



Security Council

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ENGLISH

**PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND TENTH MEETING**

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 25 April 1988 at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. ZUZE

(Zambia)

Members: 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
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. DELPECH
Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Mr. DING Yuanhong
Mr. BLANC
Mr. Count YORK von WARTENBURG
Mr. BUCCI
Mr. KAGAMI
Mr. RANA
Mr. SARRE
Mr. BELONOVOV

Sir Crispin TICKELL
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 19 APRIL 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19798)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at previous meetings on this item, I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt, Gabon, Greece, Jordan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Zimbabwe to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; and I invite the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mestiri (Tunisia) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Al-Shakar (Bahrain), Mr. Siddiky (Bangladesh), Mr. Nufiez Mosquera (Cuba), Mr. Badawi (Egypt), Mr. Biffot (Gabon), Mr. Zepos (Greece), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. Fakhoury (Lebanon), Mr. Treiki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Ould Boye (Mauritania), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Kawariz (Qatar), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Osman (Somalia), Mr. Adam (Sudan), Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Turkmen (Turkey), Mr. Gudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates), Mr. Basendwah (Yemen) and Mr. Manzou (Zimbabwe) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine Liberation Organization) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Congo and Djibouti in which they request 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. Adouki (Congo) and Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti) 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.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/19820, which contains the text of a letter dated 21 April 1988 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

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

Mr. ADAM (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): We are honoured to see you, Sir, presiding over the Council during the month of April. We already know your eminent qualities, as you belong to a sister African country whose leadership has been characterized by wisdom and determination with regard to just causes, whether in the context of Africa or of unresolved international or regional questions.

Through you, Sir, we pay tribute to the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia for the exemplary way in which he conducted the Council's business last month.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

We are also honoured by the presence of Mr. Mahmuḍ Mestiri, Foreign Minister of Tunisia. Known within this Organization in the recent past as a skilful diplomat, he has submitted to us an extremely serious matter arising from the brutal terrorist aggression against his peace-loving country and its territorial integrity early on the morning of 16 April by a group of Israeli terrorists. They infiltrated Tunisia in order to perpetrate a heinous crime which led to the martyrdom of one of the leaders of the Palestinian resistance, Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, "Abu Jihad", in a horrible manner under the very eyes of his family, including a little child.

The Foreign Minister of Tunisia presented his country's complaint in so convincing a manner as to leave no room for doubt or for scepticism to be built into a false conviction in Israel's favour, enabling it to flout the principles of the Charter and destroy all human ideals and the sacred values and rules of the international community, which prohibit aggression against the sovereignty of independent States and emphasize the need for respect for their territorial integrity.

The action carried out by the Israeli institutions of aggression and their intelligence services on 16 April, with the knowledge and blessing of the Israeli Cabinet, as reported by reliable mass media, was not the first of its kind against Tunisia's sovereignty. In October 1985 the Council adopted resolution 573 (1985), in the wake of the aggression perpetrated by Israel against Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. That aggression of October 1985 was committed blatantly by the Israeli air force, which covered hundreds of miles to fulfil its mission. The recent aggression of 16 April against Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity took a different form, but the result was the same. There is no such thing as a perfect crime.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

While Israel's political institutions and its mass media have this time chosen official silence and methods we have come to associate with them, no one has so far made any reference to any other party or presented any hard evidence accusing any other party of assassinating the Palestinian martyr, Abu Jihad.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

All reliable reporting organizations and mass media have branded Israel with the perpetration of this heinous crime.

By way of example, we refer to the Israeli Premier's initiative of sending a congratulatory cable to the terrorists on the success of their terrorist action. Was that simply out of admiration for a premeditated act of aggression undertaken by a group that landed in Tunisia from some celestial body in another universe?

Throughout its history Israel has adopted disinformation as a basis for its entire political institution. The most eloquent example in this regard is probably its use of methods of deception and fraud in building its nuclear capability. It persisted in that arrogant deception until it was recently exposed by an Israeli expert who had worked at the Dimona reactor. The world was suddenly alerted by irrefutable evidence to the seriousness of Israel's tendencies and its use of military might - even if that might lead to the outbreak of a devastating nuclear war.

