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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 6 January 1989, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. RAZALI

(Malaysia)

Members: Algeria
Brazil
Canada
China
Colombia
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Nepal
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. ALENCAR
Mr. FORTIER
Mr. LI Luye
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. TADESSE
Mr. TORNUDD
Mr. BROCHAND
Mr. RANA
Mr. BA
Mr. BELONOGOV

Mr. BLATHERWICK
Mr. WALTERS
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 4 JANUARY 1989 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20364)

LETTER DATED 4 JANUARY 1989 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BAHRAIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20367)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at the previous meetings on this item, I invite the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Nicaragua, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Uganda to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Dost (Afghanistan); Mr. Al-Shaker (Bahrain), Mr. Dah (Burkina Faso); Mrs. De Florez Prida (Cuba); Mr. Al-Alfi (Democratic Yemen); Mr. Madarshahi (Islamic Republic of Iran); Mr. Khamsy (Lao People's Democratic Republic); Mr. Rakotondramboa (Madagascar); Mr. Diakite (Mali), Mr. Sevilla Boza (Nicaragua); Mr. Adam (Sudan); Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Karoui (Tunisia) and Mr. Kamunawire (Uganda) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Pakistan and Zimbabwe in which they request 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 those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right

(The President)

to vote, in conformity 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. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan) and Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

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

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): At the outset, Sir, I should like to say how very pleased we are, and I personally, to extend to you, the representative of non-aligned and friendly Malaysia, cordial congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council at this important moment and to wish you much success in the discharge of this responsible task. At the same time, it is my pleasure to welcome your country, Malaysia, as a new member of the Security Council. I also take this opportunity to welcome the other new members of the Security Council, namely the representatives of Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia and Finland, and express the readiness of the Yugoslav delegation to fully co-operate with them in the activities before the Security Council in the period to come.

My appreciation also goes to Ambassador Hideo Kagami, of Japan, for his selfless efforts and his exceptionally effective and impartial conduct of the Council's deliberations during the month of December, as well as for the overall contribution of his delegation to the work of the Security Council in the past period. May I also thank the representatives of Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Zambia for their co-operation and understanding last year in our joint endeavours to attain the common goals of maintaining international peace and security.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

It was with profound concern and anxiety that Yugoslavia received the news of the armed clash involving the downing of two Libyan planes by two United States aircraft from the Sixth Fleet in the vicinity of Libyan territory. These sentiments were also expressed in the statement issued by the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry. Irrespective of the explanation and justification that are being offered, this unacceptable demonstration and use of force represents a serious threat to the security and stability of a small, non-aligned country, an act that is likely to worsen further the situation in the broader area of the Mediterranean.

Of particular concern is the fact that the incident has occurred at a time of significant improvement in the overall atmosphere in international relations, which was reflected at last year's session of the General Assembly as well, and when strenuous efforts are being made to find political solutions to complex issues that have burdened the situation in the world for many years.

Unfortunately, however, this improvement in the overall international picture has not been adequately reflected in the situation in some parts of the Mediterranean, where sources of instability continue to exist. One of the main reasons for this state of affairs is the continued attempts by non-Mediterranean Powers to project their presence and influence in that region and, no less important, to determine developments in individual countries of the region.

It is therefore quite understandable that Yugoslavia, along with other non-aligned countries, has long warned that the increased presence of naval forces and the frequent conduct of military exercises and other demonstrations of military force by non-regional Powers in the vicinity of the territorial waters of littoral States are fraught with a permanent danger of the outbreak of armed incidents with potentially serious consequences for the security of States, primarily the

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

non-aligned, which are exposed to various forms of pressure, outright threats and intimidation. The latest attack, which resulted in the shooting down of two Libyan planes by aircraft from a United States naval force is further justification of the validity of these warnings.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

In our opinion it is unacceptable to use certain outstanding issues, including unsubstantiated accusations, as a pretext for interference by outside factors in the internal affairs of sovereign States. In this context the shooting down of Libyan planes will certainly not contribute to the creation of the necessary climate of understanding and trust and will burden international co-operation on questions in the solution of which the broadest international community is vitally interested. Here, I have in mind, among other things, the most serious concern of the international community over chemical weapons, which is going to be the subject-matter of the forthcoming Paris Conference in whose successful outcome we are all, I believe, equally interested.

