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

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 9 January 1989, at 11.05 a.m.

President: Mr. RAZALI

(Malaysia)

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

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

Sir Crispin TICKELL
Mr. WALTERS
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

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

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

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

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

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bangladesh, India and Morocco in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the

(The President)

Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohiuddin (Bangladesh), Mr. Dasgupta (India) and Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

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

Members of the Council have received photocopies of a letter dated 5 January 1989 from the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/20377.

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): My delegation received the news of the demise of His Majesty Emperor Hirohito of Japan with profound sadness. He was an eminent leader and symbol of his nation, and the people of Finland shares the sense of loss felt by the people of Japan.

I wish to thank you, Sir, for the warm words of welcome that you extended to Finland as a new member of the Security Council. In my turn, I wish to congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and assure you of the full co-operation of my delegation. I wish you every success in your task. The assurance of full co-operation goes not only to you, but also to all members of the Security Council, with whom we hope to have a constructive and fruitful relationship. We also thank them for the kind welcome that they have given to Finland and the other new members.

My delegation regrets the fact that the Security Council has to begin its work in 1989 by dealing with an incident that clearly demonstrates the continuing presence of serious tension in the Mediterranean region.

My Government is concerned over what seems to be a continuing pattern of incidents involving the most mobile armed forces of different nations - their navies and air forces - particularly in international waters and in the airspace above international waters.

We are particularly concerned when such incidents lead to the use of force. We urge all nations to ensure that the utmost restraint is shown in situations where military ships or aircraft approach each other in any way, whether in areas

(Mr. Törnudd, Finland)

inside or outside national jurisdiction. In an atmosphere of tension, it is particularly important to avoid incidents such as the one that took place on 4 January 1989 over the Mediterranean and their escalation into a spiral of violence.

According to the explanations given to the Council, the recent incident occurred between two aircraft on one side, described as being on routine patrol, and two aircraft on the other side, described as carrying out routine operations. There must be something wrong with the routines, if this is the result.

We urge all sides in situations involving the possibility of incidents to refrain from behaviour that might lead to misunderstanding as to the intentions of the other side and hence to pre-emptive action in the belief that self-defence, which of course is a clearly recognized right under international law, is required. In an age of military high technology, the resort to so-called pre-emptive self-defence without warning can have very dangerous consequences.

We know that certain States have made agreements with the specific purpose of avoiding incidents involving their naval forces on the high seas. Other experiences have also been gained in the negotiation of confidence-building measures both regionally and globally. There seems to be a need for an international code of conduct concerning both naval forces and aircraft in order to make it possible to build confidence, to avoid the possibility of misunderstandings about the intentions of others, and to reduce the risk of serious incidents. Rules regarding the behaviour of patrolling aircraft and reconnaissance flights could be internationalized and formalized in such a manner that those activities would not be perceived as provocative and threatening.

That brings me to the question of what the Security Council could realistically do in the present situation. In our opinion, the Security Council

(Mr. Törnudd, Finland)

could decide to deplore the incident that has occurred and call upon all parties to act with restraint, encouraging them to settle any disputes and disagreements by peaceful means.

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

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia): The Ethiopian delegation joins the speakers preceding me in expressing its condolences to the people and Government of Japan as well as to the bereaved family on the death of His Majesty Emperor Hirohito.

Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. We are confident that your well-known diplomatic skills and wisdom will significantly contribute to the discharge of the onerous responsibility bestowed upon you, in the best traditions of your country.

Our appreciation goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Hideo Kagami, Permanent Representative of Japan, who conducted the deliberations of the Council during the month of December with great skill.

In the same vein, I should like to express the satisfaction of my delegation to the outgoing members of the Security Council for a responsibility well assumed.

