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LETTER DATED 3 SEPTEMBER 1980 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL

With reference to the letter dated 1 September 1980, from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/14140), I have the honour to bring to your kind attention that, in response to the Maltese claim, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya views the Maltese-Libyan dispute over the continental shelf as a bilateral issue that can be settled through negotiations and direct communication between the two countries.

The continental shelf issue still remains the subject of negotiation between both sides. An agreement has been initiated to deal with this issue by submitting it to the International Court of Justice. The final procedures concerning implementation of that agreement have not been completed. The agreement has been submitted to the Popular Congresses in the Jamahiriya. The Congress made several remarks that were conveyed to the Maltese Government for its comment in order that the necessary measures for ratification can be completed and consequently submitted to the International Court of Justice. Accordingly, the oil drilling operations in the disputed region should not have taken place before the International Court of Justice has issued its resolution. But unexpectedly, Malta carried out explorations and drilling operations within the aforementioned region. Nevertheless, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya affirms that it has not taken, on its part, any measure that could disturb peace and security in the region. It also confirms that the issue of the continental shelf between the two countries will be submitted to the International Court of Justice. Consequently, there is no necessity that calls for the convening of the Security Council.

Furthermore, this issue is secondary in significance when compared to the size and scope of the positive relations between the two countries, which the Jamahiriya anxiously desires to continue. The strong relationship shows through the various bilateral agreements between the two friendly nations, in the various fields of co-operation aimed at the consolidation of the friendship bonds and good neighbourliness with the Republic of Malta.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya remains confident that the genuine historic, social and economic bonds with Malta are strong enough to help overcome the issue of the continental shelf.

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I have the honour to inform also that the Chairman of the Non-aligned movement has initiated efforts and sent two envoys to both countries to seek their point of views and find a peaceful settlement for the dispute. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya welcomes the said initiative and hopes that a chance be given to it and to its results.

I have the honour to request that this letter be issued as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Mr. Awad S. BURWIN
Deputy Representative
of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
to the United Nations