I should also like to point out on this occasion that pressure, threats, intimidation and the encroachment upon the security of other countries are not - nor can they be - a means and method of solving outstanding issues. The only realistic way for their solution is the creation of a basis for broad international co-operation and dialogue with full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of individual countries. We therefore believe that the Security Council should take a clear stand against this dangerous use of force - the downing of Libyan planes by the United States naval force - and see to it that similar acts against Libya or any other country are prevented, for military actions have never led to the solution of problems between States.

What we need today, perhaps more than ever before, is the realization by all that outstanding issues that burden relations between individual countries can be resolved only through political means.

Yugoslavia, as a non-aligned, Mediterranean country, firmly believes that what we need today, especially when such a sensitive region is concerned, are not military actions but joint efforts for the establishment of the Mediterranean region as a zone of peace, understanding and co-operation.

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

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

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The Algerian delegation expresses its great satisfaction at seeing the representative of a non-aligned and Islamic country, with which Algeria enjoys special relations of confidence, co-operation and mutual esteem, accede to the presidency of the Security Council. Your diplomatic skill and great human qualities, Sir, are a sure augury of success in our work. Let me also convey my gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Hideo Kagami, for the exemplary way in which he conducted the Council meetings during the last month. My gratitude goes also to the delegations of Argentina, Italy, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany and Zambia for their remarkable contribution to the success of the work of the Council. Finally, I should like to welcome the new members of the Council - first of all, your own country, Mr. President, as well as Ethiopia, Colombia, Finland and Canada - and to assure them of our complete co-operation.

The situation in the Mediterranean, which because of the imposing presence of foreign fleets has had the potential for confrontation, has since the beginning of this decade experienced persistent tensions stemming from the hostile policies of the United States towards the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Indeed, this attitude towards Libya has for several years been characterized by the refusal to engage in dialogue, which unfortunately has been reflected in the escalation in confrontation. Libya, the object of an unceasing campaign of disinformation and intimidation, has repeatedly faced an intensification of provocation and acts of aggression. Thus, this situation has led from the destruction of Libyan aircraft

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

in 1981 to naval incidents in 1986, in particular the bombing of the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi the same year.

Today, we are seeing a replay of the same dangerous scenario. For several weeks the United States has been alleging that Libya is producing, or preparing to produce, chemical weapons, and the United States has openly proclaimed its intention to attack militarily the industrial installations in Rabta. In spite of many international appeals for restraint and reason, the international community is obliged to note with deep concern the current preparations to strengthen the large American naval concentration off the Libyan coast.

It is against this dangerous background that, on 4 January, two Libyan aircraft on a reconnaissance mission were destroyed by American aircraft. The Security Council is thus considering a grave incident that runs the risk of uncontrollable escalation.

The policy of hostility and the use of force as regards the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya are unacceptable and contrary to the efforts towards regional and international security, stability and confidence. The world of peace to which all of us aspire is incompatible with the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. The conduct called for by the United Nations Charter on the part of all Members of this Organization is now more imperative than ever, especially for a permanent member of the Security Council.

The dialogue and lessening of tensions which have progressively taken place and so fortunately have become part of international relations can only be damaged by persistent tensions and acts of aggression such as the latest one committed against Libya.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The firm will guiding the Arab States and the European coastal States to rehabilitate their region as part of their policies of concord and co-operation faces a serious challenge from the persistent threat right in their own back yard.

The same situation risks compromising the patient efforts in which the countries of the Maghreb have tried to encourage harmonious regional unity dedicated to guaranteeing the full rights of peoples in that region, and developing relations of confidence, understanding and co-operation with other nations.

Throughout these last years, both within the non-aligned movement as well as since 1972, at the Conference on security and co-operation in Europe, Algeria has been constantly committed to emphasizing the indivisibility of any approach to security and co-operation in Europe and in the Mediterranean and has worked towards elimination of the use of force in the region. At the same time, Algeria has steadfastly pursued its essential goal of building a Maghreb which is stable, prosperous and free from any outside threat or interference.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

It goes without saying that any attempt against the security and stability of any Maghreb State constitutes a threat to the whole of our regional community. Therefore, Algeria cannot remain indifferent to the threats to Libya, a friendly country and a neighbour with which we share a common destiny.

