



**Security Council**

PROVISIONAL

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ENGLISH

**PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND  
EIGHT HUNDRED AND SECOND MEETING**

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 18 March 1988, at 3 p.m.

**President:** Mr. PEJIC

(Yugoslavia)

**Members:**

Algeria  
Argentina  
Brazil  
China  
France  
Germany, Federal Republic of  
Italy  
Japan  
Nepal  
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Mr. BA  
  
Mr. BELONOGOV  
  
Sir Crispin TICKELL  
Mr. OKUN  
Mr. SUZE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 17 MARCH 1988 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF NICARAGUA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19638)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras 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, Ms. Casco (Nicaragua) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Pefalosa (Colombia), Mr. Gutierrez (Costa Rica) and Mr. Hernandez Alcerro (Honduras) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in the letter dated 17 March 1988 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/19638).

(The President)

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/19643, which contains the text of a letter dated 17 March 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of Nicaragua, on whom I now call.

Ms. CASCO (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): First,

Mr. President, I wish to thank you and the other members of the Council for the promptness with which you responded to my Government's request for a meeting of the Council to consider the grave situation resulting from the escalation of threats and aggression against my country and by the decision taken recently by the United States Government to send 3,200 United States troops to Honduran territory, a situation that seriously endangers international peace and security.

In returning to the Council once again, we are prompted by our commitment to peace and our lasting readiness to employ all the international means available to avoid the regionalization of the war, to reduce tension and to smooth the path leading to the establishment of a just peace with dignity in our long-suffering region.

This is not the first time the international community has witnessed a crisis artificially created by the United States Administration in its attempts to justify the continuation and extension of its warlike policy in Central America. In November 1984, on the very day of President Reagan's electoral victory, the United States Administration spread the patent lie that a squadron of MIG aircraft were at that very moment on their way to Nicaragua from the Soviet Union. The enormous disinformation machinery of the White House created around that lie an atmosphere of hysteria seemingly intended, inter alia, to make possible so-called surgical operations against Nicaragua, to create the conditions for a subsequent unjustified, unilateral breaking-off of the bilateral conversations then under way

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

in Manzanillo, Mexico, and to obscure the crushing triumph of the Sandinist Liberation Front in the first free and honest elections in Nicaragua's history.

In March 1986 we witnessed another, similar tragi-comic spectacle. It was tragic in terms of the degree of cynicism and falsehood involved, and the suffering and destruction entailed for our people, but it was also comic, because at the time Nicaraguan troops were supposedly invading Honduras, and the United States Administration was sending \$25 million in emergency military assistance, including helicopters and other matériel, the President of the country that was claimed to have been invaded was enjoying his Easter holidays on one of his country's beaches. The objective of that exercise was to influence the debate then going on in the United States Congress, in order to obtain approval for new and increased funds for Reagan's mercenary forces. Indeed, two months later the United States Congress approved a further \$100 million to finance the war against Nicaragua, and authorized the sinister Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to direct military and paramilitary operations against the Nicaraguan people.

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

In December that same year, the United States Administration reported a further alleged Nicaraguan invasion of Honduran territory, which was employed as a pretext for the bombing of Nicaraguan villages. On that occasion, the purpose was to increase the military presence of the United States in Honduran territory, to provide further weapons and ammunition to the mercenary forces and, at the same time, to spread a smokescreen over the revelations that were beginning to come out at that time in what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal.

What is the immediate background to this present state of affairs? On 7 August last year, the Heads of State of Central America signed the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America", known as the Esquipulas II Agreement.

The entire world, with the sole exception of the United States Administration, welcomed that act of independence on the part of the Central American Governments, which was intended to lay the bases for peace in our long-suffering region.

Subsequently, and notwithstanding the frenzied efforts of the United States Administration to abort that peace plan, once again the will and the desire for peace of the Heads of State of Central America prevailed. This was manifested in the reaffirmation of the Esquipulas II commitments adopted at the San José Summit of 16 January this year. As is known by the international community, the Esquipulas II Agreement stipulates that:

"The Governments of the five Central American States shall request Governments of the region and Governments from outside the region which are providing either overt or covert military, logistical, financial or propaganda support ... to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements to terminate such aid; this is vital if a stable and lasting peace is to be attained in the region." (A/42/521, p.6)

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

Likewise, the Agreement repeats the commitment of the five countries which subscribe to Esquipulas II:

"to prevent the use of their own territory by persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries and to refuse to provide them with or allow them to receive military and logistical support". (ibid. p. 7)

In flagrant violation of the spirit and letter of these agreements, the United States Administration has continued to press on with its policy of death and destruction, seeking money from further pockets of millionaires to finance its mercenary forces.

Reflecting the total bankruptcy of Mr. Reagan's policy on Central America, in February this year the United States Congress decided to reject a request for \$36.5 million in military assistance and alleged humanitarian aid to the Contra forces.

Despite the clear message spelled out in that defeat, the Reagan Administration pressed on feverishly and obsessively with its plans for war in Central America. That attitude of sabotage on the part of the Reagan Administration is in striking contrast to the genuine will for peace shown by the Nicaraguan Government, which has been expressed in the unilateral and complete respect for the commitments entered into by the five Presidents, which apply to each and every one of our countries in Central America.

Significant press circles in the United States, which it would be hard to accuse of being tied to the Sandinistas or of being biased, have finally been obliged to recognize the leading role played by Nicaragua in carrying out the Esquipulas Agreement.

