



Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

4105th Meeting

Monday, 28 February 2000, 12.25 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Listre	(Argentina)
<i>Members:</i>	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Vámos-Goldman
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Kasse
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Briefing by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans

The meeting was called to order at 12.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 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. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of the its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Bildt to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Balkans. Following his briefing, the members of the Council will have an opportunity to comment and to ask questions.

I now call on Mr. Bildt.

Mr. Bildt: It is indeed an honour to be able to address the Council on the search for self-sustaining stability, as well as human rights and democracy, in the Balkans.

Kosovo is once again the centre of public attention. But it is not my task to go into the details of all of the challenges we are facing there. Indeed, Mr. Kouchner will be briefing the Council on these on 6 March, I understand. It is enough for me to repeat what I remarked in informal consultations last year: that the operation in Kosovo is the most complex and the most challenging operation of this sort that the United Nations has ever been asked to undertake.

But Kosovo is only one small part of a region that is in search of stability, and my task as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General is to see what can be done to prevent new conflicts from occurring, as well as to see what can be done to pave the way for self-sustaining stability in the region as a whole.

Instability and conflict are not recent phenomena in this region. We often tend to forget that conflicts and instabilities in the Balkans dominated the first decade of the twentieth century as much as they dominated the last. To find a stable political order for this region, with its rich mosaic of peoples, cultures and traditions — the result of millennia of rule by multinational empires — has been a most difficult task.

It was a decade ago that we were confronted with these issues again. Old regimes and old structures of repression were thrown away, and the international community was faced with the task of helping the region transit to a new order of stability, now also built on respect for human rights and democracy. This has proved to be a most challenging task. Some would describe it as a succession of failures: the failure to prevent the war in Croatia, the failure to prevent the war in Bosnia and the failure to prevent the war in Kosovo. Those wars of course devastated the lives of people and devastated the region. The United Nations system, from the very beginning, has been at the forefront of the efforts to alleviate suffering and help ordinary people. It has often, as the Council knows, been a thankless task.

As we look at the situation now, a decade later, I do not think it is possible to say that we have managed to achieve a situation of self-sustaining stability in the

region. Indeed, our combined political, humanitarian, economic and military involvement in the different parts of the region is larger and more demanding than ever before. Were it to be withdrawn today, we would be facing new wars tomorrow.

The larger issue that we are confronted with in the region is the conflict between what I refer to as the forces of integration and the forces of disintegration. The conflict is between those who favour, or at least accept, integration within their societies as well as between them, and those who favour — often in the name of extreme nationalism — disintegration within their societies and between nations. We know, of course, from rather bitter experience that virtually every step of disintegration in the region has been associated with violent conflict of one sort or another, more often than not resulting in massive violations of human rights, massive ethnic cleansing and massive destruction of economic and social infrastructure. This has not been a region of velvet divorces; this has been a region of violent divorces.

As we look at the region today, we have to conclude that the forces of disintegration are still stronger than the forces of integration. As long as this is the case, a self-sustaining stability that also conforms to our other values will be most difficult to achieve. This makes it even more important to press on with our search for such stability.

In 1995, after massive failures and massive efforts, we managed to achieve a political settlement in Bosnia. The Dayton Peace Agreement remains one of the most ambitious agreements of its kind in modern history. In 1999, efforts to seek a political settlement to the conflict in Kosovo failed, and the war that resulted ended with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), as well as with a military-technical agreement. But there was and there is no proper peace agreement.

This is a key factor that makes the task of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo so demanding and so difficult. And since the core issues of the conflict concerning the long-term position of Kosovo are not seen as settled, it has also made it much more difficult to move towards stability for the region as a whole. There are simply too many expectations and too many fears generated by the apparently unresolved core issues of the conflict.

It is thus imperative, if we are not going to give up our search for self-sustaining stability, that we be ready to resume the search for a peaceful settlement to the conflict. The time might not yet be ripe for more concrete moves,

but the time is certainly ripe for discussion of the core issues. Let me indicate four starting points for such a search for a settlement. They, in turn, come on top of the most obvious point, namely, taking into account the wishes of all those living or having their roots in Kosovo.

