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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Sunday, 2 December 1979, at 7.30 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CHEN CHU	(China)
<u>Members:</u>	Bangladesh	Mr. KAISER
	Bolivia	Mr. PALACIOS DE VIZZIO
	Czechoslovakia	Mr. HULINSKY
	France	Mr. LEPRETTE
	Gabon	Mr. N'DONG
	Jamaica	Mr. MILLS
	Kuwait	Mr. BISHARA
	Nigeria	Mr. CLARK
	Norway	Mr. ÅLGÅRD
	Portugal	Mr. FUTSCHER PEREIRA
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. TROYANOVSKY
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir ANTHONY PARSONS
	United States of America	Mr. McHENRY
	Zambia	Mr. LUSAKA

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The meeting was called to order at 7.30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 25 NOVEMBER 1979 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/13646)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): In accordance with decisions taken at previous meetings, I invite the representatives of Egypt, Liberia, Sri Lanka and Zaire to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Abdel Meguid (Egypt), Mr. Tubman (Liberia), Mr. Fernando (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Kamanda wa Kamanda (Zaire) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Malawi, the Netherlands, Panama, Spain and Yugoslavia in which they ask to be invited to participate in the Council's discussion of the item on the agenda. In accordance 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. Anderson (Australia), Mr. Barton (Canada), Baron von Wechmar (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr. La Rocca (Italy), Mr. Nisibori (Japan), Mr. Muwamba (Malawi), Mr. Scheltema (Netherlands), Mr. Illueca (Panama), Mr. Pinies (Spain) and Mr. Komatina (Yugoslavia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on the agenda. I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: document S/13670, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 December 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, and document S/13671, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 December 1979 from the Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Mr. BISHARA (Kuwait): The issue before the Council is serious. Developments in events and the deterioration in the relations between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran during recent weeks may have dangerous consequences and repercussions on the international scene. With this possibility in mind and with a full awareness of the dangerous nature of the problem, we have supported and will continue to support all efforts to contain this crisis. Undoubtedly the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, has made all possible efforts to achieve an arrangement for a peaceful conclusion of the problem. He was right to invoke Article 99 of the Charter when he realized the danger of a continuance of the impasse and it is indeed gratifying that all members of the Council supported him on this issue. Further, the President of the Security Council issued, on behalf of the members of the Council, two statements in which he called for the immediate release of the hostages and the solution of the problem in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the norms of international law. My delegation endorsed and still endorses those two statements.

After listening last night to 13 members of the Council and two non-members, I must say the debate so far has been moderate and characterized by a spirit of constructiveness and a sense of realism. We must understand that passions that have been suppressed for three decades and have recently found an outlet are bound to be strong, deep and spontaneous. With the eruption of passions, old wounds and genuine grievances are bound to surface. We should not be surprised by this fact or by the immensity of those passions.

The Security Council is unanimous in its call for respect for international law and the rules that regulate diplomatic practice. Indeed, we support all calls for the immediate release of the hostages. In a charged atmosphere,

(Mr. Bishara, Kuwait)

however, the Council's responsibility remains first and foremost to make every effort to reduce tension. The question is what the Council can do. It is important first, and above all, to strengthen the hand of the Secretary-General in his unflagging efforts to ensure a peaceful settlement. He has established a line of communication with the Government of Iran and has succeeded in containing the crisis in many ways. Therefore the Council may wish perhaps to consider the following elements, which, after listening to 13 members of the Council, I venture to put forward as guidelines for this debate. We believe that the Council should: first, reaffirm the principles of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and of refraining from military threats or the use of force in settling disputes among nations; secondly, call for scrupulous respect for the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States and for the territorial integrity of all nations; thirdly, demand scrupulous adherence to international law and the rules that regulate diplomatic immunity; fourthly, call for the immediate release of the hostages on humanitarian as well as on legal grounds; fifthly, consider authorizing the Secretary-General to set up a consultative body that may assist in identifying abuses and violations of human rights that took place in Iran under the past régime, as well as in examining the legitimate grievances of the Government of Iran as outlined in the letter sent by the Chargé d'Affaires of Iran to the outgoing President; and sixthly, request the Secretary-General to use his good offices in whatever manner he deems necessary to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis, bearing in mind the urgency of the release of the hostages and the redressing of the legitimate grievances of the Iranian people.

It is very important to reinforce and strengthen the contacts the Secretary-General has established with the Government of Iran, and in this respect only a realistic approach will assist him in his efforts under the present circumstances. It is also important not to restrict the Secretary-General in his use of his good offices. He may send envoys or he may have recourse to the good offices of individuals, organizations or institutions. What is important in this respect is that the issue should be approached with inventiveness and originality.

(Mr. Bishara, Kuwait)

Finally, the members of the Council should all do their utmost to assist the Secretary-General in his endeavours to achieve a peaceful resolution of this question.

Mr. MILLS (Jamaica): For several weeks the Security Council has been seized of an issue which is not only extraordinary, but which represents a real danger to the entire international community. A series of developments in respect of Iran and reaching back over a period of years has now culminated in a set of events and circumstances which pose a threat to international peace and security. Today, the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran are poised in a tense and dangerous confrontation.

(Mr. Mills, Jamaica)

The Security Council has, over the past few weeks, sought to establish the means of resolving this crisis, fully aware of its responsibilities and of the gravity of the situation. The Secretary-General has made strenuous efforts to assist the parties immediately concerned and the international community in dealing with what is indeed a most complex and explosive issue. The value of his continuing contact with the Iranian authorities cannot be overestimated. My delegation is also aware of the many efforts on the part of a number of Governments, organizations and individuals in this regard.

On 25 November, the Secretary-General took the unusual step of exercising his responsibility under Article 99 of the United Nations Charter and called for an urgent meeting of the Council to seek a peaceful solution to the problem. In this, he has been fully supported by members of the Council.

In his letter to the President of the Council, he has indicated the main elements of the crisis, which involves the seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran and the holding of the staff as hostages, and the call by Iran for the redress of injustices and the abuse of human rights which were, in its view, committed by the previous régime.

