



Security Council

PROVISIONAL

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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED
AND SEVENTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 27 March 1986, at 3.30 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. BIERRING	(Denmark)
<u>Members:</u>	Australia	Mr. HOGUE
	Bulgaria	Mr. GARVALOV
	China	Mr. LI LUYE
	Congo	Mr. ADOURI
	France	Mr. de KEMOULARIA
	Ghana	Mr. GBEHO
	Madagascar	Mr. RAKOTONDRAHOA
	Thailand	Mr. KASENSARN
	Trinidad and Tobago	Mr. MOHAMMED
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. DUBININ
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. AL-SHAALI
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. MAXEY
	United States of America	Mr. WALTERS
	Venezuela	Mr. AGUILAR

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The meeting was called to order at 4.20 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 25 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17940)

LETTER DATED 25 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17941)

LETTER DATED 26 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17946)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with decisions taken by the Council at previous meetings on this item, I invite the representative of Malta to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, India, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mongolia, Poland, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Agius (Malta) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Maksimov (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Oramas Oliva (Cuba), Mr. Cesar (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Al-Ashtal (Democratic Yemen), Mr. Ott (German Democratic Republic), Mr. Endreffy (Hungary), Mr. Krishnan (India), Mr. Abdulhasan (Kuwait) Mr. Azzarouk (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Nyamdo (Mongolia), Mr. Noworyta (Poland), Mr. El Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Bui Xuan Nhat (Viet Nam) and Mr. Golob (Yugoslavia); took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Lao People's Democratic Republic in which they request to

(The President)

be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice and with the consent of the Council, I propose to invite the representatives of Algeria, Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Lao People's Democratic Republic to take part in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djoudi (Algeria), Mr. Dinka (Ethiopia), Mr. Rajaie Khorassani (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Mr. Somvorachit (Lao People's Democratic Republic) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter dated 27 March 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to His Excellency Dr. Clovis Maksoud, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, in connection with the item presently under consideration."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/17948.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council decides to grant the request made to it to extend an invitation under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Dr. Clovis Maksoud.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

(The President)

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/17947, which contains the text of a letter dated 26 March 1986 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): First, as your former colleague in the Security Council, I should like to wish you, Mr. President, every success in your conduct of the work of the Council in the remaining days of this month. We should like to pay a tribute to your predecessor as President, the Ambassador Abouki of the Congo, for his skillful conduct of the Council's work in February.

We should also like to associate ourselves with the words of welcome and good wishes we have heard here addressed to Ambassador Dubinin upon his assumption of the post of Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union to the United Nations and representative of the Soviet Union in the Security Council. Ambassador Dubinin is well known in our country as an outstanding diplomat. We wish him every success.

Over the past few days the whole world has once again witnessed another extremely dangerous exacerbation of the situation in the southern Mediterranean. Once again, Libya, a non-aligned country, has become the target of the imperialist policy of force and diktat. It has been clear from the discussion here and from numerous press reports that the armed forces of the United States have carried out another act of aggression against that Mediterranean State and have struck at a number of Libyan targets, including targets on Libyan territory.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

We vigorously condemn this further act of piracy against Libya. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic considers that the raising of this question in this Council, at the initiative of the USSR, Malta and Iraq is entirely justified, right and proper.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The Council's discussion of this matter and the statements made by a large number of representatives have demonstrated the international community's growing concern and alarm about the new globalist policy proclaimed by Washington: a policy of intervention in the affairs of sovereign States; a policy of fanning the flames of tension in various parts of the world; a policy of creating a threat to international peace and security.

The events of the last few years have made it unmistakably clear that the United States Administration has chosen Libya as one of the targets of its policy of State terrorism. We need only recall the events of 1981, when two Libyan aircraft were shot down off the Libyan coast. Exactly two years ago, the Security Council was compelled to consider once again the question of encroachments on the sovereignty and independence of Libya. We must add to that what has become a virtually constant phenomenon: provocative and threatening exercises carried out off the shores of Libya by a whole armada of United States warships. Early this year, in clear violation of the United Nations Charter and in disregard of the elementary norms of international law, the United States launched a campaign of veritable economic terror against Libya.

Washington no longer attempts to conceal the fact that it has long sought a pretext for taking drastic action against a Government which is repudiating the hegemonistic designs of the United States in the region. In that connection we must recall press reports of United States Administration approval last November of a secret plan for the destabilization of Libya and the destruction of its leadership. To provide at least some sort of basis for its policy of blackmail and threats, and to prepare international public opinion, Washington has been issuing assertions that Libya's policy represents some kind of threat to the national security of the United States. For many months now, an anti-Libyan psychological and propaganda war has been waged.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It has been acknowledged by representatives of the United States Administration themselves, as cited in The New York Times on 26 March 1986, that preparations for a military confrontation with Libya began at about the same time as the announcement of the imposition of economic sanctions against that Arab country, that is as early as January this year. According to reports, the decision to carry out this most recent act of piracy was taken 10 days before it actually occurred. In other words, we are dealing with a pre-planned, premeditated punitive operation.

United States representatives, in the Council and elsewhere, have been unstinting in their attempts to justify this recent act of aggression. In that connection they are suddenly reminding us of the existence of international law, of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter concerning the right of self-defence. They are reminding us about the international law of the sea, and even lodging protests. But we cannot help wondering: Was it really necessary to go thousands of miles from their own shores and engage in large-scale military manoeuvres off the coast of other countries to demonstrate the right of self-defence? That is topsy-turvy logic by which the victim of aggression is called the aggressor and by which the aggressor cries out for help.

As everyone knows full well, there were also attempts to justify the dirty war in Viet Nam and the barbarous strafing of peaceful Lebanese villages, about which this Council has heard, with talk of the exercise of the right of self-defence and of the defence of "vital interests". There were attempts to justify subversive action against Cuba, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Angola and the intervention in Grenada with references to "defence of their citizens". In short, the principle here appears to be that any means are justified by the end.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

As has been quite rightly pointed out here, in particular by the representative of Malta, by its acts of provocation against Libya the United States has violated the fundamental principles of the United Nations, as set out in Article 2 of the Charter, concerning the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force

"against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations".

A similar provision is found in the Definition of Aggression, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3314 (XXIX). That Definition states that the following qualifies as an act of aggression:

"Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State." (General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), annex, article 3(b))

It is quite obvious that this latest act of piracy by the United States falls squarely under the terms of the Definition of Aggression; any references made here to Article 51 of the Charter on the right of self-defence are entirely unfounded. Incidentally, it is that right which Libya has been exercising. Washington has been deliberately ignoring the existence in international law of a broad range of peaceful means for the settlement of disputes in relations between States, and has preferred to engage in military adventures - which is what we are used to from it - to "assert" and "defend" freedom of navigation.

It is strange also to hear United States representatives make reference to the basic norms of the law of the sea, for it was the United States itself which refused to sign and support the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and which, with admirable consistency, has been pursuing a policy of sabotage and subversion against that fundamental international legal document, which codifies an all-embracing legal régime governing the sea and its resources.

(Mr. Oulovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

In that connection we can hardly fail to mention the provocative acts carried out by United States warships on 13 March 1986 in the territorial waters of the USSR in the Black Sea. The United States attempted to justify those acts too by invoking present norms of the law of the sea, specifically the right of innocent passage.

The most recent act of piracy against Libya has sharply exacerbated the situation in the area, which was already an explosive one. This could have grave, wider consequences. The latest events in the southern Mediterranean are but one further illustration of the conclusion articulated at the twenty-seventh congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by the General-Secretary of the Party, Mr. Mikhail S. Gorbachev, that

"In stepping up international tension, United States imperialism sees a way to justify its military appropriations, its global ambitions and its intervention in the affairs of other countries".