On the basis of that conviction, and acutely aware of the dangers in the present situation, my country has taken repeated steps in recent weeks to warn against any increase in tension in the region and to prevent any military escalation, whose consequences would be damaging to all.

In that context, the destruction of two Libyan aircraft by the American armed forces was unacceptable and constitutes aggression which Algeria firmly condemns. In repeating its appeal for restraint and the prevention of any new military escalation against Libya, my country reaffirms to the fraternal Libyan people its support and solidarity in the face of the intolerable threats to its independence, security and territorial integrity.

The Libyan people, like all the peoples of the region, has a right to peace and security. It is the preservation of that inalienable right that Libya calls for today in the Security Council. It is therefore the duty of this body, which is given a vital role by the Charter, to make a clear pronouncement about this serious incident, in which Libya is the victim, and to prevent any new attack against that country, which could only further threaten regional and international peace and security.

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

Mr. PEÑALOSA (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to convey to you and your country the congratulations of the Government of Colombia on the great honour that has been bestowed upon you. Your intellectual, diplomatic and human qualities are the best assurance that during your presidency we shall obtain positive results.

In taking its seat once again in the Security Council, the delegation of Colombia expresses its unwavering determination to contribute to the observance of the principles laid down in the Charter that governs us, and to work with complete impartiality and independence, while always endeavouring to preserve or to restore world peace wherever it may be endangered. Accordingly, in the present international situation we stress the importance of the principle set out in Article 2 of the Charter, which states that in their international relations all Members of the Organization shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or from acting in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

In the judgement of the delegation of Colombia, the convening of these meetings of the Council is of the greatest importance, in view of the events in the Mediterranean on 4 January, which ended with the downing of two aircraft of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by United States forces. Unfortunately, those events took place as the international community was beginning to glimpse hopeful signs of détente, which had been emerging in various areas and in various forums during the past year.

It is a matter of concern to the delegation of Colombia that elements of tension should be introduced into so sensitive an area as the Mediterranean, and that there, of all places, whether deliberately or not, there should be anything but the most scrupulous care to avoid acts that might endanger international peace and security.

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

As a country that rejects violence of any kind, wherever it may occur, Colombia believes that the climate of détente must prevail and must be maintained at all times, in order to ensure that the purposes of the Organization are achieved.

We must preserve understanding and peaceful coexistence; we must continue the process of narrowing differences, however wide they may seem. This is a new opportunity to reiterate to the whole world that the United Nations is a faithful defender of the principles it established, and that success in maintaining their validity will guarantee peaceful international coexistence.

Our appeal is to justice and reason. It is the appeal of a believer in international institutions and international law as our fundamental instruments. The use of force or the threat of its use must not be allowed to get out of control, for that might lead to irreversible situations.

For all those reasons, for the sake of a timely peaceful solution, we appeal for the suspension of any type of action or manoeuvre by the parties that might aggravate the tension.

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

Mr. LI Luye (China) (interpretation from Chinese): At the outset, Sir, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I am convinced that, with your diplomatic experience and skills, you will successfully accomplish the important mission entrusted to you. China and Malaysia enjoy good relations, and the Chinese delegation pledges its sincere co-operation with you.

I should also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Hideo Kagami of Japan. His skill and talent assured him success in completing the Council's heavy work load last month.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

I take this opportunity warmly to welcome the representatives of Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland and Malaysia upon the election of their countries as new non-permanent members of the Security Council and assure them of my delegation's close co-operation. I also wish to express my thanks to the outgoing non-permanent members for their valuable contribution to the work of the Council during the last two years.

On 4 January two Libyan planes were shot down by United States planes over the Mediterranean, once again raising tension in the region and casting a dark shadow over the Middle East peace process. Deeply concerned and disturbed by this incident, my Government strongly deplores resort to force in State relations, indeed any behaviour that increases international tension.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

The Chinese Government has consistently stood for settling differences and disputes between States through dialogue and negotiations and against the threat or use of force every time such problems occur. At present the world is moving from confrontation towards dialogue and from tension towards relaxation. It would be uncreasingly unworkable to attempt to settle international disputes by military means. Such a historical trend gives expression to the common aspiration of the peoples of the world to peace and development and accords with their fundamental interests. The threat or use of force goes against that trend.

We call upon the United States to stop all its military actions against Libya. At the same time we appeal to the parties to the dispute to exercise restraint in order to prevent further aggravation of the situation and to ensure peace and stability in the Mediterranean region.

