



Security Council

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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 17 March 1988, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. PEJIC

(Yugoslavia)

Members: Algeria
Argentina
Brazil
China
France
Germany, Federal Republic of
Italy
Japan
Nepal
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Zambia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. CAPUTO
Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Mr. DING Yuanhong
Mr. BLANC
Count YORK von WARTENBURG
Mr. BUCCI
Mr. KAGAMI
Mr. RANA
Mr. BA

Mr. BELONOVOV

Sir Crispin TICKELL
Mr. OKUN
Mr. ZUZE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 11 MARCH 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19604)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at the 2800th meeting, I invite the representatives of Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Navajas Mogro (Bolivia), Mr. Peñalosa (Colombia), Mr. Gutierrez (Costa Rica), Mr. Tobar Zaldumbide (Ecuador), Mr. Insanally (Guyana), Mr. Moya Palencia (Mexico), Mr. Icaza Gallard (Nicaragua), Mr. Ritter (Panama), Mr. Alzamora (Peru), Mr. Villar (Spain), Mr. Fischer (Uruguay) and Mr. Aguilar (Venezuela) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Guatemala and India in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Castellanos Carrillo (Guatemala) and Mr. Gharekhan (India) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Mr. BUCCI (Italy): I should like at the beginning of my statement to extend my best regards to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, whose presence in this Chamber underlines the importance that his country attaches to the question under consideration.

The Security Council is meeting today to examine the situation which has arisen in the southern Atlantic following the decision taken by the British Government to hold military manoeuvres in the Falklands Islands (Malvinas) from 7 March to 31 March. The British Government states that the aim of the manoeuvres is to test the capacity of a rapid reinforcement of the defence system of the islands in the event of an emergency. Such initiative, it says, has been taken in fulfilment of the obligation incumbent upon the administering Power to ensure the security of the islands. The initiative does not constitute, in the view of the British Government, a response to an increase in tension in the area, nor does it aim to create tension. The objective is rather to allow the garrison stationed in the Falklands Islands (Malvinas) to be maintained at the minimum level by determining the possibilities of its rapid reinforcement.

In the view of the Government of Argentina, the manoeuvres, which, we have to note, are the first of this nature to take place in the islands since 1982, boil down to a demonstration of strength which in and of itself generates tension. Therefore, the Government of Argentina casts doubt on the British willingness to opt for a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the problem of the Falklands/Malvinas, and this is a circumstance which, it says, contravenes the recommendations expressed many times by the international community and the United Nations, particularly in resolutions approved by the General Assembly.

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

Italy maintains close relations of friendship with both parties which pre-date the most recent historic period. The blood ties which exist between Italy and Argentina are long-standing. On the other hand, Italy and the United Kingdom are jointly committed to creating a European Community which increasingly serves as an element of peace and stability in the world. My country is therefore concerned about this unexpected increase in tension, all the more so as it comes at a moment when, owing to the action of friendly countries, the premises for the establishment of a climate of greater trust between the United Kingdom and Argentina seemed to be in sight.

Unquestionably, the events brought to the attention of the Council constitute a disturbance in the relations between the two countries and, in our opinion, make it opportune and urgent that each of them adopt, as a preliminary step and in a spirit of restored understanding, all measures necessary to avoid a worsening of the state of tension, thus facilitating the return to an atmosphere in which the respective positions can be examined with greater calm.

My country, as we pointed out in our statement to the fortieth session of the General Assembly, can envision the beginning of a negotiating process on the basis of a balanced approach and on the principles of the United Nations Charter.

In fact, only through such negotiations can the two parties present and defend their respective positions in an open and constructive spirit through a dialogue which, in our opinion, must be entered into without pre-conditions, in good faith, with creativity and with a true willingness to find negotiated solutions.

To begin such a dialogue, it is necessary to establish relations based on trust between the two countries.

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

Awaiting this development, it is essential that each of the parties exercise the maximum restraint and abstain from undertaking initiatives which, by their nature or scope, could be interpreted by the other side as hostile on the basis of either objective considerations or emotional arguments related to the characteristics of the disagreement.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): My delegation listened with great interest to the statements by Mr. Dante Mario Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, and Sir Crispin Tickell, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, as well as by other speakers concerning the recent developments surrounding the Falkland Islands, or Malvinas.

Both Argentina and the United Kingdom have repeatedly expressed their interest in normalizing their relations and are making efforts towards that end. We all hope that these efforts of constructive dialogue will continue and bear fruit.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

I take note of the concerns expressed by the Argentine representative about the military exercise in the Falkland Islands, or Malvinas, and I also take note of the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom that his Government is taking necessary precautions to avoid untoward consequences.

I strongly hope that the latest development will not bring about detrimental effects on the efforts being made to improve the relations between the two countries and that the intentions expressed by the representatives of both Argentina and the United Kingdom today to work towards the improvement of relations between the two countries through a peaceful process will materialize in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): First and foremost I wish to say, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, that it is a great honour and pleasure for us to see Mr. Dante Caputo, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, present here today.

The dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina over the Malvinas Islands has been on the agenda of the United Nations for more than two decades. Notwithstanding the constant efforts it has exerted, the Organization has not yet been able to bring about a peaceful settlement of that question. A tragic armed conflict in 1982 made clear, indeed, the immense risks to international peace and security that the persistence of this dispute could entail.

In the light of the source of tension that the problem of the Malvinas Islands had thus become, the international community felt duty bound to promote, insistently and regularly, recourse to the virtues of dialogue and negotiation. Accordingly, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has repeatedly called for negotiations between the two parties concerned, with a view to achieving a peaceful solution to the dispute. The General Assembly, for its part, has by overwhelming

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

majorities repeatedly adopted a resolution, of which my country has been a sponsor, calling on the United Kingdom and Argentina to negotiate a peaceful and definitive settlement of all the problems pending between the two countries including all aspects on the future of the Malvinas Islands, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The General Assembly has also requested the Secretary-General to use his good offices; and a well-deserved tribute must be paid here to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts to bring the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to the negotiating table. Indeed, this unanimity on the means to achieve a settlement of this question had received a promising response in a dialogue between the two parties which, although it was indirect, was already showing signs of rebirth.

Hence, the current developments in the Malvinas Islands are a source of concern to us because they could set up new obstacles to the necessary demonstration of good will by the two parties and thereby increase tension, which fortunately had seemed to be decreasing.

The statement issued on 25 February last by the Latin American Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight and the resolution adopted on 1 March by an extraordinary meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States prove that the military manoeuvres by the United Kingdom in the Malvinas Islands are of concern not only to Argentina but also to Latin America as a whole. These positions also confirm the urgent need for peace and stability in a continent that wishes to devote its full energies and potential to the building of its economy and to the well being of its peoples. Africa, confronted with the same challenges for the future, associated itself with Latin America two years ago in an initiative designed to establish a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic, which serves as a bridge between them.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

By General Assembly resolutions 41/11 and 42/16, the international community, by an overwhelming majority, bore witness to the value of that initiative for peace and, particularly, called on all the States of other regions, especially the militarily significant States, scrupulously to respect the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation, among other things through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military activities.