The policy of hostility against non-aligned Libya has aroused the just condemnation of the overwhelming majority of States. The people of the Soviet Ukraine express their solidarity with the Libyan people in these difficult times for Libya. The Ukrainian SSR reiterates its support for Libya's just struggle for freedom and independence.

It is our hope that the Security Council will most vigorously condemn this latest act of armed aggression against yet another non-aligned State, and that it will call for an immediate end to such action, now and in the future. The armed forces of the United States must be withdrawn forthwith from the coast of Libya and the victims of this aggression must be granted its right to appropriate compensation.

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

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

Mr. EL FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic):

It gives great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. You personally and your country, Denmark, are known for objectivity and precision in dealing with issues and for great interest in the affairs of the developing world. We are confident that your competence will enable the Council to deal judiciously and justly with the urgent complaint before it.

We should also like to extend our great appreciation to the Ambassador of the Congo, who conducted the work of the Council with great success last month.

It gives us much pleasure to see Ambassador Dubinin representing the Soviet Union, that friendly country.

As it participates in this important debate, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic greatly appreciates the three requests submitted for the convening of an urgent meeting of the Security Council. Those requests were made by Malta, the Soviet Union and the Arab Group. The latter made its request in implementation of a resolution adopted by the Council of the Arab League on 26 March. That resolution condemned the flagrant American act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and provided for specific measures against that act of aggression. The resolution of the Arab League Council, of which the Syrian Arab Republic was a sponsor, calls upon the Security Council to consider the grave situation arising from the most recent American act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and embodies the full Arab solidarity with the Jamahiriya. It represents the firm position of the Arab States and the entire Arab nation against the vicious act of aggression perpetrated by the American administration against fraternal Libya.

It is worth recalling here that this premeditated, direct and flagrant act of American aggression against the sovereignty, independence and security of an Arab State constitutes an act of aggression against all the Arab countries. We must

(Mr. El Fattal, Syrian
Arab Republic)

also add that that aggression has confirmed the conviction of the people of every Arab State that imperialism is escalating its conspiracy against them, against their future and against their aspirations: that imperialism harbours ill-will towards them and wants to humiliate them through a policy aimed at extending hegemony and control over their fate, depleting their resources, exploiting them and creating Arab entities that would be used to serve the purposes of world imperialism and its greedy global designs.

We are fully convinced that the question before the Council has no relation whatsoever to freedom of navigation or to a dispute regarding sovereignty over the Gulf of Sidra. There are scores of disputes over gulfs, borders and sovereignty. Such disputes among States are usually settled by internationally recognized peaceful means. We do not for a moment doubt that the Gulf of Sidra is historically an Arab Gulf.

The United States has falsely and wrongly invoked the question of freedom of the high seas and freedom of navigation to perpetrate the largest ever terrorist and military operation against an independent State in order to achieve its dream of eliminating the progressive system of government in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The destruction of that régime has become an obsession that haunts American policy-makers, because it is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter and the objectives of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and is also committed to supporting the world liberation movement and decolonization in all forms. That régime is fully wedded to the first vital question of the Arab Nation: the question of Palestine, the liberation of Arab territories from the racist Zionist occupation and resistance against conspiracies aimed at liquidating the question of Palestine and entrenching the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories.

(Mr. El Fattal, Syrian
Arab Republic)

The United States of America impedes all efforts to impose sanctions against the racist régime of South Africa. It finances, trains and directs movements against progressive régimes in Africa and Latin America, opposes the unconditional independence of Namibia and supports aggression against Angola and Nicaragua. The same United States is today imposing economic sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and denying it its right to development and progress. This provides categorical evidence that the United States is opposed to liberation from foreign control and stands by racist régimes and even sponsors the wars they wage against all who stand for the right of peoples to independence, liberty and self-determination.

This most recent act of aggression, the culmination of a long series of acts of provocation and piracy going back to 1981, is but an attempt to bring the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to its knees. It is also a warning to all the Arab countries of what will happen if they opt to pursue their vital struggle.

We all know that any action by the United States of America against any Arab State has but one aim: to serve its strategic ally, Israel. Hence we were not surprised when Israel applauded and hailed the act of aggression against the Gulf of Sidra and the Libyan Coast and declared it a joint victory of Washington and Tel Aviv. By the same token we are not surprised that the American Administration applauds and hails every Israeli act of aggression against our Arab people. They hailed and applauded the act of aggression of 1967; they applauded when Israel overran Lebanon in 1982. And they did not stop there. They deployed their forces in the territory of Lebanon and attempted to impose on it the humiliating agreement of 1983. The fleet that shelled peaceful Lebanese villages and cities is the same fleet that has shelled Libyan territory and wreaked havoc in the Libyan Gulf of Sidra.

(Mr. El Fattal, Syrian
Arab Republic)

It is no longer a secret to the Arab people that the strategic Israeli-American alliance has been in effect since 1981 in a precise, phased and systematic manner with a view to imposing hegemony and control over the Arabs and hence compelling the Arabs to abandon their hopes. But we say they will not achieve their purposes and desires: we shall thwart them with all the means at our disposal.

(Mr. El Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

Since the revolution of 1 September 1969, world imperialism has been hatching one plot after another to undermine the independence and sovereignty of that great Arab country whose people and leadership have demonstrated much potential and ability in achieving great accomplishments in the economic, social and defence fields. That people has been able to stand up to all conspiracies. If today the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is victim of a brutal act of military aggression perpetrated against it by America, a super-Power, it is because the acts of provocation, piracy, manoeuvres, naval and air violations and economic sanctions continuously unleashed against Libya before the current act of aggression all met with ignominious failure - thanks to the steadfastness of the Libyan Arab people. The current act of aggression is bound to fail so long as the Arab will to resist remains steadfast.

The psychological warfare that the United States has been waging to delude the world into believing that there is terrorism that necessitates retaliation is aimed at whipping up world public opinion everywhere, but especially in the United States, in order to prepare it to accept any military acts committed by the United States in our Arab region on the pretext of "fighting terrorism" - to use their expression. This act of aggression has been perpetrated to distort the facts of the struggle in the region and to divert attention from Israel's crimes against the Arab people in Palestine, southern Lebanon and the occupied Golan Heights.

With the perpetration of the act of aggression, we find the Arab masses today more prepared than ever to seek the liberation of their territories. The United States act of aggression will not discourage them from continuing the struggle to regain their usurped rights. The United States and Israel must give up any hope of imposing capitulation on the Arab nation. This act of aggression will only strengthen our resolve to pursue the policy of standing up to the enemy in the occupied Arab territories.

Contrary to the expectations of American circles with reference to the vicious

(Mr. El Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

flagrant act of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, world public opinion today stands by the victim. All peace-loving States have upheld Libya's right to defend its sovereignty and independence and against the United States act of aggression; even in Western Europe there are voices opposing American adventurism and calling for an end to it, because it imperils not only the security of the Mediterranean but also international peace and security.

On several occasions - most recently on 26 March - the non-aligned countries have expressed their condemnation of American actions and called for an immediate end to the aggression against Libya.

The Security Council, by virtue of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the prevention of aggression, is called upon today more than ever before to prove equal to the events and take all necessary measures to end the aggression, effect the immediate withdrawal of the United States military forces from the Libyan Gulf of Sidra, condemn the American act of aggression in the strongest terms, and call upon the United States of America to withdraw its bases and fleet from the Mediterranean. The future of international peace and security depends on the degree of the Security Council's effectiveness in standing up to this act of aggression flagrantly perpetrated by the United States against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in violation of the provisions of the Charter and the norms of international law.

