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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/. . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements of the Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

2004TH MEETING

Held in New York on Thursday, 14 April 1977, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Simón Alberto CONSALVI (Venezuela).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Benin, Canada, China, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2004)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Complaint by Benin:

Report of the Security Council Special Mission to the People's Republic of Benin established under resolution 404 (1977) (S/12294 and Add.1)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Benin

Report of the Security Council Special Mission to the People's Republic of Benin established under resolution 404 (1977) (S/12294 and Add.1)*

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with the decisions previously taken by the Council, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Botswana, Cuba, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia and Togo to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. F. K. Bouayad-Agha (Algeria), Mr. H. Modisi (Botswana), Mr. L. Gómez Anzardo (Cuba), Mr. A. E. Abdel Meguid (Egypt), Mr. M. Ecu Miko (Equatorial Guinea), Mr. L. N'Dong (Gabon), Mr. M. S. Camara (Guinea), Mr. S. Aké (Ivory Coast), Mr. V. Sourinho (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. B. Rabetafika (Madagascar), Mr. M. Kane (Mauritania), Mr. A. Bengelloun (Morocco), Mr. J. C. Lobo (Mozambique), Mr. J. Poisson (Niger), Mr. J. M. Baroody (Saudi Arabia), Mr. M. Fall (Senegal), Mr. A. H. Hussien (Somalia)

and Mr. A. A. Kodjovi (Togo) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to inform the members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Mali, Mongolia and the United Republic of Tanzania in which they request to be allowed to participate in the debate on the question on the agenda. Consequently I propose, in accordance with past practice and with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the debate, without the right to vote, under the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

3. In view of the limited number of places available at the Council table, I invite those representatives to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that they will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever they wish to address the Council.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. M. B. Kanté (Mali), Mr. T. Puntsagnorov (Mongolia) and Mr. S. Chale (United Republic of Tanzania) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

4. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before calling on the first speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the members of the Council the draft resolution sponsored by the delegations of Benin, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius which is contained in document S/12322.

5. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): Members are aware that a draft resolution, contained in document S/12322, dated 13 April was circulated this morning. It has so far been sponsored by the delegations of Benin, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius. The number of sponsors is not limited to those delegations and consultations are still under way with respect to further sponsors from the non-aligned countries and other members of the Council. At the end of this morning's meeting, I shall perhaps be in a position to announce other sponsors.

6. I should like now briefly to introduce the draft resolution. It is very clear and expressed in simple language. As members have had the opportunity to go over it since yesterday, I do not think it is necessary for me to go into details. It has been the subject of thorough and positive negotiations.

7. The first preambular paragraph refers to the report of the Security Council Special Mission to the People's

* Subsequently issued as *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-second year, Special Supplement No. 3 (S/12294/Rev.1)*.

Republic of Benin established under resolution 404 (1977). The second paragraph expresses the concern of the Council at the violation of the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the State of Benin. The third paragraph states that the Council is deeply grieved at the loss of life and substantial damage to property caused by the invading force during its attack on Cotonou on 16 January 1977.

8. There are 12 operative paragraphs. Under paragraph 1, the Council would simply take note of the report of the Special Mission and express its appreciation for the work accomplished.

9. Under paragraph 2, which is an important one, the Council would strongly condemn the act of armed aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January 1977. This language comes straight from a resolution which was adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at Lomé earlier this year. We have been very careful regarding the wording of this paragraph and I understand that it has been accepted by all the members of the Council.

10. Paragraph 3 reaffirms a previous Council resolution—resolution 239 (1967),

“by which, *inter alia*, the Council condemns any State which persists in permitting or tolerating the recruitment of mercenaries and the provision of facilities to them, with the objective of overthrowing the Governments of Member States”.

We have been very faithful to the language of resolution 239 (1967); we have not departed in any way from its wording.

11. Under paragraph 4, the Council would call upon

“all States to exercise the utmost vigilance against the danger posed by international mercenaries and to ensure that their territory and other territories under their control, as well as their nationals, are not used for the planning of subversion and recruitment, training and transit of mercenaries designed to overthrow the Government of any Member State”.

I do not see how anyone can object to that.

12. Under paragraph 5, the Council would further call upon

“all States to consider taking necessary measures to prohibit, under their respective domestic laws, the recruitment, training and transit of mercenaries on their territory and other territories under their control”.

13. Under paragraph 6, the Council would condemn

“all forms of external interference in the internal affairs of Member States, including the use of international mercenaries to destabilize States and/or to violate their territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence”.

Here we have introduced the word “destabilize” because a great many African and other representatives who have

spoken in the Council have used it and it seems to be very much in the minds of representatives of developing countries.

14. Under paragraph 7, the Council would request

“the Secretary-General to provide appropriate technical assistance to help the Government of Benin in assessing and evaluating the damage resulting from the act of armed aggression committed at Cotonou on 16 January 1977”.

I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have discussed this paragraph with the Secretary-General, who has agreed to the wording.

15. Under paragraph 8, the Council would address an appeal to

“all States to provide material assistance to the People's Republic of Benin in order to enable it to repair the damage and losses inflicted during the attack”.

That is only an appeal and I do not believe that there can be any objection to it.

16. Under paragraph 9, the Council would note

“that the Government of Benin has reserved its right with respect to any eventual claims for compensation which it may wish to assert”.

During negotiations there was much discussion on this paragraph, but there has not been any serious objection to it and its present wording has been accepted by all members of the Council.

17. Under paragraph 10, the Council would call upon

“all States to provide the Security Council with any information they might have in connexion with the events at Cotonou on 16 January 1977, likely to throw further light on those events”.

I am sure that all members of the Council and Members of the United Nations feel that it is at least a moral duty to provide such information and that there will be no objection to that.

18. Under paragraph 11, the Council would request

“the Secretary-General to follow closely the implementation of the present resolution”.

That is merely a matter of form. Under paragraph 12 the Council would decide

“to remain seized of this question”.

19. As I said, the draft resolution is very clear and all members of the Council are well aware of the contents of this document; therefore, I do not see any need to spell them out in detail.

20. After extensive negotiations with all members of the Council—and I stand ready to be corrected by my colleagues on the Council—it is clear to me that they are ready to adopt this draft resolution by consensus. In the light of that fact, I should like to ask you, Mr. President, to put it before the Council as soon as possible for adoption by consensus.

21. I should have preferred to see the debate on this matter of Benin concluded this morning, but I see from the list of speakers that there are some 10 representatives, including nine representatives of States non-members of the Council, who have asked to speak. Apart from Mongolia, I think they are all African representatives. May I be permitted to make an appeal to my African brothers to consider the necessity, at this stage, of participating in the Council's discussion. If they must do so on the instructions of their Governments, I suggest to them, very respectfully and in a very friendly and brotherly manner, that they should be brief, avoid bringing in extraneous matters that may not be of direct relevance to our debate and confine themselves to the report of the Special Mission and so avoid all acrimony.

