Chapter VII

THE UN AT THE CROSS ROADS: JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR
When Kurt Waldheim's second term was coming to an end, the international situation was in a very critical state. Almost every part of the world was witnessing armed hostilities. Besides the perennial conflict situations such as Arab-Israeli conflict, the turmoil and tension in South Africa, new conflict situations had emerged, as for instance in Central America, Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq war, Kampuchea etc. The effectiveness of the United Nations to resolve these crises was impaired by the attitude of the member countries, more particularly that of the permanent members. On the background the selection of the new incumbent acquired importance.

As has been unprecedented in the history of the Organization, Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim announced on 10 September, 1981 that he would be available for a third term. Though the permanent members had been undecided on the matter, they, except China, supported Waldheim's re-election for another term. China's decision to oppose Waldheim's re-election to an unprecedented third term pushed the matter again to the Security Council for a formal voting.

The Super Powers favoured Waldheim because, in their view. Waldheim is "fairly objective and more appropriate a candidate for running the show at the U.N.". China proposed the name of Salim A. Salim of Tanzania, who was the President of the General Assembly in 1979. At the
same time, the United States was firm on Waldheim. Observers felt that the battle between China and the United States has become more principled than a test of power. There are, however, other reasons why China seems so much an ardent supporter of Salim A. Salim. "It was this young diplomat from Tanzania who in the seventies representing his country at the UN, causing much displeasure and anger to the then United States representative at the UN, George Bush, supported the admission of the Communist China."¹

When the voting took place in the Council, Salim fell short of the nine votes required for the election by the fifteen member body. Furthermore, United States vetoed Salim.² In two rounds of voting in the Council, Salim fell short of the required votes and both him and Waldheim had been vetoed by the United States and China respectively.

Meanwhile the Australian government which had been campaigning vigorously for Waldheim mooted an idea of splitting the five year term into two parts, giving the post to Waldheim for three years so that Salim might hold office during the remaining two years, presumably with the  

¹Bangladesh Times (Dacca), 11 November, 1981 (Article by Hasan Fordous).
silent reassurance of a full term starting from 1986. This plan did not gain support from majority of the members. Meanwhile, Waldheim requested the Security Council President Olara Ottunnu of Uganda, on the latter's request, not to include his name in the further ballot of the Security Council. Salim also withdrew on the request of the Council President. It may be noted that the US delegate Jean Kirkpatrick expressed her unhappiness over the instruction from her government to veto Salim's election. She has described him as a "dynamic, intelligent and articulate" and said she entertained "high regard" for him.3

As both these candidates ultimately lost the race, there arose the need to find out an acceptable candidate. Though many names have been proposed, as a compromise candidate, the name of Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Peruvian diplomat found acceptance from all sections of the United Nations membership. He was appointed by the General Assembly on 15 December, 1981.4 "Unlike many others who had been busy campaigning. Perez de Cuellar stayed at home."5

3 International Herald Tribune (Paris), 5 November, 1981.


5 The Indian Express (New Delhi), 15 December, 1981.
Perez de Cuellar's Conception of the Office

Perez de Cuellar assumed office on 1 January, 1982 with a firm resolution "to reactivate the political role of the Secretary-General within our constitutional parameters, always attentive to the very rapid development of events and taking care not to be dragged along by them". At the same time, he was well-aware of the task ahead, especially at a time when the Super Power relationship was at a low ebb. Perez de Cuellar viewed that the Secretary-General has to avoid two extremes in playing his role. He said:

- on the one side is Scylla of trying to inflate the role through too liberal a reading of the text of succumbing, that is, to vanity and wishful thinking. On the other is Charybdis of trying to limit the role to only those responsibilities which are explicitly conferred by the Charter and are impossible to escape; that is succumbing to modesty, to the instinct of the self-effacement, and to the desire to avoid controversy.

While expressing his views on the Charter provisions concerning the position and function of the Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar told that making an annual report on the work of the Organization:

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is not meant to be and should never become, a mere rapporteur's job: the work of the Organization is a broad term. It includes, but not confined to, whatever the Organization has done, or has failed to do. Its submission is one of the ways in which the Secretary-General can act as an initiator and can galvanize the efforts of the other parts of the United Nations.

