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### SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

#### VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1339th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Thursday, 11 August 1988 at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

QUESTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (MALVINAS) (A/AC.109/962; A/AC.109/L.1675)

The CHAIRMAN: In connection with this item the Committee has before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat, contained in document A/AC.109/962. The Committee also has before it a draft resolution on the item, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1675, to which members' attention was drawn at the 1331st meeting, held on 1 August.

I wish to inform members that I have received a request from the delegation of Argentina to participate in the Committee's consideration of this item. In conformity with established practice, and if I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee accedes to that request.

It was so decided.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the delegation of Argentina took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: Members will recall that at its 1330th meeting, held on 1 August, the Committee granted requests for hearing relating to the item from Mr. L.G. Blake, Mr. R.M. Lee and Mr. Alexander Jacob Betts.

Mrs. BERMUDEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation wishes to reiterate the statement made by 20 Latin American States on 2 September 1983 at the 1238th meeting of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly with respect to the lack of representativity of British petitioners residing in the Malvinas. This statement has since then been reaffirmed at all sessions of that Committee and of the Special Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The statement made by the representative of Cuba will be reflected in the record of the meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. L.G. Blake and Mr. R.M. Lee took places at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. L.G. Blake.

Mr. BLAKE: I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your good offices in allowing me and my colleague to address the Committee.

My name is Tim Blake. I was first elected to the Falkland Islands legislature in 1964 and I am at present an elected member in the legislature with responsibility for fisheries.

I have read the text of the draft resolution before the Committee, and I am mystified by some of its sections. I had the impression, perhaps mistakenly, that the Committee's aim is to safeguard the right of peoples to self-determination, but I find no reference in the draft resolution to finding out what the people of the Falkland Islands want. Is it not central to the United Nations Charter that all peoples should have that right of self-determination? Yet the whole theme of the draft resolution seems to be the solving of the territorial dispute between Britain and Argentina.

May I say that the Falkland Islands is our home, as it has been for over 150 years, and that it should be our choice as to whether we seek protection under the British or the Argentine flag.

In 1982 I spent almost a week in this city in discussions to find a peaceful settlement to the territorial dispute, and at the end of that time both sides had agreed on a peaceful way forward. Unfortunately, despite the careful work which was done, the islands were invaded by Argentina less than a month later.

Under our present status, our written constitution guarantees the freedom of the individual in speech, in politics - where we have universal suffrage - in religion, in the holding of property and so forth. It divides the Government into two parts: the legislature, which controls the budget and deals with the passage of legislation; and the Executive Council, where policy is decided. All members of

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the legislature are elected except the chief executive officer and the head of the treasury, who attend in a non-voting capacity. The composition of the Executive Council is: three elected members of the legislature, who are elected by their fellow members; the Governor, who is Chairman and chief executive officer of the administration; the head of the treasury; and the Attorney General. The last three sit in an advisory capacity; again, only the members elected from the legislature are voting members. So we have complete internal self-government, with Britain, our administering Power, being responsible for foreign affairs and defence.

This leads me to the status of Mount Pleasant airport. It is claimed that Mount Pleasant is a purely military facility and a threat to peace. We in the islands would dispute this. Mount Pleasant airport, to us, provides a means for our external air link. It allows those employed outside to return to their homes and those residing outside the islands to visit for a holiday; my colleague will talk a little more fully on this later. It also allows islanders to take holidays overseas.

It allows the evacuation of medical cases which would benefit from more specialized attention than we have at home, be they foreign fishermen or babies in need of specialist surgical attention. I must express our gratitude to all those who have helped us in the past when such evacuation has been necessary.

(Mr. Blake)

As members may know, we suffer from a labour shortage in the Islands. There is too much going on and there are not enough of us to do it; and so we are forced to recruit contract labour from overseas. We are particularly pleased that we can help another dependent Territory, St. Helena, which has an unemployment problem. We have a number of St. Helena workers employed in the Islands on short-term contracts. They come to the Islands for a year at a time and then return home, and it seems to be a situation which suits us both. We have had one or two who have found our climate and living conditions not to their taste, but generally they seem to enjoy their time in the Islands.

