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1342nd MEETING: 24 MAY 1967

NEW YORK

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 24 May 1967, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. LIU Chieh (China).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, India, Japan, Mali, Nigeria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1342)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902).

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902)

1. The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decision taken at the 1341st meeting, this morning, I shall now, with the consent of the Council, invite the representatives of Israel and the United Arab Republic to take places at the Council table in order to participate without vote in the discussion.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. G. Rafael (Israel) and Mr. M. A. El Kony (United Arab Republic) took places at the Council table.

2. The PRESIDENT: Members of the Council have before them copies of a draft resolution presented this afternoon by the delegations of Canada and Denmark [S/7905]. The Council will now continue its discussion of the question which it has included in its agenda.

3. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): The United States strongly supported the request made by Canada and Denmark last evening for an immediate meeting of the Security Council. We did so out of our grave concern over the sharp increase of tension between Israel and its Arab neighbours since the Secretary-General's departure, and out of our belief that the Secretary-General should be accorded all possible support in the difficult peace mission on which he is now embarked.

4. When the Secretary-General announced his intention to undertake this critically important journey, my Govern-

ment immediately gave him our full backing. We agreed with his assessment of the gravity of the situation when he said on 19 May, in his report to the Council: "the current situation in the Near East is more disturbing, indeed I may say more menacing, than at any time since the fall of 1956" [S/7896, para. 19].

5. We, like others in the Council, would normally have awaited a further report from the Secretary-General before convening a meeting of the Council. However, since the Secretary-General made his report—indeed, in the two days since he departed for Cairo—conditions in the area have taken a still more menacing turn because of a threat to customary international rights which have been exercised for many years in the Gulf of Aqaba. This has led us to the belief that the Council, in the exercise of its responsibilities, should meet without delay and take steps to relieve tension in the area.

6. In his report to the Council the Secretary-General correctly singled out two areas as "particularly sensitive". One was the Gaza Strip. The other was Sharm El Sheikh, which stands at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba.

7. The position of the United States on these matters was publicly stated yesterday by President Johnson, and I shall not take up the time of the Council to reiterate what he explicitly said.

8. We are well aware, of course, of the long-standing grievances, some of them of many years' standing, on all sides of this complex dispute. Whoever is familiar with the area knows that, regrettably, these underlying problems are not going to be resolved tomorrow. The cause of peace which we here are pledged to serve will not be advanced by raking over the past or by attempting over-ambitiously to settle the future. Our objective today should be more limited, but none the less of crucial importance in the present circumstances. It should be, very simply, to express full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to work out a peaceful accommodation of the situation. Accordingly, we should call upon all States to avoid any action which might exacerbate the already tense situation which prevailed when the Secretary-General departed on his mission.

9. Judging from what we heard at this morning's meeting, there should be no difficulty in obtaining the agreement of all members for this course of action by the Council. Surely it is the plain obligation of the parties, as Members of the United Nations committed to the cause of peace, to ensure that there is no interference with existing international rights which have long been enjoyed and exercised in the

area by many nations. Such interference would menace the mission of the Secretary-General and could abort his efforts to work out a peaceful accommodation.

10. We are fully aware, as are all the members of the Council, of the long-standing underlying problems in the area. But no problem of this character can or should be settled by war-like acts. The United States opposition to the use of aggression and violence of any kind, on any side of this situation, over the years, is a matter of record. As our actions over many years have demonstrated, and as President Johnson reaffirmed in his statement yesterday: "the United States is firmly committed to the support of the political independence and territorial integrity of all"—and I emphasize "all"—"the nations in the area. The United States strongly opposes aggression by anyone in the area, in any form, overt or clandestine."

11. My country's devotion to that principle has been demonstrated concretely—not only in the Suez crisis, where we stood against old allies, but consistently through the years. In fact, in the most recent debate in this Council involving that area, we made very clear the United States commitment to the solution of all problems of the area by exclusively peaceful means and by recourse to the armistice machinery.

12. Only two days ago many of us here had occasion, during the debate on the peace-keeping question in the General Assembly, to speak of the vital interest which all Powers, great and small alike, share in maintaining an impartial international instrument of stability—an instrument which, when danger and discord arise, can transcend narrow self-interest and put power at the service of peace. That instrument is the United Nations; and above all it is the Security Council, with its primary Charter responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

13. The view is sometimes stated that the smaller Powers, because they are the most vulnerable, are the real beneficiaries of United Nations efforts to maintain peace, whereas the great Powers "can take care of themselves". My country does not accept this view. Nobody questions the vital interest of the smaller Powers in this activity; indeed, they have manifested this interest time and time again by their votes and by their contributions. But neither should anybody suppose that the exercise by the United Nations of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security does not serve the basic interests of the great Powers also. Great Powers have both interests and responsibilities in this matter—and the greater the Power the greater the responsibility.

