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

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 15 April 1988, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. ZUZE

(Zambia)

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
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. DELPECH
Mr. ALENCAR
Mr. YU Mengjia
Mr. BLANC
Count YORK von WARTENBURG
Mr. BUCCI
Mr. KAGAMI
Mr. RANA
Mr. BA
Mr. BELONOGOV
Mr. BIRCH
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

LETTER DATED 29 MARCH 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19700)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at previous meetings on this item, I invite the representatives of India, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber. I invite the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gharekhan (India), Mr. Joffe (Israel), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Treiki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic) and Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Bangladesh in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 14 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to H.E. Mr. Engin A. Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in the occupied Arab territories'."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/19773. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to Mr. Ansay under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 14 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Ambassador Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in the occupied Arab territories'."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/19776. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to Mr. Maksoud under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

(The President)

The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda. Members of the Council have before them document S/19780, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Argentina, Nepal, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/19779, which contains the text of a letter dated 14 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of France.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): On behalf of my delegation and on my own personal behalf, I should like to express to you, Sir, my congratulations on Zambia's accession to the presidency of the Council for the month of April. I should also like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, for the way in which he conducted the presidency during the month of March.

France continues to be deeply concerned by the tension which has been prevailing for more than four months now in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza and which, with the passage of time, has entailed further loss of human life.

Since the clashes began the French Government has constantly spoken out against these acts of violence and repression which can only increase mistrust and bitterness and thus further delay efforts to bring about peace. This is why the French Government has frequently had occasion to warn the Israeli authorities and ask them to abide by the obligations incumbent upon them under international law. Quite recently it expressed its regret at steps to isolate the occupied Arab territories - steps taken by Israel scarcely on the eve of "Land Day" - and at the Israeli decision to close down the Palestinian Press Agency, a decision which

(Mr. Blanc, France)

infringes upon freedom of information. As on 14 January, we have once again condemned the deportation of eight native-born inhabitants of the occupied territories.

The French Government believes that such decisions - apart from being prohibited, whatever their reason, by the provisions of international law relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war - are likely to perpetuate the current state of tension in the occupied territories.

The continuation of this violence demonstrates that the present state of affairs must not go on any longer. All efforts should therefore be mobilized to ensure that dialogue and negotiation finally prevail on the basis of mutual recognition. But it is urgent that negotiations be started in order to bring about an overall political settlement that will ensure the safety of all States in the region and justice for their peoples. France remains convinced that convening an international conference with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties directly concerned is the most realistic way to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The French Government, for its part, is resolved to make an active contribution to finding such a solution.

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

Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): First, permit me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the functions of President of the Security Council for the month of April. Your diplomatic skills and proven experience assure us of the efficient and professional conduct of our deliberations. Our personal friendship and the excellent relations between our countries, both of which are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, are a source of special satisfaction for my delegation.

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

I take this occasion also to congratulate my dear friend the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Pejlic, for the skill and efficiency with which he presided over the Council during the very busy month of March.

Before referring specifically to the critical question under consideration by the Council, I should like to state here my delegation's appreciation of the efforts of the Committee of Seven in implementation of its mandate to follow closely the situation in the occupied Arab territories. We are grateful for the valuable information provided to the Council at the meeting of 30 March last by its Chairman, Mr. Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, and several of its members, such as the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the Saudi Arabian Minister of State, Mr. Muhammad Masoud, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Yesterday marked three months since the adoption of resolution 608 (1988), which was adopted a few days after the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 607 (1988).

Today, as yesterday, this body feels compelled to express its views on the latest events occurring in the Palestinian territories and other occupied Arab territories which can only further heighten tensions in an already critical region.

In resolution 608 (1988), the Security Council not only called upon Israel "to rescind the order to deport Palestinian civilians and to ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied Palestinian territories of those already deported;"

but further requested

"that Israel desist forthwith from deporting any other Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories".

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

Not only were those injunctions of the Council not observed but, in actual fact, the deportations continued, in defiance of the organ upon which the United Nations Charter has conferred the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War unequivocally sets forth a specific prohibition of the deportation of civilians from occupied territories.

For these reasons, my delegation feels duty-bound to take part in this debate in order once again to express my Government's serious concern over the recent deportation of Palestinian civilians and other acts of violence practised by Israel in the occupied areas, such as the demolition of houses, beatings and other inhuman practices which are in direct and open violation of the aforementioned Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The position of the Republic of Argentina on the conflict taking place in the Middle East, a conflict which has continued for more than 40 years, is well known by all. Nevertheless, I should like to highlight here that the events of the last few months have simply pointed to the urgent need to find a just and lasting solution to the conflict in that region. The Republic of Argentina fears that if this is not done, the conflict will take on new and dangerous characteristics which would further hinder the search for a peaceful settlement.

In this context, my delegation believes that the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations could provide the appropriate mechanism through which we could emerge from the present and ever-dangerous impasse. That conference, with the participation of all the parties directly concerned, would, in the last analysis and on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, make it possible to restore to the peoples of the region the peace which we all desire and which they so keenly deserve and need.

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

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): Sir, I wish to express my heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I am confident that with the benefit of your outstanding leadership and diplomatic skills, the Council's deliberations will prove fruitful.

I also wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Pejic of Yugoslavia, for the excellent manner in which he conducted the Council's work during his presidency in the month of March.

The deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab territories has been the focus of our attention since last December and, despite our concerted efforts to rectify the situation, it is obvious that the recurrent violence in those territories is not subsiding. On the contrary, it appears to be escalating out of control.

Japan is concerned in particular about Israel's renewed deportation of Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories, despite this Council's repeated appeals to Israel that it abide by its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and refrain from taking such actions.

In accordance with the report of the Secretary-General of 21 January 1988, especially his recommendation that all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention that have diplomatic relations with Israel use all the means at their disposal to persuade the Government of Israel to change its position, Japan has on numerous occasions called on Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Convention and to abide by its provisions.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

These deportations are clearly in violation of the Convention, and Japan has no choice but to voice its condemnation of this action by Israel. Once again, Japan calls upon Israel to show its readiness to respect international law and to act in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

As all of us are well aware, the deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab territories underlines the need to find a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the conflict, at the core of which is the Palestinian issue. I firmly believe that it is incumbent upon the international community and, in particular, the United Nations, to undertake immediately renewed efforts to break the deadlock in the peace process. I assure you, Mr. President, that Japan is ready to co-operate with any constructive efforts in this regard.