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

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

Mr. MADARSHAHI (Islamic Republic of Iran): It gives me great pleasure to see you, Sir, a capable statesman from the fraternal country of Malaysia, presiding over this very important body. Allow me to convey to you the congratulations and felicitations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency and on your country's election to membership of the Security Council. Despite the structural restraints prevalent in the Council I am fully confident that your diplomatic experience and leadership skills will positively reflect upon the successful fulfilment of the very important responsibility the Charter of the United Nations has entrusted to this body.

I should also like to extend to Ambassador Kagami and the delegation of Japan the heartfelt appreciation of my delegation for the exemplary manner in which they

(Mr. Madarshahi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

conducted the Council's affairs during the preceding month. At the same time, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I should like to thank those delegations whose term of membership has ended and that have left the Council. They made significant contributions to this body's attempt to maintain international peace and security. My delegation also wishes to congratulate those delegations that assumed membership of the Council at the beginning of this year, and we are confident that they will make positive contributions to the constructive and effective discharge of the duties of the Security Council.

The issue before the Council is a grave one. In order to be responsive to this very serious situation a strong sense of responsibility and fairness is required, on the one hand, along with courage and boldness, on the other.

This is not the first time that the brave nation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, with a total population smaller than the population working at this moment on the island of Manhattan, has become the target of aggression and violation of sovereignty by the United States of America, a country that regards itself as the unrivalled military Power in the world, the leader of the free world and the main supporter of the rule of law in the conduct of international relations. Nor are the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya the only victims of the use of force by the United States. Many countries, including my own, have experienced untold pain and suffering as a result of the godfather role the United States has audaciously adopted towards the entire world.

We live in a dangerous world. It is dangerous because the godfather syndrome dates back to the Dark Ages when the idea of "might makes right" was preached and practised. It is dangerous because the United States Administration is all-too-happy and ready to resolve its differences with other Members of the Organization by unilateral action at the expense of multilateralism, action marked

(Mr. Madarshahi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

by the use of brute force and decisions marked by aggression against and violation of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of other Member States.

It is extremely interesting that over the preceding years there has been a pattern to United States aggression against other States whose régimes have not been pleasing to the United States Administration. United States officialdom usually exploits the readily available media in this country and begins a campaign of disinformation against the target country sometime prior to carrying out its policy of military aggression. The United States Administration then attempts - with little if any success - to justify its acts of aggression by references to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, claiming self-defence. That pattern has been evident in the United States aggression against Libya, Nicaragua and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as in the case of the attacks on Iranian oil platforms and the Iranian ship, Iran Ajr, and in the downing of an Iran Air passenger aircraft. Members of the Council and the world community well remember that the United States advanced the same unfounded argument of self-defence for shooting down that Iran Air passenger aircraft. One must be doing something wrong to be so fearful and unstable as to shoot down a passenger aircraft and patrol aircraft by mistake.

(Mr. Madarshahi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

In 1986, before bombing a number of civilian targets in the cities of Benghazi and Tripoli, the United States had mobilized its media machinery and spread a campaign of disinformation against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The international community condemned such American acts of brutal aggression in various bodies, including the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare in September 1986, the Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity, held in 1986, the session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in Kuwait, and in General Assembly resolution 41/38.

The Americans have paid no heed to such condemnation but have become increasingly arrogant as a result of their perceived military might. This attitude is dangerous and threatening because, to put it bluntly, the military capability is not balanced with insightful mental and legal capability on the part of the American Administration.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that it is not only the Libyan people that were at the receiving end of the recent American aggression; the international community as a whole may have become the victim of the United States unprovoked recourse to the use of force, which is perceived as a gross violation of international norms and undermines the prospect of conciliation and co-operation in international relations. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while strongly condemning the American downing of the Libyan planes, praises the bravery of our Muslim brothers and sisters in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. We announce here, before this body, that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran stands in full support of the Libyan people, not because we have also fallen victim to aggression from the same arrogant Power but because this unbridled Power considers itself beyond the rule of international law, violating

(Mr. Madarshahi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States at whim and whenever it sees fit. We call upon this lofty Council to fulfil its obligation and strongly condemn the United States downing of two Libyan aircraft, thereby preventing further American aggression against Libya in a manner falling under the pattern I mentioned earlier.

