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

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 14 December 1988, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. KAGAMI

(Japan)

Members:

Algeria
Argentina
Brazil
China
France
Germany, Federal Republic of
Italy
Nepal
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia
Zambia

Mr. OUYAHIA
Mr. CULLEN
Mr. de ALENCAR
Mr. LI Luyue
Mr. BROCHAND
Mr. VERGAU
Mr. MIGLIUOLO
Mr. JOSSE
Mr. NDIAYE
Mr. BELONOGOV

Mr. BLATHERWICK
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC
Mr. ZUZE

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The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET
SOCIALIST REPUBLICS IN CONNECTION WITH THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE

The PRESIDENT: At the very outset of the meeting, I should like, on behalf of the Council, to express deep sympathy to the Government and people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with regard to the great tragedy it has experienced as a result of the major earthquake that occurred in the Transcaucasian region of the Soviet Union a few days ago. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing our feelings of profound shock and sorrow at the tremendous loss sustained by the Soviet people in terms of human lives and material destruction. I would request the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to convey to his Government our sincere condolences, grief and solidarity.

TRIBUTE TO THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of December, I should like to pay a tribute to Mr. Giovanni Migliuolo, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, for his service as President of Security Council for the month of November. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Migliuolo for the great diplomatic skill, tact and courtesy with which he conducted the business of the Council last month.

I should like, in addition, to pay a tribute to Mr. Mario Scialoja, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, for the exemplary manner in which he performed the duties of the presidency last month.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

LETTER DATED 9 DECEMBER 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20318)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Israel and Lebanon in which they ask to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate 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. Fakhoury (Lebanon) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Matnai (Israel) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

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

The Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in the letter dated 9 December 1988 (S/20318) from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Members of the Council have before them document S/20322, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Argentina, Nepal, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

I should also like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/20317, which contains the text of a letter dated 9 December 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of Lebanon, on whom I now call.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a great pleasure for my delegation and for me personally to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council this month. The relations between our two countries, our personal friendship and your well-known experience and wisdom give us confidence that the Council's work is in good hands.

I am pleased also to pay a tribute to Mr. Giovanni Miglioulo, the Permanent Representative of Italy, for the ability, even-handedness and wisdom he showed in guiding the Council's work last month.

The delegation of Lebanon greatly appreciates the response that you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Security Council have made to Lebanon's request to convene an urgent meeting to consider the aggression against Lebanon's territories by Israeli naval, air and land forces on 9 December 1988.

The letter of complaint that Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General was circulated on the same day as an official document of the Security Council

(S/20317). That letter included the information then available on the act of aggression by Israel against the town of Na'imah and the monastery on the hills overlooking that town, as well as the Shuwayfat-Sa'diyat-Bi'wirta triangle, which is deep inside Lebanon - indeed, only 20 kilometres south of our capital, Beirut.

After that letter of complaint had been drafted, further, mind-boggling details were received concerning the Israeli forces that took part in the aggression, the magnitude and intensity of the fire power and the wide areas subjected to the attack and the bombardment.

Like all of us, members of the Council must have seen on their television screens and read in their newspapers details of this premeditated, criminal, stark act of aggression. The coast of the Shouf area, from Damur to Na'imah and its surrounding hills, together with the monastery on one of those hills, up to the towns of Armun, Shuwayfat and Sa'diyat, were all shelled and bombed. That shelling and bombing extended to the peaks of the coastal mountains, especially the villages of Abeyya, Einab and Shamlan and the roads leading to them.

Israel's military aircraft, helicopter gunships, paratroop units and naval units and gunboats plying Lebanese territorial waters along the Lebanese coast all took part in the shelling and bombing.

The Israeli forces used booby-trapped dogs on which explosives and gas canisters had been tied. These dogs were used in the attack on centres of the Lebanese national resistance. That is a real first in warfare. We should not, however, marvel at any of this, for Israel, which attaches no importance whatever to the lives of non-Israelis, cannot be expected to value the lives of animals or show them any mercy.