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

The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Engin A. Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ANSAY: Mr. President, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to address the Council on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

At the outset, Sir, I extend to you our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that your competence and experience will enable the Council, under your guidance, to work effectively to face the challenges of the important questions threatening international peace and security.

(Mr. Ansay)

I extend our thanks and appreciation also to your predecessor, Ambassador Dragoslav Pejic of Yugoslavia, on the exemplary way in which he presided over the Council last month.

Once again the Security Council has been convened to examine the grave situation in the occupied Arab territories and the tragedies and crimes being committed every day by the Israeli occupation authorities against a people that refuses to submit to the will of the occupying Power and its despotic policy.

It is now more than four months that the occupied Arab territories have been the scene of the worst terror, repression and suppression by the Israeli occupying authorities. The uprising of the valiant people of Palestine against occupation in the occupied Arab territories is the result of 40 years of injustice imposed upon the Palestinian people. It is not only an uprising against the oppressive socio-economic policies or against the unjust civil administration: it is the heroic fight of a people in defence of its historic land, in defence of its national identity and in defence of its inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of its independent State on its national territory. The revolution of the uprising Palestinian people today is yet another aspect of the question of Palestine and the Middle East.

Despite condemnation by the international community of the oppressive policies, which run counter to the letter and the spirit of Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), the Israeli occupying authority is escalating its violent policies and practices against the defenceless Palestinian people. The hysteria of violence has indeed reached such a stage that it has even drawn criticism from many Israelis. The death of an Israeli girl by a bullet from the rifle of a Jewish settler ironically brought about many deaths and injuries to the Palestinian inhabitants in the area and the demolition of 14 houses

(Mr. Ansay)

in the village of Beita alone in the occupied Arab territories. The recent articles by Mr. John Kifner in The New York Times of 9 and 11 April 1988 give an account of that incident and of the vicious policy of the Israeli occupation forces. I believe all of us who have glanced through The New York Times this morning have no doubt in their minds about the murderous intentions of those Israeli soldiers throwing poisonous gas bombs inside the house of an innocent 70-year-old woman, resulting in her martyrdom.

(Mr. Ansay)

With the Council's permission, I shall quote very briefly from this morning's edition of The New York Times:

"Hundreds of refugees have been treated in United Nations clinics for tear gas inhalation,' a statement by the relief agency said. 'In some cases, tear gas has been thrown inside homes, clinics and schools, where the effects are particularly severe.'

"Agency doctors have also seen symptoms not normally connected with regular tear gas, and UNRWA is seeking information on the contents of gases used in order to provide the proper antidote and treatment, especially for the most vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, the very young and the elderly."

Another policy exercised by the Israeli occupation authorities is the deportation of innocent Palestinians, contrary to resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) of this body and to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits individual or mass transfers by force, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power or to any other country.

The profanation of Holy Places, accompanied by harassment of Muslim faithful during their prayers, has reached such a degree that recently the 80-year-old Sheikh Saad Eddin El-Alami, Head of the Supreme Islamic Council and Mufti of Al Quds Al Sharif, was personally attacked by Israeli soldiers after Friday prayers in the Haram Al Sharif on 1 April.

In this connection, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in a message addressed to the Secretary-General last week expressed the indignation and deep concern of the States members of the OIC over the criminal aggression perpetrated by Israeli occupation troops against a congregation of worshippers and against His Eminence Sheikh Saad Eddin El-Alami,

(Mr. Ansay)

which has aroused profound anger among the more than 1 billion Muslims throughout the world.

One way or another all this has to come to an end. The use of poisonous gas against innocent old women and children must stop. Deportations must end forthwith. The profanation of Holy Places and harassment of the faithful must stop. All this has to stop for the sake of the Palestinians and for the sake of the Israelis themselves, and it has to stop for the sake of humanity and world peace.

Just recently the Seventeenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from 21 to 25 March 1988, decided to name that meeting "The Session of Islamic Solidarity with the Palestinian People" as a tribute to their valiant uprising in occupied Palestine.

That Conference hailed with pride the heroic uprising of the Palestinian Arab people against the heinous Israeli occupation forces in defence of their homeland and their inalienable national rights. It reaffirmed the unflinching stand of the Islamic States to support the Palestinian people in their ongoing struggle until the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian territories, including the Holy City of Al Quds Al Sharif. The Conference reaffirmed its rejection of any partial and individual solutions which would disregard the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people or ignore the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole, legitimate representative. The Conference condemned Israel's expansionist policy and continued occupation of Arab lands and denounced its coercive measures in violation of human rights as well as the imposition of an economic stranglehold on the population to force them to end their courageous uprising. It deplored the policy of the United States of America of disregarding the PLO and providing support to Israel. The Conference mandated its Secretary-General to maintain contacts with the Secretary-General of the United

(Mr. Ansay)

Nations and with other regional and international organizations with a view to implementing Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) and securing the application of the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Conference also decided to set up Support for Palestine Committees throughout the Islamic world to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and to provide them with material and moral assistance, to request information institutions in Islamic States to intensify their coverage of news on the uprising in occupied Palestine, to exert all possible effort on the relevant authorities in non-member countries to denounce racist Israeli crimes and to organize an international public opinion campaign to condemn Israel and expose its practices and designs.

On behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its membership, I should like once again to reiterate before this gathering that the Security Council has the responsibility to take immediate effective action in order to force Israel to put an end to its expansionist and terrorist practices and to accept the United Nations resolutions. Greater efforts should be made to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the permanent members of the Security Council, in order to seek a comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, I should like to express the overwhelming desire of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Umma that the draft resolution before the Council - which, we have no doubt, will be adopted unanimously - will reach the stage of implementation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Ansay for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MAKSOU: I should like to express the appreciation of the League of Arab States for the kind invitation the Security Council has extended to me.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. You are well-known for your wisdom and diplomatic commitment to peace and liberation, as is your country, with which the Arab world has affectionate and cordial relations. I wish also to extend my appreciation and that of the League of Arab States for the manner in which your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, conducted the affairs of the Security Council during a very crucial month.

