



Security Council

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ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 20 April 1990, at 7.15 p.m.

President: Mr. TADESSE

(Ethiopia)

Members: Canada
China
Colombia
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba
Democratic Yemen
Finland
France
Malaysia
Romania
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Zaire

Mr. FORTIER
Mr. YU Menqjia
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mrs. KABA
Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA
Mr. AL-ASHTAL
Mr. TORNUDD
Mr. BLANC
Mr. HASMY
Mr. MUNTEANU
Mr. BELONOGOV

Mr. RICHARDSON
Mr. WATSON
Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA

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The meeting was called to order at 7.15 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

CENTRAL AMERICA: EFFORTS TOWARDS PEACE

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

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them a letter dated 19 April 1990 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/21257.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/21258, which contains the text of a draft resolution which has been prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. 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: Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Malaysia, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zaire

The PRESIDENT: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has thus been adopted unanimously as resolution 653 (1990).

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

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation was in favour of the draft resolution, above all because we considered that adopting a formal procedure by which the Council acceded to the Secretary-General's request through a resolution was the least the Council should do in dealing with a request implying a substantial alteration to the expanded mandate given by the Council to the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA).

We also voted in favour of the draft resolution because it seemed to us, as it did on 27 March, that the most pressing need was finally to end a situation of illegality imposed upon the people of Nicaragua for too many years.

At this stage we face the reality that the resolution of 27 March has not been respected, that conditions have been created on the ground that have made it impossible for ONUCA to carry out its mandate - to demobilize the elements of the so-called Nicaraguan Resistance (RN) - and that the Council found itself facing a situation to which the most rational response, in our view, was to agree to a further attempt, at this late hour, to see how the United Nations could contribute to putting an end once and for all to the illegal acts of intervention and aggression imposed upon the people of Nicaragua over the past decade.

However, we could not conceal from the Council that in casting its vote our delegation had grave reservations about some aspects of the request made to us, and I feel obliged to explain them now to the Council. They concern the substance of the decision we have taken as well as the procedure, which I feel is somewhat unusual.

The Secretary-General sent us a letter informing us of a series of agreements adopted yesterday morning in Managua, which resulted in a number of requests to the Organization, requests that the Council has just agreed to.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

My delegation understands that we have agreed to the matters referred to on page 4 of the Secretary-General's report to the Council, in two paragraphs. Paragraph (a) refers to monitoring the cease-fire and the separation of forces resulting from the withdrawal of forces of the Government of Nicaragua from the security zones and the adjoining areas. Paragraph (b) concerns collecting and destroying weapons and military equipment and material, including the uniforms of the Nicaraguan Resistance, as described in the Secretary-General's previous reports to the Council, including, I understand, the aide-mémoire distributed to us just a few days ago.

I say that because the request before us is the result of a series of agreements, making up a kind of jigsaw puzzle, which the Council has not yet had before it. As my colleagues know, I am privileged to have copies, and I should like to refer to a number of aspects of the agreements and state my country's position.

For example, the agreement establishing the cease-fire, signed by the Nicaraguan Government authorities, representatives of the Nicaraguan Resistance, Cardinal Obando and representatives of the next Government of Nicaragua, contains a number of matters on which I do not feel the Council is in a position to give its authorization; at least, I should like to express my delegation's clear reservations with regard to them.

Paragraph 10 of the agreement states:

"Authorities of the RN are authorized to communicate and move between one area and another, under ONUCA co-ordination". There is a similar provision in another agreement, relating to elements on the Atlantic coast, but there "movimiento" or movement, is replaced by "movilizacion", which can have a broader meaning in Spanish.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

We did not think that in authorizing the Secretary-General and ONUCA to carry out the tasks I have mentioned, concerning the cease-fire, separation of forces and the collection and destruction of weapons, we were committing ONUCA elements to carrying out this task, which I do not regard as clearly defined and which implies, among other things, that the Nicaraguan Resistance will continue to have an organized military structure, since the term "mandos" in Spanish has a very specific meaning to anyone who knows something of military language. Its use means that the commanders of the groups concerned will be able to communicate with one another and move around Nicaragua - in fact, through extensive areas of the country, where, as is known, their armed personnel are located. I do not know what communications, "movimientos" or "movilizaciones" of those elements the United Nations is going to co-ordinate. At the least, I should have felt happier if the Council had shown more concern to consider these matters, even though the text has not been translated from Spanish into the Council's other official languages.

Paragraph 12 of the same agreement states:

"The CIAV will transport and deliver humanitarian assistance to the troops of the RN and their families in the security zones".

I recall the clear language that the Secretary-General used in his aide-mémoire, where he referred to the seriousness implied by demobilization in an institutional sense - collective, not individual; he was correct in his understanding that this concept was different from that of the Central American Presidents at the Tela Conference, and in his understanding of its practical difficulties.

