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NOTE

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2321st MEETING

Held in New York on Monday, 21 December 1981, at 4.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Olara A. OTUNNU (Uganda).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, France, German Democratic Republic, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Niger, Panama, Philippines, Spain, Tunisia, Uganda, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2321)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Date of elections to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice (S/14799)

The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Date of elections to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice (S/14799)

1. The PRESIDENT: Members of the Council have before them document S/14799, which contains a note by the Secretary-General.
2. The recent death, on 12 December, of Judge Abdullah El-Erian has created a vacancy in the International Court of Justice that has to be filled.
3. I am sure that I am expressing the sentiments of all the members of the Council in extending sincere condolences to the delegation of Egypt on this sad occasion.
4. Judge El-Erian was educated at Cairo, Harvard and Columbia Universities, and lectured at Cairo University from 1943 to 1961. From 1959 to 1968, he was Director of the Legal and Treaty Department of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1968 to 1979, he served as Deputy Permanent Representative of his country to the United Nations, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva and then Ambassador to France and Switzerland. He had been a member of the International Court of Justice since February 1979, and his term of office would have ended in February 1982.

5. His loss has been deeply felt by the Government and the people of Egypt, by the International Court of Justice and by the international community.

6. Under Article 14 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, the Security Council is required to fix a date for the election to fill any vacancy in the Court. Members of the Council have before them in document S/14809 the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of consultations.

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

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously (resolution 499 (1981)).

Statement by the President regarding the 2306th meeting

8. The PRESIDENT: I wish to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The President of the Security Council has been informed by the Secretariat that following the 2306th meeting of the Security Council, on 5 November 1981, devoted to the election of five members of the International Court of Justice, a further examination of the ballots established that an error had inadvertently been made in the tally of votes on the first ballot.

"As the final result of the voting would have remained the same, the Council confirms that the result of the balloting announced at the conclusion of the 2306th meeting remains valid."

Statements by representatives of outgoing members

9. The PRESIDENT: As it appears that this may be the last formal meeting of the Council for the current year, I propose to call on members who wish to speak before I adjourn this meeting.

10. Mr. MUÑOZ LEDO (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, you have called us together this afternoon to adopt a decision within

our competence concerning the date on which a member of the International Court of Justice will be elected to replace Judge Abdullah El-Erian, whose passing saddens us. You have sought to resolve at the same time, with the tact and skill that you have so frequently shown, the matter relating to the inadvertent error made in tallying the votes in the first ballot in the election of five members to the Court on 5 November.

11. My delegation particularly thanks you for the care that you have shown in dealing with this matter. My Government's request that the Council take a decision on it was motivated solely by a concern to safeguard the prestige of this body and to see that its actions were worthy of respect. We agree that, in principle, that mistake did not in any way affect the final outcome of the voting, but we feel that only the Council has the competence to confirm or ratify the validity of its decisions. That has now been done through a statement by the President, endorsed by all the members, which is without a doubt a healthy precedent which will help to enhance our authority.

12. We are far along in the year and our agenda is brief. Thus, this meeting will doubtless close the year's work and is a propitious occasion for farewells, auld lang syne and good resolutions.

13. We shall hear a statement by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who today is taking his leave of the Council. We have lived through so many hours with him and shared so many challenges and hopes that the hour of leave-taking, of saying goodbye, is a difficult one.

14. Mr. Secretary-General, you may be sure that what you have done for the Organization and in it has been a daily example of devotion and strict professionalism with a high sense of duty. None of the major or even the minor international problems of the last 10 years was outside your notice; you paid attention to all of them; and there were more than a few crises which were attenuated or resolved because of your timely and prudent intervention. Your image remains associated with the history of our time, and you take with you the well-deserved gratitude of the United Nations and the friendship of those who can call themselves your colleagues. We wish you every success.

15. My delegation also must bid you all farewell, because we are coming to the end of the mandate entrusted to my country by the General Assembly. After two years of sharing intense experiences with other members of the Council, this is a time of genuine emotion for those of us who have had the privilege of taking part in the Council's work on behalf of Mexico.