The strategic technical co-operation that has gone on for years between Israeli intelligence services and their counterparts in some major Powers known for their friendship with Israel has enabled the latter to play havoc with all international norms and laws that should be respected and maintained. That co-operation has enabled Israel to strike at will in pursuit of the Palestinians whom it has displaced from their homeland. This is a singularly serious matter, because it has a direct bearing on the security of States, their national sovereignty over territories and their right to decision-making. I need not cite examples of Israel's past actions against the sovereignty of States other than Tunisia; we are all aware of them.

Therefore the crime perpetrated by Israeli services against Tunisia and previous crimes against the territorial integrity and political independence of

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

other States are a flagrant breach of Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter and must be condemned once again; the Council must take appropriate measures to ensure that that will not be repeated. If the State terrorism practised by Israel this time is designed to enhance the prestige of its security and of its military and political institutions in the context of the continued Palestinian uprising within Israel and inside the occupied Palestinian territories, then the result has been completely counter-productive - it has increased the resistance to occupation in the occupied territories and more martyrs have fallen.

Israel continues to impede all peace initiatives in the area aimed essentially at respecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including the establishment of their own independent State and a just, permanent and genuine peace in the Middle East. The aforementioned requires that Israel withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied by it since 1967 and its acceptance of fixed international borders. Ultimately, that means abandonment of Israel's expansionist dreams and aspirations of superiority vis-à-vis the other States in the region. Has the psychology and orientation of the Israeli leadership achieved that stage? All indications and the tendencies of Israel's leaders indicate otherwise.

Finally, I must acquaint the members of this Council with the official communiqué issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan in the wake of the assassination of the martyr Abu Jihad: It stated that the assassination of the Palestinian leader shocked the civilized world and the entire Arab nation; that the Sudan cannot but express its denunciation of this heinous crime and condemn the Israeli design to deport Palestinian freedom fighters from their homeland to Lebanon, having exhausted all means of oppression and terrorism in the occupied land of Palestine. The communiqué indicates that the Sudan has been following with grave concern all the acts of terrorism and oppression taking

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

place in occupied Palestine, and affirms that a people of the magnitude and determination of the Palestinian people will never cave in to oppression and terrorism.

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

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

Mr. OULD BOYE (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to see a brother, the representative of Zambia, presiding over the Security Council's deliberations this month. I extend to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency. My delegation feels that, thanks to your diplomatic skill and great experience, the Council will be able to fulfil its duty in the most felicitous manner.

I take this opportunity to express our congratulations to and appreciation of your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, Mr. Dragoslav Pejic, for the able manner in which he guided the Council's work during March.

I should also like to welcome a prominent Tunisian Arab official who is well known for his vast knowledge, wisdom, seriousness of purpose and prudence, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, who came personally to address the Security Council on the Tunisian complaint - indeed, a complaint by us all and an indication of our repugnance at Israel's dastardly act of assassination of the Palestinian freedom fighter Khalil al-Wazir and an act of aggression against Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We in Mauritania have been shocked in the wake of the vicious Israeli act of aggression against Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the assassination of a great Palestinian freedom fighter Khalil al-Wazir and other innocent persons.

(Mr. Ould Boye, Mauritania)

Tunisia, which has been a victim of Israeli aggression, has maintained and maintains intimate ties of kinship with Mauritania. Our actions converge towards the establishment of the great Arab Maghreb within the framework of Arab unity, which is free of intolerance and aggression. Furthermore, Tunisia has a reputation in the international community for its peacefulness, openness, hospitality, wisdom and moderation.