22. I have made that appeal before and I hope that today the representatives who speak will listen to and co-operate with me in the best interests of Africa. If they co-operate, then we could deal with this matter this morning and have the draft resolution as submitted adopted by consensus. Mr. President, I leave it to your good judgement and discretion to consult other members and find out whether it is possible to adopt this draft resolution very soon.

23. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I agree with the view of the representative of Mauritius and will, in so far as possible, carry out consultations with the members of the Council and the representatives whose names appear on the list of speakers.

24. The next speaker is the representative of Somalia, whom I invite to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

25. Mr. HUSSEN (Somalia): First of all, I should like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council for having given me the opportunity to participate in this debate. May I also congratulate you on your assumption of the office of President of the Council for the month of April and extend to you our best wishes for success in conducting this very important debate in the course of which the Council is considering a matter of great relevance to international peace and security. We are confident that your diplomatic and political experience will greatly contribute to the successful conclusion of the deliberations of the Council.

26. I should like also to express our congratulations to your predecessor, Ambassador Andrew Young, who, as President of the Council, discharged his heavy responsibilities with tact, open-mindedness, diplomacy and skill which earned him the admiration of all of us.

27. I shall now address myself to the subject under consideration. Having carefully studied the report of the

Special Mission and its annexes, I feel duty bound to express my delegation's warm congratulations to the Chairman of the Mission, Ambassador Illueca of Panama, and the other two members, Ambassador Kikhia of Libya and Mr. Mulye of India, for their objective and comprehensive report.

28. In my statement on 8 February, during the first stage of the Council's debate on the matter at hand, I said, *inter alia*:

“This is not the first case of its kind to come before the Security Council. It will be recalled that in the past the Council has been called on to take action because of armed attack by mercenaries or because of other kinds of armed intervention in the internal affairs of other African States. It will constitute a grave threat to peace and stability on the African continent if outside forces can threaten with impunity the hard-won independence of African States. It is not a question only of peace and stability. What is at stake is also the very honour and dignity of Africa.

“At this stage, the least that the Government of the People's Republic of Benin can ask for, and the Council support, is the dispatch of a fact-finding mission to ascertain the origin of that brutal aggression. Such a mission would bear in mind the importance of exposing the evil of mercenary activities and the necessity of eliminating that scourge from the face of the earth if we are to ensure that the aims and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are to be preserved.”
[1987th meeting, paras. 96 and 97.]

29. We are grateful to the Security Council for having sent a fact-finding mission to the scene of the aggression, the People's Republic of Benin. The Council is now called upon to consider the report of its Mission.

30. It is crystal clear from the report that the People's Republic of Benin, a peace and freedom-loving country, and also a member of the Security Council, was subjected to blatant and treacherous aggression, master-minded, financed and organized by imperialist forces and perpetrated by faceless and bloodthirsty mercenaries. This is made abundantly clear in paragraph 141 of the report, which states:

“On the basis of the testimony received and evidence examined by it, the Special Mission is in a position to conclude that the People's Republic of Benin was thus subjected to an armed attack by the armed force which arrived at Cotonou airport on the morning of 16 January 1977. The primary objective of the invading force was the overthrow of the present Government of Benin.”

That paragraph conclusively proves that, in actual fact, an armed attack was effected against the People's Republic of Benin.

31. The next paragraph, paragraph 142, establishes that, as a result of the armed attack by a foreign invading force,

Benin was subjected to aggression. The paragraph reads as follows:

“Inasmuch as the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the State of Benin was violated by this invading force which came from outside the territory of that country, there can be no doubt that the State of Benin was subjected to aggression.”

32. The report confirms also that those who perpetrated this ignoble aggression were mercenaries, who caused the loss of lives of Benin nationals and the destruction of property.

33. For those who expressed or harboured doubts that blatant aggression had in fact been committed against the People's Republic of Benin, the report of the Special Mission provides ample proof to confirm that that was indeed the case. This is supported by detailed evidence and comprehensively documented facts. The report proves conclusively, without any shred of doubt, that this pre-meditated armed aggression was aimed at overthrowing the legitimate Government of Benin and carried with it the aim of eliminating that country's leaders, massacring its people and other far-reaching consequences.

34. This external aggression against the independence and sovereignty of the People's Republic of Benin is, in our view, part of an imperialist and neo-colonialist plan to destabilize not only Africa but any developing countries which refuse to succumb to the dictates of the imperialists and their huge and morbidly profit-thirsty financing corporations. The People's Republic of Benin has chosen scientific socialism as its political, economic and social orientation and as a means towards its development and national reconstruction. In the eyes of the neo-colonialists, this is a crime and Benin has to be punished.

35. It is also common knowledge that international mercenaries are used by the minority and racist régimes in southern Africa in order to thwart the struggle of the African people for self-determination, freedom and dignity. These mercenaries, recruited and assembled by the minority régimes, have perpetrated many violations of and encroachments on the neighbouring African States because of those countries' solidarity with their beleaguered brothers and sisters who languish under all forms of brutality and human degradation; and also—and mainly—because those countries decided to comply with the United Nations resolutions regarding the régimes of white minorities in southern Africa.

36. I need not refresh the memories of the members of the Council with regard to the notorious crimes committed by those agents of neo-colonialism—mercenaries—against the newly independent African States in order to frustrate Africa's efforts to rid itself of the shackles of economic and political manipulation and subjugation. There can be no better way of describing the dimension and gravity of the mercenaries' activities in Africa than by quoting the remarks made by the representative of Mali on 8 February:

“From Katanga to Benin, via Bukavu in Zaire, in November 1967, Biafra in 1968, the Republic of Guinea

on 22 November 1970, Angola in 1975 and Southern Rhodesia and many other places, the Bob Dénards, the Steiners, the Schramms and their soldiers of fortune achieved notoriety through their odious crimes committed in cold blood against peace-loving African peoples.” [*Ibid.*, para. 104.]

Those words briefly but pointedly reflect the continuance of the contemptible acts of aggression committed against African countries through the unleashing of the scum of the earth—mercenaries—in violation of international law and morality.

37. The Special Mission rightly sounded a note of warning in paragraph 144 of its report, on the ominous presence of the threat posed by the use of international mercenaries against the developing countries—and particularly the African countries. This is substantiated by an article which appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, in its issue of 5 April 1977, part of which I should like to quote:

“A new attempt to recruit American and British mercenaries to fight in Africa appears to be getting under way.

“... ”

“The first visible sign in the United States of a new mercenary recruiting effort was a ‘help wanted’ advertisement placed in the *Fresno Bee* (California) on April 1. It asked for résumés from people with military backgrounds for ‘high-risk’ work in Africa at \$1,200 to \$2,000 a month, depending on qualifications.”

38. A question arises here. From these quotations we learn that a “help wanted” advertisement has reportedly been published in a newspaper, asking for résumés from people with military backgrounds for “high-risk” work in Africa, at salaries ranging from \$1,200 to \$2,000 per month. Now, the question is: who employs those people and for whom? Who pays for them and for what purpose?

39. The problem of the use of mercenaries is not as isolated an issue as some people want us to believe. It is an integral part of a more complex and systematic scheme contrived by neo-colonialism in order to maintain and protect its huge interests in Africa. This means that those powerful forces can at will meddle with and interfere in the internal affairs of independent African States, especially those which have opted for a system of government or a political and socio-economic programme which is found to be more responsive to the situation and needs of their respective countries and which leaves little room for exploitation by multinational corporations as they are now conceived and organized.

