

**United Nations**  
**GENERAL**  
**ASSEMBLY**  
**THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION**  
*Official Records\**



SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
8th meeting  
held on  
Monday, 19 October 1981  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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**Distr. GENERAL**  
A/SPC/36/SR.8  
30 October 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 67: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (A/36/21)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/504)
- (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (A/36/530)

1. Mr. KOLBASIN (Byelorussian SSR) said that the recommendations in the report of the Committee on Information (A/36/21) were on the whole positive, but the Committee's possibilities were still not being fully utilized. With regard to the progress report by the Director-General of UNESCO (A/36/530), he noted with satisfaction that UNESCO had begun implementation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). His delegation considered that the Committee on Information, the United Nations Department of Public Information and the whole system of United Nations information services should pay greater attention to the positive results of UNESCO's activity in implementing the International Programme for the Development of Communication. Any attempts to create rivalry between the United Nations and UNESCO in matters concerning the establishment of a new international order in the information sphere must be rejected. The problem was so important that both organizations should be involved; but attacks were being made on UNESCO by those who would like to preserve a policy of "information imperialism" pursued under the slogan of the "free information".

2. It was important to have a clear understanding of what the imperialist use of that slogan actually meant. The inadequate development of the mass media in many African, Asian and Latin American countries was one of the consequences of the domination of those countries by prolonged colonial monopolies. The mouthpieces of the military-industrial complex in the United States of America and some other NATO countries could easily foist on developing countries a "free flow" of their own information which as a rule was tendentious, distorted the true picture of international life, supported capitalism and slandered socialism. The volume of such information was hundreds of times greater than that emanating from the developing countries in the opposite direction.

3. In addition, the United States Central Intelligence Agency financed special radio stations such as Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, and also special Voice of America broadcasts aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States and spreading slander and misinformation about the national liberation movement and the socialist countries. The information spread by the most powerful United States information agency was not a "free flow" but a powerful avalanche of disinformation mixed with lies and propaganda directed not only against the USSR and other socialist countries but also against many developing countries and national liberation movements.

4. It was pertinent to mention the strengthening of United States radio propaganda directed at countries of the Muslim world. United States broadcasts to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan in the seven languages of the Islamic countries had recently been increased, and the radio services of the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel and some other

(Mr. Kolbasin, Byelorussian SSR)

countries were waging a veritable ideological war against Afghanistan in the three principal languages of that country and in the languages of its national minorities. The total volume of broadcasts amounted to almost 100 hours per day. Profiting from the fact that in some Muslim countries and in many other developing countries the information systems were inadequately developed and a large part of the population was illiterate, radio stations financed by the United States CIA were spreading the wildest lies and armed saboteurs were being sent to spread various absurd rumours.

5. What was the object, for example, of the campaign conducted by the United States and other NATO countries concerning information agencies of the so-called "Soviet threat"? Its aim was clearly to justify huge appropriations for the military-industrial complex and to turn people away from socialism by suggesting that it offered mankind not peace but the sword, although in reality that was a malicious distortion of Soviet foreign policy.

6. His delegation considered that, in the field of international information, it was important above all to respect the sovereign rights of other States, to prohibit interference in their internal affairs and to ban war propaganda, psychological warfare and incitement to enmity and hatred between peoples. It seemed appropriate to mention once again UNESCO's well-known Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, and also a number of resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular resolution 110 (II) on "Measures to be taken against propaganda and the inciters of a new war" and resolution 2037 (XX) concerning the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. He wished also to emphasize especially the importance of the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1978 (resolution 33/73).

7. The concept of a "free flow of information" was in fact a cover for imperialism's efforts to maintain its ideological dominance in Asia, Africa and Latin America; and it meant in practice nothing but the right of the technologically strong to impose their will on the weak.

