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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
11th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 22 October 1981  
at 3.00 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.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. KAZAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the information media could and should promote solutions to the serious problems besetting mankind. However, it was also true that the information media sometimes exerted a negative influence and hampered the solution of international problems. That was why it was inadmissible that the most powerful news media of the non-socialist world should have exclusive authority to decide what should be the channel for the so-called "free flow of information". The Western information media and, primarily the propaganda machinery of the United States, usually disseminated selected and tendentious information. Their object was to discredit socialism, the system of social justice regarded by many of the world's peoples as the only solution. Their purpose was to impede the process of the political, economic and spiritual emancipation of former colonial and dependent peoples and to keep them indefinitely under foreign rule. They sought to justify the uncontrollable arms race and the enrichment of the producers of military hardware to public opinion in their own countries and to world public opinion. They were working to satisfy the short-sighted self-interest of those who refused to abandon their dream of military superiority and hegemony.

2. The Soviet Union said that the information media working to promote imperialist interests were accountable before history. It had recently been stated that the Soviet Union considered victory in a nuclear war possible, whereas the truth was that it regarded nuclear war as sheer madness. Attempts to incite mistrust and hostility among peoples by psychological warfare and to use the information media for that purpose, were an integral part of the campaign to intensify the arms race.

3. The United Nations should use its authority to urge the communications media and States to ensure that information activities were used to further world peace and international security and to combat colonialism and apartheid, that they contributed to international mutual assistance and encouraged a climate of confidence among peoples. For those reasons, his delegation supported the proposal submitted by Czechoslovakia concerning the new world information and communication order. It was necessary to establish principles and rules governing the activity of information media which would serve the interests of world peace and co-operation and be in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

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(Mr. Kazakov, USSR)

4. The USSR delegation denounced information imperialism in all international forums and, particularly in the United Nations and UNESCO. The Soviet Union endorsed the principles put forward by the non-aligned countries at Colombo, Lomé and Havana, which included the exercise by all States of national sovereignty over information and culture, the struggle against colonialism and its vestiges, the elimination of imperialist domination and protection for the development of national systems of social information and co-operation among them.

5. The USSR was prepared to strengthen equitable co-operation with the information media of the developing countries and with news sources and agencies. It had for some time been providing assistance to the developing countries in the installation and maintenance of radio transmitters, plants for the manufacture of transistorized television sets and monitors, printing presses, film libraries and film studios. It had also provided experts in land-based communications satellite stations. Some 1,000 highly qualified specialists had already been trained in the universities and other educational institutions of the USSR and thousands more would be trained in the near future.

6. The assistance being provided by the Soviet Union had never been and would never be tied to political conditions. The position of the USSR was to supply disinterested assistance to the developing countries in order to enable them to fulfil their legitimate aspirations and demands, including those in the field of information and communication. The task of eradicating the colonialist mentality consisted not only of transferring the most recent foreign technology to the developing countries; it was also necessary to establish appropriate infrastructures and a system of information exchanges on a fair basis.

7. The Soviet Union was opposed to all attempts, overt or covert, to impede the establishment of a new world information and communication order. Using the slogan "defence of freedom of information", the Western countries were attacking the measures designed to establish the new order. The Soviet Union rejected the practice of Governments and news organizations of dictating terms to the countries which were trying to establish a new information and communication order.

8. As would be noted from the documents before the Committee, the United Nations had adopted important measures in the field of information during the current year, although there was still much to be done. Careful consideration should be given to the recommendations submitted by the Committee on Information concerning the establishment of the new world information and communication order. The co-operation between UNESCO and the United Nations also needed to be strengthened. The Department of Public Information should continue and expand its valuable activities and resolve some serious organizational problems, including the regionalization of the Radio and Visual Services Division and the establishment of linguistic balance in the materials it published. The figures given in the Secretary-General's report showed that there was a preponderance of staff from Western countries and insufficient representation of developing countries and that the position of the socialist countries had worsened.

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(Mr. Kazakov, USSR)

9. With regard to publications on United Nations activities, he pointed out that the magazine Development Forum had a tendency to omit any mention of the positive achievements in the economic and social development of the socialist countries and the newly independent countries which had opted for the non-capitalist road.

10. Mr. WARD (New Zealand) said that the principal role of the Department of Information was the effective dissemination of information about the aims and work of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies. The Department was not just involved in a public relations exercise, but in an educational process designed to foster international peace and understanding. The Committee on Information could therefore have been expected to give very careful consideration to the Department's priorities and programmes, but its report did not indicate that it had done so. Some attention was focused on easy things like the geographical distribution of personnel in the Department, but not enough emphasis had been given to the use of resources in the short and medium terms. Most delegations had pointed out that the lack of detailed information prevented the establishment of priorities and guidelines for the Department's work. There was little point in churning out information without evaluating its usefulness. The Committee had done an effective job in co-ordinating information activities in the United Nations and should continue to work in that area instead of turning its attention to schemes such as investigating the possibility of the United Nations acquiring its own communications satellite system.

