



Security Council

UN LIBRARY

PROVISIONAL

MAR 21 1988

S/PV.2800
17 March 1988

ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDREDTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 17 March 1988, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. PEJIC

(Yugoslavia)

Members: Algeria

Mr. DJOUDI

Argentina

Mr. CAPUTO

Brazil

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA

China

Mr. DING Yuanhong

France

Mr. BLANC

Germany, Federal Republic of

Count YORK von WARTENBURG

Italy

Mr. BUCCI

Japan

Mr. KAGAMI

Nepal

Mr. RANA

Senegal

Mr. BA

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics

Mr. BELONOBOV

United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland

Sir Crispin TICKELL

United States of America

Mr. OKUN

Zambia

Mr. ZUZE

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the Security Council.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: I should like at the very outset of the meeting to acknowledge the presence at the Council table of His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, to whom, on behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 11 MARCH 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19604)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela 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. Peñalosa (Colombia), Mr. Gutierrez (Costa Rica), Mr. Insanally (Guyana), Mr. Moya Palencia (Mexico), Mr. Icaza Gallard (Nicaragua), Mr. Ritter (Panama), Mr. Alzamora (Peru), Mr. Villar (Spain), Mr. Fischer (Uruguay) and Mr. Aguilar (Venezuela) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 15 March 1988 from the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which reads as follows:

"On behalf of the Special Committee, I have the honour, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to be invited to participate in the Council's consideration of the question concerning the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)."

On previous occasions the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

(The President)

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in the letter dated 11 March 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/19604. I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the following documents: S/19500, S/19564 and S/19579, letters dated 12 February and 2 and 3 March 1988, respectively, from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/19541, letter dated 25 February 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/19559, letter dated 29 February 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker on my list is the Minister for External Relations and Culture of Argentina, His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo.

Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to begin by addressing my personal congratulations to you, Sir, as President of the Security Council for the month of March. I have no doubt that your leadership will make an effective contribution to the success of the work entrusted to this major organ of the United Nations. Furthermore, you represent Yugoslavia, a country with which Argentina maintains fruitful political relations and relations of friendship.

I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Vernon Walters, who, with his well-known efficiency, presided over the work of the Council during the month of February.

I should like to express my appreciation for the convening of this meeting of the Council, which, at the request of my country, will be devoted to the consideration of the situation arising in the South Atlantic as a result of the

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

decision taken by the United Kingdom Government to conduct military manoeuvres in the Malvinas during the month of March, as publicly announced by the British Government on 11 February.

We have requested this meeting in order to express our grave concern, which we know is shared by the countries of our region and by all those nations which believe in respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly Article 1, and which thus overwhelmingly supported the various resolutions of the General Assembly that called for diplomatic dialogue and a negotiated solution to the dispute over the Malvinas.

Since the restoration of democracy in my country in 1983, Argentina has displayed every evidence of its determination to seek a negotiated solution to its dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas. Accordingly, all of our initiatives and actions and our behaviour throughout have been peaceful in nature. Our public statements in the most varied multilateral forums, formal proposals addressed to the United Kingdom as well as others are all activities within the framework of the United Nations and constitute unchallengeable proof of our conviction that diplomacy is the only way to resolve a conflict between nations. That is a simple yet momentous observation since war and peace depend upon respect for and observance of that principle. The United Nations Charter thus begins by calling for the negotiated solution of all disputes. That is why we have come to the Council, because this body is endowed with primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. We feel that once again the United Kingdom of Great Britain is disregarding the very basis for a rational solution to conflicts between States.

Over the years the United Kingdom Government has voted against a resolution which called for negotiations, without prejudice to the parties, on all aspects of

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

this dispute with Argentina. This has been the case with respect to General Assembly resolutions 37/9, 38/12, 39/6, 40/21, 41/40 and 42/19. In voting against those resolutions, Great Britain at the same time was building up a so-called Fortress Malvinas, and opening a strategic airport on the Islands. Having consolidated that position, it has now decided on a display of strength in the South Atlantic. The evidence is thus complete: Not only does it vote against the resolution, but it also consistently demonstrates its force. The Council will thus be able to appreciate the contrast between that behaviour and the behaviour of my own country.

As I have said, the United Kingdom has announced that in March it would be conducting military manoeuvres in the area of the Malvinas Islands. As is clear from the official announcement made by the Ministry of Defense of the United Kingdom in the House of Commons on 11 February, that action will involve broad-ranging mobilization of soldiers and military materiel to the disputed territory. We shall no doubt be hearing, in a few moments when the British delegation speaks, an explanation that the purpose of the exercise is to confirm the rapid reinforcement capacity of the allegedly defensive facilities in the Islands. We have reason to believe that this objective does not reflect the real intentions of the United Kingdom. We might consider various hypotheses that would help us to interpret the intentions of the United Kingdom. But today it would be more useful to consider the evidence rather than the hypotheses, and it is clear that the United Kingdom is taking this attitude at a time when indirect contacts have been under way in order to create machinery to avoid military incidents in the South Atlantic. Some friendly countries have witnessed this state of affairs.

How are we to interpret, therefore, the attitude of a country which, above and beyond these arguments and reasons, decides to follow a policy of military

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

deployment at a time when talks are under way on the avoidance of carrying out military deployment? How is one to interpret the attitude of a country which votes against resolutions that call for negotiations and which flouts the will of the majority of the General Assembly, deploying force as a response to the request by the General Assembly of the United Nations in the South Atlantic, indeed in the very area which the General Assembly had decided to declare a zone of peace and co-operation, on the initiative taken by Brazil and with the affirmative vote cast by the United Kingdom?

We raise this matter in the Security Council not merely because of the gravity of this situation, which gives rise in itself to tension and insecurity, but because it is evidence of an attitude that poses a threat to international peace. If we needed anything else to make clear the position taken by the British Government, we now have it in this dangerous situation.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

The Council must today assess the attitude of a Government which, despite having supported, in the General Assembly, decisions intended to reduce military presence and activities in the South Atlantic, is acting in a manner diametrically opposed to those decisions. But beyond assessing that attitude, the Argentine Government thinks it even more important to assess its consequences. It is not only that the British decision is a source of insecurity for Argentinians; it is not only that these actions are intended to consolidate colonial domination of the Malvinas Islands - although those reasons were sufficient cause to convene the Council: It is rather that this British attitude affects all of us, certainly all Latin Americans, but also all Members of the United Nations, because I insist - and this is my principal argument - that it disregards negotiations as a basis for the settlement of disputes.

In a few minutes we may hear that the United Kingdom has always been open to negotiations. But that applies only to negotiations that explicitly leave aside the matter that gave rise to the dispute and which fuels it today: that matter of sovereignty. We shall probably hear that it would be realistic to begin with what have come to be called reciprocal confidence-building measures.

