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**2005<sup>th</sup>** MEETING: 14 APRIL 1977

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## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2005) .....	1
Adoption of the agenda .....	1
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

## 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.

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## 2005TH MEETING

Held in New York on Thursday, 14 April 1977, at 3.30 p.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/2005)

#### 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 4.05 p.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, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania 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. M. 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. B. Kanté (Mali), Mr. M. Kane (Mauritania), Mr. T. Puntsagnorov (Mongolia), Mr. A. Bengelloun (Morocco), Mr. J. C. Lobo (Mozam-*

*bique), Mr. J. Poisson (Niger), Mr. J. M. Baroody (Saudi Arabia), Mr. M. Fall (Senegal), Mr. A. H. Hussen (Somalia), Mr. A. A. Kodjovi (Togo) and Mr. S. Chale (United Republic of Tanzania) 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 a letter from the representative of Upper Volta in which he requests 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 that representative 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 the representative of Upper Volta to take the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that he will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever he wishes to address the Council.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. A. Mensah (Upper Volta) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber.*

4. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I consider that, for the sake of orderly procedure, we should first hear the members of the Council who wish to speak, as well as the representatives of the Member States that have been invited to participate in the discussions, and then should proceed to vote on the draft resolution [S/12322]. Naturally, any members of the Council who wish to speak may do so at the appropriate time.

5. The first speaker is the representative of Upper Volta. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

6. Mr. MENSAH (Upper Volta) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I thank you for allowing me to address the Security Council and, since this is the first time I have spoken here, I should like first of all to congratulate you most warmly on your accession to the presidency of the Council, whose work you are guiding with skill and competence.

7. At the same time, on behalf of my delegation, I should like to welcome the appointment of Ambassador Young to head the Permanent Mission of the United States of

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

America to the United Nations and to extend to him our most heartfelt congratulations and wishes for success in the lofty tasks entrusted to him.

8. I have asked to speak at this stage in the Council's debate on the act of aggression against the People's Republic of Benin, not to support any of the statements made here regarding the identity of the authors of and accomplices in that act of aggression, but to voice my country's deep anxiety at the deplorable spectacle which the Africans are providing here in disregard of moderation, of our proudest traditions and of African wisdom.

9. It is customary to refer to Upper Volta as *la terre des hommes*, which is another way of saying that my country attaches the utmost importance to human values, to concord, moderation and wisdom.

10. The sorry spectacle we have been witnessing here is not remotely African, to say the least. I would remind my brothers of Benin, on the one hand, and my brothers from Senegal, Morocco, the Ivory Coast, Togo, Guinea and Gabon, on the other, that, over and above ideological commitments and temporary conflicts of interest, we are and remain Africans and that we are doomed to live together, so solid and indestructible are the ties which history and geography have woven among us. Indeed, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Niger, Benin, Togo and Upper Volta, in the colonial era, were part of the vast entity called French West Africa, the political, economic and cultural capital of which was Dakar. In one way or another, as students, as officials or as members of parliament, we have all passed through Dakar—we have sat on the same benches, served in the same services, or in the Grand Conseil of French West Africa. Neither Ambassador Boya, whom I met at the University of Fann, nor Ambassador Ouattara of the Organization of African Unity nor Ambassador Aké, will contradict me on this. The complete list would be far too long for this statement. And still today, we meet in the same regional and subregional organizations, side by side, in order, together, to combat underdevelopment and ensure our survival.

11. I have briefly evoked this historical background by way of telling the members of the Council that anything that affects one of us cannot leave the rest indifferent, and that we severely condemn the act of aggression perpetrated against the brother people of Benin. We are in solidarity with them; nevertheless, we cannot approve of the discourteous language and the personal attacks to which my brothers have seen fit to resort. I solemnly appeal to them in a brotherly fashion to abandon this practice of which the least that can be said is that it is not African at all. In Africa as elsewhere, but particularly in Africa, dirty linen is washed at home. The Security Council is not the proper place to air our domestic discords in a discourteous and even malevolent manner. As the old adage puts it: "One is master of the unuttered word, but the slave of the word already spoken". I invite my brothers of Benin, Senegal, Morocco, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Togo and Gabon to observe that maxim and to reconsider and draw inspiration from our ancient traditions, so as to put an end to these rhetorical fireworks in which they are indulging. Let them

refrain from using language that threatens to jeopardize the solidarity and unity of our States.

12. Lastly, I call on the members of the Council, as well as on all those who would take advantage of this affair to settle personal accounts having nothing to do with the higher interests of Africa, to act in such a manner that the present debate can proceed calmly and produce a speedy condemnation of the act of aggression and of the use of mercenaries. Africa's enemies, like the perpetrators of this tragic act of aggression, must be rejoicing at seeing us tearing each other apart before the Council.

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

14. Mr. LOBO (Mozambique): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. My delegation feels very confident that, under your experienced guidance, the Council will be able to come up with some concrete guidelines and effective measures aimed at finding a just and meaningful solution, not only to the problem of the act of aggression against Benin, but also for the total elimination of mercenaries throughout the world.