11. Support for UNESCO's initiative on the establishment of a new world information and communication order had been the subject of considerable controversy. Concern had been expressed that it could lead to muzzling freedom of the press. His delegation wanted to make it clear that New Zealand could not envisage support for any move that would have the effect, for whatever reason and for whatever motives, of limiting the freedom of the media to report on events in their own country and in the world at large.

12. The disparity in the flow of information between developed and developing countries could be partly overcome by programmes to improve the machinery and management of communications systems. New Zealand supported the establishment of the International Programme for Development and Communication and felt that, by concentrating on infrastructure development, it provided a practical means of implementing the idea of a new world information and communication order. In its own region, New Zealand was continuing to provide assistance to various communications development programmes. It had sponsored training courses for journalists from the Pacific, Asia and Africa and had helped to establish Western Samoa's radio broadcasting system and the agricultural information service of the Cook Islands. New Zealand was continuing to channel technical and financial assistance to the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development in Kuala Lumpur. It had also established a Working Party on communications issues to analyse information questions, to co-ordinate and establish information flows, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region and to provide up-to-date surveys of the major communications activities and issues in the region.

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(Mr. Ward, New Zealand)

13. His remarks were not intended to suggest that a new world information and communication order could be achieved simply through a transfer of technology. But nor would it be achieved through the transfer of ideology. It was relatively easy to identify the problems of the present world communications structures. However, the development of a new world information order which would satisfy the widely varying attitudes on the role of the media in society would require goodwill and reasonableness on the part of all States.

14. Mr. DESTA (Ethiopia), referring to the Committee on Information's mandate as set forth in General Assembly resolution 34/182, stressed the aspects relating to the promotion of the policies and activities of the United Nations in the field of information, and to the enhancement of efforts made by the international bodies of the United Nations system in the field of information. In that connexion, the Committee had stressed the importance of improving the dissemination of information by the Department of Public Information in order to provide the international public with adequate information about the activities of the United Nations and to generate solid international support for the Organization.

15. As the United Nations continued its efforts to establish a new order reflecting present-day realities, it should continue to democratize its institutions by applying the principle of equitable geographic representation. The present imbalance in the Department must therefore be corrected. In his report contained in document A/36/504, the Secretary-General illustrated the efforts made in the recruitment of staff for the Department in an attempt to show that some progress was being achieved in the composition of the staff. In his delegation's view, further efforts needed to be made in order to achieve a better balance.

16. Another aspect of the Committee's mandate was the evaluation and follow-up of efforts made by the United Nations in the field of information and communication. There was a need to strengthen inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination, with the primary objectives of promoting a better understanding of the aims and activities of the United Nations system and avoiding duplication. The Joint United Nations Information Committee had a vital role to play in that connexion.

17. In its report contained in document A/36/21, the Committee had urged the Department of Public Information to conduct its activities within the general framework of the principles and objectives of the new information and communication order. Ethiopia attached great importance to the establishment of that order. As was well known, the old colonial order had been rapidly dismantled since the Second World War and the new States which had emerged had challenged the monopoly of the minority of States in controlling the destiny of the vast majority of States. In the light of that historic situation, a new international economic order had been proclaimed, to continue to advocate the democratization of international economic relations. The new world information and communication order formed an integral part of the new international economic order. The

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(Mr. Desta, Ethiopia)

International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, in one of its recommendations regarding the new information order, had stated that its implementation was an on-going process of change in the nature of relations between and within nations in the field of communications. Imbalances in national information and communication systems were as disturbing and unacceptable as social, economic, cultural and technological disparities, both national and international.

18. The transnational news agencies continued to give distorted images of the developing countries, ignoring their efforts to achieve economic, social and cultural development. Negative aspects were given far too much coverage, to create sensations and obtain huge profits. News dissemination was subjected to market economy forces at the expense of objective and factual information. Correspondents of transnational news agencies often spent a few days in third world countries and then published adverse material without bothering to seek first-hand information from the relevant sources. Such misinformation damaged the efforts being made by the developing countries and was harmful to international co-operation.