40. The impact of multinational corporations has been one of the primary concerns of the international community for a good while. In 1974, the United Nations issued a report entitled *The Impact of Multinational Corporations on Development and on International Relations*.¹ The report states, among other things, that most

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.II.A.5.

countries are concerned about the ownership and control of key economic sectors by foreign enterprises, the excessive cost to the domestic economy which their operations may entail, the extent to which they may encroach upon political sovereignty and their possible adverse influence on socio-cultural values. The report states how the operations of those giants conflict with the political and social choices of countries that may opt for different models of development. This is the crux and the heart of the problem. To turn elsewhere for the identification of the real cause of the use of mercenaries is like hiding one's head in the sand.

41. Now, from this debate, as from those before it regarding acts of aggression against other African States, we have drawn one conclusion: Africa is under constant threat. It sounds as if the leaders of Africa have been served with a kind of unwritten ultimatum in which they are reminded that Africa is still crucially vital as a source of raw materials for the industrial establishments of some developed countries and also as a market for the latter's finished commodities and that those titanic financial empires and whoever is behind them will not be available for any compromise on this point. So any "hardy" African leader who tries to challenge the ultimatum of neo-colonialism must be ready for anything, and there will be mercenaries to do the job.

42. It is depressing to know that any bunch of renegades, or renegade bands, could at any time engage in a "punitive mission" against an African country whose only crime, as in the case now before us, is to have chosen a system of development which, in the best judgement of its people, is considered most suitable to their particular situation and needs.

43. Those die-hard potentates of the nineteenth-century prototype, with their well-known bigotry and imperialistic thinking, are arrogantly convinced that they can stop the winds of change and turn the clock backward in order to maintain indefinitely their privileged and monopolistic positions, thus frustrating the efforts that the third world has been making, in an attempt to see the old economic system replaced by a new economic order which calls for a more equitable sharing of the resources of the globe. That is the motive underlying all those aggressions and violations of international law and morality. Any action that fails to take into consideration this crucial fact is condemned to bear no fruitful result.

44. The representative of India, in his statement on 8 February, during the first phase of the consideration of Benin's complaint, made the following observations:

"Clearly, foreign agencies are involved, even though the Governments may be unaware of the activities of these mercenaries. Nevertheless, this does raise important questions of international responsibility for such situations. Where do these mercenaries come from, and where do they go? What are their motivations? Is it simply the profit motive, or is it the political motive that underlies their operations?" [*Ibid.*, para. 63.]

45. These questions and many others are still awaiting answers. In the same vein, Ambassador Amerasinghe, the

Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, President of the General Assembly and Chairman of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, in a letter dated 7 February 1977, addressed to the President of the Security Council [*S/12283*], stated, *inter alia*, that the Co-ordinating Bureau had expressed its serious concern over the events which took place on Sunday, 16 January 1977 because they seemed to be part of a plan aimed at undermining the stability of régimes whose policies were viewed with displeasure in certain circles. I think that that is truly the heart of the matter.

46. In his statement on 12 April, the representative of Madagascar stated on this particular point:

"The attempts made to limit the ramifications of this aggression to the African continent are not credible and, in our view, are obviously part of a larger neo-colonial plan to reconquer, destabilize and overthrow, one after another, the régimes whose options and tendencies are at variance with imperialist and neo-colonialist objectives on the African continent." [*2002nd meeting, para. 117.*]

It is against that background that the acts of aggression of which the People's Republic of Benin was a victim should be perceived and judged.

47. We believe that not only Africa but the entire international community has a moral obligation to applaud and to rally round those African countries that have repulsed mercenaries' attacks and thus defended their national honour and sovereignty. We in the Somali Democratic Republic are indeed grateful to the President, people and Government of Benin for scoring a resounding blow at the aggressor's forces of evil and human degradation, thus protecting the great victories and dignity not only of Benin but of Africa as a whole. I must hasten to add that, in the face of this continuous threat, Africa should be vigilant and, at the same time, mobilize its resources in order to defeat and destroy those evil forces. In that way it will convey to the imperialists and neo-colonialists the message that any future attempts at aggression against Africa will not be a walk-over but will certainly be crushed.

48. As was stated by the representative of Mauritius on 6 April, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, at its twenty-eighth ordinary session held at Lomé from 21 to 28 February, adopted a resolution condemning the armed aggression against Benin. In paragraph 1, so eloquently quoted by the representative of Mauritius, the resolution

"*Strongly condemns* the act of armed aggression against the People's Republic of Benin and congratulates the heroic brotherly people of Benin on their courageous routing of the aggression".

Furthermore, paragraph 4 of the same resolution reads as follows:

"*Empowers* the African Group at the United Nations to act in solidarity with Benin during the debate of the case by the United Nations Security Council".

49. In this connexion, I should like to place on record that all the African delegations which have so far participated in this debate have strongly condemned the act of armed aggression against the People's Republic of Benin and expressed their solidarity, as the resolution that I just mentioned instructed us, with their sister country of Benin.

50. It should also be noted here that the first Afro-Arab Summit Conference Meeting, held at Cairo from 7 to 9 March 1977, condemned the same aggression against Benin in paragraph 11 of its Political Declaration:

"The . . . Conference strongly condemns the practice of mercenaries and undertakes to eliminate this phenomenon in Africa and the Arab world." [See S/12298, annex.]

51. The Somali delegation believes that international peace would be better preserved if all States Members of the United Nations ensured that their territory and resources, as well as their nationals, were not used for the recruitment, transportation and/or transit of mercenaries for the purpose of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries and/or overthrowing their legitimate Governments. In consonance with those goals, the United Nations should invite all States to enact national legislation aimed at combating mercenary activities in their territories, with progress reports being made available on a regular basis to the Secretary-General. In advancing this proposal, I base myself on the substance of paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 239 (1967) of 10 July 1967, in which the Council

"Calls upon Governments to ensure that their territory and other territories under their control, as well as their nationals, are not used for the planning of subversion, and the recruitment, training and transit of mercenaries".

The same resolution stated, *inter alia*, that the Council

"Condemns any State which persists in permitting or tolerating the recruitment of mercenaries, and the provision of facilities to them, with the objective of overthrowing the Governments of States Members of the United Nations".

52. Now that the barbaric foreign aggression committed against Benin has been proved beyond any shadow of a doubt, it is incumbent upon the Security Council not only to condemn the use of international mercenaries but also to take effective and stringent measures so as to prevent the recurrence of such acts of aggression. We believe that the problem of the use of international mercenaries is serious enough to warrant Security Council action in accordance with Article I of the Charter, which stipulates that the purpose of the Organization is to maintain international peace and security, and to that end, to take effective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.

53. Accordingly, we believe that the Security Council should adopt a resolution which would have broad applicability and would prohibit the planning of subversion, the recruitment, training, equipping and/or transport of mer-

cenaries or the permitting or allowing of transit facilities for mercenaries and their equipment, so as effectively to prevent their intervention in the internal affairs of the peace-loving countries of Africa and elsewhere.