First, I believe the search for a regional settlement must have the solid support of the Council. This is not just an abstract principle or political statement. It is based on concrete experience in the region during the past 10 years. For only when there has been a solid consensus among the key international actors — often the United States, the countries of the European Union and the Russian Federation — has it been possible to achieve political agreements between the different warring parties in the different conflicts in the area. Any lesser combination has, as a rule, been doomed to failure. It is thus important for there to be a dialogue within the Council on the shape of the regional settlement that must come.

Secondly, I believe that the States of the region must be active participants in the search for this settlement. In Rambouillet a year ago, the search for a settlement was primarily between Belgrade and the political representatives of the Kosovo Albanians. Although this certainly remains the core conflict yet to be settled, its settlement is no longer enough. The future of Kosovo affects the region as a whole in a very profound way. We must thus be clear in seeking the voice and the involvement of the leaders in Skopje and Tirana, as well as other regional capitals. We must take into account the views expressed in Podgorica and in Sarajevo. We must treat it as a truly regional issue.

Thirdly, I believe it is fundamental that we be ready to make it clear that a true deal will be one that meets the minimum demands of everyone, but the maximum demands of no one. This was the essence of the political deal that resulted in the Peace Agreement for Bosnia. It answered to the minimum demands of everyone, while it met the maximum demands of no one. Only thus could that deal be achieved, and only thus can that deal be carried forward.

Fourthly, and what is perhaps most difficult, we must be able to set an agreement firmly within the context of a wider arrangement for the region as a whole, and preferably for the region within the wider European context. There are obvious interrelationships between the different conflicts in the region, and there is an obvious need to create a wider framework that will not only

guarantee the stability of the different deals in the region but will also promote the common policies of reform, reconciliation and reintegration, which will be absolutely crucial to future development.

There have been, and there are, important regional initiatives. In the early 1990s there was the United Nations and European Union-sponsored International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, and since the summer of last year there has been the Stability Pact initiative, sponsored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and initiated by the European Union. The European Union has also offered to conclude stabilization and association agreements with each of the countries of the region.

These important efforts notwithstanding, it is my belief that there will be a need for a structure that in its scope, firmness and perspective goes well beyond what has so far been contemplated.

All this being said, we all know that there are virtually no possibilities at the moment of proceeding along this path of a possible peace. We are, mildly speaking, handicapped by the regime in Belgrade. The fact that the key political and military leaders of what is left of Yugoslavia have been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia for crimes against humanity means that they are de facto excommunicated from any sort of dialogue or diplomatic contact.

This is natural, but it is undoubtedly also a dilemma. We can neither make peace without Belgrade, nor talk about the different issues of the region as a whole without taking in Serbia, but there is also no way in which we can deal with those personalities who are indicted by the International Tribunal or their close associates. We are thus, in a certain sense, in a situation in which many of our efforts in the region can be seen as little more than a big holding operation until change in Serbia opens up the prospect of moving forward with a proper peace process as well as with the wider regional agenda of reform, reconciliation and reintegration.

But simply to sit and wait is not enough. If we do that, we might well be faced with further conflicts. We must actively seek change; we must meet the provocations that are there and will come later; and we must actively try to prevent existing tensions from boiling over into open conflict.

Let me, in this context, mention in particular the situation between Serbia and Montenegro. As long as there is no change of regime in Belgrade, these two republics of Yugoslavia are set on a somewhat slow but very steady collision course. President Milosevic has grossly misused the federal institutions and grossly violated the rights of Montenegro within that federation. That the leadership of Montenegro has not reacted to these violations by seceding outright, but proposed instead a reformed relationship between Serbia and Montenegro is an indication of responsibility and statesmanship that should not go unrewarded.

The position of Montenegro is difficult in a number of respects. In a way, we can say that it suffers from double sanctions. From one side, Montenegrans suffer from the sanctions against all of Yugoslavia, which block their access to the international financial institutions. From the other side, they face the de facto sanctions against them from Serbia, forcing them — to take just one example — to rely on expensive food imports from abroad.