I shall address those two arguments. First of all, how can Argentina be expected to accept the impossible as a condition for negotiations? Secondly, how are we to construe the establishment of reciprocal confidence by a country which, at the least explicable moment, has decided to carry out military manoeuvres in the disputed area?

This is the central concern that brings us to the Security Council: those manoeuvres, which clearly express the determination not to negotiate, not to settle the dispute with Argentina peacefully. As I said, we have reason to think that this is not solely an Argentine concern. The Organization of American States (OAS) has categorically expressed its grave concern through a resolution, supported by

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

nearly all the Latin American and Caribbean countries, calling for the suspension of these manoeuvres. The Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action, composed of eight Latin American countries, denounced the United Kingdom position. Yesterday, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries stated the same concerns.

We are indeed convinced that the great majority of the members of the Council and of the United Nations share our perplexity and concern. I stress that what the Council is considering and what impelled Argentina, Latin America and other countries from outside the region to protest the British decision is the imprudent and gratuitous nature of a measure that threatens serious efforts to get the parties to this grave dispute to settle their dispute peacefully.

The behaviour of permanent members of the Security Council has a direct impact on the credibility of the collective security system set out in the United Nations Charter. If a permanent member of the Security Council decides to set itself above the Charter - for example, by disregarding its obligation to seek a peaceful settlement of disputes to which it is a party - what can we expect of other countries? The United Kingdom's disregard of the Charter clearly plays into the hands of those who seek to discredit and frustrate the United Nations.

There is no excuse for the United Kingdom to adopt a position like its present position in the South Atlantic or to disregard its obligation to enter into negotiations with Argentina to settle, peacefully and finally, the dispute on sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. That obligation is an objective fact deriving from the Charter, and it exists irrespective of whether or not the positions of principle held by both Governments may be easily reconciled.

I wish to return to a point I made earlier. The lack of mutual credibility is clearly a major obstacle to beginning a process to settle the disputes between Argentina and the United Kingdom. That is a genuine, important and long-standing

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

problem. Both Governments thus have the inescapable responsibility to refrain from any measure that could contribute to increasing this distrust. The good faith of both Governments is a prerequisite to tackling not only our disputes over the Malvinas Islands but also related problems deriving from the dispute or linked with other specific aspects of the relationship.

In that context, no excuse can justify the United Kingdom position, not even the British argument that my Government has not declared a formal cessation of hostilities. We have frequently stated that we would have no difficulty in dealing with this technical matter - which we feel to be unnecessary - in the context of a true resumption of bilateral dialogue. Moreover, it should be recalled that the United Kingdom itself never declared a formal cessation of hostilities in the 1956 war against Egypt.

Ultimately, this decision, which the Council is considering today, has dramatically highlighted certain questions to which we in Argentina have no answers and to which I think the members of the Council are in no better position to respond: How does the United Kingdom think progress can truly be made in settling this dispute? Is it by beginning negotiations conditional upon Argentina's renouncing its historical claim? Is such a proposal politically viable? It confuses the actions of a dictatorship with those of democracy.

Really and truly, how long does the United Kingdom think such a policy can last? It has often recognized the existence of a dispute, so why is it opposed to negotiations? Why is it afraid to negotiate? Could this be a question of principle? If it is, why was the United Kingdom not afraid of negotiations in the past, when it decided to begin negotiations with my country on sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands? It is worth recalling that in 1977 the United Kingdom signed with the then de facto Government of Argentina a joint communiqué which stated that

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

"The Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have agreed to commence negotiations in June or July 1977, concerning future political relations, including sovereignty, with respect to the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands".

One question will not go away: How could the United Kingdom have signed such a communiqué with a dictatorship, while refusing to do so with the democratic Government of President Raúl Alfonsín?

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

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): Members of the Council have heard a certain amount from the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship about what I am going to say. Let me put them out of their misery: I am now going to say it.

The kindest thing I can do today is to recall a little history, and get the problem raised by the Argentine Government into perspective.

At the beginning of 1982, that is to say following the events of 1977 to which the Minister referred, the British and Argentine Governments were engaged in discussions about the Falkland Islands. The islands themselves were guarded - if that is the right word - by less than 50 lightly-armed soldiers. On 2 April 1982 the islands were suddenly invaded by over 10,000 Argentine troops.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

The Security Council adopted resolution 502 (1982), a mandatory resolution, which demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the islands. The Argentine Government, in breach of its obligations under the Charter, ignored it. In consequence my Government exercised its inherent right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter, and at distressing cost to human life - British and Argentine - expelled the invaders. We are determined that no such catastrophe should happen again. Indeed we should be in dereliction of our duty under Article 73 of the Charter were we not to take the necessary steps to safeguard the security of the people of the islands.

Our obligation could be met in two ways. We could install a large permanent garrison of the size and ability to ward off any further attack; or we could do as we have done - that is, maintain the smallest possible garrison while establishing the means to reinforce it rapidly. Ability to reinforce is not something which can be left theoretical. We made it clear as long ago as 1982 that occasional reinforcement exercises would be necessary. The present one involves a small number of aircraft and fewer than 1,000 men. It would be straining the credulity of this Council to suggest that such an exercise could threaten anyone. It would indeed be to enter into the world of obsession and fantasy.

Many other States, including some of those represented round this Council table, regularly conduct similar exercises. As any competent soldier will confirm, they are a necessary, indeed an inevitable, part of sensible military planning. The only conceivable dangers which might arise in the present case come from the surprising measures subsequently announced by the Government of Argentina.

We are encouraged by statements of the Argentine Government's commitment to resolving differences between Argentina and the United Kingdom by peaceful means.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

We acknowledge and we reciprocate those assurances. President Alfonsin has many times made it clear that he does not intend to resort to force. We respect his statements, and the spirit in which they were made. We wish the democratic Government of Argentina - of which the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship is a worthy representative - nothing but well. But the Argentine claim to the Falklands still stands regardless of the wishes of the islanders, and as long as it remains so we must retain the capability of dealing with the unexpected. My Government is determined to fulfil its commitments to the people of the Falklands and to uphold their right to choose by whom they wish to be governed. Indeed it is obliged to do so by the Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

I emphasize that the British Government is working to establish a more normal relationship with Argentina. Indeed we have taken many steps to that end which have not so far been reciprocated. So far as we are concerned, but unfortunately not so far as Argentina is concerned, hostilities long since ceased between us, and we look forward to the eventual restoration of the close relations which once existed between our two countries. That may not be possible all at once. To use an Argentine image, it takes two to tango. But we have been able to conduct exchanges with the Argentine Government on fisheries through the good offices of a third party. We want to continue these exchanges and earnestly hope they will make progress.