54. In conclusion, I should like to add my voice to all those who have spoken out strongly against the activities of mercenaries. In addition to condemning the aggression committed against Benin, the Security Council should appeal to the international community—as it would do in the draft resolution just introduced by the representative of Mauritius—to extend assistance to that country to repair the consequences of the aggression committed against it.

55. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform members that India and Panama have become sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document S/12322.

56. The next speaker is the representative of Senegal, whom I invite to take a place at the Council table and to make a statement.

57. Mr. FALL (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): In speaking on 7 April in the Council [2001st meeting], I wished to limit myself to expressing the solidarity of my Government with the sister Republic of Benin. In doing so I wished to act in accordance with the spirit of the consensus of the African Group, which called on African delegations not to behave in this gathering in any way which would benefit the enemies of Africa. It was clear to my delegation that respect for that principle adopted in our Group should be unanimous. The Council has noted that the Republic of Guinea, in taking part in this debate tried to incriminate my country, in the name of a pseudo-revolutionary solidarity, in an affair which concerns it neither directly nor indirectly. In my statement of 7 April I provided the explanations required by their so-called revelations, which showed a high degree of irresponsibility and a lack of sense of proportion. I reserved the right to come back to this rostrum—with the consent of the Council, of course—if the document that had just been distributed by the representative of Benin (S/12319/Add.1) contained information unacceptable to my country.

58. I am sure you can appreciate our distress as we feel the atmosphere deteriorate in this debate which should have seen Africa united against the use of mercenaries, that tool of imperialism used against our continent to disrupt our harmonious development. We should like to say right away that responsibility for the present situation does not in any circumstances rest with my delegation.

59. The document distributed by the delegation of Benin cannot leave my delegation indifferent. In part V it states:

"This barbarous and savage imperialist aggression was carefully prepared, financed and perpetrated by French imperialism in collaboration with the Governments of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Gabonese Republic and the Togolese Republic and with the complicity of the Governments of the Ivory Coast and the Republic of Senegal."

In part IV, under the heading "Senegal", the report states:

"With respect to Senegal, 13 mercenaries of Guinean origin were recruited by a certain Joseph, whose real name is Sy Sawané Oumar . . ."

—also of Guinean origin—and

"It has also been proved"—I do not know by whom but I should like to know—"that the Senegalese immigration services issued false identity cards—i.e., safe conducts—and assisted in the embarkation of . . . mercenaries . . . without the prescribed formalities, on board an aircraft of Royal Air Maroc."

60. We deny these assertions, which are without foundation. In the course of my statement on 7 April, I explained to the Council the circumstances in which the 500,000 Guineans living in Senegal enjoyed the hospitality of our people. That among that large number there should have been 13 scoundrels who took part in that foul operation does not surprise us, although, in the circumstances, we have every right to doubt the substance of the claims. But what my delegation certainly cannot accept is the insinuation that official Senegalese services promoted or even were informed about the activities of those blackguards.

61. Accordingly, my Government has authorized me to state in the Council that Senegal is ready to welcome any United Nations mission of inquiry to Dakar to check into the facts alleged by the delegation of Benin. My Government will provide any necessary facilities for such a mission, which could include, if so desired, representatives of Benin and the Republic of Guinea.

62. My delegation believes that this matter of the aggression against Benin has developed now in such a way that it is absolutely essential to carry the investigations to the end. I do not see what positive decision could be adopted by the Council on the basis of the report of a mission of inquiry which concludes with the words:

"However, the Special Mission wishes to state that the terms of its mandate, as well as the time available at its disposal for its implementation, did not permit it to investigate further and verify the testimony of the prisoner pertaining to these matters. The same is true of the suggestive evidence contained in the documentation."
[S/12294, para. 145.]

63. As the Council is aware, the entire substance of the report of the Mission is based exclusively on the statements of the prisoner which, in fact, do not incriminate the Senegalese authorities, and on the evidence presented by the documents. It is for that reason that, with your permission, Sir, I would respond to the invitation extended by the Chairman of the Special Mission at the meeting of 7 April. In keeping with his characteristic intellectual honesty, he said he and his colleagues were willing

"to answer any questions which representatives may wish to ask on any point which, in their opinion, might require further elucidation . . . no one need therefore entertain

any doubt about the impartiality and objectivity of the members of the Mission" [2001st meeting, para. 153].

64. I should like to take this opportunity to ask the Chairman and the members of the Mission for a few clarifications. The aggression of which Benin was the victim took place on 16 January 1977. The Security Council first met on that subject on 7 February, that is, more than three weeks later. The representative of the Republic of Benin had ample time to contact his Government. I even believe I am right in saying he went to Cotonou in the meantime. So the statement he made in the Council must have been the result of careful preparation and thought and not just the expression of a mere emotional reaction. And yet, in that statement I heard the following references to mercenaries:

"In a helter-skelter stampede characterized by general disorder . . . those blood-thirsty agents abandoned in the field a considerable quantity of war matériel . . . as well as very important and particularly telling documents. Their pirate aircraft had to take-off very rapidly, leaving behind quite a number of mercenaries, who were heavily drugged and out of their minds, as well as the bodies of their accomplices which they could not take with them."
[1986th meeting, para. 19.]

65. As far as the "very important and particularly telling documents"—the visiting card left behind by the aggressors—are concerned, we know how little credit should be accorded them, since the Mission itself said it had been unable to check into the evidence provided in those documents. That is all clear and diplomatically very well expressed. So it is in connexion with the "heavily drugged" mercenaries and the bodies of their colleagues that I should like to ask a few questions.

66. Between 16 January and 7 February, the Government of Benin solemnly stated that it was holding white mercenaries. Publications at Cotonou and Conakry carried pictures of those mercenaries, as did other newspapers. On 7 February, three weeks after the act of aggression, the official spokesman of the Government of Benin described to the Council the state those mercenaries were in. They were "heavily drugged and out of their minds". I have too much respect for my colleague from Benin to believe for a moment that he wished to deceive the Council. Between 16 January and 7 February, those mercenaries who were "drugged and out of their minds" certainly had plenty of time to recover from their drugged condition and to come to their senses. The members of the Mission are distinguished men of law, and I am convinced that, as soon as they reached Cotonou, their first desire was to hear the mercenaries who had been captured. Now, in the report, reference is made to a single prisoner who was interrogated, an African of Guinean origin who had been captured not where the fighting took place but somewhere in the countryside, with his school certificate, his vaccination card and his tax card! Everything gave the appearance of his being a gentleman out looking for employment.

67. My question in this connexion is quite simple. I should like to know whether the Mission asked to see the white prisoners referred to by the representative of Benin in his statement of 7 February. If it did, what was the response of

the authorities at Cotonou? I do not mean any harm by this question. I simply do not want to have a guilty conscience, because my delegation has already expressed its very firm support for the Government and people of Benin.