This discussion in the Security Council will, we hope, contribute to eliminating all the factors that could again create tension concerning the problem of the Malvinas Islands, and to encouraging the beginning of sustained negotiations for the settlement of this dispute.

Convinced of the irreplaceable validity of negotiation in putting an end to tensions and settling disputes, my country notes with satisfaction the willingness constantly displayed by Argentina to open and pursue such a dialogue, and we appeal to the United Kingdom to associate itself with that.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): My delegation has listened most attentively to the preceding speakers, including - notably - Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, on the military exercises now being conducted by units of the British armed forces in the Malvinas Islands.

We have also taken due note of the statement of the British Ambassador, as well as the explanation of the British Ministry of Defence on 11 February 1988, that these exercises had been planned for some time, are limited in scale and scope and are related to the British Government's commitment to maintaining the security of the Malvinas.

Similarly, my delegation has noted that early this month the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States expressed deep concern over the British

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

decision to conduct the military exercises in the Malvinas and urged the Government of the United Kingdom to reconsider the matter.

The question of the Malvinas has been before the United Nations for more than two decades, and efforts have been continuing to resolve the problem peacefully on the basis of Charter principles.

While there was an unfortunate set-back to such efforts in 1982 owing to the outbreak of armed hostilities between the United Kingdom and Argentina, we felt that prospects for a negotiated settlement of the dispute appeared promising because of a number of new developments, including the return of a democratic and popular Government in Argentina and the initiation of indirect consultations between the two parties concerned. Against that background, it was only natural that my delegation should have been concerned by the decision of the British Government to move in the direction of military exercises at this time. My delegation is prepared to accept that a military exercise such as the one being conducted by Britain in the islands region could have been considered normal, or even necessary, had the situation been less tense and the subject less sensitive. However, in the current atmosphere of tension and suspicion in the area, such manoeuvres are likely to be perceived as an act of pressure and provocation.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Nepal has a long history of friendship and co-operative relations with the United Kingdom. It also shares with Argentina a common commitment to the ideals of the non-aligned movement. My delegation has had the pleasure of working in close co-operation with both the British and Argentine delegations in the United Nations in general and, at present, as fellow members of the Security Council. It is therefore only appropriate for us to hope that the distrust and differences between those two close friends would be reduced and resolved through peaceful dialogue.

The Council has had the benefit of listening to many eloquent statements during the course of this debate. It may not therefore be necessary for me to go into the details of the dispute once again at this late stage. However, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its dismay over the British decision to hold military exercises in an area which is still tense and sensitive. Such actions, needless to say, are not in the interest of the peaceful resolution of disputes. It is in this context that my delegation joins with others in urging the Government of the United Kingdom to refrain from all such activities which increase tension in the region and to pursue the course of negotiations for a peaceful and lasting resolution of the differences between the two Governments over the future of the Malvinas.

In the view of my delegation such a course of action would not only be the most appropriate means to resolve disputes over the Malvinas but also to ensure that the South Atlantic does indeed become a zone of peace and co-operation, in line with the clearly articulated desire of the international community.

Count York von WARTENBURG (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to extend, on behalf of my delegation, a word of welcome to the Minister of Foreign Relations and Worship of Argentina, His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

My delegation deeply regrets that the question of the Falklands Islands (Malvinas) has for quite some time placed a burden on the relationship between the United Kingdom and the Argentine Republic, resulting now even in a debate in this forum. My country maintains close and friendly relations with both countries. One is our close partner in a mutual alliance and in joint efforts for the further development of the European Community; with the other, we enjoy historically matured and amicable ties, now as one democracy to another.

Since 1982 the Federal Government has on various occasions set forth its views on the question of the Falklands/Malvinas in the General Assembly, and our position is known to the countries concerned. It has not changed. We believe that specifically in this discussion in the Security Council no one should lose sight of the aim of a peaceful, even amicable, settlement of the question.

The immediate reason for this meeting is the ongoing military exercises held by the United Kingdom on the Falklands/Malvinas. The Federal Government has taken note of the concerns about an aggravation of tensions voiced by Argentina and other Latin American countries.

The Federal Government has taken note also of the statement contained in the communication from the British Government and repeated today by its Ambassador that the exercises - in any event necessary at certain intervals - are a consequence of the decision to reduce the British garrison on the islands, and that that decision ought to be regarded as a de-escalating step. The Argentine Government too has also endeavoured to show a sense of responsibility in its reactions to the exercise. Thus, the manifest efforts of both sides to prevent any escalation are an encouraging sign, and we welcome them.

It is with satisfaction that the Federal Government has taken note of the beginning of an indirect dialogue between the two parties. The Federal Government

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

encourages both sides to hold onto that process of confidence-building and to look actively for ways and means of carrying it on in good faith.

At the same time we should like to thank the United Nations Secretary-General and all others involved for their good services in this question and encourage them to continue their helpful support in the quest for a political solution to this question.

Mr. ZUZE (Zambia): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for calling upon me to contribute to the item before the Council. The Council is meeting to consider the apparent threat to the region posed by the United Kingdom's decision to hold military exercises in and around the area of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) from 7 to 31 March.

The views of my Government on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) are clear and have been expressed on almost all the occasions upon which the issue has been considered. Basically, we support General Assembly resolutions 41/40 and 42/19 which, inter alia, request the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom "to initiate negotiations with a view to finding the means to resolve peacefully and definitively the problems pending between both countries, including all aspects on the future of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" (General Assembly resolution 42/19).

That provides the most realistic and widely accepted basis for a peaceful and lasting settlement to this question.

We also support General Assembly resolution 42/16 of 10 November 1987. It is important to recall that the Governments of both Argentina and the United Kingdom voted in favour of that resolution which, inter alia, reaffirmed the solemn

(Mr. Zuze, Zambia)

declaration in resolution 41/11 regarding the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation. Operative paragraph 5 of that resolution

"Calls upon all States to refrain from any action inconsistent with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations and which may create or aggravate situations of tension and potential conflict in the region".

(Mr. Zuze, Zambia)

We have taken note of the assurances by the Government of the United Kingdom that the exercise, code-named Fire Focus, will involve the movement of no more than battalion strength and a small number of aircraft, with fewer than 1,000 men in all. We are also aware of, and fully recognize, the Charter principle that countries are entitled to hold military exercises.

However, my delegation is of the view that our consideration of this item should not be construed as an attempt to question the principle of the right of each country to conduct military exercises. The central issue here is that Exercise Fire Focus is being held around a disputed territory where the sovereignty question has yet to be resolved. The latest position of the United Nations on the question of the Falkland Islands is that contained in General Assembly resolution 42/19 - that the two parties should seek a negotiated settlement to their dispute over the territory. Zambia believes that applying the politics of conquest is as bad as, if not worse than, recourse to the politics of invasion.

Against this background, it is the considered view of my delegation that Exercise Fire Focus does not conform to the spirit of paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 42/16, to which I have already referred.

Our concern is not so much about the scale or the justification for the military exercises. Rather, it is about the very act of carrying out such exercises around a disputed area. For this act is in itself destabilizing and a source of tension and legitimate concern. This is something to which my delegation cannot subscribe, not only because it would set a very dangerous precedent, but because it is also incompatible with the spirit of the declaration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation.