The losses in human lives and material damage caused by the Israeli aggression are great indeed. A large number of buildings, including houses, were destroyed. Crops were burned. Roads were destroyed. The initial attack and the fighting that

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

followed it, which went on for 12 hours without interruption, left a large number of dead and wounded.

The Israeli enemy has accustomed us to daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty, by all the means at Israel's disposal. Lebanese sovereignty is, of course, Lebanon's responsibility. But it is also the responsibility of the Security Council. Is there any member of the Council that does not understand the meaning of sovereignty and would not fiercely defend it?

In its letter of complaint, the Lebanese Government condemned this Israeli aggression. We have repeatedly warned of Israel's tendency to intensify its military operations against Lebanon, in the absence of a firm deterrent position on the part of the Security Council that would oblige Israel to implement the Council's resolutions demanding that it cease all military operations against Lebanon and completely, immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Lebanese territory.

The latest act of Israeli aggression is yet further proof that Israel considers as fair game Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its airspace, its soil and its territorial waters. That is in direct contradiction of the Security Council's resolutions, which Israel continues to flout. It is also a breach of the United Nations Charter, international law and custom and international conventions.

After the aggression, the Israeli Army Chief of Staff, General Dan Shamron, made a statement which offers further proof that the Israeli ruling clique firmly intends to go on pursuing its policy of aggression against Lebanon. General Shamron said that the Israeli operation on Friday, 9 December, against Palestinian bases in Lebanon was a great success whose military dimensions would become apparent in the near future. He added that this operation would not be the last.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

In other words, General Shamron wishes to reassure this Council and the world at large that Israel will not abide by any resolution, convention, law, norm or international agreement. This statement unveils the planned Israeli policy against Lebanon. It was so candid that it verged on the insolent, as is the wont of the Israeli military and politicians. It is not directed against Lebanon alone; it is directed against the international community as a whole and the Security Council in particular.

Since its establishment in the heart of the Middle East region, Israel has consistently pursued a policy of aggression and on the assumption that might is right. The law of the jungle is the only law it has ever recognized and the one that it follows whether or not this is to the liking of the international community. Acting outside the boundaries of the law is the principle it believes in. The human losses and material damage it causes do not matter at all so long as those who suffer are not Israel or Israelis. All is permitted to Israel and forbidden to everyone else. Even resistance to aggression is considered terrorism in Israel's eyes. Even resistance against occupation is a criminal act according to Israel. As for planned aggression, killing and destruction it is always clad by Israel in the legitimacy of self-defence against the presumed dangers. It is fear that Israel lives in and it is an inevitable result of its pursuit of the policy of aggression for the sake of aggression.

Israel would be wrong to believe that such a policy could last. Israel has gone through bitter experiences with the Lebanese resistance. Yet the arrogance, defiance and hatred which motivate Israeli officials prevent them from returning to their senses and learning the lessons they should have learned from the incursions of their forces into Lebanon whether in cross-border strikes or in deep penetration inside Lebanon.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 cost it dearly. The price it paid was hundreds of dead and wounded. Since then, it has contented itself with long-range shelling, aerial and/or naval bombardment and the substitution of the so-called "army of South Lebanon" to the use of their forces in military engagement.

When Israel took the risk earlier this year and made an incursion with its own forces into the depth of southern Lebanon, in an attempt to raise the morale of its soldiers and commanders, it suffered grave losses. Its Minister of Defence, Rabin, thought that by standing on one of the hills overlooking the village of Midoun - and having this picture taken while the houses of that small village were being razed by his troops - he was going to restore the self-confidence of Israel's armed forces. He may have gone further in his thinking. He may have thought that history was going to accord him the place it accorded Nero when he stood watching Rome burn. Yet Midoun, the tiny village, is not Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, and Rabin is not Nero.