My delegation, along with others, is aware of the extremely strong feelings of the people of Iran and of their deep desire to obtain redress in respect of the grievances referred to in their communications and in the letter of the Secretary-General. We are also aware of the high level of tension and emotion in that country surrounding this affair. We do not, however, deem it appropriate at this stage to comment on these matters and on the legal considerations involved, nor to speculate on possible approaches or remedies. Nevertheless, they constitute a major element in the problem now before us, and in our view every viable means must be explored, both multilaterally and bilaterally and through the judicious and pragmatic application of the principles of justice and law, to find peaceful means of addressing and resolving them.

(Mr. Mills, Jamaica)

It was inevitable that the seizing of American diplomatic personnel and the holding of these persons in captivity and the seizure of the Embassy in Tehran would become the primary issue in this situation and the centre of international concern. My delegations regards these actions as unacceptable. They constitute a grave breach of the fundamental principles and rules of international law and diplomatic practice. They represent a threat to the effective conduct of international relations. Moreover, these actions have brought considerable suffering to the persons involved and to their families. Finally, they have converted a situation which in itself was full of serious difficulty into an increasingly explosive one.

Jamaica's position in this matter is clear. It is rooted in our deep concern for the safety of the persons involved and in our determination to ensure that the principles and rules of international conduct in these matters are observed and respected.

It is for these reasons that we, along with other members of the Security Council, supported the call issued by the President of the Council on 9 November and again on 27 November for the immediate release of the hostages.

It is in this spirit that Jamaica joined with other members of the Organization of American States in the declaration issued on 26 November and in the appeal to the Government of Iran. And it is equally in expression of these feelings that the Prime Minister of Jamaica issued an appeal on 20 November which stated, inter alia:

"Relations between States are based on patterns of conduct which have become well established over many centuries. These patterns of conduct enable international relations to be conducted in a manner which is predictable and to minimize the possibility of friction.

"The Government of Jamaica is gravely concerned that the present action, which violates these long-established principles, could have the most dangerous implications for the future conduct of international relations.

(Mr. Mills, Jamaica)

"The Government of Jamaica therefore issues an appeal to the Iranian authorities to ensure the release of the hostages and the cessation of the occupation of the Embassy in accordance with internationally accepted principles governing relations among States. This appeal is also made on humanitarian grounds.

"The Government of Jamaica regards these as necessary steps in creating a propitious atmosphere for the international community to consider ways in which it might assist to resolve the problems which now exist between Iran and the United States of America.

"Jamaica stands ready to help in whatever way it can to achieve a satisfactory resolution".

Jamaica once again joins in the call for the speedy release of the hostages, without conditions.

In this dangerous situation the Council must act judiciously, with a sense of urgency and with a full appreciation of the far-reaching implications. The task is undoubtedly made more difficult with the almost daily developments which add new dimensions - in some cases dangerous ones - to the crisis. Such a situation occurring at any time would present grave problems. These developments take place at a time when the international situation is marked by serious tensions and difficulties in the political and economic fields, many of these the subject of attention and concern in this Council and in the General Assembly. We approach the end of a decade and carry over into the 1980s serious difficulties and differences in international relations and major challenges to all countries and to the United Nations system.

(Mr. Mills, Jamaica)

The issue before us, and the circumstances and developments surrounding it may well contain, apart from their own particular and unique features, elements of a broader nature and may embody lessons for us as members of the international community. It is therefore important, in the view of my delegation, that, while we address the immediate and imperative concerns, we should seek to understand such wider implications as may be involved.

In these matters my delegation feels a particular concern for the role and function of the Security Council and of the United Nations system. As a small non-aligned developing country, Jamaica, along with other newly independent countries, seeks always to enhance the role of the United Nations which is vital to our interests and to our security.

The present crisis is a challenge to the United Nations, and to all Member States, not least to the two States directly concerned. We hope that the Council and the Secretary-General will be able to play a constructive role in the resolution of this problem.

In all this my delegation pays a tribute to the Ambassador of Bolivia who carried so well the heavy responsibilities of the presidency of the Council in November, and to you, Sir, as you assume that role for the present month. We have full confidence in your leadership of the Council in these difficult times.

Finally, it is our sincere hope that the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran will find it possible to resolve their differences and to establish amicable relations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt): It is indeed a source of reassurance at a time when the rule of international law as well as time-honoured customs are at stake that the legendary wisdom of China, as represented by you, Mr. President, guides the deliberations of the Security Council.

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation to and our high esteem

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

for the outgoing President of the Security Council,
Ambassador Palacios de Vizzio of Bolivia.

The Security Council is meeting at the request of the Secretary-General. His timely initiative is highly appreciated and commended. It is a source of satisfaction for my delegation, indeed for all Member States, to note that the Office of the Secretary-General is continuing to perform a central role as a focal point for endeavours to resolve international conflicts. Egypt wishes to declare its support for the Secretary-General's initiative and for his efforts to resolve the problem under consideration.

Egypt's request to participate in the debate on the item under consideration stems from its conviction that respect for, and scrupulous adherence to, the rule of law is a prerequisite for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our considered opinion that world peace can only be attained when all States members of the international community comply with the rule of law and international legitimacy. International law is not the monopoly of any State or any group of States. All States, regardless of their stage of development, their political orientation, their spiritual or religious heritage, have contributed throughout history to the accumulation of rules to regulate inter-State conduct.

One of the first rules universally accepted was to accord hospitality and safe conduct to diplomatic envoys and make them inviolable. Throughout history this rule has been of paramount significance. To demonstrate the importance attached to diplomatic immunities and privileges, scholars and jurists have traditionally adhered to the doctrine of extra-territoriality for diplomatic missions in order to emphasize the utmost necessity of respecting their diplomatic status. The 1961 Vienna Convention reaffirmed the time-honoured customary rules in accordance with contemporary concepts.

It was self-evident to the representatives of the international community when they met in Vienna in 1961 that the infringement of this

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

cardinal rule, recognized from ancient times by all peoples, could have grave repercussions on world peace. In point of fact, the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, in its preamble, underscores the relationship between the respect for diplomatic immunities and the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the promotion of friendly relations among nations.