14. In this spirit, I am authorized to announce that the United States, both within and outside the United Nations, is prepared to join with other great Powers—the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France—in a common effort to restore and maintain peace in the Middle East.

15. All must join in the search for peace: the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the great Powers. Both separately and together, let us work in this common cause which so vitally affects our own interests and those of all the world.

16. Mr. MATSUI (Japan): Mr. President, first of all I should like to extend my welcome to you, as the President of the Security Council for this month of May. You have already, as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of China, assumed the Presidency of the Security Council with great distinction in the past and I am confident that under your able guidance the Security Council will achieve fruitful results.

17. The Japanese delegation has followed with very great concern the recent developments in the Near East and, as the Secretary-General described it in his report of 19 May, the "increasingly dangerous deterioration along the borders" [S/7896, para. 1] in that area. We fully share the deep anxiety expressed by the Secretary-General with regard to the situation. We believe that it is a matter of urgency for the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to discharge its responsibilities.

18. I have no intention to go into details of the past history of the relations between Israel and Arab countries. I only wish to say at this juncture that the presence of the United Nations Emergency Force has served for more than ten years in the past as a deterrent and restraining influence for the preservation of tranquillity in the area. Now that the order for the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force has been given, the foremost and most important consideration is for all Governments concerned to exercise maximum restraint, scrupulously avoiding any action of any kind which might lead to further deterioration of the present grave situation in the Near East.

19. The confrontations now existing there must not be permitted to escalate into armed conflict. The utmost caution and restraint is essential not only with regard to land borders and air space, but also with regard to the waterways in the area. The maintenance of international peace and security in the Near East is not a matter that concerns only the countries in the area. It is a matter that concerns the entire world. The Governments directly involved in the present situation certainly do realize this. Their responsibilities and obligations under the Charter and relevant international agreements extend beyond themselves and involve the interests of the entire international community.

20. At the same time, all Member States, and particularly the members of the Security Council, have the responsibility and the obligation to do everything in their power to help maintain peace in the area. Speaking for Japan, I pledge our fullest co-operation to this end.

21. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): I take the floor briefly again at this time to introduce and to explain the draft resolution which has been circulated as document S/7905. Mindful of the concern expressed by most members of the Security Council in the discussion so far, about the need to reinforce the mission of the Secretary-General and to do nothing to exacerbate an already dangerous situation in the Middle East, I have been authorized, on behalf of the Governments of Denmark and Canada, to introduce this straightforward, impartial draft resolution for the consideration of members of the Security Council.

22. I think the Council will find that the language is taken almost word for word from the statement which the representative of Denmark made earlier today [1341st meeting], and it expresses a point of view with which I fully agree. The draft resolution, like our joint letter requesting inscription of this item on the agenda of the Council, is, I believe, clear in language, limited in scope, and non-controversial in motive.

23. In the draft resolution it is proposed that the Council should, first, express its support for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to pacify the situation; second, request all members to do nothing to worsen the situation; and third, invite the Secretary-General to report to the Council upon his return so that we may continue our consideration of the matter in this forum.

24. We believe that the draft resolution would have a useful effect in extending the moral influence of the Security Council, in the present situation, in support of the Secretary-General's effort and in support of the preservation of peace in the Near East, while reducing the possibility of unnecessary controversy among us.

25. I would suggest, therefore, that we should consult immediately following this meeting, with the hope that members of the Council might attain unanimity on this matter as soon as possible.

26. Mr. SEYDOUX (France) (*translated from French*): France is staunchly devoted to the maintenance of peace in the Middle East. From the beginning of the present crisis, it has constantly urged moderation on all the parties involved, appealing to them to avoid embarking on a process of escalation and, above all, warning them against the danger of turning the crisis into a military confrontation fraught with deplorable consequences for all.

27. It has to be noted, at the present juncture in the march of events, that reason and moderation have thus far not prevailed. Nevertheless, the French Government continues to rely on the sense of responsibility of the leaders of the countries concerned towards their peoples, and on their resolve to safeguard peace. The crisis has clearly reached a new stage with the announcement of the measures taken by the Government of the United Arab Republic to prevent the passage of shipping through the Gulf of Aqaba.

28. As to the role which the Security Council can play, the French Government recognizes the fact that the Council can undertake no action so long as the principal Powers are not in agreement among themselves. For the moment, therefore, it can do no more than approach the parties with an appeal to reason and ask them to refrain from taking any action that might endanger peace. Assuming that that appeal is heeded, and taking due account of the position of the Powers which bear primary responsibility for peace in the world, the Council could then proceed to discuss the means whereby it could help to bring about a peaceful solution of the present dispute.

29. Lord CARADON (United Kingdom): Since other members of this Council have referred to the question of Chinese representation, I wish merely to say that the

position of my Government in this matter has repeatedly been made perfectly plain and has not changed, and I do not wish or need to repeat it at this time.