The Security Council is meeting once more to deliberate on the situation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. It is meeting amidst many confirmed reports which have been elaborated by the various speakers who appeared before the Council yesterday. Some of the reports and some of the documented facts are indeed mind-boggling, because they coincide at a time in history when the entire world - not only the Jewish constituency everywhere - is attempting to remember and reflect upon the lessons of the holocaust, because the holocaust was one of the most dreadful aberrations in contemporary history, because it was predicated philosophically on selecting a particular faith and group of people as targets of systematic discrimination, persecution and ultimate killing.

(Mr. Maksoud)

It is ironic that while we try to learn the lessons of the past a sort of 1933 is being reenacted in the occupied Palestinian territories today. It is not, of course, mass murder. The holocaust was the culmination of a process, not the initiation of one. Today, Palestinians who are in the occupied territories shouldering the historic responsibilities of ending the occupation of their homeland are being subjected to tyrannical and systematic oppression, discrimination and persecution.

Such is also the pattern on which the occupying authority is creating both its behaviour and its objectives of achieving permanent disfranchisement of the Palestinian people, the almost permanent dispossession of the Palestinians in their homeland, and of ruling out any peaceful option that would enable them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. That is the situation, heightened by the international community's awareness of the deadly weapons being used against innocent civilians, and by the deportations: the virtual dumping of the deportees in the south of Lebanon in the so-called security zone - as if Israel were maintaining that "security zone" as a dumping ground to help it persist in its violations of international law and the Geneva Convention.

However, Israel does not consider itself in violation of the Geneva Convention precisely because it does not consider itself accountable to the articles of the Geneva Convention, and it does not consider itself accountable to the Geneva Convention because it does not consider itself an occupying Power. And because it does not consider itself an occupying Power, it is in fact a claimant Power. It is behaving as if it were the heir to the territory which it occupies in violation of all United Nations resolutions, of the world consensus, of international law and of the Geneva Convention. It is this discrepancy that has repeatedly rendered Israel in contempt of the Security Council, because it has never admitted at any time

(Mr. Maksoud)

since the occupation in 1967 that it is an occupying Power. This is the fundamental stumbling-block to any peace effort.

I do not want to go into the types of persecution that are taking place. I do not want to reenumerate all that is taking place today against the people of Palestine. But, like many representatives, I was struck by the spectre of armed settlers wreaking havoc with the destiny of the people in the occupied territories when one of their own was, regrettably, killed by another settler - inadvertently, accidentally or deliberately is not the issue - and by the venom displayed by the agents provocateurs who then went into that small town to sow fear and devastation, even though it was known that it was not the Palestinians who had killed the girl. It was as if those illegal, armed vigilante-settlers had had their prejudices interrupted by the facts. It is that interruption that heightened their wickedness and made them intent on the continued pursuit of mutilating the national and demographic character of the occupied territories by bringing out the worst in the Israeli-Zionist establishment.

Parenthetically, here I must say that this whole uprising has also brought out the best in the Jewish humanist tradition: many intellectuals, artists and even some politicians throughout the world Jewish community have articulated their outrage at the behaviour pattern of the Israeli occupation, which functions as if it were the legatee of the Jewish heritage and the Jewish destiny. If anything has been brought out in the last few weeks and months, it is the brutality of the Israeli establishment and the humanity of Jewish values and traditions.

It is in that respect that the uprising, this liberating movement, is not only achieving a refocusing on the central issue in the Middle East, namely, Palestinian rights, and is not only helping to achieve progress towards Palestinian liberation, but is, in a way, liberating its very adversaries from the dehumanizing process the

(Mr. Maksoud)

Israeli-Zionist establishment is pursuing. It is in that respect that the uprising becomes not only a Palestinian-Arab uprising but a worldwide human phenomenon.

Furthermore, when the Security Council last met and, technically, adjourned, it was hoped that those who were trying to salvage the peace option in the Middle East through unilateral initiatives - such as those undertaken by Secretary Shultz in recent weeks - would meet with success. The veto exercised by the United States in the month of February on a draft resolution that was in many ways not so severe, to put it mildly - many people even treated it as almost innocuous - now appears in retrospect to have been not so much on the substance of the draft resolution as it was on the function of the Security Council and on its role in order to pave the way for an initiative undertaken by a global Power towards which it is necessary to act with deference when it comes to its operational diplomacy.

(Mr. Maksoud)

Secretary Shultz went twice to the region and had intensive discussions, examining the issues from all sides. But, however meritorious the motives might have been, the input of energy was, unfortunately, not matched by an output of results, because simultaneously with that initiative Israel hardened its position. It began to use vocabulary unprecedented in modern parlance, vocabulary that has been repeated here, such as references to "grasshoppers" and "insecticizing" the population of Palestine, confirming and ratifying the very racist contempt of the Israeli Zionist establishment for the population.

Faced with this hardened and heightened racist approach, Secretary Shultz discovered that the incremental permissiveness the United States has historically shown towards Israel's objectives was still a factor paralysing the possibility of generating a positive response by the intransigent Israel. Secretary Shultz went and came back. He met with two distinguished Palestinian-American professors to broaden the framework of resources to achieve an inching towards objectivity - and all hell broke loose. One of the results was to expedite the resignation of the representative of Israel to the United Nations. But, more important, the Arab League delegation met with Secretary Shultz and had a frank and open dialogue, because we have learned from the United States experience in pragmatic diplomacy that it is better to be frank and open.

I should like to share very briefly with the members of the Security Council an impression of the result. Let me say at the outset that the divergences in our views do not necessarily pre-empt continued dialogue. In that respect there is an element of positivism. We are cognizant of the fact that the American Administration is becoming more sensitized to some of the conceptual aspects of our concerns. The United States Administration was sensitive to the idea that an international conference should be undertaken. But there was a divergence of

(Mr. Maksoud)

opinion on the nature, the function, the mechanism of that international conference. The American position tended to be that the international conference should be a blend between ceremonial and an inoperative mechanism. We consider that the United Nations-sponsored international conference should be ongoing, well prepared, well structured and fully mandated to conduct simultaneous discussions and negotiations on all the issues arising from the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the jurisprudence that the various relevant resolutions of the United Nations have clearly spelled out.