Article 22 clearly states that the premises of any mission shall be inviolable. The agents of the receiving State may not enter those premises except with the consent of the head of the mission; also, that the receiving State has a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity. This basic tenet could find its historical origin in the holy Koran, which says:

"O ye who believe, enter not houses other than your own, without first announcing your presence and invoking peace upon the folk thereof. That is better for you, that ye may be heedful."

Iran is a party to the 1961 Vienna Convention. Consequently, it is in duty bound to comply with the letter and spirit of the Vienna Convention. Such an obligation should not be ignored or disregarded under any circumstances. No argument could be advanced to justify an unwarranted disregard of a binding treaty commitment. The concept of respect for obligations and the fulfilment of undertakings is of paramount importance under Islamic law. The holy Koran, in very explicit words, calls upon all Moslems to carry out their obligations in good faith:

"O ye who believe, fulfil your undertakings."

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

As a Moslem and a representative of a Moslem country, I must confess that all Moslems are concerned and even disturbed by certain adverse propaganda which Islam is receiving at present. When an act is committed in any part of the world, the perpetrators, in accordance with the most elementary rules of justice, should be referred to by name, if possible, or according to their political motivation or nationality. Yet we note with regret that certain sectors of the mass media in several countries, focus on our spiritual heritage and not on the nationality or political motivation. A general impression could mistakenly develop that Islam condones such practices as the taking of hostages.

I feel it is my duty to clarify certain misrepresentations. Islam is a religion of justice and not of revenge. The opening of the scripture, or the essence of the Koran, has been called the Lord's prayer of the Moslems and it reads: "In the name of Allah the merciful and compassionate". This is the traditional motto of the Islamic religion. The principle of peace in Islam has its immediate origin in man's faith in God Almighty. Islam is a religion of tolerance. Islam does not distinguish between human beings on the basis of nationality, race or colour. In Islam the dignity of man is fully recognized, his property is sacred and his privacy is respected and protected. Moreover, Islam gives prominence to the establishment of peaceful relations among nations.

Egypt wishes to express its grave concern at the continued holding of American diplomats as hostages in Tehran. We have consistently deplored the taking of hostages under any circumstances. It is relevant to recall here that the General Assembly is in the process of drafting an important Convention on the taking of hostages. Article 1 of the draft convention stipulates:

"Any person who seizes or detains and threatens to kill, to injure or to continue to detain another person (hereinafter referred to as the 'hostage') in order to compel a third party, namely, a State, an international intergovernmental organization, a natural or a juridical person, or a group of persons, to do or abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for the release of the hostage, commits the offence of hostage-taking within the meaning of this Convention."

(A/C.6/34/L.12, p. 2)

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

Egypt fully realizes that the situation is fraught with impending dangers. Therefore it is of the utmost necessity for the United Nations to resolve the crisis in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the rule of law. The weight of world public opinion should be harnessed to persuade the authorities in Tehran to free the hostages immediately. Any grievances felt by the authorities in Tehran could be considered on their merits by the proper authorities within the existing international legal system. It should be made clear, however, that support for efforts to redress these grievances could be eroded by the course of action followed.

The Security Council is at present seized of this serious problem. The Charter has vested in the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Faced with this responsibility, the Council cannot afford to refrain from actively resolving this crisis, particularly when the Secretary-General has invoked Article 99 in calling for the convening of the present Council debate. A possible course of action the Council might consider is the dispatching of a goodwill mission from the Council to Tehran to ensure the safety and secure the immediate release of the hostages.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I now invite the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to take a place at the Council table and to make a statement.

Baron von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. President, I wish to thank the members of the Council, through you, for permitting my delegation to participate in this debate.

What is happening in Tehran is an event without parallel in modern times. We are faced with a grave crisis which affects not only relations between two great States but the very foundations of the international order. It has caused political leaders all over the world to raise their voices. I would refer in particular to the statement issued by the Heads of State or Government and the Foreign Ministers of the Nine members of the European Community meeting in the European Council in Dublin on 30 November.

(Baron von Wechmar,
Federal Republic of Germany)

The Security Council of the United Nations is called upon to live up to its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative.

The debate in this forum has reaffirmed the conviction of the community of nations that the taking of hostages in Tehran is a flagrant violation of the fundamental principles and rules of international law. The taking of hostages is not permissible under any circumstances or for the furthering of any aim whatsoever. The inviolability of members of diplomatic missions is indispensable for peaceful communication among nations. This is a long-standing principle, which has stood the test of time and which is respected by all States regardless of cultural traditions, religion or ideology. This principle of international law is embodied notably in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which Iran too has ratified.

(Baron von Wechmar,
Federal Republic of Germany)

Together with the community of nations, the Federal Republic of Germany supports the application of the international conventions based on the principle of respect for the immunity of diplomatic missions.

This violation of international law is compounded by contempt for elementary humanitarian obligations. For the past four weeks 50 human beings have been held hostage under humiliating conditions and subject to severe physical and mental strain. Their suffering is constantly with us.

On 22 November, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr Genscher, stated publicly that:

"The hostages have our sympathy. The American people deserve our solidarity, and we appeal to the responsible persons in Tehran finally to let the hostages free. The entire community of States is challenged here. No one can remain silent."

Since the day the hostages were taken, my Government has been involved in efforts to bring about an early, peaceful solution. It has been a party to multilateral démarches and appeals, especially within the scope of the European Community. It remains determined to support decisions taken by the Security Council and to assist the Secretary-General in his efforts to overcome the present crisis.

In accordance with the United Nations Charter, the Federal Republic of Germany supports the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. We respect the right of the Iranian people to determine its future in free self-determination and to give itself a new order which is better suited to its wishes than the past ones. I wish to stress what my American colleague has already said in this forum, that:

"None of us is deaf to the passionate voices that speak of injustice, that cry out against past wrongs and that ask for understanding. There is not a single grievance in this situation, alleged or spoken, that could not be heard in an appropriate forum." (S/PV.2175, p. 7)

But we are convinced that past injustices cannot justify further injustice. Events in Tehran cast a dark shadow on the Islamic revolution in Iran and on the new course that country has opted for. It would be tragic if the passionate struggle for justice of the Iranian people were to make that people insensitive to violations of the most fundamental principles of international law.

