year we fleshed out this programme in some particulars and backed it up with practical action. Throughout the past year the Soviet Union maintained its moratorium on nuclear explosions, although others continued development work on their already utterly destructive engines of death. The Soviet Union's extension of its moratorium even beyond 1 January 1987, until the first United States explosion, affords yet another chance to put a genuine barrier in the way of the nuclear-arms race.

The Reykjavik meeting brought questions of the cause of peace, international security and nuclear disarmament to a previously unattained level, from which new horizons became apparent. All mankind is looking at these newly opened prospects in the hope that persistent efforts to secure radical cuts in and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons will, ultimately, yield positive results. For its part, the Soviet Union has repeatedly affirmed - and now affirms again in the

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Security Council - its determination to pursue that course. We are eager to do all we can to defuse crises - including those in the Middle East and Lebanon - and to prevent the emergence of further conflicts.

As Mikhail Sergeiyevich Gorbachev stressed in his message to the Secretary-General,

"the Soviet Union advocates a more prominent and effective United Nations, widespread use of the peaceful methods for resolving disputes called for in the Organization's Charter and fuller exploitation of the opportunities available to the Security Council and the General Assembly, and it favours [the Secretary-General's] mediating efforts". (S/18571, p. 5)

In its desire for co-operation with all States, the Soviet Union is prepared to support any constructive proposal, whatever its origin. The Soviet Union is determined to pursue even further international dialogue and to find fresh new approaches and novel methods for solving the problems the Security Council will be facing this year.

Today the Security Council is holding its first meeting of 1987. Members of the Council know full well that they are facing important problems we must all resolve, and tasks we must all carry out. In doing this it is extremely important that all the possibilities of the Charter be put to the fullest possible use.

The Security Council has just renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Council's consideration of this question is a grim reminder of Israel's continuing aggression in the South of that country. When the Council created the Force nine years ago, after a large-scale Israeli invasion of Lebanon, it assigned UNIFIL the task of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory, and of ensuring the restoration of international peace and security.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Unfortunately, we must note yet again that the Council's demands, clearly stated in the mandate of the Force, remain unfulfilled. Stubbornly disregarding the Security Council's demand for the prompt and unconditional withdrawal of its troops, Israel is attempting to perpetuate its occupation of those areas and establish a beach-head from which to launch new strikes deep inside Lebanese territory and to destabilize the general situation in Lebanon.

As stressed in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon,

"Israel's determination to maintain its 'security zone' has provoked equally determined resistance from various armed groups in Lebanon. An increasingly violent conflict has resulted....

"... The main problem remains Israel's refusal to withdraw completely from Lebanon and its insistence on maintaining the 'security zone'..."

(S/18581, paras. 27-28)

The Soviet Union views the problem of guaranteeing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon in the general context of efforts to bring about a comprehensive, peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict. The principles and machinery for such a settlement are well known. Now the primary requirement is the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East. The decision to convene such a conference has been supported by an overwhelming majority of States in General Assembly resolutions, including at the Assembly's recent forty-first session. Those resolutions affirm the need to convene a conference; moreover they have for the first time endorsed the call for the establishment in the framework of the Security Council of a preparatory committee with the participation of all the permanent members of the Council to take the steps necessary for the convening of a conference.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

In this way a step has been taken which opens up the way to the practical unblocking of the conflict situation in the Middle East by means of collective efforts - something that the Soviet Union and other peace-loving countries have constantly and unswervingly advocated.

The broad support given to that proposal in the United Nations, as well as at the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare, shows that the struggle to bring about a just and comprehensive Middle East settlement and secure the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East is now entering a qualitatively new phase.

The Soviet Union's point of view on the need to start preparatory work on the convening of an international conference on the Middle East and to set up, within the framework of the Security Council, a preparatory committee for that purpose was recently confirmed once again in the statement of the Soviet Foreign Ministry of 7 January 1987. The statement points out that the Soviet Union is far from having any intention of imposing any kind of prepared, strict pre-arranged rules for the work to be done in preparation for the conference. It is a collective matter and must be the subject of bilateral contacts and multilateral discussions, inter alia in the preparatory committee when it is set up. What is needed now, above all, is to make a start on untying the knot of tension in the Middle East which is so dangerous for all. Needless to say, the overall normalization of the situation in the Middle East would have a most direct and positive impact on the situation which we now encounter in Lebanon.

