



IN/SA COLLECTION

FOURTH COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 15 October 1985
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAMORRO MORA (Nicaragua)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (continued)

1. Mr. SMERAL (Czechoslovakia) nominated Mr. Skofenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) for one of the posts of Vice-Chairman.

2. Mr. Skofenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS (A/C.4/40/2, 3 and 4)

3. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a communication containing a request for a hearing concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (A/C.4/40/2). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant the request.

4. It was so decided.

5. Mr. FELDMAN (United States of America) expressed his Government's reservation with regard to the hearing of petitioners on the matter of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Article 83, paragraph 1, of the Charter expressly reserved all functions of the United Nations relating to strategic areas - and the Trust Territory in question was such an area - to the Security Council. Paragraph 3 of the same Article provided that the Security Council should avail itself of the assistance of the Trusteeship Council to perform functions relating to certain specific matters in the strategic areas. The General Assembly and its Committees were nowhere mentioned in Article 83.

6. It was therefore on a basis of a dubious legality that the Committee had decided to hear a petition relating to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

7. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom) concurred with the United States representative. Article 83 made it perfectly clear where the responsibility for Trust Territories lay. In the interest of the effective use of United Nations time, he further noted that the petitioner in question had already been given an opportunity to petition the Trusteeship Council in May 1985, and anyone genuinely interested could refer to the verbatim record (T/PV.1584) of that previous lengthy hearing.

8. Mr. RASMUSSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the granting of the request for a hearing contained in document A/C.4/40/2 should not be interpreted as an acceptance of the view that the General Assembly was entitled to assume any functions in relation to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Article 83 was very specific on that point.

9. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a communication containing a request for a hearing concerning Guam (A/C.4/40/3). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant the request.

10. It was so decided.

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11. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a communication containing a request for a hearing concerning Western Sahara (A/C.4/40/4). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

12. It was so decided.

13. Mr. HADDAOUI (Morocco) said that the Committee's laudable practice of hearing petitioners from dependent Territories had come to be abused in recent years. A case in point was the request for a hearing contained in document A/C.4/40/4. It was difficult to see how a letter so formulated could be regarded as anything but a joke. Persons arrogating to themselves ministerial rank and the title of "ambassadors" actually had the effrontery to designate themselves - for the first time in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee - as representatives to the United Nations.

14. The Committee did not have a purely recording function; it was expected to take responsible decisions. Both the Committee and the Secretariat should demonstrate greater seriousness and firmness and apply more rigorous criteria before accepting requests for hearings. The precedent set in the case under consideration could be dangerous in that it would allow persons in the guise of petitioners to the Fourth Committee to gain access to United Nations Headquarters for other purposes, thus compromising the honest petitioners.

15. It was his understanding that entry to United Nations Headquarters was very strictly regulated by the appropriate Secretariat services and he would like some clarification on the rights and duties of petitioners in that respect. He therefore requested the Secretariat to seek the opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs and report back to the Committee at a subsequent meeting, on the following specific question: at what point did a petitioner have the right to enter Headquarters - from the time a letter was written to the Chairman of the Committee, or from the time the Committee had decided to grant the request for a hearing? If persons were, in fact, allowed to circulate freely in the building before the Committee had granted their request for a hearing, there was little point in going through the exercise of asking the Committee to decide on the request.

16. Morocco was opposed, as a matter of principle, to granting the request for a hearing contained in document A/C.4/40/4.

17. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received nine additional communications containing requests for hearings under agenda items 18 and 110. He suggested that, in accordance with the usual practice, the communications should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

18. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 110: ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN NAMIBIA AND IN ALL OTHER TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/40/23) (Part IV), (A/AC.109/803, 805, 810-812, 815, 817, 819, 825 and 826)

19. Mr. ARNOUSS (Syrian Arab Republic) said it was to be regretted that certain interests continued to pursue activities that supported colonialist régimes and that certain institutions continued to exploit the resources of colonial Territories. The situation in Namibia was worsening and the repression and exploitation of the Namibian people becoming more intense. The racist régime in Pretoria would not be able to persist in such conduct were it not for the support it received from colonialist Powers and monopolistic corporations.