The Syrian Arab Republic stands with great resolve by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, its Government and people with all the political, military, material and other means at its disposal. We will provide every assistance to the Government and fraternal people of Libya, which will inflict defeat on the imperialist aggressors. That heroic people will triumph, despite the might and arrogance of the American aggressor.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for the kind words he addressed to my country and me.

(The President)

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

Mr. GOLOB (Yugoslavia): Mr. President, you have already distinguished yourself in conducting the Council's affairs and it is thus all the more agreeable to congratulate you, as is customary, on your assumption of office.

Your predecessor, Mr. Martin Adouki, Ambassador of the People's Republic of the Congo, has left on us an indelible impression by his sagacity and tireless activity for peace and security when he led the Council during the month of February.

Force has again been flagrantly used in the Mediterranean, this time in the central Mediterranean. The Council is considering the latest dangerous escalation marked by the aggressive, armed attacks of the United States Sixth Fleet on Libya. The prospects for peace and security that the countries of the region want are being most seriously endangered and, if continued, somewhere down the road the independence and sovereignty of peoples risk being buried. That, in our view, is the bottom line of what we have witnessed during the past few days in the central Mediterranean. The international community, the United Nations and the Security Council, guided by experience and by duties under the Charter, should be able to prevent it.

New and deadlier weapons are being heaped on the Mediterranean - a region that is already tense, overloaded and indeed saturated with armed power and the weight of extra-regional military forces. I submit that it would be naïve to believe that such an increase in military activities and the use of so much force can really be controlled or managed, as has been claimed.

The armaments and foreign military presence and the use of force and aggression in the Mediterranean increase, while the level of peace and security and of the environment for co-operation are inexorably being reduced.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

It may be useful to recall here the messages of peace and security for all that were formulated by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in particular on the issue of the Mediterranean, especially since these messages have not been heeded and a deaf ear has been turned to them.

It was a year and a half ago that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the non-aligned Mediterranean countries met in Valletta, Malta. They reviewed the situation in the Mediterranean and they noted with disquiet and concern the growing manifestation of bloc confrontation, the continuous escalation of great-Power military presence, the policy of deployment of armaments and weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear missiles, and the installation, by countries outside the region, of military bases and facilities that threaten the security of non-aligned Mediterranean and other countries.

They pointed out that the Mediterranean region was being transformed into a critical area of tension with serious negative implications for international peace and security. They stressed that the sovereignty and independence of States of the region were being threatened and that the process of a peaceful settlement of regional problems was being jeopardized.

At the same time they called upon the non-Mediterranean States to adhere strictly to the principle of non-use or threat of force and urged them not to use their armaments, forces, bases and military facilities against non-aligned Mediterranean members.

This, by the way, is stipulated in the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as well and is an obligation incumbent on all signatories to the Act.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

It may be useful to recall that the Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries meeting at Angola last year in September stated that the Ministers expressed grave concern at the

"military presence, activities and manoeuvres of the great Powers in the territories, air space and territorial waters, or in the vicinity, of non-aligned countries and considered these as breeding tension and instability, endangering peace and security and pose the threat of intervention in the internal affairs of these countries." (S/17610, para. 19)

Yugoslavia, a European, Mediterranean and non-aligned country, has been following the deterioration with growing concern. It was only a month ago today that the Presidency of Yugoslavia, the collective Head of State, issued a statement. At that time they expressed serious concern over the threats to peace and security in the region. They pointed out that uncontrolled development may have unforeseeable consequences for peace and stability in the Mediterranean, Europe and the world. They stressed that a growing presence of military factors, increased concentration of military strength and arsenals of weapons, including nuclear ones, constantly aggravate the situation. They pointed out that frequent military exercises and other military demonstrations in the vicinity of the territorial waters of littoral States threaten to cause dangerous incidents. They pointed out that this may have perilous consequences for the security of all littoral States, and in particular the non-aligned countries, which are thus exposed to various threats and pressures.

And finally they emphasized that no motive or pretext can justify the threat or use of force, interference in internal affairs and the exerting of pressure; and they made clear that Yugoslavia fully supports the independence and sovereignty of all Mediterranean countries.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

This is, however, the backdrop against which the latest developments took place, and about these developments the Presidency of Yugoslavia last Tuesday issued the following statement:

"After consideration of the latest dangerous escalation of the situation in the central Mediterranean which was marked by aggressive armed attacks by the United States Sixth Fleet against the objects and territory of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expressed greatest concern over those acts, condemned them and demanded the urgent cessation of military operations endangering the security and territorial integrity of the countries of the region, in particular the non-aligned Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as well as of peace and stability in the world at large.

"The latest developments only reconfirm that the Mediterranean region, due to an ever larger accumulation of military forces and to the lack of a solution of critical situations in the area, has grown into a new serious focus of crisis in the world.

"Bearing this in mind, the Presidency pointed to the urgent need for an immediate action by the widest international community, particularly the Security Council of the United Nations, aimed at preventing the breaking out of a conflict of wider proportions, at providing respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and at seeking a peaceful solution in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the policy of non-alignment. This calls for special increased efforts by the non-aligned and other Mediterranean countries for the preservation of peace and security in the region, as well as for the promotion of mutual co-operation among the Mediterranean countries. Yugoslavia will be most actively involved in that quest, making its full contribution."

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

Mr. LI Luye (China) (interpretation from Chinese): China and Denmark share long-standing friendship and co-operation. His Excellency the Prime Minister of Denmark is currently on a visit to China, which will surely generate a new impetus to the advancement of such relations. At this moment, the Chinese delegation naturally feels extremely pleased to see Your Excellency, an outstanding representative of Denmark, presiding over the work of the Council. We wish to extend to you our hearty congratulations. In the meantime, I wish to express our sincere thanks to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Martin Adouki, for his successful accomplishment in guiding the busy schedule of the Council last month.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

I also take this opportunity to extend our welcome to the new permanent representative of the Soviet Union, His Excellency Mr. Yuri Dubinin.

It has been noted by all that since the beginning of this year the United States Navy has conducted frequent military manoeuvres in the waters near Libya, subjecting Libya to military threat and aggravating the tension in the Mediterranean. The Chinese Government is deeply concerned over this development. The recent attack by the United States against the territory of Libya, a sovereign State, constitutes a violation of the norms governing international relations. It is the consistent position of the Chinese Government to oppose and condemn all acts that violate the norms guiding international relations and encroach upon the territorial sovereignty of other countries.

The peaceful settlement of international disputes is a universally recognized principle in modern international law. Moreover, the United Nations Charter set the peaceful settlement of international disputes as one of the important principles of the Charter, and laid down specific provisions with regard to the means and procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is therefore the common obligation of all countries to abide strictly by this principle in handling international relations and not to resort to force or the threat of force. Proceeding from this principle, we call on the United States to cease forthwith its military threat against Libya, so as to alleviate the tension in the Mediterranean and restore peace and stability in the region. We also call on both sides to resolve their differences peacefully, in accordance with the means and procedures provided in the Charter.

I wish further to emphasize that the Mediterranean countries, particularly the non-aligned countries among them, have in recent years been actively working for and promoting peace, security and co-operation in the region. The Chinese

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

delegation is of the view that the aspirations and efforts of those countries and their peoples should be respected by all other countries.

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

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

Mr. AZZAROUK (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am personally acquainted with your ample experience and your skills, because I spent some time in your capital. I am confident you will be able to conduct the Council's work in an exemplary manner. I am also happy to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Adouki of the Congo, for the excellent way in which he presided over the Council's work last month.