68. On the other hand, I would not go so far as to tell the Council of my surprise at the temerity of aggressors who sent a mere 20 men to put out of action a military camp they knew was guarded by 600 professional soldiers! The whole affair is particularly strange because, in the radio message he broadcast shortly before 9 a.m. on 16 January, the President of the Republic of Benin said:

“At the present moment, our combat units are at work and are defending the strategic points . . . with revolutionary fervour” [*see S/12319/Add.1, part II*].

That revolutionary zeal of 600 Beninese soldiers fighting 20 mercenaries would make one smile had it not cost the lives of individuals who had done nothing to deserve such a tragic fate, and had it not created orphans and widows who are still mourning their dead.

69. It is no less curious that Adjutant Kouton, who commanded the first forces engaged in the counter-attack in the landing zone, did not have the presence of mind to prevent the retreat of the attackers by making it impossible for the famous DC-7 to take off. That would not have required much in the way of strategy.

70. Finally, let us express our surprise that Bâ Alpha Oumarou, the only mercenary captured, was able, from inside the aircraft, to read the sign which said “Franceville-Aéroport El Hadj Omar Bongo”, whereas in the car which took him to Casablanca he was unable to read the road signs showing the way to Marrakesh.

71. The same Bâ Alpha Oumarou, who was born in Senegal and has lived only in that country and in Guinea, is able to tell from the accent whether a person speaking good French is of German or Breton origin! I believe that that young man's intelligence should have enabled him to acquire more than a certificate of primary studies. At times, in response to questions, that disturbing individual spoke in English without waiting for translation by the interpreter. That is according to a report I received and may be untrue. It seems he was so skilled that he was even able to conclude his statement by wishing long life to the Benin revolution which he was supposed to put down. Some have even suggested that he concluded by saying “Ready for the revolution!”

72. With regard to this act of aggression of 16 January, seven missions went to Benin to establish the facts. It cannot be said that Benin did not co-operate in the search for evidence. Those missions consisted of the International Commission established by Benin, the commissions of the African, Malagasy and Mauritian Common Organization, of the World Federation of Trade Unions, of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization, of the secretariat of the Organization of African Unity, of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity and, finally, the Special Mission of the Security Council.

73. Two facts have been established by these various missions. The first is that an act of aggression did take place. Benin was in fact the victim of aggression, and this is not denied by anyone and certainly not by my delegation. The second fact is that it is impossible to establish who was responsible for that aggression.

74. These facts had seemed so relevant to the African Group that we had decided to confine ourselves to a condemnation of the use of mercenaries, since the evidence advanced incriminating certain countries could not be verified by the members of the Special Mission. I believe that, in taking that stand, the African Group acted with great wisdom. Those recommendations of the African delegations were made openly during a plenary meeting of our Group. Ambassador Ramphul, representative of a member of the Security Council and of the Acting President of the Organization of African Unity, mentioned them during the meeting of 7 April.

75. At the outset of my statement, I said that my delegation was much distressed to see Africa presenting this sorry spectacle to the entire world. But how could it have been otherwise when, in the name of national sovereignty, such serious accusations have so casually been made against responsible Governments, with the hope that those Governments would remain silent?

76. Senegal—and I have had to stress this—is a land of hospitality. We have chosen our course, just as we recognize that others have the right to choose theirs. The well-being of our people is our sole concern, and our cardinal rule both within the Organization of African Unity and within other movements to which we belong, is to work for understanding among peoples and co-operation among all States, in full respect for our respective institutions. And it is for that single reason that we welcome in our country any African who considers that our country is a land of asylum whose institutions completely safeguard his freedom and his human dignity.

77. What we deplore in the document from Benin is the ruthless desire to divide Africa into two camps known as the revolutionary and the moderate. We believe that the Benin delegation bears a very heavy responsibility when it plays into the hands of those who are trying, for reasons which have nothing to do with the interests of Benin, to promote dissension among African States.

78. In his statement at the meeting on 12 April [*2002nd meeting*], the representative of Madagascar, in a flight of oratory of which he alone is capable, asked who could prove that the Benin Government had forged a single one among the many documents. He even said that it would be enough to prove the falseness of a single document to demolish the entire body of evidence furnished. That is his opinion; it is not mine. I should like, however, to reply to his question, because it just so happens that I know a thing or two about air navigation.

79. In part IV, section 3 of the document issued by the delegation of Benin [*S/12319/Add.1*], reference is made to the navigational chart of the pilot of the DC-7, which landed at Cotonou on the morning of 16 January. Everyone

knows that such a document is removed from the cockpit only if the crew is changed. We have been told that the DC-7 kept its engine running throughout the entire commando operation, which suggests that the crew remained on board. Perhaps the representative of Madagascar could tell us how the navigational chart could have been left on the ground when the crew remained within the aircraft. Furthermore, that same chart should enable the authorities of Benin to know the aircraft's destination after take-off from Cotonou. It would seem that we do not have sufficient information on that score.

80. This debate, which was requested by the delegation of Benin, is regrettable on more than one account. Grave accusations have been levelled against sovereign States in such a casual manner as to be provocative and without any serious proof to back them up.

81. This morning, a United Nations diplomat who is a friend of the Government and the people of Benin said this to me: "Benin has been the victim of aggression; that is indisputable and nobody denies it. But why are the Benin authorities adding to their story in such a way as to sow doubt in people's minds?" Those are not my words; that is what a friend of Benin said, and I could give his name.

82. There is a proverb in my country which says: "What is too full always overflows, but the overflow is always diluted and weakened". In this affair, I have the distinct impression that Benin has filled the receptacle a little too full.

83. It is truly regrettable that, in such a grave and tragic affair, which everyone agrees took place, the delegation of Benin should have chosen this peculiar way to plead its cause, for I am convinced that no one will gain much by it, and Benin least of all.

84. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Guinea, whom I invite to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

85. Mr. M. S. CAMARA (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to speak a second time in this debate to make a statement in response to the representatives of Senegal and the Ivory Coast who, on 7 April and this very morning, said such opprobrious things about us following our statement, a statement which we intended to be entirely in keeping with the purpose of the present meeting. In so doing, we shall not follow the example of our critics from Senegal and the Ivory Coast and allow ourselves to be diverted in the direction in which they wish to lead us with the aim of robbing the current debate of its extremely serious nature and making us turn our attention from our objective: condemning aggression and the use of mercenaries and providing aid and assistance to Benin to enable it to staunch the wounds it sustained during the war.

86. All honest men of good sense have recognized that the People's Republic of Benin was in actual fact a victim of aggression on 16 January 1977. The voluminous documentation produced by the Security Council Special Mission

sent to Cotonou has provided all the irrefutable proof required to show that Benin was in fact a victim of a treacherous act of armed aggression.

87. After the failure of the operation, the mercenary commando withdrew and left behind it important documents, including official papers of all kinds issued without any doubt by the relevant ministries of well-known Member States.

88. For our part, without having to be geniuses, we had to shed as much light as possible on the origin of the bearers of those official documents. Both the OAU Council of Ministers and the African Group at the United Nations requested that African States which possessed additional information likely to make a positive contribution to the Council's debate should transmit it to the Council. The statement of the representative of the Republic of Guinea was entirely in keeping with that precise request.