(Mr. Ould Boye, Mauritania)

That has been reflected in the support we have seen in the past few days for this sister country. There is no doubt that Israel's act of aggression against Tunisia and its cowardly assassination of Khalil-al-Wazir have proven several facts: first, that Israel does not want peace; secondly, that violence is inherent in Israel's system of life and that, therefore, it would be difficult for Israel to renounce it. Also, Israel has proved that it has lost its nerves in the face of the Palestinian people who are in revolt inside occupied Palestine, especially as the Palestinians have pre-empted Israel's ability to use its essential weapons. It has become clear to the entire world that the democracy claimed by Israel is but a smokescreen thrown up in an effort to deceive certain nations and to lure increasing numbers of settlers to Israel.

However, there is another established fact, namely, that the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, has gained more resolve and determination. Palestinians no longer dread the Israeli soldiers, who are armed to the teeth.

Our consistent position has been that the Palestinian people, whose land has been usurped unjustly and by aggression, will emerge victorious in its war against Israel; it is supported by all forces that uphold peace and justice.

Israel is mistaken when it assumes that, by killing a Palestinian freedom fighter who has been denied his land, it will be able to stem the growing tide of the Palestinians' uprising, which is aimed at regaining their dignity, independence and freedom. The determination of the Palestinian people has been reinforced and they no longer fear death. The Palestinians enthusiastically embrace martyrdom. Martyrs are buried amid chants and songs of joy and pride.

(Mr. Ould Boye, Mauritania)

A Mauritanian poet who considers himself a Palestinian has stated:

"We receive our martyrs in pride and dignity as we celebrate their departure, and we sing the songs of death in the cause of life as being the way to life. We sing in our wounds, for miracles reside in the masses and oppression gives birth to freedom."

As I address the Security Council, I declare our solidarity with and support for sister Tunisia in the face of Israel's vicious act of aggression against Tunisian territory and sovereignty. I reiterate my country's support for the Palestine Liberation Organization and the heroic Palestinian people confronted by the campaign of terror and assassination carried out against them by Israel, both inside and outside their homeland. Israel is once again challenging all international laws and norms of behaviour by committing an act of aggression against an independent, sovereign State Member of the United Nations.

Accordingly, my delegation calls upon the Security Council most strongly to condemn Israel for its repeated acts of aggression against the Tunisian Republic and to take proper action in order to prevent the recurrence of such acts of aggression. We call upon the Security Council, in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly, also to condemn as an abhorrent act of terrorism Israel's assassination of Khalil-al-Wazir, who was in his civilian residence and in the presence of his children and other family members.

By adopting such a position, which is in conformity with the principles for which it was established, the Security Council would undoubtedly enhance the confidence of peoples and States in the United Nations and in the highest organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, namely, the Security Council itself.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. OLHAYE (Djibouti): I wish to acknowledge at the outset the presence of Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Foreign Minister of Tunisia, who has travelled all the way here to plead his country's complaint to this Council, following the act of aggression sustained by his country. His presence here is clear testimony of the gravity of the matter for the consideration of the Council. Djibouti has a special relation with Tunisia and has always respected and admired the pragmatism, moderation and consistency in international relations of that sisterly nation. We are saddened that it has become again the object of Israeli terrorism.

Before proceeding, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am confident that your skills and professionalism will judiciously guide the Council.

The Council is meeting to consider Tunisia's legitimate complaint concerning Israel's blatant disregard of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Convincing evidence incriminating Israel in this attack, which culminated in the tragic death of Khalil-al-Wazir "Abu Jihad" and other innocent individuals, has been detailed by the speakers who spoke before me and therefore I need not dwell on it at length. This is a serious crime that requires the most intense co-operation in the Council to arrive at far-reaching conclusions and measures which will effectively ensure that such disdain and arrogance shall have no place in this world. It is disturbing that Israel could commit multiple atrocities simultaneously in the occupied territories, in Tunisia and, only a few days ago, in Lebanon, and still be obsessed with security and peace.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

Indeed, it is Israel's very denial of security, peace and freedom to others that is the root cause of the problem. The trampling underfoot of the rights of Palestinians for almost half a century and the consistent flouting of all relevant United Nations resolutions aimed at achieving lasting peace in the region is a recipe for disaster.