I wish also to dispel any suggestion that for some mysterious reasons - and they would have to be mysterious - we are opposed to lowering tension in the South Atlantic. The Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship expressed bafflement as to why we should wish to hold these exercises. I think that the

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

reasons as I have explained them are clear and simple. From the outset we supported the proposal put forward by Brazil in the General Assembly in 1986 for a zone of peace in the South Atlantic. We shall continue to support it. Our forces in the Falklands are there to defend the islands from attack. Their presence is entirely consistent with the aim of the Brazilian proposal. Likewise we have ratified the two additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and have at all times complied with our obligations not to deploy nuclear weapons in territories for which we have international responsibilities and which lie within the Treaty's Zone of Application. We have also carried out our obligation not to deploy nuclear weapons in areas in which the Treaty is in force. We would wish to see it enforced throughout the region, with all States in Latin America becoming parties to it. It is important to note that Argentina has not so far ratified the Treaty. We again call upon it to do so.

The Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship ranged far beyond the subject of this debate. He referred to the discussions in the General Assembly last year, where I think the positions of both of us were very clearly set out. There was then, it will be recalled, a call for negotiations on all aspects of the future of the islands - which, I am afraid, is a thinly disguised demand for negotiations on sovereignty. The Argentine Government has made it plain many times that such negotiations can have only one outcome: the annexation of the islands by Argentina. That is an outcome which - and there is no doubt about this - would be quite unacceptable to the people of the islands. What the Argentines want is not negotiations but talks about a hand-over date.

On the subject we are discussing - that is, the current exercises in the Falkland Islands - I set out our position very succinctly in my letter of

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

25 February to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; you referred to that letter, Mr. President, at the beginning of our discussion today. Our case is so simple, so strong and so direct that I am sorry I have been obliged to take up the Council's time in putting it once more.

Above all, let us keep matters in perspective. Our garrison on the islands is entirely defensive: it threatens no one. In the past two years our reinforcement capability has allowed us to halve the number of troops we keep on the islands. That is surely a contribution to the lowering of tension rather than the opposite, which has just been suggested to the Council.

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

Mr. PEÑALOSA (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Our world, lacking in bastions of faith and universally respected principles, is increasing in need of leaders with clear principles who have earned its confidence and of an Organization to foster the credibility that has been lost, making it possible to demonstrate the benefits of the establishment of friendship and trust between peoples.

This is what has given rise to the founding of the United Nations, when five of its longest-standing Members sought to establish a mechanism that would spare mankind from the horror it had experienced prior to 1945. The United Kingdom is one of those five permanent members of the Security Council whose Governments possess the requisites for world leadership so necessary in our time.

The Government of Colombia is keenly concerned at the fact that it is the United Kingdom Government that is violating the principles of the Charter and the provisions of our Organization by doing all it can to impede bilateral dialogue with the Argentine Republic, which dialogue is the only practical means for finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the long-standing dispute over the Malvinas Islands.

I would repeat what I said at the forty-second session of the General Assembly:

"The issue of the Malvinas Islands deeply affects the whole of Latin America. The countries of the region have joined in a common cause with the Argentine Republic and unreservedly support its right to sovereignty over the islands. Undeniably the continuation of the dispute with the United Kingdom has an effect on the political climate in the continent. An obvious problem of decolonization, which could have been resolved within the context of the framework provided by the United Nations Charter, has become a hotbed of tension and conflict in the South Atlantic with repercussions throughout the region." (A/42/PV.70, p. 18)

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

Today, that tension is increasing because of the holding of military manoeuvres in the area of the Malvinas Islands by the British Government. The Government of the United Kingdom had offered grounds for hope for a settlement to the dispute, not only by its support for the General Assembly resolution declaring the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation, but also by expressing its determination to seek more normal relations with Argentina.

How can the deployment of force and overbearing behaviour normalize relations? The Council has now been convened only after Argentina and Latin America had exhausted all available means in their efforts to dissuade the British Government from engaging in a new demonstration of military might.

The climate prevailing in Argentina is very clear: a democratic Government committed to substantive reform for the well-being of its people is offering peaceful, bilateral dialogue, with an open agenda and without pre-conditions. Instead of evoking an appropriate response, a response arising out of a change in preconceived attitudes or fixed agendas, it has met with the deployment of force, exacerbating tension and rendering dialogue and peaceful negotiations less likely.

That is the disturbing factor, not the size or intensity of the manoeuvres. The vaunting of military power is antithetical to a climate of negotiation and peace.

Colombia has never supported the use of force in the settlement of disputes. The peaceful settlement of conflicts is a cardinal element of its foreign policy. Accordingly, we support a comprehensive negotiated solution to the dispute over the Malvinas Islands, and, in that connection, my delegation wishes to emphasize the positive and practical approach taken by the Argentine Government, which, in bilateral negotiations with the United Kingdom, has clearly manifested its

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

intention to protect the interests of the inhabitants of the islands and has promised to respect and protect, through safeguards, statutes and guarantees to be agreed upon at those negotiations, the maintenance of the lifestyle, traditions and cultural identity of the islanders.

The Government of Colombia will fully support the search for conditions that can lead to a resumption of the negotiations between the United Kingdom and Argentina to find a peaceful and lasting solution. My country is convinced that, with the firm support of the international community and with the invaluable co-operation of the United Nations Secretary-General, a solution can be found to deal with all aspects of the problem, marking a decisive contribution to the strengthening of peace in the world.

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

Mr. FISCHER (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Although Uruguay does not often participate in debates in the Security Council, I should nevertheless like to congratulate you, Sir, on the calm and effective manner in which you are exercising the duties of President of the Council. Our congratulations also go to your predecessor, Ambassador Vernon Walters.

The decision of the United Kingdom to hold military manoeuvres in the area of the Malvinas Islands has caused deep concern, not only to Argentina, but throughout Latin America and, in particular, to those countries like Uruguay that are part of the South Atlantic region. The preservation of peace in the region is, for my country, a historic concern that precedes the establishment of any international legal instrument for its safeguard.

RM/7

S/PV.2800

24-25

(Mr. Fischer, Uruguay)

On 12 February of this year the then-Foreign Minister of Uruguay, Mr. Enrique Iglesias, during a brief sojourn in London, informed the Foreign Office of my country's official position on this question, as follows:

"Such acts do not contribute to relaxing tensions in the area. On the contrary, they may seriously affect the goal of a zone of peace in the South Atlantic, which Uruguay vigorously supports."