20. The Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia, held at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 20 September 1985, had revealed startling information on the continuing activities of those corporations in support of the racist régime. That régime also received political and military support from certain Western countries, chiefly the United States, and its ideological partner, the racist régime in occupied Palestine.

21. That support had been condemned by the General Assembly and by the major international organizations. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had condemned the continued collaboration of those two countries with South Africa in the political, economic, military and nuclear fields. It had called upon the Governments of the United States and of the countries members of the European Economic Community to reconsider their so-called free trade agreements with Israel and to withdraw the facilities granted to Israel because they destroyed the effectiveness of the relevant United Nations resolutions and encouraged the racist régime in South Africa to persist in its policies and practices. The Luanda Declaration had also condemned such co-operation.

22. His delegation would like to stress the dangers of the increasing economic co-operation between Israel and the bantustans. Israel not only had become South Africa's fastest-growing trading partner, but was almost alone in recognizing the bantustans as independent States, in defiance of the will of the international community.

23. The United Nations had terminated South Africa's Mandate over Namibia nearly 20 years ago. The resolutions of the General Assembly and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice had asserted that South Africa's occupation of Namibia was illegal and that Member States should refrain from establishing economic relations with South Africa in that Territory. Decree No. 1 for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia had prohibited the exploitation of the resources of the Territory without the express permission of the United Nations Council for Namibia. Nevertheless, there was abundant evidence that such measures

(Mr. Arnouss, Syrian Arab Republic)

had had little effect on the actual state of affairs in Namibia. The Council had pointed out that the transfer of foreign capital to South Africa and Namibia also had military consequences and helped to improve the ability of the South African military machine to exploit Namibia and to continue its aggression against the Front-line States. Most recently, Security Council resolution 574 (1985), adopted on a complaint by Angola, had demonstrated that acts of aggression continued even after severe condemnation by the international community.

24. The activities of foreign economic and other interests in colonial Territories were harmful by their very nature because, in addition to plundering the natural resources of those Territories, they tended to establish an economy that did not reflect their needs, hindered their development and perpetuated their economic dependence. Those activities adversely affected the ability of colonial peoples to express economic and political choices. Only after they were guaranteed full exercise of their right to self-determination and independence could they freely determine the type of economic activities they considered necessary for their growth and useful for their development.

25. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned all activities that impeded the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and efforts to put an end to racism and racial discrimination. It condemned all forms of military, and especially nuclear, co-operation with South Africa, particularly that of certain Western States, which only increased tension in the region, widened the area of confrontation, created an explosive situation and exposed the region to the danger of nuclear blackmail.

26. Although his country had joined the consensus on the resolution of the Special Committee contained in document A/40/23 (Part IV), chapter V, paragraph 10, the text should have contained an explicit condemnation of all countries collaborating with, protecting or assisting the racist régime in South Africa in the economic, political, military or nuclear fields.

27. His country continued to support the call for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the racist régime in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter. Even if the Security Council failed to act, all States should, separately and individually, impose sanctions on South Africa so as to isolate it and compel it to implement the United Nations resolutions calling for an end to its illegal occupation of Namibia, the cessation of its aggression against the Front-line States and the elimination of its hateful racist policy.

28. His delegation considered that military activities in colonial Territories, including the maintenance of military bases, presented a serious obstacle to the economic and political independence of the Territories concerned. His delegation endorsed the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly by the Special Committee and contained in document A/40/23, chapter V, paragraph 11. It was of the view that there should have been an explicit reference in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution to the fact that the presence of military bases and installations in colonial and Non-Self-Governing Territories was an impediment to the implementation of the Declaration.