(Baron von Wechmar,
Federal Republic of Germany)

We appeal once again to those responsible in Iran to release the hostages immediately and thus again ensure respect for international law. Only thus can the way be opened for an international development in which legitimate concerns and complaints of the Iranian people can be heard.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make a statement.

Mr. ANDERSON (Australia): Mr. President, I thank you and, through you, the members of the Security Council, for affording me this opportunity to address the Council this evening.

The Australian Government has followed with profound concern and anxiety the deepening crisis in relations between Iran and the United States. It has also followed, and it commends, the continuing efforts towards a solution of the crisis which have been made by the Secretary-General, by the President of the Security Council and by the President of the General Assembly.

On 9 November, Mr. President, your predecessor expressed the Security Council's deep concern over the prolonged detention of American diplomatic personnel in Iran. He emphasized that the principle of the inviolability of diplomatic personnel and establishments must be respected in all cases, in accordance with internationally accepted norms. The actions which have been taken in Iran are indeed in clear conflict with articles 22 and 29 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and are inconsistent with Iran's responsibilities as a party to that Convention and as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons. The Australian Government accordingly affirms its full support for the President of the Council, and we join with all previous speakers in this debate in urging in the strongest terms that the diplomatic and other personnel now being held hostage in Iran be released without delay and be provided all necessary protection. Justice and human compassion demand no less.

In the letter which he addressed to the President of the Council on 25 November the Secretary-General referred first to the problem of the seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran and the detention of its diplomatic personnel.

(Mr. Anderson, Australia)

He noted also that the Government of Iran seeks redress for injustices and abuses of human rights which in its view were committed by the previous régime. Australia, which has a long history of friendly and co-operative relations with the people of Iran, believes that appropriate procedures can be devised within the framework of international relations and international law to meet those grievances and to resolve those problems. We likewise hope that a peaceful solution based on justice and goodwill will be found for all the differences which have arisen in relations between the United States and Iran.

But such an outcome is conceivable only if the Government of Iran on its side observes and ensures respect for international law and the established norms of the international community by recognizing the inviolability of diplomatic personnel and premises and by taking immediate action to release and give full protection to all those who have been held hostage.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make a statement.

Mr. BARTON (Canada): Mr. President, I am grateful to you and the Council for making it possible for me to make this statement on behalf of the Canadian Government concerning the vitally important issue which we are now discussing.

My message reflects the same concerns as have been voiced by many others in the course of this debate. They have already been strongly expressed by my Prime Minister and by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In addition, the Canadian House of Commons has unanimously adopted resolutions indicating the seriousness with which Canadians view the present situation in Iran. Together with other Governments represented by diplomatic missions in Tehran, Canada has joined in direct representations to the Government of Iran, and we have associated ourselves with the statement of Commonwealth representatives made on 27 November. But it needs to be said again in this chamber, to make it crystal-clear, that Canada, as the next-door neighbour of the United States, shares completely the American sense of outrage at the abandonment by Iran of its solemn obligations under international law to maintain and protect the immunity of accredited diplomats and diplomatic premises.

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

Canadians recognize, as do all others, that Iran in the past year has been undergoing a particularly difficult political evolutionary process and that there is a strong sentiment that the previous administration should be held accountable for past injustices. But in no way does this give licence for the present Government to follow the course of action it is now pursuing.

Iran is a Member of the United Nations. Its future welfare is bound up with the other Members of the international community. It could not live as an island unto itself, even it wanted to. But if it is to play its proper role as a respected Member of this Organization, it must adhere to the conventions and obligations which are essential to the conduct of relations between States. First and foremost, it should release the hostages immediately and provide safe conduct for them from Iran. Once the threat to diplomatic personnel and premises has been removed, the international community will be in a position to give consideration to the concerns of the Government of Iran.

It has rightly been pointed out that in this highly dangerous situation it is vital to keep cool heads and not to lose sight of our goal to achieve a peaceful settlement of the dispute. We believe that the United Nations has been contributing to this end through the statements issued by your predecessor, Sir, as President of the Council and by the President of the General Assembly. We also commend the action of the Secretary-General in bringing the matter before the Council in exercise of his responsibilities under Article 99 of the Charter. The wisdom of this action has been demonstrated by the measured and constructive tone of the debate in the Council.

We have seen statements in the press that the United Nations is on trial over its ability to solve this dispute. Of course, that is nonsense. No intergovernmental institution can take on the obligation of individual nations to behave responsibly. But my delegation is convinced that when this crisis is finally resolved, the record will show that the United Nations, through the good offices of the Secretary-General and the many mechanisms it offers for the airing of differences, will have made a substantial contribution to peace and the harmonization of relations between States.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. NISIBORI (Japan): Let me begin by first extending my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December, and secondly expressing my appreciation to you and to the members of the Council for allowing me to speak on the vital issue which the Council is now deliberating.

My delegation whole-heartedly welcomes the fact that the Security Council has duly responded to the Secretary-General's request, based upon Article 99 of the United Nations Charter, by convening this series of meetings. We are deeply aware that the tensions of the situation have escalated to crisis proportions, not only involving the bilateral relations of the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran, but possibly affecting the peace and stability of the region and, indeed, of the entire world. The fact that the issue is of grave and vital consequence to the maintenance of international peace and security has been amply demonstrated by the deliberations conducted so far in this chamber. In the earnest hope that our participation may contribute to the work of the Council, my delegation requested this opportunity to express its views.

First of all, as a country that is friendly to both the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan is gravely concerned about the situation which has developed since the unfortunate seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran.

The fate of the hostages is of course our most profound concern. Though Iran's release of some of the hostages is welcomed, there is no prospect yet for the release of the remaining hostages, and this is a source of serious anxiety.

My delegation shares the view expressed by others during these deliberations that, in addition to the humanitarian considerations, the present situation, regardless of the reasons involved, constitutes a deviation from the well-established norms of international law concerning the inviolability of diplomatic personnel and property.