For their part, the countries members of the Group of Eight and the members of the Organization of American States, among which my country is included, have already unequivocally voiced their concern at the holding of the British manoeuvres and the increase of tension in the South Atlantic they have caused, as well as at the fact that, far from contributing to the effective establishment of such a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic, it disregards its character.

(Mr. Fischer, Uruguay)

The holding of military exercises, with unusual troop movements, over an extended period of 24 days in the region of the Malvinas Islands, is not a matter beyond the United Kingdom's control; it is not a measure that its Government was forced to take in order to confront a challenge from outside; nor can it reasonably be considered that it had to be taken to meet that country's priority interests.

The United Kingdom has argued that the exercises are routine reinforcement exercises, notification of which was given a long time ago, and that their aim is to reduce the United Kingdom garrison in the Malvinas Islands, as the representative of the United Kingdom said in his official statement of 25 February 1988, distributed as an official Security Council document (S/19541).

But we can in no way disregard the form of the manoeuvres or the context in which they are being held, nor can we overlook the circumstances of their timing and location. These military activities must therefore be evaluated in the context of the political and legal conditions prevailing in the zone since the end of the unfortunate war of 1982.

First, since then commitments have been entered into as a result of the declaration of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic, in General Assembly resolution 41/11 of 1986, adopted with the express support of the United Kingdom, under which that country assumed the specific obligations

"to co-operate in the elimination of all sources of tension in the zone"

(General Assembly resolution 41/11, para. 4)

and to bring about

"the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence there"

(General Assembly resolution 41/11, para. 3)

Secondly, the decision to hold military manoeuvres was taken against a background of a growing relaxation of tension, which could well be regarded as promising for the pacification of the area and which was characterized by an

(Mr. Fischer, Uruguay)

absence of attitudes of mutual hostility, as the international community noted. To avoid being subjective, I cannot do better than to quote the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the matter last November, in which he said:

"both parties have in the past year shown commendable restraint and a clear willingness to reduce areas of tension" (A/42/732, para. 6), although the Secretary-General also said that it had not been possible to bring about a dialogue between the United Kingdom and Argentina to resolve the questions in dispute.

Moreover, the persistent, acknowledged desire shown throughout this period by the Argentine Government to find a peaceful solution to the conflict is undeniable, and its permanent dedication to the path of diplomatic negotiations is unquestioned. We must bear in mind that on 14 August last the British Government expressed its "ardent desire" to contribute to strengthening peace and security in the region with the establishment of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic. Its commitment to the promotion of dialogue to find practical ways to reduce tension was renewed in that country's reply of that date to the Secretary-General with respect to the establishment of the zone of peace.

That climate of a progressive strengthening of peace prevailed until a short time ago. Therefore, it should be understood that the holding of military manoeuvres can only cause frustration and uncertainty about the spirit in which they are being carried out and seriously threaten the climate of relaxation of tensions, which was being strengthened.

Thirdly, we realize that the taking of such measures and the circumstances in which they take place inevitably have a bearing on the establishment or otherwise of trust between States, the reduction or increase of confrontation and the

(Mr. Fischer, Uruguay)

dissipation of possible misunderstandings. That has been progressively recognized by the international community, as expressed through a recent General Assembly resolution.

It will therefore be understood that when the goal is a reduction of tension between States, the strengthening of mutual confidence and the prevention of misunderstandings that could give rise to situations of conflict, activities such as military manoeuvres should preferably be dealt with through co-ordination between States, in order to foster confidence and international security. It is worth recalling that with that in mind, in the European context, the United Kingdom and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have negotiated an agreement with the Warsaw Pact States for prior notice and reasonable warning of military manoeuvres and the regulation of such manoeuvres, with precisely drawn regulations laying down the conditions and the limits for such military activities, under the September 1986 Stockholm Agreement.

With regard to the Malvinas area in particular we would point out that in a letter to the Secretary-General on 22 September 1986 the United Kingdom expressed its desire to "rebuild confidence" between the two parties involved in the conflict, regarding that as

"an essential prerequisite to the reduction of tension in the South Atlantic".

(A/41/636, annex, para. 1)

In the present case it is not clear how the recent decision to hold military manoeuvres in the Malvinas could contribute to a restoration of confidence and the lessening of tension in the area.

Fourthly, the international community has made clear and repeated appeals for the negotiation of a peaceful solution to the dispute; it has done so in consecutive General Assembly resolutions adopted by overwhelming majorities year after year. In those appeals there is implicitly a call to the parties to abstain

(Mr. Fischer, Uruguay)

from any action that could increase tension in the region and thus make a negotiated solution less likely.

The deployment of troops from one hemisphere to another into the Malvinas area and the holding of military exercises over a period of three weeks does not serve to foster the necessary dialogue and trust between the parties.

Uruguay, which always wants to help bring about the conditions in which dialogue between the parties will be feasible and effective, therefore urges the British Government to avoid holding such manoeuvres. It appeals to it to act in accordance with the spirit and philosophy followed by the United Kingdom and its allies in other regional settings where its security is most directly at stake. In so doing, as a member of the Group of 8, we also urge the friendly Government of the United Kingdom to resume bilateral negotiations with the Argentine Republic with a view to working towards a peaceful solution to the problems between the two countries.

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

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil) (interpretation from Spanish): Before reading the text of my statement, allow me, Mr. President, to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo. His presence here is evidence of the interest and importance which his country attaches to this debate it has requested.

The Government of Brazil views with deep concern the latest developments with respect to the Malvinas, events which have given rise to this meeting of the Security Council. The decision by the Government of Great Britain and Northern Island to conduct military exercises in the Malvinas area does not contribute to a peaceful and lasting settlement of the problems outstanding between the United Kingdom and Argentina. There is no need for me to recall the position which Brazil has traditionally taken on the substantive dispute between these two countries, with which we have always enjoyed close, historic ties of friendship.

To Brazil, the Malvinas have been and continue to be a territory of the sister Republic of Argentina. I shall refrain from a description of the continuing efforts made by my Government to find a peaceful solution to this controversy that has given rise to tensions in the South Atlantic. I would simply recall that we have repeatedly co-sponsored General Assembly resolutions, most recently resolution 42/19, establishing the framework for a negotiating process capable of settling the entire dispute between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom. In our view, this process must be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and without prejudice to the positions of the parties.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

Within this framework we believe it necessary to ensure that no measures are taken that might increase tensions or impede the creation of the conditions necessary for political dialogue. Yet, just as we were beginning to see signs of progress in the process of mutual confidence-building and a hint of willingness by the parties to return to a positive dialogue, the British decided to conduct the Fire-Focus manoeuvres, giving rise to an undesirable resurgence of tensions.