On 24 and 25 March the United States of America brought the situation in the eastern Mediterranean to the brink of explosion. The United States Sixth Fleet engaged in manoeuvres which violated Libya's sovereignty. It entered Libya's territorial waters and bombarded parts of Libyan territory.

This is only the third month of 1986, and the United States fleet has already carried out four sets of manoeuvres adjacent to the Libyan coast. Since 1981 more than 18 exercises have been carried out in the area, involving aircraft carriers and other warships - more than 30 warships altogether - which have engaged in shows of force or at least a threat to use force. Since the beginning of this series of terroristic acts the United States has not concealed its intention to undermine the legitimate rights of the Libyan people or its desire to violate my country's sovereignty through force.

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The position adopted by the United States is not one of self-defence, for Libya is thousands of kilometres from the United States. Using force or threatening to use force, the United States has arrogated to itself in an unprecedented manner the right to use the open sea for military manoeuvres and to test weapons, at the same time exploiting and pillaging the resources of the sea. More than half the underwater surface of the globe seems to have become a natural extension of American territory.

Despite all that, with its policy of aggression the United States sees fit to establish almost permanently alongside the coasts of Libya and other small Mediterranean States fleets of warships targeted on those coasts. The numbers of troops and the destructive weapons carried on those ships exceed those of all the coastal States of the Mediterranean. Whether we are talking about international waters or territorial waters, that is in itself a continuous source of threat and aggression and constitutes interference in the sovereign decision-making powers of the coastal States of the region.

That is why small States in the region confront two alternatives: either succumb to aggression and threat or stand up to them. In defence of its freedom and territorial integrity, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya could not but declare that it was opposed to the hegemonistic policies of the United States and the subjugation of small States through the threat or use of force. The United States has used that fact to seek, wrongly, to justify its actions as self-defence.

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

In 1973 Libya declared its historical and inalienable rights over the Gulf of Sidra. Other States have also adopted legislation and issued statements relating to their rights over the Gulf. Some of these States are Mediterranean and others that lie outside this region have also referred to their right to the extension of certain seas. There has also been various legislation adopted by various States with respect to the delimitation of territorial and international regional waters. No State has ever questioned that to violate such declarations and rights could give rise to the exercise of the right of self-defence. To accept this is to set up a form of legitimacy à la Americaine by which any State rejecting a piece of national legislation or a political declaration would accordingly have the right to send its fleet, or threaten to invade that State, or attack it, on the pretext of exercising its right to self-defence.

The United States representative during the deliberations of the Council yesterday stated that the United States had sent its fleet into the Gulf - and would continue to do so. It would continue to send its fleet into any waters with respect to which the United States does not recognize the legitimate status. This is an unlawful attitude which puts the United States into a state of confrontation and war with all States of the world. The acts of aggression on 24 and 25 March against Libya represent a threat to a group of States which have adopted political stands and national legislation which do not seem to be to the liking of the United States.

The situation is clear and self-explanatory. The aggression against Libya is a grave precedent which other States may use in the future. This is not a conflict involving only the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the United States. It is a problem between the world community and the United States, for the United States has arrogated to itself the right to reject the national legislation adopted by certain

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

States by stating that this legislation is dangerous to the United States and, therefore, the United States has the right to oppose it and to exercise its right to self-defence. I do not think this position can stand up in international law. No international instrument would legitimize or justify such a position, a position which gives the United States the right to increase tension to the point where it threatens international peace and security.

The situation is even more serious, for the United States, through its representative in the Security Council, has declared that the United States has sent its fleet to the region in order to impose respect for international law and peaceful navigation. How can we explain this position except by the fact that the United States has received, it seems, a mandate from the international community to ensure that international law is respected and that consultations are merely empty words. There are no bodies competent to debate these questions and the United States alone cannot arrogate to itself the right to defend international law by the threat or use of force.

There is another aspect to this problem. The international community must be convinced that the right to use international waters is quite different from using the gulf adjacent to the Libyan coast, for that region is the cradle of civilization and religion, whose inhabitants have long lived in peace and security. The coastal States wish to solve their problems by peaceful means, by using all the machinery provided by the international community for the solution of disputes.

These peoples are seeking to develop their natural resources in conditions of peace and they do not need a State situated thousands of miles away from them to set up its machinery of destruction off their shores. These countries are going to have to adopt the position taken by Libya and reject such activities by all means at their disposal.

(Mr. Azzarouk, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

The representative of the Soviet Union in his statement yesterday quoted Mr. Gorbachev as follows:

"The actions of the United States are a challenge to the whole world community. They constitute a flouting of universally acknowledged civilized relations. Such a policy provokes regional conflicts and threatens international peace and security. It is aimed against all independent peoples." (S/PV.2668, p. 11)

For these reasons, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya supports what was said by Mr. Gorbachev on 26 March, that the Mediterranean should become a zone of peace and co-operation and that all military fleets should be withdrawn from that area. We call on all coastal States of the Mediterranean to support that declaration and to continue to oppose the presence of the United States fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. Let us condemn the role of that fleet and let us protect ourselves against hegemony. International and regional bodies, together with other States, have condemned the United States action here and the Council should also rebuff these activities, which are contrary to the rule of law and peaceful co-operation.

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

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

Mr. RAJAIE-KHORASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): A number of speakers have preceded me, and a good deal of information and many arguments have been presented with regard to the issue under investigation. Before proceeding to the bulk of my arguments, I wish to say this to you, Mr. President: The month of March is about to end, and therefore the term of your presidency. I congratulate you not only on the way you have presided over the Council but also on the excellent record that you will leave behind. The achievement of success by a man of your capabilities and experience could really have been expected.

I wish also to thank your predecessor in the presidency, Ambassador Martin Adouki, for the excellent work he did during the month of February.

The Security Council is meeting now to consider the act of military aggression by the United States against Libya. The United States of America is well known for its acts of aggression. This is not the first incident and I do not believe it will be the last. The United States has invaded many small countries in the past. I think that people in the United States are asking themselves - I have personally heard some of them doing this - how proud they can be of the military acts of their Government against small countries.

We know that in this region Nicaragua has long been the target of United States imperialist plots and conspiracies. But in the case of Nicaragua the United States claims that in its own courtyard it has the right to dictate to the countries that have the honour of being in its neighbourhood. Well, what about Libya, which is thousands and thousands of miles away from the coasts of the United States? I do not believe that anyone can give any credence to the invalid arguments produced by the United States regarding its presence and its manoeuvres in the vicinity of the Libyan coasts. I do not think that the United States would

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

have needed to insist upon carrying out manoeuvres in a controversial area if it had not really wanted to be provocative and aggressive.

Furthermore, this act of military invasion of Libya by United States naval forces is not an isolated act, as we all know; it is part of a chain of events all of which constitute a premeditated plan by the United States to weaken and, if possible, topple the popular Government of Libya.

The United States economic sanctions, which were openly rejected by the entire world, were associated with the military storming of the Gulf of Sidra by the United States, in order to emotionalize and inflame this tense situation and in the hope that European countries would give in to the United States demand for a global economic blockade of Libya. Since the European countries were too wise to risk their national interests for the sake of United States ambitions, the United States Administration suffered another international political defeat. Consequently, in a reactionary, obsessive manner, it decided to cover up that defeat by a military manoeuvre which it thought would divert international public attention from the naive and self-defeating United States foreign policies to United States military might. Resort to military might is the well-known United States remedy for its political flaws. And, apart from that, the United States Administration is always preoccupied with its fighting power rather than with its thinking power. That is why military solutions are usually its solutions of first resort. In the case of Nicaragua, for instance, it is the Nicaraguan officials who always insist upon negotiation and political and peaceful settlement of any possible disputes that the United States Administration might have with them; whereas it is always the United States party that believes in military, para-military and subversive intelligence operations against the Government of Nicaragua. As I have said, in the case of Nicaragua the United States usually has the pretext of enjoying some kind of prerogative over those small countries that geographical fate has located in the

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

neighbourhood of the United States. But what about the people of Libya, who are thousands of miles away?