Another area which has caused ripples on the international scene is our attempt to control the levels of fishing in waters around the Islands. We are now in the second year of operation of the Falkland Islands Interim Conservation and Management Zone - known as the FICZ - and I am pleased to report that our efforts are going well. We would like to control a greater area than we do at present, for that would do much to enhance our conservation efforts. This fishery in the South Atlantic is and can be of benefit to the world at large, and it is our firm intention to do all we can to see that fishing levels are not allowed to rise above that which allows for continued stock-level maintenance. In the year before we declared the FICZ there were known to be over 600 vessels in that area; last year we reduced that figure to below 200.

The allocation of fishing licences has been based on the best scientific advice to ensure that stock levels are maintained, and at present our budget for protection and scientific research is well in excess of 25 per cent of the revenue. This second season has greatly enhanced our data bank, which is giving scientists a better base each year on which to calculate stock levels and fish uptake. This research is a principal part of our effort, and the catch pattern in

(Mr. Blake)

the South Atlantic is being better described each year. But it would be wrong for me to suggest that we are not benefiting from the industry: it has become a major industry for the Islands.

The surplus revenue from fishing, with the revenue from agriculture, has enabled us to speed up our development programme. We have a building programme which will increase the housing pool by 30 per cent over the next two years. To match this we are renewing the water supply and almost doubling the capacity to supply electricity. The changes which have occurred in the past six years would be difficult for anyone who has not been in the Islands since then to understand. The break-up of the big farms into single-family farming units, the renewal and upgrading of power and water supplies, the medical facility and education - all those started with the aid funds supplied by the British Government after liberation in 1982; and development has continued at a growing rate since that date. This year all our development is being funded from local resources. We have committed close to £2,000 per head of population to development.

The improved medical facility, based on the new hospital which was built with British aid after the tragic fire destroyed the old hospital, provides a greater and improved level of medical care for our people, plus emergency medical assistance for the fishermen. We have in the hospital today Italians, Spaniards, and last week we brought in - with the help of the RAF Air-Sea Rescue Service - a gravely ill Russian seaman. This emergency service we are providing in the South Atlantic is not just for those fishing within the FICZ but for all.

Similarly, in education great strides have been made in the past six years. Over 20 per cent of the children leaving school this year will take their "O" level examination - the equivalent of the International Baccalaureate - and any of those who wish to do so and have gained a minimum of four subject passes will be

(Mr. Blake)

sponsored for higher education with all expenses paid, including pocket money. Had the Committee met one week later I could have told the petitioner Mr. Alexander Betts how his daughter had fared in her "A" level exams and whether she had sufficiently high grades to enter university, again sponsored. I know the date well because my son is a classmate of his daughter and in the same position.

With the advent of the FICZ and the number of boats around the Islands, there are spin-offs for other countries in the area. The ships are using the repair facilities in Chile and are provisioning in Uruguay; and I am pleased to learn that there is a commercial venture being established to run a regular ferry link between the Islands and ports on the mainland. We welcome such links which have been established over a number of years.

I shall go back to fishing and the increased movement of ships. We have just spent £3 million on the provision of a floating port facility to improve our services to the fishing fleets.

What I have tried to portray to this Committee is the booming of our economy with the resultant increase of our resident population. Is it possible to expect us, the Falkland Islanders, with such a future ahead of us to transfer from the present protection we have which covers defence and foreign affairs but leaves us to govern ourselves to a status where, instead of inflation at a rate of just over 3 per cent last year, when wages rose by 20 per cent, with free medicare, index-linked pensions and no unemployment to become part of a country where inflation is now running at over 300 per cent, there are labour disputes and unemployment, plus a foreign language to learn?