Furthermore, although there was a divergence of opinion there was an acknowledgement that the United States had become more sensitive to the need for a Palestinian contribution. But the formula that the United States provided was definitely inadequate, because the Palestinian delegation, in our view, is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), because the PLO is not only - as I have often stated here - the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, but is for the Palestinians the framework of their peoplehood; it is a state of mind for the Palestinian people in the absence of their State, the articulation of their national identity in the absence of their national citizenship. For that reason any attempt to circumvent the representative character of the PLO means that there is no seriousness in proposing negotiations, because there is no consequence to any negotiations in which the PLO is not a full and equal partner.

The third, and perhaps more relevant, aspect of our divergence of opinion with the Secretary of State on this issue is that Secretary of State Shultz's plan envisages an interim period and then ultimately discussion and negotiation of the ultimate status of the territories. We differ on that, because we believe that the right of the Palestinians to self-determination is not negotiable. Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories is not negotiable. What we negotiate

(Mr. Maksoud)

is the structuring of the outcome, its phasing, the circumstances in which it is created. We do not negotiate whether or not the Palestinians have a right to self-determination; we do not negotiate whether or not Israel should withdraw from the Arab occupied territories. We negotiate the outcome that has been spelled out in all its parameters by the various United Nations resolutions. In other words, negotiations are a preferred methodology to achieve and salvage the peace option. However, they are not a fishing trip, a vehicle to discover an outcome; they are the vehicle to determine the structuring of the outcome.

That is very important, since Israel has repeatedly resisted the notion that in the occupied territories it is an occupying Power. That stumbling-block requires that we come to the realization that as long as Israel does not acknowledge that it is an occupying Power, and therefore considers itself unaccountable to the Geneva Convention and the resulting international laws, the Security Council will always find itself hamstrung, almost to the extent of paralysis, in bringing Israel to comply with its will and its resolutions.

(Mr. Maksoud)

If the Israelis feel they can pursue their objectives unhampered by the necessary moral, political and diplomatic intrusiveness of the world body because they feel that at this moment the American position is faced with the inevitability of a presidential campaign, in which we hear some of the presidential candidates vying to compete on who can embolden Mr. Shamir more in the pursuit of his intransigence and the brutalization of the situation, then perhaps Israel thinks it has more time to buy to pursue its objective of emptying the Palestinians of their capacity to pursue their legitimate struggle.

But let me, in conclusion, state that when the internal leadership of the uprising asks the shopkeepers to open at a particular hour and the Israeli occupation authority asks them to close and forces them to open at another particular time, when the shops in Ramallah or Nablus are opened forcibly by the Israeli occupation, they are opened unattended, and nobody goes in to buy or sell, there has not been one incident of looting in the occupied territories.

What you have in the occupied territories is the setting in motion of a corrective on all levels. It corrects the refocusing of the international community on the centrality of the Palestinian question. It refocuses on the determination of the Palestinian and Arab people to end all forms of occupation. It sets in motion a corrective of our very adversaries, who might, in seeing the visibility of the brutality of Israel's establishment, try to reassert their inner humanism and sensitivity.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Maksoud for his kind words addressed to me.

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

Mr. SIDDIKY (Bangladesh): It is a matter of pride and pleasure for my delegation to see you, Sir, occupying the presidency of the Security Council, not only because of your prodigious abilities and personal qualities but also because

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

my people hold your country, Zambia, close to their hearts.

At the same time might I compliment your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Dragoslav Pejic of Yugoslavia, on the remarkable leadership he imparted to the Council in the preceding month. He was able to vindicate the trust his friends and admirers had placed in him.

It is a matter of profound sadness not just for me but for all who are gathered here, and even for others beyond these halls, to see the international community so inert and helpless against the vile and disdainful actions of an entity that has chosen to turn a deaf ear to the voice of reason and sanity. Worst of all, it has seen fit to ignore lessons it should have drawn from its own sad past and regrettably, even at this very moment, it refuses to see the writing on the wall. The consequence, for all of us, can be horrendous.

This year so far the Council has met half a dozen times to deliberate upon the very subject for which we are gathered today. This respected body, the embodiment of the desire of nations for peace, has adopted resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988). We are all aware of their contents. We are all bewildered by the utter contempt the Government in Israel has displayed for those wise urgings. Not only has it illegally expelled eight more Palestinians to southern Lebanon; it has added insult to injury by reportedly deciding to deport 12 others.

The expulsion of innocent civilians from their hearths and homes is not the only crime the authorities in Israel deem fit to commit. We need only open a newspaper or tune in the radio or television anywhere in the world today to read about, hear and observe the tragic ordeal of the Palestinian people. How do we explain to our children that the fascism we decided to eradicate, and claim to have eradicated, at the sacrifice of millions of lives in the Second World War still survives and is being tolerated? How do we explain to the children of Palestine our inaction in the face of their tribulation?

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

Yesterday our distinguished colleague and brother Ambassador Terzi of the Palestine Liberation Organization commented that we might not find Beita, a tiny village in the occupied territories, on the map. But Beita is now indelibly imprinted in our minds as an example of what terror man can wreak upon man, in much the same way as Guernica was in the days of the Spanish Civil War. We all now know how the Israeli girl was killed. We deeply regret her tragic demise. But we are repelled at the barbaric atrocity that the Israeli authorities let loose in the village, accompanying their false accusations.

To enumerate the list of crimes perpetrated by Israel would take longer than the time we have at our disposal. Israel must know that shooting innocent men, women and children, razing their hearths and homes to the ground, depriving them of food and water, robbing them of not just their rights but their human dignity cannot endear Israel even to its friends.

The defilement of holy places and the harassment of the faithful, and particularly the action taken by the Israeli authorities against Sheihk Saad Eddin El-Alami, Head of the Supreme Islamic Council, who was assaulted and beaten in Haram Al Sharif, in Jerusalem, have shocked and enraged us all. I cannot imagine that the people of Israel would themselves endorse the repression committed by those who claim to represent them. The Palestinians have risen together in unique passive resistance. I am positive that more and more right-thinking men, women and children of Israel would join them in their glorious cause.

But what must the Council do? Can it afford inertia? Surely time is of the essence. Every day the tragedy continues to mount. The Council must intensify action to ensure Israeli compliance with the Geneva Convention of 1949 for the protection of civilian persons in time of war. If Tel Aviv does not heed the Council's formal resolutions, it is the bounden duty of all Members, individually and severally, to try and persuade the Israeli authorities to behave humanely.