(Mr. Zuze, Zambia)

It is for those reasons that my delegation appeals to the Government of the United Kingdom to reconsider its decision to proceed with the planned military exercises, whatever their purpose.

We also call upon both parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to proceed in earnest towards the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the reaffirmation by the Foreign Minister of Argentina of his Government's readiness to pursue the search for a peaceful solution to this question with an open agenda and without pre-conditions, as reflected in his statement to the Council and in the communiqué issued by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries yesterday.

In this spirit, my delegation further appeals to both parties to engage in negotiations aimed at a definitive and lasting solution to the question of the Falkland Islands, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. My delegation trusts that both parties will heed this appeal, not least because, as members of the Council, particularly the United Kingdom, which is a permanent member, they have a solemn responsibility to act in conformity with the Charter as well as to promote international peace and security.

Mr. BA (Senegal) (interpretation from French): I wish to place this brief statement in a threefold context - that of calm, openness and dialogue.

The question on our agenda directly concerns two countries with which Senegal enjoys fruitful relations of friendship and co-operation. Happily, the messages of Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, whose presence here I welcome, and of the permanent representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were marked by that spirit of openness and restraint that is indispensable to the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to negotiations on a question whose sensitivity we all appreciate.

(Mr. Ba, Senegal)

My delegation noted with satisfaction the positive and constructive elements in the statements made this morning by the representatives of the two countries directly concerned. We urge the two parties to continue their efforts to find, within the framework of the contacts they have already begun, a mutually acceptable solution in accordance with the appeals made in that regard by the General Assembly. The Government and people of my country hope to see the spirit and the dynamic process thus begun lead to a normalization of relations, with a return to those relations that the Governments and peoples of Argentina and Great Britain have always maintained in the past.

Mr. OKUN (United States): I have listened with interest to the statements by representatives, including the Foreign Minister of Argentina and the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, concerning the current situation in the South Atlantic. My Government shares the concerns expressed about the ongoing tensions in the region, which have their origin in the long-standing dispute between Great Britain and Argentina over the Falklands, or, as they are known in Spanish, the Malvinas Islands.

The efforts of my Government to assist in finding a fair and equitable solution to this difficult and complex problem are well known. The United States has joined with other Member States in the General Assembly to request that the parties to this dispute initiate

"negotiations with a view to finding the means to resolve peacefully and definitively the problems pending between both countries". (General Assembly resolution 42/19, para. 1)

Consistent with this, my Government has not taken a position on the question of sovereignty; rather, we have urged greater progress towards a mutually acceptable solution. Such progress would serve as an example to the community of

(Mr. Okun, United States)

nations of how democracies can, through patient diplomacy, resolve their differences without resorting to violence.

The United States regards as friends both parties to this serious and complex dispute. All the world is aware of the closeness of our relationship with the United Kingdom. We have welcomed and strongly supported the resurgence of a democratic and responsible Government in Argentina and its new, positive approach to peace. Our efforts to assist our fellow democracies are a matter of record. Our policy is based on support for peace and democracy. The United States has been active in urging that greater progress be made towards a mutually acceptable solution. We have sought to assist in laying the groundwork for effective communication. Our efforts are continuing.

Both parties have made efforts towards resolving the dispute and have achieved some progress. It is evident, however, that tensions persist in the area. My Government believes that a more stable basis of mutual trust needs to be created - one that will permit genuine movement towards reconciliation. While not underestimating the difficulties involved, we believe that the initiation of direct talks could contribute to that objective. It is my Government's hope that such discussions, characterized by a spirit of good faith, could lead to a serious exploration of confidence-building measures. This in turn could open the way for productive negotiations aimed at normalizing relations and addressing the underlying causes of this situation.

Mr. DING Yuanhong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): I wish first of all to welcome His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina.

The Chinese delegation has listened attentively to the statements made by the representatives of the countries concerned. The question of the Malvinas Islands is a legacy of history. Argentina's claim to the islands reflects the national aspirations of the Argentine people. The Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of American States have adopted resolutions on a number of occasions supporting Argentina's position that it has sovereignty over these islands. The Chinese delegation is of the view that Argentina's claim to the Malvinas Islands should be respected by the international community and hopes that the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly can be implemented at an early date.

While expressing our concern over the situation in the South Atlantic caused by the British military exercise in the Malvinas, we hope that Argentina and the United Kingdom will find a fair and reasonable solution to the question of the Malvinas Islands and other related questions through peaceful negotiations, and will refrain from taking any action that does not serve peace and stability in the region.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): I wish first of all, on behalf of my delegation, to welcome His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Government of the Argentine Republic.

My country has constantly joined in the international community's efforts since 1982 to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the dispute between two nations that are friends of France.

My delegation reaffirms the conviction it has expressed several times in the past that only negotiations, without prior conditions, can lead to a solution in

(Mr. Blanc, France)

keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which stipulates the peaceful settlement of disputes, international co-operation and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Without challenging the right of any State to conduct military exercises that do not contravene its international obligations, my delegation calls on both parties to facilitate the negotiations to which I have just referred and to show restraint in the present circumstances.

My delegation recalls too that French support for a negotiated settlement should not be interpreted as a stand by my country on the substance of this question.

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

Mr. ICAZA GALLARD (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, Sir, permit me to congratulate you sincerely on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Our two countries are indissolubly linked by brotherhood in defence of shared principles and purposes, and the ideals forged by the founding fathers of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The brotherhood and solidarity between our countries is supplemented by the friendship that unites our delegations. There has been clear evidence of your diplomatic talents and skills and your commitment to just causes in the debates over which you have presided this month; they will certainly come to the fore again in the Council's discussion of the problem before it today.

Allow me also to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Vernon Walters of the United States for the effective way in which he guided the work of the Council in February.

(Mr. Icaza Gallard, Nicaragua)

We have followed with great attention and deep concern the clear, important and eloquent statements made by His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic, yesterday afternoon before the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and this morning before the Security Council, with respect to the decision by the United Kingdom to carry out military exercises in the Malvinas Islands between 7 and 31 March 1988.

That decision by the British Government can only be called open provocation of the Argentine people and an insult to the Latin American family.

The international community can bear witness to Argentina's demonstration of good will to settle its disputes by peaceful means and in keeping with international law. We can bear witness also to Argentina's tireless appeals to the United Kingdom to sit down at the negotiating table and settle the dispute in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. But the constant position of the United Kingdom has been one of intransigence, inflexibility, arrogance and scorn for the appeals by Argentina and the international community, expressed through United Nations resolutions and through declarations by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In these circumstances we are participating in these meetings of the Security Council requested by our Argentine brothers, impelled by the most sincere Latin American spirit to state our full and unconditional support for the people and the Government of the Argentine Republic, which are facing today further colonialist aggression threatening their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Nicaragua, having itself suffered pillage and plunder by the English buccaneers who in past centuries plagued the American coast - and the victim today of aggression, threats and demonstrations of force by another permanent member of this Council - once again denounces this gunboat policy which is a clear reflection of disdain for our dignity and our rights.