30. I wish to speak very briefly today, and I shall ask the permission of the President to speak again more fully as the debate proceeds.

31. I should say straight away that my Government welcomed and supported the request made by Canada and Denmark for an urgent meeting of the Security Council. Here perhaps I might be permitted to speak a very friendly word to the representative of the Soviet Union. It is certainly not for me to give advice to such an experienced and respected representative. But with reference to what he said this morning, I would say that I was always taught not to impute bad motives to others. We should never think of doing any such thing to him; his motives are always crystal clear. Indeed, his motives are, if I may say so, as transparent as his proverbs are obscure.

32. No one who has followed the events of the past ten days could possibly doubt either the danger or the urgency of the situation. Both the danger and the urgency were made very clear in the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and to the Security Council. They have certainly been made graver still by subsequent events. At a time such as this, the Security Council must immediately accept its responsibility and show at once that it is determined to discharge it; it is a responsibility denied by none.

33. Whenever there is a danger of international conflict, none of us questions that the Security Council has a duty to take hold of the situation, to meet without delay and always to be ready to take action. We rightly pride ourselves on being able to meet at the shortest possible notice, and it is difficult to imagine circumstances more urgent and more menacing, as the Secretary-General has forcefully reminded us, than those which now demand our instant attention in the Middle East. We in the Security Council all have an inescapable obligation.

34. Moreover, the Secretary-General is today engaged in vital discussions in Cairo. We welcomed and immediately supported his decision to make this effort to keep the peace, to reduce tensions and to search for measures which can prevent conflict in future. The first aim which he and we must set ourselves is to counsel restraint and to keep the peace, so that time can be provided for new plans to be worked out for the future. It is well that as he pursues his mission, he should know that he can rely on our support. Once that first task of holding the situation and preventing conflict has been accomplished, there will be many purposes to be pursued, amongst them reduction of confronting forces and establishment of continuing, effective United Nations measures.

35. What has been done in the past by the United Nations Emergency Force, the Mixed Armistice Commission and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization has been proved to be salutary, effective and essential, and we have paid tribute to all those who have taken part in those successful peace-keeping endeavours. My Government

would prefer to see the earliest re-establishment of the kind of United Nations operation which so successfully operated in Sinai and in Gaza. But it also believes that alternative means could be effective. It is to that question that we should direct our urgent attention.

36. In addition, there is one most urgent and most dangerous issue of all: the question of the right of passage for shipping of all nationalities through the Strait of Tiran. The maintenance of the provisions of the Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea¹ dealing with international navigation between the high seas and territorial waters is of the gravest concern to my Government, as it must be to all engaged in international trade. On this subject my Prime Minister made an important statement today in which he reaffirmed what was said by a representative of my Government in the General Assembly ten years ago. These are the words he used:

“It is the view of Her Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom that the Strait of Tiran must be regarded as an international waterway through which the vessels of all nations have a right of passage”.²

37. These, then, are the questions that we have to tackle together. First, how can tension be relieved and immediate dangers of conflict be removed? Second, how can the rights of free and unimpeded passage through the Strait of Tiran be guaranteed and assured? Third, how can effective United Nations measures and machinery to keep the peace and prevent violence and conflict throughout the whole area best be worked out for the future? Fourth, what new measures and additional action can be taken to prevent such dangers to the peace from recurring in future years?

38. Those are all matters which we shall discuss as we proceed with our debate. I do not wish or need to discuss them immediately. For the present, I wish only to repeat that, to deal with these problems, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General, we welcome the calling of the Security Council to reinforce his efforts, and we undertake to take a full part in the urgent task on which the Council is now engaged.

39. Never has the United Nations faced a greater challenge or a greater opportunity. We have an opportunity now, if we work together in understanding and in good faith, not only to lift the threat of conflict from the Middle East, but to restore the trust placed in the United Nations as an effective force for keeping the peace of the world.

40. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): Fellow-members of the Security Council, at the beginning of this morning’s meeting we drew attention to the fact that the Soviet Union delegation saw no adequate grounds for such haste in convening the Security Council; and having heard the statements of the representatives of the Western Powers, we have even more reason for insisting that certain forces are artificially heating up the atmosphere for reasons which

¹ Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, signed at Geneva, 28 April 1958.

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Plenary Meetings*, vol. II, 667th meeting, para. 13.

have nothing to do with genuine concern for peace and security in the Near East.

41. It is particularly significant that the statements made here today, from this rostrum, by various representatives of NATO countries contain a note of obvious disappointment and nostalgia for a foreign land in which they had quite recently stationed their troops and from which, alas, in accordance with the inalienable right of a sovereign State, they were asked to get out while the going was good.