The assassination of Khalil al-Wazir, Abu Jihad, has only added more fuel to an already precarious situation. Now we shall have a conflagration. During the past four months we have witnessed the spontaneous uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories, which has to date resulted in the death of some 200 people, thousands of casualties, unquantifiable loss of property and deportations. These people demand nothing more than the basic elements of human decency, the rule of law and the exercise of self-determination towards self-rule, as enshrined in the Charter. To subdue and stifle the popular uprising simply through resorting to coercion and the use of force, accompanied with arrests, detentions, deportations blockades and curfews, will not serve the cause of peace nor heal the wounds. On the contrary, it has only served to exacerbate and further aggravate the delicate balance. In the process, Israel has, unnecessarily, earned for itself the wrath, condemnation and ignominy of the international community. It is suffering from a credibility crisis of enormous proportions, as a result of its total defiance and contravention of numerous United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988). As could be expected, the assassination of Abu Jihad has further strengthened the resolve and the will of the Palestinian people, who more than ever firmly reject resignation and despair: their reaction is rage, not submission.

Obviously, political control in Israel is in the hands of men who are vehemently opposed to the very notion of peace, let alone peace negotiations; and any hope, however fragile, raised by Secretary of State Shultz has now evaporated.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

As the Observer rightly pointed out,

"the Israelis [settlers] live more in the past than the present and attach greater weight to the claims of history than the claims of men".

Israel is entitled to its opinions and prejudices; it is not, however, entitled to its own conception and interpretation of human rights, freedom and international law and practice. Israel knows full well how far is too far and how much is too much. It must be punished severely for its contempt of this Council.

We offer our sincerest condolences to the family of the slain leader and to the Palestinian population, who have suffered an irreparable loss. Equally, we wish to state our full sympathy and solidarity with the Government and the people of Tunisia. The Council is in duty-bound to condemn in the strongest possible terms the repeated act of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a staunch and law-abiding Member of the United Nations.

I thank the Council for having acceded to my request to participate in this debate.

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

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

Mr. ADOUKI (Congo) (interpretation from French): I am pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You have my delegation's very best wishes during your term of office this month.

I wish to thank your predecessor, His excellency Ambassador Pejic of Yugoslavia, for the excellent job he did last month.

I should like once again to place on record the deep respect my delegation and I have for His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Tunisia, who is present at this debate. We should have much preferred to greet and welcome him warmly to New York in less distressing circumstances. Nevertheless, we are pleased to see him here with us.

The Palestinian people are mourning their dead. Indeed, for the past 40 years life there has continued to extract a ghastly daily toll. In the current Palestinian national uprising, the international media have relayed pictures of stone-throwing being met by bloody repression at the hands of the occupation forces in Gaza and the West Bank - two occupied territories whose inhabitants, as we know, have opted for a path other than resignation and despair.

The Palestinian dead strewn along that path are now legion. Not even Palestinian leaders are spared the enemy's lightning terrorist strikes: they fall murdered in their turn.

In October 1985 Tunisia witnessed a massive attack against the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), in flagrant violation of international law and Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Now it has become the setting for the despicable murder of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, a PLO leader, in Tunis on 16 April, in circumstances I shall not dwell upon but which Tunisia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, with an acute sense of his lofty responsibilities, accurately described to the Council.

In the Minister's view - shared by international observers of recognized credibility and impartiality - a hefty dose of blindness and complacency would be required to absolve those responsible for this politically motivated murder on Tunisian territory.

The Congo firmly condemns the political assassination of the Palestinian leader Khalil al-Wazir. My country has expressed its condolences to the Palestinian people and to the families of the Tunisian victims. The Congo shares Tunisia's respect for international law.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

This crime committed in Tunis constitutes an attack against Tunisian sovereignty and territorial integrity. It cannot go unpunished. As previous speakers have rightly emphasized, this crime undermines the relaxation of tension that is necessary in the search, which is already arduous, for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Adjouki, Congo)

All Member States of the United Nations are duty-bound to work for peace by doing their utmost to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

My delegation reiterates that the Congo condemns all attacks financed, supported and perpetrated by Governments as being particularly odious. My delegation is reminded in these circumstances of the regular assassinations of freedom fighters perpetrated by the racist South African apartheid régime.