19. The third world, which had been a victim of the existing information order, was demanding a change in its dependent status in information and communication. To that end, aid to developing countries for strengthening and expanding their communications capabilities must be increased. Western transnational news organizations, which continued to enjoy a monopoly of news gathering and dissemination, had a moral obligation to share their knowledge and experience with the developing countries so that the latter could strengthen their capacities. The developing countries, in turn, should identify their needs so that experts and equipment could be provided accordingly.

20. Steps of that kind would go a long way towards strengthening national and regional agencies in the developing world, thereby ensuring objective reporting of events in the third world, which in turn would contribute to the decolonization of information and facilitate international understanding.

21. The argument that a new order would curtail freedom of opinion and information did not hold water; it was being used only to defend the freedom of a few societies to dominate the vast majority of the peoples of the earth. It was understandable that those with vested interests should be reluctant to relinquish their monopoly of the mass media and the advantages which that monopoly gave them; but those who advocated the establishment of a new world communication order were equally determined to persist in their efforts to realize a balanced information flow. Seen in its true perspective, the new information order was an attempt to reduce the gap which separated the developing and developed countries, with a view to strengthening international peace and understanding.

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(Mr. Desta, Ethiopia)

22. Ethiopia, which was a firm believer in a new world information and communication order, strongly supported the early establishment of that order, which would serve the cause of international co-operation. Consequently, it fully supported the recommendations of the Committee on Information contained in document A/36/21, and commended them to the Committee for its endorsement.

23. Mr. TOPCUOGLU (Turkey) said that the creation of a global climate of peace and understanding required, inter alia, a free, correct, complete and objective flow and exchange of information. His Government therefore attached great importance to United Nations activities in the field of information and communication, particularly the activities of the General Assembly and UNESCO.

24. His delegation wished to dwell first on the need to establish a new world information and communication order, which had found unanimous expression in almost every recent resolution on the subject adopted in the United Nations system. The concept was relatively new and had not yet been precisely defined, and further studies were certainly needed to elaborate it clearly. But it was recognized universally and unquestionably that the existing information and communication order should be replaced by a new one to meet the new conditions and challenges of the modern world. Therefore, the consensus on the need for the establishment of a new world information and communication order constituted a remarkable success. Despite the differences among Member States and various groups, most of the main elements of that new order had already begun to emerge, and the differences of opinion which persisted were related more to the priorities and formulations of those main elements than to their substance.

25. The process of the creation of the new order, although slow and sometimes painful, was sure and continuous. The changes should not be abrupt or traumatic and should be based on the largest possible consensus rather than on confrontation between different views. There was no longer any confusion about the roles and prerogatives of the General Assembly and UNESCO in that vital and important process of change: they should above all be complementary and not contradictory or overlapping. The General Assembly elaborated guidelines and co-ordinated and harmonized information policies, playing a political and philosophical role, whereas UNESCO's work was more professional and technical. The establishment of a new, more just and more effective order should be based on freedom of information, freedom of the Press and free circulation and wider and better dissemination of information, particularly between developed and developing countries.

26. Turkey was deeply committed to the basic principles of freedom of information and of the Press. As Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the modern Turkish Republic, had pointed out, the ills that might result from freedom of the Press could be eliminated only by the exercise of that freedom itself. Turkey occupied a unique place in the spectrum of national cultures owing to its geographical location and long historical heritage; and it had accumulated much experience in the field of information and communication. Nonetheless, it understood the aspirations of the developing countries in that regard and knew well, from its

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(Mr. Topcuoglu, Turkey)

own experience, some of the unfortunate aspects of the existing information order and such negative manifestations as the one-way flow of information emanating from prejudices and ulterior motives and serving propaganda purposes. Turkey understood the urgent need to change the dependent status of developing countries in relation to developed ones in the field of information. With regard to the report of the Committee on Information, it should be noted that the consensus reached, particularly on the recommendations, provided the Department of Public Information and other public information units of the United Nations system with valuable guidelines. It was to be hoped that the same spirit of understanding and consensus would prevail in the Special Political Committee during its deliberations on that item.

27. With regard to the work of the Department of Public Information, his delegation again wished to emphasize the importance it attached to the effective functioning of the United Nations Information centres; to the intensification of DPI's links with the developing countries through closer co-operation with their news agencies; to the need to achieve an equitable geographical distribution of personnel in the Department of Public Information; to the importance of training journalists from the developing countries; to the organization of round tables for editors, and to the adoption of more modern and efficient techniques for the preparation and dissemination of public information material.