8. The Byelorussian delegation considered that the United Nations information services and the work of the Department of Public Information in particular required further improvement and development. The most serious shortcoming was the lack of an equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Department, where the developing countries and socialist States alike were either unrepresented in important posts or their representation was insignificant compared with that of leading western countries. He hoped that such an abnormal situation in a responsible sector of the Secretariat's work would be corrected in the immediate future. He also thought that all the United Nations information services should publicize more widely United Nations efforts to avert a nuclear catastrophe. The Department of Public Information had a duty to give the widest possible notice that States and statesmen who were the first to use nuclear weapons would be committing the gravest crime against mankind and that there would never be any justification or absolution for them.

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9. The Department of Public Information and other information services should also publicize more widely United Nations efforts to curtail the arms race, maintain and develop détente and liquidate the last strongholds of colonialism and racism. United Nations publications should be used for that purpose and all of them needed to be improved, including Development Forum. The circle of contributors should be wider and should represent both countries which had made evident economic and social progress and also the developing countries. Their content should also be improved so that they were not confined to expressing a one-sided view. His delegation could not agree that United Nations publications should be dominated by a limited circle of western authors who advocated the capitalist path of development and gave doubtful prescriptions for overcoming the difficulties encountered by developing countries. In that connection, it was particularly important to pay more attention to recommendation 1 in the report of the Committee on Information (A/36/21, para 154) which emphasized the need for all to collaborate in the establishment of a new world information order.

10. The facts showed that financially powerful circles of world reaction were overtly and covertly opposing the establishment of just and democratic international relations in the information field. It had to be stated with great regret that some very influential circles were showing no desire to co-operate in implementing measures to establish a new international information order. The facts showed who the people were who were inciting "cold" and "psychological" war against the socialist countries which were seeking to cast off the yoke of the consequences of colonialism. Isolation and exposure of those people would remove a serious obstacle to the establishment of a new international information order.

11. The Byelorussian SSR would continue to support the developing countries' struggle to transform information relations in all international forums, including the United Nations and UNESCO, and it supported the basic principles for creating a new world information order. It advocated strict implementation of United Nations resolutions 110 (II) and 127 (II) on the prohibition of war propaganda and the dissemination of false or distorted reports; of the United Nations Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace; and of UNESCO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War. The resolutions of UNESCO's twenty-first General Conference and General Assembly resolution 35/201 were an important step on the way to implementing the basic principles of the UNESCO Declaration.

12. Mr. CANALES (Chile) said that the triple function assigned to the Committee on Information by the General Assembly was of particular interest to his country. Chile had expressed satisfaction in 1980 that questions relating to that information had moved on from a rather theoretical stage and had become a practical reality in the work of the United Nations; and that still remained the case. With regard to the work of the Department of Public Information, he wished to congratulate Under-Secretary-General Akashi on his work and that of his staff. He was convinced that the close collaboration between the Committee on Information and the Department would result in the complete and effective application of the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

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13. On the question of equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Department, he thought that in view of the importance of public information activities, greater efforts should be made to achieve a fair representation of all geographical regions. Equally important for Chile was the question of balance in the use of the United Nations official languages, both in audio-visual programmes and in the Department of Public Information's publications. His delegation reiterated its support for the request to the Secretary-General in resolution 35/201 to strengthen the effectiveness of the Department's adaptation unit established for that purpose, so that best use was made of all available resources.

14. The Chilean delegation considered that compliance with fulfilment of the General Assembly's recommendations on the production of television programmes in Spanish was of particular interest. It was grateful for the attention paid by the Department of Public Information to that aspiration of the Spanish-speaking countries, and hoped that the operative phase of those programmes would be reached very soon.

15. His delegation had also examined with interest the Director-General of UNESCO's report to the General Assembly on implementation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (A/36/530); and it thought that emphasis should be placed on the developing countries' communications systems by promoting technical assistance to the greatest extent that financial contributions to the Programme would allow.