I believe that our administering Power, the United Kingdom, is currently involved in exchanges with the Government of Argentina through a third party for co-operation in conservation of fish stocks, and it is to be hoped that this will

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bear fruit. I hope these contacts will serve to reduce any tension there may be in the air in the South Atlantic.

It is our mission here as elected members of the Legislature to point out that the future of the Falkland Islands is for us, the Falkland Islanders, to decide. We do not wish to become a part of either Great Britain or Argentina. We wish to develop our economy as we see fit in co-operation - if this is possible - with our neighbours; but unless it could be shown to the satisfaction of all Islanders that a change in our administering Power would be of benefit to all, then we would not seek such a change of status.



(Mr. Blake)

It should be recognized that we made the islands what they are today, and we would wish that they should continue to be under our control with the Government of our choice. It would seem to me that the draft resolution before the Committee seeks in no way to give us such freedom, but to make us more dependent on a different Government.

Thank you for listening to me and may I introduce my colleague, Councillor Lee.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Mr. Lee.

Mr. LEE: Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me this opportunity to address this Committee on behalf of the people of the Falklands as one of their elected representatives. My name is Robin Lee and I am a sheep farmer by trade. I was elected to the Legislative Council in 1985.

First of all, I should like to give the Committee the background of my family. My great-grandfather came to the Falklands in 1857. He was a shepherd from the Epsom Downs in Surrey. He came to work at Port Howard on the West Falklands in about 1875, where he spent the rest of his life. His youngest son, who was my grandfather, worked at Port Howard for 54 years; then my father worked there for 46 years; and now my brother and I both live and work there. Until 1986 the Port Howard sheep farm was owned by the Waldron family, which was based in the south of England. In early 1987 the Waldron family agreed to sell the farm to the Falkland Islands Government. Owing to the Government's present policy of encouraging farms to be locally owned, my brother and I were able to register a new company and purchase the 200,000-acre farm on which our family has worked and lived for over 100 years. Nearly all the people that work for us are shareholders in the new company. Today my brother and I are very optimistic about the future of agriculture in the Falklands.

Increased revenue from fishing licences is being used to help more and more islanders to purchase their own land. In fact, over 90 per cent of West Falklands

(Mr. Lee)

is now owned by islanders. The agricultural grants continue to improve. We are developing a wool mill that will continue to produce a very high quality garment for export. In fact the demand for these products is already much higher than we can supply. The Government has agreed to spend over 4 million pounds on a new telephone system throughout the islands. Farm tracks are being improved, and there is a real possibility that we will soon see a shingle road system throughout the Islands.

I am also involved in the promotion of tourism in the Falklands. Although tourism will never be a major industry, we are very pleased with the number of people taking a holiday in the Falklands, and indications are that this year 30 more people will come than did last year. They enjoy the wildlife, trout fishing, horse riding and our very British way of life.

As Mr. Blake has said, this all depends on the continuing operation of Mount Pleasant airport, but we are very optimistic. An increasing number of cruise ships visit the Falklands to allow people to photograph the wildlife in its natural surroundings.

Many people here today may feel that it is a sensible suggestion to ask the Falkland Islanders to become part of the Argentine. I should like to ask everyone who feels that way to take a moment to ask himself why we should agree. Do the Argentines need our farm land? I should think not, because they have many square miles of poorly developed farm land of their own, better farm land than ours. Would the Argentine people want to live in the Falklands? Again the answer must be no, as most of them live in the north of their country and are very reluctant to move south. I feel strongly that there is only one reason that the Argentines continue to claim our Islands, and that is to satisfy their pride. No Falkland

(Mr. Lee)

Islander wishes to quarrel with the Argentine people; of that I am sure. But we do object to their claiming our Islands as a matter of pride.