Last Friday Israel took the risk once again and pushed its troops, its navy, army and air force in a large-scale incursion into the depth of Lebanon. Again, the price of aggression was very high. Israel has admitted to the death of a senior officer, a lieutenant colonel, and the wounding of a number of its troops. Yet to us, the human losses seem much larger and the material losses seem immense.

The timing of the operation on Friday was no coincidence. Israel wanted to mark the first anniversary of the uprising, the intifadah, in the occupied Palestinian territories. The aim of this operation was to restore confidence to its army - that confidence which has been shaken by the revolution of stones, the revolution that the Israeli army, for a whole year failed to quell. Israel had nothing but the Lebanese territory to vent its wrath and attack with all its might. However, the operation has failed, as it was destined to, against the solid determination of the Lebanese national resistance to repel it.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Lebanon has never been taken in by the assertions of Israeli officials that they have no ambitions as regards Lebanon's territory or water resources and that their operations are not directed against Lebanon and the Lebanese. The air and naval bombardment and shelling from the ground were all directed against the Lebanese villages and territory. The losses and casualties were inflicted on the Lebanese and the damage was done to their property. Israel's continued occupation of part of the Lebanese territory is the clearest evidence of its ambitions in regard to the territory and the water resources of Lebanon. Israel's continued aggression and practices against Lebanon are the clearest proof of its premeditated, deliberate policy against my country.

In view of the lack of confidence on the part of Lebanon in Israel and its leaders, the continued acts of aggression by Israel and its leaders against the Lebanese territories, the towns and villages, the unarmed defenceless civilians; in view of the persistence of Israel and its leaders in the policy of aggression for the sake of aggression against Lebanon; in view of the statements by civilian and military Israeli officials, the gravest and most recent of which was the statement made by General Shamron; and in view of the explosive situation created by Israel, through its continued occupation of part of the Lebanese territories in the South and by its acts of aggression and practices, which jeopardize peace and security in the Middle East and the world, the delegation of Lebanon strongly calls upon this Council to do the following.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

First, to condemn Israel for its acts of aggression and for its latest act of aggression carried out against Lebanese territory.

Secondly, to compel Israel to implement the resolutions adopted by the Security Council demanding Israel's immediate and final cessation of all acts of aggression against Lebanese territory.

Thirdly, to compel Israel to implement the Council's relevant resolutions providing for the immediate and unconditional comprehensive Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

Our demands are legitimate. Members of this Council have long recognized our demands and called for their implementation in their statements whenever Lebanese complaints against continued Israeli acts of aggression were being considered by the Council. If Israel is responsible, so is this Council because the protection of the sovereignty of Member States as well as the maintenance of international peace and security are within its mandate.

The Council is capable of adopting a resolution and carrying it out. The fact that we are today resorting to it reflects our belief in that ability of the Council and in our right as a member of the international family to have the Council act on our complaint.

Impeding the Council's mandate contributes to aggravating further the explosive situation in southern Lebanon and in the Middle East. It means impeding the task of maintaining international peace and security and encourages Israel to pursue its policy of aggression against Lebanon.

It is in the nature of peoples that they do not forget an insult. It is in the nature of history that it is just in its judgements: severe against aggressors and against those who encourage them or condone their practices and actions.

Mr. President, we address an appeal to you and, through you, to each and every member of this Council: protect the sovereignty of Lebanon; redress the injustice inflicted upon its people, and stop the bloodshed in Lebanon by deterring Israel

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

through the unanimous adoption of a firm, courageous stance and an obligatory resolution.

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

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

Mr. MATNAI (Israel): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December. I wish also to thank the representative of Italy for the way in which he directed the Security Council's deliberations during the month of November.

At the outset I would like to reiterate the position of the Government of Israel regarding Lebanon. This position has been repeated many times in the past. Simply put, Israel has no territorial claims whatsoever in regard to any Lebanese territory - not one inch. Israel's desire is to protect, defend and ensure the security of its population from repeated attacks emanating from Lebanese territory.

We wish to see sovereignty restored in all areas of Lebanon by one central Government. We wish to see a unified State responsible for security within Lebanon and along its borders. Unfortunately, though, this is not the case.