28. The report of the Secretary-General showed that significant progress had been made on those and other aspects of the work of the Department of Public Information. In view of the current critical budgetary situation, it was important to consider the relationship between the quality and the quantity of the services requested. The Director of the Department had indicated that there had been a sharp rise in the demands made by the General Assembly and other substantive bodies, and that it had been necessary to increase the number of publications and conduct wider public information programmes. Although the Department tried to meet its additional responsibilities and to eliminate activities of marginal usefulness, it clearly could not be expected to continue indefinitely to assume additional responsibilities, without additional resources. With all due respect for the principle of "zero growth" in the United Nations budget, he believed that some kind of solid financial basis must be devised to ensure that the resources available to DPI were commensurate with its growing needs.

29. The priorities of United Nations information activities should be established in the light of the issues before the United Nations system as a whole: international peace and security, disarmament, problems of social, economic and cultural development, the establishment of a new international economic order and others.

30. The functions of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) were becoming increasingly important in ensuring the necessary co-ordination between the various agencies in the United Nations system, in avoiding duplication and in the execution of joint projects and activities within the system. In that connexion, his delegation supported the recommendation that JUNIC should be strengthened.

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(Mr. Topcuoglu, Turkey)

31. The report of the Director General of UNESCO was very enlightening and encouraging, particularly in connexion with the International Programme for the Development of Communication. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the efforts made by UNESCO in launching the Programme, which was a positive landmark in the establishment of the new world information and communication order, because of the important role it could play in building up the necessary information infrastructure in the developing countries.

32. Mr. CHEBAANE (Tunisia) said that the consideration and evaluation of the information policies and activities of the United Nations system reflected two basic factors: the trend in international relations, especially in the past two decades, and the need to establish a new world economic order and a new information order. The concept of information should be re-examined and adapted to existing circumstances. Information and communication problems were inherent in the global social, economic, political and cultural structures of modern society. That fact illustrated the limitations, and the contradictions that existed between the information services of the United Nations system and the new requirements of the modern world. It was necessary to establish in international relations a new system that could help to reduce the flagrant imbalance that currently existed between the North and the South.

33. In that connexion, the future order should be fair, realistic and basically progressive. The international community's task should be undertaken in the context of a reform, a process of reconstruction, that was consistent with the great objectives of civilization: international peace and solidarity, disarmament, the promotion of human rights and the struggle against colonialism, apartheid and racism. To attain those objectives, the present information system must itself be decolonized, since those objectives could not be attained as long as the developing countries were prevented from making their voices heard, from defending their political and economic interests and from asserting their own cultural identity. Clearly, the effort to restructure the international system of communication had resulted from the over-all world development process. Unfortunately, some countries were arguing that the purpose of that idea was to curb freedom of the press and free access to sources of information. There was no contradiction between freedom of information and the need for a wider, more just and better balanced dissemination of information; they were two complementary requirements.

34. Referring to United Nations information activities, he noted that the General Assembly played a major role in the elaboration, co-ordination and harmonization of the policies governing United Nations activities in that field. The organizations in the United Nations system also played a special role in promoting communication. In that regard, he expressed the hope that the International Programme for the Development of Communication, adopted by UNESCO, would be applied and would produce practical results in the near future.

35. The report of the Committee on Information (A/36/21) contained a number of recommendations, such as the recommendations concerning the means and structures

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(Mr. Chebaane, Tunisia)

to be used by the Secretariat, taking into account existing budgetary constraints. In that connexion, it was necessary to provide permanent short-wave broadcasts and to consider the possibility of having the United Nations Radio Service introduce frequency modulation broadcasts; in that way, the Department of Public Information could prepare a bolder strategy aimed at strengthening its ties with the mass media in developed countries, which regarded United Nations activities with the greatest suspicion. In addition, it was necessary to reduce the existing geographical imbalance in the staff of the Department of Public Information. In any case, major improvements could be made, even within the limits imposed by the existing manning tables and financial resources.

36. Mr. OUSMANE (Niger) said that a consensus seemed to be emerging in the Committee on the need to establish a new information order as soon as possible. Although ideas on the nature and depth of the changes required in the existing order depended on the situation of the country concerned and on its own philosophic conception, the adoption of the International Programme for the Development of Communication and the 33 recommendations of the Committee on Information provided a basis for the formulation of specific measures for introducing a new world information order.

37. Unfortunately, it had been said that all the developing countries' appeals for a new world information and communication order were merely an attempt to suppress the free flow of information. Those who made such accusations disregarded the real situation in the developing countries, and also the history of the development of ideas in their own countries. It was therefore necessary to bear in mind the important role which the free circulation of information had played and continued to play in the establishment and strengthening of modern democracies. In addition, the Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, at their meeting in Nairobi in June 1981, had reaffirmed that the complete liberation of oppressed peoples required respect for freedom of opinion and of information, free access to information and a balanced dissemination of news.