16. With regard to the new world information order, his delegation wished to reiterate its conviction that in all measures aimed at establishing a more just and balanced order one essential element must be the strengthening of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression as fundamental human rights. Realization of the importance of making the world information order more free and more fair was an indispensable prerequisite for the complete satisfaction of the needs which the developing countries in particular had in that matter. His delegation recognized in particular the developing countries' need to improve their own capacities, and for that reason it regarded the International Programme for the Development of Communication, within the framework of UNESCO, as an objective contribution to meeting those needs.

17. The Chilean delegation could not share the view of those who described as essential the so-called "responsibility of the media" and it had serious doubts about the scope of such a concept, basically because of its rejection of systems in which the information apparatus was at the service of the State. The first and essential responsibility of the communications media was their commitment to the truth; and the truth could be disseminated only if the principles of freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and freedom of information were fully applied.

18. Mr. DOLEZEL (Czechoslovakia) said that the need to reshape the existing imbalanced and unjust international information and communications order was increasingly recognized throughout the world, and information questions were receiving growing attention from the international community. Although a great deal had already been accomplished at a number of inter-governmental conferences and meetings, including the Conferences

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of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries of Colombo and Havana, in the United Nations Committee on Information and in particular at the twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO, such accomplishments were only the beginning of a long and complicated process. Despite the positive results achieved by the two UNESCO Conferences namely the 1978 Declaration on Fundamental Principles Concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, and the resolution formulating the 11 points on which consideration of a new world information and communication order should be based, there had been no clear-cut definition of that new order. For the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations, however, the desirability of a new order was unquestioned.

19. Both the UNESCO resolutions and General Assembly resolution 35/201 had been adopted by consensus, and the consensus method should continue to be used in the effort to reshape the existing order of information exchange. That process, like the effort to restructure the international economic order, would, in all probability, be arduous and protracted. The two goals were inter-related and inter-dependent: a new international information order was a logical extension of the new economic order and one could not succeed without the other. Efforts to establish the new information order must go hand and hand with social and economic change, and with the struggle to eliminate all the obstacles that stood in the way of political, economic, cultural and spiritual decolonization.

20. Through their struggle against encroachment and interference in their internal affairs by imperialism and neo-colonialism and against the looting of their natural resources and the exploitation of their peoples, and through their struggle for peace, international security and equal co-operation, the countries of the developing world and the non-aligned countries in particular had become an important positive and active factor in international affairs. In the pursuit of those objectives, they had the full support of the socialist countries.

21. In recent years, largely owing to debates in UNESCO and in the United Nations, more critical attention had been focused on the manipulations of the huge international information monopolies which, with the support of the military-industrial complexes of the capitalist world, had for decades infiltrated the minds of the people and ideologically influenced whole States and even regions of the world, hampering their striving for genuine independence and equality and for international understanding and peace. Some 80 per cent of the information circulated daily in the non-socialist world was the product of the four largest western news agencies. For many countries which did not possess their own information systems and could not afford to maintain a network of reporters and correspondents throughout the world, those agencies were virtually the only source of international news. Obviously, after that stream of information had been screened at the agency centres, it acquired a distinct political colouring, through a complex and ingenious machinery of selection. Thus, under the guise of a free flow of information, the developing countries were daily invaded by a flood of foreign news

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without any possibility of reciprocating with a flow of their own information. Until the developing societies created their own systems of gathering and disseminating information, and until the information monopolies were broken, that imbalance would remain and the free circulation of information would be only a myth. The establishment of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies was an important step in correcting the imbalance. Provided that it reflected the needs and interests of all the participants and was carried out on a just and equal basis, international co-operation in the field of mass information could be fruitful.

22. Past debates in the Special Political Committee and elsewhere had revealed considerable differences between the socialist and the western countries regarding the role of the mass media and their relationship to the State and society, and also concerning the international exchange of information. It was important for the socialist countries that the dissemination of information and knowledge, one of the most powerful tools available to man, should be used responsibly for man's advancement and, internationally, for better understanding. The primary task of the international exchange of information should be the strengthening of peace.