The agreement refers to troops, and troops have their commanders. Nothing could be further removed from the concept of demobilization than the permanent presence in certain areas, protected by the United Nations, of uniformed, armed troops, with their own military leadership and nation-wide co-ordination. It would

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

be immoral if the United Nations were to waste a single cent of any Member State's money or the Secretariat's resources in providing so-called humanitarian assistance to those gentlemen. I believe it would be the first time the humanitarian bodies of the system had provided humanitarian assistance to uniformed units, militarily organized and with their leadership intact. It would be a considerable departure from the practices and methods employed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The agreements include annexes, one of which is a timetable. In point 5 we are told - in fact, we are not told, because no one has informed the Security Council - of

"The start of delivery of humanitarian aid by the CIAV to RN troops in the 'security zones'".

According to the document, the starting date for that operation was 19 April 1990, at noon. In that case, it began yesterday.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

Might we not have met somewhat more urgently, yesterday? Seemingly impossible. But apparently this was taking place before the Council was informed.

There is something more serious, more disturbing than that. There is another annex, dealing with the Toncontin Agreement signed by Commander Ruben, Mr. Antonio Lacayo and Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. It does not include the Nicaraguan Government but rather the representatives of the future Government and representatives of the contras and the Cardinal.

The third paragraph of that agreement interprets the role of ONUCA in a way that I hope is not entertained by its Commander. It suggests that a voluntary delivery of the weapons would be carried out in the presence of international organizations - ONUCA and the International Support and Verification Mission (CIVIC).

But in its first preambular paragraph the resolution just adopted clearly provides for the complete demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance by ONUCA, not in the presence of ONUCA. That is one of the series of agreements that prompted us today to undertake this exercise.

There are also two pages - I do not know if they form part of these agreements. One contains a paragraph 10 which seemingly is a continuation of the timetable. It reads as follows:

"The Government of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan Resistance shall meet to establish prior guarantees to be enjoyed by members of the RN. Following agreement and guarantees, the demobilization of RN forces will be carried out. Date of completion: 27 April."

Below that, in parentheses, can be read "Proposed by RN as last point in the timetable for 26 April". I do not know whether this proposal by the RN was approved in the timetable. Since we have received this in a somewhat unusual fashion it is not clear what the status of this is. But it would appear that this

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

endless story of the contras, which has gone on for so long - the story of the financing and deployment of armed groups against the Government of a sovereign Central American State - is not even going to end on 25 April, because in theory there is a possibility that somebody, however odd this may seem, may seek to impose further conditions or attempt to bring pressure to bear not upon the present Government but upon the future Government, which is to take office on 25 April, saying it is going to be necessary to discuss this matter, and the armed elements deployed in these areas in Nicaragua protected by ONUCA forces may or may not determine that these guarantees are sufficient.

Furthermore, the same idea is implicit when it refers to the stages in the demobilization process, the fulfilment of which will be determined by the willingness and ability of the new Government to take office on 25 April to meet the conditions and security safeguards required by the RN, which would represent an obligation of the Government elect.

Let us hope that these two paragraphs, these loose pieces in the jigsaw puzzle, are not part of the series of agreements reached. But I think they are quite illuminating as to the extent to which as of yesterday some of the factors directly involved in this deplorable, painful and excessively long exercise were considering the possibility of bringing the matter to an end.

Now that this resolution has been adopted we must express our conviction that the United Nations must do its utmost to ensure that this process of complete demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance by ONUCA is carried out within the period laid down in the first preambular paragraph of the resolution and ends on 10 June 1990. Before 7 May we shall have to review all aspects of ONUCA's operations, in accordance with operative paragraph 2 of the resolution just adopted. We hope that by then we shall have some indication of how the whole process is working.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

I think, furthermore, that if anything is to be concluded from this experience, as we find ourselves approaching its possible end, it is that there needs to be real political will on the part of those who have brought this situation about - who have provoked these circumstances, providing the financing and violating international law and indeed their own national legislation over so many years - to take a real and sincere step forward to once and for all put an end to this series of violations of international law and the principles of international coexistence. If anyone is to pay to cover the costs involved in ending this criminal series of deeds carried out to keep these people in Nicaragua, it is the Government responsible for the perpetuation of this state of affairs and the insolubility of the situation up until today. I refer to the United States of America. The international community and the Members of this Organization have no obligation to assume any responsibility.

I would end by making one further comment. In these agreements we read expressions of concern and guarantees relating to the so-called members of the Nicaraguan Resistance, or the troops with their leaders. This is mentioned in the agreements: security areas are going to be set up, there are going to be movements of troops of the legitimate Government of Nicaragua to provide safeguards for these individuals. I would express concern about the guarantees, security and the right to peace and life of the people living in those areas - those, that is, who would be left subject to the whims of the only organized, armed, militarily prepared forces, the so-called elements of the Nicaraguan Resistance.

It is our hope that our Organization and its representatives in Nicaragua will act in such a fashion that in future we do not find ourselves obliged to regret any association or coexistence with new crimes or further violations of the Nicaraguan people.

Mr. BELONDGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation heard with satisfaction and accepted the statement of the Secretary-General in which he informed members of the Security Council of the signing, on 19 April in Managua, of agreements the implementation of which, as we understand it, will finally lead to the full demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance and thus put an end to this dangerous source of tension in Central America.