The times call for prudence and restraint. The Brazilian Government continues to be convinced that there must be peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic.

That indeed was the message conveyed by the international community when it adopted General Assembly resolution 41/11, which declared the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation, to be scrupulously respected by all States.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation sympathizes with Argentina's request to have the Security Council consider the situation that has arisen in the South Atlantic as a result of the decision of the Government of the United Kingdom to hold military manoeuvres in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

We have listened carefully to the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, in which he expressed concern over the situation. In this connection, we are pleased to note the confirmation of Argentina's intention to try to achieve a negotiated settlement.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly stated its position on the issue of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), which, we are pleased to note, coincides with the appeals of the overwhelming majority of Members of the United Nations in recent years for the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to seek ways of achieving a peaceful settlement of their dispute, including all aspects of the islands' future.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

At its forty-second session the General Assembly, in resolution 42/19, once again advocated precisely such an approach. Recent events, however, have given us new and real cause for alarm at the situation in the South Atlantic. There can be no doubt that the movement of United Kingdom forces and arms into the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) for the purpose, as was declared in London, of testing the feasibility of carrying out a large-scale military operation there cannot serve the cause of promoting a political settlement - all the more so since, under no circumstances, can a demonstration of force be viewed as an acceptable accompaniment to the normalization of bilateral relations.

The position of the international community is unambiguous. Despite statements of the alleged routine nature of this operation, it is clear that the military manoeuvres that are being carried out despite the appeals of Argentina, the Latin American States and many Members of our Organization, are inimical to the interests of settling the situation in the South Atlantic and run counter to the peaceful efforts and desires of the countries of the continent, the Non-Aligned Movement and the relevant decisions of the United Nations. Such actions are not conducive to promoting the purposes of creating a zone of peace and co-operation in the region as advocated by the majority of Members of the United Nations, including the United Kingdom.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet delegation supports those who feel that the United Kingdom's policy of increasing its military activity in the area of the islands is not conducive to ensuring the stability and security of the South Atlantic and is a course that we, like others, feel is fraught with increased tension.

As was stressed in the statement by the representative of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, on 24 February 1988:

"The Soviet Union adheres to a principled position of support for a speedy settlement of the problem of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and believes that the way to achieve it is through serious negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom, on the basis of the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly - not through unilateral actions and military manoeuvres. That would be in the interest of all parties and would promote the normalization of the situation in the region and the strengthening of international peace and security."

That is the Soviet Union's view on the question under consideration today by the Security Council.

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

Mr. ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me at the outset to express our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, for the outstanding way in which you are presiding over the Council's business in March. We know that your exceptional professional and personal qualities, which are a faithful reflection of your great country's standing and prestige, will make a valuable contribution to the Council's work.

Our appreciation goes also to the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Vernon Walters, for the wise and businesslike way in which he presided over the Council during the month of February.

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

I should like to begin my statement by greeting the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, whose presence here today underscores the importance of this debate.

As recognized by the international community, the dispute over the Malvinas Islands has historically been - as it is today - a matter which affects claims of national sovereignty over the islands within the framework of a colonial situation. That is why the Peruvian Government's position - one of full respect for Argentina's sovereign rights over the Malvinas Islands - is founded on the overriding need to promote the elimination of existing colonial situations, all the more so when, as in other regions, colonialism here is compounded by strategic-military considerations aimed at preventing or delaying the process of decolonization.

Within this context, the decision of the United Kingdom Government to conduct military manoeuvres in the islands give rise to legitimate concern, because, in addition to introducing a new obstacle into the process of lessening tension in the Malvinas; it represents a unilateral action which can rightly be carried out only by the party exercising sovereignty over the islands.

It seems to us rash to carry out military manoeuvres in a zone which the international community recognizes as being in dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina and with regard to which the General Assembly has repeatedly urged both Governments

"to initiate negotiations with a view to finding the means to resolve peacefully and definitively the problems pending between both countries, including all aspects on the future of the Malvinas, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations". (resolution 42/19, para. 1)

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

Indeed, that decision of the British Government should be viewed in the light of its decision adopted on 29 October 1986 to declare a 200-mile zone around the Malvinas Islands, within which it set up a so-called interim fishing and administrative conservation zone which overlapped the 150-mile "military protection zone" declared by Great Britain after the 1982 conflict - a measure that interferes with the unchallenged Argentine rights to jurisdiction.

In contrast, the Government of Argentina has always openly expressed its total readiness to negotiate within a wide framework on all aspects at the root of the dispute. It is in that spirit of reconciliation, and out of a desire to maintain peace and prevent incidents, that we should view the prudent Argentine attitude to exclude, in patrolling its South Atlantic coasts, the so-called 150-mile military exclusion zone imposed by the British Government.

It is therefore difficult to understand the British Government's decision to conduct military exercises in the Malvinas, particularly when that unilateral action is in contradiction to the letter and the spirit of the General Assembly resolution whereby the South Atlantic was solemnly declared a "zone of peace and co-operation" - a resolution which was adopted by an overwhelming majority, including the vote of the United Kingdom, and which urged Member States to promote peace and co-operation in the zone.

Above all, we are concerned that that decision by the British Government, far from being an isolated case, is part of a military escalation which, in addition to being incompatible with the proposals for peace, dialogue and negotiation, seems intended to introduce new elements of tension and conflict in the South Atlantic, specifically in the Malvinas Islands.

That is why on 1 March the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted resolution 494 expressing deep concern at the increase in tension in the South

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

Atlantic and urging the United Kingdom Government to reconsider its decision to hold military exercises with a view to creating a climate of mutual trust for future negotiations.

On this occasion, the Government of Peru wishes to reaffirm before the Council its steadfast solidarity with and total support for the Argentine Republic's inalienable rights over the Malvinas Islands and its endorsement of the entire process of dialogue and negotiation free of tensions and military pressures.

In the view of Latin Americans, the dispatch of foreign troops to our region with the aim of holding military exercises, whatever their origin or deployment, is in all cases clear and unjustified intervention which our peoples vigorously reject as infringement upon our unity, security and sovereignty.

In this spirit, Peru deplores the United Kingdom Government's holding of military manoeuvres in the Malvinas and appeals for a halt to them and any other activities which, because they increase tension in the area, disturb and delay prospects for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the question of the Malvinas - a process which has been called for year after year by the international community and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in repeated resolutions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for the very kind words he addressed to my country and to me personally.

The next speaker is Mr. Oscar Oramas Oliva, Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its rules of procedure. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba), Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee of 24)

(interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, I should like to thank the Council for this opportunity, as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, to address the Security Council in connection with its consideration of the question of the Malvinas Islands (Falklands).