23. In the current tense international situation, irresponsible use of the mass media to sow distrust, spread disinformation and half-truths, or even to launch slanderous campaigns against the socialist countries must be denounced, as must the continued operation of such subversive radio stations as the so-called Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, whose principal purpose appeared to be to undermine the socialist societies and to intensify the arms race. The Czechoslovak delegation therefore stressed the need for the elaboration of principles and norms to govern the international use and exchange of information. The exchange of information, like other areas of international relations, must be governed by generally recognized principles of international law. The new international information and communications order must be based on international law and on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Those principles included, above all, the right of peoples to self-determination, the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the right of peoples and individuals to acquire an objective picture of reality by means of accurate and complete information, and the right to free expression through a variety of instruments of culture and communication. The right of every State to develop its own independent information system and to protect its national sovereignty and cultural identity, which might be threatened by transnational entities, must be indisputable, as must the right of every State to use its mass media to acquaint the world with its intentions, goals and political, moral and cultural values. That right must be balanced, however, by the recognition of the right of every State to defend itself, within its constitutional possibilities, against the spreading of untrue or distorted information which might damage its interests and threaten friendly relations among States. The right of every State to participate in the international exchange of information on conditions of equality, justice and mutual advantage, must be guaranteed.

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24. A new international information and communication order based on those principles would be instrumental in promoting progress in the accomplishment of other important tasks facing the United Nations and the world: the strengthening of peace and international understanding, the continuation of the process of *détente* and the striving for disarmament, the establishment of the new economic order, and the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism and apartheid, and against all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, supremacy and interference.

25. UNESCO had assumed a very important role in promoting the establishment of a new information order. The progress report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/36/530) gave details of the valuable results achieved in that respect. The establishment of an International Programme for the Development of Communication and the election of the Intergovernmental Council for the Programme were among the most recent examples. All States members of UNESCO should encourage and support it in those activities, and there should be close co-operation between UNESCO and the United Nations Committee on Information so that their activities should complement each other.

26. Although Czechoslovakia was not a member of the United Nations Committee on Information, it had followed its work with great attention. The most valuable result of the Committee's current work was the set of recommendations submitted by it to the General Assembly, as set out in its report (A/36/21). There were perhaps omissions in the recommendations which might be criticized; but the Czechoslovak delegation, aware of the difficulties that the Committee had had to face in reaching a consensus was ready to join in that consensus, so important for making progress on the question of information. It was also in favour of extending the Committee's mandate.

27. The extensive and efficient work of the United Nations Department for Public Information was to be commended. There was, however, still room for improvement, for instance in the quality of the various publications produced. The principal guideline must be strict adherence to the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council or other body on which the various projects were based. Given the financial constraints, the only way to achieve improvements was to utilize the available resources more effectively and to concentrate on the key issues and the main goals of the United Nations, among which the struggle for peace and international security, disarmament and international co-operation must have priority.

28. Steps had been taken in recent years to redress the geographical imbalance in the staff of the Department for Public Information and to increase the representation of the developing countries; and that action should be continued until a balance was reached. At the same time, it should be noted that the Eastern European countries were also under-represented and that there had been no improvement in that respect.

29. The Joint United Nations Information Committee played an important role in co-ordinating the public information activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system. The Czechoslovak delegation shared the Joint Committee's concern, referred to in the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/504), at the



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deterioration of the image of the United Nations and the erosion of support for it. The United Nations Information Centres had a significant role to play in spreading the message of the United Nations throughout the world, but the key to the problem lay in the approach of the mass media of individual countries and, perhaps even more important, in the approach of Governments. The media and Government of Czechoslovakia attached high priority to presenting the correct image of the United Nations and publicizing its goals among the Czechoslovak public. Czechoslovakia recognized the unique and important role of the United Nations and was in favour of enhancing its positive influence in all fields, including information. The Czechoslovak delegation would regard it as most useful if the current debate were to result in an appeal by the General Assembly to the mass information media of the world to work actively to improve the current tense international climate and continue the process of détente.

30. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that his country attached great importance to the question of information. Though the topic had been widely discussed for many years and had become a formal agenda item in the United Nations and its Committee on Information and in UNESCO, much still remained to be said on it. A long and complicated process would inevitably be needed to bring about the desired change, namely the establishment of a new information and communication order, whereby equality of rights and justice among nations would be ensured, and political oppression, economic exploitation and all methods of domination and pressure would be completely eliminated, through a balanced system at the service of all peoples of the world. Those who urged respect for such highly political notions as freedom of opinion and information and free circulation of information, without first seeking to identify and correct the serious injustices and inequalities in the existing system, were clearly putting the cart before the horse. Those important freedoms and fundamental values were being used by a few privileged nations in the northern hemisphere, not in order to serve the cause of co-operation, peace and understanding among peoples, but to strengthen their political, economic and cultural domination over the rest of the world.

31. A new world information and communication order had become a formal topic of debate in the United Nations Committee on Information in 1978. It had, of course, been informally discussed for decades since the process of decolonization had first begun. Currently, new and highly specialized technologies were being developed in the western world which intensified the inequalities, injustices and imbalances between the southern and the northern hemispheres. The great western news agencies had created a vast empire of communications industries in which the collection, transcription, transmission and distribution of information was directed to the sole end of profit-making, in other words sale to the largest possible number of customers. Thus, information was distorted and manipulated by a supranational cartel from the northern hemisphere entirely lacking in political morality and serving interests contrary to the noblest objectives of mankind.

32. The position was growing steadily worse. The proposed new information order, fiercely resisted by that supranational cartel, was being deprived of any real content and its advent was being continuously postponed through recommendations or

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resolutions that were often contradictory, or through actions that cancelled each other out. Consequently, denouncing the existing information and communication order and demanding its replacement had become a matter of conscience for the delegation of Benin. The developing countries must be vigilant and must reject so-called concessions that were designed to keep them in a technically and financially backward condition, subject to economic and political domination.

33. The People's Republic of Benin had a clear vision of the solutions that must be adopted at every level for the establishment of a new international information and communication order in which the interests of all countries would be respected. First, the role of the Committee on Information must be strengthened. The Committee should meet every year, and its work should be more carefully prepared, on the basis of an agenda that would tackle specific problems in a search for programmed solutions. Benin, which was a member of the Committee, was aware that much had been achieved already in the way of changes in the last three years in the policies and activities of the United Nations in information matters. However, much still remained to be done. In accordance with the most recent recommendations, the delegation of Benin attached particular importance to a solution to the problem of the existing imbalance in the staff of the Department of Public Information that would enable the African countries above all, followed by Asia and Latin America, to occupy policy-making posts. It also endorsed the plan for the regionalization of the Radio and Visual Services Division, which should be put into effect rapidly in order to bring about the necessary balance. Africa should be given its rightful place in that connection, and nationals of the African countries should be given the responsible posts they deserved with the Department. Linguistic balance was another important goal that had not yet been achieved. The adaptation unit set up for the United Nations Chronicle should not be used simply to translate articles conceived and written in English but should be a real working unit in which the official languages of the Organization would have complete equality. For the desired co-operation between the Department of Public Information and third world information structures, it was essential that the Department should have adequate means. Given the existing budgetary constraints, an effort must be made to find a way of obtaining the necessary resources for training more journalists and press managers from developing countries and for increasing co-operation with regional news agencies and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies. The Department of Public Information should also take care to see that its services disseminated objective and balanced information that would lead to a better understanding of the United Nations and its role.

34. His delegation had taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/504) and the statement by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, on DPI's endeavours to implement the decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly. He paid a tribute to the work of Mr. Akashi and his colleagues. However, he did not believe that the United Nations Chronicle should be simply a translation of articles written in English. DPI should see that United Nations publications were available in all working languages at the same time.