I believe that, in the interests of stability, we must all accelerate our efforts to give them help in this particularly difficult situation. The confrontation between Montenegro and Serbia is a confrontation over the future of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As such, it has obvious implications for the way in which Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) can one day be fully implemented. A regional settlement is hardly possible until key questions of the future shape of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have been settled. Such a regional settlement will have to balance the wider interests of the Serbs or other Slavs with those of the Albanians in the region. We certainly want to build democracy and civil society in the entire region and in all of these countries, but this will not be enough to make all of these other issues go away. Nationalism and democracy are not necessarily incompatible.

We must be aware of the tensions that are there along the fault lines between these wider interests. We see them on an almost daily basis in Mitrovica in northern Kosovo. And we must not pretend that we cannot recognize those extremists groups or individuals on both sides who are determined to exploit these tensions to the full along all of the fault lines, be they in northern Kosovo, be they in southern Serbia, as we are also seeing, or be they perhaps even in Macedonia. Again, we are dealing with the clash between the forces of integration and the forces of disintegration in the

region. If the latter are allowed to have the upper hand for long enough, we will see tensions building up even more, bringing further conflicts, and perhaps even paving the way for conflicts every bit as brutal as those we have already witnessed.

We are thus faced with a complex situation in the region. There are positive developments. The political changes in Croatia certainly count very prominently among those and, in spite of all of the difficulties that we are facing and the Council is familiar with, we are also making progress in Bosnia. But overall, we are still far from achieving the self-sustaining stability which we have been seeking for the past decade and about which all the individuals of the different countries of the region, irrespective of belief, origin or creed, are dreaming. So the search will have to go on under conditions that are far from easy.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Let me first of all express my appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this meeting. We welcome once again Mr. Carl Bildt, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, and thank him for his succinct but wide-ranging briefing and candid analysis, which I am sure have been extremely useful to Council members. He has given the Council a lot of food for thought.

For the purpose of today's discussion, my delegation wishes to focus on only a few issues of importance to the Council and to the international community in the continuing efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also in Kosovo.

First, among these immediate concerns is the return of refugees and displaced persons. There have been concerted efforts made by the United Nations system and the international community as a whole to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. In Kosovo, a very large number of Kosovar Albanian refugees and displaced persons have returned, but there is now the problem of an outflow of other ethnic communities from the province, especially of the Serbs. Meanwhile, the refugee problem remains largely unresolved in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even four years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The refugee problem is, of course, at the heart of the existing insecurity situation, which is due to the absence of law and order or to their ineffectiveness, both in Bosnia and

Herzegovina and in Kosovo. In our view, the restoration and maintenance of law and order are important not only in themselves, but also in terms of encouraging the rapid return of the refugees.

Secondly, there is a need for continued emphasis on the reconciliation process. This should remain one of the priorities, both for Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as for Kosovo. It is only natural for the communities that have been subjected to some of the worst crimes against humanity committed since the end of the Second World War to seek justice for their loved ones who have perished. In this regard, it is important that justice be done and be seen to be done. Hence, the special importance that we attach to the work of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, which the international community should strongly support.

Thirdly, there should be continued and unstinting support from the international community for the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. We note that a lot of work has been done in this area by the international community as a whole and countries in the region. We note in particular the specific plans outlined in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe for further efforts, ranging from economic reconstruction and political reform to closer regional integration. We commend these efforts and hope for their success.

Finally, my delegation would like to underscore the importance of the role of local leaders. We believe that much of the success of the efforts of the international community will depend on the cooperation and constructive attitude of the local leaders.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We thank Mr. Bildt for his very frank, thorough and engaging briefing on Balkan issues. It could not have been timelier, as the recent incidents in the Balkans, and in Kosovo in particular, have made us freshly focus our attention on the international efforts for peace in the region as a whole. We appreciate this firsthand briefing on Balkan issues from a veteran such as Mr. Bildt.

The recent flare-up in Mitrovica has been viewed as potentially destabilizing for other areas of Kosovo and beyond. Mr. Bildt has long been championing a far more intensive involvement on the part of the international community in reconstruction — not just in Kosovo and Bosnia, but also across the Balkans as a whole. We agree with his statement today that the time is now ripe for discussions on all unresolved core issues in the Balkans.