16. For 34 years—almost the entire life of the Organization—my Government did not consider the possibility of joining the Council. It felt that this body was a too vivid reflection of the imbalance of power in

international relations and the political pressures stemming from bipolarism and hegemonism. My country was put forward to take a Latin American seat on the Council at a time of institutional crisis threatening the Organization towards the end of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Without hesitation we assumed the high responsibility offered us to serve the international community, and we have no regrets at having done so.

17. The Secretary of State for External Relations of Mexico emphasized here, as we began our work [2190th meeting], the risks involved in autonomous action by the Council and stated that for our country membership of this body could be meaningful only if the decision had been taken to act independently and constructively. He pointed out that we were not joining this body as allies, friends or enemies of anyone, but in order to support just causes and to defend principles.

18. Our experience in the Council, which I do not have to rehearse now, has been highly positive. It has shown us that, despite constitutional limitations, strict adherence to the principles of the Charter is compatible with the demands of political compromise which are ineluctable in a body of this nature. This is possible provided that there is a willingness to negotiate and as long as there is no fear of a rupture and as long as our legitimate positions are not sacrificed in the name of false unanimity.

19. I wish to bear witness to the progress signified by the growing solidarity among the developing countries, permanent or non-permanent members of this body. The policy of non-alignment and the innumerable struggles of the Group of 77 are gaining an ever clearer and more influential expression in the decisions of the Council. Otherwise, it would not reflect the aspirations of the international community and would simply become an anachronistic obstacle to the process of making the United Nations more democratic.

20. The highly regarded delegations of the German Democratic Republic, the Niger, the Philippines and Tunisia are also leaving. They, like us, have shared the tribulations of this period and we can rightly call them our classmates. With all of them we achieved a high level of understanding and deepened our political and human relations. May these links endure and increase in other bodies and in renewed struggles.

21. To all those who will continue for a greater or a lesser time here, we wish to express recognition of and gratitude for their unquestionable diplomatic and personal qualities, and we also wish to thank them for the cordial and respectful way in which the Mexican delegation has been treated at all times. We shall certainly work together in joint tasks in the future.

22. We wish to mention in particular Ambassador Jacques Leprette of France, who presided the Council

when our country joined it. He was most helpful to us then, and it is a coincidence that we are leaving together.

23. For a country with such a long past as Mexico has, this has actually been but a day in our lives, but one rich in learning. We hope that our second term in this body has contributed, albeit modestly, to the affirmation of the principles of justice which are the very reason for the existence of the United Nations and which some day must prevail over the recurring dictates of force.

24. Finally, we trust that thanks to the responsible and independent outlook of States, the Council will fulfil its primary duty by working for peace and international détente.

25. Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): On 31 December, the mandate of Tunisia on the Council will come to an end. I dare to believe in the wisdom of the world and its leaders in hoping that they will respect what is generally called the end-of-the-year truce and that they will spare us any fresh threat to international peace and security. If that is indeed the case, then this meeting will be the last in which Tunisia will take part during its term as a member of the Council.

26. Therefore I should like to express my emotion and sadness at having to lose something from which I have benefited for almost two years—the unique privilege of rubbing shoulders almost daily with eminent colleagues whose experience and competence have been for me a source of enrichment. I am deeply grateful to them for that.

27. To those among us who will still bear in 1982 the heavy responsibility of maintaining peace and security throughout the world, I should like to wish all the courage and patience they will certainly need. They may rest assured that, for my part, outside this body, I shall be their spokesman and their defender whenever any impatience is expressed about the persistence of conflicts and tensions around the world. I shall bear witness to the continuing efforts and the vast amount of work—not always visible from outside—that they untiringly do as members of the Council, showing among other things their physical resistance.

28. To those countries like Tunisia, whose terms of office come to an end this year, to our colleagues and friends, the representatives of the German Democratic Republic, Mexico, Niger and the Philippines, whose personal qualities and spirit of friendship and co-operation I have come to value, I wish to say that the perfect co-operation that developed among our delegations will, in other bodies, within the Organization and elsewhere, continue with the same harmony and fruitful results. The well-known talents and broad experience of the representatives of Guyana, Jordan, Poland, Togo and Zaire, who will be replacing us at the

beginning of 1982, are to me both a consolation and a guarantee of the quality of the contribution that they will certainly make to the Council's discussions.