89. The objective nature of the evidence and the information provided in our statement is eloquently demonstrated by information contained in the annexes to the report of the Security Council Special Mission, letters from Ivory Coast and Senegalese patriots and photocopies of membership cards of the members of the Association of Guineans Abroad and identity cards published on pages 14 to 50 of *Horoya*, No. 2264, of 6 to 12 March 1977, which, incidentally, we should like to make available to representatives. We should like to point out that these important documents are accompanied by a map of the mercenary bases on Guinean frontiers which also shows the future plan of attack shortly to be carried out against the free African territory of Guinea.

90. Instead of making wild attacks against the Guinean régime and its great leader, we had hoped that the representatives of Senegal and the Ivory Coast would have explained the irrefutable documentation of the aggression against Benin which was definitely issued at Dakar and Abidjan, namely, identity cards and vaccination certificates for the mercenaries.

91. After such barbarous, treacherous and diabolical acts of aggression as we witnessed in Guinea in 1970 and as recently took place in Benin, the members of the Council and those of the entire international community will understand how well justified our apprehension is, as well as that of the peoples of African countries, in the face of a constant threat against our independence and sovereignty.

92. We know that the anti-Guineans of the Association of Guineans Abroad (RGE) and the Fraternal Association of Guineans in the Ivory Coast (AFGCI) are based in Senegal and in the Ivory Coast. One of those criminals, the wretched Bâ Alpha Oumarou, said:

"We Guineans were supposed to be trained in order to train others in different countries—Senegal, or other countries—train them for guerrilla war. That is what we were told." [*See S/12294/Add.1, annex III.*]

93. The representative of Senegal, in his statement, said, among other things, "Africa has become the chosen land of the international mercenary" [*2001st meeting, para. 33*].

94. The Bâ Oumarous—where were they recruited? In Senegal and in the Ivory Coast, in the puppet movements of RGE, AFGCI, OAL [*Organization of Free Africa*] and FLERD [*Front for the Liberation and Rehabilitation of Dahomey*]. Who are they? They are nothing but renegades of the type of Sy Sawané Oumar, a mercenary recruiter who has been condemned to death *in absentia* by our national revolutionary court.

95. Further, our brother from Senegal recognized that

“The aggression of which the Republic of Benin has been the victim is part of a long chain of other acts of aggression committed by mercenaries against independent African States.” [*Ibid.*, para. 34.]

96. Do people want armed aggression to become institutionalized in Africa? If that is not the wish of the international community in general and the African States in particular, each Member State must be firmly committed before all mankind to fight and root out this evil of mercenary activity which is a threat to everything that has been achieved by the African peoples, particularly revolutionary régimes.

97. It is for the Governments of Senegal, the Ivory Coast and others to honour their commitments by effectively banning on their territories the activities of organizations like RGE, AFGCI, OAL and FLERD, whose objective is the overthrow of Governments and régimes freely chosen by the peoples of countries which have once and for all repudiated those renegades, those bad Africans, who are fit only to be thrown on the scrap heap of history. Other States have already honoured those commitments with regard to my country. We thank them for their objectivity.

98. Every speaker should make his contribution to the solution of these urgent problems of the use of mercenaries and the armed aggression that accompanies it.

99. In the statement of our colleague from Senegal, we detect a flagrant contradiction. He said, on the one hand, that we had not even turned the pages of the Special Mission's report and, on the other, that everyone knew that “one does not have to study this report in detail to realize that the essential elements it contains are to be found in the statements of the only prisoner who was captured after the withdrawal of the mercenaries and that the prisoner is an African and, what is more, a citizen of Guinea” [*ibid.*, para. 42]. All that we can do is refer the representative of Senegal to our statement, which he does not seem to have heard or read, but which none the less is entirely in keeping with the purpose of this series of Council meetings.

100. As can easily be seen from the voluminous documentation presented by the Special Mission on the armed aggression against the People's Republic of Benin, some documents that were captured and other irrefutable proof that has been provided entirely match the information and statements constantly put forward by the Republic of Guinea for the attention of international public opinion. We have been accused of being very much against our two neighbours, Senegal and the Ivory Coast. As is well known, the Republic of Guinea has more than two neighbours

which have thousands of Guineans living on their territory. The Republic of Guinea would have had no interest in making gratuitous accusations against those two neighbours if they had not become springboards for anti-Guinean activities.

101. What wrong did the representative of Guinea do when he made available to the Security Council and international public opinion the information he had that could shed all possible light on this diabolical act of aggression against the People's Republic of Benin at a time when the people of that country were working so hard on the gigantic task of building socialism, a task they had freely set themselves? For our part, we do not wish to see a repetition of such an act of armed aggression in Africa or elsewhere.

102. With regard to the slander which the prophets of doom, the neo-colonialists, the puppets constantly spread against our country, by describing its leaders as persons obsessed with plots, persons who wish to camouflage political and economic failures, and by speaking of the alleged ruin to which they have brought the country, and so forth, we reply that the Guinean revolution is doing very well. No plot, whatever its dimensions, will ever prevail in the free land of Guinea. Furthermore, counter-revolution throughout the world militates in favour of the triumph of our revolution.

103. We Guineans are happy with the eloquent results achieved since 1958. Indeed, Guineans can be proud to be absolute masters of their own land, owners of their economy, their banks, their industry, their trade, their means of transport, their universities, and so forth; they can be proud that they are administering all those things in the exclusive interest of the Guinean people, without having to take orders from technical advisers of any kind. We know that the imperialists, the colonialists, the neo-colonialists and the puppets cannot stomach the striking successes we constantly record in the Guinean revolution.

104. Out of modesty, we would simply remind the Council of the impressions taken back to his own country by a distinguished African head of State—incidentally, a member of the Conseil de l'entente—on his return from a State visit to the Republic of Guinea in 1976:

“To start with, it was a visit of friendship but, when we got there, the authorities of Guinea transformed it into a State visit. This was the first time we had gone to that beautiful country. But we were made to feel absolutely at home in Guinea, and we were struck by the high degree of mobilization of the Guinean people. I have had many opportunities to stress that, ‘when one wants to do harm to someone, one attributes all kinds of failings to him’. You have certainly heard, as we have, how people talk about Guinea. We had an opportunity to realize on the spot that that country was simply a target of criticism. People said: ‘Guinea is an unfortunate country; the Guinean people are living in poverty; there is nothing to eat; the country has nothing’. That is false, absolutely false! Nothing is lacking in Guinea. It is not by any means a backward country. It is a country which is

clearly ahead of others. The people of Guinea are very loyal to their leader. We saw a happy people, a cheerful people, a very hospitable people. Everywhere we went we noted general and total mobilization. Everything is lacking? Absolutely not. Maybe it is imperialism that is lacking, but that is all."

105. Guineans are giving pride of place to human dignity, to a sense of responsibility, in their quest for happiness. Thus, for us Guineans a poor but worthy man deserves more respect and esteem than one rich but unworthy.

