



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

*His Excellency Mr. Stafford Neil
Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations*

**IN THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

THE REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

New York, October 13, 2003

[Final Text]

Mr. President

The Report of the Security Council which is before us is a bulky document of 221 pages the real substance of which is covered in the introductory section of 14 pages containing a descriptive account of the Council's activities, with the rest consisting of the documentary information and references. We would have benefited from more substance and analysis. The period covered was one of intense activity as the Council held about 200 meetings along with numerous informal meetings and consultations.

The dominant issue in the Council's activity related to the disarmament of Iraq. It formed part of the dramatic events which captured world attention amid controversy and debate on the role of the United Nations. As a result of profound divisions, the Council was unable to control or determine the course of events following the decision taken by a Coalition of states to take military action without authorization by the Council. The record of the Security Council in this process had some positive elements as in some ways, members sought to exercise their responsibility with due regard for the principles of the Charter. Political circumstances created a difficult time for the Council which is still grappling with the complications flowing from the unfolding events.

The other area of concentrated effort was in Africa where there were positive indications of the Council's effectiveness in dealing with particular areas of conflict. We note the improving situation in Sierra Leone and Angola and intervention with respect to the conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are concerns with the level and urgency of its response to developments in both Liberia and the DRC which was hesitant and tardy. In Liberia, the slowness to engage may have caused a worsening of the humanitarian situation up to the time of the deployment of the ECOWAS vanguard force.

In general, we believe that the Council's engagement in Africa could have been fortified by a greater sense of urgency and a larger commitment of resources in terms of manpower and economic assistance to provide for security and stability in a situation where there had been so much disruption and humanitarian need.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East which has been a continued source of anxiety and frustration, the year carried us through a familiar pattern of hope and despair. The Road Map was heralded as opening the way for peace but that process has been unravelling. The role being played by the Security Council appears to be uncertain and tentative. The United Nations is declared as being a party to the Quartet under whose sponsorship the Road Map was launched. But it is not clear to some of us what is the agency through which the United Nations is represented in this process. There does not appear to be any active role performed by the Organization in terms of the formulation of the Plan or in the monitoring and strategy of implementation. The United Nations appears to be only a nominal partner or bystander since there is little evidence that the Security Council has been significantly engaged. The Report

merely indicates that the Council followed the work of the Quartet and reiterated support for the Road Map and the Quartet's efforts.

We also note too that the Council continued to engage in holding debates on thematic issues though there seems to be a lessening of this activity. In our view, this is an unnecessary addition to the work of the Council. Besides, it gives us increasing concern with respect to duplication and the encroachment on subject matters which are more appropriately handled by the General Assembly. We would recommend that in order to respect the different competencies of the various organizations, that the practice of holding debates on thematic questions should be reviewed and discontinued.

With regard to the operations of the Council, we would wish to make two observations. One is that there is continued concern about transparency and a failure to give due attention to the views of the wider membership expressed in the debates in the Council. When decisions are taken before a debate is held and non-members are heard after Council members have spoken, the contribution of non-members cannot be really effective. We believe that it is incumbent on the Council in its decision-making, to take account of the views of interested parties and the wider membership. This is a serious obligation on the Council as it acts on behalf of the membership to safeguard international peace and security.

The second point relates to the tendency for decision-making to be concentrated among the Permanent Members and a limited role played by the elected members of the body. We continue to feel concerned at this trend of growing concentration of power in decision-making. We understand the realities of power but the fact is that an undemocratic process is undermining the legitimacy of Council decisions and the authority of Council action.

Mr. President, under Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the international community and is therefore accountable to the General Assembly. Accordingly, we believe it is important that the Security Council be formally informed of the views, observations and recommendations of the General Assembly in relation to its report. As a follow-up to this debate, we would suggest that a special meeting of the Security Council should be held to hear the response of the General Assembly through a statement to be made by the President of the Assembly summarizing the debate; Alternately the Assembly should adopt a formal document to be presented to the Council. Accountability should be formally acknowledged in order that the General Assembly carry out the role envisaged in the Charter as the principal organ of the United Nations.

With respect to reform of the Security Council, we regret the lack of progress. We continue to underscore the importance of enlarging the composition of the Security Council to make it more representative and to reform its decision-making procedures to conform with the principle of the sovereign equality of states. The situation cannot continue to be left in abeyance on the basis of a failure to find consensus. Some new initiative should be undertaken utilizing a democratic procedure to move the process forward.

Jamaica places its trust in you, Mr. President, having regard to the sense of commitment which you have demonstrated for strengthening the United Nations system. Your political experience and skill are our greatest assets for progress during this General Assembly. We need to show some positive results from the years of meetings, consultations, discussions and negotiations. To succeed, we need the full support and positive contribution of all members of the Organization. You can be assured, Mr. President, that Jamaica will do its part.

Thank you, Mr. President.