He believed that article 99 has given "a reservoir of authority a wide margin of discretion, which requires the most careful political judgement and is limited only by prudence". 9

Whatever pronouncement an incumbent makes, it goes without saying that the careful handling of situations at an early stage of the crisis can make a headway with regard to the result of the Secretary-General's intervention. In this case, Perez de Cuellar was critical of the attitude of the member states for the delay in bringing matter before the United Nations. He thought the Security Council or the Secretary-General cannot have any influence in handling a situation effectively if the members avoid bringing critical problems before the Security Council or to do so late. He underlined the need to reverse this trend "if the Council is to play its role as primary world authority for international peace and security". 10

8 ibid., p.65.

9 ibid., p.66.

As was in the case of his predecessors, Perez de Cuellar also favoured quiet diplomacy. He believed that avoiding too much publicity is one of the most important keys to the success in diplomacy. So, he adopted his own style of diplomacy. He is an advocate of what he calls "silent diplomacy", the painstaking behind-the-scene negotiations which alone can build the trust to bridge deeply opposed positions. Perez de Cuellar viewed that if quiet diplomacy has to succeed, it needs the confidence of all parties.

Perez de Cuellar stressed the need for consensus in almost all the endeavours which the Organization undertakes in pursuance of the fulfilment of its primary objectives. Especially in the case of peacekeeping, he stressed the need for consensus among the members and more particularly among the permanent members. In this context, Perez de Cuellar was opposed to the "intemperate rhetoric or excessive repetition" in the Assembly, as it "seldom served" any purpose.¹¹

Based on this conception of the office of the Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar attempted to discharge his functions in a modest way, stressing more on confidential personal contacts directly or sometimes through

¹¹ibid., session 41, Suppl.No.1 (A/41/1), p.3 (Annual Report of the Secretary General).
personal representatives. It may be noted here that, as this study is restricted to the end of Perez de Cuellar's first term, the outcome of his efforts in finding a political solution to most of the chronic and pressing crises did not start yielding positive results. It was during the second term of Perez de Cuellar that some of the serious disputes that have heightened the cold war tension showed signs of reconciliation.

**Afghanistan**

Perez de Cuellar has played an important role in the United Nations endeavour to secure the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan in accordance with the General Assembly resolutions of 14 January, 1980, even before he became the Secretary-General. On 11 February, 1981, the then Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim appointed Perez de Cuellar as his personal representative to explore the possibilities of a negotiated settlement of the Afghan crisis. As a matter of policy the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan regime was averse to the idea of the visit of the Secretary-General's personal representative. However, Perez de Cuellar visited Kabul in April 1981. In his second visit to Afghanistan in August, Perez de Cuellar visited Islamabad also and his efforts succeeded in achieving a procedural breakthrough. On his return, Cuellar reported that Pakistan
and Afghanistan reached an agreement on a four-point agenda: (i) the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan; (ii) pledges of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan; (iii) international guarantees concerning non-interference (reportedly involving the Soviet Union, China and the United States; and (iv) the return of the refugees.12

Following his election as Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar appointed Diego Cordovez of Ecuador as his personal representative to help resolve the Afghan crisis. By the time cold war tension reached a dangerous level, the United States increased its military and economic assistance to the Mujahiddeen rebels fighting the Soviet and Afghan forces. The attitude of Pakistan also hardened, presumably due to the US pressure. Due to this the Secretary-General warned, "what we have is a bridge of straw and we should not try to run across it too much".13

In April 1982, Cordovez shuttled between Kabul and Islamabad and succeeded in getting their concurrence to meet in Geneva from June 1982 onwards to find ways for a peaceful settlement. Soon the "good offices" role of Cordovez, through his constant meetings, was turned


into one of active mediation. He succeeded in persuading
the negotiating parties that instead of arguing about
each item separately, it was first necessary to accept the
concept of a "comprehensive settlement" in which agreement
on the withdrawal of foreign forces, on mutual non-
interference guarantees and on the return of the refugees
would be independent.\textsuperscript{14} The first round of indirect talks
in Geneva in June 1982 envisaged the foundation of
agreement on the objective of complete withdrawal of
"foreign troops" but Cordovez had not explicitly raised
the issue of withdrawal time-table. After the talks,
Cordovez said that the talks had moved beyond procedural
questions to substantive matters, and concluded a kind of
package of understanding.\textsuperscript{15}

The second round of talks was held in two phases:
first from 11 to 22 April, 1983 and from 12 to 24 June,
1983. Preceding the second round of talks, both the
Secretary-General and his Personal Representative visited
Moscow. Later the Secretary-General reported that the
Russians expressed themselves strongly in favour of
political settlement and supported the UN endeavours.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}ibid., p.38.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Washington Post}, 26 June, 1982.