42. The United States representative and, after him, the United Kingdom representative have used many fine-sounding words and portrayed their concern for peace in the Near East in glowing colours; but, all this was merely verbiage, merely paint and paper. We know that their words do not correspond to their deeds. If Washington and London really wished to reduce tension in the Near East, instead of indulging in wordy statements, they should begin, for instance, by the withdrawal from the Mediterranean of their fleets, which constitute one of the most serious sources of tension in that part of the world.

43. With regard to the reply of my United Kingdom neighbour, Lord Caradon—who, owing to circumstances over which we have no control, happens to be on my left—I should like to say that it would of course be discourteous on our part to ignore the distinguished Lord’s receptiveness to oriental folklore. Needless to say, we noted that despite the British sense of humour, our United Kingdom colleague did not allow a smile to appear on his face, evidently remembering the recent speech made in the General Assembly by one of our friends, who said that whenever the lion bares its fangs, it is unreasonable to suppose that it is smiling.

44. This may, of course, indicate that something is lacking in their education or upbringing, but we all have our shortcomings. Furthermore, it sometimes happens—and I should like to have recourse once again to oriental wisdom—that even monkeys fall from trees.

45. I should now like to draw the attention of members of the Security Council to the Soviet Union’s position regarding the situation in the Near East. That position is, we hope, already well known. Nevertheless, we should like to take this opportunity to restate it.

46. With regard to the recent events in the Near East, the Soviet Union Government, as everyone knows, made the following statement on 23 May 1967, and I should now like to read out the text as issued:

“A situation giving rise to anxiety, from the standpoint of the interests of peace and international security, has been taking shape in the Near East in recent weeks. After the armed attack by Israel forces on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic on 7 April of this year, Israel’s ruling circles continued to intensify the atmosphere of military psychosis in that country. Leading statesmen, including Foreign Minister Eban, openly called for Israel to undertake large-scale ‘punitive’ operations against Syria and to strike it a ‘decisive blow’. The Defence and Foreign Policy Committee of the Knesset (Parliament), in

a decision dated 9 May, granted the Government full powers to conduct military operations against Syria. Israel forces were moved up to the Syrian frontier and placed on a war footing. National mobilization was proclaimed.

“It is quite clear that Israel could not act in this way if it were not for the direct and indirect encouragement it had for its position from certain imperialist circles which seek to bring back colonialist oppression to Arab lands. These circles regard Israel, in the present conditions, as the main force against Arab countries that pursue an independent national policy and resist pressure from imperialism.

“Israel extremists apparently hoped to take Syria by surprise and deal a blow at Syria alone. But they miscalculated. Showing solidarity with the courageous struggle of the Syrian people, who are upholding their independence and sovereign rights, Arab states—the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Algeria, Yemen, Lebanon, Kuwait, Sudan and Jordan—declared their determination to help Syria in the event of an attack by Israel.

“The United Arab Republic, honouring its commitments as an ally for joint defence with Syria, took steps to contain the aggression. Considering that the presence of the United Nations troops in the Gaza area and Sinai Peninsula would in this situation give Israel advantages for staging a military provocation against Arab countries, the Government of the United Arab Republic asked the United Nations to pull its troops out of this area. A number of Arab States voiced their readiness to place their armed forces at the disposal of the joint Arab command to repel Israel aggression.

“As is known, the Government of the USSR warned the Government of Israel, in connexion with the armed provocation of 7 April, that Israel would bear the responsibility for the consequences of its aggressive policy. It would seem that a reasonable approach has not yet triumphed in Tel Aviv. As a result, Israel is once again to blame for a dangerous aggravation of tension in the Near East.

“The question arises: what interests does the State of Israel serve by pursuing such a policy? If they calculate in Tel Aviv that Israel will play the role of a colonial overseer for the imperialist Powers over the peoples of the Arab East, there is no need to prove the groundlessness of such calculations in this age when the peoples of whole continents have shaken off the fetters of colonial oppression and are now building an independent life.

“For decades the Soviet Union has been giving all-round assistance to the peoples of Arab countries in their just struggle for national liberation, against colonialism, and for the advancement of their economy.

“But let no one have any doubts about the fact that should anyone try to unleash aggression in the Near East, he would be met not only by the united strength of Arab countries but also by strong opposition to aggression from the Soviet Union and all peace-loving States.

“It is the firm belief of the Soviet Union that the peoples have no interest in kindling a military conflict in the Near East. It is only a handful of colonial oil monopolies and their hangers-on who can be interested in such a conflict. It is only the forces of imperialism, with Israel following in the wake of their policy, that can be interested in it.

“The Soviet Government keeps a close watch on the developments in the Near East. It proceeds from the fact that the maintenance of peace and security in the area directly adjacent to the Soviet borders meets the vital interests of the peoples of the USSR. Taking due account of the situation, the Soviet Union is doing and will continue to do everything possible to prevent a violation of peace and security in the Near East and safeguard the legitimate rights of the peoples.”