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

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

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): Mr. President, let me at the outset convey to you the felicitations of the non-aligned countries, the African Group - of which Zimbabwe is Chairman for the month of January - and of Zimbabwe, as your country, Malaysia, begins its tour of duty on the Council. The Zimbabwe delegation is happy to see that Malaysia, a key member of the Non-Aligned Movement, commences its tour of duty as President of the Council at this crucial time when this body is poised to tackle issues which lie at the very core of its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. We extend similar congratulations and good wishes to the other new members of the Council, all of which Zimbabwe considers dear and trusted friends. We congratulate Ambassador Kagami of Japan for the calm and able manner in which he handled the affairs of the Council during the month of December.

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, United States Navy warplanes shot down two Libyan military planes conducting regular reconnaissance patrols over international waters in the Mediterranean Sea off the Libyan coast. The United States claims that the Libyan aircraft were speeding towards its F-14s "in a hostile manner" and that its planes acted in self-defence.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

It has not escaped the notice of many that this sad incident comes in the wake of open threats and a sustained media campaign directed against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the United States. Since last September the United States has been flexing its muscles and threatening to take military action against a Libyan pharmaceutical factory it alleges to be a chemical-weapons plant. Out of no obligation, the Government of Libya, at the highest level, freely offered to make the factory in question the subject of international inspection. The United States refused to avail itself of that offer and instead, besides intensifying its disinformation campaign against Libya, dispatched 12 battleships to the Mediterranean.

The international community viewed with grave concern and disquiet these provocations and threats of the use of force against Libya. Less than 24 hours before the United States attacked the Libyan planes, the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had expressed concern and warned in its communiqué, now circulated as an official document of the Council, that the disinformation campaign and threats by the United States directed against Libya might serve as a pretext for launching acts of aggression against that country. The hostile intent against Libya was already obvious even at that stage. During that meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, members stated that they feared the United States might attack Libya within 24 hours. As we all now know, the attack came within 11 hours of that meeting.

The Council will recall that similar threats and media campaigns had preceded aerial and naval attacks by the United States in April 1986 against the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi. The international community has also not forgotten that prior to the April 1986 incidents, similar public opinion conditioning took place just before the United States attacked and sank four Libyan patrol boats at

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(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

Sirte in March 1986. Again, in June 1983, when United States Navy F-14s intercepted Libyan aircraft outside the Gulf of Sidra, and in August 1981, when two Libyan planes were shot down over the Mediterranean off the Libyan coast, the same thing happened.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

It is partly for that reason that the rationalization now being offered for the shooting down of the two Libyan MIGs is so unconvincing. Indeed, even the technical arguments that the Libyan MIGs were armed has not been conclusively established as today's New York Times remarks in connection with the video tapes of the so-called dog fight off the Libyan coast:

"The videotape, as seen on American news programs tonight, do not indicate the presence of the missiles as clearly as Mr. Howard [of the Pentagon] maintained. The quality of the tape was poor and what is said to be missiles appears as a darkened blur." (p. 10)

To most rational and fair-minded people it is not easy to detect any hostile or suicidal intent by two Libyan reconnaissance MIGs towards the United States armada off the Libyan coast.

Gunboat diplomacy should have no place in this day and age, and it is a pity that the season of peace the world has recently been going through should be shattered by such a misguided display of machismo. Wednesday's deplorable acts of aggression against Libya do not only pose a threat to the peace and security of the Mediterranean region; they clearly run counter to the prevailing spirit of dialogue and co-operation in international relations. It is unfortunate, to say the least, for the United States, a major Power and a permanent member of the Security Council charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, to indulge in such trigger-happiness.

We are gravely concerned that this incident will impact negatively on recent positive developments aimed at moving forward the Middle East peace process. And, coming a few days before the Paris Conference on chemical weapons, we fear the whole atmosphere for that conference may well have been poisoned. These are serious consequences.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

We wish to take this opportunity to express our concern and regret at the tendency by some States to abuse international forums by turning them into platforms for disinformation campaigns and for legitimizing their aggressive policies against non-aligned countries. In the light of certain statements made recently in connection with the forthcoming Conference of States Parties to the 1925 Geneva Convention on Chemical Weapons, we should like to warn that the non-aligned countries will not allow anyone to use that forum for disinformation campaigns aimed at winning support for military action against any Member State and legitimizing some dubious concept of "preventive principle".