When I, like many other Islanders, think about the Argentine claim to the Falklands, I think back to the invasion of 1982 and how nearly a thousand troops occupied our small settlement of 40 people. Our fences were torn down, holes were dug in the ground, and even the name of the farm was changed. Many hundreds of mines were placed on our countryside and beaches. I then look at the present situation in the Argentine with all its unrest and 300 per cent inflation and compare it with our very stable way of life with inflation of only 3 per cent. It makes me even more determined to stay British and to continue to live as we have done for over 150 years. I beg the Committee to support the Falkland Islanders in their wish to determine their own future.

Mr. Blake and Mr. Lee withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Betts took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Betts.

Mr. BETTS: I greatly appreciate the decolonization Committee's consenting to give me the opportunity to address it; for it has always been a receptive and useful forum for petitioners. I will speak about the Falkland/Malvinas question as a native of the islands who now lives on the Argentine mainland, carrying out duties to which I was democratically elected as a councillor of the town where I live in the province of Cordoba, being now the Executive Secretary to the mayor.

Because I am an islander, the peaceful and definitive solution to the Falkland/Malvinas question is of vital importance to me, being a territorial dispute that keeps alive the interest of the international community as a whole.

(Mr. Betts)

That interest is reflected in the fact that today another draft resolution is before the Committee to be voted upon.

It is my wish to advocate in favour of Argentina's rights to the mentioned islands that are in possession of Great Britain, thanks solely to an arbitrary act of force which remains the cornerstone of Britain's colonial presence in the archipelago. This presence will never be consented to by the Argentine people, nor can it generate rights for the United Kingdom

The Falkland/Malvinas represents an unwavering claim of the Argentine nation substantiated within a framework of law and principle and a very well-founded historical case. This cannot be swept aside by the British, nor belittled by misleading literature that distorts the truth of historical information. The strength of the Argentine claim has been reflected in the overwhelming majority by which the six resolutions on the subject, approved by the United Nations since 1982, call on the two sides to negotiate a settlement.

It is lamentable that a comprehensive negotiation in the search for a peaceful and definitive settlement of all Anglo-Argentine differences has not yet begun - something which, without doubt, requires moderation and a willingness to compromise by both Governments. The British Government not only chooses to ignore United Nations resolutions on the Falkland/Malvinas issue but also pursues objectives that are contrary to Argentina's sovereign rights and opposes the objectives the General Assembly has established on this matter through the specific resolutions.

(Mr. Betts)

Nevertheless, the Argentine Government has maintained a conciliatory attitude which has been confirmed on numerous occasions. The Argentine willingness to negotiate has also been recognized by the vast majority of the international community, a group as important in its diversity as categorical in its number.

Without doubt, the central theme of these negotiations is the definitive solution to the sovereignty issue of the territory of the Falkland, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and is an issue in which the British Government invokes the principle of self-determination which, as an instrument of decolonization, is being utilized by Great Britain as a means to colonize a Territory in dispute and also as a political argument for allowing the archipelago to remain under British rule.

Self-determination, while an inalienable right of peoples respected by Argentina, has been overruled in this instance because the island inhabitants do not constitute a "people" in the sense of the interpretation of United Nations resolution 1514 (XV). Its possible application in this case would transgress the territorial integrity of the Argentine Republic, something which also contravenes the assertions of the same resolution.

The United Kingdom Government claims it cannot compromise on the principle of sovereignty which it is defending in the Falkland/Malvinas, arguing that the British citizens of the islands must have a voice in determining the future of the disputed Territory where they live. Yet, in the islands of Diego Garcia, its inhabitants, not long ago, were deported by the British without consultation or consent, in order to hand the islands over for the installation of a military base. These are two contrasting examples of painful ambiguities of British policy.

The continued naval and military escalation in the South Atlantic region, with its provocative military manoeuvres, endangers peace and affects stability in the area, reflecting a persistent opposition to the purposes and principles of the

(Mr. Betts)

United Nations Charter, in its attempt to perpetuate a colonial régime in the above-mentioned area.