38. Niger advocated the broad dissemination of the principles and ideals of the United Nations; and it believed that, in order to improve the image of the United Nations system and establish the new world information order, it was necessary to mobilize all the human and material resources available to the international community. Another requirement, however, was the political will of Member States to attain that objective.

39. Referring to the report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/36/530), he said it was essential to recognize the importance of the fundamental objectives of strengthening endogenous communication capabilities, especially in countries where those capabilities were most inadequate (para. 7). With regard to the report of the Committee on Information, he expressed the hope that all the recommendations contained therein would be fully applied.

40. Mr. LIANG Yufan (China) said that, after studying the respective reports of the Committee on Information; the Secretary-General and the Director-General of UNESCO, his delegation had noted with appreciation the close co-operation between

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(Mr. Liang Yufan, China)

the Committee on Information and the competent organs of the United Nations, as demonstrated at the first session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication, held in Paris in June 1981.

41. His delegation supported the work of the Committee on Information aimed at the establishment of a new, more just world information order. The representatives of several countries had expressed their concern over the imbalance between developed and developing countries in the field of information. Such an imbalance was an illogical relic of the past, when developing countries had been unable to develop their economies and their science and technology. The establishment of a new world information and communication order was an inevitable historical trend and the common task of all States represented in the United Nations. A peaceful international environment was essential for that purpose. Information activities at the United Nations should therefore concentrate on the defence of world peace and on supporting all countries struggling to attain and safeguard national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and to oppose imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. Furthermore, the developed countries were duty-bound to assist developing countries to expand their information and communications resources by providing them with capital, technology and equipment. On the other hand, developing countries should basically rely on themselves and, through independent collective efforts, establish their own communications system. An important aspect of establishing a new world information and communication order would be for the developing countries to improve their co-operation, make up for each other's deficiencies, learn from each other and make progress together.

42. China was a developing socialist country and its command of modern techniques was not advanced enough to meet the needs of its hundreds of millions of citizens. However, it was ready to learn from the experience and technology of other countries.

43. Mr. PELAEZ (Peru), referring to the new world information and communication order, said that the image and prestige of the United Nations were due largely to the publicity work of its own public information channels. It was important to note that the Department of Public Information had accepted most proposals and recommendations made by Member States and had demonstrated a noble desire to excel.

44. Although within the United Nations the positions of Member States had met with a sympathetic reception, in information media outside the Organization they had had to confront closed, impenetrable systems founded in economic and political power, which impeded the efforts of the third world to attain a new, just economic order.

45. Ideological confrontation was emerging against that background; the aim was to replace that unjust order by establishing concepts which defended the liberty and fundamental objectives of States. The solution lay in identifying common, genuine, non-aligned causes, imbuing them with the principles contained in the

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(Mr. Pelaez, Peru)

United Nations Charter and in international law, and adopting goals which would promote social and economic development while respecting differing political, economic, social and cultural viewpoints.

46. The best way of achieving a more just and equitable economic system was not by eliminating such information systems or by imposing or promoting censorship and prohibition on the pretext that such systems represented an information monopoly and failed to reflect third-world aspirations. Countries should strengthen their internal infrastructures and formulate their own information and communications policies guided by respect for freedom of expression and opinion. Such criteria had been faithfully applied by his own Government, as stated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru at the current session of the General Assembly.

47. Peru supported the strengthening of international co-operation through training, the provision of advisory services and the transfer of resources, and wished to draw attention to the journalist training activities of the Department of Public Information, as well as the assistance given by the Department to the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies.

48. After praising the work of the Chairman and the Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, he expressed support for all the recommendations contained in the report and urged other Member States to reaffirm the mandate of the Committee on Information contained in General Assembly resolution 34/182, in order to promote the establishment of the new world information and communication order.

49. Mr. TADLAOUI (Algeria) said that a large number of countries which had attained independence were also trying to achieve control of their destinies, for which they required access to the scientific knowledge of the rest of mankind. Moreover, the economic and cultural independence of developing countries could be hampered by the activities of the industrialized countries. Those obstacles, of which there were many, were also usually technical and economic.

50. In a world characterized by serious inequalities and imbalances, there was a clear and urgent need to establish a new world information order, based on balance, diversity and the reciprocal exchange of information. Regrettably, the gap between the communications capacity of third-world countries and that of developed countries was still widening. His delegation therefore welcomed the work of UNESCO supporting the demands of the developing countries, despite the campaigns orchestrated against that organization to discredit it. The resolutions adopted at the twenty-first session of its General Conference had identified some elements of the new world information and communication order, supported the conclusions of the MacBride report and adopted an International Programme for the Development of Communication.