(Mr. Icaza Gallard, Nicaragua)

That is why, when facing those who would attempt to make their military and economic might into the only viable measure of right, we must oppose them by using the force of law, the force of reason, the force of justice and the decisive weight of international solidarity in order to win respect for our sovereignty, our independence and our territorial integrity.

(Mr. Icaza Gallard, Nicaragua)

Nicaragua wishes to repeat here once again its opposition to the attempts to apply resolution 1514 (XV) to the problem of the Malvinas in a way irrelevant to its true purpose and spirit, interpreting it in arbitrary and manipulative ways. The Malvinas are a colonial enclave in foreign territory; therefore its inhabitants, subjects of the Crown, do not have the legitimate right to self-determination. It must be recalled that Latin Americans are forbidden access to the Islands.

It is also important to recall that the present military manoeuvres of the United Kingdom in the Malvinas are contrary to resolution 41/11 of the General Assembly which declares the South Atlantic to be a zone of peace and co-operation. Paradoxically, the United Kingdom voted in favour of that resolution, thus committing itself to respect its provisions, one of which

"Calls upon all States ..., in particular the militarily significant States, scrupulously to respect the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation, especially through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence there"

and other similar measures.

In conclusion, we wish to express our gratitude and support to Argentina for its constant willingness to seek a negotiated solution to the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, territories which belong to Argentina and which the United Kingdom has been illegally occupying by force for more than 150 years.

We also urge the United Kingdom to reciprocate the position and approach of the Argentine Government and, once and for all, to abandon its erroneous policy which not only harms the interests and rights of Argentina but is an unacceptable offense to all the peoples of Latin America.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nicaragua for the kind words he addressed to my country and to me personally.

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

Mr. RITTER (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, my delegation extends to you its sincerest congratulations and wishes to pay a public tribute to you for the competent manner in which you are conducting the proceedings in the Council. Your diplomatic skills have once again been displayed.

I should also like to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Vernon Walters of the United States, on the manner in which he conducted last month's proceedings and to welcome Mr. Dante Caputo, the Foreign Minister of Argentina, whose presence here enhances the Council's debate.

Panama's position on Argentina's rights in this sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas has been enunciated with consistent clarity and firmness. A mere re-reading of the many statements made by my delegation in various forums ever since the United Nations first dealt with the question nearly a quarter of a century ago makes it unmistakably clear that my country has steadily, sincerely and forcefully recognized the rights of the Republic of Argentina. Our support is an expression not of continental solidarity but of our devotion to the norms and principles that govern the conduct of nations in the present-day international community.

I shall not repeat the historical, legal, geographical and moral reasons why my Government views the return of the Malvinas to Argentine sovereignty as a priority cause for all of Latin America. As Mr. Caputo said yesterday, the issues of the Malvinas and of Panama's struggle to recover sovereignty over its entire territory, including the Panama Canal and its installations, require the unequivocal unity of all the peoples and governments of Latin America.

(Mr. Ritter, Panama)

Nor shall I enumerate all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Committee on Decolonization on the question of the Malvinas ever since 1965, when this matter was first brought to the Organization. I would emphasize, however, that those resolutions clearly and categorically reflect the conviction of the overwhelming majority of the international community that, in the present dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina over the islands, peaceful negotiations should be the means of bringing about a settlement of all the differences and problems affecting relations between the two countries. That, however, requires promotion of a climate of mutual confidence and co-operation. Hence, the situation before us today is a source of alarm, disappointment and serious concern for all of Latin America.

Once again, the situation in the South Atlantic has become a serious threat to international peace and security, a threat which requires prompt and effective action by the international community as represented by the Security Council. These serious events were eloquently described with moderation and calm by the Foreign Minister of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, who spoke with the kind of vigour possessed only by someone who has right and justice on his side. This is further proof of the unswerving determination of the Government and people of Argentina to do its utmost to continue to search for a negotiated settlement to this long dispute in keeping with the means made available to all Member States by the Charter.

This positive, conciliatory attitude contrasts with the regrettable decision adopted by the Government of the United Kingdom, one that can only be interpreted as an expression of a distorted view of today's world and of the persistent belief that the threat and use of force continue to be a viable means of conducting relations among States.

(Mr. Ritter, Panama)

My delegation has no doubt whatsoever that the military exercises being carried out at the present time by the British Government in the South Atlantic, put into effect in open defiance of the appeals of the General Assembly on the question of the Malvinas Islands, far from contributing to the goal of strengthening the security of these Islands, only sharpen existing tensions in the region and poison the atmosphere for dialogue which we have worked so hard to create over the past few years.

These military exercises are also in violation of the commitments assumed by the British Government when it supported unreservedly General Assembly resolution 41/11, which declared the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation.

But above and beyond the legal or formalistic aspects of the British action, my delegation notes with growing concern the renewed bellicosity towards Latin America on the part of those Powers which, because of their power and their influence on the present international political structure, have special responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The permanent members of the Security Council more than anyone else have an obligation to dispel the doubts that exist today regarding the effectiveness of institutions and procedures established by the community of nations to deal with threats to the peace and international security.

(Mr. Ritter, Panama)

The Council must therefore act without delay, in keeping with Chapter VI of the Charter on the pacific settlement of disputes, stating unequivocally that commitments assumed, especially by the permanent members of the Council, must be honoured as the only way of guaranteeing the survival of the contemporary international structure.

That is why my delegation wishes to re-emphasize its determined support for the consistent and mature position taken by the sister Argentine Republic. We hope that common sense, wisdom and a spirit of dialogue and negotiation will prevail over intransigence and lead to the settlement of this dispute by peaceful means, in keeping with the unanimous call of the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Panama for the kind words he addressed to me.

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

Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana): Mr. President, the Council has decided in its wisdom to convene today in order to consider recent developments related to the Falklands (Malvinas) issue. Under your expert and effective guidance, our deliberations will serve, I am sure, to analyse the current situation and to encourage the search for a peaceful solution to the dispute which divides Argentina and the United Kingdom. The reasonable and dispassionate approach which has been brought to the question at hand can only lead to a greater understanding of its scope and, therefore, to a better appreciation of what needs to be done to restore peace and harmony to the relations between two respected members of the United Nations family. My delegation is therefore grateful for the opportunity the Council has provided it to participate in this commendable exercise of peace-making and reconciliation.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

I also wish here to say a word of welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, who has come to honour us with his presence here today.

The positions of the parties - and, indeed, our own - on this issue are well known and no further exposition of their cases is likely to shed any new light on the fundamental differences which continue to separate them. We ourselves would therefore prefer not to dwell on the contentious details but rather to highlight the need for a positive response by both sides to the call for peaceful negotiations the United Nations has repeatedly issued on each occasion that it was required to review the problem. Admittedly, such negotiations have proved difficult and elusive. Nevertheless, they represent the only hope for a breakthrough in the current impasse and must accordingly be pursued with full vigour and determination. The Charter to which we the Member States, including Argentina and the United Kingdom, have subscribed enjoins us in Article 2, paragraph 3, to settle our

"international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered."

