

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED
AND FIFTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on 20 July 1987, at 3 p.m.

Mr. ANDREOTTI (Italy) (interpretation from French): It is a source of special satisfaction for me also, Mr. President, to see you conducting the work of the Security Council. I am convinced that your personal qualities and your experience will greatly assist the Council in its deliberations.

I would take this occasion, too, to extend sincere compliments to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of the Congo, on the skill and political sense he demonstrated in presiding over the Council last month.

It is in clear awareness of its responsibilities that my delegation intends now to state its view on the continuing war between Iraq and Iran.

This war has now continued for seven years. It has lasted longer than any conflict of the contemporary era and the result of the current stalemate is trench warfare in which the destructive effects of the advanced technologies of our time add to the horrors and miseries which characterized the First World War. In fact, this conflict combines the worst aspects of past conflicts. Once again we witness the indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets. Once again we witness the use of chemical weapons, the prohibition of which we thought had been considered a great and precious accomplishment of our civilization, since that weapon had not even been used in the Second World War.

There are two aspects of this tragic situation which strike us: on the one hand, this war continues even in the absence of specific claims on the part of the belligerents - in particular, territorial claims. Secondly, the international community has been unable from the outset of the conflict to find effective means to put an end to the hostilities. It is not among the least of the contradictions at this time that a large part of international public opinion seems to be more worried about the negative effects of the war on trade relations and oil supplies than about the costs of the conflict in terms of human lives and suffering.

There is also the ever-present danger of the conflict's shifting towards other areas and extending to neighbouring regions. It is precisely that concern, as well as fear of the risks involved in the initiatives that could be taken outside the framework of the United Nations to ensure the security and protection of the interests of one or another State, that has led us to support the draft resolution before us, which expressly refers to the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. That reference, in our view, demonstrates that there is a serious intention to enhance the image of the United Nations and vigorously uphold its role in the

maintenance of international peace and security. That is why we are meeting here today.

The Security Council has been repeatedly seized of this conflict. It has dealt with it unsuccessfully because of the different approaches that were followed on previous occasions. Consequently, military operations continue. Not a day passes without some disturbing news of additional civilian casualties, of innocent victims of violence and of the use of chemical weapons. Even in the past few days a number of innocent young people were wounded by these heinous weapons and have been hospitalized in Rome. Investigations and inquiries have been carried out with respect to these tragic and illicit aspects of the war. Condemnations have been issued.

But is there any point in condemning single acts, however unlawful or heinous, when the conflict which generates those acts cannot be ended?

The purpose of our Organization is to preserve peace. The Charter requires all Member States to settle their disputes by peaceful means. It is certainly proper to condemn specific acts of violence. However, the real decision which is expected of us is to condemn the initiation and continuation of the war, particularly since it no longer relates to any realistic, well-defined objective. In this regard, Italy, together with the other members of the European Community, has taken a very clear stand.

Therefore, it seems to us that the time has come to take a step forward - a bolder initiative than has been taken in the past. We therefore welcome the appeal made last January by the Secretary-General to the Security Council, and in particular to its five permanent members, to seek the consensus necessary to put an end to this tragic conflict.

The present draft resolution is the result of long and difficult consultations that have taken place over the last few months, principally among the permanent members of the Security Council, following a procedure which must not become the rule but which can be considered as justified in this case, given the extreme complexity of the problem and the importance of the objectives at stake. This draft resolution, in our view, attempts to meet some fundamental requirements: it takes into account, to the maximum extent possible, the basic political positions of the parties to the conflict; it gives due importance to the problem of the security of the States of the region; it paves the way for the resumption of action by the Secretary-General, who enjoys our full support and trust. No less important, in our view, are the provisions of the draft resolution which address the humanitarian aspects of the conflict, such as the problem of the prisoners of war and of the international collaboration that will be necessary for the reconstruction of the areas struck by the war. In that regard, I take this occasion to state my country's determination to participate palpably and significantly in that task as soon as the situation permits.

The conflict between Iran and Iraq constitutes a breach of the peace; it threatens the security of the entire region and is the cause of repeated and serious violations of the fundamental principles of international law, including Article 2 of the Charter of our Organization, the Geneva Protocol of 1925, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the norms which regulate freedom of navigation.

It is therefore clear - and the international community has to be unanimous on this point - that this state of affairs must be halted. My country maintains relations of friendship and mutual respect with both Iran and Iraq. Our judgement is therefore objective and impartial. At the same time, Italy cannot shirk the

responsibilities incumbent upon it, particularly those which derive from its membership in the Security Council. Events have shown that Iran and Iraq are unable by themselves to put an end to the hostilities and to set out on the road to peace. It is therefore up to the international community - notably the Security Council - to use the means provided by the Charter for restoring a just and equitable peace in a situation which poses an increasingly grave threat to international security.

The Security Council has the right to expect the parties to give their full and unconditional co-operation to the Secretary-General. However, if it is to be effective, this appeal, which we support unreservedly, must be accompanied by a willingness on the part of each one of us to act within the framework of the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter, whose specific Articles are directly or indirectly referred to in the draft resolution.

We are called upon to take a stand on a package of principles which could be decisive in the sense that it could set in motion a process which, with God's help and with the good will of men, may lead to peace.

For those reasons, my delegation will support both the draft resolution before us and the follow-up action.