\textsuperscript{16}United States, Department of State, \textit{Afghanistan:
Four Years of Occupation}, Report No.112 (Washington, 1983)
p.8.
Almost at this time, it has become clear that any peaceful settlement to the question mostly depend on the United States which had been providing all assistance to the Mujahideens (freedom fighters) through Pakistan. One analyst notes that "Washington finds it useful to keep Moscow in the position of defendant at the bar and appears content to wait until the Soviet withdrawal can be exacted as part of a larger bargain".17

After the conclusion of April 1983 talks, Cordovez announced that substantial progress had been achieved in all areas and the negotiations were ninety five per cent complete.18 He also said that the "draft text envisaged" the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan 'and he had some informal indications that the Soviet Union, the United States and China would be ready to guarantee the agreement when they have examined the text".19 But the initial hopes after the first phases of the second round of the talks, started disappearing and the cold war politics intensified. Both the United States and Pakistan alleged that the Soviet Union was using dilatory tactics. The Soviet Union also charged that the United States was trying to torpedo the Geneva talks.


19 The Muslim (Islamabad), 12 May, 1983.
In August 1983, Diego Cordovez submitted his draft to both Washington and Moscow for comments, but both the countries maintained a silence over it. Washington and Islamabad denied even having received the text of the draft from Diego Cordovez. Under these circumstances, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar declared that he would cancel a proposed visit to the region in September 1983 of Cordovez on the grounds that the nature of the deadlock did not offer much hope of early resolution.

The third round of talks which was held from 24 to 30 August also failed to achieve any positive result. After fourth round of talks in June 1985, Cordovez said that an "important advance had been made in drafting the agreement which would become the basis for a comprehensive settlement, if more powerful factors permit". The gradual pace of development at the proximity talks at Geneva did not seem to have disheartened both the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative. The fifth round of talks were held between 26 and 30 August, 1985. Cordovez noted that unlike earlier efforts to reach a comprehensive pact, the parties had agreed on the form of the settlement and all

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20 Harrison, n.13, p.47.

21 The Muslim, 5 August, 1985.
were aware that there would be four instruments and that each word which, as agreed upon, was going to appear in the finalised instrument in exactly the same place in which they have agreed to put it.22

While submitting the draft documents to Moscow and Washington in early 1985, Cordovez requested both Superpowers to act as guarantors in case an agreement was signed. Moscow had agreed and Washington, after initial reluctance, expressed its willingness to be a guarantor. The intervening period between the fifth and sixth round of Geneva talks was marked by the summit meeting of President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader Mikhael Gorbachev. In the meantime, the United States withdrew its consent to be a co-guarantor. The US State Department maintained that nothing had been promised but that "whatever has been offered was depended on 'satisfactory accord'".23

Despite all the rebuffs, the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative continued to seek a negotiated settlement. The dawn of 1986 was followed by the occurrences of traumatic developments which though did not lead to the negotiated settlement of Afghan question but wielded decisive impact on the subsequent developments


leading to the conclusion of Geneva accords of April 1988. In Afghanistan, as in the Cyprus negotiations, the Secretary-General has not merely facilitated dialogue between the parties but also repeatedly floated proposals intended to effect convergence and agreement.

**Iran-Iraq War**

The Secretary-General's involvement in the Iran-Iraq conflict was confined to mainly two fields - the prevention of the use of chemical weapons and the humanitarian treatment of the prisoners of war by the both sides. On the question of ending the war once it started, the efforts of the Secretary-General was not welcomed by both sides as the fighting was already underway.