As an incoming member of the Council, my country assumes its new responsibility with a renewed sense of commitment to the basic principles of the Charter and to contributing its due share to the work of this body. You may rest assured, Mr. President, that the Ethiopian delegation will continue to support all worthy efforts in pursuit of the maintenance of international peace and security. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the members of the Council as well as other colleagues who have wished us their best in meeting the exigencies and challenges of the heavy responsibility entrusted to us by the overwhelming majority of the membership of the United Nations.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

The year that has just elapsed has been described as one ushering in an era of reconciliation, détente and peace. Indeed, it was a year of the blue berets, who honourably stood guard for peace in very troubled regions of the world, as well as of the imaginative and far-sighted statesmen who charted peace plans for the resolution of nagging problems with serious ramifications for the maintenance of international peace and security. The events that unfolded during the year and their pattern-setting impact were such that the international community almost fetishistically believed that the years following that rewarding year were bound to be years of the dove.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

In view of such very promising prospects for the maintenance of international peace and security we would have preferred to begin our tenure in the Council in more auspicious circumstances. But the prevailing situation is such that we have been compelled to pronounce ourselves on the issue before the Council.

Once again, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has sought action by the Council on a matter affecting its right to remain a sovereign, independent and non-aligned nation.

The incident which culminated in the downing of the two Libyan aircraft off the coast of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has drawn the attention of the international community to the danger inherent in such unfriendly encounters between States. To the objective and impartial observer of the circumstances which led to that sad incident, the origin of the problem is not difficult to discern. A mere chronological assessment of the unfolding situation which led to the downing of the Libyan aircraft indicates that the ever-increasing apprehension of the United States Government over the alleged existence of a chemical weapons industry in Libya was building to a critical stage. The high-level pronouncements made about the possibility of United States "surgical or pre-emptive attacks" on a chemical facility in the town of Rabta seemed to portend a bad omen.

Unwelcome and alarming as such pronouncements have been, appeals for restraint were made by all those concerned about the consequences of such acts on the maintenance of international peace and security. It was with that in view that the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries called on the United States

"to desist from undertaking acts of aggression and provocation against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations".

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

Recalling

"that similar threats and media campaigns had preceded the aerial and naval attacks by the United States on 15 April 1986 against the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi",

the Co-ordinating Bureau

"expressed deep concern and warned that the current campaign and threats served as a pretext for launching fresh acts of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya".

The events since the issuance of that communiqué on 3 January 1989 seem to have vindicated the timely concern expressed by the non-aligned countries.

History is yet to unveil the nebulous military circumstances which ultimately led to the downing of the Libyan jets in the very often troubled waters of the southern flank of the Mediterranean. However, one finds it hard to be convinced that it was by sheer accident that the fighter jets of a great Power with a mighty fleet in the Mediterranean found themselves at loggerheads with planes of a littoral State of the Mediterranean.

No less difficult to accept is that the escalation of the mass media campaign against Libya related to the alleged acquisition of chemical weapons capability, especially prior to the airborne incident and on the eve of the convening of the international conference on the strengthening of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on Chemical Weapons, was just a coincidence.

As a country which had to go through the harrowing experience resulting from chemical weapons attacks on its civilian population, Ethiopia attaches great importance to the entire subject of the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. None the less Ethiopia firmly believes that neither the rights nor the concerns related to these issues can be made the exclusive preserve of just a few.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

As members of the Council are well aware, the negotiations being conducted at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva have reached a fairly advanced stage. It is a matter of regret that a major Power which continues to assume its responsibility in that forum would resort to diplomatic or quasi-military exercises which would undoubtedly mar those otherwise noble efforts by the community of nations.

It is the considered view of the Ethiopian delegation that, when there is convincing evidence which indicates a potential threat to international peace and security, the concerned State should bring them before the appropriate bodies of the United Nations. To resort to unilateral punitive measures is to hamper the favourable climate which seems to prevail throughout much of the world.

Need we remind the permanent members of the Council that

"The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement ...",

in accordance with the spirit and letter of Chapter VI of the Charter.

Coming as we do from a culture which associates great power with a heightened sense of responsibility and magnanimity, it is our conviction that power must be judiciously exercised. We believe that those that wield it should exercise maximum restraint in any of their undertakings and refrain from threatening the less powerful States by resorting to unjustified manifestations of military posturing.