In fact, over the past year the tragic situation in Lebanon has deteriorated even further. Those who have invoked the images of sovereignty and territorial integrity today should redirect their accusations at others who make a mockery of the territorial integrity of Lebanon.

Among those, of course, there are other forces in Lebanon: the PLO and its various tributaries that use Lebanon to launch violence against Israel. Now, in the absence of a Lebanese Government capable of assuming its responsibilities - namely, preventing such attacks from occurring - the Government of Israel has no option but to take the measures necessary for our security.

(Mr. Matnai, Israel)

On 9 December 1988 the Government of Israel took one such action. In a limited operation the Israel Defence Forces targeted the headquarters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC). As is known, the PFLP-GC is a faction of the PLO led since 1968 by the arch-terrorist Ahmed Jibril. The PFLP-GC has its headquarters in the hills north of Dammur. Dug into those hills were a number of ammunition dumps and anti-aircraft batteries. There were also a number of terrorist training camps hidden in those hills. It was from that area that Jibril and his cohorts planned and executed a number of terrorist attacks against Israel over the past years.

Last November - November 1987 - for example, PFLP-GC terrorists infiltrated Israel using a hang-glider. Six Israelis were killed in the attack before the terrorists were stopped. One month later, in December 1987, the PFLP-GC claimed responsibility for a grenade attack in Rafah that injured a number of Israeli civilians. And more recently authorities in West Germany arrested a number of PFLP-GC terrorists and uncovered an arms cache they intended to use in large-scale terrorist operations.

It is somewhat ironic that I am representing my Government at this Council meeting for I know the terror of the PFLP-GC first-hand. In 1972 I was Chargé d'affaires, a.i. in Phnom Penh. One morning I received a letter in the mail. Inside the letter there was a bomb. The PFLP-GC was the sender. I was on its mailing list.

I am not here to prove that the PFLP-GC is a premier terrorist organization that has repeatedly launched terrorist operations against my country. That fact is quite well known. I am here to inform the members of the Council that we engaged in a limited operation to defend ourselves from terrorism, the curse of the modern world. The operation lasted a few hours and all troops - I repeat, all troops - were withdrawn upon completion of the mission.

(Mr. Matnai, Israel)

Only two days ago the same Ahmed Jibril made his position clear on Damascus Radio. He disclosed once more his notion of a peace settlement. His goal was clear: "the return to Haifa, Jaffa, Nazareth, Lydda and Ramle. Without this, there is no peace with the enemy".

Israel has no conflict with the Government or the people of Lebanon. We do, however, have a conflict with those who have subverted Lebanese legitimacy for their own aggressive ends against us and who have plunged Lebanon into the tragedy which has characterized that country for nearly two decades.

In the present circumstances, and as long as the current tragic situation prevails in Lebanon, we remain firm in our resolve to ensure a secure existence for our citizens within our borders. We continue to believe that the only feasible solution that will ensure tranquillity on both sides of the border with Lebanon can be found in adequate and mutually agreed security arrangements. At the same time, we shall continue to yearn for a lasting peace with Lebanon, as with all our neighbours.

This esteemed Council should note that the presence of armed terrorists in Lebanon is the root cause of this problem and condemn it, not those that defend themselves from acts of terrorism.

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

Mr. NDIAYE (Senegal) (interpretation from French): The non-aligned countries members of the Security Council have given me, as co-ordinator of their group for December, the task of making the following statement on their behalf:

"The non-aligned countries members of the Security Council wish to express their sympathy to the Soviet delegation following the natural catastrophe that has stricken the Soviet people.

(Mr. Ndiaye, Senegal)

"They also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for December 1988, and to assure you of their whole-hearted co-operation; they are at your disposal. They note with pleasure that you have discharged your functions with the utmost discretion and the skill for which the Japanese people are known.

"They also wish to express their gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Italy and to congratulate him on the exemplary manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the Council in November.