It is useless for London to try to diminish the importance of its military installations in the archipelago. We all know that modern-day war is a competitive race that revolves around sophisticated technological resources and costly ground installations, backed up by rapid deployment of specialized forces, similar to those of the naval and air force units stationed in the Falkland/Malvinas. Ultimately, it is worthwhile recalling what several Latin American newspapers opportunely alleged as fact, and that is that probably the most important negative consequence of the massive British military presence in the colony is that of arms, rearmament and arms escalation in the region and all that that implies. The military exercises conducted in the islands last March brought increased tension to the whole South American region.

With regard to this, one must recall that on 27 October 1986 the United Nations General Assembly approved, by an overwhelming majority, resolution 41/11, in which it solemnly declares the South Atlantic to be a "zone of peace and co-operation". Bearing this in mind, the demilitarization of the mentioned region should not only be an aim but also a common desire of all parties and peoples, either directly or indirectly involved in the area. Why then does Britain behave with unwarranted arrogance on the matter of the Falkland/Malvinas, spurning any discussions with the Buenos Aires Government about the future of the colony? Could it be in the erroneous belief that the lucrative fishery and mineral resources in the waters adjacent to the archipelago are of far more importance than agreeing to sit once more at a negotiating table? Just what does the present British Government hope to achieve? There is no longer a military dictatorship in power, nor pride to restore, nor elections to be won; but there would appear to be an

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intellectual negligence that is impeding customary British foresight from seeing beyond the River Thames.

Since the Declaration of the "Falkland Islands Conservation Zone" in 1986, commercial fishing is bringing the promise of unprecedented prosperity and a new way of life to the colony, where its 1,900 inhabitants depended solely on raising sheep for a living. The island's economy has suffered historically from a lack of local investment and a continual flow of private funds out of the archipelago into the United Kingdom. The result of this syphoning off of money was a stagnant local economy and a continuing drop in the island's population.

We can observe in the recent past that a favourable economic change has taken place through aid inflow, land redistribution and investment funds through the Official Development Corporation. The presence of contract workers and the military garrison has also contributed to giving the economy a buoyant character. This economic upsurge is seen with sympathy by everyone linked with the islands, but it also proves how much they were neglected in the past by their British administrators.

I must observe, as the great-great grandchild of Falkland Islanders who lived in the islands until the end of June 1982, that the colony, till then, was a very uncomplicated place in which to live. That has all changed, with the build-up of a massive military capability and the injection of significant amounts of development funds, the latter illustrating with total eloquence that the islands, whose 1,900 inhabitants find themselves illogically disconnected from the South American mainland, cannot survive if left to their own means.

The island society is undergoing great changes that affect the traditional lifestyle of the colony. Among the outstanding aspects of this is the degree to which it must depend on a permanent stream of immigrants or temporary immigrant labourers employed in the skilled or semi-skilled work that the development of the

(Mr. Betts)

islands demand, especially in the fisheries-related activities. This encourages socio-economic tensions and a possible swing in political power that could be in favour of the newcomers. The colony's 1986 census figures establish that a decreasing percentage of the population was born in the islands. This, without a shadow of doubt, will be reduced even more in the future. Even now there is a feeling of a certain "loss of identity" among local born residents.

In this respect, transgressing various United Nations resolutions that particularly recommend that there be no changes made in disputed Territories, the British Government has recently launched a scheme to encourage more people to emigrate from the British Isles to the archipelago. We can ask ourselves who then will be the islanders of the future with political weight in the Falkland/Malvinas question?

I cherish the hope that the basis of understanding will be found which is necessary to provide an effective solution to the long-standing sovereignty dispute in an atmosphere of comprehension and dialogue. There are no problems that cannot be solved if sufficient political will exists and good faith prevails - conditions that are the key to any successful negotiation, reconciling positions and overcoming differences.

The time has come for the two countries to end their enmity. Those who died in the 1982 conflict did not die to make the two countries everlasting enemies nor to keep alive the hazards of a territorial dispute.