47. Such is the position of the Soviet Union and such is our assessment of the situation in the Near East.

48. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the United Arab Republic.

49. Mr. EL KONY (United Arab Republic): It is indeed amazing that when a country like ours exercises its inherent rights and discharges its fundamental responsibility in safeguarding its security, defending its people and upholding its obligations towards the Arab nation, it should become the target of a large and ugly campaign of distortion and abuse. While this is happening, the world witnesses, as it has been witnessing for the last several years and especially very recently, other Powers—in fact, those same Powers which have engaged during this week in that campaign of slander—carrying out an intensive and brutal policy beyond their boundaries and far away from their own territories, against all human standards and most definitely against the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of human behaviour.

50. I need not at this stage remind the Council of those actions and policies since they are widely criticized and, to put it mildly, have become the subject of the indignation of the world community.

51. Being fully aware of the tactics and manoeuvres of such conniving Powers, we are not surprised by their reaction; such an immediate reaction on their part can never be a cause of surprise to us.

52. Meanwhile we cannot but express our feeling of indignation when we see that other Member States have been subject to pressures exerted upon them for the sake of attaining selfish and derogatory interests. The world never has entertained and never will entertain any respect for anyone who agrees to undertake such a task. It is regrettable that the Governments of Canada and Denmark saw fit to act on behalf of both the United States and the United Kingdom. It is indeed ironic that the two countries I have mentioned—Canada and Denmark—which have championed the submission of this question to the Security Council in the name of peace and security, have acted adversely in failing to support the role of the United Nations in South West Africa. That position was enjoined,

as we all know, by the United States and the United Kingdom.

53. The countries to which I refer have led the bandwagon of hostile propaganda against my country. They render the situation far worse when they act in full cognizance of our legitimate and rightful claims, while at the same time deliberately ignoring the consistent provocations by Israel.

54. Do we really need to remind anyone of the threats and intimidations posed by Israel? Why was the voice of Canada and Denmark mute when Mr. Eshkol threatened time and again to invade the Syrian Arab Republic? Where was the so-called conscious concern of those two Governments when Israel raided and demolished the village of As Samu in Jordan, inflicting suffering and torture upon its peaceful inhabitants? Do we need to repeat ourselves by reminding members of this Council of the violations, the disrespect and disregard of the numerous resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, ignored by Israel? The tragedy of Palestine, the mutilation, uprooting and expulsion of its lawful inhabitants still glare at everyone. It gives us reason to wonder why such a defiant attitude on the part of Israel passes unnoticed, while the exercise of our legitimate rights becomes the subject of such vehement attacks. Israel prides itself on being in the unique position of having drawn five condemnations by this important body.

55. Time does not permit me to enumerate the many acts of aggression committed by Israel against neighbouring Arab countries. The attacks to which I have referred could not have been attempted by Israel without outside encouragement and support. Such support invariably alternates between one source and another. As we see in the present case, it comes from the United Kingdom and the United States.

56. Speaking in all fairness, would any member sitting round this table agree to ignore such threats if he were placed in our position? With this in mind, we find it unnecessary and uncalled for to remind Member States that it is our legitimate right, as well as our national obligation and inescapable duty, to rise up in self-defence in the face of such overt provocation.

57. By dramatizing the situation today, they are seeking to create an atmosphere of anxiety to serve their own interest and to cover up any future designs for intervention. This is reminiscent of what we have recently read and heard regarding the desire of the United States to establish itself as the "international policeman", to serve its selfish ends. There have been numerous references to the policies of the United States in many areas of the world which have been fittingly described as an expression of the "arrogance of power".

58. This overt provocation to which I have referred makes it incumbent upon us to face our responsibility and never to shirk our duty of self-defence.

59. The draft resolution [S/7905] which has been introduced by the representatives of Canada and Denmark is, in our opinion, an attempt to sabotage the mission of the Secretary-General.

60. That was my preliminary intervention. I reserve my right to elaborate at length on the various aspects of this problem during the course of the debate.

61. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Israel.

62. Mr. RAFAEL (Israel): The Government of Israel has on various occasions in recent months brought to the attention of the Security Council its growing concern over the worsening situation in the Near East. A campaign of ever increasing violence has been carried out against my country. These acts of hostility are being organized, supported, financed and planned by neighbouring countries. This campaign is accompanied and bolstered by a ceaseless torrent of threats against the territorial integrity, the political independence and the very existence of Israel. This incessant hostility has attained in the past few days new momentum and dimensions.