"The non-aligned members of the Security Council are firmly convinced that the violation of the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and independence of a State poses grave threats to international peace and security. That is why the non-aligned countries, which have always been against the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, wish to take this opportunity to condemn the aggression against Lebanon that took place on 9 December 1988 and also to reject unreservedly the arguments advanced by Israel in justification of that act. In their opinion the act of aggression of 9 December 1988 committed by the land, naval and air forces of Israel against Lebanon cannot be tolerated and should arouse an appropriate reaction from the Security Council.

"In this respect the adoption of the proposed draft resolution would constitute a minimum reaction by the Security Council, which bears special responsibility for the restoration to Lebanon of its inviolable and inalienable rights to sovereignty, territorial integrity and peace. By adopting the draft resolution the Security Council would once again express

(Mr. Ndiaye, Senegal)

the international community's refusal to go along with the use of force and policies of aggression as a means of ensuring the security of any State whatsoever."

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

Mr. BROCHAND (France) (interpretation from French): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, as previous speakers have done, congratulations on your accession to the presidency of our Council. Allow me also to express our gratitude to the Italian delegation, and particularly its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Migliuolo, for the exemplary manner in which it acquitted itself of its tasks last month.

Once again the territory of Lebanon has been the object of an attack from outside. France has always condemned acts of violence that infringe upon the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon. By voting in favour of the draft resolution before us, France will express its concern that there be an end to attacks directed against a country to which we feel particularly close.

At a time when Lebanon's unity is in jeopardy, such attacks can only aggravate an already unstable situation. The existence of a peaceful and independent Lebanon, which is necessary to equilibrium in the Middle East, depends on a reconciliation among all the Lebanese people and an end to all foreign interference.

On this occasion my country wishes to state again its hope that the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) will be applied in conformity with resolutions of the United Nations in order to preserve the territorial integrity of Lebanon and to ensure peace and security in its southern region.

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

Mr. STARACE-JANFOLLA (Italy): It is with great pleasure, Sir, that I join previous speakers in paying tribute to your presidency. The ties between our two countries go far back in history. Our current co-operation is intense and exemplary. You know you can count on our full co-operation, and we wish you good work and every success in your task.

I also wish to acknowledge with thanks the friendly expressions of appreciation addressed to my delegation for the work done during the Italian presidency in the month of November.

(Mr. Starace-Janfolla, Italy)

Once again the Council has been convened following a complaint in which Lebanon has decried an act of aggression against Lebanese territory by Israeli naval, air and land forces. Both because of a consistent position always maintained by the Italian Government on cases of violations of sovereignty and because of the bonds of friendship which unite my country and Lebanon, I must express here that we strongly deplore this military operation, which constitutes a serious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon which must be respected.

I wish, above all, to express our support for and solidarity with the Lebanese people, which once more has suffered an injustice. We express our sympathy to the families of the victims.

The Council has adopted on the question of Lebanon a number of resolutions aimed at establishing a climate of peace on the border between the two countries through the complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces to international borders and through the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon on that same line. Those resolutions must be respected, and the Council should take this opportunity to reaffirm its strong support for the letter and principles of those resolutions.

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

Mr. de ALENCAR (Brazil): First of all, I should like to express to you, Sir, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you presiding over the work of the Council for the month of December. I am sure that your experience and dexterity in the art of diplomacy, coupled with the international prestige and importance of Japan, will enable you to discharge your duties as President in the most efficient manner.

(Mr. de Alencar, Brazil)

It also gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Migliuolo, and to the distinguished representation of Italy for the efficient manner in which they conducted the business of the Council during the month of November.

Let me also thank you, Mr. President, for having conveyed to the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on behalf of the members of the Council, our grief and our solidarity with regard to the tragic consequences of the earthquake which occurred in Soviet territory. We fully associate ourselves with your thoughtful words.