Therefore, whatever may be the impediments to negotiation between Argentina and the United Kingdom, it is their obligation to continue the search for agreement by peaceful methods. The failure of previous efforts such as the Berne talks should not discourage the undertaking of new initiatives. The several resolutions the General Assembly has adopted since the initial confrontation in 1982 provide, in our view, a continuing framework in which an amicable exchange of views may be conducted. Moreover the Secretary-General stands ready, despite the frustrations of his past efforts, to assist the parties in engaging in the kind of dialogue envisaged by the Assembly. There can therefore be no excuse for further delaying the process of direct negotiation.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

As a failed philologist in a previous incarnation, I myself have always been struck by the root meaning of the word "negotiation". It comes, as any reputable dictionary will tell us, from the Latin neg-otium, that is, no idling; in other words "busy-ness" - which has given us the English word "business". The Romance languages, like French and Spanish, have been more faithful to the Latin origin and now have the words "negoces" and "negocios", both meaning business. This observation leads not to an abstruse linguistic lesson but to the thought that perhaps business - through economic and social relations - might prosper the diplomatic negotiations expected of Argentina and the United Kingdom. An increased emphasis on such intercourse will in all probability improve the political climate between the two countries and usher in a new season of friendship and goodwill. We would therefore appeal to them to idle no more and to get on with the business of negotiation.

It is unfortunate that some events in the past have created what has been described by one of the parties as "a legacy of distrust" in Anglo-Argentine relations. Quite understandably, emotions run wild at the recollection of painful memories and refuse to listen to reason. This is tragic since distrust, if left to fester, will breed further alienation and hostility. There must therefore come the moment of realization that it is not in the interest of either party to allow their relations to deteriorate to a point where dialogue becomes unthinkable. Surely the moment has arrived for new opportunities to be grasped in search of a just and lasting solution to the Falklands (Malvinas) issue.

A reason for optimism about a fresh beginning is the note by the Secretary-General in his report to the forty-second session of the General Assembly that

"... both parties have in the past year shown commendable restraint and a clear willingness to reduce areas of tension ...". (A/42/732, p. 2)

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

It may well be that they can now be prompted by this Council to display even greater political courage and advance to the point where they can resume negotiations without prejudice to their fundamental positions. This is not as fond an expectation as might appear at first blush, since there is a well-established tradition of friendship and co-operation between the two countries which antedates their dispute and offers a possible basis for a new and constructive relationship. A study of recent statements made by each party reveals in fact that, while there is an attitudinal rigidity in some matters, there is nevertheless a mutual yearning for improved relations. From time to time, both sides have reiterated, quietly, their assurances of good faith and indicated their readiness to co-operate wherever possible. My delegation would therefore urge them to explore fully the lines of amity which may exist and to emphasize those points of convergence rather than of divergence.

Such an approach is not only expedient but also imperative now, since the locus of the dispute, namely, the South Atlantic, has assumed major importance in both geo-political and economic terms. In recognition of that fact, the General Assembly has declared the South Atlantic a "zone of peace and co-operation" and called for full respect of its status. To their mutual credit, both Argentina and the United Kingdom have confirmed their willingness, through unequivocal support of the relevant resolutions, to abide by the aims of the declaration which are primarily to promote regional co-operation and to preserve international peace and security. Regrettably, however, the dispute over the Falklands (Malvinas) and other acts have generated considerable tension in the hemisphere and has become a source of concern to the States situated therein. We would therefore ask that nothing be done now which would jeopardize the stability of the region and expose it to possible conflict in the future.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

We have dared to intervene on this sensitive issue and to address the parties frankly and directly because of the excellent relations we have with both of them. In the case of the United Kingdom, our association is long-standing and is fostered today by our common membership of the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other important international institutions. Argentina, similarly, is a sister State within the Non-Aligned Movement and a number of regional institutions. Both countries should therefore understand the motive of our intervention, which is nothing more than a desire to see two good friends reconciled to the conduct of normal relations. The views we now express are therefore merely intended to impel them in that direction.

Finally, the Council, untrammelled on this occasion by some of its customary procedures, such as the formulation and adoption of resolutions, has, we think, provided an atmosphere in which the Falklands (Malvinas) issue can be discussed with relative moderation. The interventions of the principal parties thus far have happily avoided any unnecessary recrimination and appear to open the door to future negotiation. Their many friends who have spoken today would sincerely wish to encourage the resumption of dialogue so that they might be quickly enabled to put their differences behind them and renew their historical ties of friendship. My own delegation would be delighted to receive a positive response to its plea and urges both Argentina and the United Kingdom to be sensitive to the concern this Council has shown for their future relations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Guyana for his kind words addressed to me.

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

Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the delegation of Bolivia, I should like to express our most sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to express our best wishes for the success of your delicate tasks. We are sure that success is indeed already ensured, thanks to your innate tact and vast experience. I should also like to express my delegation's gratitude to Ambassador Vernon Walters, Permanent Representative of the United States, for the skilful and courteous manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Council during the month of February. Similarly, I wish to welcome and to offer my best wishes to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, whose presence here does honour these meetings.

I wish to thank the members for allowing my delegation to participate in these meetings of the Security Council, convened at the request of the Government of the Republic of Argentina, to deal with the question of the military manoeuvres being held by the United Kingdom in the Malvinas Islands, a matter which is also a cause of deep concern to the Government of Bolivia, since that military action violates the sovereignty rights of the Argentine Republic over the archipelago of the Malvinas, rights which are fully recognized by Bolivia. At the same time, my country feels that this action is a provocation which endangers the peace and security of the continent precisely in a region which the United Nations General Assembly has declared a zone of peace and co-operation. In this regard, and on instructions of my Government, I shall read out a communiqué issued by the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Bolivia on the question under consideration in this Council. It reads as follows:

"With regard to the holding of military manoeuvres by Great Britain in the zone of the archipelago of the Malvinas, the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Bolivia expresses its deep concern and deplores this action, which

(Mr. Navajas Mogro, Bolivia)

endangers the peace and tranquillity of the continent. It expresses full solidarity with the Republic of Argentina in its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands.

"The Ministry of Foreign Relations, in ratifying its support for the initiatives of the Argentine Republic at the United Nations in order to put an end to these military manoeuvres, expresses its most sincere desire that a frank dialogue will immediately begin between the two nations and that agreements will be reached guaranteeing a climate of genuine peace and understanding in this region of the South Atlantic."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Bolivia for his kind words addressed to me.

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

Mr. CASTELLANOS CARRILLO (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish):

Since this is the first time that the delegation of Guatemala has participated this month in the debates in the Security Council, I should like to congratulate you, Ambassador Pejic, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Your demonstrated abilities are a guarantee that the Council will achieve positive results under your leadership. At the same time, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Vernon Walters, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, for the skilful manner in which he guided the Council's work last month.

The delegation of Guatemala has listened with great attention to the important statement made here by Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic, in which he apprised the Security Council of facts and positions which, far from contributing to reducing hotbeds of tension and

(Mr. Castellanos Carrillo,
Guatemala)

strengthening ties of co-operation for economic and social development, could endanger international peace and security, particularly in the South Atlantic region.

The United Nations has adopted several resolutions on that region aimed at strengthening the ties of friendship, peace and co-operation which should prevail among the peoples of the world, in keeping with the principles and purposes contained in the Charter.