Early this week, in a fresh and desperate endeavour, President Reagan called a White House meeting of the leaders of the Congress in order to try to convince them

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

of the need to continue to finance the people who are daily committing murder against the Nicaraguan people. Since there was no response to his diabolical proposals, and on the very day that the Special Prosecutor, Mr. Lawrence Welsh, was publishing no fewer than 23 criminal charges against the fictionlike protagonists in the Iran-Contra scandal, once again a prefabricated crisis emerged, similar to those to which I referred before, which confirms the infinite capacity of the current United States Administration for devising machiavellian plots.

Indeed, as in 1986, before the Government of the United States asked the Honduran Government to make its request to Washington for assistance in repelling an alleged invasion of which not even Honduran officers themselves were aware the day before, the troops of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 7th Infantry Division had already, several hours before, received orders to mobilize and to go on special alert because they were shortly to be ferried to Honduran territory.

Unlike previous occasions, however, this time the compulsory applicant, rather than receiving \$25 million and transport equipment, received 3,200 United States troops in its territory. These United States troops were sent in combination with the mobilization of other forces on permanent stand-by in various military bases which the United States keeps in Honduras.

Things are very different from the way they have been portrayed by Mr. Elliott Abrams, who, were he to deserve any recognition by the Congress of his country, it would be on the grounds of being a consummate liar.

On 6 March, the Sandinista People's Army began a military operation in the San Andres de Bocay sector, at the confluence of the Amaka and Bocay Rivers, five kilometres from the border with Honduras, in an area where the counter-revolutionaries had positions from which they had been dislodged between

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

12 and 16 March. That operation was intended to drive the mercenary forces from Nicaraguan territory in an action of legitimate self-defence of our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The mercenary forces, as is their wont, fled back into Honduran territory which, as is well known, is where they have their sanctuary. Everyone is aware that it was from these well-known bases on Honduran soil that the mercenaries bombarded our troops who were located on the other side of the frontier, in Nicaraguan territory.

The military operation carried out by our army is being portrayed by the United States Government as an illegitimate action. According to the Reagan Administration, the Nicaraguan Government has no right to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity; it has no right to face and fight the mercenary forces. On the other hand, the mercenaries, as they have been doing over the years, are apparently entitled to commit murder against the Nicaraguan people, to mine our highways, to burn co-operatives, schools and health centres and a whole range of our economic infrastructure.



(Mrs. Casco, Nicaragua)

Given the delicate situation in the frontier area resulting from the concentration of mercenary forces, the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, has kept in constant telephone contact with his Honduran colleague, President Jose Azcona Hoyo, to whom he has communicated the details of the situation and has proposed a summit meeting between the two Heads of State, another meeting between the heads of military forces of both countries and, at the initiative of President Cerezo of Guatemala, an urgent meeting of Central American Foreign Ministers. President Ortega's purpose was to avoid a worsening of the conflict that might compromise the success of the peace process in Central America.

As a further initiative, aimed at preventing the recurrence of any kind of border incident, and in the face of the serious nature of the threats launched by the United States Government, my Government has formally requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) to send as speedily as possible a mixed technical mission to investigate in situ the recent border incidents that occurred in the Bocay sector, on Nicaraguan territory, between the Reagan mercenary forces and the troops of the Sandinista People's Army.

My Government has also requested that that technical mission, after carrying out its inquiries, make specific recommendations for the disarmament and withdrawal of the mercenary troops located in Honduran territory, because the underlying cause of the problem and of this state of affairs is the lack of compliance with the provisions of the Esquipulas II accords. It is due to the enormous pressure brought to bear on the Honduran Government to continue providing sanctuary to the Reagan mercenary forces and to Mr. Reagan's insistence on continuing to finance and support his mercenary forces in violation of even his own country's laws.

Despite all the efforts and initiatives on the part of the Nicaraguan

(Mrs. Casco, Nicaragua)

Government, and with the protection of the presence of United States troops in Honduras, there occurred yesterday the first grave provocation when two United States jet aircraft coming from Honduras bombed the Amaka sector, on Nicaraguan territory bordering Honduras, at a time when a group of national and foreign journalists were in the area at the invitation of the Nicaraguan Government to verify that our actions were confined to the exercise of our legitimate and unquestionable right to defend our territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Likewise, on 17 March, at 4.40 p.m., an F-5 aircraft coming from Honduras launched two missiles against Nicaraguan troops in San Andres de Bocay, on Nicaraguan territory bordering Honduras. Subsequently the aircraft returned to Honduran territory.

As is publicly known, under the pretext of this so-called invasion, the United States Administration has considered a series of options, including the possibility of direct military action against Nicaragua, in order to save its mercenaries, who have been strategically defeated, both politically and militarily.

President Reagan, against the background of this campaign of lies and in the atmosphere of hysterics fanned by the enormous disinformation machinery available to him, is seeking not only to ensure the direct military involvement of the United States in the Central American conflict but also to abort the Esquipulas accords and, more specifically, efforts to achieve a cease-fire in the area. Nevertheless, in a further gesture of great flexibility and a genuine political desire to achieve peace, my Government has decided to consent to direct negotiations at the highest level with the so-called Contra directorate at the frontier post of Sapos on Nicaraguan territory, beginning on Monday, 21 March, in the presence, as eye-witnesses, of His Eminence Cardinal Obando y Bravo and His Excellency Joao Baena Soares, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS).

(Mrs. Casco, Nicaragua)

Now the United States Government is seeking to sabotage this fresh effort by Nicaragua as part of the Sapoa dialogue, which is clear evidence of our compliance with the Esquipulas accords.

To sum up, what the Reagan Administration is pursuing through this creation of a fresh artificial crisis is:

- To scotch the Esquipulas II accords;
- To abort or sabotage the Sapoa cease-fire negotiations;
- To create the necessary climate in Congress for obtaining fresh funds for the mercenary forces, including lethal aid - in connection with which the mass media this afternoon reported the introduction of a new \$30-33 million aid package for the Contras, with President Reagan having the option of requesting additional military assistance;
- To lay the ground for possible direct military intervention against our country;
- To increase and strengthen its military presence on Central American soil; and
- To divert attention from the criminal charges against senior Administration officials who in recent years were directly involved in activities such as those we are denouncing today.

