



Canada assumed its seat on the Security Council on January 1st in the expectation that the first item of business would be the long awaited implementation of UNSC 435/78 leading to the independence of Namibia. However, just as negotiations began, two Libyan planes were shot down on January 4th by United States fighter aircraft over the Mediterranean. Within hours, members of the Council were meeting individually with the President of the Council (Ambassador Rana of Nepal was President during the month of January). This was followed by an informal session of the Council and finally a formal meeting on January 11, 1989.

During informal negotiations on the draft resolution, Canada joined other western members of the Council in an effort to draft a text which would present a balanced account of the event. When this failed, Ambassador Fortier informed the Council that, after having carefully considered the information provided by both parties Canada had accepted the American version and would vote against a resolution condemning the United States. The resolution was not adopted as the United States, the United Kingdom and France all exercised their veto.

Just prior to the vote on the draft resolution, the Council was faced with a complicated procedural issue related to the status of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO, which enjoyed Observer status at the UN, asked to address the Council under the procedural rule (37) which relates to states, rather than being sponsored by a member state as provided under the rule (39) for observers and other organizations or individuals. In explaining our decision to abstain on the motion, Ambassador Fortier noted that Canada "does not oppose the Observer of Palestine's being heard in UN bodies, but it believes that the past procedure should continue to be followed. Furthermore, Canada recalls that it has not recognized the Palestinian State proclaimed in Algiers". Although the USA voted against the motion, it was carried as the veto does not apply to procedural matters (Canada abstained with the UK and France).

At the same time as the Libyan discussions were taking place, informal consultations continued on Namibia, the mandate for the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was renewed, a date was set to fill a vacancy on the International Court of Justice and informal discussions continued on the ongoing conflict in the Israeli-occupied territories.