29. Finally, I must mention particularly the exemplary collaboration which developed naturally and continuously among the non-aligned members of the Council. Their preparatory work together, in what is known as the caucus room, made a particularly positive contribution to the work of the Council as a whole.

30. We have learned that the great competence and wide experience of our colleague and friend, the representative of France, Jacques Leprette, have led his Government to appoint him to new and important duties. While bowing to the imperatives of the diplomatic career and congratulating him on this fresh mark of confidence, we cannot but express to him our sincerest regrets at seeing him leave us. We shall miss him, as well as his wise counsel. Indeed, we shall always remember his personal contribution to our work and his skill in finding the succinct and measured formula, which have always been decisive factors in guiding the Council. We wish him every success in his new post.

31. At a recent private meeting, I had an opportunity to tell the members of the Council how sure I was that I was leaving this body having gained the benefit of their friendship, as well as their counsel and experience. I would add today my certainty that the Council, this supreme body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is, despite the criticism it sometimes has to endure, fully capable of discharging that responsibility if only the sacred principles of the Charter remain the only basis for its stands and its action.

32. For its part, Tunisia, which this year is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its admission to the United Nations, and which for all this period, has lived in peace, without provoking or threatening anyone, striving to promote friendship and co-operation with all parts of the world, remains faithful to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and more than ever attached to the principles of the Charter, particularly that concerning the peaceful settlement of disputes. In this spirit, during its term of office on the Council, Tunisia has unswervingly sought to make its contribution to the work of the Organization and to the enhancement of the Organization's prestige and authority.

33. The attainment of this goal has been sought too, with both faith and conviction and with determination and skill, by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, over the last 10 years—10 years in the service of the United Nations in the defence of its principles, and in the service of the international community for greater understanding among peoples and wider co-operation among States. The altogether remarkable

job done by Mr. Waldheim, his firm and courageous stands, his resolute support for just causes, whether in the Middle East, in Africa or elsewhere, are things which Tunisia, an Arab and African country, cannot but stress here before paying him the most cordial and sincere tribute to his lofty accomplishments and limitless devotion.

34. In expressing its thanks and gratitude to the head of the Organization as his term of office draws to a close, the Tunisian delegation is convinced that Mr. Waldheim will remain for the Organization a heeded and sought-after counsellor in all matters relating to international affairs and to peace and stability in the world. The Tunisian delegation is all the more pleased to pay him this tribute, since we are convinced that his activities at the service of the Organization will be pursued with the same determination and conviction by the new Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

35. The personal qualities of Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar and the lofty responsibilities he has held both within his country and outside it, as well as the especially important international missions with which he has been entrusted within the Organization, leave no doubt about his qualifications as a highly regarded interlocutor, respected by all, not only within the Organization but in the various capitals of the world. The great sensitivity shown by Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar to the crucial problems of our time—those of the third world, on which today hang the balance and prosperity of the entire world—is an additional cause for optimism and confidence.

36. May I express here to the new Secretary-General our gratitude for his having inspired these feelings of confidence and optimism, and extend to him our warm congratulations and best wishes for every success in the noble and difficult task awaiting him.

37. In closing, Mr. President, I would beg your indulgence and that of the members of the Council to convey the thanks of the Tunisian delegation to the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Ustinov, to Mr. Ortner and to all their co-workers for the assistance and effective co-operation they have always given us. Our thanks go also to the interpreters, translators and other Conference Services personnel.

38. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): Since it is very likely that this meeting will be the last one in which the German Democratic Republic will participate as a non-permanent member of the Council, I should like to say a few words.

39. In keeping with the principles of the foreign policy of our Socialist State, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic has bent every effort to promote the resolution of the items on our agenda

on the basis of the Charter. We are very gratified to record that during our two-year term of office in the Council, this body has taken a number of constructive decisions.

40. Each of us is aware of why the Council has not always proved able—nor is it always able, in fact—to discharge its responsibilities. The Council is not in any wise to be regarded as a world government, nor should any attempt be made to alter its functions to fit that purpose. The Charter has vested in the Council all the authority it requires for it to discharge the functions vested in it. Making use of that authority seems to me to be one of the most fundamental factors which will make for successful action on the part of the Council.