Interestingly enough, the Washington Post of yesterday, 26 March, in an article entitled "United States Decided To Give Libya Firm Message", reported that the military attacks against Libya were not carried out without proper consultation and co-ordination with Egypt. I do not know if the United States officials are ready to accuse the Washington Post of forging such embarrassing allegations against the régime of President Reagan and that of Hosni Mubarak. We could perhaps ironically congratulate the régime of Egypt on collaborating with United States imperialism against the nations of the region; after the Camp David conspiracy, such collaboration is understandable.

The United States claims that freedom of the seas is essential to the maintenance of international security and the flow of commerce. It also claims that "this body should reaffirm the internationally accepted freedoms of navigation". (S/PV.2668, p. 21)

The United States, which has brought to the Gulf of Sidra as many fleets as that small vessel can accommodate and which even had the intention of bringing 90,000 troops to that region, also shamelessly claims that all that military might was mobilized to defend freedom of navigation. What the international conventions recognize, however, is the right of innocent passage. Was the mobilization of all those fleets really innocent passage? Does it fall within the provisions of article 19, paragraphs A to D, of the 1982 International Convention on the Law of the Sea? Was the premeditated blockade of Libyan waters, with all those fleets and aircraft carriers and other sophisticated electronic devices, simply an act of innocent passage? Was the premeditated United States intimidation of Libya simply innocent passage?

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

Finally, were the collaborations between the United States and the Egyptian rulers, as reported in the Washington Post of 26 March, regarding the invasion of Libya, really acts of innocent passage? How innocent is this United States Administration, really? To reveal the dimensions of the American goodwill and right to freedom of navigation and innocent passage, I would like to quote a portion of a paragraph of the article in the Washington Post of 26 March, which reads as follows:

"Officials said the lack of Libyan Air Force activity may be partly due to the jamming of Libyan ground radar by United States electronics warfare planes. ... In modern aerial dogfighting, jet fighters are guided toward their targets by radar operators, who see the adversary fighters as two green dots on a console and advise the friendly pilots on what course to fly to make the intercept."

Now, this preparation must have been very, very necessary for a goodwill trip, which really seems to be entitled to enjoy freedom of navigation and innocent passage - according to the interpretation of the American lawyers.

I would like to call the attention of the members of the Council who already know these articles to article 17 of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is entitled "Right of innocent passage". That article states:

"Subject to this Convention, ships of all States, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea."
The Convention then defines the concept of innocent passage, and paragraph 2 of article 19 states that:

"(a) any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of the coastal State, or in any other manner in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations;

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

"(b) any exercise or practice with weapons of any kind",
and two other cases, are exemptions from innocent passage.

Now, do we or should we believe that so many ships and electronic devices and so much military power brought into that area by the United States should really be entitled to freedom of navigation and that they should enjoy innocent passage?

There is another concept in article 300, entitled "Good faith and abuse of rights", makes good faith a very important principal concept in the overall argument of freedom of navigation and innocent passage. If the United States authorities had any idea of good faith, they would probably have had second thoughts before mobilizing all their ships and electronic devices against Libya in areas in which they believe they are entitled to enjoy freedom of navigation or where they want to defend that freedom.

I therefore expect those delegations that invalidly take recourse in the internationally recognized right of freedom of navigation and innocent passage not to insult the intelligence of the international public by calling the storming by so many ships, so many surveillance and intelligence-gathering devices and aircraft carriers, mere "innocent passage" entitled to freedom of navigation.

The United States Navy planned to bring 100,000 - or, as some claim, 90,000 - troops to the Gulf of Sidra, whereas the entire Libyan military force numbers only 73,000, including men and women. Please, was this United States exercise an act of State terrorism or was it truly defending freedom of navigation?

This so-called defence of freedom of navigation is nothing but a proxy war that the United States has launched against Libya on behalf of the Zionist base occupying Palestine. It is a war against Islam by the United States, which is playing into the hand of the Zionist base occupying the Palestine beloved of all Muslims.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

There have been some attempts to reduce the American aggression against Libya to some legalistic trivialities concerning the validity of the Libyan interpretation of its territorial waters. Whatever the significance of the Libyan interpretation may be, it is definitely not the duty of the United States Navy to conduct its military manoeuvres precisely in the area that is - at the least - controversial. The sinister, provocative intentions of the United States should not be justified in terms of academic disagreements on the extent of Libya's territorial waters. There is no doubt that the United States manoeuvres are dangerous, provocative acts that have actually threatened the peace and security of Libya and that should have been absolutely avoided.

The United States is therefore to be held responsible for all the losses and damages incurred by Libya, as well as for perpetrating an act of State terrorism against a State Member of the United Nations. The Security Council is therefore expected to stand very firmly against such lawless behaviour, particularly because the United States follows the same aggressive policy in other parts of the world as well, and also and particularly because the United States is a Permanent Member of the Security Council, which is supposed to be the guardian of international peace and security. My Government, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, strongly supports the Government of Libya and the people of Libya against the imperialist policies and practices of the United States. Their struggle is justified, and we strongly support them.

We condemn the provocative manoeuvres of the United States in the Gulf of Sidra. We condemn the American acts of military aggression against Libya, and we believe that such aggressive, terroristic policies of the United States constitute a great menace to international peace and security. The Council is therefore in duty bound to do its utmost to relieve the nations of the world from such a menace.

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

The next speaker is the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SOKVORACHIT (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): First of all, Sir, I wish on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. My delegation is confident that, given your great diplomatic experience and your wisdom, the work of the Council will be crowned with success.

My delegation wishes also to express its deep appreciation to Ambassador Adouki of Congo for his good work as President of the Council last month.

I should like to thank you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Council for having given my delegation this opportunity to make its modest contribution to this discussion of the question before the Security Council, the extremely serious and dangerous situation in the southern Mediterranean. This is a matter of the greatest concern to the entire international community, arising out of the political-military attacks and the blatant, premeditated acts of aggression of the United States Sixth Fleet against a small developing country, the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, an independent and sovereign State and a full-fledged Member of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since the beginning of this year, the United States fleet has carried out no less than four large-scale military manoeuvres in the waters adjacent to the Libyan coast, thus posing a grave and sustained threat to the independence and security of Libya. Libya has shown the greatest possible restraint. These manoeuvres can be regarded only as premeditated acts of provocation; the subsequent lightning attacks were naked and overt acts of aggression against Libya.

The target of those attacks is not only Libya, but, through it, the Arab peoples, the non-aligned countries as a group, and all developing countries which cherish peace, national independence and freedom and which dare to stand up to the might of the United States: all the countries which refuse to bend the knee to the diktat of Uncle Sam.

(Mr. Somvorrachit, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

The provocative United States military manoeuvres in the Mediterranean are not an isolated case or a matter of chance. They should be seen in the context of other United States manoeuvres in Central America, near Kampuchea, on the Korean peninsula and in other parts of the world, and in the context of the violation of the territorial waters of the Soviet Union by two United States warships, of the frantic commitment of the United States to the arms race, to nuclear testing and to the "Star Wars" programme.

All those activities form part of the overall strategy of the United States, first of all to recover its lost influence - which is indeed the task set himself by the Permanent Representative of the United States when he arrived at the United Nations - and then to dominate the world with its military superiority and its war machine, indiscriminately crushing underfoot anything in its path. That is the explanation for its acts of aggression against Libya, Nicaragua and other peoples, carried out in collusion with the most corrupt of local reactionaries in various countries, all under the banner of defending jungle democracy.

