



5A

PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

16 APRIL 1986

The Australian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr Richard Woolcott, will make the following statement to the Security Council later today:

"Australia speaks today mindful of the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. World attention is focussed on this body and people around the world look to us to take positive action to achieve a peaceful resolution of the issue before us. We must respond effectively to the challenge.

As tension has developed in the Central Mediterranean, Australia has continued to counsel restraint. As a matter of principle Australia rejects any attempts to resolve differences between nations by violent measures and in particular through terrorism. This is a principle which has guided the Australian Delegation in its approach to many of the issues which have come before this body.

As the Prime Minister said on 15 April, the Australian Government deeply regrets that this conflict has taken place. We urge both sides to engage in genuine efforts to bring about the peaceful resolution of their differences.

It will mean, as an absolute and essential condition, that Colonel Gaddafi terminate his Government's direction and export of, and support for, terrorist activity against civilians and civilian targets, such as have been perpetrated recently against United States civilians. This would also mean that the United States should desist from further military action against Libya.

It was an occasion for some satisfaction when the Fortieth General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution on measures to prevent international terrorism. That resolution unequivocally condemned as criminal all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever and by whomever committed. The resolution, I repeat, was adopted by consensus.

And yet, terrorism has continued.

The Australian Government accepts that there is a substantial body of evidence of Libyan involvement in and direction of international terrorism. This situation cannot continue.

We have all condemned such outrages. We have deplored the loss of innocent human lives and the poisoning of relations among States which result from these pernicious acts. We therefore stand ready to work with the whole membership of this organisation to bring international terrorism to an end.

If terrorism cannot be rooted out, the international community faces a dark future of increasing violence. Already, the situation has reached the point where the United States has felt compelled by Libyan actions to regard it as essential to take military action. Threats of further violence have followed from several quarters. There have been some calls to arms, when the world should be calling for mediation, negotiation, conciliation - in short a peaceful settlement.

If we do not make a stand in favour of such peaceful means, we will be surrendering to an intensifying cycle of violence.

Mr President, having stated the position of the Australian Government on the question before the Security Council, I now wish to move onto new ground.

In this debate so far, we have heard a substantial number of interventions. These have attempted to establish the parameters of discussion. They have been deficient, however, in that they have not addressed clearly and sufficiently the question of what can be done to contain and stop this conflict - and in particular what the Security Council can do to this end.

If our work this week is not to be a complete failure, yet another sterile exchange without constructive end, it is necessary that all of us, members of the Council and members of the United Nations, should turn our minds actively and without further delay to the discharge of our responsibilities to avoid further tensions and to bring our deliberations to a constructive conclusion.

The Security Council has wide powers in this regard under Chapter VI of the Charter. I mention Article 33 (2) whereby the Council may call upon parties to settle their dispute by a variety of means, Article 34 (1) whereby the Council may investigate any dispute, and Article 36 (1) whereby the Council may at any stage recommend appropriate procedures.

Members of the Council may have difficulty agreeing upon the precise and total nature of the dispute. But there should be no question of disagreement that, within the purpose of the articles I have cited, the maintenance of international peace and security has been endangered. Article 36(1) captures this point precisely in its reference to a dispute of the nature referred to in Article 33 "or of a situation of like nature".

There is also a range of procedures available for the Council to pursue these objectives, which would merit urgent examination in the case before us. In saying this we have in mind the role the Secretary-General might play in this matter and Australia would naturally support any such endeavours by him.

It is my objective now to press the Council to assume its responsibilities in this regard.

I do not necessarily wish to make firm proposals as to the exact method that the Council itself might employ. That is for consideration and decision by members. But the Council needs to act constructively with the cooperation of the parties and it may assist the Council's deliberations if I identify a number of courses:

- . the Security Council must play its part and I believe the President of the Council has the responsibility under the Charter to channel the Council's energy in constructive ways.

- . The peaceful means of dispute settlement elaborated in Article 33 of the Charter are also worthy of careful consideration.

- . Finally, Mr President, I note that the parties themselves could bring the dispute to a speedy end by making and strictly observing genuine and binding commitments to the Security Council about their future conduct. These commitments would include on the one hand a pledge concerning the strictest respect for and adherence to the terms of UNGA Res 40/61 which unequivocally condemns terrorism and calls on all states to refrain from organising, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts. They would also include on the other hand a reciprocal commitment to refrain from recourse to armed force. The Council could examine urgently how such commitments might be undertaken by the present parties and by all states concerned.

Mr President, I have indicated that the Australian Government wishes the Council to move from the stage of debate to the stage of accepting its responsibilities to promote a peaceful settlement, on terms acceptable to the parties and to the world community.

I suggest that you, Mr President, should institute and pursue consultations among member states to this end. You will have the full cooperation of the Australian delegation in that endeavour."