35. UNESCO, because of its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), remained the nerve centre of the United Nations system's efforts to establish the new information and communication order. He wished to reaffirm his country's support for UNESCO, its staff and the Director-General, Mr. M'Bow, for the work done

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and for the courage they had shown in face of pressures to curb their creative élan. The criticisms made of UNESCO, and the measures that handicapped it financially, were part of the same conspiracy of transnational press agencies which did not want justice to be done.

36. At the current session emphasis should be placed on the special role of UNESCO, so as to strengthen its authority for the implementation of the PDC. The Committee should therefore consider its support for UNESCO in a new light by adopting a separate resolution on the subject, so as to make the international community aware of the IPDC and of the financial support necessary for the success of that Programme. His delegation was willing to participate in the adoption of a resolution containing precise provisions on the role that international co-operation was expected to play.

37. Good will was needed to deal with the enormous tasks which presented themselves on all levels. The establishment of the new international information and communication order was an urgent matter that must not be deferred since it could resolve many problems which caused tensions to persist, threatened détente, and brought back the retrograde methods of the Cold War.

38. Mr. NEIL (Jamaica) said that Jamaica's approach to questions relating to information was based on a recognition of the importance of the information and communication media in influencing public opinion and its potential for promoting the goals of the United Nations and for improving international understanding, as a vehicle for the interchange of information and ideas on a worldwide basis. It was now clearly established that United Nations activities in the field of information were to play a significant role in efforts to build a new world order based on peace, justice and co-operation. The work of the Committee on Information in carrying out its mandate was therefore of major importance.

39. Having read the Committee's report (A/36/21), he recognized that the Committee had just begun to tackle a task of major dimensions, and that fulfilment of its overall objectives was basically a long-term enterprise.

40. Turning to the Committee's recommendations contained in paragraph 154 of document A/36/21, he noted that, in recommendation 6, the Committee had once again pointed to an imbalance in the staff of the Department of Public Information. His delegation supported the general principle of ensuring equitable geographical distribution in the allocation of posts within the unit. He noted in that connection that paragraph 7 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/36/504) showed that there had been some progress in that direction. His delegation supported increased efforts to ensure equitable geographical representation in DPI.

41. His delegation was puzzled by the wording of the recommendation concerning the issue of linguistic balance in the staff. It would naturally support a linguistic balance as far as the output of the Department was concerned, because every effort should be made to produce and make available information to meet the needs of the world community as a whole. However, the recommendation regarding a linguistic balance in the staff was vague in its meaning, and problems were foreseeable in its implementation.

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42. On the question of regionalization of the Radio and Visual Services Division, he agreed in general that a plan should be urgently set in motion, as indicated in recommendations 8 and 10, although those recommendations appeared to be lacking in precision. He suggested that, in future, the report of the Committee should include in an annex all proposals which had been submitted by delegations.

43. A more determined attempt should be made to carry out the plan for regionalization, as required by General Assembly resolution 35/201, and he reiterated his delegation's support for the creation of a Caribbean unit in the radio service. The need for such a unit had been recognized by a number of delegations in the Committee and acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 35/201.

44. His delegation was inclined to support recommendation 22, subparagraph (b), for a study on the question of information that would be broader in scope than that prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit in previous years. The report should provide the basis for concrete guidelines to enhance the role of the centres. It was quite evident that, in that and other respects, the Committee needed more data on information activities in the United Nations system and that serious studies were required before the Committee could develop new initiatives and give more specific guidelines for the work of DPI and its programmes.

45. Jamaica was in favour of further work in the field of increased use of shortwave broadcasts for the expansion of activities in radio, and felt that it was necessary for the United Nations to keep up with the ever-improving technology of communication and to utilize to the fullest extent possible new technological devices to disseminate information. He was therefore in agreement with the proposals by the Committee for expansion of United Nations broadcasts (recommendation 25) and the efforts to move even further forward with shortwave transmissions and the use of satellites -- subjects which were recommended for study in recommendations 23 and 24. With regard to co-ordination of information activities in the United Nations system, it seemed apparent that the existing machinery for interagency co-ordination was ineffective. He therefore supported the Committee's recommendation for a strengthening of the role of the Joint United Nations Information Committee. It was also clear that UNESCO would be playing the leading role in the area of information in the United Nations system. His delegation was pleased that the plans for the implementation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication was going forward; and it expected that the Programme would play an important part in achieving the objectives of the new world information and communication order. The Committee on Information should keep in close touch with the activities of UNESCO in that field, since its own mandate required action in the same direction.