As I implied at the beginning of my statement, I speak with a heavy heart. But the truth must be told and justice upheld. We cannot afford to stain the current international atmosphere, nor should we acquiesce in the erosion of trust and confidence at the international level in order to cater to what might be

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

perceived as a prerogative of the powers that be. Indeed, such a misplaced attribute of great power will have very grave consequences for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The results of the painstaking efforts of the best sons of our planet must not be allowed to vanish because of lack of restraint on the part of some. It is with this profound sense of expectation from the dividends accrued from the promising political climate of 1988 and with our unswerving commitment to the principles of the Charter that we urge the Government of the United States to desist from undertaking acts that may lead to provocation and confrontation. After all, the rule of law must be respected first and foremost by the great Powers which have been granted special responsibilities, for very obvious reasons.

At the heart of the matter before the Council is more than the existence or absence of chemical weapons facilities or even the military encounter of aircraft in unfriendly skies.

The issue at stake is not whether the focused interests of global Powers can be served at the expense of the sovereignty of others, but rather whether or not the sovereign rights of all can be respected. That is why we continue to believe that the rule of international law will prevail over rudimentary impulses of power.

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

Mr. BA (Senegal) (interpretation from French): We share the grief of the Japanese people in the death of the illustrious Emperor Hirohito, to whose memory we pay our respects at this time. In these sad circumstances my delegation would like to convey the sincere condolences of Senegal to the Government and the great and friendly people of Japan.

Let me express to you, Sir, the Senegalese delegation's warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council during the month of January. We are convinced that your personal and professional qualities will help the Council to carry out its delicate mission in the best possible manner. Senegal is pleased that your country, Malaysia, a friend, and, like my country, a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference has begun a term of office in the United Nations body entrusted with the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We also welcome Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia and Finland to the Security Council, countries to which we reaffirm the same sincere and friendly co-operation you already enjoy, Mr. President.

We once again express our deep gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Hideo Kagami of Japan, for all that he accomplished during his presidency in December, accomplishments worthy of his great country. Our gratitude for their fine contributions goes also to the ambassadors of Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Zambia, whose countries have just completed their terms of office in the Security Council.

(Mr. Ba, Senegal)

Senegal learned with sadness of the incident on 4 January which led to the destruction by American armed forces of two Libyan reconnaissance aircraft above the Mediterranean Sea.

This deplorable incident stems, in our opinion, from tensions which for several years have been stirring up the once peaceful waters of a sea whose call to peace and fruitful co-operation among peoples is based on reasons that are at once historic, economic, commercial, cultural and political.

It seems to us that respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter by the States Members of the United Nations, which have in sovereignty subscribed to them, would avoid the creation or worsening of situations that inevitably lead to such incidents. Among those principles of our Charter we should recall in particular the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations. The Manila and New York Declarations, adopted by the General Assembly in 1982 and 1987 respectively, emphasize the importance of respect for those principles.

The incident of 4 January has no place in the climate of détente now prevailing in international relations - a climate which all States, individually and collectively, have the duty to preserve, reinforce and broaden, in particular by improving their bilateral relations. It is even to be feared that the Middle East peace process, in which many efforts of political will, imagination and courage have been deployed, may be negatively affected by such an incident. For those reasons, Senegal appeals to the United States of America and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to abstain from any action that might worsen the situation in the region.

(Mr. Ba, Senegal)

We hope that the two parties concerned will manage to contain the situation and go beyond it in order to make good use of their determination and will - which they have reaffirmed many times - to contribute to the consolidation of the climate of détente and co-operation among nations that cherish the peace, justice and freedom we wish to see triumph.

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

Mr. BROCHAND (France) (interpretation from French): I cannot begin my statement without expressing the profound sadness with which my country received the news of the death of Emperor Hirohito of Japan. I should like to join in the condolences already expressed and extend France's sympathy to the Government and the people of Japan.

Let me also extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the French delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Kagami of Japan. I also wish to welcome to the Security Council your delegation, the Malaysian delegation, as well as those of Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia and Finland - countries with all of which my country has the most cordial relations of friendship and co-operation. Lastly, I express our appreciation to the delegations of those countries that have recently left the Council - Argentina, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and Zambia - for their exemplary contributions to our work.

France deeply regrets the incident on 4 January between Libyan and United States air forces in the Mediterranean. The French Government would like here to recall unambiguously that it wishes above all, at a time when tensions in the world are being reduced, that the eastern Mediterranean be no exception and that in this case reason and calm prevail.