(Mr. Castellanos Carrillo, Guatemala)

It should be recalled that at its forty-first session the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/11, entitled "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic". In that resolution it solemnly declared the Atlantic Ocean, in the region situated between Africa and South America, a "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic". It also called upon all States of the zone to promote further regional co-operation for social and economic development, the protection of the environment, the conservation of living resources and the peace and security of the whole region. Furthermore, it called upon the States of all other regions, in particular the militarily significant States, scrupulously to respect that region, through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence and the non-introduction of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. In the resolution, States were also called upon to co-operate in the elimination of all sources of tension in the zone and to respect the national unity, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all the States of the region.

During its recent sessions, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions on this item. In particular, at its last session - the forty-second - the Assembly adopted resolution 42/19, in which it reiterated its request to the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to initiate negotiations with a view to finding the means to resolve peacefully and definitively the problems pending between both countries, including all aspects on the future of the Malvinas Islands, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his renewed mission of good offices in order to assist the parties in complying with the request.

Today the Security Council is meeting at the request of an interested party, which has used legitimate arguments to make the international community aware of its concern at the announcement by a permanent member of the Security Council, the

(Mr. Castellanos Carrillo, Guatemala)

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, that it would hold military exercises in the Malvinas Islands between 7 and 31 March this year.

The decision to carry out military manoeuvres in the Malvinas Islands has been condemned in many forums. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the countries members of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action have expressed their deep concern at and denounced the grave consequences of this decision - particularly the escalation of tension in the region - which violates and contravenes the General Assembly's solemn declaration of the region as a zone of peace and co-operation.

On 1 March this year the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States adopted resolution CP/Res.494/730/88, the very title of which clearly indicates the "deep concern over the decision by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to undertake military exercises in the Malvinas Islands and the hope that that decision will be reconsidered".

Guatemala urges that the decision to carry out military manoeuvres should be not only reconsidered but definitively cancelled, as a demonstration by a military Power of its faith in and adherence to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

Guatemala repeats its appeal to the parties to comply with the United Nations Charter and the various relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and to initiate negotiations with a view to finding the means to resolve peacefully and definitively the pending problems, including the future of the Malvinas Islands.

Guatemala wishes to express in this forum its total and absolute solidarity with the Argentine Republic on the question of the Malvinas Islands.

As the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly itself have recognized, the principle of territorial integrity has primacy over the principle

(Mr. Castellanos Carrillo, Guatemala)

of self-determination in those cases where colonial occupation has affected the territorial sovereignty of independent countries. It should be pointed out that, in similar circumstances, Guatemala lost part of its territory, and it too has claimed its legitimate rights in this respect.

There can be no doubt that Argentina has historical and legal rights to claim its sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands. Therefore, it is imperative that these territories be restored to it, through negotiations which will bring about a peaceful and definitive solution.

For those reasons, Guatemala supports the Secretary-General's good-offices mission designed to create propitious conditions and a climate of confidence that will make possible a just and appropriate solution to the problem.

Guatemala feels that the present international climate is conducive to finding peaceful, negotiated solutions to various types of conflicts. To that end, States must demonstrate the genuine, necessary political will. We appeal to the parties to this conflict to show a sense of responsibility by complying with the resolutions on the matter adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly and refraining from any act that could increase tensions and endanger international stability, peace and security.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Guatemala for his kind words addressed to me.

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

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): Mr. President, may I join those who have spoken before me in expressing great satisfaction at seeing you in the Chair. The traditional close relationship that exists between our two countries and the fact that you yourself are no stranger to us both in Delhi and in New York add to our happiness. In the long period that we have known you we have come to admire the qualities of your mind and heart and your diplomatic skill.

I should like to take this opportunity also to express our appreciation to Ambassador Walters as well as Ambassador Okun of the United States for the exemplary manner in which they conducted the deliberations of the Security Council in the month of February.

The Security Council meets today at the request of the Government of Argentina to consider the situation in the South Atlantic following a decision of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to conduct military exercises in the Malvinas Islands from 7 to 31 March 1988.

May I here express my delegation's appreciation at the presence of the Foreign Minister of Argentina.

The position of my Government on the problems related to the Malvinas is well known. It has been stated on many occasions in the General Assembly and is reflected, along with the views of other non-aligned countries, in the documents of the Non-Aligned Movement. We believe that these problems can and should be solved politically, through amicable bilateral negotiations. We regret that negotiations, as envisaged in the General Assembly resolutions on the subject, have not yet begun. We have been encouraged, nevertheless, by the increasing indirect contacts which we understand have taken place between the two countries on various matters. We therefore feel that any unilateral action, such as the one the Council is

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

discussing today, will diminish the possibility of dialogue and will not contribute to the peaceful solution of the problem. A situation in which both parties can look forward to the resumption of their traditionally close ties must be restored and fostered. We hope that such a situation will come about at the earliest.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his very kind words addressed to my country and to me personally.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Yugoslavia.

First of all, I should like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Relations and Worship of non-aligned Argentina and express my happiness at seeing in the Council Mr. Dante Caputo defending his country's cause before us.

The dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina, two countries with which Yugoslavia maintains close and friendly relations, over the Falkland/Malvinas or Malvinas/Falkland Islands has attracted the attention of the international community for some time. The fact that that question has been raised in the Security Council yet again shows that disagreements between the two countries have not been overcome, despite some earlier encouraging indications of their readiness to embark upon a dialogue and negotiations. There is also no doubt that significant differences that continue to exist between the two sides postpone a political solution of this problem, which has burdened relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom as well as the situation in the South Atlantic.

Ever since the outbreak of the conflict Yugoslavia has been in favour of having the two countries resolve the outstanding disputes and disagreements by political means and through strengthening mutual confidence. In this context we have rendered full support to dialogue and negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom with the aim of creating favourable political conditions for a comprehensive and lasting solution of the problem in the spirit and on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, which Yugoslavia supports.

(The President)

We have proceeded from the conviction that a solution to this dispute is not only of importance to the two countries but also in the overall interest of the maintenance of stability and security in the region of the South Atlantic that was declared a zone of peace and co-operation by a General Assembly resolution, for the adoption of which both Argentina and the United Kingdom voted.

We sincerely hope that in the situation created by the decision of the British Government to hold manoeuvres in the disputed area, which has, logically and understandably, caused serious concern in Argentina and the Latin American region as a whole and led to the convening of these meetings, maximum restraint will be demonstrated and that any action that could lead to increased tension in the region of the South Atlantic will be avoided, since it would further complicate and jeopardize the prospects for the normalization of mutual relations and for the solution of the conflict.

We expect that the debate now being held in the Security Council will serve primarily as a constructive stimulus to the two parties to address themselves even more resolutely, and through the good offices of the Secretary-General, to the creation of a favourable atmosphere in their relations that would open new avenues for substantive negotiations for the solution of this dispute, on the basis of United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

It is encouraging, however, that the two sides have displayed readiness in this debate to improve their relations. Yugoslavia fully supports such orientation and calls for a political solution of the dispute. The success of these efforts would not only enable the removal of an important source of mistrust and dispute between the two countries but would certainly positively affect the overall situation in that part of the world.

I now resume my function as President of the Security Council.