The peoples of the Middle East must be provided with the peace that they have awaited for so long, and their right to national sovereignty and a secure existence must be reliably guaranteed. For that it is necessary in practice to show a willingness to engage in new political thinking and build one's policies in the light of mutual interest, on the basis of the principle of equality and identical

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

security. Only in that way will it prove possible to move away from the present standstill on the Middle East settlement; and only thus will it prove possible to resolve the situation in Lebanon.

Taking into account our approach to the settlement of the problems of the Middle East as set forth by us, the Soviet Union continues to attach the highest importance to the need to guarantee the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli occupation troops from Lebanese territory, as clearly demanded in Security Council decisions. An important role in performing that task should be played in accord with its mandate by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) whose presence should promote the most prompt attainment of that objective.

In conclusion, I express our hope that the year which has just begun will not bring much work for the Security Council, but also that we will make substantial progress towards the solution of those questions on which we have been working in the recent past.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Soviet Union for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): First, on behalf of my delegation, permit me to congratulate you, Sir, in your capacity as President of the Council for this month. We are confident, as are all other members of the Council, that your wisdom, skill and broad experience will lead the Council in a good and, we hope, fruitful direction.

I thank you, Mr. President, and the other members also for the kind words addressed to Ambassador Walters for his stewardship last month.

At our first meeting it is, of course, a time to ring out the old and ring in the new, and I should like to add my delegation's welcome to the new members that

(Mr. Okun, United States)

join us: Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia, countries with which my own country has warm and fruitful relations. We look forward to useful and fruitful co-operation here in the Council - the same co-operation that we had from the five departing members: Australia, Denmark, Madagascar, Thailand, and Trinidad and Tobago, whose work with us so enriched and contributed to all our labours over the past two years.

Last, but not least, I welcome an old colleague in a new responsibility - Ambassador Safronchuk. We are happy to see him here at the head of the table, where he will sit permanently.

I am pleased to reaffirm my Government's strong support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) once again by voting to extend its mandate. Despite the limitations placed upon it, UNIFIL has clearly contributed importantly to efforts to bring stability to southern Lebanon. While we believe that the best means to bring permanent stability to southern Lebanon and assure security along the Israeli-Lebanese border are agreed-upon, long-term security arrangements, in the interim there appears no real alternative to UNIFIL.

We are also pleased to see that all members of the Council have voted again to extend UNIFIL's mandate and thus have expressed in a positive way their support for the Force.

We cannot fail to note again the tragic loss of yet another member of the Force, a member of the Irish Contingent, and my delegation shares the sorrow and condolences expressed to our Irish colleagues here and in Dublin at this loss. He fell in the name of peace, and we honour him for that.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United States of America for the kind words he addressed to me.

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

Mr. McDONAGH (Ireland): I wish first of all to thank the members of the Council for permitting Ireland to address it on this occasion.

I also wish at the outset to express our very warm appreciation to those who have conveyed their commiseration to us in connection with the tragic occurrence of 10 January.

(Mr. McDonagh, Ireland)

It has not been Ireland's practice to speak at meetings of the Council dealing with the question of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Our attitude to UNIFIL and to United Nations peace-keeping operations in general has been clearly defined over the years. Like other troop contributors, we have felt satisfaction and, indeed, pride in our participation in such operations. That participation has been an important element in our commitment to this Organization. In regard to UNIFIL in particular, we have shared with fellow troop contributors and with others concerned deep feelings of frustration over the difficulties facing the Force, the obstacles to the full implementation of its mandate, the financial difficulties and, most bitter of all, the sacrifices of human life paid by members of the Force because of the hazards - often unnecessary hazards - to which they are daily exposed. Too often, those who have chosen to serve selflessly have had to surrender their lives in that service. These casualties of peace-keeping shock us, and, as they inexorably continue, they should have the cumulative effect of spurring us to reexamine relentlessly the reasons which give rise to them.