On 3 November, 1983, Iran asked the Security Council for an examination of the medical and military evidence of the use of chemical weapons employed by Iraq in the war. On 8 March, 1984, the Iranian ambassador, said Rajaie Kharassani addressed a letter to the Secretary General invoking the Assembly's 1982 resolution and asking him to take immediate action to investigate. On 9 March the Secretary-General announced that a team of experts

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25 The four experts belonged to Australia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
would leave for Iran soon. It was clarified that the Secretary-General was despatching the team "under his authority" derived from the Charter. The four experts reported unanimously on 26 March that chemical weapons in the form of aerial bombs had been used in the areas inspected in Iran.\(^\text{26}\) Iraq denied the use of chemical weapons and said that "if the experts sent by the Secretary-General found substance of this kind in some Iranian areas, Iran is the one which bears responsibility."\(^\text{27}\) On 30 March, 1984, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the use of chemical weapons. The speedy, efficient intervention by the Secretary-General had significantly, perhaps decisively, raised the costs to the user and appeared to have caused Iraq to rethink its tactics. Perez de Cuellar cited this intervention as one of the occasions when the Secretary-General can discharge his functions without a formal invocation of article 99 of the Charter.\(^\text{28}\)

Another area in which Perez de Cuellar exercised his good offices was the question of humanitarians treatment of the prisoners of war of the Iran-Iraq war. He


\(^{27}\) Doc.S/16438, 27 March 1984 (ibid., p.16).

\(^{28}\) Perez de Cuellar, n.7, p.66.
sent a three member United Nations mission to inquire into the situation and civilian detainees in Iran. The mission reported:

While we were given assurances by authorities in both Iraq and Iran that they endeavoured to adhere to accepted international norms for the treatment of prisoners of war, it was evident that policies and standards that they professed to uphold were not always being observed. We found that hard treatment and violence in the camps were far from uncommon. 29

The Secretary-General visited Tehran and Baghdad in April 1985 and discussed the matter with the government authorities. Through his personal interference, he could secure assurances from both the warring nations that they would treat the prisoners of war with compassion.

It may be noted that the Secretary-General's efforts were restricted to these two areas. With regard to the ending of the armed conflict, Perez de Cuellar reported that he had "not found the means to bring the war to an end". 30 However, the Secretary-General has been criticised by scholars for not invoking article 99 before the war broke out considering the long tension between the two countries. 31 On the question of invoking article 99,


Perez de Cuellar was cautious. He said:

Before invoking the article, the Secretary-General has to consider carefully how his initiative will fare, given the agreement or lack thereof among the Permanent Members and also the positions of the Non-Permanent Members. 32

**Falkland War**

Within months of assuming office in January 1982, Perez de Cuellar's 'silent diplomacy' was tested in the Falkland/Malvinas war. Taking over from the failed efforts of the US Secretary of State Alexander Haig, he, through far less public efforts, brought both sides very close to agreements. The General Assembly in a resolution asked the Secretary-General to undertake a renewed mission of good offices to assist the parties in complying with its request to take necessary measures to that end. 33

It may be noted that throughout the initial stages of the crisis, Perez de Cuellar kept a low profile to allow the peace initiative by the US Secretary of State Alexander Haig to go on. Haig had proposed a plan calling for mutual withdrawal of Argentinian and British forces; a tripartite administration involving the United States,

32 Perez de Cuellar, n.7, p.65.

Britain and Argentina; and negotiation in due course over the key issue of sovereignty. The Secretary-General had little choice in the matter. He might, perhaps, have thought that the United States, having good relations with both parties and also its standing as a Super Power, would succeed in its attempt.

After the failure of Haig's efforts, Perez de Cuellar pursued a course of quiet diplomacy, establishing a task force under a deputy to prepare contingency plans in the event of Haig's failure and offering on 19 April both parties to the disputes a list of ways in which the UN might be able to help bring about a political settlement. By the end of April, fighting had broken out between the two sides. It led the Secretary-General to assume a formal, public role as a mediator. He proposed a set of ideas to both delegations which included the concepts of mutual withdrawal, the commencement of diplomatic negotiations, the lifting of sanctions in the exclusive zones, and the establishment of transitional arrangements in Falklands pending the outcome of diplomatic negotiations.