We invite the Government of Honduras to accept the proposals made by President Ortega and live up to the Esquipulas accords, proceeding immediately to the dismantling of the Contra bases, and to the disarming and expulsion of the mercenaries from its territory.

We also urge the party most responsible for this state of affairs, the United States Government, to desist once and for all from its policy of destruction and death in Central America, to put an end to its illegal assistance to the Contras

JUN/7

S/PV.2802  
14-15

(Mrs. Casco, Nicaragua)

and stand at the side of those countries respecting international law, comply with the ruling of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 and genuinely support the peace efforts in Central America.

For our part, we reiterate our will for dialogue with the United States Government and our desire to participate in the Sapoa negotiations; but we also stress our readiness to resist any kind of action that the United States dares to launch against our heroic people and our revolution, because in Nicaragua we defend not only the decency and sovereignty of our nation but also the dignity of all Latin America.

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

Mr. HERNANDEZ ALCERRO (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): Honduras is taking part in this meeting of the Security Council because the item under discussion today closely affects its interests.

The charges made by the delegation of Nicaragua reflect neither the facts of the events nor the situation prevailing in the border area between Honduras and Nicaragua. These charges are incorrect and unilateral; they are designed to conceal Nicaragua's responsibility for the worsening of tension in the Central American region.

The Government of Honduras is surprised that the Government that is responsible for the worsening of the situation in Central America has requested this meeting of the Security Council. Honduras would have been fully entitled to call for this meeting. As the country attacked by Nicaragua, we are entitled to report here and in other international forums the violation of our territory by the Sandinista régime. The Government of Honduras has refrained, however, from taking such an initiative because it has been and continues to be committed to the search for a solution to the present situation through diplomatic bilateral and regional channels, and particularly through the use of the machinery created by the Presidents of Central America in the context of the process for the establishment of peace in the region.

As has been extensively reported, the Government of Nicaragua planned and carried out a broad-ranging offensive in northern Nicaragua against Nicaraguan insurgents, and, in a flagrant violation of Nicaragua's international obligations, some 1,500 Sandinista forces entered Honduran territory, in the Bocay sector of the Olancho Department, using their artillery and the air force.

The President of the Republic of Honduras, José Azcona, having been informed of the Nicaraguan aggression, and pursuant to his firm commitment to the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America", signed on

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

7 August last year, personally contacted President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and called on him to order his troops to withdraw immediately from Honduran territory and to refrain from further acts of aggression against Honduras.

At the same time, President Ascone contacted the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala to keep them abreast of the situation and to request their intervention with President Ortega of Nicaragua in order to achieve the immediate withdrawal of the troops that had invaded our territory.

The reaction of the Honduran Government has been cautious and prudent, designed to avoid a direct confrontation with Nicaragua. Nevertheless, the Government of Honduras has put the Government of Nicaragua on notice that it will act firmly if necessary. Furthermore, the Government of Honduras has considered the adoption of other measures in defence of our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Despite the accuracy of the Honduran reports - which have been confirmed by international sources - the Government of Nicaragua continues to deny that Sandinista troops have violated Honduran territory. That denial has been contradicted by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua himself; indeed, recently - on 16 March - during a television programme he admitted, in response to a question from a journalist, that Sandinista troops had actually carried out an incursion into Honduras.

For years now, my country has faced repeated acts of aggression by the Sandinista People's Army. We have done everything possible to get the Nicaraguan Government to adopt measures that would ensure no further incursions by its armed forces into Honduran territory. As the Security Council will recall, in March 1986 more than 2,000 Sandinista soldiers violated our territorial integrity - and this was publicly acknowledged by President Ortega himself. Similar attacks took place in November and December that year, when 1,000 Nicaraguan soldiers crossed the

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

border and advanced deeply into our territory.

The Government of Nicaragua has refused to pay any attention to our requests and warnings in regard to the dangerous nature of its activities. Therefore, I once again reaffirm before the Security Council that the Government of Honduras is determined to act in the calm and restrained fashion dictated by the situation but, at the same time, will adopt the appropriate measures in exercise of its right of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

That statement which I have made to the Council today was communicated to the Government of Nicaragua as a most energetic protest by Honduras against the aggression which it has suffered. In so doing, we demanded - and continue to demand - the immediate withdrawal of the Nicaraguan troops from our territory.

As usual, the Government of Nicaragua has denied that Sandinista troops entered Honduran territory on this occasion and, in an attempt to throw a smokescreen over the events in the border area and to justify its military actions, which violate Honduran sovereignty, the Government of Nicaragua not only has called for this meeting of the Security Council but has gone so far as to request the dispatch of a joint commission of the United Nations and the Organization of American States to the border area to investigate a situation - a situation that, in the view of the Government of Honduras, has without any doubt whatever been caused by Nicaraguan actions. Honduras does not consider that the establishment of such a commission is necessary, because we would thus be allowing Nicaragua to continue to use international forums to cover up its lack of compliance with its obligations as a State.

Last year the Presidents of Central America established, among other things, an International Verification and Follow-up Commission, which, unfortunately,

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

departed from the original intention. As a result, the five Presidents of Central America jointly agreed to end the activities of the Commission, because some of its members had acted in a biased fashion during its work.

In a statement on 16 January this year, the Presidents of Central America transferred the verification and follow-up functions to the Executive Commission, comprised of the five Central American Foreign Ministers.