I therefore ask this Committee to continue in its efforts to persuade the litigant parties to resolve their differences within the framework of the specific resolutions on the matter, exhausting all diplomatic instances, fully respecting the obligation to solve this controversy peacefully and, above all, through negotiations.

Mr. Betts withdrew.



The CHAIRMAN: I understand that Miss Jennie Herrera of the Hobart East Timor Committee will not be able to appear before the Committee. She has, however, submitted a written statement, which has been placed on the side table in the Council Chamber.

I now call on the representative of Venezuela to introduce the draft resolution in document A/AC.109/L.1675.

Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): The draft resolution in document A/AC.109/L.1675, which relates to the question of the Malvinas Islands (Falklands) and which is sponsored by Venezuela, Chile and Cuba, is in line with the general pattern set by resolution A/AC.109/930, adopted by the Special Committee on 14 August 1987. The sponsoring countries are shouldering this responsibility as a demonstration of their unwavering commitment to the cause of decolonization and, especially, to the solution of the colonial situation that we are now considering.

The essence of the draft resolution is reflected in the fifth paragraph of the preamble, which refers to

"the interest of the international community in the resumption by the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of their negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute relating to the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)".

(A/AC.109/L.1675, fifth preambular paragraph)

It is deplorable that 20 years after the adoption by the General Assembly, on 16 December 1965, of resolution 2065 (XX) - and the provisions of that resolution have been repeatedly reaffirmed both by the General Assembly and by the Security Council - the anachronistic colonialist situation in the Malvinas Islands is still unsolved.

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

In keeping with that concern, the General Assembly, in paragraph 1 of our draft resolution, would reiterate that the best way to put an end to the special and particular colonial situation is the negotiated settlement of the dispute between the two Governments.

In the draft resolution the General Assembly would also take note with satisfaction that the Argentine Government has reiterated its intention to comply with the General Assembly resolutions referring to this item and, at the same time, would express regret that, in spite of that positive factor and of the widespread international support for global negotiations between the parties that would include all aspects on the future of the Malvinas Islands, the implementation of those resolutions has not yet started.

Finally, we reaffirm our support for the good-offices mission undertaken by the Secretary-General in order to assist the parties in complying with the General Assembly resolutions on the question.

In my delegation's view, this draft resolution serves the best interests of the parties involved in the dispute and of the international community, in its commitment to safeguarding international peace and security. For that reason, we trust that the draft resolution will be adopted by the Committee with the support of all its members.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Special Committee for giving me this opportunity to participate in the debate on the question of the Malvinas Islands - a question which, as everyone knows, directly involves my country's vital and lasting interests. I wish also to congratulate you, Sir, on the way in which you are presiding over the debates of this body. Your well-known diplomatic skills will certainly contribute significantly to the success of the Committee's work. We

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

congratulate, too, the other officers of the Committee. In particular, we extend greetings to Mr. Tanaka, Mrs. Rives-Niessel and the other officials and representatives of the Secretariat, who are carrying out their duties with their usual efficiency.

Furthermore, we again express our thanks to the Special Committee for its significant contribution to the process of decolonization and, in general, to the advancement and attainment of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The overwhelming support given to General Assembly resolution 42/19 confirmed the international community's continued interest in the resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom with a view to settling the outstanding problems between the two countries, including all aspects of the future of the Malvinas Islands. That resolution, which was in accord with earlier pronouncements by the General Assembly, was explicitly accepted by my Government, because we share the view of the vast majority of the international community that that decision offers an adequate, reasonable and flexible framework within which Argentina and the United Kingdom can reach a lasting, mutually acceptable settlement of the question of the Malvinas Islands.

As in the past, we are convinced that the international community's concern to see the question of the Malvinas Islands solved is more than mere rhetoric. There is a widespread conviction that the prolongation of the status quo, involving a freeze in Argentine-British relations, is in no way advantageous to the parties in dispute and, in general, does not promote the shared interest in reinforcing relations of co-operation and détente among the members of the community of States. The indefinite prolongation of the dispute about sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands - owing, above all, to the lack of any machinery for seeking a

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

solution - militates against stability in the region of the South-West Atlantic. It is quite clear that that region as a whole would benefit were Argentina and the United Kingdom to find the means to bridge their differences.