Since the Security Council is considering recent events relating to the Malvinas Islands (Falklands), it might be useful initially to review the course of legislative events in that Territory.

The Malvinas Islands are a Non-Self-Governing Territory within the meaning of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter. They were included in the original list of Non-Self-Governing Territories in 1946. They were also included in the 1963 preliminary list of Territories to which the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples applied.

In 1965 the General Assembly recognized the existence of a dispute between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom with respect to sovereignty over the islands and invited both Governments to hold negotiations with a view to finding a peaceful solution to the problem. The Assembly likewise urged the two parties, in so doing, to bear in mind the provisions of the Charter and the objectives of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as well as the interests of the population of the islands.

At subsequent sessions, the General Assembly and the Special Committee repeatedly urged both Governments to conduct negotiations. They were convinced that the way to end the special and particular colonial situation was through a

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Acting Chairman,
Special Committee of 24)

peaceful negotiated solution of all outstanding issues. On repeated occasions, the Assembly reaffirmed the need for both parties to take duly into account the interests of the population of the islands, pursuant to the Assembly's resolutions on this question.

The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct a mission of good offices in order to assist the two Governments to resume the negotiations. In his report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session the Secretary-General stated that, on the basis of discussions with the representatives of the two Governments, conditions had not sufficiently evolved to enable him to carry out the mandate entrusted to him by the Assembly. The Secretary-General regretted the fact that, while both parties had in the past year shown commendable restraint and a clear willingness to reduce areas of tension, it had not yet proved possible to engage both Governments in the kind of dialogue consistent with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly.

Both Governments have repeatedly expressed their interest in normalizing their relations.

Given those events, it is quite clear that any measure intended to increase a military presence in the region would only serve to worsen tensions in the area and would not help to create a suitable atmosphere for resolving the problem peacefully.

We hope that the Government of the United Kingdom will reconsider its decision and refrain from continuing the holding of the military manoeuvres.

It is now more necessary than ever for the two Governments to attempt to reach an understanding on the basis of which, thanks to the good offices of the Secretary-General, the long-delayed negotiations can finally begin, so as to find a peaceful and definitive resolution of all outstanding questions between the two

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Acting Chairman,
Special Committee of 24)

countries, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

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

Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset, I should like to say how pleased I am to see you presiding over the deliberations of the Council this month. The very cordial relations that exist between the people and the Government of your country and those of Venezuela are based completely on the unshakeable dedication of both nations to the cause of international peace and co-operation and on our constant faith in the principles and purposes governing this Organization. Also, I am convinced that your wisdom and diplomatic skills in carrying out your high functions will guarantee the successful conclusion of the Council's discussions.

I should like to take this opportunity as well to express our gratitude to Ambassador Vernon Walters, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, for the knowledgeable, talented and competent manner in which he presided over the meetings of the Council during the month of February.

Before setting out our position on the question before us, I should like, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to greet most cordially His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, Mr. Dante Caputo.

On 27 October 1986 the General Assembly adopted, by a large majority, resolution 41/11; the General Assembly in operative paragraph 1,

"Solemnly declares the Atlantic Ocean, in the region situated between Africa and South America, a 'Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic';"

(Mr. Aquilar, Venezuela)

in operative paragraph 3,

"Calls upon all States of all other regions, in particular the militarily significant States, scrupulously to respect the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation, especially through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence there, the non-introduction of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction and the non-extension into the region of rivalries and conflicts that are foreign to it".

and in operative paragraph 4,

"Calls upon all States of the region and of all other regions ... to respect the national unity, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of every State therein, to refrain from the threat or use of force ... in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the principle that the acquisition of territories by force is inadmissible;".

The South Atlantic is an enormous ocean region bordering the coasts of dozens of Latin American and African nations, nations of the third world which require an adequate framework of security and harmony in order to achieve their basic goals of political, social and economic development.

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

In this context, the goal of preserving that zone of peace and co-operation accords with the noblest purposes of the Charter and provides a framework for international coexistence, contrasting with a world marked by conflict and violence.

General Assembly resolution 41/11 was adopted with wide support, including that of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Military manoeuvres in the area of the Malvinas Islands cause concern and contradict the spirit and letter of that resolution, because they introduce into the zone an element of unnecessary and undesirable tension. This decision by the British Government is particularly discouraging since it comes at a time when efforts were going forward to create a climate favouring a resumption of dialogue with the Argentine Republic leading to a peaceful, just and lasting solution of the dispute concerning sovereignty over these islands.

The creation of a climate of mutual trust is a prerequisite for any negotiating process that could be carried out between the parties. In that connection, the Argentine Government has many times reiterated its readiness for dialogue and has offered convincing proof of its maturity and flexibility in dealing with the problem of its relations with the United Kingdom.

In the light of the facts, we are less heartened by the British position of ignoring the many requests by countries of the area, including Venezuela, to suspend the military manoeuvres in the Malvinas, since those manoeuvres shake the climate of mutual trust and also highlight the conflictual aspect of the question.

In a statement issued on 25 February 1988, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries members of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action, known as the Group of 8, indicated that they

"express their profound concern at the decision of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to conduct military manoeuvres in the Malvinas

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

Islands. They denounce the grave consequences of this decision, which will lead to growing tension in the South Atlantic and which disregards its character of zone of peace and co-operation, as declared in the United Nations General Assembly by the vast majority of the international community.

"They urge the Government of the United Kingdom to refrain from holding the proposed military manoeuvres and to resume bilateral negotiations with the Argentine Republic with a view to a peaceful and definitive settlement of the dispute concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and the other problems outstanding between the two countries." (S/19559, annex)

I wish to draw attention to a special feature of the situation before the Council today. I refer to the fact that one of the parties concerned is a permanent member of this lofty body, which confers upon it unique privileges and advantages. My Government considers that these are no free gift, but must be interpreted in the context of corresponding responsibilities stemming from the very nature of the purposes of this body: the maintenance of international peace and security.

The declaration of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic was recalled in General Assembly resolution 42/16 of 10 November 1987, which was adopted, again, with the support of the United Kingdom. I would recall that in that resolution the General Assembly

"Calls upon all States to refrain from any action inconsistent with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations and which may create or aggravate situations of tension and potential conflict in the region".

(General Assembly resolution 42/16, para. 5)

In a statement issued on 19 February this year, the Government of Venezuela reaffirmed its solidarity with the Argentine Republic and its rights of sovereignty

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

over the Malvinas Islands, and stated that it shared the concern of the Argentine people and Government at the consequences that could result from the military exercises being carried out in the zone.