106. The State Party of Guinea, the Government of the Republic of Guinea, have always faced up to their responsibilities—national, African and international. Our great accomplishments on all fronts of the struggle—political, economic, social, cultural—require no comment from me. We Africans of Guinea are aware of the villainous role played in Africa by the puppet Governments whose heads of State are African in name only, with their palaces and their fabulous sums of money stolen from the people and deposited in banks outside Africa.

107. My colleagues from Senegal and the Ivory Coast were very generous in regard to the Republic of Guinea, a member of the Organization of African Unity. What they said about the President of the Republic of Guinea shows us the kind of morality they preach, especially as Senegal and the Ivory Coast have never in human memory made a clear statement about the liberation struggle in southern Africa. Furthermore, the Minister of Information of the Ivory Coast brought back from his visit to Pretoria so much praise for Vorster that we cannot be offended when those who encourage *apartheid* make a judgement of the Guinean revolution that is filled with insolence and insanity.

108. The representative of the Ivory Coast, to whom we have already partly replied in what I just said, will allow me to remind him that anger, indignation, insults are the weapons of base people who have run out of arguments. Nevertheless, although it is inadmissible, in our Organization, for an ambassador to use the kind of foul language he did about a head of State, I would tell him—since I am speaking in exercise of the right of reply—that the words he used about my distinguished chief of State, namely the "pathological case that really requires the . . . attention of the medical profession" [*ibid.*, para. 134], really apply to the puppet Houphouët-Boigny, who is now in treatment for such an illness in Europe. And we would add that soon Africa will be celebrating the end of the system of puppets, because the days of the puppets Houphouët-Boigny and Léopold Sédar Senghor are numbered.

109. The Republic of Guinea always provides proof of what it says to the world. Thus, in 1973, thanks to the extreme vigilance of our people, we foiled a plot which had basically been planned in the Ivory Coast and Senegal. I would refer the Council to our magazine *RDA*, volume 69, of August 1973. Anyone who wishes to refresh his memory may look at that document, which was circulated in the United Nations during the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly. What I have said applies also to 1976. We are sure that our critics have heard or read the

testimony of these abominable agents on the radio or in the press.

110. We do not want to reply here word for word to the ravings of the very people who pose as great experts on the United Nations; nor do we want to reply to the puppets, to the neo-colonized or to those who pine for the "good old days" gone forever, who are haunted by the spectre of scientific socialism, which they think should be eliminated, at all costs, from African society as a way of life.

111. The representative of the Ivory Coast spoke to us of happiness and well-being in his country, which is supposed to be so prosperous. But who is prosperous there? A handful of individuals who are exploiting the people. We remind you that in Guinea everything belongs to the workers.

112. After that clarification which we were absolutely obliged to make, we wish to stress that the battle here is between the revolutionary forces, on the one hand, and the forces of reaction in the service of imperialism, colonialism and the bourgeoisie, on the other.

113. Our deep devotion to Africa, to African unity and the cause of Africa's freedom is well known to all. Indeed, President Ahmed Sékou Touré's great love for Africa has been recognized even by President Senghor, who likes to say that President Sékou Touré has a tyrannical love for Africa. That is true, because he is African above all else.

114. To revert to the question on the Security Council's agenda, we appeal to the international community to see to it that the present meetings culminate in just and firm decisions so that the activities of mercenaries and the use of force in international relations may be banished for ever from our present-day world and so that the necessary aid and assistance may be given to the People's Republic of Benin to staunch its war wounds. To help Benin is to help Africa as a whole.

115. The Republic of Guinea has always consistently denounced all forms of reaction, divisiveness, oppression and exploitation of peoples. Indeed, what could have been more natural than that, from the very first moments of the dastardly act of aggression against the people of Benin, their Guinean brothers should have been behind them?

116. We beg the indulgence of the members of the Council if we have been somewhat long. In the light of the fact that clarity in inter-State relations is one of the principles most prized by my country, I reserve my right, Mr. President, to ask you to allow me to address the Council once again if the need arises, particularly if we find ourselves obliged to speak again.

117. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, whom I invite to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

118. Mr. CHALE (United Republic of Tanzania): Mr. President, first of all, I should like to express my

delegation's sincere gratitude to you personally and, through you, to all the members of the Security Council for affording us the opportunity to participate in this important and increasingly serious debate on the question before us. It is our strong conviction that the discussion of the subject under review should be given wide scope, should command wide participation and should proceed with all the seriousness it deserves. So vital an issue should not be allowed to maintain a low profile. I submit that it is incumbent upon all of us, collectively, to examine the problem realistically and deal with it squarely and with fine impartiality, in accordance with the principles and spirit of the Charter. It is for this reason that the Tanzanian delegation has asked to take part in this protracted discussion and, thereby, perhaps will be able to make some modest contribution to this question with which we are, one and all, deeply concerned. To do otherwise would be to fail deplorably in one's duty.

119. Having said that, I should like, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to associate myself with the speakers who have preceded me, in congratulating you most sincerely, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. After hearing my good and great friend, Ambassador Illueca, the learned and respected Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations, who so ably and boldly painted you in your proper colours as the embodiment of the ideals and aspirations of your great country, Venezuela, I am left with no option but to admire you and your country, which is so deeply committed to the liberation of man—unless, as the saying goes, I should wish to seem to be illuminating the sun with a lantern. Suffice it, therefore, to say that you are a man of refined character and conspicuous ability and experience. With your organizing mind and integrated personality, the Council has found in you a distinguished President who has already demonstrated competence, efficiency, wisdom and understanding. We wish to assure you of our co-operation.

120. I wish likewise to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Andrew Young of the United States, who, with understanding, devotion, impartiality and distinction, conducted the work of the Council for the month of March. His concern and commitment to the cause of justice and freedom enabled him to handle with great diplomatic skill the crucial issues of *apartheid* in South Africa. His performance and attitude were indeed exemplary, the more so considering that, in his short time here, he has managed, in a crash programme, to acquaint himself with the style, operations and intricacies of the United Nations.

121. Before turning to the question on the agenda, I should like to express my appreciation to the members of the Special Mission for the outstanding and commendable work they have done in so short a time. The valuable report of the Mission and the annexes are very useful. In our view, the report should help the Council examine the question in its proper perspective, draw logical conclusions and arrive at pertinent unanimous decisions on matters and points which are *per se nota*—that is, on matters which are very obvious and crystal clear in the report. We are grateful to the Special Mission for presenting us with so comprehensive a

report which is a factual account of what happened at Cotonou on that fateful day of 16 January 1977. My delegation thus congratulates the members of the Mission—Ambassador Illueca of Panama, Chairman of the Mission, Ambassador Kikhia of Libya and Mr. Mulye of India—and the staff of the Secretariat who accompanied them on the valuable services rendered.

122. The Special Mission, established under Security Council resolution 404 (1977), was given the task of inquiring into and investigating the tragic events of 16 January at Cotonou and of submitting a report to the Council. In compliance with the decision of the Council, the members of the Mission promptly went to Benin to discharge the task entrusted to them. Leaving no stone unturned, they availed themselves of every opportunity to investigate every event and circumstance that could give them an indication of what had happened on 16 January. To be precise, let me quote what the Chairman of the Mission stated:

“the members of the Mission did everything they could not to miss any opportunity to investigate every event and circumstance that might be relevant to what happened on 16 January” [2000th meeting, para. 22].