35 ibid., p.173.
The Security Council agreed to support the Secretary-General's initiatives, and a period of intense negotiations under his auspices continued until 19 May. This involved some thirty meetings with the two sides and telephone appeals to both Thatcher and General Galtieri.

Two more debates of the Security Council followed the Secretary-General's admission on 20 May of his failure to reach a settlement. The Council again mandated the Secretary-General to negotiate a cease-fire. By that time the war was almost coming to a close with the landing of the British forces at San Carlos Bay, and on 2 June, the Secretary-General once again reported the failure of the mission.

Namibia

The question of the independence of Namibia was one of the most important and foremost subjects in Perez de Cuellar's priority list. He said if he had a single goal in his term, it was to preside over the independence of South West Africa, the territory that is controlled by South Africa. "I cannot forget. I come from the Third World. I have to give priorities. I have committed myself to solve this problem as soon as possible." 36

36 International Herald Tribune, 11 January, 1982 (Perez de Cuellar's first interview after assuming the office of the Secretary-General).
In May 1983, the Security Council mandated the Secretary-General to consult with the parties to achieve a cease-fire agreement in Namibia. It called on South Africa to make a firm commitment to comply with the plan for the independence of Namibia and co-operate fully with the Secretary-General. However, the Council for Namibia reported to the General Assembly that the negotiations had been obstructed by South Africa's use of various tactics to delay agreement on a workable solution. In October 1983, the Secretary General informed the Security Council that although virtually all issues regarding the establishment of United Nations Transition Assistance Group had been resolved, South Africa continued to link the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola to the plan for independence in Namibia. On 28 October the Security Council declared that the "independence of Namibia cannot be held hostage to the resolution of issues that are alien" to the 1978 independence plan for Namibia.

Though all preparations had been completed by the United Nations, the Secretary General reported on 9 September, 1986 that Namibia was still unjustly denied the right of self-determination because of illegal perpetuation of control by South Africa, which continued to insist on the extraneous linkage to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. 37

Middle East

Middle East had been an area of tension from the very beginning. The involvement of the United Nations in the Middle East was more intense compared to any other area of conflict in the world. All the Secretaries-General had tried their utmost to solve this perennial crisis between the Arabs and Israel. Perez de Cuellar was of the view that the problem needed the world community's most concern. At the same time, he said that "the United Nations must be present for the final political solution". 38

Perez de Cuellar paid official visits in June 1983 to five countries in the region: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. In July, he met in Geneva with Yasser Arafat in order to complete his own assessment of the situation and to see how best the United Nations could contribute toward a just and lasting settlement. In his report to the General Assembly session in 1984, Perez de Cuellar said that the Middle East conflict could be fully resolved only through a comprehensive settlement concerning all its aspects.

Despite all his efforts, the Middle East situation remained unchanged and here was an alarming absence of a generally acceptable and active negotiating process. 39


Lebanon

Lebanon was an area of perpetual clashes between the Christian and Muslim militias. On 6 June, 1982, the Israeli forces attacked Southern Lebanon. UNIFIL was not a significant obstacle to the invading forces. So, resistance, chiefly of a token and non-human kind was offered, as a reminder that UNIFIL was the only authorized armed forces in Southern Lebanon. But in neither armaments, nor size, nor mandate was it fitted to resist the Israelis, and its positions were simply "overrun or bypassed". 40

The Security Council met on 6 June, and unanimously demanded Israel to withdraw all its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon, and that all parties strictly deserve the cease-fire. On 18 June the Security Council extended the mandate of the Force for two months more. The Forces' functions had become largely humanitarian, to distribute food, water and other essential supplies, acting in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

With regard to the continuation of the UNIFIL, the permanent members lacked unanimity. The proposal for a

peace-keeping force had been rejected in the Council by the Soviet veto. Another proposal for a United Nations force to act as a buffer zone between the Israeli and Syrian troops in Lebanon was criticised by the Secretary-General as he thought it "would help to partition the country". He proposed that the appropriate time, a territorially expanded UNIFIL should sit between Israel and Syrian presence in Lebanon. His idea was that in the context of a full Israeli withdrawal, and without prejudice to arrangements elsewhere in Lebanon, there should be a temporary deployment of UNIFIL in areas vacated by Israeli forces and its immediate deployment in the area of Sidon."