Many countries, including the United States itself, have the capability to produce poison gas. The racist Pretoria régime frequently uses poison gas in our region. We therefore cannot understand why Libya is singled out by those who possess poison gas, as unfit to possess the same. What international law, treaty or convention that forbids possession as different from use is being invoked on this occasion? It is unacceptable for any country to appoint itself sheriff of the world and to arrogate to itself the right to punish those countries it does not approve of, especially when those countries are acting within international law.

The non-aligned countries are deeply concerned by the repeated acts of aggression and provocation against Libya by the United States. The frequency of those incidents, and the campaigns and movements of United States military forces that have always preceded them, clearly show that those acts of aggression and provocation are contrived and premeditated. We therefore urge the Council to call upon the United States to desist forthwith from undertaking such aggressive acts,

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

including the so-called military manoeuvres and training off the Libyan coast. The continued presence of United States naval forces in that area endangers peace and security in the Mediterranean and hinders the efforts to make that region a zone of peace, security and co-operation in keeping with the current climate of co-operation in international relations.

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

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

Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Pakistan): I wish to begin by expressing my gratitude to the members of the Security Council for giving my delegation the opportunity to participate in this debate on an issue which is of great concern to the international community as a whole.

It is a source of special gratification to the delegation of Pakistan that the presidency of the Security Council has been assumed by Malaysia, a country with which Pakistan enjoys close friendly relations and with whose people the people of Pakistan feel a special sense of solidarity and common purpose.

We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council so soon after the election of your country as a member of the Security Council and its return to the Council after 23 years. We wish you every success in the fulfilment of the great responsibilities that lie ahead of you and feel confident that the Council will be able to conduct its business effectively under your able guidance.

Let me also take this opportunity to express the profound appreciation of my delegation for the exemplary manner in which Ambassador Kagami of Japan guided the deliberations of the Security Council last month.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

At the same time, I should like to convey my delegation's warm congratulations to the new members of the Security Council that have taken their seats in the Council and wish them every success in carrying out the important responsibilities they have assumed.

The Security Council has been convened to consider the latest incident off the coast of Libya in which two Libyan MIGs were shot down by carrier-based United States aircraft over international waters on the ground that the "MIGs were obviously armed aircraft with obvious hostile intent".

Libya has rejected the charge and maintains that the two aircraft which were shot down were unarmed reconnaissance planes. As such, their destruction in a situation of accidental confrontation with the United States carrier-based aircraft can only be seen as the product of an atmosphere of prolonged hostility between the two countries as well as of the atmosphere of deep distrust and tension which currently prevails.

The present phase of hostility between Libya and the United States has roots in developments covering a decade. In a similar incident, two Libyan aircraft were shot down over the Gulf of Sidra in 1981. Once again, in 1986, United States aircraft fought an engagement with Libyan naval vessels which eventually led to the United States bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi.

Those incidents were the subject of a debate in the Security Council in April 1986.

The latest incident of the shooting down of two Libyan aircraft in the central Mediterranean on 4 January took place in a tense and complex situation. A pharmaceutical plant near Libya's northern coast has been viewed with deep concern by the United States as being capable of producing chemical weapons. Libya has

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

vehemently denied the charge. Any precipitate action based on these concerns will seriously erode the foundations of international law and the well-established norms of inter-State conduct.

It is most unfortunate that nothing has been done during the past decade to dispel the atmosphere of suspicion and fear which led to the tragic incident of 4 January and may engender further hostile acts in the future. Such a situation has the explosive potential of sparking a wider conflict and conflagration.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

The Co-ordinating Bureau of the non-aligned countries, which met in urgent session on 5 January, considered the recent United States action against Libyan aircraft as unprovoked aggression in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Reiterating the call of the eighth non-aligned summit on the United States to desist from military manoeuvres off the Libyan coast, which endangered peace and security in the region, the Bureau urged the withdrawal of United States naval forces from the area and reaffirmed its solidarity with Libya in safeguarding its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In a statement issued on 5 January, an official spokesman expressed deep concern of the Government of Pakistan over the shooting down of the two Libyan aircraft by American planes. The statement said that the Government of Pakistan firmly believed that resort to threat or use of force for the settlement of differences constituted a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. The Government of Pakistan has underlined the need for restraint, which is necessary to de-escalate the situation and prevent the recurrence of such unfortunate incidents. It has urged that no steps be taken that could heighten tension in the area and might adversely affect the recent positive developments in the Middle East that have created a favourable climate for peace in that region.