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(Mr. Arnouss, Syrian Arab Republic)

29. His country remained totally committed to support for the liberation struggle of the peoples of southern Africa and for that of other peoples struggling for freedom, dignity and the right to sovereignty and self-determination by all available means. It believed that such a struggle remained the only means of liberating Namibia and extirpating the racist régime.

30. Ms. TRUJILLO (Venezuela) said that despite the tremendous efforts to end colonialism, millions of persons in different parts of the world still lived under colonial domination. Even though the work of the Committee on decolonization had been reduced, there were still 18 non-self-governing countries, 10 of them on the American continent. Her delegation deplored the military operations and the military bases in colonial Territories. She cited the case of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) where, notwithstanding the Treaty of Tlatelolco, militarization had created the fear that the Atlantic Ocean might become a nuclear zone.

31. She welcomed the accession of new States in the Caribbean to full sovereignty and supported the efforts of other non-self-governing peoples to exercise their legitimate right of self-determination.

32. Colonialism had persisted because of the unremitting plunder of the Territories by economic, financial and other interests which blocked the independence of the indigenous population and its enjoyment of its own natural resources. Indeed, monopolistic interests, with the full co-operation of certain Western countries, were sustaining régimes like the apartheid régime in South Africa by providing political, economic and military support.

33. Venezuela, as a founding member of the United Nations Council for Namibia would continue to discharge its duties until Namibia was freed from the yoke of colonialism. It rejected South Africa's colonial rule in that Territory in violation of United Nations decisions and the principles of the Charter as well as its military incursions into other African countries. It deplored the failure of the great Powers to persuade the Pretoria régime to eliminate apartheid; indeed, by their action or failure to act, they were in fact prolonging a situation which constituted one of the greatest crimes against humanity.

34. Mr. DARWISH (Egypt) said that what was happening in Namibia was a flagrant example of both the exploitation of the resources of Territories under occupation and of the alliance between foreign economic interests and occupation authorities.

35. Namibia was endowed with abundant natural resources and had enormous reserves of minerals and great potential in agriculture and fisheries. Despite the lack of reliable statistical data, information published by the corporations operating in Namibia and studies published with the help of non-governmental organizations in a number of Western European countries had confirmed that those corporations were reaping enormous profits. One reason was the cheap labour provided by the Government of South Africa in order to attract foreign investment. Foreign corporations had grown so powerful that they were able to determine the course of the Namibian economy in complete disregard of the short- and long-term interests of the indigenous inhabitants.

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(Mr. Darwish, Egypt)

36. Aluminium headed the list of natural resources subject to foreign exploitation. It was important not only because of its intrinsic value but because of its applications in the military and nuclear fields. In the aluminium industry, as elsewhere, the foreign corporations, in their endeavour to make the highest possible profits, had neglected to implement those safety precautions necessary to protect the environment and the worker which were scrupulously implemented in other parts of the world.

37. Namibia was a unique responsibility of the United Nations and the Organization had the duty of protecting the Territory's resources from exploitation and depletion until such time as it acceded to independence. One of the most important developments in that connection had been the decision taken by the United Nations Council for Namibia in 1985, after long deliberation, to institute legal proceedings against corporations exploiting the resources of Namibia in contravention of Decree No. 1 for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia. Egypt called upon all States, particularly those to which corporations operating in Namibia belonged, to assist the Council in ensuring the application of the provisions of Decree No. 1 as an admonition to those corporations that the day would come when they would have to pay the price for their actions.

38. Egypt was particularly concerned about the long-time effects of such exploitation because of the rapid rate of depletion of Namibia's natural resources. Namibia was the last sanctuary of traditional colonialism and its people were being subjected by the South African régime to oppression and violence. There were, however, a number of other Territories that had not yet acceded to independence and whose natural and human resources were, to varying degrees, subject to plunder by foreign economic interests without regard for the interests of the indigenous inhabitants.

39. Objectivity nevertheless required it to be said that, in certain cases, Administering Authorities had endeavoured to guide the activities of foreign economic interests operating in some developing countries in such a way as to protect the interests of the inhabitants. Such action deserved the support and approbation of all.