46. His delegation would support the renewal of the Committee's mandate but believed that the Committee could review some aspects of its operations.

47. First, the Committee should concentrate on thoroughly analyzing the detailed issues before it, and should endeavour to present more concrete and specific recommendations to the General Assembly. In that regard, the Committee should consider dispensing with the general debate. The debate in the General Assembly should be adequate for the Committee to obtain information on the positions of delegations on general questions. The Committee should then have more time to deal with the detailed questions before it.

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48. Secondly, the Committee should aim at making more concrete and specific recommendations to the General Assembly, although it was understandable that, in view of the consensus procedure, precision and specificity were often sacrificed in the negotiating process.

49. Thirdly, the Committee should include in annexes to its report all working papers discussed by the Committee, so that the General Assembly could be more fully informed on the matters before the Committee.

50. Fourthly, a section of the report should indicate the status of matters on which the Committee was unable to submit agreed recommendations.

51. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 35/201 (A/36/504), he said that his delegation had noted the information on the availability of United Nations material in various languages and was satisfied with the progress made in that area. It was disappointing, however, that studies regarding shortwave broadcasts by the United Nations using its own facilities and frequencies had not been completed in time for the Committee on Information to consider them. His delegation attached great importance to the development of activities in the field of broadcasting, and urged the Secretary-General to ensure that the studies in question and also proposals on the subject would reach the Committee on Information for its consideration. His delegation was satisfied with the Secretary-General's report on the publication Development Forum, particularly with regard to the programme for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries begun in September 1981.

52. The progress report of the Director General of UNESCO (A/36/530) provided useful information, and he congratulated UNESCO on the work it was doing, particularly with regard to the International Programme for the Development of Communication. He hoped that the Director General's appeal in the report would elicit a favourable response from the international community, so that the Programme would not fail for lack of adequate resources.

53. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, until the present meeting, his delegation had been deeply and favourably impressed by the level of seriousness and reasonableness and the statesmanlike quality of the discussion on the item under consideration. However, during the morning's discussion, the level of debate had declined markedly as a result of the contribution by the representative of the Byelorussia SSR. Under the comprehensive rubric of "As is well known", that representative had repeated the total fabrication that the Central Intelligence Agency was responsible for the burden of the United States Government's international broadcasting activities. The representative of Byelorussia did not seem to know that the United States Congress provided every dollar necessary to support Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and the Voice of America. That fact was recorded in the yearly reports of the Board for International Broadcasting, which were publicly available and easily accessible. Of course, the overwhelming part of United States information services was provided by the large, diversified and flourishing private sector of the United States.

(Mr. Lichenstein, United States of America)

54. The Byelorussian representative had referred to the sudden -- to him, rather mysterious and threatening -- increase in the level of United States broadcasting activities directed, inter alia, at Afghanistan. There was no mystery. In the case of Afghanistan, the increase was precisely co-terminous with the occupation of the country by 85,000 foreign troops. Moreover, 118 United Nations Member States had demanded the withdrawal of those forces.

55. The representative of Byelorussia had stated that United States broadcasts and other information vehicles were the source of lies and propaganda disseminated to audiences in the socialist world and elsewhere. The United States was proud to address those audiences, although it regretted the circumstances which made it necessary to broadcast to them. People who fled from oppression or were denied access to the ballot box were often said to be "voting with their feet". The audiences in the socialist world and elsewhere addressed by the United States were "voting with their ears and minds" for a freedom which they were otherwise denied.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.