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

And then we must tackle the problem at its root. There must be found a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to this intractable issue. The first step would be the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The same view was expressed only last month by the Nordic Foreign Ministers. Bangladesh believes the path to the solution of the crisis lies in such a conference, for, much more than many, my people is aware of the pangs of occupation. But then in such a meeting the Palestinians must be represented by their sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, or else all such efforts would come to naught. We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General in the cause of peace. I conclude in prayer for its success.

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

Mr. YU Mengjia (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation is very pleased to see you, the eminent representative of friendly Zambia, in the Security Council Chair this month and is convinced that the Council will benefit greatly from your dynamism, talents and rich diplomatic experience. I pledge you the close co-operation of the Chinese delegation during the discharge of the noble mission entrusted to you.

I should also like to express our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Dragoslav Pejic for his successful performance in guiding the Security Council's work last month.

Since the uprising involving the entire Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories broke out last December, the Security Council has met on quite a few occasions to deliberate on the situation in the occupied territories and adopted three relevant resolutions. Those resolutions, giving expression to the common will of the international community, condemned the Israeli authorities' policies and actions violating the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories; and demanded that Israel, as the occupying Power, abide by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and stop deporting Palestinians.

However, to our indignation, the Israeli authorities, with their customary arrogance, have treated those resolutions with contempt and continued to intensify their suppression and slaughter of the Palestinian people. What is more, they have even impudently declared that they will crush the Palestinians like grasshoppers. Consequently, the number of Palestinians killed, wounded, detained and deported is on the rise and the situation has deteriorated even further.

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

Confronted with the brutal policies and actions of the Israeli authorities, it is incumbent upon the Security Council to voice its condemnation and take forceful measures in response.

The whole world bears witness to the fact that the Palestinian people have not been cowed by Israeli violence. Their popular struggle against brute force is developing in scope and depth, pounding on the rule of Israeli occupation with unremitting and powerful force. It also demonstrates to the whole world that the trend towards ending the Israeli illegal military occupation is irreversible and that the Palestinian people is bound to achieve its goal of regaining its national rights.

The developments in the occupied Arab territories and the worsening situation there demand that the Security Council take further and more effective steps to compel the Israeli authorities to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, stop forthwith their suppression and practice of deportation against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, protect their life and personal safety, and ensure their basic rights to survival.

At the same time, the international community should step up its efforts with a renewed and greater sense of urgency to promote vigorously the Middle East peace process through individual or collective initiatives, in order to seek a fair, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East question, including the question of Palestine which is at its very heart. The Chinese delegation is convinced that the convening of an international conference under United Nations auspices is an effective way to seek Middle East peace. Based on those considerations, the Chinese delegation supports the draft resolution sponsored by six non-aligned countries.

In its statement in the Council on 28 January of this year, the Chinese delegation pointed out that, as far as the Middle East is concerned, it is no

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

longer possible to maintain the status quo, and to try to do so will only exacerbate the situation. Developments in the region have made it amply clear that a comprehensive, just and reasonable settlement of the Middle East question brooks no delay. In the interests of peace and tranquillity in the Middle East and of world peace, the international community must redouble its efforts to reverse the dangerous situation caused by intensified Israeli repression and push forward the process towards a political settlement of the Middle East question. China is ready to work together with other States to that end.

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

Count YORK von WARTENBURG (Federal Republic of Germany): I should like to join in the congratulations expressed to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We have great confidence in your long political experience and the objective and energetic way in which you will conduct the Council's work.

I wish also to express our sincere and warm appreciation to Ambassador Pejic for the great sense of responsibility and untiring personal dedication that characterized the performance of his task to direct the Council's very heavy workload during the month of March. I should be grateful if the Yugoslav delegation would convey that to him.

Our debate now focuses on the grave upheavals which erupted on 8 December 1987 in the territories occupied by Israel. Today, four months later, these upheavals persist with undiminished grimness. These upheavals have evidently originated spontaneously, without any influence from outside. They constitute a civil uprising and that renders them all the more grave and makes their repercussions all the more serious.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

This uprising cannot be put on a par with commando or terror actions directed from outside against Israel. This uprising is the rebellion of a population whose youth is faced with the dire prospect of losing all hope. Acts of repression and the settlements policy in the occupied territories aggravate the tensions further.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

In Israel grave dismay and deep concern about developments in the occupied territories are rife. The methods applied there, especially the grave acts of violence, raise also for many Israelis the question of what Israeli democracy stands for and the question whether such measures are justified by Israel's security requirements.

In Israel, too, the awareness grows that the status quo must be overcome. The status quo in the occupied territories has become untenable. The most serious cause of the upheavals persisting since the beginning of December last year is to be found in the lack of any perspective in the lives of the Palestinian population - from the political, economic and social aspects. Disappointment at the fact that no progress is being achieved in all the attempts at a settlement has sown embitterment and despair among the youth.

The situation in the occupied territories can effectively and lastingly be changed for the better only through a comprehensive settlement of the political conflict lying at its root. The most fundamental elements of such a settlement are the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized boundaries, the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, and the renunciation of the threat or use of force. We and our European partners continue to regard an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations as the most suitable framework for setting into motion the peace process.

In recent months, the Security Council in its resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) repeatedly called upon Israel strictly to abide by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949. We fully agree with the Secretary-General who in his report on the situation in the occupied territories of 21 January regards observance of the Fourth Convention as the most effective among

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

the presently available means for putting an end to human rights violations in the occupied territories and relaxing the situation.

We sincerely regret that Israel, in spite of the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council, once again resorted to the means of deportation and of collective punishment, such as the recent demolition of homes. These measures are devoid of any legal foundation. The Government of my country, therefore, once more urgently appeals to Israel to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories and strictly to abide by its provisions.

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

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to avail myself of this opportunity, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the responsible post of President of the Security Council and express our conviction that your wide experience, diplomatic abilities and other eminent personal qualities will enable you effectively to guide the work of the Council.

I should also like to express our profound gratitude to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Pejic, who made every possible effort to ensure the successful conduct of the work of the Security Council in dealing with its very heavy agenda last month.

Reports from the occupied territories indicate that Israel has increased its repression against the Palestinian population. Thousands of Palestinians have been arrested; the curfew has been widely applied; in violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949 civilians are being deported and demonstrators have been fired upon, as a result of which the number of those killed and wounded is reckoned by the hundreds. Particularly alarming is the great evidence of the use - together with

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

tear-gas - of another gas which produces a different type of symptom and is more disabling.