It is our earnest hope that this critical situation will be resolved with the greatest urgency and that the remaining hostages will be promptly released.

At the same time, we fervently hope that solutions to the various problems which lie behind the present situation will be sought with greater earnestness and that in so doing the countries concerned will act with the utmost restraint and deliberateness.

(Mr. Nisibori, Japan)

The Government of Japan has already expressed its concern to the countries directly involved. It is Japan's intention to continue to co-operate toward the solution of the present situation through whatever avenues are possible. At the same time, Japan strongly hopes that the deliberations of the Security Council will contribute to an early and satisfactory settlement of the problem.

And, in closing, my delegation reaffirms its full support for the continuous efforts of the Secretary-General in using his good offices to facilitate an early solution to the problem.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

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

Mr. SCHELTEMA (Netherlands): Mr. President, I thank you and the other members of the Council for granting our request to take part in this debate. That request was prompted by the grave concern the people and the Government of the Netherlands feel as a result of diplomatic personnel being taken hostage in Tehran and of the ensuing tension between Iran and the United States.

Whatever grievances a country may have towards another country - and we are aware of the depth of feeling in Iran regarding the previous régime - these can never justify the occupation of diplomatic premises and the holding of hostages. Such actions violate the very bases upon which the conduct of international relations is founded, and has been founded for ages. Since ancient times the immunities of diplomatic missions have been universally recognized, for without the strict observance of this basic rule, anarchy would reign and no peaceful solution of disputes - the premise upon which this Organization is built - could be achieved.

(Mr. Scheltema, Netherlands)

Not only has the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations been violated but the events in Tehran are also in conflict with the draft convention regarding the taking of hostages which the Sixth Committee is in the process of finalizing. Furthermore, the Netherlands Government believes that any use of force to further political ends is unacceptable.

In a Parliamentary motion adopted unanimously on 20 November and endorsed by the Netherlands Government, the Second Chamber of the Netherlands Parliament expressed the opinion that the occupation of the United States Embassy in Tehran and the taking as hostages of American citizens, as well as the attitude of the Revolutionary Council in Iran towards this matter, constitute inadmissible violations of international law. The Chamber expressed the hope that the incident would be terminated peacefully. On 30 November the Heads of State or Government and the Foreign Ministers of the nine member countries of the European Community stated in Dublin that failure to protect diplomatic missions and the taking of hostages to exert pressure on Governments are totally unacceptable. They called on Iran to observe the established principles governing relations between States.

I should like to join the previous speakers in this debate who have appealed urgently for the prompt release of the hostages and their safe return to the United States as an essential precondition to the peaceful solution of the outstanding issues between the United States and Iran.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Malawi. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MUVAMBA (Malawi): Mr. President, I extend to you my delegation's warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. My delegation is more than assured that, given your sober sense of judgement and diplomatic skill, your stewardship will enrich and enhance the work of this honourable Council. On behalf of my delegation, I should also like to salute and thank your predecessor for the able and effective manner in which he so admirably graced the presidency of the Council during the course of what turned out to be a very trying period.

My delegation is constrained to seek authority to address the Security Council because of the grave developments that have been taking place in Iran since 4 November last, when diplomatic personnel of a Founding Member of the United Nations were taken hostage on their own premises.

We seem to perceive a certain degree of irony in these developments. As may be conceded, the two great countries involved in this dispute were, until a few months ago, friendly if not brotherly. Both countries are currently led by God-fearing gentlemen and the dispute between them would seem to have been precipitated by the question of human rights. In this connexion it might be appropriate to remark that the two great leaders concerned are said to be as committed to the question of human rights as one fallen self-proclaimed African emperor and one self-promoted and catapulted African field marshal were to the physical liquidation of their respective nationals.

But what is intriguing about the current dispute, which this Council has been called upon to consider, is that those countries have invoked the name of God the Almighty and Allah the Merciful. Therefore, this fact alone might augur well for the future efforts of this Council.

The newly installed Revolutionary Council of Iran may have gone to considerable pains to highlight the myriad human rights violations during the tenure of the former Government of the deposed Shah. That Council has spared no effort in articulating the fact that several other crimes were committed during the period that the former Government was in office. Therefore, in an attempt to seek redress for whatever crimes have been alleged, they are asking the Government of the United States of America - the current host of the former Shah, who is the accused - to extradite the said accused to facilitate his trial in Iran.

(Mr. Muwamba, Malawi)

The Revolutionary Council of Iran might have a case, and it might be conceded here and now that Iran is in fact entitled to seek the Shah's return if it is at all true that the alleged crimes were committed by him or with his approval. It is understood and appreciated that whatever the crimes committed by the former Government of Iran they were in fact punishable under Iranian law. Nobody in his right mind disputes this fact.

But the immediate issue, at least from the viewpoint of the international community, is the question of hostages who are currently being held in Iran. Iran's grievances against the Shah should not, in our view, be vented through innocent diplomatic personnel who, technically if not legally, are the guests of the Iranian Government. While the Malawi Government fully takes note of Iran's grievances, it nevertheless is unable to see any justification of that country's decision to take American diplomatic personnel hostage. Accordingly, it is my Government's view that the taking of hostages is in itself a violation of international law. It is also the view of at least my Government that the invasion of a diplomatic mission by the host country violates international law and diplomatic practice as enshrined in the various Conventions relating to diplomatic persons and institutions.

On the basis of what the international community picks up from the media regarding developments in Iran, my delegation is inclined to the view that the positions of Iran and the United States are in fact polarized. That being the case, the time might now have come for this Council to act to ensure that, first, the threatened trial by Iran of all American diplomatic personnel in that country's custody is not carried out; secondly, that the release of those hostages and their safe return home is urgently sought and negotiated for without further delay; thirdly, that the threatened flexing of military muscle by the United States is thwarted by appealing for the withdrawal of all the lethal weaponry of destruction which has now been deployed in the Persian Gulf - if what we pick up from the press is correct;

(Mr. Muwamba, Malawi)

fourthly, that a way must be found to assist the people of Iran in seeking redress for the various crimes that have allegedly been committed; fifthly, that the inviolability of diplomatic personnel and establishments is to be reasserted.