40. Mr. SHERWANI (India) said that since the quest for economic profit had often been the motivating factor of colonialism, it was logical that today, economic interests should be obstructing the decolonization process. Namibia had been singled out for special attention by the United Nations because it was the most serious and most brutalized victim of colonialism.

41. South Africa had arrogantly defied Security Council resolution 435 of 1978, and countless other United Nations resolutions and decisions on Namibia and had been able to withstand concerted international pressure and maintain its stranglehold on Namibia's economy because it was supported by foreign economic interests. The profits to South Africa in the short run far outweighed the financial burden incurred from its illegal occupation of Namibia.

(Mr. Sherwani, India)

42. Foreign economic interests also played a significant role in Namibia's economy, maintaining a virtual monopoly over the mining, fishing, fur, agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The people of Namibia were condemned to slave labour and derived no benefit from the rich resources of their land.

43. The activities of foreign economic interests in Namibia were a major obstacle to Namibia's independence. Moreover, when Namibia did gain independence it would be impoverished and despoiled and its economic reconstruction would pose a most serious challenge. Whereas in other countries foreign economic involvement could be regarded as a mixed blessing, that was not the case in Namibia. Foreign economic activities which were detrimental to the interests of the local inhabitants and restricted their freedom of choice with regard to their future status could not be countenanced.

44. On the question of military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration, the Non-Aligned Movement had categorically stated that the establishment of bases and other military installations in dependent Territories was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Namibia was again cited as a case where militarization by the colonial Power directly obstructed decolonization. South Africa had used its military installations in Namibia both to repress the Namibians and as a launching pad for aggression against neighbouring States. Furthermore, it had flouted the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council and acquired a nuclear capability.

45. India supported the view of the General Assembly that military bases in Non-Self-Governing Territories should be dismantled and removed. The decolonization process did not end with the attainment of formal independence; the long-term approach involved the consolidation of that independence. The pattern of growth and development in Non-Self-Governing Territories and the activities of foreign economic interests should therefore be viewed in that context.

46. Mr. OUYAHIA (Algeria) said that Namibia was the most striking example of the plunder of the natural resources of a Territory under colonial domination. The natural wealth was being plundered by foreign and South African capital which together exercised complete control over the Namibian economy. The convergence of those two interests was the main obstacle to the application of mandatory sanctions to force South Africa to withdraw from Namibia. The argument advanced to justify that unholy alliance was concern for the interests of the indigenous population.

47. Foreign military activities were also an obstacle to total liberation. Military bases were maintained in colonial enclaves for testing nuclear weapons and for launching military operations against neighbouring countries. South Africa used its installations in Namibia to launch attacks against Angola and destabilize southern Africa.

48. Acceptance of the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination and independence had been won by dint of great sacrifice on the part of the people in the former colonies. Their struggle had been resoundingly supported by the United Nations and the international community could not justify or ignore any act or attitude which sought to prevent the total eradication of colonialism.

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(Mr. Ouyahia, Algeria)

49. Any economic or other form of activity which obstructed the implementation of the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples was a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of resolution 1514 (XV). The natural resources of Namibia were the inviolable heritage of the Namibian people and their illegal exploitation by South Africa and foreign interests were considered illegal by the international community.

50. Mr. HAILE-GIORGIS (Ethiopia) said that while the overwhelming majority of the members of the Fourth Committee agreed that the activities of foreign economic interests impeded decolonization and the elimination of apartheid, a minority having financial and economic interests in dependent Territories argued to the contrary. He regretted that the latter refused to acknowledge the facts, particularly with respect to southern Africa. Namibia, for example, was clearly being exploited by transnational corporations which supported the illegal occupation of that Territory and kept it totally dependent on international market forces by restricting economic activity to the extractive industries, despite the repeated protests of the international community. In South Africa the transfer of capital and technology by Western transnational corporations not only enabled the racist régime to perpetuate colonial exploitation but also to develop a powerful military machine. Nothing short of total disengagement by the Western monopolies from southern Africa could remedy the situation. Purely cosmetic changes could not change the systems of colonialism and apartheid, and economic sanctions must be imposed against Pretoria.