63. The representative of the Soviet Union has read to the Council a TASS statement which included a series of sweeping and unfounded allegations against my country. My delegation may choose on a later occasion to deal with that and similar statements. At this stage I will take up only one point from the list the representative of the Soviet Union has presented to the Council. He said that Israel had, prior to the recent Arab troop movements, massed large forces along the Israel-Syrian borders. The unfounded nature of that allegation is fully established by the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council as recently as 19 May; paragraph 9 of that report says:

"There have been in the past few days persistent reports about troop movements and concentrations, particularly on the Israel side of the Syrian border. These have caused anxiety and at times excitement. The Government of Israel very recently has assured me that there are no unusual Israel troop concentrations or movements along the Syrian line, that there will be none and that no military action will be initiated by the armed forces of Israel unless such action is first taken by the other side. Reports from observers of the Truce Supervision Organization have confirmed the absence of troop concentrations and significant troop movements on both sides of the line." [S/7896.]

64. On the other hand, massive troop concentrations have been built up in the Sinai peninsula, along the southern borders of Israel. The United Nations Emergency Force, which for ten years has assisted in maintaining stability there, was peremptorily evicted. All these steps were part of an over-all plan, the design of which is now unfolding. It is approaching its culmination in the threats of President Nasser to interfere with shipping in the Strait of Tiran at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. That announcement was made while the Secretary-General of the United Nations was on his way to Cairo on his mission to preserve the peace. Before the Secretary-General had an opportunity to meet President Nasser, it has been reported now from Cairo that Egypt has decided to initiate operational measures to interfere with the freedom of navigation in the international waterway, the Strait of Tiran. According to these reports, these measures include laying mines in the inter-

national waterway and opening fire on vessels which do not submit to search.

65. As the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Eshkol, stated yesterday in the Knesset, interference with shipping to and from Israel, and the Israel port of Eilat, would be an act of aggression. The Prime Minister said:

“Every interference with the freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and in the Strait of Tiran constitutes a gross violation of international law, an infringement of the sovereign rights of other nations and an act of aggression against Israel.

“ . . .

“From 1957 onwards other Governments, including the main maritime Powers, publicly committed themselves to exercise their rights to freedom of navigation in the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba. Indeed what is now being challenged is a solemn and clear-cut international obligation. Its implementation will have a decisive bearing on international security and law. This is, therefore, a fateful hour, not only for Israel but for the whole world.

“ . . .

“In the face of this situation, the Government of Israel will maintain the policy which was enunciated in the General Assembly of the United Nations on 1 March 1957 by the then Foreign Minister of Israel, Mrs. Golda Meir.”

66. Mrs. Meir stated on that occasion:

“The Gulf of Aqaba comprehends international waters and . . . no nation has the right to prevent free and innocent passage in the Gulf and through the Strait giving access thereto, in accordance with the generally accepted definition of those terms in the law of the sea.

“Israel is resolved on behalf of vessels of Israel registry to exercise the right of free and innocent passage and is prepared to join with others to secure universal respect of this right. Israel will protect ships of its own flag exercising the right of free and innocent passage on the high seas and in international waters.

“Interference, by armed force, with ships of Israel flag exercising free and innocent passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Strait of Tiran, will be regarded by Israel as an attack entitling it to exercise its inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and to take all such measures as are necessary to ensure the free and innocent passage of its ships in the Gulf and in the Strait.”³

67. The Prime Minister continued in his statement to the Knesset yesterday:

“Since that statement was made free passage in the Strait and in the Gulf of Aqaba has been an established

international reality which has been sustained for ten years by hundreds of sailings under a great number of different flags, including the Israel flag, and by the establishment of a wide and expanding pattern of trade and communications. The illegal proclamation by the President of the United Arab Republic to close the Strait of Tiran is another violation by Egypt of international law in addition to the long-standing illegal blockade of the Suez Canal which Egypt maintains in defiance of its international obligations and the resolution of the Security Council of 1 September 1951 [95 (1951)].”

68. The action of Egypt constitutes a challenge of utmost gravity not only to Israel but to the whole international community. My Foreign Minister, Mr. Eban, is on his way to New York and he himself may wish to acquaint the Council with the full scope, significance and gravity of the situation created by the actions of the Egyptian Government. Therefore at this stage I can confine myself to repeating here what the Prime Minister has stated in Jerusalem: that Israel's quest for peace is as ardent as its determination to defend itself and protect its territory, the security and freedom of its people and its rights.

69. Lord CARADON (United Kingdom): I wish to address a word, very shortly, very frankly and sincerely, to the representative of the United Arab Republic. In what he said to us just now, he used such words as “abuse” and “vehement attacks” which I understood him to suggest came from my country. If he will be good enough to read again what I said just now, he will, I am sure, in his fairness, admit that in what I said there was not one single word which could come under such a category.

70. I have indeed today been anxious—as I believe all of us have been—to say no word of criticism whatsoever, to be scrupulously careful to avoid anything which might be called an accusation. Therefore, I must admit that it is a disappointment to me—having, in the interests of moderate and helpful debate, spoken myself with such restraint—that he should nevertheless have felt it necessary to use the terms which he used just now. I ask him, on reflection, to understand that in what he said just now, he was entirely mistaken.

71. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): I too will be very brief in exercising my right of reply to some comments made by my friend, the representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Fedorenko. He made some remarks describing the alleged role of the United States in the present Middle Eastern crisis. In reply to this, I would only remind him of the famous story of Alice in Wonderland. I am sure you will all remember what Alice told the White Queen in *Through the Looking-Glass*: that one cannot believe impossible things. To that the White Queen replied: “I daresay you haven't had much practice . . . When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast”.

72. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): In exercising my right to reply to the words that were spoken, I recognize that there was some anger on the part of my friend, the representative of the United Arab Republic. I would only say that I find it

³ *Ibid.*, 666th meeting, paras. 11-13.

difficult to see in any of the statements or proposals which I set before the Council any word of criticism of his country, any word of advice or admonishment, or anything else which could justify such an intemperate reply on his part.

73. As to the role of my country, I have nothing either to justify or to excuse. For his information, I should be very glad to make available to him the White Paper of the Canadian Government entitled: *Crisis in the Middle East, October-December 1956, and January-March 1957*.⁴ We were very proud to help his country at that time.

74. Mr. TABOR (Denmark): The representative of the United Arab Republic accused me of addressing insults against his country and vehemently attacking his country. He also asked the Council to assess the present situation in all fairness. I know the representative of the United Arab Republic very well and I am sure that he too will wish to be fair to me. If that is the case, I am sure that all his accusations against my country must be slips of the tongue. I do not take any offence at them, though they were to me a personal disappointment. As I said, I take them as mistakes which we can all commit.

75. I made an entirely impartial statement, without any attack or any accusation—not one single word against any country, and certainly not against the United Arab Republic.

76. The representative of the United Arab Republic also had the nerve to say that my country acted on behalf of the United States and the United Kingdom. As I said in my statement this morning, my Government tries, to the best of its abilities, to act on the basis of its own assessment of the merits of any particular case.

77. I should have liked to say more. However, I understand the emotions of the representative of the United Arab Republic, which only too clearly demonstrate the grave crisis in the Middle East. I listened carefully this morning to the representative of Ethiopia, when he appealed to us not to add petrol to the fire. In the light of this appeal, I shall refrain from further comments on the statement of the representative of the United Arab Republic.

78. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): Fellow-members of the Council, it was not our wish to prolong these polemics, but whenever someone makes remarks about us we always consider it impolite to ignore them. And since my distinguished colleague Ambassador Goldberg told the Council an old story about Wonderland and its strange characters that peopled it, we should like to say that, of course, anyone who has attended primary school knows that story. In fact, gazing in the looking glass is a very ancient practice. All of us should occasionally do so, and see a reflection of ourselves and our actions.

79. We do not quite understand the point our United States colleague was making. He expressed himself rather nebulously, but every fable has a moral. Anyone who has

continued his studies beyond primary school has of course studied history as well, and many people will probably remember the story of the student who asked his teacher, an ancient sage: "What must we do, how are we to behave when we perform a certain action?" That ancient thinker—this happened in the Orient—replied: "Do not forget to look back in order to understand your actions better."

80. The PRESIDENT: Members of the Council will have taken note of the suggestion made by the representative of Canada that consultations should be held after this meeting in an effort to secure agreement on the text of the draft resolution which has been submitted. I would therefore suggest that the best procedure at this point would be to adjourn the meeting in order to facilitate informal consultations among the members of the Council. I would, however, ask members of the Council to hold themselves available, in the light of the situation, for an early, further meeting of the Council. The time of that meeting will be announced after the consultations.

81. Mr. PARTHASARATHI (India): With regard to your statement, Mr. President, we hope that you will consult us in accordance with accepted practice with regard to the time and date of the next meeting. However, I must put on record that my delegation will not take part in any informal consultations with regard to the draft resolution submitted by Canada and Denmark.

82. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): We have stated our views and our position this morning and this afternoon on the question under discussion. We should like to draw the Council's attention once again to the fact that we did not and do not consider it appropriate at the present time to have any special or urgent meetings—or rushed meetings—of the Security Council.

83. Nor do we see any need to hold any consultations whatever, much less to continue consultations; and the statement just made by the representative of India does not indicate in the slightest that he has any interest in such consultations.

84. We should like to state that we do not intend to take part in any consultations.

85. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): Mr. President, I should like to request a short recess for immediate consultations between myself and certain other members of the Council.

86. The PRESIDENT: As there is no objection to the suggestion of the representative of the United States, there will be a short suspension of the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 5.35 p.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.

87. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): My understanding, Mr. President, of what you suggested was that the best procedure at this point might be to adjourn the meeting now for prompt, informal consultations among the members, and that you asked the members to hold

⁴ Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, Canada, 1957.

themselves available to the Council, in view of the seriousness of the situation, for an early, further meeting, the time of which would be announced after appropriate consultations.