At the end of 1984 and early in 1985, talks were held under the United Nations auspices between Israeli and Lebanese military representatives regarding Israel's plan to withdraw from Lebanon. Lebanon, however, backtracked from its earlier public endorsement of the Secretary-General's proposals for a bigger United Nations role. By this time, in late 1985 Israel had announced its own plan for withdrawal, which was to take place in three stages over the next six months. In April 1985, the Secretary-General stressed that no armed military or

41 The Times (London), 11 June, 1984.

paramilitary personnel of any kind can be allowed to operate in the area, other than the Lebanese army and the UNIFIL, and that all parties and elements publicly declare their support for and cooperation with the Lebanese authorities and UNIFIL. 43 In April 1986, Perez de Cuellar recommended that UNIFIL's mandate be extended for six months, but due to the objection by France, the extension was restricted for three months. In October, he stated that the UNIFIL was in an "intolerable situation for a United Nations peacekeeping force", but added that it was making "an important contribution to such peace and stability as exists in Southern Lebanon". Accordingly, he could not recommend its withdrawal. 44

Situation in Central America

The situation in Nicaragua was brought to the United Nations Security Council informing it that the worsening tension in the region constituted a threat to the independence and sovereignty of Central American States and to international peace and security. The situation arose out of the support and assistance which the United States was providing to the anti-government rebels in Nicaragua.

43 UN Doc.S/17093, 11 April, 1985, para 42.
The Council met on 25 March, 1982. A draft resolution calling member states to refrain from using indirect, overt or covert force against any country in Central America or the Caribbean and called on all States to support the search for a peaceful solution to the problem was vetoed by the United States. In September 1983, on the request of Nicaragua, the General Assembly considered the situation. It reaffirmed the right of all countries of the region to live in peace and to decide their own future, free from outside interference and intervention.

In May 1984, at the request of the government of Nicaragua, the International Court of Justice started hearing the matter. But on 6 April, 1984 the US government notified the Secretary-General that a declaration it had made in 1946, accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice would not apply for a period of two years to "disputes with any Central American State or arising out of or related to events in Central America". The United States argued that the case was not admissible because of the non-participation of third parties, such as Honduras, whose interests in the question had to be protected; because Nicaragua's complaint involved the question of use of force in international relations, which was essentially a matter
for the Security Council and not the Court; because a judicial disposition was not possible in a case of ongoing conflict; and because Nicaragua failed to exhaust established avenues for conflict resolution, such as the Contadora peace process undertaken by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.

The Secretary-General's role in this situation was not of a catalyst, or a third party as he could foresee that the United States would not welcome such an effort by him. He reported to the Assembly that the situation had steadily deteriorated with the increasing intrusion of conflicting ideologies. He believed that only by insulating the Central American situation from the East-West conflict and seeking a Latin American solution that takes account of the economic and social needs of the area can a genuine settlement be achieved. 45

Grenada

On 25 October, following a period of serious political unrest in Grenada, during the Prime Minister, some other members of the Cabinet and a number of civilians were killed, military forces from the United States and several Caribbean countries intervened in Grenada.

The situation was brought before the Council by Nicaragua. Due to the veto exercised by the United States, the matter was taken to the General Assembly. The General Assembly deplored "armed intervention as a flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state". It also called for an immediate cessation of the armed intervention and the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops, and requested the Secretary-General to assess the situation in Grenada and to report back within seventy-two hours.

In response to the Assembly's request, Perez de Cuellar appointed a representative who visited the island on 3 November to gather information. The Secretary General reported on 6 November that the most essential aspect of the situation in Grenada was the non-existence of any political authority. The Governor General of Grenada informed the Secretary-General's representative that, based on the 1973 constitution of Grenada, he had decided to provide for an interim arrangement that would enable the country to administer its affairs pending the return to full constitutional government by way of general elections. The general election was held on 3 December,

46 General Assembly Resolution A/RES/38/7, 2 November, 1983.
1984, and on 10 April, 1985, the new Permanent Representative of Grenada presented his credentials to the Secretary General.