I have received instructions from my Government to inform the Security Council that the moment it has been proved to Honduras that the invading troops have left our territory, we shall immediately convene an urgent meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Central America in our own capital, Tegucigalpa.

At this stage, in view of the continuing violation of our territory by Sandinista troops and the constant incursion into Honduran airspace of Soviet-manufactured helicopters, what is urgent is that the Government of Nicaragua halt its aggression and comply in its actions with the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter.



(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

In particular, we demand respect for Article 2 of the Charter, which obliges all Member States to

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

In the view of my Government, the position of United Nations bodies with respect to Nicaragua's illicit international activities must be a condemnation of this aggression, which threatens the peace and security of the region and a demand that the aggressor withdraw its troops from Honduran territory.

Nicaragua's actions against Honduras result in part from its arrogance, which rests on the excessive military might that country has been building up since 1979. The Government of Nicaragua has some 130,000 men under arms, which is totally out of proportion when compared with Honduras's 16,000 military troops and 4,000 police.

On previous occasions, the Government of Honduras has stated before the Security Council and the General Assembly that notwithstanding the grave insecurity created by the arms build-up in Nicaragua we have decided not to militarize our society or unduly increase our national defence spending. Rather, we have encouraged regional arms and troop limitation and reductions, something Nicaragua rejects. We in Honduras base our security, first and foremost, on our own self-defence capabilities, and secondly on the continental and world-wide international legal system, which has established machinery for peaceful settlement of disputes, collective self-defence and solidarity. Finally, a third aspect of our security consists of special agreements with other friendly allied countries, to one of which Honduras has turned on this occasion. The President of Honduras requested the President of the United States of America to provide effective and

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

immediate assistance enabling our country to strengthen its position of international security in the face of the current aggression. The Honduran request was based on the Military Assistance Agreement of 1954 and on the joint presidential declaration of 1985, in which the United States and Honduras recognized the existence of a special security relationship between them, and undertook to provide mutual assistance in the event of aggression.

The Government of the United States responded positively to our request and has dispatched to our territory 3,500 troops, who are stationed on a Honduran air base in the central part of the country. These troops will be carrying out readiness exercises. Their presence is temporary and they will remain in Honduras until the Sandinistas withdraw their troops from Honduran territory. This presence is part of a preventive strategy in the face of aggression; in line with the state of affairs, they will see action only if the Government of Honduras so requests, which has not yet been the case.

It is odd that the Nicaraguan Government should denounce the dispatch to Honduras of United States troops whose presence, as I have stated, is temporary, while remaining silent about the presence in its own territory of military and security personnel from East bloc countries, who are not there temporarily, but permanently.

Yesterday, the Honduran armed forces carried out an air attack against a Sandinista military post in Bocay, in Honduran territory, which had been providing logistical support for the aggressive activities of the Nicaraguan troops operating in our territory. This was a limited action intended to cut off the supply of matériel and logistical support to Sandinista troops in Honduras.

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

The present situation was not created by the dispatch of United States troops to Honduran territory, but rather by a carefully planned strategy of the Government of Nicaragua to breach its obligations under the Esquipulas II agreement of 7 August 1987. By attacking Honduran territory and provoking a tense situation, the Government of Nicaragua is trying on the one hand to focus international attention on a crisis with its neighbours in order, on the other hand, to free itself from the pressure the international community has been exerting on Nicaragua to comply with the Esquipulas II agreement, to declare a broad and unconditional amnesty, to agree to a cease-fire with the armed opposition, and to open a genuine process of national reconciliation and democratization in Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan strategy began when the Government of Nicaragua rejected mediation by Cardinal Obando y Bravo, because it found it inconvenient. Their aim is to dismantle the peace process which began in August last year in Guatemala. On the one hand they are calling for direct negotiations with the rebel forces and on the other they are taking action to destroy their negotiating partners before they can reach the negotiating table.

If internal reconciliation were truly to prosper in Nicaragua, we believe that there would be no need for recourse to arms or to concentrate troops on the borders of neighbouring countries or carry out military attacks against them.

It is the responsibility of the Government of Nicaragua - not the responsibility of the Governments of neighbouring States - to restore peace to its society through dialogue and negotiations, as a basic contribution to the maintenance of regional peace.

But the contribution it can make right now is to cease its aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Honduras and immediately to withdraw its troops from our territory and from border areas.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): Again we find ourselves, with some irony, meeting at the request of Nicaragua. The Central American Presidents committed themselves on 8 August 1987 to a peace agreement. My Government welcomed it, but viewed with some scepticism Nicaragua's promise to carry it out. At the San José summit this past January the Presidents met again. They reaffirmed the objectives of the agreement and emphasized the need for Nicaragua to implement its original democratization commitments immediately. Nicaragua, which had a long distance to travel in order to implement democracy, has evaded and stalled in seeking a fair cease-fire and democratic reforms. The events which have unfolded in the past few days have confirmed our worst fears about Nicaragua's true intent.

The evidence is clear and compelling. Let us look at the record.

The week in which the Sandinistas signed the Guatemala Agreement, they arrested the Heads of both the Bar and Human Rights Associations.

The week of the January summit in which the Sandinistas supposedly agreed to a more flexible approach to cease-fire talks, leaders of the internal opposition parties were arrested because they had met in Guatemala with leaders of the Resistance.

The Sandinistas have stonewalled in all their dealings with the civic opposition, and they still refuse to entertain suggestions for democratic constitutional reform.

The Sandinistas have attempted to reduce the role of Cardinal Obando y Bravo, the most prestigious Nicaraguan leader on either side, and only the protests of the Resistance have kept him in the meetings - and that as a "witness".

Those who counted on Managua's assurances and good faith can look at a peace process battered by Sandinista intransigence and bad faith: discussions with the internal opposition halted, discussions with the Resistance halted, and now a major

(Mr. Okun, United States)

military incursion into Honduras. Most important, we see consolidation of the Sandinista régime without effective opposition, free to destabilize the nation and the region.