In the view of my delegation, neither the threatened trial of the hostages nor the threatened possible military reprisals can be perceived as being in consonance with the spirit and letter of the normal conduct of relations among nations. Accordingly, such threats, from whatever source, should not and must not be condoned by this Council.

It is our considered view that in keeping with the injunctions of at least Articles 2, 33 and any other related Articles of the United Nations Charter, this Council should proceed to explore all diplomatic, and therefore peaceful, options open to the international community for resolving explosive situations such as the one that now obtains in Iran. My own Government is totally committed to the earnest search for peaceful solutions to problems with which the international community might be confronted. Hence my delegation's present plea is that this Council proceed along these lines. Mr. President, I wish you and the Security Council every success in this delicate but noble task.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Malawi for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a place at the Council table.

Mr. LA ROCCA (Italy): Mr. President, at this time of deep concern for the entire international community regarding the crisis which has occurred in the relations between Iran and the United States of America and which has prompted the Secretary-General, in a most timely move, to call for an urgent meeting of this Council under Article 99 of the Charter, it is gratifying for my delegation to see that the proceedings of this Council are to take place under your wise and highly experienced leadership. We trust that under your guidance the Council will succeed in its efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to this crisis - efforts so effectively initiated by your

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

predecessor, Ambassador Palacios de Vizzio of Bolivia.

The inviolability of diplomatic personnel and premises is, in my Government's view, the most basic condition for the orderly development of international relations. May I also recall, in this regard, the statement issued by the Heads of State and Government and the Foreign Ministers of the Nine States members of the European Community in Dublin on 30 November. Should the rules of international law, which have been observed for centuries under all civilizations and have been recently codified in the Vienna Convention of 1961, be waived under the pressure of grievances, however deeply felt or widely shared by the people of a nation, the whole structure of international relations would be threatened with collapse. The detention of the American diplomatic personnel in Tehran is therefore totally unacceptable to my Government, and we urgently appeal to the Iranian Government to put an immediate end to this state of affairs.

My Government understands the feelings and emotions which inspire the Iranian people at this time. The President of the Italian Republic is on record as having protested, months before the departure of the Shah of Iran, against the oppressive nature of his régime and its massive violations of the human rights of the Iranian people. In addressing an appeal to the Imam Khomeini on 23 November for the release of the hostages, President Pertini recalled his previous stand in the following words:

"I protested officially against the Shah when he was oppressing human rights in Iran. I received and helped Iranian students who had sought refuge at that time here in Rome and were in fear of being extradited. I opposed their extradition, which would have meant their death. I did all that for the cause of human rights, on behalf of which I have struggled all my life.

"Today, in the name of those same rights, I appeal to you to intervene on behalf of the American hostages. You cannot allow the Iranian people to commit the same violations which were committed by the Shah. Please do not let this appeal go unheard."

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

It is in the light of this stand, publicly taken by the highest authority in my country, that my Government feels entitled at this stage to call upon the Government, on both legal and humanitarian grounds, promptly to redress the violations of international law which have occurred in that country and to allow the hostages to return, free and unharmed, to their families, to whom we wish to take this opportunity to express our deep sympathy. Such an action will, inter alia, allow for a much more dispassionate examination of the grievances of the Iranian people by this Council, before which the Government of Iran will have the full right, as do all sovereign Governments, to put their case. The latter could, alternatively, be examined by any other body which might be set up through peaceful negotiations by the parties concerned, or through the good offices of the Secretary-General.

However, it is quite obvious that such a dispassionate debate would be almost impossible under the pressure of a situation which poses a grave threat to the peace and security of a region and of the world as a whole. We therefore again appeal urgently to the Government of Iran to free the hostages without further delay.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Panama. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): Today the Security Council is facing a most serious institutional crisis and the fact that China has assumed the presidency of the highest political organ of the United Nations at this historic crossroads gives rise to well-founded hopes in the minds of the people of the world that wise and peaceful formulas will be found to solve the problem referred to the Security Council by the Secretary-General in his letter of 25 November (S/13646) in keeping with the principles of justice and international law. Mr. President, we trust that you will lead the Council towards effective solutions with the dignity and wisdom that characterize you.

In the difficult work being done to achieve this objective, your distinguished predecessor, the representative of Bolivia Mr. Sergio Palacios de Vizzio, opened a broad path towards the peaceful restoration of infringed rights when, as President and on behalf of all the members of the Security Council, he made the categorical statements on 9 November and 27 November 1979 in which the repeated decision of the Security Council was included urging the Government of Iran to respect the principle of the inviolability of United States diplomatic personnel and premises in that country in accordance with internationally accepted standards. The Council, therefore, most strongly urged that Government to release without delay the diplomatic personnel detained in Iran and to give them the necessary protection and it instructed the Secretary-General to use his good offices to achieve that objective. There can be no doubt that the outgoing President's conduct lived up to the high Latin American legal tradition and deserves the warmest congratulations.

(Mr. Illueca, Panama)

On 25 November 1979, in a gesture which called for international acknowledgement, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the terms of Article 99 of the Charter, requested a meeting of the Council in view of the grave situation that had occurred in the relations between the United States and Iran, which the Secretary-General defined as follows:

"The Government of the United States is deeply disturbed at the seizure of its Embassy in Tehran and the detention of its diplomatic personnel, in violation of the relevant international conventions. The Government of Iran seeks redress for injustices and abuse of human rights which, in its view, were committed by the previous régime ... the dangerous level of tension between these two countries threatens peace and stability in the region and could have disastrous consequences for the entire world.

"In my opinion, therefore, the present crisis poses a serious threat to international peace and security". (S/13646)

The situation in Tehran, however, is marked by one very specific feature, as was stressed last night in this very Council. It is the fact that the violence of the armed band that invaded the Mission is being defended and supported by the Government of Iran. The Iranian Government has furthermore announced its intention to try the hostages for alleged violations of the security of the State. Among the Embassy staff apparently involved are the Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. L. Bruce Laingen, and two other American officials who, according to today's news, are to be tried on espionage charges. They are being held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in open violation of universally accepted standards of international conduct.