In keeping with its Charter obligations and its special responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council must express the horror and the repudiation and firm condemnation of this act of aggression which Tunisia is entitled to hear from the international community and States members of the Security Council.

Like so many peace-loving States and peoples, the Council would thus be displaying its active solidarity with Tunisia, a United Nations Member whose generous hospitality and sovereignty have once again been so outrageously flouted.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Representative of Zambia.

When the framers of the United Nations Charter deliberated over its provisions, they envisaged, inter alia, a provision for the prevention of situations that threaten international peace and security. In an effort to achieve this end, they made it obligatory for all Member States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

(The President)

As Member States of the United Nations, we therefore have a moral obligations to fulfil in good faith, the provisions of the Charter in order to promote greater international understanding and co-operation. This, in our view, is a cardinal principle which we all should cherish and respect.

It is with this view in mind and our faith in the United Nations as the arbiter for resolving international disputes that my delegation saw the imperative need for the Security Council to accede to the request by the Government of Tunisia to debate the item before us.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Mr. Mestiri, in his lucid and detailed presentation to this body, stated his country's indignation and outrage at Israeli total disregard of Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. My country, which has suffered similar acts of aggression from the racist régime of South Africa, is in full sympathy with Tunisia's complaint and supports it. Tunisia is a friendly, non-aligned and peaceful country committed to the total eradication of all vestiges of colonialism, oppression and foreign domination. These are lofty aims which deserve the unflinching support of all freedom-loving countries the world over. Tunisia's commitment to these ideals is demonstrated by its readiness and willingness to offer sanctuary to oppressed and displaced people. Its sacrifice and selflessness are highly commendable and merit the sympathy and support of the international community at large.

The situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate by the day as Israeli forces continue to brutalize, maim and break bones and to kill Palestinians in the occupied territories despite the resolutions of the Security Council, and indeed the outcry of the international community against this reign of terror.

(The President)

It is regrettable that in this day and age, and given recent attempts at peace initiatives which include the proposal for an international peace conference to address the Middle East situation, the core of which is the question of Palestine, Israel has chosen to take a dangerous path of attacking its Arab neighbours and those that are not close to its borders in hot pursuit of those opposed to its military occupation. This aggressive posture cannot and will not contribute to peace and security in the Middle East. It will breed further tension and escalate conflicts, both of which constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

For a long time now my country has repeatedly urged Israel to adopt a policy of peaceful coexistence with its Arab neighbours. We find it ironic that a country which publicly seeks secure borders should resort to State terrorism as a way of dealing a permanent blow to those who disagree with its policies. By seeking to resolve political problems by military means Israel is engaging in an exercise of self-delusion. We continue to believe that it is in Israel's own interest, and indeed in the interest of all countries in the region, that a peaceful and just solution to this vexing problem have its roots in an international peace conference. Peace and aggression cannot coexist.

We in Zambia strongly condemn the armed terrorist commando attack on Tunisia on 16 April 1988 and call on the international community to spare no effort in condemning this attack. Assassination of leaders is not the answer to the problems of the region. In this regard, Israel should have the courage to accept the universal call for an international peace conference on the Middle East in which all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), will participate on an equal footing. It is our conviction that the situation in

(The President)

the Middle East requires leaders with great courage and vision; it requires leaders capable of looking beyond the immediate political advantages in order to address the long-term interests of the Middle East and its people. Only if and when this is done, can Israel hope to live in peaceful, secure and internationally recognized borders.

The raid on Tunisia, which resulted in the brutal murder of Abu Jihad, a member of the PLO Executive Committee and others, has indeed shocked the international community. It cannot be seen as just an isolated act of lawlessness by an unknown gang of bandits: rather, it must be viewed as a carefully premeditated assassination with intent to liquidate the PLO leadership. This was indeed the case on 1 October 1985, when Israel committed a similar act of aggression against Tunisia, which was strongly condemned by the Council in its resolution 573 (1985). Israel, therefore, has a "track record" in military operations against the leadership of the PLO.