51. With regard to the existing information and communication "order", he noted that almost all information came from four large well-known international news agencies, the first of which was represented by journalists in 110 countries

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(Mr. Tadlaoui, Algeria)

in the world. In addition, one industrialized country alone controlled 75 per cent of the television programmes broadcast in the world. With respect to telephone services, 75 per cent of the world's telephones were installed in eight developed countries. Those figures represented fat profits for transnational communications corporations, one of which had had a sales figure of \$300 billion in 1977. The speed of technological change in the information field would not only aggravate the current imbalance, but could also have negative consequences for the future of the third world.

52. The developing countries were faced with the need to break their dependence in order to safeguard their economic and cultural identity and sovereignty. The developed countries should eschew their lust for power and provide all-round sustained and generous assistance to the developing countries so that they could install comprehensive national communications systems.

53. The consensus achieved at the twenty-first session of the General Conference of UNESCO was encouraging, and was reflected in General Assembly resolution 34/181, which authorized UNESCO to establish an international fund for the development of communications. In addition, the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication had envisaged the possibility of financing that programme as an international fund under UNESCO.

54. His delegation welcomed the contributions made by developed and developing countries to the International Programme and expressed the hope that other Member States would also contribute to it. The developing countries had realized that they should rely mainly on themselves to promote policies which would enable them to end their dependence in the field of information and communications, establish and strengthen international news agencies meeting the aspirations of their peoples, develop a communications system adapted to each country's potential, monitor the transfer of technology better adapted to their countries, place information at the service of development and find a solution to the delicate problem of training communications specialists.

55. These measures depended on a strong display of political will by the countries of the third world, and required horizontal co-operation among the developing countries. In that connexion, attention should be given to the Committee on Information's recommendation stressing co-operation between the United Nations and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies, as well as its suggestion that the Department of Public Information should consider the possibility of receiving daily dispatches from the Pool and other regional agencies. Within the context of South-South co-operation, two groupings had recently emerged which made possible the direct interchange of information without intermediaries: the National Information Systems Action Group, which linked 15 countries in Latin America, and the Federation of National Arab Agencies. The World Newspaper Supplement had managed to overcome the wall of silence imposed by the press multinationals on the introduction of a more just and effective international economic order. His delegation was pleased that the Committee on Information had recommended support for the World Newspaper

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(Mr. Tadlaoui, Algeria)

Supplement so as to ensure the dissemination of objective news on international economic issues and the problems of development.

56. In its consideration of United Nations policies and activities in the sphere of information, the Committee on Information had drawn up guidelines for the future work of the Department of Public Information. His delegation agreed fully with the recommendations appearing in the Committee's report. It applauded attempts to improve the activities of DPI, regardless of the variety of problems involved. It particularly appreciated the television news programmes, the efforts to find solutions to the developing countries' lack of technical personnel, and the launching of a training programme for journalists and broadcasters. The results obtained to date were encouraging, although much remained to be done. It was important to provide the best possible coverage, world wide, of United Nations activities, and both public and private information media should collaborate in that task. For the same reason it would make sense to strengthen the United Nations information centres.

57. His delegation hoped that preferential treatment would be given to the issue of frequency modulation so that the United Nations could broadcast by short-wave to all continents. There was no doubt that the technical and legal difficulties which had obstructed the use of the United Nations frequencies would soon be eliminated with goodwill on all sides. The United Nations would presumably have its own transmitter in the future, which would give it sovereign power to reach all corners of the world with conventional technology or even by satellite. The possibility of providing the United Nations with its own communications satellite could be regarded as a first step towards the introduction of a genuine communications satellite system.

58. With regard to the equitable geographical distribution of DPI staff his delegation maintained that the number of staff members from developing countries must be increased, and they must be given the opportunity to participate effectively in decision-making. Equally important was the regionalization plan for the Radio and Visual Services Division.

59. The world would never arrive at real freedom or the free flow of information while the imbalance persisted between information-producing and exporting countries and the countries which imported and consumed it. Any kind of fruitful rapprochement between nations would clearly have to occur in the context of a two-way flow of information.

60. Mr. KOTSEV (Bulgaria) said that the arms race and the increasing outlays for production of weapons of mass destruction spurred by imperialist militaristic circles had reached such proportions that the danger of an outbreak of a devastating war was becoming a real one. The cardinal problem facing the United Nations and its organs, as indeed all mankind, was to remove that danger.

61. The building of greater confidence and understanding among peoples and the development of political, economic and cultural co-operation between countries

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(Mr. Kotsev, Bulgaria)

with different social systems and at different levels of development depended to a great extent on the international climate which, in turn, was determined largely by the media. The direction in which the efforts of the international community were channelled would depend primarily on the kind of information disseminated.