The Government of Venezuela also appealed to the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to reconsider its decision and assume a conciliatory position according with the letter and spirit of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Our position remains unchanged, and I wished simply to reiterate it today.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Venezuela for the very kind words he addressed to my country and to me personally.

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

Mr. MOYA PALENCIA (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The Mexican delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia presiding over the work of the Security Council during the month of March. We are certain that your personal qualities and diplomatic skill will be of enormous value in helping the Council carry out the tasks before it.

We wish also to state our appreciation of the efforts made in February by the previous President, the representative of the United States of America.

I should like particularly to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo.

Mexico has asked to speak because we consider that the military manoeuvres carried out by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which are currently under consideration, are contrary to the spirit of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the question of the Malvinas; they jeopardize international peace and security and add growing and needless tension to the situation in the South Atlantic.

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

We had hoped that this delicate and painful conflict was showing signs that it could be settled through peaceful dialogue and negotiations in accordance with one of the most cherished principles of the United Nations Charter; it transpires that one of the States concerned, rather than promoting that dialogue, has chosen the disputed zone to carry out extensive military and naval exercises, causing deep universal concern.

We have repeatedly stressed the need for a peaceful negotiated settlement of the conflict in the South Atlantic. Since the start of the crisis, Latin American nations have co-ordinated our efforts, giving firm unified support to Argentina and urging the United Kingdom to reach a just, lasting negotiated settlement of its dispute with Argentina, including all aspects relating to the future of the Malvinas Islands. Accordingly, Mexico has been among the sponsors of draft resolutions on this subject adopted by the General Assembly since 1983; texts which, I emphasize, are in full accord with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

In that context, we have welcomed the conduct of the Argentine Republic, which has stated its readiness to enter into dialogue and negotiations in conformity with repeated appeals by the General Assembly. We have noted with deep concern the persistent refusal of the Government of the United Kingdom to match the position of the other side.

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

The British Government has avoided substantive negotiations on the question of the Malvinas Islands. Instead, it has insisted that the discussion should revolve around the right of the inhabitants to self-determination. As we have emphasized on other occasions, resolution 1514 (XV) makes it very clear that peoples are entitled to be decolonized through the exercise of self-determination when they have been subjected to foreign domination; but this is not the case of the inhabitants of the islands. Furthermore, in regard to territorial enclaves, resolution 1514 (XV) makes it clear that decolonization consists precisely in the restoration of sovereign rights to the State that has such rights.

The Argentine nation has acted in full accordance with the sovereignty it has enjoyed since 1825, when Argentina achieved independent existence with a national territory encompassing the archipelago. In 1833 the United Kingdom occupied that territory by force, even though it had recognized Argentina's independence years before. Hence, to put forward the argument of self-determination for the British inhabitants is simply to attempt to obscure the central issue of sovereignty and to perpetuate, anachronistically, a colonial enclave on the American continent.

On the other hand, the Argentine Republic has repeatedly stated its determination to respect the legitimate interests of the inhabitants of the islands. That weakens the British argument even more.

Contrary to the hopes of the majority of the members of the international community, the differences between the parties have increased as a result of the events that have led to this series of Council meetings. The decision by the United Kingdom Government to conduct extensive military manoeuvres in the Malvinas Islands impedes the search for a peaceful solution to this historical dispute and also serves to create a climate of tension in the South Atlantic, which increases the Mexican Government's concern over the impact that this decision can have on

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

international peace and security. The fact that the United Kingdom is a permanent member of the Security Council increases its serious responsibility in this matter.

We believe that the British military manoeuvres are incompatible with resolutions adopted by the General Assembly both with respect to the question of the Malvinas Islands and with respect to the establishment of a Zone of Peace and Co-operation in the South Atlantic - resolutions that we have unreservedly supported with a view to strengthening international peace, security and co-operation: indispensable factors for furthering the development of the nations of the area.

We should recall that the General Assembly, in declaring the South Atlantic a Zone of Peace and Co-operation, particularly called upon the militarily significant States scrupulously to respect that region as a zone of peace and co-operation, especially through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence in the South Atlantic. Therefore, we cannot conceal our surprise at the recent decision by the United Kingdom Government, which is at odds with the vote it cast at the forty-second session of the Assembly in favour of resolution 42/16 on this item.

The Mexican Government, which regards the decision by the United Kingdom Government as contrary to resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly, requested the British Government to consider the consequences of these military manoeuvres regionally and internationally. Furthermore, in the statement issued on 25 February last at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries members of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action - the Group of Eight, of which my country forms part - denounced the grave decision taken by the United Kingdom, which they considered would lead to growing tension in the South Atlantic.

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

Moreover, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs urged the British Government to refrain from holding the proposed military manoeuvres and to resume bilateral negotiations with Argentina with a view to a peaceful and definitive settlement of the dispute concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and the other problems outstanding between the two countries.

Unfortunately, the manoeuvres began recently, and thus we once again must urge the Government of the United Kingdom to break off the military exercises as soon as possible and to give clear evidence of its willingness to engage in dialogue and negotiations - which, we hope, can put an end to this dispute that has gone on for far too long now, to the detriment of regional and international peace.

To seek to resolve existing conflicts through the use or threat of the use of military force is in violation of the legal principles of civilized coexistence and, furthermore, is counterproductive and gives rise to further conflict situations. This morning we learned with surprise that the Government of the United States of America - another permanent member of the Security Council - had decided to dispatch a sizeable military contingent to Honduras, a country located in one of the key areas of the Central American conflict. The Mexican delegation expresses its consternation at this deplorable event, which, like the British manoeuvres in the Malvinas Islands, violates principles contained in the United Nations Charter, adds a source of tension to the regional conflict, can provoke the extension or spill-over of that conflict, and makes no contribution at all to the arduous process of peace to which the countries of Central America, with the support of Latin America and almost the entire international community, are committed.

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

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

Mr. VILLAR (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the impartial and efficient way in which you have been guiding the work of the Security Council this month. My congratulations go also to your predecessor, Ambassador Vernon Walters of the United States.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, who is honouring us with his presence today, has eloquently explained the reasons that prompted his country to request the convening of the Security Council. Spain has repeatedly set forth - in the General Assembly, but also in the Security Council - its position on the question of the Malvinas Islands. I shall not dwell now on matters that are already all too familiar. I wish only to emphasize that my country's position is fully in accordance with the doctrine established and reiterated by the United Nations General Assembly since 1965. That doctrine can be summarized in the following three points. First, what is at issue is a question of decolonization, which includes a dispute between the United Kingdom and the Argentine Republic concerning sovereignty over the islands. Secondly, this dispute must be resolved peacefully through negotiations between the two parties. Thirdly, in the solution of the problem due attention must be given to the provisions and objectives of the Charter and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). As is well known, paragraph 6 of resolution 1514 (XV) enshrines the primacy of the principle of territorial integrity over any other principle. Similarly, consideration must be given to the interests of the inhabitants of the islands.