As the Security Council meets to consider the 9 December Israeli military attack against Lebanese territory, the Brazilian Government once again joins in strongly deploring this latest violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity, which completely disregards the basic principles of the Charter of this Organization as well as accepted norms of international conduct. We consider that the perpetration of such acts makes internal reconciliation in Lebanon a more difficult goal to be attained, thus exacerbating tensions in the Middle East region. It also inflicts heavy suffering on the Lebanese population, something which is cause for grave concern to my country.

Brazil remains convinced that peace and stability can return to Lebanon only as a result of the unreserved compliance with the relevant resolutions of this Council. This would also represent an important step towards peace in the whole of the Middle East.

We therefore strongly feel that all attacks against Lebanese territory must cease immediately. The Brazilian delegation is thus prepared to give its support to the draft resolution now before us, which was introduced by Senegal on behalf of its sponsors, and we hope it will be fully complied with.

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

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it (S/20322). Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Senegal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against: United States of America

The PRESIDENT: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 in favour, one against and no abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

I shall now call on members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): I should like first of all, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to express our total confidence in your wisdom and skill in guiding our work. I should like also to thank most sincerely the Permanent Representative of Italy for his fine work in leading the Council through the month of November.

The United States remains committed to supporting Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Consistent with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), we have called repeatedly for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, and the extension of central government authority throughout the country. This remains our policy.

(Miss Byrne, United States)

We have opposed the draft resolution considered by the Council today because it criticizes the actions of one party while ignoring the attacks and reprisals that have originated on the other side of the border. It is precisely this cyclical pattern of violence that has perpetuated the suffering in this troubled area.

Moreover, in requesting that Israel cease all attacks against Lebanese territory regardless of provocation this draft resolution would deny to Israel its inherent right to defend itself. This we cannot accept.

So long as extremist elements continue to use the area as a base for launching hostile attacks against Israel, southern Lebanon will not enjoy a return to stability. What is needed are practical measures to curb terrorist activities, not more unbalanced resolutions that achieve nothing. The United States remains ready to work with all parties towards ending the violence in southern Lebanon and towards restoring peace and security to the area. These efforts will continue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States for her kind words addressed to me.

The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has asked to make a statement, and I now call on him.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Since this is my first opportunity to speak in the Security Council in December, I should like first of all to convey to you, Sir, my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We have already had occasion to see how skilfully you have been conducting the proceedings of the Council, and we wish you further success in your important post.

I also want to avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to your predecessor as President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative

(Mr. Belogonov, USSR)

of Italy. November was a difficult month; hence I should like in particular to express my pleasure at the fact that Ambassador Giovanni Migliuolo so skilfully coped with his difficult task and with his illness, especially since he once again has the opportunity to participate in the work of the Council.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Mr. President, the Soviet delegation is deeply moved by the words of condolence you expressed in connection with the great disaster of the earthquake in Armenia that has afflicted the Soviet people. The earthquake has caused tremendous suffering. The number of dead is estimated today at 55,000, and more than 500,000 people are homeless. An enormous amount of material damage has been done.

The attention of the whole of the Soviet people is now focused on Armenia. For two days, Mikhail Sergeiyevich Gorbachev was in the area, and the President of the Council of Ministers of the USSR is directly involved in the rescue operation. Everything possible is being done to save the living, to provide medical assistance to the injured and to help women and children and all who have suffered from the earthquake.

Our country grieves over the loss of life, but it is determined fully to restore the devastated regions over the next two years. A tremendous amount of work remains to be done. In these tragic days help is arriving for those who suffered in the region, not only from every corner of the Soviet Union, but from many foreign countries as well, from Governments, from various public organizations and from thousands upon thousands of individuals. We are profoundly grateful to all who have taken our grief and suffering to heart, who have expressed their solidarity and sympathy and who are taking practical steps to help the survivors.

We are grateful to all the members of the Security Council who have expressed their condolences and sympathy at today's meeting and on other occasions. On behalf of the Soviet delegation, I should like to thank you, Sir, for the statement you made today as President of the Security Council with regard to the earthquake in Armenia. Your message will be transmitted to the Government of my country.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the agenda item.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.