62. Questions relating to information were inseparable from the maintenance of international peace and security. The information media represented a force of momentous political, psychological and social dimensions; their activities had enormous influence not only on individuals but also on public opinion and international relations. For that reason, questions relating to information were being discussed in such international bodies as UNESCO, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. One important issue was how to channel the enormous potential of the media to serve the cause of peace. Whether the ideas of maintaining peace and promoting relations of friendship and co-operation embedded in the Charter of the United Nations and based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, self-determination, the eradication of colonialism and racism, respect for human rights etc., were realized, depended to a great extent on how that potential was used.

63. The dissemination of information should neither impinge on the sovereign rights of other countries and peoples, nor violate the principles of international relations set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and other resolutions and decisions adopted in international bodies and organizations, not excluding the 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 resolution 110 (II) adopted by the General Assembly in 1947, which condemned all propaganda inciting or encouraging any kind of threat to peace.

64. In accordance with those principles and decisions, the news in the People's Republic of Bulgaria objectively reflected the economic and cultural achievements of the Bulgarian people, their social advances and their desire to live in peace with their neighbours and all the nations of the world. The Bulgarian media provided daily information on what countries and peoples both near and far were accomplishing, besides promoting rapprochement and understanding among peoples, upholding the ideas of peaceful coexistence and disarmament, and helping to eliminate the danger of local wars or global conflict.

65. The role played by information in relations between States with a view to maintaining peace and security was universally recognized. The question of the responsibilities and role of information had been the subject of many United Nations resolutions and documents. Mention should be made of resolution 10/2, paragraphs 103, 104 and 105, of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and document A/36/458, "World Disarmament Campaign",

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drafted by a Group of Experts designated by the Secretary-General. Among other things, the latter document recommended that "in order to facilitate the efforts to halt the armaments race, world public opinion should be mobilized on behalf of disarmament; this mobilization should be promoted by governmental and non-governmental information organs and those of the United Nations and its specialized agencies". The document added: "Member States should be encouraged to ensure a better flow of information with regard to the various aspects of disarmament to avoid dissemination of false and tendentious information concerning armaments ...". And it asserted that "the media is the single largest organized disseminator of information. It is essential that the media be encouraged to give more prominence to the dangers of the arms race and disarmament issues. This constituency includes, inter alia, journalists, broadcasters, editors, producers and directors, all of whom have a direct influence upon the content of the information and opinions presented by the media to the general public."

66. Unfortunately, the media in a number of countries were not used to mobilize public opinion in favour of disarmament, the struggle for peace, peaceful co-existence, and understanding and co-operation among peoples. On the contrary, in those countries the media were used for diametrically opposite purposes: to exacerbate the international situation, justify disproportionate spending on rearmament and condone interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

67. The imperialist information monopolies distributed false and distorted information, manipulating public opinion to suit the interests of the forces of militarism. A classic example of such manipulation was the myth of the so-called "Soviet threat". The imperialist monopolies were engaged in an increasingly unbridled propaganda campaign against the socialist countries and many non-aligned and developing countries. Another example was the activities of Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and other radio stations. Their broadcasts were intended to increase international tension, destabilize other countries - above all, the socialist countries - and engender distrust and enmity between peoples and their Governments.

68. A recent case in point was an article that had appeared in The Christian Science Monitor of 25 September 1981. It reported the decision of the United States Administration to establish another radio station which would have the "noble" mission of "telling the truth to the Cuban people", or in other words, of attempting to influence their direction, falsely interpreting the policies of the Cuban Government and distorting and belittling the achievements of the Cuban people in social, economic and cultural development. Bulgaria supported the just struggle of the non-aligned movement for peace, democracy and social progress and for the establishment of a new world information and communication order as well as the guiding principles set forth in the declarations issued at the meetings of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries. A major issue in the restructuring of international relations in the field of information to ensure the widespread, equitable, balanced and free flow of information, was the relationship between freedom of information, the purposes of dissemination and the responsibilities of the disseminators.

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69. The restructuring of the international information order was not feasible unless the principles and norms of international law governing inter-State relations were observed and unless the mass media were made to serve international peace and understanding, in conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations. Bulgaria favoured the widespread and free flow of information, provided there was due respect for the legal norms of the countries to which it was directed and for the sovereignty, political integrity and cultural identity of peoples and countries.