41. The German Democratic Republic has twice had the honour of occupying the presidency of this body. We should like to avail ourselves of the opportunity which is given us today to thank all our colleagues for their co-operation. We are particularly grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who has at all times supported us with his advice and his actions and whose tireless efforts have quite properly won world-wide recognition. I am very pleased to say that it was indeed a signal honour for me to represent the German Democratic Republic for more than eight years precisely during that term of office. May I, Mr. Secretary-General, offer you heartfelt wishes on your birthday and wish you health and personal well-being and the very best of everything.

42. We should also like very warmly to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Comrade Ustinov, and all his colleagues in the Secretariat for the very kind co-operation which we were able to rely on at all times.

43. In conclusion, may I assure the Council that the representative of the German Democratic Republic intends always to do everything he can to support this supreme body of the United Nations in the discharge of its duties, including its prime responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

44. Mr. President, once again I should like to express to you our gratitude for your diplomatic talents, for your skill in discharging the functions of President of this supreme body. Our delegation admires you.

45. Mr. OUMAROU (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): In a few days, the Niger will be leaving this prestigious body, in whose work we have participated for more than two years in very worthwhile deliberations which have contributed to the peace and security of the world. For us, it is therefore the moment to take a look back and to express a certain feeling of regret—regret that soon we will have to give up the respected title of member of the Council, which we bore like a banner and which in all areas has won us consideration and deference; regret that we must leave a body that we have frequented as a kind of club because its

atmosphere was so egalitarian and its debates so responsible and harmonious; regret, finally, that we must leave when so many problems remain and when we were beginning truly to perceive the substance, the limits and the glimmers of a solution.

46. Nevertheless, in looking back briefly over the past two years, the Niger can express pleasure that it was present at, amongst other events, the independence of Zimbabwe; we are aware of how long that was debated in the Council when that country was still the rebellious Southern Rhodesia. That decolonization is of course the work of the Lancaster House agreement, but it would never have resulted in such success without the combined, vigorous and stubborn work of the United Nations, particularly of the Council. It is always a privilege and a pleasure to be present at those crucial moments when certain milestones in history are being laid. Today Zimbabwe is living in peace and confidence, proof that this was a fine undertaking and well accomplished.

47. Equally, the Niger as a member of the Council went through the difficult and tense time when 52 Americans had to spend 444 days in captivity, despite the pleas of the world and the constant efforts of the Council. History will record that their liberation, although it was finally won through negotiations outside the framework of the United Nations, nevertheless owes it to this body that positions were made more flexible and resistance was overcome by energetic action and repeated initiatives.

48. Finally, we participated in the consideration of numerous crises, particularly in Asia, in South Africa and in the Middle East. Some of those crises are today virtually over, and we are very pleased at that fact. But if others still smoulder and preoccupy us, it is not because we have not made an effort to deal with them. Thus, we very clearly rejected the invasion of Afghanistan and have called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country. We also condemned the actions taken by Israel against the Palestinians, denounced the Israeli plan to make Jerusalem the capital of the Hebrew State, requested international status for that Holy City, demanded that the Arabs be given back their lands which have been occupied since 1967, shared the distress of Lebanon, supported the efforts of that country to preserve its territorial integrity, pleaded for all the States of that region finally to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and, of course, we have deeply deplored the war between Iraq and Iran, which we still regard as being truly useless and superfluous.

49. As for southern Africa, we have stated our attachment to the unconditional independence of Namibia, as laid down in resolution 435 (1978), and we deeply deplored the failure of the Geneva talks, which means that this Territory still continues, as we reach the end of the year 1981, to suffer South Africa's presence, persecution and exploitation. We have also proclaimed

our opposition to the inhuman policy of *apartheid*, which has prevented the black South African majority from coming into its own or recovering its dignity. We have rejected the policy of bantustanization, expressed our solidarity with the South-West Africa People's Organization, the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, and we have vigorously condemned South Africa for its acts of sabotage and aggression against the front-line States.