123. Permit me to refresh my memory aloud as to what the word “circumstance” stands for because this will show us how seriously and conscientiously the members of the Special Mission accomplished their task. By using the word “circumstance”, the Mission deliberately wished to draw our attention to and to inform us of the fact that they went into every detail possible and probable as to who, what, where, by what means, why, how and when that mercenary operation was carried out on that tragic day. Learned lawyers would simply say, with regard to the word “circumstance”, in Latin: “*Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando?*” This is clear evidence of how meticulously and circumspectly the Mission tried its level best to accomplish its task. One wonders why the findings of the Mission carried out in this manner should not be given credence and respect.

124. On completion of the mission, a comprehensive and factual report was submitted to the Council by the Special Mission, giving us a clear picture of what happened at Cotonou on 16 January, when wickedness almost carried the day. The report contains, among other things, evidence and substantiated statements that are completely agreed upon by the three wise members of the Mission. It would appear, therefore, that by reading the report, those of us who either waited for more information on the event or were doubting Thomases should now be gratified and satisfied, since more light has been shed on the question. The report could not be more objective and informative.

125. I am made to understand, however, that it would seem that the report does not go far enough; more specifically, in that one of the finishing touches—namely, that of verification—was not undertaken. If we are honest, we must admit that it would mean, to all intents and purposes, asking for the impossible, to expect the Special Mission to submit a verified and scrupulously rescrutinized report, considering the short time at its disposal—an

explanation that is clearly indicated in the report itself. We know full well that nobody is bound to the impossible—*"nemo tenetur ad impossibile"*. Besides, this would have meant somehow employing and deploying the complete network of, shall we say, an international intelligence service, which, I am afraid, the United Nations has not established as yet.

126. In our view, the Special Mission has, with objectivity and impartiality, produced tangible evidence and sufficiently convincing factual data to serve as premises for the Council's logical conclusion and decision. It is my sincere hope, therefore, that a resolution that is wide in scope will be unanimously adopted.

127. My delegation refrained from taking part in the debate when the Council first considered the complaint by Benin last February. We were then of the opinion that more information would be required as to the nature and source of the aggression, even though it was clear enough that mercenaries were employed to commit acts of aggression against the People's Republic of Benin on Sunday, 16 January 1977. There could not have been any mistake in what Ambassador Boya, a distinguished son of Benin, stated on 7 February [1986th meeting] to the effect that a group of mercenaries had landed in a DC-7 aircraft at Cotonou airport and attacked and fired at random. The destruction of buildings and property, the loss of lives and the injuries inflicted upon defenceless civilians could not have been a matter of mere imagination. The report of the Special Mission, however, shed further light on the unfortunate events of 16 January and leaves no doubt that the People's Republic of Benin was a victim of aggression and that its territorial integrity and national sovereignty were violated by an armed force from outside.

128. The employment of mercenaries for subversive activities against independent African countries is no new phenomenon. Africa has been the victim of repeated acts of aggression; it has, indeed, been made a theatre of mercenary activity by the perpetrators. Why, one may ask, is this? Is it because—as Pliny the Elder, who lived during the first half of the first century, said somewhat prophetically: *"Ex Africa semper aliquid novi"*—there is always something new coming out of Africa? And rightly so, for mercenary activities now find their place in Africa and this is a new development.

129. The Council is fully aware of the menace mercenaries pose to the young developing countries. We may ask ourselves, who are those mercenaries, who employs them and for what purpose? The Special Mission, in paragraph 141 of its report, concludes that

"... the People's Republic of Benin was thus subjected to an armed attack by the armed force which arrived at Cotonou airport on the morning of 16 January 1977. The primary objective of the invading force was the overthrow of the present Government of Benin."

The report continues, in paragraph 143:

"It is also clear that a majority of the attacking force, not nationals of Benin, were participating in this action for pecuniary motives and were, therefore, mercenaries."

130. Needless to say, mercenaries have been used to sow seeds of confusion and cause destabilization in small and developing countries for the benefit of the forces of imperialism, colonialism and racism.

131. The events of 16 January 1977 at Cotonou show that similar operations could be undertaken against other small defenceless countries for the purpose of overthrowing those Governments whose internal or external policies are not to the liking of certain circles abroad. The Special Mission has to be commended for drawing attention to this in paragraph 144 of its report.

132. The OAU Summit Meeting, held in Mauritius in June 1976, and the Fifth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo in August 1976, denounced the use of mercenaries to undermine the independence of sovereign States and obstruct the struggle of national liberation movements against colonial rule. Those who foster, maintain and promote mercenary operations should fully realize that their actions are a complete negation of all the principles of the Charter and pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

133. This is no matter to be taken lightly. Heavy losses, both in property and the lives of innocent people, have been inflicted upon the people of Benin. The magnitude of the losses could have been even greater had it not been for the valiant and heroic people of the People's Republic of Benin, who repulsed with such valour and determination the barbaric and unprovoked acts of aggression by these strange and reckless saboteurs and murderers against the independent and sovereign State of Benin. The sons and daughters of Benin must be commended for thus defending the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of their country, on which the invaders cast covetous eyes, because, as one could say rightly, the earth here is so kind that "just tickle her with a hoe and she laughs with a good harvest of kernel seeds and palm oil".

134. It is abundantly clear, therefore, that the recruitment and use of mercenaries against sovereign States—and even, for that matter, against national liberation movements—and all acts of aggression should be strongly condemned. The Security Council should adopt legislative measures prohibiting the recruitment, training or transit of mercenaries.

135. The Foreign Ministers of African States, at their meeting at Lomé in February this year, strongly condemned the act of aggression committed against Benin.

136. In conclusion, my delegation expresses its complete solidarity with and sympathy for the victims of this aggression, the people and Government of Benin. We support any assistance that can be made available to them.

137. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): At this stage of our debate we have on the list of speakers the names of one member of the Council, namely China, and five non-members. Therefore I am wondering whether we could not hear China, the member of the Council, first this afternoon.

Should this be possible, I would suggest that the draft resolution in document S/12322 be adopted by consensus—as agreed, I hope—immediately afterwards. It is not my intention to muzzle the non-members of the Council that are listed to speak but I believe that the item under consideration has been sufficiently debated. Therefore I once again appeal to those who have indicated their wish to speak this afternoon to reconsider their position and to think about the advisability of putting an end to what has turned out to be a rather sad affair in the Council. I am confident that I shall prevail on my colleague and brother of Benin not to intervene again to comment any further on views expressed here this morning. I sincerely hope that my African brothers will find it possible to co-operate with me. Their views are already well known to all of us, and I do

not believe any more speeches would throw any further light on the whole situation.

138. I am considering—with the consent of my Government whenever I receive it—placing the question of mercenaries as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly. Should this be possible, I would suggest that that would be an appropriate time for my African brothers to express their views on this evil as we Africans see it. However, if my African colleagues are under specific instructions from their respective Governments to speak in this debate, I again appeal to them to be brief and to avoid controversies as much as possible.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.