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STATEMENT DELIVERED BY

H. E. MR. NOEL DORR

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND

IN THE

SECURITY COUNCIL

ON THE SITUATION IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (ISLAS MALVINAS)

25 MAY 1982

Mr. President:

When I spoke in the Council on Friday last, I described the war in the South Atlantic as the war that should not have happened. I said further that I believed someone must shout stop.

It was in order to offer the Council a way to do that - a way that we hope both sides might be ready to accept - that Ireland decided to submit a draft resolution on Monday evening, three days after our debate began.

Already on many previous occasions as this tragic conflict grew and developed we tried to say stop - while at the same time - and this is very important - upholding the principles already laid down by the Council itself as well as the basic principles of the Charter.

We began trying to say stop on 1st April, together with other members of the Council, when we called on both parties not to use force to settle an old dispute.

We continued on 2nd and 3rd April, when we criticised Argentina for using force in spite of this; we warned of the danger of further conflict; and we voted for Resolution 502.

In various ways since then Ireland, like others, has continued to say "stop - do not let it lead to war". Let there be a diplomatic solution. But war it is.

A century ago war was described as the extension of politics by other means. Today that definition does not hold. War is now always the failure of politics. In our time we have evolved methods and principles, which, though still imperfect, allow for the settlement of international disputes peacefully; and the United Nations Charter commits us all to use those methods; to follow those principles; and to avoid the use of force.

The war over the Falklands/Malvinas is thus a failure of politics and a failure of negotiation. It has escalated by stages - grievance deeply felt on one side, defence of principle on the other. Now both sides are locked in dangerous combat; and all of us, sensing the wider dangers are deeply apprehensive.

Each of us, no doubt, has our own view of who was right and who was wrong at each successive stage in this escalation from dispute, to conflict, to war. But few nations here, if they look to their own tragedies and failures are entitled to be self-righteous. What we must ask ourselves now rather

is what we as a Council can do collectively to offer both sides in the present conflict a way out of the combat in which they are locked?

The only rational way out is a return to negotiation - provided of course that this is a negotiation which will neither betray the principles which one side is defending at great cost nor ignore the sense of grievance which the other has felt for many years. That is the sole purpose of our draft Resolution. We sought to achieve such a return to negotiation by careful stages which would build up more confidence at each stage.

Our draft in fact envisaged three stages in the effort to bring the fighting finally to an end, get the Secretary-General's negotiations back on the rails, give them new authority.

The first step, we believed would have to be taken by the parties themselves. They must be ready to stop active hostilities, for a limited period in the first instance. If they were not ready to do this then we feared that little else could be done. In paragraph 3 of our draft we proposed a period of 72 hours; and we called this a suspension of hostilities. This does not mean that that is all we are proposing; nor does it mean, of course, that after that short period the fighting would resume. What we wanted was a short pause - enough to start a process, to build a very minimum of confidence and to arrange the details of a more lasting cease-fire.

This pause would lead into a second stage. It is at that second stage - that of a more permanent cease-fire - that the Secretary-General would begin to come back into the picture. That is the meaning of paragraph 4 in our draft. During the 72 hour period, while the parties suspended fighting he would enter into urgent contacts with both sides to try to work out by agreement the practical problems of a lasting cease-fire.

We know well that there are such problems and we do not think that they can be ignored.

At this second stage, for example, there may be need for arrangements for a limited withdrawal to prevent a breach of the cease-fire. The question of re-supply of forces may arise; questions would also arise as the naval vessels in the area. In our view this would be the right moment to re-involve the Secretary-General. His role in the first instance would be to help the parties to work out practical problems on the ground on a mutually acceptable basis. This could help to build confidence and to prepare the way for the later use of the good offices referred to in paragraph 2. At this second stage we have also envisaged as a possibility the idea that United Nations Observers might be stationed with the forces on either side to monitor the cease-fire. This very minimum involvement of the United Nations could be a beginning and a preparation for a larger United Nations presence on the islands at a later stage as envisaged in the Secretary-General's own proposals.

The third stage in the approach what we have in mind at this stage is, of course, the renewed mission of good offices by the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 2. If there is one theme which emerged with absolute consistency from this debate it was praise for the Secretary-General's efforts to negotiate a settlement consistent with Resolution 502. This was coupled in most cases with a wish to see him continue with the impetus and authority of a new and more formal mandate, which would preserve as far as possible at this stage the points on which he had already established a measure of agreement.

The aim of paragraph 2 in our draft would be to give him this new authority and impetus.

It might be asked whether such an approach has any chance of success at this stage. How can he now hope to go farther than in his previous efforts? There are, I believe, several important points of difference in the present situation which could make it realistic to think of asking him to continue his devoted efforts.

First, he would now have a formal mandate from the Council.

Second, the adoption of our Resolution would in some way help to preserve the measure of agreement

which he had already achieved and which may otherwise completely disappear.

Third, the situation itself is changing. One must always hope that in any conflict a stage will be reached where both parties would be ready to accept a settlement if a mission of good offices is continued.

Fourth, this new effort by the Secretary-General would in our proposal come when some elementary measure of confidence had already been established, first by the parties suspension of hostilities and second by the more lasting cease-fire negotiated with the help of the Secretary-General.

This then is our proposal. A careful process, an effort to build confidence and to get the Secretary-General's admirable efforts back on the rails. Like every process it must begin somewhere. It must begin with a small first step, taken by the parties, a short pause in the fighting. But it is a process designed to lead to a resumption on a new and more formal basis of the admirable and sustained efforts which the Secretary-General undertook with such a substantial measure of success for over two weeks.

Mr. President:

Our proposal is not a "wolf in sheep's clothing" as one source was said to have described it, according to this morning's New York Times. Nor is it a result of wooly thinking. It is an honest attempt made in complete good faith to offer a reasonable and graduated way out to both parties locked in a dangerous and tragic combat while upholding and I insist on this, the important principles to which we remain fully committed.

If the parties do not now accept it, so be it. If they want to fight to a finish, so be it. If this Council, for whatever reason, cannot or does not wish to adopt our proposal, so be it. If a better formula can be found, so be it - we will welcome anything that will work in the present situation and bring peace while maintaining the principles I have mentioned. Whatever happens in face of this tragic conflict, Ireland will continue to believe that it was at least right to have tried. Whatever the outcome it will not be said at the end of our short term of membership of this Council that we did not even try.

Thank you, Mr. President.