It is precisely from this standpoint and on this understanding of the goal and purport of the 19 April agreements that we supported the Secretary-General's proposal with regard to measures that would enable the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) to play its allotted role in this process. It is to be hoped that the 19 April agreements will be marked by the fact that the solution of the basic situation of the transitional period in Nicaragua is now entering its final stage.

The signing of these important agreements has come about only as the result of all kinds of hard work designed to create the internal and external conditions necessary to ensure the achievement of national reconciliation in Nicaragua. The Government of Nicaragua and representatives of the victorious coalition in the elections both signed a protocol on the modalities for the transfer of presidential power, as well as the Toncontin agreement on the demobilization of the contras and the declaration of Montelimar adopted by the Presidents of the five Central American countries. The essential thing is that all those documents are based on the express wish of the overwhelming majority of the Nicaraguan people for peace and harmony. We hope that the will of that people will be implemented on the basis of unconditional compliance with the 19 April agreements.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

In that connection, I should like to point out in particular the consistent and persistent efforts of the Secretary-General to promote the normalization of the situation around Nicaragua and to solve the key problems of a settlement and the demobilization of the contras. We have noted with satisfaction the conclusion, with the direct participation of ONUCA, of the demobilization operation of detachments of the Nicaraguan Resistance on Honduran territory.

At the same time, unfortunately, we are still concerned about the mass passage of armed contras into Nicaragua. That action was carried out in violation of earlier agreements; this compels us - and I speak quite frankly here - to be somewhat concerned about the sincerity of the contra leaders with regard to the agreements just concluded on 19 April. Of course, we hope that the contras will comply strictly with the demobilization agreement signed in Managua. We cannot possibly permit a situation in which the security zones that have been created should be transformed into an extensive springboard for the armed opposition in Nicaraguan territory, a kind of State within a State. The existence of these zones, as we see it, will be legitimate only within the context of the implementation of the main task of ensuring the disarming of the contras within the prescribed timetable. Otherwise, all this could not only dash hopes of national reconciliation in Nicaragua but also, in light of the United Nations current involvement in the operation, undermine the authority of the United Nations in that part of the world.

The Soviet delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution on the extension of the mandate of ONUCA on the basis of the explanations of the tasks, composition and timetable for the disarmament of the contras and the financing of the operation, as laid down in the Secretary-General's statement during the Council's consultations (S/21259).

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

We are convinced that, given our concerted efforts and the political will of all parties concerned, there none the less exists a genuine possibility of promoting the process of reconciliation and its key element, the demobilization of the contras, on the basis of the agreements achieved. For our part, we shall act precisely in that spirit.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): I had not intended to speak during this meeting of the Security Council, but I feel compelled to do so owing to some remarks made by speakers who preceded me.

First of all, I should like to express the profound thanks of my delegation for the truly heroic work of the Secretary-General and his colleagues in the United Nations, and for their energetic and creative efforts, to contribute to the search for peace in Central America. I believe that it is profoundly important to note that those efforts have been in support of agreements arrived at with great difficulty, patience and political courage by the Presidents of the five countries of Central America. We support those agreements fully, their implementation now, and the efforts of the Secretary-General to contribute to that process.

I must take exception at the assertion of the representative of Cuba that somehow my country is apparently responsible for all of the ills that have befallen Nicaragua. No less than any other Government, mine regrets the difficulties the Nicaraguans have suffered. But now, in a dramatic demonstration of civic pride and nationalism, Nicaraguans themselves have determined their future by democratic means. The parties in Nicaragua have come to an agreement by which they expect to arrive at internal peace, not something imposed on them by outsiders but something which they have arrived at and which we enthusiastically support.

(Mr. Watson, United States)

Needless to say, we support the United Nations efforts to participate in that process, as requested of us by the Secretary-General. We hope that other conflicts in Central America can also be resolved quickly between the parties in the respective countries and that all external parties will contribute to peaceful settlements of those disputes and not to war, conflict and suffering.

In that regard, we laud the efforts of the Secretary-General and his colleagues in seeking to facilitate discussions that will lead to peace in El Salvador, and we hope that all the members of the Security Council and all other nations will support those efforts as enthusiastically as we are supporting his efforts to contribute to peace in Nicaragua.

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): It is late in the day, so I will not take up much more of the Council's time. I merely wish to say that I absolutely agree with Ambassador Watson with respect to his recognition of the enormous efforts made by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to attempt to bring peace to Central America, including the efforts being made to assist the parties involved in the conflict in El Salvador to move forward to negotiation.

However, I am not at all in agreement with him - and, indeed, I think very few are - when he attempts to disregard his Government's responsibility in the tragedy the people of Nicaragua have experienced and are still experiencing. The mass of documentation available in this country - in its Congress and its courts - at the Court in The Hague and in General Assembly records makes it, it seems to me, unnecessary now, at this hour in the evening, to explain why his Government bears sole responsibility for this tragedy.

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

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.