We have therefore sought to address the Security Council this afternoon because it is meeting in the shadow of the tragic death of an Irish UNIFIL member, Corporal Dermot McLoughlin, on the evening of 10 January 1987. Corporal McLoughlin was killed by a round fired from an Israeli Defence Force tank during unprovoked bombardment of the village of Brashit. The Secretary-General's report now before the Council describes this occurrence as a particularly irresponsible act. The Irish authorities fully agree with that evaluation. They have conveyed their views to the Israeli authorities and have indicated their expectation that those responsible for it will be appropriately disciplined.

This is not the first Irish UNIFIL fatality, and Ireland is not the only troop contributor that has suffered such losses. However, an immediately practical

(Mr. McDonagh, Ireland)

effect, if I might use that term, could be that it would at least serve to focus the attention of all concerned on the casual, almost arbitrary, dispensing of death that was involved. In particular we would hope that the Security Council could give urgent attention to this serious aspect of UNIFIL's many problems.

Peace-keeping has always had and always will have its inescapable hazards, hazards that we have to recognize and accept. But our peace-keepers surely have the right to ask that all reasonable measures should be taken to reduce the dangers facing them. They have the right to demand that Israel and all other parties concerned should ensure that their lives are not endangered by apparently pointless actions which can bring no possible benefit or advantage to anybody. Those who can impose restraint and discipline on their activities should be asked to do so. This is the thought which we put forward for the Council's consideration in the course of its review of the range of difficulties facing UNIFIL in its efforts to fulfil its mandate.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Israel 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 that representative 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. Bein (Israel) took a place at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now invite the representative of Israel to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. BEIN (Israel): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council. Your experience, good nature and statesmanship will no doubt be of valuable assistance in guiding the work of the Council during this month. It is also my pleasure to convey to your predecessor, Ambassador Walters, the Permanent Representative of the United States, our appreciation for the efficient and distinguished manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in the month of December.

At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the Government of Israel, to express our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to the bereaved family of Corporal Dermot McLoughlin and to the Government of Ireland. Immediately after this regrettable incident on 10 January, the Israeli Defence Force began an intensive investigation of the circumstances leading to Corporal McLoughlin's death. Yesterday my delegation forwarded to the Secretary-General the preliminary findings of the investigation, reproduced in documents S/18581 and Corr.1 and Add.1.

I should like to take this opportunity to clarify Israel's position regarding southern Lebanon and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Government of Israel has declared repeatedly that it has no territorial claims vis-à-vis Lebanon and is solely concerned with maintaining the security of its northern border and preventing terrorist attacks from Lebanon against Israeli civilians and population centres. Israel remains strongly committed to working with any party in Lebanon that genuinely seeks peace and tranquillity on both sides of the border.

During the current reporting period there have been a number of attempts to infiltrate Israel's northern border, and Katyusha rockets have been fired from

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

Lebanon at targets in Israel. In the wake of recent concerted attempts by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to reestablish itself in Lebanon there has been intense fighting in Rashadiya, the Sidon area and in Beirut itself. Of special concern to us was the kidnapping and murder of nine Jewish Lebanese citizens, four of whom were murdered in the past few weeks. They were murdered for the sole reason that they were Jewish. In addition, there have been a number of serious attacks by Hezbollah on positions of the South Lebanese Army. In the past week alone 15 soldiers of the South Lebanese Army have been killed and 11 wounded.

There can be no doubt that UNIFIL has an important role in maintaining stability in the area under its control and in enhancing prospects for a negotiated solution to this complex and sometimes seemingly intractable situation. UNIFIL has undertaken its role in difficult circumstances and exacting conditions. It has suffered painful casualties in the process. The people of Israel share the grief of the bereaved families and their Governments. Israel pays tribute to the ongoing efforts of the troop-contributing countries and believes that every effort should be made to enhance the security of UNIFIL in order to safeguard the lives of its soldiers. Israel has recently again conveyed its willingness to co-operate with the United Nations in this regard and to exercise its influence wherever possible to prevent attacks on UNIFIL.

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

Ultimately, UNIFIL's peace-keeping role can be enhanced and secured only through the consent and co-operation of the Governments concerned in effectively ensuring reasonable operational conditions. This is clearly demonstrated by at least two examples of successful peacekeeping operations: the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the Multinational Force in Sinai. The solution, therefore, to the problem of southern Lebanon and the conditions under which UNIFIL operates cannot be viewed separately from the problem of Lebanon as a whole.