The dauntlessness which has been evidenced by the Palestinian people, its constancy in its struggle for its inalienable national rights against Israeli occupation, its determination which decades of violence and persecution have been unable to break, and continue to arouse among us Soviet people feelings of admiration, solidarity and support.

The events quite clearly indicate that neither military might nor cruel, provocative armed repression on the part of the occupier is equal to the task of quenching the aspirations of people to liberty. This is axiomatic and its correctness has once again been borne out by the popular uprising on the West Bank and in Gaza.

We are persuaded that there can only be one possible way out of the prevailing situation and that is through a new political thinking, which here, as elsewhere, should become the main vehicle of policy underlying efforts to find a solution to the Middle East problem should rely not on armed force, not on repression, but on negotiation and an equal and pragmatic dialogue.

In this connection, I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Security Council to a statement made by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, when he recently met in Moscow the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yassir Arafat. In expressing solidarity with the selfless struggle of the Palestinian people, Mr. Gorbachev explained in the following terms the Soviet point of view regarding the substance of a settlement:

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

"The most important prerequisite for a settlement is the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the territories occupied in 1967, the West Bank of the Jordan, the Gaza sector and the Syrian Golan Heights. The Palestinian people is entitled to self-determination to the same extent that it is guaranteed to the people of Israel. How the Palestinians make use of this right is entirely up to them. The most effective machinery to bring about a settlement is an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Its legal foundation should be the acknowledgement by all those who participate in it of the force of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

"Representatives of all parties involved in the conflict would take part in the Conference, including the Arab people of Palestine, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council. The Conference would provide for a variety of ways in which the participants could interact and co-operate.

"Regarding the role of the permanent members of the Security Council, it would be essentially to create a constructive atmosphere for the negotiations at the Conference to proceed and, to this end, they could inter alia either collectively or individually put forward proposals and recommendations.

"Invitations to participants in the Conference would be sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

"The Soviet Union would not be opposed to interim steps and stages towards a comprehensive settlement. However, they should be neither considered nor carried out in the Conference unless they are geared to its final purpose."

It is quite obvious from what I have just said that the Soviet approach envisages taking account of the points of view and interests of all concerned in the conflict. We should focus on a balance of interests. It is clear that any attempts to reach a settlement without taking into account a balance of interests of all the parties concerned - both the Arabs, including the Palestinians, and Israel - would inevitably lead to deadlock, because it would run counter to the logic and the lessons of history.

Another extremely important component of the normalization of the situation in the Middle East is the cessation of the arms race there, in particular because it has changed since the conflicting and belligerent parties now possess the means of mass destruction as well as long-range missiles.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet Union has persistently promoted a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We are prepared to co-operate constructively with all involved in this peace process. The United Nations is invested with sufficient authority and the necessary opportunities to impart a dynamic thrust to the process of a Middle East settlement. To that end the Security Council should immediately proceed to take the steps necessary to prepare and activate the machinery for an international conference on the Middle East, starting with what is most essential: the establishment of a preparatory committee. As it is to be formed on a bilateral and multilateral basis, we believe it will be possible to remove many of those obstacles that stand in the way of such a conference. We are convinced that it is now time sincerely, seriously and honestly to set the process of a Middle East settlement on the main road to preparations for and the convening of an international conference.

As we see it, there is now every opportunity to break out of the vicious cycle of events in the Middle East. It is our hope that the Security Council will take the necessary steps to initiate actual movement towards a just resolution of the Palestinian problem by means of a comprehensive settlement. It is also our belief that the present consideration here in the Security Council of the situation in the occupied territories will help to achieve that end.

The Soviet delegation there supports the draft resolution submitted by six States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

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

Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): It is a pleasure for me and my delegation to see you, Sir, presiding over the Council. We know that the Council's work and deliberations are in the best of hands. I should like also to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, who led us through a very busy month with the greatest skill and determination.

It is almost four months since the Council last December adopted resolution 605 (1987), a resolution which, among other things, called upon Israel to end its policies and practices which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. It is over three months since the Council adopted resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), which called upon Israel to stop deporting Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories.

It is a matter of great disappointment not only to my delegation but I believe to all those around this table that the period since those resolutions were adopted has seen no improvement and, in many respects, a worsening of the situation.

Details are widely available of brutal and often indiscriminate actions against civilians in the occupied territories. These actions have resulted in deaths, acute physical injuries and detention on a massive and arbitrary scale. World opinion has been shocked and disgusted - rightly so - by the widespread suffering of the civilian population of all ages and both sexes, resulting from a policy of violent repression and from the continuing failure of the authorities to ensure due restraint on the part of the security forces. That the occupying Power has declared openly the nature and purposes of its policies - to crush the opposition by the use of physical force against civilians - has made these policies doubly repugnant.

(Mr. Birch, United Kingdom)

The provocative and often lethal actions of armed settlers in the occupied territories against the inhabitants have drawn increasing attention. Collective punishments, including the demolition of houses, have become more common. Deportations in disregard of this Council's resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) have again taken place, and more are envisaged. Arbitrary economic measures have been taken against the population, causing hardship and suffering.

This Council has long pointed out that such measures on the part of the occupying authorities are unacceptable. They are more; they are immoral, illegal and politically self-defeating. The purpose of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 was to spare the world such abuses and such degradation to both occupied and occupier alike.

(Mr. Birch, United Kingdom)

Israel, as a party to the Convention, has not only the legal obligation to apply its provisions in full but also the moral obligation to ensure that its occupation takes place in accordance with the standards the Convention embodies.

Israel occupies a special place in our regard. In the first half of this century the Jewish people suffered from arbitrary rule, violence, discrimination and attempted genocide. They were denied the status of equals in their own lands. They were persecuted and hounded, millions to their death. Israel was founded as a place where such dreadful events could not and would not happen. For many of us, it is painful that echoes of that old intolerance, that harsh belief in the right of might, should be heard there today. We judge Israel as we do because we expect more of her than of others who do not share her history, her misfortunes, but above all her great moral foundation.