70. The concept of the "free flow" of information without qualification was unacceptable to Bulgaria, as it was to the majority of countries represented in the Committee, since it was being made to serve the interests of the Western information monopolies which sought to disseminate inaccurate and distorted information with ulterior motives, in order to promote dubious or unacceptable values and ideas and manipulate world public opinion in a manner that was to the liking of the militarists. The concept of free flow would benefit only the developed capitalist countries which possessed huge information monopolies and for that reason could act from a position of strength. That was why there was such vehement opposition to the establishment of a new and equitable world information and communication order. International co-operation in the field of information could only succeed and produce good results if it reflected the needs and interests of all countries, and was founded on justice and fairness.

71. The People's Republic of Bulgaria had supported and would continue to support the struggle of the developing countries, particularly the non-aligned, to restructure international relations in the field of information on the basis of principles laid down in the documents and decisions of the United Nations, UNESCO and the summit meetings of the non-aligned movement; it would continue to render assistance to those countries commensurate with the needs and goals of their social, economic and cultural development.

72. The work of the Committee on Information to improve the information activities of the United Nations system and its recommendations for establishing a new world information and communication order, deserved a favourable evaluation, since they fell within the mandate given to that Committee in General Assembly resolution 34/182 and reaffirmed in resolution 35/201. Efforts had been made to redress the current geographical imbalance in the staff of the Department of Public Information. Regrettably, however, nothing had been done to ensure an equitable participation by staff from the Eastern European countries. The Department must make greater efforts to explain and popularize the measures taken by the United Nations, UNESCO and individual States to halt the arms race, ease international tensions and ward off the danger of a nuclear conflagration.

73. His delegation wished to express its satisfaction with the progress of the work of UNESCO in the field of information and communications and with the establishment of the International Programme for the Development of Communications and the work of its Intergovernmental Council. Bulgaria intended to continue to co-operate actively with United Nations agencies and to contribute to the restructuring of international relations in the field of information.

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74. Mr. DAOUD (Iraq) said that a number of United Nations resolutions, among them General Assembly resolution 35/201, referred to the need to establish a new world information and communication order. The Conferences of Heads of States or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Havana and New Delhi had also underscored the importance of the subject and the role of the United Nations in that respect. In the communications field, the great Powers used the media in their spheres of influence, information was not objective and there was an imbalance between the developed and the developing countries.

75. With regard to the role of the United Nations in the communications field it was necessary, both at Headquarters and in the information centres, to disseminate fair and balanced information and eliminate the monopoly of the developed countries. A communications seminar had been held in Baghdad and similar resolutions on the subject had been adopted there with a view to increasing co-operation between the information media of the developed and developing countries in order to achieve a new information order that would be supportive of the new international economic order.

76. With regard to the report of the Committee on Information (A/36/21), it was to be hoped that its recommendations would be put into effect as soon as possible. The following steps had to be taken to lay the groundwork for the establishment of a new world information order: the developing countries must be helped to overcome their difficulties in the field of communication, equitable geographical distribution must be achieved in the staff of the Department of Public Information, the role of the information centres must be promoted and their activities better co-ordinated, closer relations must be established between UNESCO and the General Assembly, co-operation among the developed and the developing countries must be increased, collaboration with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies must be promoted and United Nations activities such as those on behalf of peace and against racial discrimination must be even more widely publicized. In September 1982, Iraq would host the seventh Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, and it hoped that the Department of Public Information would publicize the results of that Conference throughout the world.

77. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegation of Argentina, which had not been present when the list of speakers was closed, wished to have its name included in that list. If there were no objections, he would include Argentina in the list.

78. It was so decided.

79. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received a request from the members of the Group of Arab States and the Islamic Conference for the Committee to hold a meeting on Monday, 26 October, devoted to agenda item 64, entitled "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories", in order to review recent developments in connexion with the excavations being carried out in East Jerusalem.

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80. Mr. GLEYSTEN (United States of America) said that there were certain difficulties in agreeing to that request, because the Committee had adopted the time-table for its work contained in document A/SPC/36/L.1 by consensus. It would also be difficult for delegations to prepare themselves for a debate that was to have taken place in the month of November and therefore the agreed time-table should be observed.

81. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said that his delegation categorically objected to the meeting requested for 26 October. The Committee had agreed to set the date of 16 November for consideration of agenda item 64. In any event the request was nothing more than another attempt to make propaganda against Israel.

82. Mr. NUSEIBEH (Jordan) requested a change in priorities in the agenda, owing to the urgency of the situation caused by the excavations of Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

83. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that the report relating to agenda item 64 was not available.

84. The CHAIRMAN said that on Monday, 26 October, the Committee would proceed to debate agenda item 64 in accordance with the request of the members of the Group of Arab States and the Islamic Conference.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.