Israel withdrew its forces from Lebanon in pursuance of the decision of the Government of Israel of January 1985, which envisaged certain measures to defend Israel's border. It has since become clear that Israel's security arrangements are, at this stage, the only viable means of providing relative peace on both sides of the border.

There are those who believe that the solution simply lies with Israel abandoning its present security arrangements while UNIFIL deploys southwards to the international border. There is no indication, however, that such a scenario would prevent the intensification of terrorist attacks against Israel from the area of southern Lebanon.

The situation in the whole of Lebanon is not improving; rather, it is deteriorating. The "battles of the camps" are intensifying and the danger exists that these rivalries of the different factions, with their shifting loyalties, will spill over to southern Lebanon and to the border of Israel. UNIFIL alone, despite its best intentions, cannot stop this from happening, and it seems that only the present arrangements can secure - for the time being - relative tranquillity in the area.

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

Israel does not, however, consider these arrangements as permanent. A stalemate in the present situation is to the detriment of all the parties concerned. Israel is therefore interested in reaching a permanent solution for the security of its border with Lebanon. In order to progress, however, there must be a clear and defined party which would be able to take upon itself responsibility for the overall maintenance of security in southern Lebanon. This is not a task which UNIFIL can discharge alone, and obviously action would be required to neutralize extremist elements.

At first we thought that the Government of Lebanon would be the appropriate partner, but arrangements negotiated to ensure the integrity of the common border were not implemented, as a result of the abrogation of the 17 May 1983 Agreement by the Government of Lebanon. Israel remains willing to negotiate and co-operate with the Government of Lebanon or any other credible partner in that country that genuinely seeks, and can ensure, peace in that area.

In this context, Israel proposes that the efforts directed towards a solution be based on the acceptance of the principles of trial periods and a stage-by-stage approach, beginning with an immediate and total cease-fire in the entire area for a period of at least six months. Once these principles are accepted and implemented by the parties concerned it will then be possible to negotiate the territorial and binding aspects of a permanent solution. These principles should constitute an accepted framework for a dialogue on lines similar to those envisaged in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)

The solution is not in the hands of the Government of Israel alone, nor can it be reached through unilateral acts which would once again expose Israeli and, indeed, Lebanese citizens, to the danger of indiscriminate terrorist attacks. Israel, for its part, is ready to consider any viable proposal that would

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

adequately take account of the legitimate security concerns for its northern border, and will work with any party in Lebanon that seeks peace on both sides of the border.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Israel for the kind words he addressed to me.

I now call on the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish at the outset to thank the Council for agreeing to invite the delegation of Lebanon to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda.

It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month, and to assure you of our full confidence in your qualifications, wisdom and diplomatic skill, which will stand you in good stead in successfully guiding the Council's work.

I am also happy to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Vernon Walters, the Permanent Representative of the United States, for the competence, effectiveness and sound management he evinced during his presidency in December.

I also congratulate Ambassador Safronchuk on being appointed Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, and express thanks and appreciation to his predecessor.

The Council has agreed for the 22nd time to renew the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The request of the Lebanese Government that its mandate be renewed was again unavoidable, because in the eight and a half years or more since its establishment under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) UNIFIL has failed to carry out the task entrusted to it by the Council, owing to Israel's refusal to implement those resolutions and subsequent

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

relevant resolutions calling for Israel's full and unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory, for the deployment of the Force up to the internationally recognized border, and for assistance to the Lebanese State to regain its sovereignty and authority over the whole of its territory.

I reiterate that by its repeated requests for the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate the Lebanese Government did not intend to make the Force permanent, since Lebanon had called upon the Council, and is still calling upon it, to enable the Force to carry out its task so that Lebanon may regain its sovereignty and authority over the whole of its territory and the members of the Force may return to their countries and families, after carrying out their mission of maintaining international peace and security.

Israel has not only refused to implement United Nations resolutions, but has directly, using its own army, or through the so-called South Lebanon Army, created obstacles and committed unwarranted, blatant aggression against the positions of the international contingents. I do not need to go into the details of those acts of aggression and list the dead and wounded, as those matters are dealt with in detail in the Secretary-General's report. But we note that, as indicated in the report, there is an increased threat to the Force posed by the Israeli army and the so-called South Lebanon Army.