As the Permanent Representative of Honduras has just informed the Council, Nicaragua, which has the largest army in Central America, has deliberately violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a peaceful neighbour - Honduras - whose armed forces are far fewer in number than those of the Sandinistas. Sandinista aircraft bombed Honduran territory for several days. The Sandinistas have deployed approximately 1,500 to 2,000 troops on Honduran soil. The fighting continues. My Government would like to note that the Central American democratic Presidents have supported Honduras and condemned Nicaragua.

Honduras is a close friend of the United States. President Reagan has responded to an explicit request of the Government of Honduras by ordering the immediate deployment of an Infantry Brigade Task Force to Palmerola Air Base in Honduras for an emergency deployment readiness exercise. The request from Honduras was reported in the 16 March press statement which its Permanent Representative has had circulated as a General Assembly and Security Council document with the symbol A/42/931-S/19643 dated 17 March. This exercise is a measured response designed to show our staunch support for the democratic Government of Honduras at a time when its territorial integrity is being violated by the Sandinista Army. It also demonstrates to the Governments and the peoples of Central America the seriousness with which the United States Government views the situation in the region. The Brigade Task Force will not be deployed to an area of ongoing hostilities, and thus it does not constitute either a threat or the use of force against Nicaragua.

The Sandinista Government has claimed that its troops were in hot pursuit of insurgents; this claim is false. That invasion was no accident. It was not made in hot pursuit and it was not a lost patrol. It was and is a planned offensive

(Mr. Okun, United States)

conducted on the territory of another sovereign nation, in clear violation of international law and conventions. Indeed, it is one of the largest military operations mounted by the Sandinistas since they seized power in 1979.

The Sandinistas have been preparing for this operation since the beginning of March, moving equipment, vehicles, supplies, fuel and troops closer to the border, and establishing a forward staging area within 45 miles of the Honduran border. They apparently began planning this attack in reaction to a vote in the United States Congress that ended aid to the Nicaraguan resistance. Indeed, President Ortega on 8 March warned the Resistance to "prepare itself for another heroic drive" by Sandinista forces.

An Extraordinary Assembly of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation was held on 12 and 13 March. Its purpose was "to continue strengthening the military defence of the revolution, particularly through mobilization of the armed population, in order to accelerate the total destruction of the mercenary forces" - the term used by the Sandinista régime to refer to the Nicaraguans of the Resistance. In short, these careful and massive preparations, combined with President Ortega's public warning, indicate that the offensive had and has one fundamental goal: the destruction of the Resistance as an effective fighting force.

These latest actions by the Sandinistas demonstrate clearly their determination to solve their civil war by military, rather than political, means; they are consistent with Sandinista actions inside Nicaragua aimed at crushing all opposition. The Sandinistas seek to destroy the Resistance as an effective fighting force in order to stifle internal dialogue and thoroughly demoralize the democratic opposition groups within Nicaragua. In the months that have followed the Guatemala City Agreement, the Sandinistas have repeatedly refused to discuss substantive issues with both the Resistance and the democratic civic opposition.

(Mr. Okun, United States)

On 28 February, Cardinal Obando y Bravo called President Ortega's latest insistence on the Sandinista agenda for cease-fire talks "a backward movement to zero".

Unfortunately, the Sandinistas do not want negotiations or national reconciliation. They want the Resistance to surrender. There is no guarantee that returning Resistance fighters could ever participate in Nicaraguan political life or that their lives and liberty would be safeguarded.

The Government of the United States believes in peace, democracy and national reconciliation in Central America. These goals were espoused by the Central American Presidents at Guatemala City. Therefore, we urge the Government of Nicaragua to cease its aggressive approach to its opposition, to respect the territorial and other rights of its neighbours and to negotiate in good faith with its opposition, both military and civilian. Nicaragua must stand by its commitments and turn away from its old ways. The time to grasp the olive branch of peace is now.

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil) (interpretation from Spanish): It is with deep concern and grave disquiet that the Government of Brazil has learnt of the current deterioration in the situation in Central America. The results of this, we fear, could be serious for the peace process launched so hopefully and enthusiastically by the Presidents of the five countries in the region.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

Notwithstanding the major obstacles impeding a peace process that is by its very nature complex, the results obtained so far seemed to offer the hope of the gradual creation of an atmosphere of détente and understanding, which, in turn, would enable us to overcome the serious internal and international problems that beset the peoples of Central America.

In the even more trying circumstances facing Central America today, the Brazilian Government is of the view that it is essential to face up to the need for stringent respect for the major principles of international coexistence enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in the Charter of the Organization of American States, the principles of non-intervention and of condemnation of recourse to violence. Those principles were consolidated after a time of great difficulty and suffering in the life of nations. It would be truly regrettable were countries in this hemisphere to be carried away by emotions and were they unilaterally to adopt hasty positions incompatible with the great principles of international law by using force to resolve the differences that may temporarily separate them.

To the parties directly involved - the United States of America, Honduras and Nicaragua - we launch an earnest appeal for moderation. They must immediately halt and reverse the military escalation in the region and thereby eliminate the grave tensions created by the present escalation. Everything must be done to promote conditions favourable to implementation of the regional peace process launched by the five Central American Presidents. As one of the countries members of the Contadora Support Group, my country feels linked to that goal in a very special way.

In conclusion, I should like to state that my country's Government would take a favourable view of the acceptance by the United Nations Secretary-General of the request addressed to him to send a verification mission to the area of conflict.