The acts of aggression carried out by the United States against Libya violate all norms of international law and run counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter; my delegation condemns them in the strongest terms. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is resolutely opposed to the threat or use of force in international relations. No law, no international norm, authorizes the United States to carry out flagrantly provocative manoeuvres against Libya or any other State. The United States having insisted on doing so, Libya was within its rights to defend itself with the means at its disposal. What would the United States do if a military power of its size - but not aligned with it - were to arrogate unto itself the same right, and carry out manoeuvres on that scale off the United States coast, off Florida for instance? Would the United States just sit back and look on?

(Mr. Souvorachit, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Only its position as a super-Power - and the law of the jungle - enable the United States to attack Libya and other States weaker than itself with impunity.

What do the Christians say you should do when you are struck on the left cheek? Do they not say that you should turn the other cheek? I wonder whether the United States leaders are true Christians.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to affirm once again the support of our Government and people for the friendly Government and people of Libya in their just struggle to defend their basic, sacred national rights.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

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

Mr. MAKSOUD: I should like to join, Sir, in the universal consensus on your elevation to the presidency of the Security Council. Needless to say, relations between the Arab world and your country have always been friendly and inspiring.

It has just been announced that President Reagan and Secretary of Defense Weinberger have stated that the United States warships in the Gulf of Sidra have withdrawn from that region. There is no doubt that this tends to defuse the climate of violence that has pervaded the international scene in the last couple of days. We want to take note of this, because it might enable the world community to focus on the real issues involved, perhaps leaving behind the emotionalism that can be engendered by negotiations or discussion or debate in the presence of violence.

(Mr. Maksoud)

What, then, is at stake in this matter?

The Arab League, at its meeting on the Foreign-Minister level, strongly condemned the deployment of the American warships in the Gulf of Sidra because it violated the conditions of international security in that region. We heard with great interest the United States position, which was reinforced by the position expressed by the British representative this morning. We think that it constitutes what is claimed to be the legal basis on which the United States has staked its claim to the right to deploy its warships in the Gulf of Sidra.

Let me state at the outset that if every time some State wants to test the claim of another State as to the scope of its territorial waters through the deployment of warships and military exercises, then we are opening the floodgates to international anarchy and to the brinkmanship of confrontation. That is why the League of Arab States is deeply concerned about this recent development. Libya's complaint is shared by the entire Arab world - not only because a threat to one individual Arab State constitutes a threat to the national security of the entire Arab world, but also because if we allow this precedent to go unchecked we shall, as I have said, be opening the floodgates for repeated similar events. And perhaps next time it will escalate into something the world community will come to regret deeply.

For example, Chile, Ecuador and Peru claim 200 miles as their own territorial waters. Does that mean the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom or the United States should go to those waters and undertake military exercises to ascertain that the claim of Chile, Ecuador or Peru is in violation of international law? Would it not be preferable for the international community and the Powers that be to test such claims if they are contested? The United States contests Libya's claim that the Gulf of Sidra is within its territorial waters. The right to challenge Libya's claim is accepted, but the means by which it has been challenged is the reason the Security Council is meeting.

(Mr. Makroud)

In the final analysis, the United Nations has made available many forms of recourse through the International Court of Justice, arbitration, negotiation - any form to exhaust the diplomatic, political and legal options available to the international community to challenge the claim of one country about the scope of its territorial waters.

What we are faced with in this case is contestation as to the validity of Libya's claim that the Gulf of the Sidra comes within its territorial waters. But there are many, many peaceful means to test the validity of that claim. It would have been preferable to follow such a course: for then it would not have been necessary for the Council to meet or for us to hear the rhetoric of confrontation of the last few days.

In the specific case of the Gulf of Sidra, we find in the background the relations between Libya and the United States, concerning which the most we can say is that they are almost non-existent. The break in diplomatic relations has led to the break in diplomatic communications. Therefore, to a very large extent, the relations between the United States and Libya are at best adversarial. A couple of months ago the United States imposed economic sanctions on Libya, and in so doing demonstrated that their relations are not only adversarial but critical. Hence, given the background of these relations, the deployment of the American navy in the Gulf of Sidra, which is contested, was legally a provocative act. That is why the act of provocation has endangered security and peace in that region.

The United States has claimed that its entire reason for going into the Gulf of Sidra was to test and challenge the legal position Libya has taken. I repeat that the challenging of Libya's claim is an available option; in many ways that challenge is shared. But the means the United States has used to test the legality of Libya's claim is totally and irrevocably condemned by the entire Arab nation; hence the resolutions that have been adopted by the Arab league in the last 24 hours.

(Mr. Maksoud)

Further, let me ask this. Is Libya's claim for the Gulf of Sidra totally without any element of logic? If the answer is yes, then perhaps resort to the International Court of Justice would have been the preferred option. But there is some logic to Libya's claim. It may not be universally accepted logic, but it exists. First of all, the route over the Gulf of Sidra has been and remains the route used for flights by Libyan airlines between Tripoli and Benghazi. Commercial navigation within the Gulf of Sidra has been mostly Libyan for a long time. Other civil aviation and international air traffic do not fly over the Gulf of Sidra because it is not economical to do so. They use the straight route.

(Mr. Maksoud)

Consequently, the claim that the Gulf of Sidra is part of Libya's territorial waters might not necessarily be legalistic in the narrow sense; it could logically constitute an economic zone for Libya's claim. Economic zones have been established by many countries in the world, and if one travels from one place to another within the Gulf of Sidra one travels only from Libya to Libya - nowhere else.

What we are saying is that there is some palatable logic to the Libyan claim and, therefore, if that claim is to be challenged on either legal or economic grounds there are many avenues for doing so that should be exhausted before the exercise of any military option. At worst, military option should be an issue of last resort, not of initial planning. When that is done in the context of a backdrop of adversarial relations - as exists between Libya and the United States - then we can come, logically again, to the conclusion that that was a deliberate provocation.

In this regard, now that the United States warships have been removed from the Gulf of Sidra and redeployed, our concern is that this should not constitute a precedent. If that precedent were repeated - and today the United States Administration stated that it will do it again, if necessary - the meeting of this Council would assume far-reaching importance, because by its resolution the Council would be helping to close the option of military deployment and set in motion incentives for any Power which wants to test the legality of Libya's claim, or any similar claim, against the more legal, political, diplomatic avenues, institutions and recourses. In the light of developments today, I think this constitutes the essence of the challenge that now faces the Council. Otherwise we would be opening the floodgates to unilateral determination by the United States, or any other

(Mr. Maksoud)

Power, to determine the rules of engagement and would be letting loose all facets of international behaviour by unilateral, ex cathedra, declarations by one Power or another that it has arrogated to itself the right to undertake provocations of this sort.

Hence, in view of the situation, we perceive the purpose of this Council's meeting to decide in a much more rational manner the task of closing the option of military deployment, military exercises, and to generate sufficient interest so that any kind of dispute should be resolved through legal, diplomatic and other peaceful channels.

I am taking the United States position at face value; I am not giving any credence to the other political objectives and the violent rhetoric that have accompanied United States pronouncements concerning Libya or the Arab world. I am focusing in the manner that the Ambassador of the United States sought to focus - on the legal aspects of this challenge. We hope that is so. The rhetoric of the United States Administration during the past few months has been charged with an appeal to gutsy instinctive reactions. We hope that will subside. There might be more political than policy considerations. We are eager to see no repetition so as to avoid the continuous misunderstanding that would lead us to more crises.