(Mr. Brochand, France)

In this connection, France has taken note of the United States statements on this incident and on the fact that it was not linked to concerns expressed elsewhere in respect of a chemical plant. The French Government also reaffirms its commitment to freedom of movement, maritime and airspace, in international areas.

Our country, which borders on the Mediterranean, is particularly concerned with the maintenance of stability and peace in that sensitive region, in which peaceful development is a fundamental goal for the coming year. We hope that everyone will exercise restraint and refrain from any act that may heighten tensions.

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

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

Mr. ADAM (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like first to convey through you, Mr. President, our sincere condolences to the friendly delegation of Japan and to the Japanese people on the passing of Emperor Hirohito, who, as the symbol of his nation, led his people for more than half a century through numerous difficulties to its present economic development, prosperity and peace. The Sudan has declared an official mourning period of three days in respect of that great loss.

My delegation has great pleasure in seeing Malaysia, a country which is intimately linked to my country, joining the membership of the Security Council, and seeing its delegation preside over the work of the Council for this month. We are also pleased to welcome the other new members to the Council - Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia and Finland - which, we are sure, will enrich the deliberations of the Council and contribute to achieving the desired results. On behalf of my delegation I should like to express our complete confidence in your ability and competence in conducting the work of the Security Council.

As we bade farewell to the past year we harboured great hope that international and regional problems and disputes that had occupied the international Organization for many long years would soon be resolved so that peace and security might prevail throughout the world. However, that hope was dashed by the downing of two Libyan reconnaissance aircraft by United States jet fighter planes on 4 January, at the very beginning of this new year. We believe that that incident constitutes a very serious act of aggression against the sisterly Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, to which we are attached by strong bonds of good-neighbourliness and a common destiny.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

In addition, that incident presents a threat to the security of the Mediterranean region and will hamper international efforts aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East.

This recent act of aggression the Council is now discussing is the fourth time that such an act of aggression has been committed by the United States against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, offering unfounded allegations and baseless justifications. The United States is a major Power and a permanent member of the Security Council and has major international responsibilities. We are deeply concerned by the frequency of these acts of aggression, because they imply a very serious threat to international and regional peace and security and violate the principles of the non-use of force in international relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes among States. Those acts run counter to the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter.

Proceeding from this position, my country and the majority of the Members of the international Organization have condemned those past acts of aggression and, in the same way, they condemn the present act of aggression.

The downing of the two Libyan planes was neither a coincidence nor a surprise. Rather, it occurred in the midst of an intensive and systematic media campaign against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and in the wake of official United States threats, which hinted at the possibility of military action against a pharmaceutical plant, on the pretext that the plant was for the production of poisonous gases, despite the denial of those allegations by the Libyan authorities and the fact that those authorities declared their readiness to receive a neutral fact-finding commission. At the time, my country condemned those threats and expressed its solidarity with the people of the sisterly Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

Among the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter are the maintenance of international peace and security and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. The repeated acts of aggression we have cited show that those principles and purposes are being subjected to erosion and subversion as a result of individual acts. Therefore, we believe that the major Powers have international responsibilities, foremost among which is the maintenance and strengthening of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

History has taught us that the military might of major Powers, with all their superiority and huge resources, cannot suppress opinions, beliefs and the right of peoples to make their own choices, nor can they suppress the struggle of the small countries, which are no less important in view of their membership, on an equal footing, in the international Organization. Moreover, those peoples no longer submit to aggression or threats.

My delegation associates itself with the Arab and the non-aligned States in expressing the hope that the Security Council will assume its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and that it will take the necessary steps to prevent a repetition of aggression against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. We hope that the Council will condemn that aggression. We also affirm the solidarity of the Government and people of the Sudan with the Government and people of the sisterly Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

In this regard, the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of the Sudan issued a communiqué on 5 January in which it strongly condemned the downing of the two Libyan planes and expressed its full support for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. It also called upon the international community to condemn such acts which threaten

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

stability and peace in the Mediterranean, thereby affecting the special strategic position of the area, in particular with respect to the Arab States, the neighbouring European States and the world at large.