The international community has reinforced its presence to prevent inter-ethnic clashes. This has contributed, to some extent, to a calming of the situation. But experience shows that conflicts rooted in ethnicity tend to be prolonged and even to transcend generations. The strengthened international presence cannot be a permanent solution. There should be a built-in mechanism within their societies which would check and halt any flaring up of hostile situations.

We should help promote a culture of peace in the Balkans with determined efforts and with the involvement and participation of all sectors of their societies. An all-embracing movement by civil society for a culture of peace is possibly the only way to achieve sustainable stability in the region.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): We find Mr. Carl Bildt's statements very interesting for several reasons, the first being his experience. He was the European Union's envoy during a particularly sensitive phase of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He carried out his task in an authoritative manner, with perseverance and wisdom, and finally, jointly with Mr. Holbrooke, achieved a successful outcome. He was the first High Representative of the international community for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, as a result, he has a wealth of experience that it is in our interest to draw on.

The second reason why we attach a great deal of importance to Mr. Bildt's statements touches on the very circumstances of his appointment and his mandate. The Secretary-General was right to appoint a Special Envoy for the Balkans as a whole. I believe that what is important with respect to Mr. Bildt's task is the scope of his competence and the need for him to have a global overview of the region. This is because, as we know, different institutions and bodies with different mandates and compositions are taking a variety of approaches to the Balkan region, and therefore it is up to Mr. Bildt to take a sweeping look at the overall situation, where, despite the specificity of the situations, certain characteristic elements recur.

I believe that in this respect Mr. Bildt is keenly aware, as he has demonstrated today, of the three important considerations. The first is, of course, to try to contribute to strengthening trends towards cooperation and solidarity as opposed to trends towards disintegration or division. I believe that this is a very interesting approach — the only viable one, in fact — and that Mr. Bildt has rightly chosen it.

The second important consideration is that we must not shy away from the word "reform". Of course, when we speak of reform, we mean democratic reform. Indeed, certain actors in the region must either become more aware of the need for democratic reform or step aside, because this is a key element in the successful consolidation of trends towards cooperation and solidarity.

My third comment concerns the importance of reconstruction. We must continue to lend our assistance in order to provide grounds for hope.

These three aspects — solidarity, reform and reconstruction — underpin Mr. Bildt's overall vision, and that is why we are gratified to have him with us today. We welcome the work he has already done, and we encourage him to continue in that same vein.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): I too would like to thank Mr. Bildt for his informative and thought-provoking briefing.

The current situation in the Balkans gives us cause for mixed feelings of both cautious optimism and grave concern. Our optimism is based on the undeniable progress achieved through post-conflict peace-building efforts in Croatia and in Bosnia, while the cause of our concern is the progressive deterioration of the situation in Kosovo.

We share the conviction of Mr. Bildt, which he expressed some time ago, that any long-term strategy for stability and peace in the region was dependent on a so-called three R's policy: comprehensive reform of all conflict-devastated societies, reintegration of the region with the European and global infrastructure, and reconciliation between all the States and all the nations of the region.

My delegation is convinced that the issues of security, the return of refugees and economic reconstruction are among the key pillars of the overall settlement of the Balkan conflict. Needless to say,

adequate security conditions are a prerequisite for any peace process. In the context of the Balkans, first and foremost, this relates to the current situation in Kosovo, which continues to challenge European security as a whole and undermine peace-building achievements in other parts of the region.

The recent disturbances in Mitrovica showed that more resolute measures should be undertaken to break the cycle of ethnic hatred, distrust and revenge and to stop terrorist and criminal activities against international peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel.

The return of refugees and displaced persons is one of the core problems in ensuring political stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia. It is clear that this problem can be addressed only in a regional framework, provided that there is a close cooperation between the countries of the region in securing a voluntary return of the national minorities and in ensuring their legitimate claims for safety and equal social rights, including property rights.

In this context, we are satisfied by the reports of an increase in the positive trend of the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The recent statements by the new leadership of Croatia give us hope for further progress in resolving the existing problem of refugee return in this country.