15. I should like to take this opportunity to associate myself with all the tributes paid to Ambassador Andrew Young for the competence, skill, dedication, spirit of understanding, clarity of political vision and all the other great talents we have come to appreciate in him during the time he presided over our deliberations last month.

16. Before going into the substance of the issue under consideration, my delegation would like to express its satisfaction and appreciation for the valuable and excellent work performed by the special fact-finding Mission to Benin. Through the Chairman of the Mission, Ambassador Jorge Enrique Illueca, my delegation wishes to congratulate each of the members of the Mission.

17. On 16 January this year, the Mozambican people were astonished to learn that the People's Republic of Benin had been the victim of an act of armed aggression perpetrated by a horde of mercenaries who flew into Cotonou, the capital city of Benin, in a pirate plane. In solidarity with the brother people of Benin, and on behalf of the Mozambican people and FRELIMO [*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*], President Samora Moisés Machel immediately sent a message of solidarity to President Kérékou, strongly denouncing and condemning the criminal and cowardly aggression of the mercenaries against the people and Republic of Benin. On that occasion, President Machel, expressing the sentiments of the Mozambican people with regard to the aggression, said:

"We vehemently condemn this attempt of the defenders of imperialism to interfere in the internal affairs, democratic order and sovereignty of the progressive countries through such acts of subversion and by resorting to armed aggression without hesitation."

18. There is no doubt that the cowardly armed aggression against Benin by the mercenaries was the work of international imperialism and reactionary forces in their continuous effort to destabilize the progressive Governments in Africa. In Mozambique, we are very much aware that international imperialism and reactionary forces will never be happy with those peoples and Governments that are seriously dedicated to a democratic popular revolution, where the working masses exercise actual control over their own political and socio-economic system. So the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Benin by mercenaries is an effort on the part of the reactionary forces to turn back the historical clock of freedom and progress in Africa. On this matter, the leader of Benin himself, President Kérékou, speaking to the nation on 16 January, said:

"The international imperialists and their local lackeys do not forgive us for having put a definite end to their cruel mystification of our people by telling them clearly on 3 November 1974 that scientific socialism was the only historical path for us in our African land of Benin, and that Marxism-Leninism was the only philosophical guideline for any true revolutionary action."

19. Mercenary activity is one of the manifestations of international imperialism, through which it desperately attempts to prevent the struggle of the oppressed peoples. That is why mercenaries, those professional assassins, agents of imperialism, were brought to Cotonou: to stop the revolutionary process going on in the People's Republic of Benin.

20. We hail the courage of the militant people of Benin and their determination to build their own country in full national independence and sovereignty.

21. On the other hand, we deeply regret the lack of African pride and dignity demonstrated by all those traitors who betrayed Africa by shamefully playing a leadership rôle in the game of international imperialism in the criminal aggression against Benin through the collaboration and assistance that they extended to the terrorists who invaded Benin on 16 January. At Cotonou, the mercenaries exercised terrorism through the use of force against the people of the sovereign People's Republic of Benin. There is no room for doubt that at Cotonou the mercenaries committed a crime against the people of Benin.

22. For a long time, international imperialism has been using African soil as a stage for the criminal activities of its base, imperialist, criminal élite: the mercenaries. Those agents of imperialism have tortured, massacred and shot countless numbers of the best sons of Africa. Men, women, children and defenceless people have been murdered in cold blood by the mercenaries. Wherever they have struck, as at Cotonou, not only has the population been cruelly massacred, but the economic infrastructure senselessly partially or totally vandalized. To think and to speak of mercenaries in Africa is to revive the memories of the barbaric massacre at Stanleyville, the imperialist-inspired invasion of Guinea, and a number of our African leaders who were assassinated in a cowardly fashion by the agents of those interested in maintaining, establishing or restoring fascism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism on our continent.

23. The whole world knows that a serious crime against humanity was committed when mercenaries in Angola, during that country's second war of liberation, were involved in the summary execution of prisoners and the massacre of thousands of civilians. For a time, those international outlaws terrorized the people of southern Sudan and northern Nigeria by killing thousands of people in their efforts to divide and weaken those African countries which international imperialism had conceived as being a possible threat to its interests. None of the activities of those mercenaries in these examples should ever be condoned by a Member State that believes in the principles of our Organization. We do not think that any State Member of the Organization would find ambiguous or controversial the fact that all those international soldiers of fortune who are fighting on the side of racist régimes in southern Africa against peoples struggling for their freedom are involved in international terrorism. Members of the United Nations should combine their efforts to fight mercenarism, which means stopping international terrorism, since mercenaries are the best classic example of terrorism that we in Mozambique can think of. If the entire international community is seriously concerned with eradicating international terrorism, let it give proper attention to the problem of the mercenaries. Unless we are serious, nations can go on speaking of the various ways in which to stop international terrorism and at the same time continue to allow the recruitment of mercenaries within their boundaries. Unless we are serious, nations can go on drawing up beautiful draft resolutions condemning international terrorism as each nation conceives it, while at the same time keeping on organizing, financing, equipping and training soldiers of fortune. Unless we decide to be seriously and earnestly dedicated, the horrifying crimes committed by international terrorism will go on and nations will continue affording transit facilities and transport to mercenaries to enable them to go wherever international imperialism is interested in opposing, through armed violence, the process of self-determination of the people. This option is ours. So long as we permit the situation to continue, Benin will be just one of many examples to come. Paragraph 144 of the report of the Security Council Special Mission to the People's Republic of Benin states:

"From the manner in which the operation was conceived and executed, the Special Mission believes that a similar operation could be conducted elsewhere against small defenceless countries for similar purposes."