Therefore, our condemnation was not a challenge of the right to challenge. The Arab world condemned the instruments to which the United States resorted to challenge a position.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Maksoud for the kind words he addressed to my country and me.

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

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): Allow me at the outset to express the Algerian delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Council during the month of March. We have been able to observe the many professional and human qualities, including your competence and readiness to work, that you have been able to bring to the conduct of the Council's work.

We should also like to thank Ambassador Martin Adouki of the People's Republic of the Congo for the highly competent and effective way in which he performed his task last month.

The Mediterranean seems decidedly to be monopolizing international headlines as a result of the regular eruption of a series of events which, as if swept along by the relentless logic of escalation, have been a feature by their special gravity of developments in the situation in the region, and thus constantly threaten international peace and security. The fact is that the region was predestined for such a situation by virtue of a conflict - that of the Middle East - that constantly amazes one owing to its unforeseeable and uncontrollable dimensions arising out of the very persistence and worsening of its original causes.

As witnesses, and sometimes as protagonists in the conflict, certain countries have preferred - as a matter of strategic choice and immediate expediency - not to react except to the most recent events, those affecting them most directly, because in this remarkable series of developments it has become illusory to try to circumscribe the conflict geographically. These reactions, which seek to be forceful and spectacular and whose sensationalism for the sake of the news media takes precedence over any overall political vision, are in marked contrast to the total lack of boldness in attempts to implement initiatives designed to find a valid and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East in the interest of regional security and international peace.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

Thus, even today, when the history of the conflict from its very inception, as well as the burning topical nature of its many repercussions, cries out for a global solution, we see only a politically chilly but militarily feverish attitude which, far from seeking to reduce tension in the region, has added considerably to it with new escalation.

The development of the conflict abundantly teaches us that it is the persistent nature of this conflict and the tolerance of the original underlying injustice that have favoured the extension of Zionist aggression and its corollary, the tragic expression of the despair of the Palestinian people, to the whole of the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean, once a centre of commerce and civilization, has now become, despite the efforts of non-aligned littoral countries, an arena for all forms of confrontation.

In no way can peaceful purposes be ascribed to the concentration of warships in the Mediterranean. Their presence is in itself a demonstration of force, while the reinforcement of that presence is of constant concern to the littoral non-aligned States. Just when the proliferation of individual or joint military manoeuvres raises the greatest apprehensions, the dreaded event occurs: the territorial integrity of a littoral country is brutally violated and its national sovereignty threatened.

Apart from human losses, the extensive damage and the flagrant assault on the sovereignty of which Libya has been the victim, the event is even more disturbing because it involves a super-Power which by virtue of its capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council, the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has the primary duty to act with prudence and restraint so as to avoid provoking, by a thoughtless act on its part, a breakdown of international peace and security.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

We should bear in mind that the grave events in the Gulf of Sidra were preceded by a series of acts and measures which could only cause us to fear the worst. Whatever the nature of the dispute and the bases of positions of one side or the other, dialogue and the establishment of calm and normal means of communication between the parties in question should have been sought in place of confrontation and provocation. This is particularly true in the case of a super-Power, whose every act involves the credibility of the system of collective security established by the Charter and whose every deed in a region of the world as sensitive as the Mediterranean challenges the validity of the international juridical system. On that super-Power rests primary responsibility for ensuring that a dispute does not escalate into aggression - in this case, against the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Algeria is more than ever convinced of the need to rid the Mediterranean of big-Power rivalry and of shows of force. Together with the non-aligned coastal countries of the Mediterranean, it has constantly striven to stress the indivisible nature of any approach to security and co-operation in the Mediterranean. In the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, for example, Algeria strove from the beginning to draw attention to the mistake that would be made by some and to the injustice that would be done to others by extending this North-South rupture, the source of so much instability and inequality in the world, into the heart of the Mediterranean by taking a partial approach to peace.

Thus, by contrast with Europe, where peace and co-operation are generally preserved the security of the Mediterranean is more threatened now than it was some 10 years ago at the conclusion of the Helsinki Agreements. Indeed, present events, including this debate, contradict the declaration by which participating States then committed themselves to security and co-operation in the Mediterranean:

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

"to promote the development of good-neighbourly relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on which their relations are based, and with the United Nations Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States and accordingly, in this context, to conduct their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States in the spirit of the principles set forth in the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States;

"to seek, by further improving their relations with the non-participating Mediterranean States, to increase mutual confidence, so as to promote security and stability in the Mediterranean area as a whole;".

Is it necessary to recall that Algeria, a non-participating State at that Conference, had then taken the initiative of raising the issue of the link between European and Mediterranean security? There were many instances of hesitation that had to be overcome before this Mediterranean dimension was included in the concerns of the Conference, and this was due in particular to the co-operation of the participating Mediterranean States.

However, the very process of détente following that Conference became concentrated on Europe in disregard of and at the expense of the need for dealing with tensions in the Mediterranean.

Indeed, any brutal increase of tension in the Mediterranean brings us back to this fundamental need for a rehabilitation in the region by the patient but resolute promotion of a policy of dialogue and co-operation aimed at establishing a zone of peace and co-operation in the Mediterranean.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

In this respect it is urgent that there be significant reductions in the foreign military presence in the Mediterranean in order to eliminate the considerable element of tension and to create an atmosphere conducive to the elimination of conflicts.

It is precisely because recent events run counter to such an objective that Algeria has reacted with particular concern to the recent threats and use of force against Libya. This involves, without question, a particularly grave increase in tension which should have been resolved by exploring the peaceful means laid down in the United Nations Charter - not by the inadmissible and unjustifiable use of force.

In solidarity with the fraternal people of Libya in defending its sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and historical achievements, Algeria reaffirms its conviction that it is vital, in the name of international law and peace, to bring to an end any activity conducive to tension and to provoking an escalation in the confrontation. The Security Council must take the appropriate decisions to prevent the renewal of such actions which threaten international peace and security.

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

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. WALTERS (United States of America): I have listened today to a cascade of falsehoods from those who, through shrillness and inaccuracy, try to make wrong seem right and right seem wrong.

The Libyan representative, as well as many others who spoke today, seems to have forgotten that Libya, not the United States, opened fire on ships that were well outside any recognized territorial waters. Six missiles were fired by the Libyans before the United States responded. Alice in Wonderland is not dead; she has been present here today during this debate.

Since the Libyan representative failed to mention that Libya had been the first to use force, he feels no need to justify Libya's opening fire. The Libyan Government has told us in a letter that it considers the United Nations and this Council to be irrelevant, and that it will rely on its own strength.

A State simply cannot claim portions of the high seas and then proceed to open fire on anything that is there. Several States that have supported Libya here today do not seem to realize that in supporting such extravagant claims they could set a dangerous precedent that may return to haunt them. One of the States that spoke against the United States here today only a few years ago sent its fleet into a disputed area at sea. The speaker who followed and supported Libya seemed much more anxious to discuss other people's problems than the war his country is waging against one of its neighbours, causing thousands of deaths.

The United States, which in my lifetime has helped to liberate many nations, really has no lessons to learn from nations that have repeatedly shown their willingness to use force against their neighbours, as Libya is doing as I speak today, with thousands of its troops on the soil of a weak neighbour.

The interest of the United States has been to preserve the freedom of the seas. It was Libya that first used force, not the United States.

Mr. DUBININ (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): First, I thank those colleagues in the Council and others who have spoken here today for their welcome to me as representative of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet delegation wishes primarily to make a few comments on the statement made today by the representative of the United Kingdom, who tried to whitewash the militaristic actions of the American Administration. His statement clearly showed that he was taking the imperial approach. It brings to mind the days when the United Kingdom claimed to rule the seas, when it claimed that it could regard all the oceans of the world as its own little pond. It is quite clear that we are now living in different times.