The PRESIDENT: I must say that for some time I have noticed the practice of distributing speeches in the Council Chamber immediately following their



(The President)

delivery by some representatives. It is really disturbing the work of the Council, and I appeal to representatives who are speaking not to distribute their statements in the Council Chamber. They can do it outside in any way they like, but not here.

Mr. PFIRTER (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): My Government is concerned at the growing tensions in Central America and at the fact that foreign troops have been sent to a country in the region. Once again we would emphasize that a solution to the conflict in Central America requires full respect for the principle of non-intervention. That principle must be respected by the countries in the region, among themselves and between those countries that have links with and interests in the region.

A negotiated solution to the conflict in Central America - which my country firmly supports - must be based on the principles contained in the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America and on the Esquipulas II accords. Stability in the region will be achieved only when there is full respect for the principles of non-intervention and self-determination and a democratic way of life.

Whenever it has addressed the question of Central America in the Security Council Argentina has made clear that the crisis affecting that region, to which we are closely linked by ties of blood, history and language, is of the greatest concern to it. A confrontation in Central America would have irreparable implications for the entire hemisphere. It would create deep divisions in the region and could have a negative impact on the democratic institutions that have developed in our continent in recent years.

Accordingly, we would make a fraternal appeal to the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua immediately to lessen the tension in the border area and to guarantee respect for each other's territorial integrity and the non-use of their territories as bases for armed actions against other States in accordance with the Esquipulas II accords. We would urge all the parties involved to exercise the

(Mr. Pfirter, Argentina)

maximum restraint and to refrain from any action that might worsen the conflict or jeopardize the peace process in Central America.

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

Mr. GUTIERRES (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in the present debate, a task which, as the representative of Costa Rica, I feel myself in duty bound to perform. I regret the present state of affairs and appreciate that the pace of events has prompted the Council to schedule this meeting so speedily.

Yesterday the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica issued the following statement:

"In view of recent events in the border area between Honduras and Nicaragua the Government of Costa Rica deplores the actions that have taken place, actions that are contrary to our clear and steadfast commitment to peace and democracy in Central America and that represent serious threats to regional stability.

"The Government of Costa Rica wishes to emphasize its permanent commitment to the principles that inspired the negotiating process known as Esquipulas II, which constitute the essential framework for the attainment of a lasting, non-violent solution to the serious problems existing in the region.

"Similarly, the Government of Costa Rica urges the various actors in the conflict to resort to calm and measured dialogue, taking the necessary steps to guarantee the preservation of peace in the Isthmus and a speedy return to normalcy."

In accordance with the terms of that communiqué, I feel it necessary briefly to inform the members of the Security Council of our approach to the situation that exists and of the steps we now feel should be taken.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Costa Rica)

The Government of Costa Rica considers that our country is not part of the problem of Central America but that Central America is a source of problems for Costa Rica. We do not think that we have contributed to the crisis, but we feel it essential that we contribute to its solution, since it affects us, and profoundly so. The enormous flow of refugees, the uncertainty in the area that has led to set-backs in economic life, the prevailing climate of tension, cannot fail to affect a country which is nevertheless continuing to preserve internal peace and to practice democracy and which would wish the same to apply in neighbouring and adjacent nations.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Costa Rica)

All of those matters prompted our President, Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, to put forward his peace plan. General satisfaction and relief were felt at the signing by the five Presidents of the Central American Republics on 7 August last year of the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America". Since then we have worked to implement the plan and ensure that all the commitments entered into were honoured.

At the beginning of this week the outlook seemed quite promising. The Executive Commission set up by the five Foreign Ministers had a second meeting planned for 23 March. The previous meeting, in February, had taken place in an atmosphere of cordiality and harmony and a desire to find solutions. In February the Government of Nicaragua had presented a detailed verification plan, which it had been agreed would be discussed at the March meeting.

At the national level, the achievement of a negotiated cease-fire in El Salvador and Nicaragua continued to be the crucial problem in the process. However, after many efforts and despite opposing positions and difficult circumstances, there had been agreement that a meeting should be held on Monday, 21 March, in the Nicaraguan town of Sapoa, near the border with Costa Rica. Thus, at the least, we had a procedure to work towards a cease-fire.

However, during this week, instead of preparing its negotiating position, the Nicaraguan Government attempted to achieve the total military defeat of its opponents, carrying out an offensive with all the equipment available to it as a result of its arms build-up over a number of years. Not content with carrying out those activities in its own territory, its army entered the territory of the Republic of Honduras in order to try physically to eliminate its opponents once and for all. That provoked the inevitable reaction by the Honduran authorities - their request for assistance from the United States Government - the sending of military

(Mr. Gutierrez, Costa Rica)

sending of military forces by the United States, and another emergency situation in Central America. We are back to square one, after thinking at one stage that we could achieve some of our goals. We thought that we had pulled back from the precipice of violence and suffering, but now we are at the edge once again.

Therefore, it is logical that the Costa Rican Government should deplore what has happened. However, nothing can be gained by condemnation or seeking to apportion blame.

Nothing irreparable has happened yet. We can still return to the course we have set ourselves. We must return to the commitment to peace and progress towards that goal. The meetings are still scheduled for next week. Furthermore, I understand that the President of the Republic of Guatemala, Mr. Vinicio Cerezo, has appealed to the other Central American Presidents to take part in an emergency meeting, which could take place over the weekend; that is not yet certain.

In any event, we must now strive to see that we all return to the negotiating table. This new crisis should be a vivid, lasting example of the truth that the path of war and violence will not lead to any final solution to the Central American crisis and that no one can think of exploiting the momentary weakness of his opponents. Rather, in the spirit of the Esquipulas Agreement, we must all work to make a reality of peace and democracy in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Peru 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.