There is a unanimous feeling in the international community in favour of scrupulous respect for the inviolability of diplomatic missions and the personnel who serve in such establishments. That sentiment was evinced last night in this very hall by the 15 delegations which participated in the debate, representing as they do all regions of the world and more specifically the Nordic countries through the representative of Norway, the nine States members of the European Community through the representative of the United Kingdom, and the President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) through the representative of Liberia.

(Mr. Illueca, Panama)

Similar appeals for the withdrawal of the Iranians from the occupied Embassy and the release of the hostages were issued by the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Ambassador Salim Ahmed Salim and by the Council of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The crisis that has caused the Council to meet today does not concern the United States alone. It affects equally all States members of the international community, and it is for this reason that my delegation wished to exercise its right to participate in this debate, which is one of the most serious in the history of the United Nations. For any small country such as Panama, the rule of law in international affairs is an essential requirement.

Our position is neither opportunistic nor circumstantial. With the same determination with which Panama defended the immunity of two ships operated, respectively, by the Cuban and Soviet Governments that were unlawfully detained in the Panama Canal in October 1973, my country now seeks to safeguard those very principles which we deem to be essential to peaceful international coexistence. We wish to state at this point how important it is for the future of the United Nations as well as for international peace and security that the Security Council negotiate and secure the evacuation of the United States Embassy unlawfully occupied in Tehran and the immediate release of the 50 members of its diplomatic personnel held in that building as hostages.

I think it timely to recall that this position of principle which Panama has adopted together with other Latin American States regarding the privileges and immunities both of States and of their diplomatic missions and personnel was put to the test at the time of the detention on 2 October 1973 in Balboa in the former Canal Zone of the vessel "Imías", the property of the Cuban Government, pursuant to an order handed down by the United States Federal Court. A few days later the "William Foster", a vessel operated by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was also detained by order of the same United States Federal Court on 12 October 1973. Both vessels were detained by the United States authorities when they intended to pass through the Panama Canal.

(Mr. Illueca, Panama)

In both cases, Panama stated that it recognized the sovereign immunity enjoyed by the "Imías" and the "William Foster" and protested against the action taken by the United States. The position of the Panamanian Government was favourably commented upon in the general debate of the twenty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and doubtless constituted a valuable contribution consistent with the fundamental principles which are incorporated in the jurisprudence of international canals and their operation.

I think it only fair to say that the State Department of the United States, acting on the Panamanian appeal, recognized the immunity of the vessel "Imías" which was, in due course, released. A few days later the same action was taken with respect to the Soviet vessel, the "William Foster".

In the specific case before us, force was used and acts of violence were committed by armed bands whose action has clearly been supported by the Iranian Government in violation of universally applicable conventional standards and customary practice. It is therefore obvious that the threat to international peace and security derives from an illegal act attributable to the Iranian Government, consisting of the continued unlawful occupation of the United States Embassy building in Tehran and the subjection of its diplomatic personnel to humiliating indefinite arrest and to punitive action in blatant transgression of conventional standards.

(Mr. Illueca, Panama)

The problem which the Council has the obligation to examine is, specifically, the occupation of the United States Embassy and the detention of its diplomatic personnel. The Secretary-General points out that the redress that the Government of Iran is seeking for the injustices and abuses of human rights which that Government believes the previous régime to have committed should be considered in a different forum from the Security Council and in other, more propitious, circumstances.

This in no way means that Panama does not agree that responsibility must be determined for the criminal and inhuman acts carried out by the members of the previous régime headed by the Shah or even that he should be extradited through legal and diplomatic means, should that prove necessary.

The peoples throughout the world hold that those who flagrantly violate human rights should be judged for their crimes, and there are many who call for the establishment of international tribunals with competence to deal with such matters, in the style of the Nuremberg tribunal. Unfortunately, those tribunals do not exist, but without any doubt they would, if created, be competent to bring to justice - although this list is not exhaustive - the deposed Shah of Iran, Idi Amin of Uganda, Bokassa of the erstwhile Central African Empire, now a Republic, Somoza of Nicaragua and Vorster of South Africa, all of whom have a debt to pay to the international community and to their own peoples in the area of human rights.

Every political event reflects immediately preceding history. The serious events in Tehran are closely linked with other violations of international law and of the principles of the United Nations which still await solution and which are a permanent source of frustration, disappointment and bitterness for many peoples in different regions of the world. There is much accumulated resentment. For this reason the Security Council is bound to make use of all means at its disposal to put an end to the unprecedented situation which calls us together, and not to make international life more difficult or the future of humanity more complex. The wise judgement, the political experience and diplomatic skill of the President of the Security Council and of its members will, without doubt, make it possible to find the ways and means to that end, including if necessary the presence of Council members in some form in Tehran as special representatives of the international community. That is

(Mr. Illueca, Panama)

an approach which would adequately respond to circumstances and would make it clear to the Iranian authorities that it is not only the United States that rejects and condemns the violation of its diplomatic headquarters and the reprehensible detention of its personnel, but that it is joined by all those represented here.

In saying this, my delegation also speaks in its own interest. Indeed, for a small country, existence as a nation is only possible in a world in which law and order prevail. The sole weapon, the only defence of a small nation lies precisely in the maintenance of the legal system that governs international relations. Once this system is shattered, once its principles are violated, only the law of the strongest will prevail and in that case it would never be the small nations whose rights and freedoms would be defended and safeguarded. Thus, when requesting that the Security Council take firm action in the defence of the hostages in Tehran, Panama is also defending the vital principles that may serve it for its own development, its own peace and its own welfare.

To conclude, I believe that I echo the opinion of broad sectors of Latin America and of many peoples of other regions of the third world when I appeal to the Iranian authorities to cease their illegal and inhuman detention of persons who are protected by international law and who are, in fact, guests detained in contravention of all rules, principles and ethics, whether of the East or the West. In situations such as the present one, any event may detonate an explosion with incalculable consequences, which would affect us all and from which we would all suffer equally.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Panama for the kind words he addressed to me.