88. That is what I understood you to say, Mr. President, and I hoped that would meet with the approval of the Council.

89. The PRESIDENT: I would like to say to members of the Council that that is exactly what I said and that is exactly what I meant.

90. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) (*translated from French*): We have already stated our position this morning on the item under consideration, and we are now fully convinced that the futile exercises which some members have indulged in here have done nothing towards clarifying the question of the Middle East.

91. I should simply like to say, for the moment, at this point, that as a member of the Security Council and of the United Nations, we are always available to the Council and its members. We are not available for consultations on a draft resolution or on any other measure that might be planned, for we do not believe that such action is likely to be of help in solving the question at the present time.

92. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): Fellow-members of the Council, we sometimes hear sounds in the Council without knowing where they originate or whom they come from. First, we heard the views of the Indian delegation on the subject of consultations. But the Indian representative, in addressing the Council, expressed a completely opposite viewpoint. A moment ago we heard the voice of America. It is now becoming clear whose viewpoint this is: sounds again emerged from obscurity confirming the authentic nature of these ideas. All this creates confusion in the work of the Council.

93. The Soviet Union delegation would like to confirm once again that we did not and do not see sufficient grounds for convening a meeting of the Security Council. Nor do we see grounds for any consultations, let alone urgent consultations, special consultations, and so on. All this further supercharges the atmosphere.

94. That is not our approach, and we cannot agree with it. The Soviet Union delegation is not prepared to take part in consultations of this kind.

95. Mr. KEITA (Mali) (*translated from French*): This morning, my delegation very briefly explained why it considered this meeting to be inopportune. This afternoon, before the suspension that has just taken place, my response, with regard to the suggestion for possible consultations, was that my delegation was not prepared to agree to such consultations. I wish to reiterate that response here for the record.

96. Mr. MAKONNEN (Ethiopia): In my intervention this morning I stated the view of my delegation that it would be better for discussion in the Council not to take place at this

moment when the Secretary-General is engaged in serious talks with the Government of the United Arab Republic and before we know the outcome of his important mission. Despite our strong misgivings on that score, we bowed to the better wisdom of the Council and did not make any formal objection to the continuation of the discussion here. But when it comes to any specific proposal in the form of a draft resolution, I have to state very clearly that my delegation holds the view that it would not be in the interest of the Security Council, and would not help to solve the problem that we are faced with, to take any precipitous action before hearing from the Secretary-General on the outcome of his talks—especially when such action is likely to cause division and diversion amongst us.

97. Mr. IYALLA (Nigeria): Mr. President, my delegation understood you to say that you would be consulting with members of the Council as to the appropriate time for the next meeting of the Council. I merely wish to express the hope that in your consultations you will take into serious account what is now apparent in the Council—a matter on which we humbly tried to give some advice at the outset—that perhaps the discussion we have had today might have been better timed. So far as the Nigerian delegation is concerned, we think that a continuation of the discussion would be even more fruitless than has been the case today, unless we had before us the results of the work of the Secretary-General and the consultations he is now having.

98. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): I must say that I am quite at a loss to understand the statements that are being made. Representatives are asserting that they do not wish to consult, but they are consulting openly in this Council as to their ideas, as to whether or not there should be future proceedings. They are belying their own words. When a statement was made, which it was thought was agreed to by all, that we would recess for consultations, that meant that everybody would be free to state in those consultations what he thought ought to be the subject of the next meeting, when the meeting should be held, and so on. But it seems to me that what we are doing is a complete contradiction in terms. We inscribed this item on the agenda; many representatives have expressed themselves for or against; we have debated it today; and now representatives are telling us how they would express themselves if consultations were held.

99. The United States, as a member of the Council, will always consult with our colleagues about anything. We conceive that to be our duty as a member of the Council, and we are at a loss to understand the point of view of any representative on the Council who says that he will not consult with other members of the Council. We do not know how this Organization can proceed if no informal consultations are held between members of the Council.

100. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): Mr. President, you made a certain proposal which you read out with care. It was, in effect, as I understood it, that we would adjourn in order to permit consultations to take place and would then come together at a time which seemed appropriate to those with whom you consulted. At the beginning of the meeting there were those who suggested that there had not been

consultations before the meeting was convened. Now when it is suggested that we should consult and then meet there seems to be some difficulty. I should have thought that the most orderly procedure would be to accept the proposal made by the President—which seems to be normal enough—that we should adjourn, should consult one another, and then meet at an early date, depending on the nature of the consultations. I do not think that a discussion about consultations in the open Council will result in any different conclusion from the one that you have suggested,

Mr. President, and I propose that we should adopt your good advice.

101. The PRESIDENT: If there is no further comment, and if there is no objection, I propose that the meeting should be adjourned until further notice.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.