It is right, therefore, that this Council should again call Israel's attention to its grave concern about the situation in the occupied territories and express not merely the Council's desire for an end to the current violence but its hopes for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict which underlies it. Too often the Council's work to this end has been disregarded and set aside. At an earlier meeting on this subject - on 30 March - the representative of Israel called upon the Council to give up rhetoric and to work for a peaceful settlement. May I assure him that what the Council has said and will continue to say on this subject is not mere rhetoric. It is the expression of a wish for peace - the same peace that his country needs and desires. It cannot be found through repression in the occupied territories.

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

(The President)

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put it to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided. I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. BUCCI (Italy): I am very pleased to join the speakers who have preceded me in welcoming you, Sir, to the presidency of the Security Council for April. During the months I have spent on the Council as the representative of my country I have had the opportunity to appreciate your skills as a diplomat, your knowledge of our procedures and the wealth of your experience. My delegation is pleased to see you occupying the presidency also because of the friendly relations and ties existing between our two countries.

I should also like to convey our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Dragoslav Pejic, a man of great professionalism and outstanding personal qualities, who conducted the work of the Security Council during the month of March in an exemplary manner.

No one will be surprised if my country takes a favourable position on the draft resolution under consideration. Our position today is consistent with the stand we have taken in the past regarding the tragic situation existing in the occupied territories. The problem of these territories is crucial. To the extent that it determines the fate of the Palestinians it is indeed at the centre of the crisis in the Middle East.

The events of the past five months prove that a postponement of the solution to the problem is untenable.

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

My country has already expressed its views in favour of a political solution which should result from an international peace conference held under the auspices of the United Nations. The 12 States members of the European Community have also expressed their unequivocal support for this development.

Italy believes that the international conference, in which all the interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), should participate, must find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict. In other words, the conference should ensure both Israel's right to exist within secure, recognized and guaranteed boundaries and the Palestinians' rights, including the right to self-determination with all that this implies.

In the mean time - and this is a logical consequence of our conception - Israel, as the occupying Power, must observe in the occupied territories those norms of behaviour which are established in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, as the Secretary-General rightly notes in his report to the Council of 21 January 1988 (S/19443).

We believe that the draft resolution under consideration by the Security Council today (S/19780) reflects these concerns of ours, and we shall therefore vote in favour of it.

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

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/19780.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: 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, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against: United States of America

The PRESIDENT: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 in favour, one against, and no abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): Sir, I would like to express our satisfaction at your assumption of the presidency. Allow me to say that we have full confidence in your skills, impartiality, experience and wisdom, and we shall look forward to working with you throughout this month. Permit me also to thank your predecessor at my left, Ambassador Pejic of Yugoslavia, for the energetic and skillful manner in which he guided our efforts during the past arduous month.

The United States has voted against the draft resolution before us today. Once again the Security Council has been asked to inject itself in an ad hoc manner in the complex issues of the Middle East. The Council has been presented here with a text which, as my Government has noted on previous occasions, neither contributes to easing tensions in the occupied territories nor to promoting the cause of peace.

This is the fifth time that the Security Council has been asked to take up the situation in the occupied territories since the outbreak of violence there last December. The United States position on the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention and our opposition in principle to deportations are well known and remain unchanged. As we pointed out on 1 February when we voted against a similar draft resolution, however, we do not regard this recurrent recourse to the Security Council as befitting its authority and prestige. The draft resolution before the Council today, as its predecessor on 1 February, is redundant and inappropriate: its broad and sweeping condemnation of Israel contains not a scintilla of balance; it contains no appeal or request for calm.

As members of the Security Council are aware, the United States is engaged in a major diplomatic effort with the parties directly concerned to try to bring about the start of direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. The United States has put forward a proposal which we regard as realistic and constructive. This proposal offers the best hope for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It would lead to a comprehensive settlement assuring the

(Mr. Okun, United States)

security of Israel and of all the States of the region, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. We would welcome the support of members of the Security Council for this effort. We also ask that the Council desist from rhetorical exercises and draft resolutions which are not productive and only cut across the objective of finding a real way to peace in the Middle East.

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

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): Sir, it is a great source of satisfaction for me and for the Algerian delegation to see you, the representative of a fraternal country with which Algeria has relations of solidarity and close co-operation, presiding over the work of the Council for the month of April. I am convinced that, under your leadership, the work of the Council will lead to satisfactory results for all. I should also like to pay a special tribute to our friend, Ambassador Pejic, for the manner in which he performed his duties last month.

I think we must say, first, that the South African and Palestinian peoples are condemned to be the recipients of American vetoes. Mention has often been made of the impotence of the Security Council. That impotence results from abuse of the veto. On 1 February the Zionists perceived the veto as an encouragement and as an invitation to persecute Palestinians. Each war of aggression by Israel against Arab countries has been an occasion for new faits accomplis in the conquest of new territories. A mere glance at the changes that have taken place on the map of the region since 1948 bears witness to successive acts of aggression and territorial spoils.

On 22 December last, when considering the question of the occupied Palestinian territories, the Security Council adopted resolution 605 (1987), in which, inter alia, it requested the Secretary-General

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

"to examine the present situation in the occupied territories by all means available to him, and to submit a report no later than 20 January 1988 containing his recommendations on ways and means for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation".

When the Council next met it was to consider those two aspects - the protection of Palestinian civilians and their future - on the basis of the Secretary-General's report. On 1 February also, based on the Secretary-General's report and on resolution 605 (1987), the Council debated again and, with near unanimity, reached a basic consensus calling for the occupying Power to comply with the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and expressing the urgent need to achieve a comprehensive settlement to the conflict.

The American veto on 1 February not only bespoke a negative attitude towards the position of the international community but also encouraged the policy of annihilation being practised by the Tel Aviv authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories. The result of the massacres and mass imprisonments, the use of toxic gases, the dynamiting of homes and the expulsion of Palestinian civilians from their own land: 200 killed, 5,000 civilian prisoners and successive deportations.

Since 1 February many articles have appeared in the international press on the deteriorating situation and the encouragement felt by the Tel Aviv authorities. The Manchester Guardian of 18 March 1988 contains an article from which I quote the following excerpt.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

(spoke in English)

"Civiltà Cattolica, the journal of Italian Jesuits, said some Israeli soldiers 'had resorted to methods which it would be a euphemism to describe as inhuman,' and spoke of 'horrifying violence' and 'clear outrages against humanity.' ...