50. I should like now to express the gratitude and appreciation of my delegation to all the present members of the Council who did us the honour of giving us their friendship and whose unanimous esteem and active assistance helped us considerably in approaching the problems before us and evaluating the facts. Special mention is due the permanent members of the Council: Mrs. Kirkpatrick of the United States, who has felicitously introduced a new sensibility in the Council and whose frankness and firmness are fully equal to the role of her great country; Mr. Troyanovsky of the Soviet Union, who is always very attentive and obliging and whose forcefulness at all times has aroused our admiration; Mr. Leprette of France, whose courtesy has given us reassurance even at the most difficult moments and who only raises his voice to bring to the Council the wisdom and tact of his prestigious country; Mr. Ling Qing of China, discreet but effective, of whom one can say that with him China has resolutely decided to make its weight felt in the United Nations; Sir Anthony Parsons of the United Kingdom, open-minded and pragmatic, whose level-headedness and sureness of touch have always made an appreciable contribution to the work of the Council. From each of these representatives my delegation has learned a great deal which will certainly inform our future contribution to the work of the United Nations.

51. Finally, I should like to say a few words about Mr. Waldheim, our dynamic Secretary-General who will soon be leaving that office after having brilliantly and conscientiously discharged his functions for 10 years, 10 years which have made an indelible mark on the United Nations and of which the least we can say is that they have considerably enhanced the Organization's prestige and universality. In discharging his functions, Mr. Waldheim has been not only the distinguished head of the United Nations, but the servant and friend of all continents, of all peoples and of all countries. Always ready to place himself at the service of peace and understanding among nations, he has carried out his task with grace, self-sacrifice and dignity. Today, we can say that he fully deserves the thanks of the world and of all nations. I hope that he will regard these words as expressing the sincere and unfailing gratitude of the Republic of Niger.

52. In conclusion, I should like to address sincere thanks to the members of the Secretariat entrusted with Security Council affairs. Their contribution to our work has always been appreciated, and my delegation is grateful to them for it.

53. Mr. YANGO (Philippines): As this may be the last opportunity for my delegation to speak during our term of membership on the Council, I should like to express, on behalf of General Carlos P. Romulo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, who headed the Philippine delegation to the Council during the months of July 1980 and September 1981, our deep appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity afforded us to serve on the Council.

54. I must acknowledge that it was a sobering experience for us to work with all the members of the Council over the past two years. The co-operation extended to my delegation and the spirit of harmony and unity we witnessed in the cause of the principles and objectives of the United Nations will not easily be forgotten. We did our best to work for the sake of those principles and objectives and to contribute what we could, conscious always of our responsibility as a member of the Council to discharge our mandate of preserving and maintaining international peace and security. Clearly, we treasure in our hearts the many experiences we have gained by virtue of our membership on the Council. We have been afforded the rare opportunity of participating in discussions on major questions affecting the work of this important organ of the United Nations. We have been privy to the anxieties and apprehensions of the Council in difficult circumstances. We have benefited enormously from all those experiences.

55. We feel that it could be said that we have done our duty, and so today we bid farewell to our colleagues on the Council with a feeling of self-satisfaction and of great friendship for you, Mr. President, and for all our esteemed colleagues and our co-workers in the Secretariat, all of whom have helped the Council to discharge its responsibilities.

56. We understand that the Secretary-General will make a statement before the Council adjourns. In that connection, we should like to make some brief remarks. For the past 10 years, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, has been at the forefront of the Organization in its efforts to solve the many complex and nagging problems confronting the world. Mr. Waldheim not only has served with the utmost skill and competence, but also has contributed much towards the achievement of the lofty principles for which the United Nations was created. He leaves an indelible imprint on the Organization, a body composed of numerous countries with diverse interests and concerns. Yet he has skilfully managed to reconcile those divergent interests and to echo those concerns in an effective and graceful manner. He has always been sensitive to the genuine aspirations of the developing countries. For those reasons, we owe him a profound sense of gratitude. His love for the Organization truly reflects his staunch commitment to the cause of universal peace and understanding among all countries and peoples. As he leaves us, we wish him success in his future endeavours.

57. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) (*interpretation from French*): Although I represent a country which is not an outgoing member of the Council, I should like to say a few words now that the time has come for me to leave the Council. They are words of gratitude—gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your mastery of the function which you assumed so short a time ago; your career is already moving on a rising curve of success. On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I had the pleasure and the honour to pay a tribute to you, Mr. Secretary-General, during a memorable and solemn ceremony last week in the General Assembly. I should like to express my gratitude also, and above all, to you my dear colleagues, who for five years have given me your co-operation, your friendship, your support. I recall that, as Ambassador Muñoz Ledo mentioned just now, I was President of the Security Council when those of our friends who are leaving us today joined the Council to give us the benefit of their experience and their assistance. You have bid me farewell in such warm terms that it would be pleasant to remain to hear more.