We remain deeply alarmed, however, by the growing large-scale campaign of intimidation aimed at turning the Kosovo province of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into an ethnically monolithic area. The economic reconstruction of the entire region and all of its countries individually is at the heart of the eventual settlement of every constituent part of the Balkan conflict.

In this connection, the significance of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe cannot be overestimated. It provides a chance for all countries of the region to speed up its economic recovery and the overall process of transformation in order to integrate more closely into the European family of nations. In addition, this document provides a solid regional framework for the economic reconstruction of the Balkans as a whole.

Ukraine welcomes the recent adoption of the Bucharest Declaration of the Third Meeting of Heads of State and Government of South-East European Countries on 12 February this year, and reiterates its interest in becoming more closely associated with the joint efforts of the

international community as facilitator of the process of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. My country believes that, as a Danube riparian State that suffered losses because of economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo crisis, it should be involved in this ongoing process of regional economic reconstruction. Undoubtedly, there is a clear linkage between the developments in different parts of that region. Therefore, a regional approach should be applied in settling all the interrelated disputes in the Balkans. There is a clear need for closer coordination of efforts between the international players on the ground, including all the United Nations missions. In this regard, we are certain that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans can play a more active role to that end.

At the same time, we have to note the absence of an established dialogue between the Special Envoy and the Security Council. I have to confess, Mr. Bildt, that when we learned about your coming to brief the Council, our delegation, like many others, tried to figure out the concrete subject of the discussion in the context of your activities, simply because the Council has very little information about this.

We are aware of Mr. Bildt's broad mandate, entrusted to him by the Secretary-General. My delegation believes that this mandate allows him to address some Balkan issues which, due to different reasons, fall outside the focus of the Security Council. My country believes that Mr. Bildt's role and his efforts in the Balkans are indeed a valuable contribution to our common cause of establishing sustainable peace and stability in the Balkans. Therefore, it seems to me that these common efforts could be much more effective if the two-way communication between the Security Council and the Special Envoy for the Balkans were established on a permanent basis.

Against this background, we welcome today's briefing. My delegation deems it necessary to have such Council briefings regularly. On the one hand, the practice of such briefings will enable the Council to be better apprised of the Special Envoy's activities in the Balkans. On the other hand, it will allow the Council, when necessary, to extend more actively its political support to him or to use his good offices. At the same time, the introduction of the practice of briefings should not preclude the use of a feasible communication channel between Mr. Bildt and the Security Council, as well as in the reverse direction, through the Secretary-General.

We would also like to have more information about the activities of the second Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, Mr. Eduard Kukan, who might also wish to participate in the relevant Council briefings.

Finally, let me wish Mr. Bildt every success in his activities in the Balkans in his present capacity. My country stands ready to further contribute to our joint endeavours in pursuit of the restoration of peace and security in that region.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*)
I associate myself with the words of welcome to Carl Bildt, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, and I thank him for his clear and thorough statement of his views on what is happening in the Balkans. I agree with his conviction that the problem of the Balkans can be resolved only in a comprehensive way, and that indeed a regional approach is essential, both in view of the number of participants and in view of the objective to which we should all aspire. I particularly wish to emphasize his view of the necessity to have the agreement both of the Security Council and, in a broader context, of the international community on what path we should follow in order to move towards a settlement of all aspects of the Balkan crisis. This is extremely important so that we can all work in one direction and not try to use this or that conflicts for the advancement of our own national agendas, as that approach would not lead us to any results. The only way to achieve results is to follow the agreed approach of the international community, as reflected specifically in decisions of the Security Council and the various European structures.

I entirely agree with Mr. Bildt that one of the tasks that is enshrined in many United Nations resolutions is that of putting an end to extremism from all sides and to exert very strong pressure on the forces of disintegration. Without this, we cannot count on a sustainable resolution of the Balkan problem.