(The President)

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alzamora (Peru) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

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

Mr. ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): The Government of Peru wishes to inform the Council of its grave concern over the decision by the United States Government to send military forces to the territory of the Republic of Honduras following the armed clashes that have taken place in recent days in the Honduras-Nicaragua border area between units of the Sandinista People's Army and their regular forces operating in the area. We consider that this unjustified increased United States military presence in the area affects the political climate required for the fulfilment of the peace agreements adopted by the five Central American Heads of State at the Esquipulas II meeting and threatens the security of the States of the area.

The Government of Peru makes an urgent fraternal appeal to the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua to take the path of sovereign, direct dialogue to reduce tension on the border between them, guarantee respect for the territorial integrity of each and ensure that their territories are not used for acts of aggression against other States, in accordance with the commitments entered into in Esquipulas II. In accordance with those commitments, Peru also calls for the withdrawal of all foreign military forces from Central America and an end to outside assistance to the irregular forces and insurrection movements operating in the region.

We consider that today it is more urgent than ever that there be strict respect for the basic principles of non-interference, the non-use of force or the threat of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

Finally, we trust - indeed, we are sure - that the Secretary-General will do everything he can to consolidate the peace process in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: I have been approached by some members of the Council who have asked that the meeting be suspended for half an hour.

With the concurrence of the members of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting for half an hour. We will meet again at 3.30 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: As I stated earlier, some representatives had requested that the meeting be suspended so that consultations could be held. I am now informed that these have taken place.

The representative of Nicaragua has asked to make a statement, and I call upon her.

Ms. CASCO (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): My Government is not in the least surprised by the accusations levelled against it this afternoon by the representative of Honduras. Nicaragua knows that the Government of the United States is pressuring the Government of Honduras to adopt positions not in keeping with the interests of the Honduran people or with the interests and wishes of Central Americans in general. The United States has been using its influence and power to force those positions on Honduras.

I do not want to take up the Security Council's time by going into the Nicaraguan Government's efforts with successive Honduran Governments since 1981, beginning with the Government of General Policarpo Paz Garcia, with a view to adopting the measures necessary to eliminate situations and incidents in the Nicaragua-Honduras border areas that could heighten tension between our two countries and develop into threats to international peace and security.

We made those efforts in the belief that such incidents do not serve the interests either of the people and the Government of Honduras or of the people and the Government of Nicaragua. But we understand that they serve the interests of a Power which is tried by all possible means to create conflicts that could later be used to justify its aggression against my country.

Yet it is strange that the Government of Honduras should speak of a Nicaraguan "invasion" of its territory when there has never been a confrontation between the



(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

armies of our two countries. The Government of Honduras knows that the legal definition of aggression involves one State occupying the territory of another with the aim of undermining its territorial integrity. We therefore find it absurd to speak of an invasion when the Government of Honduras knows that the Government of Nicaragua has no intention of occupying its territory. The only occupation of Honduras worthy of the name is the presence on Honduran territory of United States troops and Reaganite mercenaries.

As everyone knows, the International Verification and Follow-Up Commission - composed of the Foreign Ministers of Central American countries, the countries of the Contadora and Support Groups and the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and founded in the framework of the Esquipulas II Agreement - visited Central America, specifically Honduras, and was given clear and abundant testimony by trade union, peasant and coffee-growing groups that foreign forces were occupying large sectors of territory in the southern part of the country and that in consequence hundreds of Honduran families had been removed from their homes. That is the invasion; that is the occupation imposed on the Government of Honduras by United States pressure. It is this that should be denounced in the Security Council. There should be no denunciations imposed by the United States through pressure and blackmail.

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

Nicaragua has faithfully abided by each and every commitment entered into within the framework of the Esquipulas II peace accords. By contrast, the Government of Honduras has disregarded its obligations arising not only from those agreements but also from international law. It has an obligation not to allow its territory to be used as a springboard for acts of aggression against another country.

We were pleased to hear the representative of Honduras say that his Government is prepared to resolve the present situation through bilateral and regional channels. If that is indeed the case, why has his Government not responded to President Ortega's proposal to meet with President Azcona Eyo? Why have they not responded to the proposal of President Cerezo of Guatemala to hold as a matter of urgency a meeting of the Central American Foreign Ministers, scheduled to take place on the 22 and 23 of this month in Guatemala - a meeting which may not be held in view of the fact that the Honduran Government has already said that it will not attend?

The clearest proof of the falsity of the accusations levelled by both the representatives of Honduras and of the United States to the effect that Nicaraguan troops are on Honduran territory is the Honduran Government's refusal to receive a technical mission of experts from the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) to investigate the incidents that took place this week. If Honduras really feels invaded, then why does it fear a visit to its country and to Nicaragua by a neutral commission of experts to look into the charges? If Honduras can establish that there are Nicaraguan troops on its territory, why does it not accept today a visit by international journalists to the border area on the Honduran side as Nicaragua allowed foreign newspapermen and Nicaraguan reporters to do yesterday on its side to establish that our operations were indeed limited to

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

the defence of our territorial integrity and sovereignty? If the Government of Honduras is sure, and not afraid of the falsity, of its accusations, why does it not agree to have the Support Group go to Honduras to look into the charges levelled against my Government?

My Government urges the Government of Honduras to heed the international community's clamour urging both our Governments and the Government of the United States to display wisdom and prevent further bloodshed and agree to having a technical mission from the United Nations visit his country and mine to investigate the situation prevailing there.

I should like to say the following in connection with the statements made by the representative of the United States. If the Government of the United States truly desires to support the peace process in Central America, it is not by sending American young men to risk their lives in our embattled region; that is no way to support peace in Central America. It is not by stepping up its military presence in Honduras that it will contribute to the peace efforts that we Central and Latin Americans in general have been making; quite the contrary.