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

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

Mr. DASGUPTA (India): The Government and people of India learned with deep sorrow of the demise of His Majesty Emperor Hirohito of Japan, and we take this opportunity to convey our deepest condolences to the friendly Government and people of Japan.

Sir, it gives my delegation particular satisfaction to see you as President for this month. We recall your association with India with great appreciation and are fully aware of your exceptional diplomatic skills. We are confident that you will guide the deliberations of this Council for the month of January with distinction.

We take this opportunity also to express our appreciation to Ambassador Hideo Kagami of Japan for his conduct of the Council's meetings during December 1988.

On 4 January, two Libyan military aircraft were shot down by United States navy jets in the Mediterranean. An official spokesman of the Government of India termed the incident as "unfortunate" and added that "such confrontations are dangerous and can only jeopardize the prospects of peace in the region about which the situation has recently become distinctly hopeful".

(Mr. Dasgupta, India)

On Thursday last the Council heard the statements by the delegations of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the United States. What is clear to the Council is that a serious and dangerous incident has taken place and that the situation must not be allowed to deteriorate.

This is all the more urgent when viewed against the background of recent events and reports of possible further escalation affecting Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has felt constrained to come to the Council once again. I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the statement issued by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries on 5 January.

The year 1988 was remarkable, for the hopes it brought for bringing about durable peace in a number of troubled regions of the world and for the expectations that it raised for a definitive change in the climate of international relations - that nations should seek peace and not war, dialogue and not confrontation.

We cannot allow what is still a fragile process to lose momentum and strength. That would be tragic indeed.

Regrettably, we appear to have begun the new year with an unfortunate episode. It is the task of the Council to ensure that this is not allowed to escalate into confrontation and strife in the region and develop into a serious threat to international peace and security.

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

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

Mr. BENNOUNA (Morocco) (interpretation from French): My country was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of His Majesty Emperor Hirohito, known to all for his patriotism and his commitment to peace. We wish through you, Mr. President, to extend our most sincere condolences to the people and Government of Japan in these sad circumstances.

On behalf of the Moroccan delegation, I wish to express our great satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, preside over the Council's work for the month of January. You represent a country which is an eminent member of the Islamic community and with which we have close relations characterized by friendship and fraternity. We are convinced that your competence and your diplomatic experience are the best guarantee that the Council's work will be successful.

May I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Kagami, on the exemplary way in which he discharged his responsibilities as President of the Council last month.

I also take this opportunity to wish the new members of the Council every success in shouldering their new responsibilities and to express to the outgoing members our appreciation of their efforts to strengthen peace and harmony in the community of nations.

The Security Council is beginning its work for 1989 by considering a military confrontation in which United States aircraft downed two Libyan reconnaissance aircraft some 60 kilometres from the coast of Libya.

No one contests the fact; no one questions the tension created by the threats to which Libya has been subjected in recent weeks; and no one can disregard the seriousness of the incident in the present international situation.

However, 1988 came to an end in an atmosphere of widespread optimism, because of the unprecedented progress in détente between the two big Powers and the positive impact of that rapprochement on arms reduction and the settlement of

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

regional conflicts. New prospects are thus emerging for the maintenance of international peace and security and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations as guarantor of a world order in which the rights of all nations, large and small, may be safeguarded, without in any way reducing the special responsibilities entrusted by the Charter to certain States - especially the permanent members of the Security Council.

Therefore, the ideal conceived and proclaimed in 1945, when the Charter was adopted, and subsequently thwarted by the cold war, with its resultant zones of influence and foreign intervention, may now have the opportunity to develop fully in a world in which the death knell tolls for outdated ideologies and obsolete Messianism, a world which fully appreciates the values of tolerance, pluralism, universal respect for human rights, without any restriction, and interdependence with the unbounded development of human creativity.

We were therefore expecting that the Council, which met until the very last day of 1988 to consider the conditions in which Namibia will attain independence under resolution 435 (1978), adopted 10 years earlier, would begin without delay from the very beginning of the new year its very heavy schedule of work for the definitive settlement of regional issues in order to advance the cause of world peace and security and to lay the groundwork for development and prosperity in the relevant areas of the world.