The year 1988 was a great year for the United Nations, inasmuch as most of the regional conflict situations began to yield to the pressure of world public opinion and turned ripe for resolution. The year ended in a hopeful atmosphere of great expectations for global peace and harmony. The international community is anxious that this atmosphere, which is the product of sustained effort and perseverance and of much suffering and sacrifice, be preserved. It is imperative for all concerned and for the great Powers in particular to use their influence and capabilities to

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

strengthen world peace and to reinforce faith in the United Nations as an instrument of international peace and security.

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

The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has asked to make a statement, and I now call on him.

Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I thank you, Sir, for calling on me for the second time in this debate.

At the end of this morning's meeting, the United States representative provided information on the two Libyan reconnaissance planes shot down by the forces of the United States in a premeditated manner. They were shot down by United States naval aircraft belonging to the Sixth Fleet, which was conducting manoeuvres off the Libyan coast in the Mediterranean.

The United States delegation has provided fabricated pictures that were attributed to the two aforementioned planes. The delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya would like to state that those pictures and that information are pure fabrication. They were directed in Hollywood style, and can readily be recognized as fake.

Moreover, the declarations of the two Pentagon spokesmen are contradictory: on the one hand they tell us that the American aircraft were surprised by the attacks launched by the Libyan aircraft. On the other hand, they have produced pictures and recordings indicating that the two aircraft were about to launch those attacks. Those planes were prepared to make those recordings beforehand. How could those aircraft take pictures of attacking aircraft at such a distance?

(Mr. Muntasser, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

An official spokesman of the Pentagon himself said yesterday:

(spoke in English)

"I have to confess to you that the quality of the videotape is lousy."

(continued in Arabic)

The New York Times today said that:

(spoke in English)

"The videotape, as seen on American news programs tonight, do not indicate the presence of the missiles as clearly as Mr. Howard maintained. The quality of the tape was poor and what is said to be missiles appears as a darkened blur." (p. A10, col. 1)

(continued in Arabic)

The pilots themselves have said that it was very difficult for them to confirm whether or not the two Libyan aircraft were armed. The representative of the United States has said that those aircraft were conducting peaceful, routine manoeuvres. Whether or not those aircraft were conducting peaceful manoeuvres off the Libyan coast, I leave it to the representatives and the Council to decide.

Mr. WALTERS (United States of America): I am not going to get into a hassle over the question of the quality of the image. I think the important thing here - and it is clear from all the records - is that the United States aircraft made five evasive manoeuvres to turn away from the oncoming MIGs.

Now, if you are walking down a dark alley at night and you see a man who has a gun, and you cross the street and he crosses the street; you speed up and he speeds up; you slow down and he slows down - I think you have to realize that he is not coming to present you with a bouquet of flowers.

We have heard a lot about a disinformation campaign, yet two of the speakers here have quoted American newspapers to prove that the United States Government is

(Mr. Walters, United States)

wrong. I think that is fascinating. It is difficult for them to understand that for the press to oppose the Government in this country carries no danger to the press. We thank God that that is the way it is.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has asked to make a statement, and I now call on him.

Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I apologize for seeking to speak once again. However, may I remind the representative of the United States of America that what he has said is unilateral and is only what the United States of America claims.

He has stated that the American aircraft made five attempts to elude the Libyan jets. However, I had the honour to be present during the debate in the Security Council on the Iranian civilian aircraft, and all representatives know and remember the claim of the captain of the Vincennes that it was a military jet because it descended by some 1,000 feet or went right or went left. On that basis, he believed it was a military aircraft and hit it.

This was said over and over again, and I do not believe that the Council believes what is uttered by one side only. We are fully convinced that the two Libyan aircraft were reconnaissance planes on a routine, reconnaissance patrol. They were prepared neither for combat nor for attack. We have said that over and over again. If the Council wishes to listen to the Americans alone, that is its business. However, there is another side to the story. That, perhaps, is the democracy mentioned by the representative of the United States of America. Let us listen to both sides.

The PRESIDENT: There are no further speakers for this meeting. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on the agenda will take place on Monday, 9 January 1989, at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting rose at 5.00 p.m.