51. Other dependent and small Territories were equally threatened by foreign economic interests, which concentrated their activities on service industries that maximized their profits but did not contribute significantly to self-sustaining economic growth and development. The Committee should therefore call upon the administering Powers to promote the economic and social development of the people of the small Territories through diversification of their economies and effective control of the activities of the transnational corporations. He specifically rejected the argument that foreign military bases in the dependent Territories provided employment and tax revenue; such bases only diverted resources from productive economic ventures and perpetuated the dependence of the people on foreign-operated and non-productive activities. The bases served not to protect the Territories but to subdue liberation movements and to intimidate colonial peoples struggling for self-determination and independence. Their presence also exacerbated international tension.

52. In conclusion, he commended the adoption by the Committee of the recommendations of the Special Committee on decolonization in chapters V and VI of document A/40/23 (Part IV).

53. Mr. TADLAOUI (Morocco) said that for many years the United Nations had been concerned with the activities of the transnational corporations in Namibia because they were an impediment to decolonization. The occupation of Namibia had been declared illegal and many resolutions and decisions had been adopted to protect the natural wealth of the Territory and make South Africa renounce the odious system of apartheid. South Africa's response had been to intensify its repression of the peoples of southern Africa and its aggression against neighbouring countries.

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(Mr. Tadlaoui, Morocco)

54. In the circumstances, the world community had a great responsibility towards the peoples of southern Africa, whose tragic plight owed much to the attitude of certain countries and their economic interests. The only acceptable basis for a peaceful settlement of the Namibian question was Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

55. Another factor preventing the Namibian people from exercising its rights was the military activity in the area, which was being used as a launching pad for aggression against neighbouring States. The military co-operation of certain countries with Pretoria must therefore stop and the General Assembly must renew its appeal to all States that had not yet done so to comply with Security Council's arms embargo on South Africa.

56. In conclusion, his delegation supported the recommendations of the Special Committee on decolonization in chapters V and VI of document A/40/23 (Part IV) and commended that Committee for its work during 1985.

57. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he rejected the representative of Venezuela's allegations regarding the militarization of the Falkland Islands. His country's military dispositions there were purely deterrent and any claims to the contrary could only complicate his country's relations with Argentina. He regretted that those allegations had been made by a country with which his own country had historically enjoyed good relations, and he could not imagine that Argentina itself would wish to raise the political temperature now through such allegations. His country had also scrupulously complied with the provisions of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which it had both signed and ratified, unlike certain Latin American States.

58. Mr. JOFFE (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, in connection with the comments made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, that his country's trade with South Africa was barely visible compared with those of other nations, including the Arab States. South Africa was in fact a significant trading partner of a number of Arab countries. The United Arab Emirates, for example, delivered from 250,000 to 400,000 barrels of crude oil a day to South Africa, which also received considerable quantities from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Iran. Israel, unfortunately, had no oil.

59. Mr. PFIRTER (Argentina), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the United Kingdom had not been replying to any statement from his own delegation, but appreciated the fact that he had understood that his delegation had no wish to raise the temperature in the debate. Although his delegation disagreed with the United Kingdom with respect to certain aspects of the situation in the South Atlantic, it was working towards an ultimate settlement of the difficulties between the two countries.

60. Mr. DEYHIM (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he would in due course refute the allegations made by the representative of the Zionist régime but wished to make it clear that it was not his own Government which claimed to have halted all oil deliveries to South Africa

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61. Mr. AL-MUSFIR (United Arab Emirates), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he would in due course obtain the necessary documents to refute the allegations, based on misquotations, of the representative of the Zionist régime.

62. Mr. ARNOUSS (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Zionist entity, in defiance of United Nations resolutions, continued to have well-documented relations with its fellow racists in South Africa.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

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