It must be clear from statements originating from Israel that, rather than disorganizing the PLO, the assassination of Abu Jihad has merely served to aggravate the situation in the Middle East. It has inspired the oppressed people of Palestine to fight to victory, and it has provided a rallying point which will serve to strengthen their bonds of unity, a goal for which the late Abu Jihad worked so diligently during his lifetime. Israel will never overcome the just struggle of the Palestinian people by assassinating its authentic leaders. Indeed, as the Israeli paper Hadashot, in its editorial opinion, pointedly wondered:

"If PLO leaders are targets for bumping off, with whom, actually, do we intend to discuss the settling of the Palestinian problem?"

In conclusion, my delegation calls on the Security Council, which is charged with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, to

(The President)

act decisively by adopting the draft resolution before it so that this act of aggression will not be repeated in the future by Israel, or indeed by any other country.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

With the concurrence of members of the Council, I shall now suspend the meeting for 30 minutes in order that certain points may be cleared up.

The meeting was suspended at 12 noon and resumed at 1.25 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: 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 it to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

Does any member wish to make a statement before the voting?

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): The United States deplores the use of violence from whatever quarter. In particular, we condemn acts of political assassination, as American Government spokesmen stated clearly in Washington last week.

Tunisia is a close and valued friend of the United States. For a second time in less than three years it has suffered a violation of its territorial integrity and its sovereignty. The United States has repeatedly emphasized its support for Tunisia's territorial integrity; we remain faithful to that pledge. Our relationship with Tunisia is firmly rooted in a common dedication to the dignity of man and to the pursuit of political moderation and tolerance. Tunisia enjoys a solid reputation as a peaceful country. Over the course of the years it has pursued its national goals in a manner consistent with its commitment to peaceful resolution of its problems. The perpetration of political assassination on Tunisian soil stands in stark contrast to Tunisia's long-standing tradition of non-violence.

Despite the strong views the United States holds on political assassination, and despite our strong support for Tunisia's national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the United States has decided to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution today because it disproportionately places all blame for this latest round in the rising spiral of violence in the Middle East on one event only while failing to mention other actions that preceded it. It also includes language which is suggestive of Chapter VII sanctions.

(Mr. Okun, United States)

As we deliberate here today we must not lose sight of the broader goals we all share. All involved must renew their efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East which will realize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in a manner that protects Israel's security. Palestinians and Israelis both deserve a future of security, dignity and prosperity. There must be mutual respect for each other's rights and a climate where fear and recrimination can be replaced by security and trust. We believe now is the time to act.

The PRESIDENT: The Council will now vote on the draft resolution before it contained in document S/19819.

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: None

Abstaining: United States of America

The PRESIDENT: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 611 (1988).

I shall now call on any member of the Council that wishes to make a statement following the voting.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): My delegation has just voted in favour of the resolution. We did so in view of my Government's consistent condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, including such acts of political murder as that of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

As the sponsors of the draft and others well know, we would have preferred certain changes to the text. In particular, we would have wished it to leave more open the implication of responsibility for the murder, since, as I said here on 21 April, we do not know with certainty who was responsible. We also regret that Security Council resolution 573 (1985) was incorrectly quoted. Further, we find that operative paragraph 3 has little meaning when taken with the rest of the resolution, which does not contain specific provisions for implementation. Our understanding of operative paragraph 2 is that it can only refer to measures that are appropriate and lawful and in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

In spite of our doubts on these points, my delegation voted in favour of the text to make clear our determination to join the Council in vigorous condemnation of the murder, and to help bring home to those responsible the grave consequences of their act.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization, who has asked to speak.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, I wish to thank all those who expressed their position of principle by condemning the criminal assassination of Abu Jihad. I should also like to express our gratitude to all those who extended sympathy to the family of the martyr, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian people. We have transmitted those sentiments to the bereaved family and leadership of the PLO.