"'Faced with such a spectacle one cannot but think of more horrendous crimes, of those same crimes the Jewish people endured in the worst periods of persecution when they seemed destined to disappear, destined to the Final Solution'."

(continued in French)

That statement does not, I think, require any comment on my part.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

Complaisance towards the Zionist authorities went so far as the imposition of an almost complete news blackout on the presence of Arab Ministers who had come here to raise the question in Washington and in New York, and on their discussions.

We are here dealing with respect for the laws and principles that should govern civilized society, a society of nations which freely adhered to them on entering this Organization. Such rules and principles should apply erga omnes to all.

The majority of members of the international community consider that the Middle East problem requires a just and comprehensive settlement, to be achieved through an international conference under United Nations auspices, with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as the representative of the Palestinian people. As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out, there must also be recognition here in the Council of the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people.

Here I wish to ask: why are some still not concerned about that right to self-determination; why do they invoke it only in the context of East-West confrontation? We deeply regret and bitterly deplore the continuance of that negative attitude by the United States towards the elementary essential rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab peoples. The position adopted on 1 February and confirmed today cannot be described as anything other than an obstacle to a just and lasting settlement of the problem of the Middle East, whose core is the question of Palestine.

The Palestinian people has given too much proof of its vitality and dynamism in its struggle for freedom for anyone to think of marginalizing it or having it dwarfed in any negotiation.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The purpose of the brutal and unjustified opposition to the draft resolution is nothing more nor less than to disqualify the Council from playing its proper role under the Charter - that of establishing and maintaining international peace and security - and to create an additional obstacle to finding a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict through an international peace conference on the Middle East, which everyone emphasizes is the only valid framework for true peace.

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

The next speaker is the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization, on whom I now call.

Mr. TERZI (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)): The perseverance of our people under occupation is symptomatic of our perseverance here. We are in no way discouraged; we have not lost faith in the Council. We are grateful to the 14 other members of the Council that have taken a firm stand. If the Government of the United States has chosen to single itself out, it is entirely up to that Government. There is always a rotten apple in the barrel. Maybe it will see it that way.

What happened was not unexpected. A Government that can address the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice with disrespect and arrogance and tell the world "Irrespective of any legal obligation, we are going to do it our way" can do everything and anything. We can expect even worse from that Government, a Government that frustrates the legal process, frustrates the consensus and the attempts for peace and tries very hard to frustrate the work of the Security Council.

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine
Liberation Organization)

It is redundant and rhetorical for the representative of the United States to say that his country has confidence in you, Mr. President. What we need is confidence in the Council. The President is the representative of the Council, so it is not a personal matter that we are addressing here.

To what extent does the United States respect the Council? To what extent does the United States respect the Charter? To what extent does the United States really feel that it is part and parcel of this international community and that it should respond to the norms of international law and international consensus?

The representative of the United States says:

"The Council has been presented ... with a text which, as my Government has noted on previous occasions, neither contributes to easing tensions in the occupied territories nor to promoting the cause of peace." (supra, p. 56)

The issue concerning the glorious uprising of our people has been before the Council since December. Perhaps the representative of the United States will tell us what his Government has contributed to ease the tension in the occupied territories, other than supplying more sophisticated toxic gas and hundreds of millions of dollars to the occupying Power and giving it all the protection that it needs. What has the Government of the United States done towards easing the tension? How does it plan to proceed, when to this very moment the United States denies the Palestinian people its right to self-determination?

This is a challenge: let us hear the representative of the United States say in clear terms "The United States does recognize the existence of the Palestinian people. It recognizes that that people has the right to self-determination, and the United States will respect that right of the Palestinian people." I know he will not. He cannot, because it is on record in the Congress that the United

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine
Liberation Organization)

States says that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is not consistent with United States foreign policy. So what is it the United States representative tells us about the legitimate rights of the Palestinians?

Then we are told that this is redundant and rhetorical. Where is the redundancy, when the Council affirms the urgent need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict? Maybe it is redundant in that they should not send any more new, sophisticated toxic gas or more machine guns.

By its position, the Government of the United States is defeating the purpose of the Charter. Maybe that is what it wants. I do not know. But I should like to hear from that Government that it is not trying to defeat the purposes and principles of the Charter.

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine
Liberation Organization)

We are told that since the outbreak of violence, since last December, the Council has taken up the situation. Well, if people do not come to the Council, where do you think they should go? What was the Council made for? What is its mission in life?

He says the Council has met so many times since December. But I wonder if he can recall how many hundreds of times the Council was convened to consider the derivatives of the brutalities of the Israelis. Should I remind him of 1978, of 1982, and of all those occasions when the Council had to meet - even at 4 o'clock in the morning?

How can we preserve the authority and prestige of the Council? Only by respecting it, by respecting the wishes and the will of the international community.

We are told that the United States is engaged in a major diplomatic effort with the parties directly concerned to try to bring about the start of direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. I think the one who drafted that is really a genius. It is trying to bring about "the start". The start of what? Of direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. My God, we are talking about Palestinians who are throwing stones, scores of Palestinians who are being killed, Palestinian women who are losing their children because they have inhaled toxic gas. And we are told that the United States is still thinking, trying to start a negotiating process.

What have we been here for, for at least the last 20 years? Have we not really started? Or has the Government of the United States been in a long dream and thus not heard about all the efforts being taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by the General Assembly, by the Security Council itself? I wonder. Have we forgotten all about the past activity of the Security Council in

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine
Liberation Organization)

particular, and the United Nations in general, concerning the endeavours for a comprehensive peace? Or is everything erased overnight, and now, all of a sudden, has the Government of the United States woken up one morning and maybe looked at the screen and said "Oh, there is a problem in the Middle East between Israel and its neighbours. Let us start trying to think how we can end that problem."

Well, it is too late in the day, because there is only one process for peace, and that one process for peace will take place in this Chamber and bring all the parties to the conflict together - and we know who the parties are. Those boys who are using the holy rocks of the Holy Land to defend their rights - they are the principal party. If they are not here at this table for the negotiations for peace, then what do you expect? And bring those who have troops, guns and toxic gases to the negotiating table.

Naturally, the Council has a duty. Its duty is very clearly spelt out in the books: to maintain peace and security. If the United States feels that the provisions of the Council are not sufficient, then I do not see how it can really contribute towards peace.

The PRESIDENT: There are no further speakers for this meeting. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.