East Timor

East Timor had been a Portuguese colony from the sixteenth century. In 1960, the General Assembly placed East Timor in the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. In 1976 and each year until 1983, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the people of the Territory should able to exercise freely their right to self-determination and independence and it recommended that the Security Council take effective steps to secure that right.

Upon assuming office, Perez de Cuellar began informal consultations with the Government of Indonesia and Portugal, aimed at improving the humanitarian situation in East Timor and promoting a comprehensive settlement of the problem. In November 1982, the General Assembly formally requested the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned. These consultations, undertaken within the framework of the good offices of the Secretary-General in 1983, resulted in contact in July between Indonesia and Portugal, through their Permanent Representative in New York.

On 25 July, 1984, the Secretary-General reported to the Assembly that Indonesia and Portugal had agreed to
continue the dialogue established between them. In October 1985, Indonesia and Portugal agreed to undertake substantive talks which began in New York the following month under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

Summary Observations

Javier Perez de Cuellar was not very much widely known when he assumed the office of the Secretary-General. He was the Personal Representative of his predecessor Kurt Waldheim in Afghanistan since 11 February, 1981.

Apart from the already existing and chronic crises, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Kampuchean crisis, the situation in the Central America and Carribbean state of Grenada added new dimension to the world situation. This threw great challenge to the United Nations and the office of the Secretary General in particular. There was a growing tendency among the members to discard the Organization as an ineffective body by almost every section of the United Nations community. Added to this was the financial difficulties faced by the Organization due to the refusal of some major countries to pay their budgetary contributions to the United Nations.

Soon after assuming the office, Perez de Cuelllar tried to address almost all the crises/situations such as Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq war, Middle East situation, the
Kampuchean question, Namibian independence etc. The efforts of Diego Cordovez, the Secretary-General's personal representative in Afghanistan had been one of the most difficult ones, the talks had broken down on many occasions and whatever fragile glimmer of hope for a political settlement started fading. Still, the perseverance and determination of the Secretary-General and his personal representative kept the peace process active. By submitting proposals after proposals, the Secretary-General could almost chain the parties and their protagonists in the peace-process. As a matter of fact, the occasional victory of the Mujahiddeen rebels encouraged Pakistan and the United States and this consequently diluted their commitment to a peaceful political solution. But the constant urging of the Secretary-General, and the change of leadership in Soviet Union had a catalytic effect on the outcome of the peace process.

Perez de Cuellar's stress on 'silent and quiet diplomacy', the painstaking behind-the-scene negotiations which alone could build the trust to bridge deeply opposed positions. And his own skill in carrying out difficult tasks had deeply impressed his colleagues and member states. His efforts to negotiate the Falkland (Malvinas) war, use of chemical weapons by Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, Namibian independence and the arbitration in the Rainbow Warrior dispute earned him much reputation.
As this study is restricted to the first term of Perez de Cuellar, the result of his good offices functions had not reached a final solution in almost all the issues/situations. However, within five years since he assumed the office, he earned wide recognition. It may be noted that, when he took over the office, the Organization was facing acute financial difficulties. He adopted various measures to reduce the expenditure of the Organization by cutting the number of senior officials in the Secretariat to the extent of 12 per cent of the 35 Under Secretaries-General and 52 Assistant Secretaries-General. Even when his first term was over the financial situation of the Organization was not improved. The United Nations membership, including all the permanent members were unanimous in re-appointing Perez de Cuellar. He sought guarantees from the United States that it would pay most of its assessed due of over 120 million dollars that year (1986). He said that the financial health of the United Nations, not his own physical condition, would be the determining factor in his decision whether to stay or not. He said he did not see "any reason why I should preside over the collapse of the Organization". 47

The disappointments and lack of faith in the Organization among all sections of the United Nations in

in the early eighties was removed by the Secretary-General and he was capable of improving the image of the Organization and instil confidence among the members by the time his first term was over in the late 1986. Though the final outcome of the Secretary-General's endeavours was not come out, there was tremendous hope of finding solutions to many issues. Though there were many reasons for such a positive change like, the end of cold war, comparatively quiet international political environment; the efforts of Perez de Cuellar were nonetheless unimportant.