(Mr. Villar, Spain)

Spain's concern over the question of the Malvinas Islands, which explains its statement today - a statement it is making in the most constructive spirit - is manifold: First, it arises out of the paramount importance we attach to the principles involved, which serve to shape United Nations doctrine with respect to the decolonization of the Islands.

Secondly, in years past this dispute has degenerated into a bitter and bloody armed conflict between two countries with which we have the closest of bonds. With the United Kingdom, one of our major allies and partners, we share an ever-growing community of interests and a political plan for European integration. We are linked to the Argentine Republic by the most solid human, historical and cultural ties, and, since its return to democracy, we are working with it to build very special relations.

Thirdly, we are prompted by concern that the worsening of the conflict over the Malvinas could affect relations between Latin America and the European community, the strengthening of which is one of the priority objectives of the Spanish Government's foreign policy.

In my delegation's view the British military manoeuvres that have been under way in the Malvinas since 7 March are not helping to create the necessary climate of confidence that will enable the two parties to achieve a peaceful, negotiated settlement of their dispute over sovereignty and other outstanding issues, something which the United Nations has been urging for more than 20 years now.

My delegation therefore shares the concern expressed on 1 March by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States at the decision taken by the United Kingdom Government. In this forum we would appeal to both parties to look towards a future of co-operation between our two continents and to strive to eliminate once and for all the obstacles that stand in the way of a peaceful settlement of this anachronistic dispute.

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

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I appreciate the honour of being allowed to participate in the Council's discussion of this issue. I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the post of President of the Council for the month of March and wish you the greatest success in your work. I should also like to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Vernon Walters of the United States, and to extend a fraternal greeting to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, who is honouring us with his presence at this debate.

I must express the concern with which my Government has viewed the decision by the Government of the United Kingdom to hold military manoeuvres in the Malvinas. That decision was announced over a month ago, and the manoeuvres are now being held. Hence this meeting and what may be said here can only be viewed as an exercise of public opinion in the face of a fait accompli that, lamentably, could not be avoided, even though it should never have occurred.

The announcement by the United Kingdom Government maintains that the so-called Operation Focus is the "first exercise". It has also expressed its intention to add "routine reinforcement exercises" from time to time. What we are witnessing, therefore, is the beginning of a process that is to be repeated. We must therefore speak clearly here and now, since we are going to find ourselves faced with similar situations in the future, with consequences we can only deplore, affecting as they do our ability - and duty as State Members of the United Nations - to promote peace in all situations.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Costa Rica)

The Government of Costa Rica has been a sponsor of General Assembly resolutions calling upon the Argentine Republic and the Government of the United Kingdom to seek a negotiated settlement of their dispute over the Malvinas Islands. We voted in favour of resolution 41/11, which declared the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation. It is highly significant also that both the Argentine Republic and the Government of the United Kingdom also voted in favour of that highly meaningful and encouraging resolution. We have sought ways to bring about a situation in which both Governments might succeed in establishing better relations than presently exist, relations such as they had enjoyed for many years in the past.

For all those reasons, my Government must express displeasure and concern at the meaning we are forced to attach to the present manoeuvres. They cannot be regarded as a simple, innocent, routine exercise. One can only conclude that the United Kingdom has no intention of seeking a peaceful solution to the dispute and that it intends to maintain a military preparation for a situation it feels may very possibly arise. All of this refers to a country that is a permanent member of the Security Council and, as such, has the obligation to exercise primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, as stated in Article 24 of the Charter.

The Malvinas, whatever their situation de facto or de jure, are a part of the Western Hemisphere; they are part of an area that affects the defence interests of that Hemisphere, in accordance with the definition contained in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. Moreover, the ongoing manoeuvres in no way improve the chances that the South Atlantic will truly be a zone of peace. Therefore the Costa Rican Government feels justifiably concerned, since its interests are specially affected. Hence our desire, under Article 31 of the Charter, to participate in this discussion.

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

I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bolivia and Ecuador 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. Navajas Mogro (Bolivia) and Mr. Tobar Zaldumbide (Ecuador) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

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

Mr. TOBAR ZALDUMBIDE (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): I am grateful to you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to take part, on behalf of my country, in the Security Council debate on the question of the Malvinas Islands.

Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on presiding over the Council this month. Your well-known diplomatic skill and the ability with which you preside over the Council's deliberations guarantee the success of its work. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Vernon Walters, who so efficiently and diligently presided over the Council's work last month, and warmly to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, who is honouring us with his presence.

Ecuador has for years supported and sponsored various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in connection with the dispute over the Malvinas Islands between the sister Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. My country has done so on the basis of its firm conviction that there is an urgent need to respect and strengthen the Charter principles on the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the non-use of force or the threat of force in any kind of conflict.

Similarly, Ecuador has advocated non-intervention and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, which in the case of the Latin American Republics must be in compliance with the principle of uti possidetis juris of 1810. Accordingly, my country has rejected any form of aggression and any anachronistic attempt to maintain colonial enclaves in the continent.

For those reasons Ecuador considers that the only way to deal with the problem before us is by negotiations between the parties, with the Secretary-General's good offices, in order to achieve a peaceful, lasting solution.

(Mr. Tobar Zaldumbide, Ecuador)

Ecuador therefore appeals once again to Argentina and the United Kingdom, friendly countries with which it enjoys cordial relations, to begin as soon as possible wide-ranging negotiations, in compliance with the repeated request of the international community, leading to a peaceful, lasting solution to the problem separating them, including all matters relating to the future of the Malvinas.

In view of what I have said, the Government of Ecuador noted with deep concern information confirming the holding of military exercises by the United Kingdom in the Malvinas area, since we consider that they will further poison the climate in the South Atlantic, a region that the General Assembly declared in its resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986 to be a zone of peace and co-operation. That resolution was adopted with the support of both parties to the dispute. The manoeuvres are clearly incompatible with the United Nations resolutions to which I have already referred, as well as resolutions of the Organization of American States and declarations of the Non-Aligned Movement, among others.

Above all, unfortunate actions of that kind call into question the good faith that must prevail in all negotiations between countries embroiled in a dispute, even, as in this case, in the context of indirect bilateral contacts, which seem to have been under way.

In accordance with the traditional principles of its foreign policy, the Government of Ecuador wishes to take this opportunity to put on record its condemnation of such activity, reiterate its solidarity with the Argentine Republic and once again proclaim its support for the resolutions on the matter adopted by the loftiest international bodies.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ecuador 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 this afternoon at 3.30 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.