58. I should like to thank the officials of the Council, as well as their assistants, who have helped me throughout these years. I thank the interpreters and translators who have made my statements intelligible when they might not have been, the verbatim reporters, whose patience is endless, and others who work silently and efficiently for the Council. I also thank all those I have overlooked, who will, I hope, forgive me. To all of you, at the time when my five-year mission is coming to an end, I should like to say that the experiences I have had in the United Nations, in the service of peace, have been the most stimulating and engrossing of my entire diplomatic career.

59. I wish to extend to all of you my warmest wishes for the future. Farewell.

60. The PRESIDENT: I now call upon the Secretary-General.

Statement by the Secretary-General

61. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Let me at the outset express my profound gratitude to the members of the Council who have spoken today for the kind words they addressed to me. Their remarks are indeed heartening to me and reflect the close co-operation that has always existed between the Council and me during my term of office.

62. Since this may well be the last time that I have the opportunity to address the Council, I should like to conclude by making a few remarks on the work of the Council and, in particular, on the relationship between the Council and the Secretary-General.

63. In the 10 years that I have been Secretary-General, I have derived great satisfaction from the close working relationship I have always enjoyed with the

Council and its members. Especially in times of gathering tension and crisis, it is essential that this close relationship be maintained, not only in order to avoid misunderstandings or to keep the Council fully informed of developments but also to ensure that the Council, on the one hand, and the Secretary-General, on the other, complement each other's actions and act with unity of purpose.

64. I have always kept in close touch with the President of the Council on current matters. The President of the Council exercises an extremely important element of leadership, especially when the Council is confronted with difficult problems. It is therefore very necessary that the Secretary-General make available to the Council the information that is available to him, any suggestions that he may have for obtaining such additional information as may be required and any informal advice that he may find appropriate to offer for dealing with current difficulties. Sometimes the Secretary-General himself can take certain actions—short of, or including, formal notification under Article 99 of the Charter—which further the purposes of the Council and can contribute to the solution of problems. At such times also it is essential that the Council and the Secretary-General act in concert.

65. The development of the system of consultations in the Council has, I think, provided a useful new element in its work. It has also proved very helpful to me, both as a means of keeping the Council informed and as an informal means of consulting with the Council on action to be taken. I have always highly appreciated those consultations; I think they constitute great progress in the Council's working methods.

66. In the past 10 years, we have been through a number of serious crises. The Middle East war of 1973 evoked a highly effective response from the Council in securing the cessation of hostilities and putting on the ground a peace-keeping force. That episode was an excellent example of the way the Council and the Secretary-General and his staff can act together and speedily in a dangerous crisis. That episode had another and broader result in providing the occasion for the formulation of a working basis for peace-keeping operations which has proved very useful in subsequent peace-keeping operations.

67. I do not wish to make a list of all the important and rather difficult questions with which the Council has dealt in the last 10 years. I would, however, particularly single out the crisis in south Lebanon in 1978 and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations Interim Force, and also the Council's handling, again in concert with the Secretary-General, of the extremely difficult case of the hostages in Iran.

68. The Council is a good example of an evolving international institution. Each chapter of its history adds something to its experience and contributes to the evolution of its working methods and reputation.

That is why the actions that the Council takes or, on occasion, fails to take both create precedents of vital importance for its future authority and effectiveness. As I said in my farewell statement to the General Assembly,² the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary function of the United Nations—a goal of which we must never lose sight.

69. It has therefore been a particular privilege and challenge to me to play some part in the evolution of this extremely important organ of the United Nations. I like to think that whatever small contributions we may all have made during this period will add something useful to the structure of peace which we are trying to build in the United Nations.

70. May I conclude by expressing to you personally, Mr. President, and to all the members of the Council my warm appreciation for your co-operation and most of all for your friendship. You personally, Mr. President, have shown great skill, clear-headedness and objectivity in dealing with an unusual number of very complex and difficult questions. I referred to them only recently during the luncheon that you so kindly gave for us. I think the United Nations is lucky to have people of your calibre—and, if I may say so, especially young people of your calibre—to serve it. I wish you and all my friends in the Security Council all success in your vital task.