The United Kingdom representative claimed that the Soviet delegation was trying to bring the discussion back to the times of confrontation between East and West. To put it mildly, that statement did not reflect reality. In its provocative anti-Libya policy, the culmination of which was the armed aggression against that country, the United States has set out on the path of confrontation, confrontation not only with Libya but with all the non-aligned States, all those that hold dear their freedom and independence. That is clear to all, and therefore requires no further explanation.

It is certainly not the Soviet Union that is trying to sidetrack the discussion and to replace the subject of today's debate; rather, it is the United States and the United Kingdom. It is they that are trying to present the situation as though it were a question not of armed action by the United States against Libya but of the principle of the freedom of navigation in international waters.

There is a paradox here. Freedom of navigation involves the law of the sea. The very countries that refused to sign that most important international instrument, the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, are the ones that are focusing on that issue.

(Mr. Dubinin, USSR)

It is also appropriate to recall that the United States, which claims now to be defending the right to freedom of navigation, was not so long ago mining the waters around Nicaraguan ports. The illegality under international law of that action was clear. So instead of proving its standpoint in connection with the law of the sea under the United Nations Charter, the United States is trying to justify itself by reference to the notorious gunboat diplomacy. Indeed, one could call it aircraft carrier diplomacy now.

The piratical actions of the United States against Libya provide even more pressing reasons for taking active, broad measures to ensure security in the Mediterranean region. The Soviet Union advocates that the cradle of civilization, the Mediterranean, should become a zone of peace and co-operation.

Our proposals still stand on measures to promote trust and confidence, including a reduction of armed forces and the withdrawal from the Mediterranean of vessels bearing nuclear weapons. Under the proposals, there would be no deployment of such weapons on the territory of the non-nuclear-weapon Mediterranean countries, and the nuclear-weapon countries would undertake not to use them against any Mediterranean country that did not have such weapons deployed on its soil. All those proposals are still valid.

As the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev said yesterday, the Soviet Union is willing to go even further. He said that there was no need for the Soviet Union to have its fleet in the Mediterranean permanently; it was keeping its warships there simply for one clear reason, that:

"the United States Sixth Fleet, armed with nuclear-missile weapons and threatening the security of the U.S.S.R., its allies and friends, is in the immediate proximity of our borders."

(Mr. Dubinin, USSR)

Mikael Sergeivich Gorbachov continued:

"If the United States, which is situated thousands on thousands of miles from the Mediterranean, pulled its fleet out of there, the Soviet Union would simultaneously do the same. We are prepared without delay to enter talks on the issue.

"As a first step, there could be a limitation of activities and weapons in this area among the Mediterranean States. Further steps to strengthen security in this region, in our view, could be decided upon in accordance with the Soviet proposal contained in the statement of 15 January 1986, referring to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction."

We in the Soviet Union responded with understanding to the proposal by the non-aligned countries regarding the Mediterranean. They intend to hold their second conference this year in Malta. This point was made here by the representative of Malta. We consider that a useful role could be played by a broader meeting, similar to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, at which the Mediterranean States and those adjacent to the region, as well as the United States and other interested countries could also participate. There could hardly be any doubt as to it being a question of agreed efforts by all interested parties which, in the long term, would lead to a stable peace in the Mediterranean.

Mr. MAXEY (United Kingdom): I am glad that the Soviet representative felt able to respond to the question which Sir John Thomson put to him during the course of his statement this morning. Much of Mr. Dubinin's statement was, of course, not, in fact, in reply to anything which my Ambassador had said but constituted a further statement of the Soviet position. To the extent that Mr. Dubinin's remarks constitute a reply to the question which was put to him this morning, I cannot pretend that I found the reply very illuminating. The tone, I am

(Mr. Maxey, United Kingdom)

bound to say, was also a disappointment. I hope that counter-attack, rather than reasoned argument, will not be characteristic of Mr. Dubinin's contributions to debates in this Council.

The Soviet representative said that the United Kingdom had not signed the recently concluded Convention on the Law of the Sea and implied that this in some way disqualified us from commenting on the question of international law relating to freedom of navigation.

It is correct that we have not signed the Convention on the Law of the Sea. We have made our position very clear: we have said that provisions relating to the deep-seabed in the Convention are not acceptable to us and that we hope they can be amended in a manner that will enable us to become a party to the Convention; we are working to that end.

But what is quite clear, and this is not challenged or inconsistent with the new Convention on the Law of the Sea, no State is entitled to claim territorial waters that extend beyond 12 miles from their coast, much less to shut off large areas of the high seas. That is what Libya has attempted to do in the Gulf of Sidra; practically no State has recognized its claim, and many have specifically denied its validity.

It is, however, not my Government's position on the principles involved in the recent incident in the Gulf of Sidra which is in question, but that of the Soviet Union. My Government's position was made crystal clear in Sir John Thomson's statement this morning. Nobody, I am quite sure, in this Chamber can be in any doubt where the United Kingdom stands, but there is uncertainty about the Soviet position, and that uncertainty, as far as I am concerned, remains.

The question which Sir John Thomson asked this morning was simple and could have been simply and briefly answered. It falls into two parts which are

(Mr. Maxey, United Kingdom)

intimately connected. The first is: does the Soviet Union subscribe or not to the principle of freedom of navigation on the high seas, and does the Soviet Union support, or does it not support the claim which Libya has proclaimed in relation to the Gulf of Sidra?

If one supports unequivocally the principle of freedom of navigation on the high seas, then one distances oneself from the position taken by Libya. If one supports the Libyan position and condones breaches of the principle, then the principle is undermined and falls to the ground. One cannot have it both ways. The Soviet statement this evening suggests to me that they continue to wish to have it both ways, and the reasons why they wish to do so, I think, are clear enough to all of us.

Mr. DUBININ (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): What we have just heard from the representative of the United Kingdom yet again reveals the aspiration of his delegation to divert the attention of the Security Council and that of world public opinion from the essence of this matter: the armed actions by the United States against a sovereign State.

The representative of the United Kingdom referred to the text of the Convention, which is still not signed by his State, but he did refer to the text of that Convention, nevertheless, so as to familiarize us with some of its provisions. So, perhaps in response to what he said, I also could refer to the text of that Convention and the part that is most directly related to the subject which is now being considered by the Security Council. Article 301 of the Convention states the following norm:

"... States Parties shall refrain from any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State."

In other words, contemporary sea law, as codified in the 1982 Convention,

(Mr. Dubinin, USSR)

requires that one refrain from the threat or use of force because, after all, this is one of the basic prerequisites of the Charter of the United Nations. The action of the United States of America against Libya is a violation of this fundamental norm of the Law of the Sea, just as it is also a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. This is the crux of the matter that is today being considered by the Security Council and which is, indeed, a matter of concern to the world public.

Mr. MAXEY (United Kingdom): I have listened with care to the statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union. He has clearly quoted correctly from the Convention on the Law of the Sea but he has not applied it correctly to the present situation. I must make it very clear to him, and, indeed, to most of the speakers we have listened to during the course of today, that the Security Council is not meeting because of the means used by the United States to assert the right of freedom of navigation on the high seas in the Gulf of Sidra but because of the means used by Libya to try to assert its illegal claim to exclusive rights in the Gulf of Sidra. It is not the United States which has breached the principle which the representative of the Soviet Union just enunciated.

The PRESIDENT: There are no further speakers for this meeting. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on the agenda will be held on Monday, 31 March 1986 at 3.30 p.m.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