(The President)

The representative of the United States of America has asked to make a statement, and I now call upon him.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): Although most delegations have limited themselves to addressing the matter at hand, the representatives of Mexico and others have presented distorted and inaccurate interpretations of events which are not on our agenda and which add nothing of relevance to our debate. I believe it is necessary, therefore, to clarify the American position on the latest developments in Central America, particularly the Nicaraguan incursion into Honduras.

In light of this significant cross-border incursion by the Sandinista armed forces, and at the request of the Government of Honduras, the President of the United States has ordered the immediate deployment of an infantry brigade task force to Palmerola Air Base in Honduras for an emergency deployment-readiness exercise. This exercise is designed to show our staunch support for the Government of Honduras at a time when its territorial integrity is being violated by the Nicaraguan army. The brigade task force will not be deployed to any area of ongoing hostilities.

There are certain other aspects of the current debate which have also troubled us. The United States believes that in principle the Security Council is not the most appropriate forum for a discussion of military exercises per se.

The PRESIDENT: I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, who has asked to make a statement.

Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): The Council is concluding its present debate, and this is therefore an appropriate moment to clarify certain matters and provide some balance. We have heard 30 statements today, and they have of course given us a complete panoramic overview of the

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

thinking of the international community with respect to the subject that has brought us together here.

Before drawing up a balance sheet, however, it is always good to make some things very clear in order to avoid any confusion in such a delicate subject. We have heard the representative of Great Britain state that his country's choice was either to increase a permanent garrison in the islands or to opt for the course of manoeuvres as a way to avoid having a large permanent presence there. That option - either a number of permanently based soldiers or a rapidly available group - is a correct one if one wants to have soldiers there and if one thinks that the best way of facing the future and of solving the problem is to impose military occupation and force.

The options would be improved if, in addition to the choice between a permanent garrison and rapid deployment we considered what all members of the Council wish, namely, the alternative of negotiation. Hence the option of war is not ironclad. It is ironclad only if there is no desire to negotiate, only if one wants to use force. If, however, one wants to negotiate, if one truly wants to solve the dispute through diplomacy, that option does exist, though not in the terms set forth by the United Kingdom representative.

I wish now to refer to the scope or scale of the manoeuvres in question.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

Mr. Stewart, the Defence Minister who announced the decision of the Ministry of Defence to the House of Commons on 11 February, said, first, that the exercise would involve a significant number of troops and a significant deployment of matériel, and, secondly, that it would be a large-scale operation. However, today the representative of the United Kingdom told us that the manoeuvres involved only a small group of men and a small amount of matériel. For the tranquillity of the international community, it would be good for the United Kingdom to be consistent in its own statements and tell us whether the manoeuvres are large-scale or small-scale. I must heed the statements from London - hence the concern of my Government and the countries of the region.

I shall refer only briefly to some other matters that need to be clarified. For example, self-determination is spoken of as a necessary pre-condition for negotiations. We have always offered to negotiate without pre-conditions. The subject of self-determination was raised in the General Assembly at the fortieth session when the subject of the Malvinas was dealt with. When the vote was taken on what became resolution 40/21, the United Kingdom proposed two amendments to make the text refer explicitly and specifically to the problem of self-determination. By a large majority the General Assembly rejected that proposed amendment by the United Kingdom, because the basic idea is to negotiate without pre-conditions, to negotiate without prejudging the British or Argentine position. I want to emphasize that concept and make it clear to the whole Council.

The United Kingdom Government speaks about more normal relations, and insists on a step-by-step approach. Of course. There are no magic solutions. There are no immediate ones. We all want more normal relations and we all want gradual progress - but moving forward step-by-step, not backwards. The step-by-step

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

approach means the policy of occupation by force, step by step; manoeuvres, step by step. What is normal is then manoeuvres. It is not logical to maintain that policy and at the same time do what is being done in the South Atlantic.

Let us leave on one side the consistency of the manoeuvres with paragraphs 3 and 4 of the General Assembly resolution on the South Atlantic (41/11). Anyone who reads them can judge for himself whether the manoeuvres are consistent with the declaration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation.

I have a few observations in conclusion. All of this shows that the central problem, the problem separating the two countries, the problem at the origin of the dispute, at the heart of the difference, cannot be ignored. How can we try to come closer together on the other questions if we ignore - do not say "resolve" but "ignore" - the main question? Paradoxically, the British decision to hold the manoeuvres results in demonstrating the validity of the Argentine thesis. What is happening today is happening because the central problem is not being dealt with. That is why we are meeting and are concerned.

In the final analysis, it is not that we are not negotiating because there is tension; there is tension because we are not negotiating. That reminds me of a famous British writer, Chesterton, who asked whether the wind moved the trees or the trees moved the wind. The truth is that there is tension because we are not negotiating; there are manoeuvres because we are not negotiating; and there is concern because we are not negotiating. That is the origin of the whole question, as expressed definitively by the representatives who have given their views in the Council this morning and this afternoon.

Are the manoeuvres being carried out because of the possibility of an attack? An attack by whom? By the democratic Government of the Argentine Republic? We have said, and I repeat here in the Security Council, that the Argentine Republic

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

conceives only of the use of negotiations and diplomatic instruments to resolve the conflict. Argentina is working for peace.

A few months after the democratic Government took over in my country we resolved our 100-year-old dispute with Chile. All our international initiatives have proved our devotion to peace, negotiation and diplomacy. Does the United Kingdom desire democracy as a condition for beginning negotiations? Does it want a clause stipulating Argentine democracy for the negotiations? If so, democratic Argentina is ready to support such an idea. Let us negotiate between democracies, because history has no record of war between democracies.

I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for referring to the national dance of my country and my city - the tango. Of course, it takes two to tango. And it takes two to negotiate. As I understand it, the representative of the United Kingdom does not want to tango with Argentina, and I am concerned that the United Kingdom does not want to negotiate the problem with us. But to be alone is not a good counsellor. Today we have noted in this Chamber that of the 30 Members of the United Nations that have spoken - four of them permanent members of the Security Council and the others non-permanent members and representatives from other friendly countries that have asked to speak - not one has supported the manoeuvres. Certainly there have been differences of nuance; that is natural. There are countries that are very close to the United Kingdom and others that are not so close. But there was not one statement in support of the manoeuvres. Nobody supported British sovereignty over the islands. Everyone asked for negotiations. Everyone supported the decisions of the General Assembly. Nobody justified the manoeuvres. Everyone wants a diplomatic solution, one that is reasonable and possible, not magic, one that is sensible and mature, to be reached by the United Kingdom and Argentina.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): I have listened with great interest to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina and to the other speakers in the debate. I thank those who spoke with good sense and moderation.

I am bound to say that some speakers have strayed somewhat from the item on our agenda, which as the Foreign Minister reminded us at the beginning of the debate, is "the situation created in the South Atlantic by the British Government's decision to conduct military manoeuvres in the Falkland Islands from 7 to 31 March 1988". Perhaps I might say a brief word about that, because that is why we are here.

The purpose and the facts of the British reinforcement exercise are straightforward. Its purpose is to practise our ability to reinforce the reduced garrison on the islands, which we wish to keep to an absolute minimum.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

Whether it is large or small is in the eye of the beholder. I leave it to the Council to judge whether less than 1,000 men and a few aircraft is large or small.