It is by abiding by the spirit and the letter of Esquipulas, which shows that there is an overriding need to end support to mercenary forces and abandon its intention of overthrowing the legitimate Government of Nicaragua. It should put an end to its policy of State terrorism which it has been pursuing in Nicaragua by its mercenary forces. That is how the United States can contribute to peace in Central America. It must face the fact that its policy has been discredited and exhausted. Its only results have been suffering and terror brought upon the long-suffering Nicaraguan people. It must abide by the ruling of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986, which calls on the United States to end its unlawful and immoral policies. That is how it can contribute to peace in Central America.

(Ms. Casco, Nicaragua)

For that reason we urge the United States Government, in particular President Reagan, to accept President Ortega's proposal, made last October in the General Assembly, to hold bilateral talks aimed at a final solution to the existing differences between our Governments. That is how we should proceed towards normalizing our relations and contributing to the peace efforts being made in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of Honduras has asked to be allowed to speak. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. HERNANDEZ ALCERRO (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): I am obliged to speak in reply to some of the questions put by the representative of Nicaragua. Neither the accusations made by Honduras nor our formal denunciation of Nicaragua's invasion of Honduran territory should come as any great surprise to her or, indeed, her Government. This is a justified position, for my country has been the victim of an act of territorial violation by the Nicaraguan Government.

At no time have we said that the Government of Nicaragua has no intention of occupying or invading Honduran territory; quite the contrary. What Honduras demands is that Nicaragua withdraw from our territory all its troops who are still there today. That would be genuine proof of its commitment to peace in the Central American region.

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

The Government of Nicaragua should certainly not tell the Government of Honduras what types of denunciation it should make. We have denounced this invasion, as we have the expansionist aggressive attitude of the Nicaraguan Government - and not only towards my country, but towards other countries neighbours of Nicaragua.

We also say that Nicaragua has not abided by the 7 August 1987 agreements, nor has it abided by the amnesty, the cease-fire, the process of national reconciliation. Quite the contrary, it is trying to disrupt the entire regional peace process.

We are prepared to hold a meeting of the Executive Committee of the five Central American Foreign Ministers. We could agree to a meeting in Tegucigalpa as soon as the Government of Honduras can establish that all Sandinist troops have been removed from Honduran territory. The President of Nicaragua has given that Committee the power to establish the facts and to follow up the Esquipulas II Agreement.

I do not know whether what we have heard here today from the representative of Nicaragua contradicts the agreements reached on 16 January of this year in San José, Costa Rica, when President Ortega committed himself. It is not for us, Nicaragua's neighbours, to resolve the internal problems of that country. As I said at the end of my statement, Nicaragua must make another contribution to peace in Central America: it must put an end to the internal conflict that prevails within its own borders. It must open its society. It must give no justification for Nicaraguans taking up weapons. It must democratize the country and enter into dialogue with its people and not try physically to eliminate Nicaraguan opposition.

The internal conflict that has existed for the past 7 years in Nicaragua has adversely affected all the Central American countries, and principally my country,

(Mr. Hernandez Alcerro, Honduras)

because that conflict has overflowed into Honduras and other Central American countries. Nicaragua must demonstrate its good faith and faithfully abide by the commitments it has entered into.

We would urge the Government of Nicaragua not only to heed the clamour of the international community but to heed the clamour of its own people - its own people, who want only peace and freedom. It must seek reconciliation with the people of Nicaragua, with those who, in their yearnings for peace and freedom, have seen only military actions such as those being promoted at the present time by the Sandinista Government. Those people have also witnessed persecutions and the imprisonment of opponents.

I too would like to ask a few questions of the representative of Nicaragua: Are we to consider that the military operations of the Sandinist People's Army are a sign of political willingness to carry out a process of reconciliation, to which it is committed? I should like to know whether peace, which is lacking in Nicaragua, should be sought in rhetoric in international organizations? I should like to know whether committing acts of aggression against neighbouring countries and concentrating troops along the borders of neighbouring countries ought to be viewed as another contribution to peace in Central America?

I should like to know whether this contributes to and is in keeping with the agreements signed by the Presidents of Central American countries at the Esquipulas II Summit Meeting? I should like to know whether the international community should no longer insist that Nicaragua be democratized and that the amnesty to which it is committed be granted? I should like to know if it intends to carry out in good faith the cease-fire negotiations, to promote reconciliation, or should we focus our attention solely on bloodshed in Nicaragua and Central America at large as the path to peace? It would seem that that is the path the Sandinista Government has chosen.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): We have listened to this quite amazing statement by the representative of Nicaragua, and through all of the charges I think one might discern two points. First, arrogance towards Honduras, in that the Nicaraguan representative sought to speak for Honduras and spoke quite a lot about that - but the Honduran representative has spoken for his own country. Secondly, finger-pointing towards my own country.

But Honduras and the United States and the other countries in the region all know one thing: the problem is not between Nicaragua and the United States. The problem is that of the Sandinistas with their own people and their own neighbours. Therefore, it cannot be solved by meetings between Presidents alone. A country ruled by the Sandinista Party, which practises coercion at home and practises aggression abroad, will meet resistance, and the Sandinista Administration has met that resistance and will continue to meet that resistance. It is not the United States alone that is the cause of the problems, however much the Nicaraguans may pretend that it is.

We have heard this stated eloquently here at the table, and I simply would like to make that point, that the United States stands for peace in this area and when the Sandinista régime chooses to make peace with its domestic opposition and ceases to create problems for its neighbours, then and only then will peace come to the area.

The PRESIDENT: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on its agenda will be fixed in consultations with members of the Council.

Before adjourning the meeting I should like to remind members of the Council that we shall have informal consultations immediately after this meeting.

The meeting rose at 6:30 p.m.