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

Mr. KOMATINA (Yugoslavia): May I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December, and express my delegation's conviction that, under your able guidance,

(Mr. Komatina, Yugoslavia)

the Security Council will be able to contribute to a successful solution of this problem as well as other major issues on the Council's agenda.

It is also a great pleasure for me to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Palacios de Vizzio of Bolivia, for the most effective way in which he contributed to the work of the Council last month.

Through you, Mr. President, I wish to thank the other members of the Security Council for having given me the opportunity to participate in the debate on this important question.

In the statement made by the spokesman of the Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs on 27 November, we welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General in requesting that the Security Council be convened. In doing so, we proceeded from the assumption that what is involved here is a grave crisis, fraught with unforeseeable consequences for peace in the region and in the world at large. We also proceeded from a conviction that in this, as well as in similar situations involving international disputes and the need for their peaceful solution, the role of the United Nations is irreplaceable. We consider that the United Nations is the most appropriate forum in which to deal with every crisis, including the present dispute which has arisen between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America.

(Mr. Komatina, Yugoslavia)

Yugoslavia has constantly insisted on the need to respect the fundamental principles which constitute the basis of international relations. In this regard, we have laid particular stress on respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force, non-intervention and the right of every people freely to determine its social, economic and cultural development and its socio-political system without outside interference.

The observance of these principles, which have become the patrimony of international law and are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and in the policy of non-alignment, is a prerequisite for the peaceful solution of international problems and, consequently, for the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

In conformity with these principles, we have supported the changes effected in Iran in the course of its independent development, which are the results of the efforts of the Iranian people to defend its identity and right to determine its own destiny. We have welcomed Iran's decision to join the Non-Aligned Movement, which points to the authentic character of the transformations in that country. We are convinced that Iran will have an important place and role in the struggle for the implementation of the principles and objectives of the policy of non-alignment. On the road of national emancipation the Iranian people are encountering various difficulties that are a legacy of the past inherited from the previous régime. It is the duty of the international community and of all of us, while strictly observing the principle of non-interference, to help the Iranian people to devote its energies to the development of its independent and sovereign country. This would contribute to the stabilization of conditions in that crucial area of international relations, which is of particular importance to world peace.

The protection of diplomatic missions, respect for the immunity of diplomatic representatives and the prohibition on taking hostage the personnel of diplomatic missions are component parts of those universal principles the observance of which is indispensable to stable relations between States and to every effort

(Mr. Komatina, Yugoslavia)

exerted for the peaceful solution of disputes and the strengthening of co-operation on the basis of equality of rights. This important problem has its political, legal and humanitarian aspects. For this reason, we consider it necessary to observe the norms of international law which have been codified, in the field with which we are concerned, in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Furthermore, as we are all aware, a draft convention against the taking of hostages is being worked out in the United Nations within the framework of necessary additions to existing international instruments for the development of an international legal order.

We are firmly convinced that the liberation of the hostages would contribute to the creation of a climate of mutual confidence and respect, to the establishment of constructive relations on a basis of equality between Iran and the United States and to the solution on the basis of international law and the Charter of the broader issues and grievances raised by Iran. This would contribute to the relaxation of tensions and the safeguarding of peace, that is, to the achievement of the objectives towards which the United Nations and all of us are striving. In the final analysis, it would contribute to the further consolidation of the Iranian revolution and to the realization of the aspirations of the Iranian people.

On this basis we supported the statement of the President of the Security Council on the freeing of American hostages and the vacation of the Embassy premises, and we hope that the result of the current meetings of the Security Council will be a positive contribution towards that end and to the peaceful settlement of the dispute between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States. We feel that the Security Council and the Secretary-General should continue to exert efforts to bring about an equitable solution.

Proceeding from positions of principle, we have constantly exerted efforts in the search for peaceful solutions to all disputes, particularly crises that threaten international peace and security, on the basis of strict observance of the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the principles embodied in the policy of non-alignment and respect for international treaties and conventions. This time also it is our wish to contribute to an easing of tension and to the maintenance of peace, because we are obviously faced with a serious problem involving basic principles of international relations, in the settlement of which all of us should participate.

(Mr. Komatina, Yugoslavia)

It is therefore necessary to give proof on all sides of restraint, responsibility and realism and to make use of all means likely to lead to a lasting and peaceful settlement.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Yugoslavia 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. PINIES (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to express to the Secretary-General my appreciation of his commendable decision to call this meeting of the Security Council. I should like also to thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to take part in this meeting, and also to congratulate the President for last month, the Ambassador of Bolivia, on the work the Council accomplished under his skilful guidance.

In the events that are at present taking place in Iran peace and security in international relations are being violated in new ways. It is the very legal structure that makes peace possible - namely, the norms of international law and in particular the Vienna Convention on diplomatic and consular relations - that is facing its greatest threat in recent times.

The taking of hostages, not by an uncontrolled mob but with the consent of established authority, opens a breach in international relations the consequences of which are unforeseeable and could have catastrophic repercussions.

My country, which understands the efforts of the Iranian people to choose new roads towards governing its future and is aware of the obedience owed to other basic principles of international law, such as respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, considers that the violation of the laws protecting diplomatic personnel and premises cannot be justified in any way, that the persistence of the present situation erodes the credibility of the Iranian political process and that a positive and immediate solution would hasten the achievement of Iranian aspirations.

(Mr. Pinies, Spain)

My delegation therefore endorses the content of the declaration made by the outgoing President of the Security Council a few days ago and reiterates the appeal made on 23 November by the Council of Ministers of my country, which instructed the Spanish Ambassador in Tehran to make known to the Iranian authorities, recalling the good relations Spain maintains with the Islamic peoples, our profound concern at the existing tension; and to join other accredited Ambassadors in Tehran in working for the speedy liberation of the personnel who are being detained, in contravention of the law and international agreements, and for their return safe and sound to their country.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. I therefore intend to adjourn the meeting now. After consultations, the next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of this item will take place tomorrow, Monday, 3 December 1979, at 4 p.m.

The meeting rose at 9.20 p.m.