We support the call for a regional approach, a comprehensive approach. In particular I would like to emphasize what Mr. Bildt said about the role of Yugoslavia in the Balkans, and I can only agree with his conclusion that without the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there will be no peace or long-lasting, stable development in the region. That topic has already been discussed in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. A lot is being said about it now, and we consider that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General could play a positive role in helping coordinate the various efforts of the international

community, which are being undertaken in the framework in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, by the European Agency for the Reconstruction of Kosovo, by the South-East European Cooperation Initiative, by the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and others. In any case, there are many regional initiatives that in one way or another concern the Balkans, and at this stage there is a need for these initiatives to be coordinated, ideally, or at least for some summarized information on how these initiatives are being carried out. Incidentally, the United Nations Development Programme is doing this, while the Economic and Social Council adopted a special resolution and at its last session the General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution on economic assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe, as well as a consensus resolution on humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. So we would urge Mr. Bildt and all of his colleagues to consider what they could do to ensure that all of these different efforts are coordinated and are helped to achieve the common goal of development of the entire region, without any discrimination.

The only point with which I find it difficult to agree in what Mr. Bildt said is his reference to the Belgrade regime as virtually an obstacle to the development of the entire region, or at least an obstacle to the resolution of various problems, including the problem of Kosovo. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a participant in the settlement of the Kosovo crisis, the principles of which are described in resolution 1244 (1999).

In our view, many of the problems that UNMIK now faces with respect to the implementation of that resolution derive from the fact that UNMIK is, to put it mildly, not interacting sufficiently with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities, without whom it will simply be impossible to implement the decisions set out in resolution 1244 (1999). The present approach has to change, both in the political sphere — as I believe we shall be discussing in detail with Mr. Kouchner and General Reinhardt — and in the economic, social and humanitarian areas.

In the economic sphere, I have already mentioned United Nations resolutions on the reconstruction of the region and on assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the humanitarian sphere, we should not forget that the largest group of refugees in Europe is now in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They are mainly refugees from Bosnia and from Croatia; as Mrs. Ogata has confirmed here on several occasions, that group

of refugees is simply being ignored by donors, or at best is being given scant attention. This cannot fail to create the feeling that members of the international community continue to politicize the Balkans, as seen especially in discrimination against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in a wide variety of areas. Incidentally, I must observe with all due respect for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia that the trend to politicize matters applies also to the activities of that body. The politicization is almost palpable. Specific examples of it have been cited, and questions have been asked. But the answers we received did not dispel our doubts.

Let me cite another example of where bias has made it impossible to make progress in an area relating to the attempt to resolve the crisis in the Balkans. We know that there is a problem in Prevlaka. Recently, we have been told by the Secretariat that on the whole the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of Montenegro are implementing the regime in the United-Nations-designated zones in Prevlaka. But at the same time, the number of violations is on the rise. We hope that the new Government in Croatia will take measures to ensure that it too respects the United-Nations-designated zones there.

But my main point relating to Prevlaka is the following. We have heard that for nearly seven months the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been requesting the resumption of bilateral talks with Croatia on the question of Prevlaka. So far, Zagreb has not responded to those requests; according to some information, Zagreb's position can be explained by the fact that the Croatian side does not wish to deal with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities, *inter alia* because of indictments by the Hague Tribunal.

That indicates that we must all consider where we are to go if some parties continue to refuse to talk to Belgrade at all. What do we wish to achieve in this way? There are regular elections in Yugoslavia, but will we all respect the outcomes and the choices voiced by the people of Yugoslavia? This is no empty question; it involves policies of individual countries that in many respects run counter to the wishes of the international community. I might recall that United Nations decisions reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia indicate that such matters, whether in Kosovo or in Prevlaka, must be resolved with the direct participation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

There is significant politicization present in the policies of a number of countries. We have United Nations decisions, but we must implement them. It is becoming increasingly difficult to implement such decisions because of opposition from certain States to the participation of Belgrade in the implementation of binding commitments under the resolutions.

I really do not know the answer to this question. But I appeal to all involved to review their positions and to consider their own particular tasks and how we can all truly implement our decisions. In any event, I believe that the path towards an answer lies in the mandate held by Mr. Bildt. He has vast experience, enormous energy and great creativity. The approach he has taken reflects those qualities, and we trust that the same qualities will help us all move further ahead in the right direction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As announced earlier, I shall now suspend this meeting until 4.30 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.