Therefore, the destruction by American forces of the two Libyan aircraft and the tension that preceded and followed that incident were like thunder in a calm sky. That is also why many voices have spoken out to draw attention to the extremely sensitive and fragile nature of the geo-political balance in the Mediterranean and to the negative implications of the tension there for the

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

promising efforts and the encouraging initiatives for the promising efforts and the encouraging initiatives that have been made for the settlement of the Middle East crisis.

The Kingdom of Morocco, as a Mediterranean country situated on one side of the Straits of Gibraltar, has always attached special importance to the security of that sensitive part of the world, and has in particular called for close and institutionalized co-operation between the countries of both sides of the Mediterranean and for a reduction of the forces and arms deployed there.

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

Furthermore, our historic, cultural and religious roots, as well as our national destiny, are closely related to those of our Maghrebi brothers, from Mauritania to Libya, and including Algeria and Tunisia, with all of whom we are determined to consolidate our age-old common achievements and to promote an integrated and harmonious community. As members of the same family we are of course directly touched and profoundly affected by the threats and use of force against Libya as well as by any violation of the fundamental rights of that fraternal country. In such circumstances Morocco hopes that moderation and restraint will prevail so as to avoid any escalation that might exacerbate emotions and lead to a serious deterioration of the situation.

It is up to the Security Council to preserve respect for the Charter, which prohibits any threat or use of force, whether against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State or in any other manner incompatible with the principles and purposes of our Organization. Similarly, it is up to the Security Council to guarantee the stability and security of the Mediterranean by taking appropriate measures to reduce tension and to put an immediate end to the threats to Libya. In that way a positive contribution can be made to the maintenance of the détente and co-operation that have been characteristic of current international relations.

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

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

Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh): My delegation joins previous speakers in conveying to the Government and the people of the friendly country of Japan our deep condolences at the passing away of Emperor Hirohito.

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon your assumption of your august office. I have not the slightest doubt that you will bring the prodigious qualities of your head and heart and intellect to bear upon our deliberations and ably guide them to a fruitful conclusion. May I also place on record our deep appreciation for the skilful manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Kagami, conducted the affairs of the Council.

My delegation would also like to extend a warm welcome to the new members of the Security Council which we are confident, will make significant and positive contributions to the Council's work. We take this opportunity to express our thanks to the outgoing members, which made remarkable and commendable contributions to the Council's success during the past two years.

The Bangladesh delegation views with deep concern the recent downing of the two Libyan jets, which has necessitated the convening of the current meetings of the Security Council. Bangladesh considers it most disturbing that the incident should have taken place at this point in time, when the international community is just beginning to hope for a further consolidation of the peace process in the various parts of the globe, a process that has gained new momentum as a result of recent relaxation of tension in the international political arena.

Bangladesh has closely followed the various stages of this most unfortunate incident with deep anxiety and is acutely conscious of the imperative necessity to avoid repetition of such incidents. Those have the potential of adversely affecting an already tenuous and fragile fabric of peace and security in the region.

During the last few days in the Council appeals have repeatedly been made to all concerned to exercise utmost restraint and to avoid any act that would render the situation in the Mediterranean region in particular and the Middle East in general more complicated. The Bangladesh delegation lends its full support to

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

these proposals. We should like to state and stress our firm conviction that peace in the area - and, for that matter, in all other parts of the world - can best be served not by pursuing policies based on mistrust or by following paths of confrontation. More pertinently, peace and its maintenance call for moderation and scrupulous adherence to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter relating to the conduct of inter-State relationships and settlement of disputes between nations.

Bangladesh would thus like to urge that all concerned unfailingly and consciously endeavour to settle their disputes in the region by peaceful means. Bangladesh strongly believes that there is an urgent need for all to refrain in the conduct of their relations from the threat or use of force against any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations as enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. President, the Bangladesh delegation very much hopes that the Security Council, under your wise and prudent leadership, will take all necessary and appropriate measures to promote peace and security in the region.

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

There are no further speakers on my list for this meeting. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item on the agenda will take place tomorrow, Tuesday, 10 January 1989, at 3.30 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.