In the full conviction that it behoves both Governments to spare no effort in the search for a constructive solution to the question of the Malvinas Islands, the authorities of my Government have repeatedly manifested Argentina's readiness to resume contacts with the United Kingdom in an imaginative and flexible framework. The first step, perhaps, is to rebuild mutual trust, which has been gravely undermined by 17 years of fruitless negotiations and by the deplorable conflict between the two countries in 1982. One can think of various areas in which constructive exchanges could begin.

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

Argentina, which is ready to find a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the Malvinas Islands sovereignty dispute and other outstanding problems with the United Kingdom, has continued to pursue a course encouraging and favouring détente in the south-western Atlantic. No act or measure by my Government has in any way created difficulties in restoring stability to the region.

On the other hand, as we all know, the British Government has taken imprudent and unnecessary steps. For example, last March London arranged the holding of military manoeuvres in the Malvinas zone. Those exercises, involving the movement of a significant number of troops from the United Kingdom to the Islands, were not in keeping with the positive spirit and moderation needed to restore normality to the south-western Atlantic. The military manoeuvres were therefore rightly severely criticized by a large number of countries. The Organization of American States adopted a decision reflecting the condemnation of our whole region. Similar feelings were expressed at the meeting of the Security Council held here in New York on 17 March this year.

Such events, together with the British Government's continued refusal to accept and comply with the relevant resolutions of the Special Committee and of the General Assembly, continue to raise legitimate doubts about the United Kingdom's true intentions in the south-western Atlantic. The United Kingdom's behaviour should naturally be of concern to the Special Committee, because it affects the progress of the process of decolonization and is incompatible with specific resolutions relating to the question of the Malvinas Islands and general provisions on decolonization.

In that regard, it is worth recalling that the Special Committee has repeatedly pointed out that the Malvinas Islands should be decolonized through a peaceful settlement of the sovereignty dispute over them between Argentina and the

(Mr. Delpach, Argentina)

United Kingdom. On that point, I shall refrain from referring to other matters of substance relating to the question, because all members of the Committee are very familiar with them. I shall confine myself simply to recalling that the Special Committee and the General Assembly have both rejected the application of the principle of self-determination to this issue. That is logical and correct, because the principle that applies in this case - the decolonization of the Malvinas Islands - is that of territorial integrity.

The relevance of that principle is incontestable, since the United Kingdom occupies the Islands not by right but as a result of an act of force perpetrated, as we all know, in 1833. The present population is not indigenous to the territory. We are all aware that the present inhabitants are British citizens transplanted to the territory by the colonial Power, after the expulsion of the inhabitants of Argentine origin who were living in the Islands. We are all well aware of this, which does not detract from the respect the Argentine Government feels, and has reiterated publicly on many occasions, for the identity of those currently living in the Islands.

For all those reasons, the Special Committee will be perfectly justified in adopting today the draft resolution sponsored by Cuba, Chile and Venezuela (A/AC.109/L.1675). Therefore, my Government wishes in advance to express its gratitude to the Committee for taking this important decision, which will help consolidate the United Nations unwavering doctrine on the question of the Malvinas Islands.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my country's firm resolve to seek a peaceful, negotiated settlement of all outstanding problems with the United Kingdom. At the same time, I wish to reaffirm Argentina's just claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. Over and above any developments that may create false expectations about

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

the possibility of a future that disregards the existence of a sovereignty dispute, the fundamental and constant reality of the Malvinas Islands is that Argentina will never renounce its goal of regaining full national sovereignty over them.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1675.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1675 was adopted by 20 votes in favour to none against, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Tomorrow the Committee will hold two meetings - at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. - to consider the questions of Gibraltar and East Timor.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.