Lebanon appreciates the bravery and steadfastness of UNIFIL in difficult and at times grave circumstances.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Lebanon extends its thanks and appreciation to the Force Commander, its officers, soldiers and administrative staff, as well as to the observers from the Truce Supervision Organization. It also appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General and his assistants to implement this Council's resolutions.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Lebanon I cannot but express our great sorrow at the injuries inflicted upon members of some contingents of the Force. We extend our condolences to the families of the fallen among the contingents of France, Fiji, Finland, Norway, Nepal and Ireland, who were martyred in the performance of the sacred task of maintaining peace. To the Government and the people of Ireland, I extend special heartfelt condolences on the death of a corporal in the Irish contingent by unwarranted fire from Israeli forces, thus emphasizing Lebanon's condemnation of acts of aggression against the Force by any party, its concern over the safety of the Force and its readiness to continue, within the limits of its capabilities, to thwart any threat to the Force.

My delegation thanks the Council for its positive response to the Lebanese Government's request and the Secretary-General for his support of that request. While congratulating Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia on their accession to the Council as non-permanent members, I also express to their representatives my delegation's full confidence in their ability to discharge their responsibilities under the United Nations Charter.

Lebanon calls upon the Council and its members, collectively and individually, to undertake prompt and effective endeavours to implement resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), as well as all other relevant resolutions. While Israel bears a direct responsibility for obstructing UNIFIL's task, this Council's has the fundamental responsibility to enable the Force to carry out its mission by removing the impediments facing it. If Israel continues its obstructionist stand, it will

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

be incumbent upon the Council to consider practical ways and means to secure the full and unconditional implementation of its resolutions.

My delegation associates itself with the Secretary-General's appeal to all States Members of the United Nations to pay in full their assessed contributions to the expenses of the Force, so that the international community's contribution will become collective and constitute moral and material support for the success of the task of the most important peace-keeping operation of the present time.

I had intended to conclude my statement at this point. However, the statement of the representative of Israel has prompted me to say the following. I should simply like to say to him that this Council adopted a resolution, subsequently confirmed by numerous other resolutions, confirming the necessity of Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. Hence it is Israel's duty to withdraw and obey these resolutions. As for the pretext that they are extraneous to the subject, that is a mere red herring devoid of any seriousness.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Lebanon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for your words of welcome to my country as a member of the Council. My thanks also go to the other delegations that expressed similar sentiments, especially the delegation of France and Ambassador de Kemoularia.

It is a particular pleasure for me that this first statement by our delegation should be made under your presidency. We know you well and fully appreciate your personal and professional qualities. We are convinced that they will be of great assistance in ensuring the effective guidance of the work of the Council this month. Similarly, that Venezuela should be presiding over the Council this month

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

is a happy coincidence since, together with your delegation, we hope fully to represent the objectives and principles that guide Latin American countries at the United Nations.

On this occasion I wish also to mention the skilful and effective way in which the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Vernon Walters, guided the work of the Council last December.

We have succeeded the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago and its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Alleyne, and I wish to pay tribute to them. We shall at all times seek to ensure that our participation here represents a continuation of his valuable contribution to the work of this lofty body.

Argentina was a member of the Council on four previous occasions. We are fully aware of the importance of the functions entrusted to the Security Council under the United Nations Charter. I wish to assure you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Council that we shall always be inspired by the firm determination to contribute to the Council's fulfilling its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations and in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

These are revered purposes and principles, and they are fostered by my country. Our participation in the Council will be guided by them, and it is within that framework that we shall act in keeping with the values, purposes and objectives of our international foreign policy.

We offer you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Council our full co-operation in contributing to the success of our work. Lastly, the Argentine delegation extends a warm welcome to the delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia, which, like our own, have become members of the Council this year.

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

I could not conclude my statement without bidding farewell to Mr. Viacheslav Ustinov and congratulating the new Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk on his recent appointment to head the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. We are convinced that his activities will represent a continuation of the work of his predecessor, to the benefit of our Organization.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words.

As President of the Council for this month, I should like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Council to express our welcome.

Assuming my capacity as the representative of Venezuela, I wish to express my delegation's pleasure at the presence in the Council of the very distinguished representative of the Argentine Republic, a country with which my own country enjoys the closest relations of friendship and co-operation.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council. There no further speakers for this meeting. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.