There is no doubt that the international consensus regarding the item before the Council has contributed in a concrete fashion to alleviating to a large extent the suffering sustained as a result of this loss. But I should like to emphasize

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine
Liberation Organization)

here that our Palestinian people and its sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, will be able to overcome this loss and put it behind it.

I take this occasion to place on record our appreciation to all members that voted in favour of the draft resolution, especially to the non-aligned countries that sponsored it and to express our satisfaction that the United States did not exercise its power of veto. In this regard, I express the hope that positive positions will be taken to serve the just cause of peace in the Middle East.

In conclusion, I once again express our deep gratitude to Tunisia, its Government and people, and also stress to all members of the Council that our people will continue its struggle to attain its inalienable national rights.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, who has asked to speak.

Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): I am particularly obliged to the members of the Council for their positive response to Tunisia's appeal. We hope that the text which has just been adopted, even though it does not fully meet our expectations, will nevertheless have the deterrent effect we hoped to see.

We are most grateful also to the sponsors of the draft resolution, who, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, took upon themselves the task of negotiating this text and finding solutions acceptable to the members of the Council. We are particularly grateful to those of them who had to overcome their convictions in presenting a draft resolution which was not fully satisfactory to them. We can

(Mr. Mestiri, Tunisia)

assure them that we too had to make an effort - one which did not come easily to us - to satisfy ourselves with this decision which, when all is said and done, basically responds to the concerns of our people.

Finally, the aggression has been denounced and condemned and the aggressor named. Our sincere thanks go to all those delegations which have expressed to us their solidarity, sympathy and support on behalf of their respective countries. I should have liked to name them all, because they were all generous in their words to my country, my people and President. Our gratitude also goes to those who, notwithstanding the pressures brought to bear on them - sometimes in an inelegant fashion - nevertheless lived up to the responsibilities incumbent upon them under the Charter.

(Mr. Mestiri, Tunisia)

We also understand those who, unable to vote in favour of the draft resolution, abstained, thus enabling the international community to denounce and condemn this act of aggression and, hence, the aggressor.

We know beyond all doubt who the aggressor was. Almost all speakers identified the aggressor; it is clear that even those who expressed doubts know perfectly well who the aggressor was. We are therefore convinced that in the light of new elements the task of the Secretary-General to place the responsibility for this act, a task set out in paragraph 4 of the resolution, will not be an unduly difficult one. This will enable the Security Council, which remains seized of the matter, to take measures under the Charter with respect to the aggressor as confessions and discoveries continue to emerge.

For our part, we shall transmit to the Secretariat a file containing technical information about such matters as the logistical support provided during the operation by an Israeli aircraft flying in air space near Tunisian territory. The presence of that aircraft has been confirmed also in a communiqué issued by the Italian air-traffic controllers' union, the text of which is available.

The Chargé d'Affairs ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Malta has just provided us with a letter from his Government confirming that the aircraft bearing the number 4X977 and Israeli insignia - the aircraft I mentioned in my introductory statement - overflow the region. The letter contains precise data concerning its movements, which coincide in terms of time and space with the aggression. This letter too will be transmitted to the Secretariat.

Our file also contains information from the Lebanese authorities on the false passports and aliases used and on the rental of the vehicles employed by the terrorists.

(Mr. Mestiri, Tunisia)

We hope that other States, especially those in the Mediterranean region, will join Malta in co-operating in this with the Secretary-General, to whom we pay a tribute; from the outset he has viewed the problem in its true context. Communications from him, without straying from the most complete objectivity, have stated clearly what the international community knows full well.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to assure you of our appreciation and admiration for the patience and wisdom with which you guided this debate. I could not pass in silence over the position taken by Zambia, a friendly brother nation of Africa which, in keeping with a long tradition of tireless struggle for just causes, played a decisive role in the conclusions reached in this debate.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

There are no further speakers for this meeting. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.