The British Government has no desire to increase tension in the South Atlantic nor to disrupt the current indirect exchanges taking place with Argentina on fisheries; nor is the exercise in any way inconsistent with the Brazilian proposal for a zone of peace in the South Atlantic nor with our firm support for it. There is nothing in that proposal which affects the right - indeed the duty - of all States to take steps to safeguard the security of their citizens.

Several speakers have suggested that the stand my Government has taken over the future of the islands is somehow inconsistent with the Charter or with the United Kingdom's status as a permanent member of this Council. It should be clear from what I have said that our actions are indeed a product of our respect for our obligations under the Charter and our responsibilities as a permanent member in the South Atlantic as in all other parts of the world. The exercise now in progress, which is the subject of this debate, is entirely consistent with the Charter; nothing is clearer than our commitment, shared somewhat selectively by most Members of the United Nations, to the principle of self-determination.

In his statement the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship referred to the 1977 agreement between Argentina and the United Kingdom to hold negotiations on the future of the islands. He asked why the British Government was not now prepared to enter into the negotiations called for in recent General Assembly resolutions when we were prepared to hold discussions with the then undemocratic Government of Argentina. I gave him the answer then, but I should like, if I may, to repeat it.

I have to tell him that the tragic events of 1982 changed everything. The Argentine invasion put an end to the negotiations into which we had entered in good

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

faith. It breached the assurances Argentina had previously given that the security, institutions and way of life of the Falkland Islands would be safeguarded. For the islanders, the invasion was a traumatic experience. It fundamentally altered the way they thought - and the way they continue to think - about Argentina. I discovered this for myself when I visited the islands last year and had the opportunity to talk to a great many of the islanders. It made them understandably suspicious of protestations of good will.

I said this morning that the British Government was determined to fulfil its obligations to the people of the Falklands and to uphold their right to choose by whom they wished to be governed. I also said that Argentina's call for negotiations was a thinly disguised demand for a transfer of sovereignty. The Argentine Government has made clear time and again that in its view such negotiations can have only one outcome: the annexation of the islands by Argentina. This insistence on prejudging the issue is painfully evident in the communiqué issued by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement yesterday. In that communiqué the Bureau reaffirmed its support

"of Argentina's right to have its sovereignty over the islands restored through negotiations."

Do I have to repeat why protestations that the results of the negotiations would not be prejudged have to be taken not with a pinch but with a handful of salt.

I hope I have given a clear answer to the question the Minister put to me this morning.

As I think we share a common wish to improve relations between our two countries, I wonder if I might put some questions to him on which he might like to reflect after this debate.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

In September 1982, even before President Alfonsín came to power, we agreed with Argentina on the abolition of the financial restrictions that both sides had introduced at the time of the conflict. We have honoured our part of the agreement, but the Argentine authorities have implemented it only partially and still maintain discriminatory restrictions on British companies in Argentina. Why is this so?

Next, in 1983, we proposed the resumption of air links between Britain and Argentina. So far there has been no response. When can we expect one?

Then, in early 1985, the British Government suggested privately to Argentina the reciprocal lifting of trade restrictions. It also repeated its willingness to accept a bona fide visit from the families to the graves of those Argentines who died and are buried in the Falklands. I myself took the trouble to visit the cemeteries of both the Argentine and the British dead. It was a sad experience. We have so far received no reply to our suggestions.

Next, in July 1985, Britain unilaterally lifted its restrictions on imports from Argentina. May we expect a reciprocal gesture?

And, last, Britain imposes no restrictions on Argentine ships calling on British ports or on the overflying of British airspace by Argentine aircraft. But Argentina continues to ban British aircraft from its airspace and airports and British ships from its seas and ports. Again, I hope that the Argentine Government will reconsider these and other one-sided measures.

I must confess to doubts about the value of this debate. But good would come out of it if it could lead to the development of that more normal relationship - that tango to which the Minister and I are both attached - between our two Governments and peoples, which, I believe and hope, is our common aim.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, who has asked to speak.

Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Yes, Argentina claims sovereignty and we say that the Malvinas are Argentine. I imagine that the United Kingdom does the same and says that the Malvinas are British. Well, that is the dispute. I do not see why the representative of the United Kingdom should be surprised to hear that Argentina is saying that the Malvinas Islands are Argentine; that is the dispute to be settled. If Argentina had not made any claim, there would be no dispute and there would be no request for negotiations. But as there are claims on both sides, diplomatic negotiations are necessary. Hence it should be borne clearly in mind that the fact that Argentina is claiming sovereignty and that the United Kingdom is claiming sovereignty is precisely the dispute, the problem we must resolve by diplomatic means of negotiations, and no one can logically maintain that because there is a dispute that dispute cannot be resolved - unless logic no longer prevails.

The representative of the United Kingdom has referred to a series of actions that have been taken, saying that diplomacy in his country has taken a practical approach to the problem of the islands. To me the practical approach to the problem of the islands would be to resolve its most important practical aspect, which is the central problem from which all the specific problems derive: the origin of the dispute, the future of the islands. If we do not discuss that aspect, which is eminently practical and not theoretical, then we cannot be sure of the entire edifice that might be built in connection with all the other issues. Everything else would be fragile were we not to set in motion the machinery to resolve what is central and paramount.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

But, strictly speaking, I have asked for the floor to speak not on these subjects but on what the United Kingdom said about 1982. We are a democratic government. We have suffered a great deal. The misfortunes of authoritarian governments in Argentina have caused great hardship and my compatriots have in many cases been tortured.

Let us be generous towards our own history and towards the history of other countries. I did not come to the Council to speak about the history of colonialism; I did not think it appropriate. Nor would it be useful to refer to what would not help us in the future; 1982 is past. References to it will not help bring about a resolution to the future of the Malvinas Islands. Let us be generous towards our peoples and toward the peoples of other countries.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): I think we are all grateful to the distinguished Minister for what he has said. I do not think that arguments or indeed negotiations about sovereignty in the circumstances he has described would be fruitful for the very reason that he has given himself.

But I would like to make perfectly clear what I said in my initial remarks this morning: that we have the greatest respect for the changes which have taken place in Argentina and for the democratic government of President Alfonsín and his colleagues. We greatly welcome that and I should like that to be very clearly understood.

All I would like to add as a final word is that it is true that people suffered under that régime in Argentina to which you referred, Mr. Minister. But sometimes we forget that the Falkland Islanders suffered too. When I went there myself and met these very ordinary people in their small homes scattered over those

(Sir Crispin Tickell,
United Kingdom)

many Islands that I heard things which shocked me in the same way that I am sure that the present Government of Argentina has heard things which shocked those who had to endure military rule. These things cannot be forgotten too quickly or overnight because they relate to the hearts and minds of ordinary people. That really is the root of the dispute, and I would just like to say that we sympathize with what he has said, but please remember that the Falkland Islanders suffered as well and that we have to allow for the healing effects of time.

The PRESIDENT: There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of discussion on the item before it. Before adjourning the meeting I would remind the members of the Council that immediately after this meeting we shall be holding informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.