—Statement by the President

71. The PRESIDENT: The life of the Security Council moves in rapid annual cycles, beginning each January and ending in December. In January the Council welcomes new members, and in December it has to bid farewell to the outgoing non-permanent members.

72. This December we feel even more acutely the pains of separation, not only because five non-permanent members are leaving the Council and two of our senior colleagues are departing from New York altogether, but also because the Secretary-General is taking leave of the Organization after a decade of very distinguished and dedicated service.

73. I should therefore like to take this opportunity to pay a very special and well-deserved tribute to our friend Mr. Kurt Waldheim.

74. When the history of international relations over the last decade is written, the name of Mr. Waldheim will be associated with the most important events of that period. Indeed, I cannot think of any major international concern of our time in which the United Nations under Mr. Waldheim's leadership has not left an enduring impact. Mr. Waldheim's masterly use of quiet diplomacy has turned that art into a most effective tool for resolution of conflicts. He never left a stone unturned in his efforts to weave a common thread of understanding between those with otherwise con-

flicting interests. His personal compassion enabled him to understand better the enormous suffering that afflicts our world. Under Mr. Waldheim's direction, the United Nations has made great strides in its efforts to alleviate this suffering by extending generous help to many of our nations in the fields of economic and social development, disaster relief and health care.

75. Coming as I do from Africa, I cannot forget that it was during this last decade that the peoples of Africa, with the encouragement and support of the United Nations, were able to dismantle some of the most entrenched bulwarks of settler colonialism on that continent. Mr. Waldheim has been a reliable and consistent friend of Africa.

76. Mr. Waldheim, you have served the international community well. With a quiet determination and a sturdy spirit, you have borne 10 years of exacting service with remarkable grace and good cheer. A decade ago you came to the service of the United Nations as a diplomat from Austria; today you leave the Organization as a statesman who belongs to the world.

77. I wish you and Mrs. Waldheim many blessings and a lot of happiness in your new life.

78. I must say a word about two of our senior colleagues who have been true pillars of the Council. They not only are leaving the Council now but will soon be departing from the Organization altogether. Ambassador Jacques Leprette of France has represented his country in the Council for five years. He will soon leave New York to take up the important tasks of representing his country in Brussels, another hectic centre of multilateral diplomacy. Ambassador Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, after representing his country at the United Nations for eight years, two of them spent in the Security Council, will soon return to Berlin to continue his important functions as Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country. We wish both of them all success in these important endeavours. I am sure that, as they have done in New York, in their new responsibilities they will continue to build bridges among the countries and peoples of the world.

79. I am sad to see that no less than four of my colleagues in the non-aligned caucus whose friendship and solidarity have been a constant source of strength to me are leaving the Council this month.

80. I shall miss the benefits of Ambassador Taïeb Slim's wide experience and seasoned judgement. I have said this before, but I do not mind repeating it now, that I remain grateful to him for his help, which has made my present tasks more bearable. I shall always remember with admiration Ambassador Yango's steadfast commitment, his generous spirit and his patient understanding in difficult times. We shall miss the contribution of the only delegation within the non-aligned caucus which is an original signatory of the Charter of the United Nations. I cannot forget the kindness of my dear brother Ambassador Idé Oumarou of the Niger. From the outset he took me to the quiet shade of the baobab tree and there, like a good African elder, he initiated me into the ways of the Council. I have learned much from his wisdom and example. I know that this is only the beginning of our long common journey in the service of Africa. I shall miss very much the valued advice of Ambassador Porfirio Muñoz Ledo of Mexico. His boundless energy and probing mind were always a rich source of inspiration to us all. He has embodied so well the tradition of ideas and innovation which is the heritage of his great country.

81. Finally, may I say that I look forward to 1 January 1982, when I can pass on my present responsibilities to my good friend Ambassador Oleg Troyanovsky of the Soviet Union, whose broad shoulders are so much better suited to carry the delightful burdens of this office.

82. I wish you all very happy and restful holidays.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

NOTES

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Plenary Meetings, 98th meeting.*

² *Ibid.*, 105th meeting.

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