24. But as far as my Government is concerned, the struggle of the people of Benin against international imperialism will be part of a joint action with the people of Mozambique. We shall never remain indifferent to imperialists who, through their international terrorists, attack the brother people of Benin or any other part of Africa. Whenever that happens, we, too, feel attacked and the entire African continent feels attacked. President Machel stated this clearly in his message to the people of Benin when he said:

"We want the enemies of liberty and peace to know that in Benin, in Mozambique, as well as in any other country, anti-imperialist Africa will know how to reply with determination to all provocations."

25. FRELIMO and the People's Republic of Mozambique are an integral part of the world's anti-imperialist front and, as such, will always side with other progressive forces of the world, especially with the African nations and peoples fighting for justice, freedom and dignity.

26. Like the people of the People's Republic of Benin, we in Mozambique are engaged in the struggle for the construction of a new society free from the colonial mentality and free from the exploitation of man by his fellow man. So our struggle is the same and we are fighting on the same front as the people of Benin.

27. International imperialism is and has always been our enemy. The bombs, guns and ammunition which were used to massacre our people during the armed struggle for the liberation of Mozambique were provided to the Portuguese colonialists by international imperialism. All the weapons, the bayonets and ammunition used at Sharpeville and at Soweto were given as presents to the South African racists by international imperialism. The jet fighters, helicopters, tanks, bombs and explosives, as well as the mercenaries themselves that Ian Smith used to violate our frontiers and spread terror among the people by indiscriminately killing women, children and old people, and blowing up bridges, schools and houses, were the gifts of international imperialism—the same international imperialism that organized, recruited, trained, armed and financed the professional assassins who stormed and terrorized Cotonou on 16 January this year. In Mozambique we are confident that the Benin revolution will win, as the People's cause is just and the people themselves are invincible and ready for the revolution.

28. We call upon the Council to take urgent and effective measures to end the activities of mercenaries in Africa. Specific measures must be taken by the Council to discourage the use of mercenaries in Africa and especially against those who arm, employ and assist mercenaries in their operations. A great deal of responsibility in the case of Benin must lie with them.

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

30. Mr. N'DONG (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I thank you for being so kind as to allow me to speak once more. Indeed, after reading the "Report on the imperialist armed aggression committed on Sunday, 16 January 1977 against the People's Republic of Benin" [S/12319/Add.1] drawn up by the Government of Benin and circulated here on 6 April, my delegation could not remain silent, especially as we note that that document was distributed in violation of the gentlemen's agreement reached within the African Group only a few hours before the meeting of the Security Council. With all deference to those who tried to give reasons for this distribution, which smacks somewhat of a conjurer's trick, like pulling a rabbit from a hat, the delegation of Gabon feels all the more impelled to speak once more in this debate, since the representative of the People's Republic of Benin, in his

somewhat blustering statement, took the liberty of attacking my country.

31. I was very surprised to hear my brother from Benin state here that the delegation of Gabon had prepared its statement hastily. Gabon had known since the month of January 1977 that it might be accused of having been involved in the events which took place at Cotonou, because a bulletin of the embassy of a big Power in central Africa, circulated a few days after the attack, contained information to the effect that the aircraft that transported the so-called mercenaries had come from Gabon. When called on by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Republic of Gabon, the Ambassador of that big Power in Libreville was not in a position to say where that information had come from and simply stated that it had been provided by friendly countries. However, it was not till 4 March that Gabon reacted publicly during a press conference held at the Waldorf Astoria in New York by Mr. Martin Bongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of my country. Bearing in mind what I have said, can we really speak of haste here?

32. In fact, the whole attitude of my colleague and brother from Benin leads me to believe that, running short of arguments to answer the relevant questions which were asked of him by the delegation of Gabon and other delegations—questions on the fate of the mercenaries who were captured and of the corpses, questions on the rather tardy reaction of the "Beninese revolutionary armed forces", questions regarding the conditions in which Bâ Alpha Oumarou was arrested—, he saw fit merely to resort to the same calumnies he accuses other delegations of having uttered. Is this the attitude that we can expect of a diplomat who, in a paternalistic tone, allows himself to teach others a lesson?

33. Once and for all, the delegation of Gabon solemnly and categorically refutes all the unfounded accusations that have been levelled against its country and its dynamic President, accusations which are all the more surprising since the Republic of Gabon and the People's Republic of Benin have heretofore always had excellent relations, notwithstanding the differences in their political choices.

34. As I said in my statement of 6 April, the motto of our great national political party, the Democratic Party of Gabon: "Dialogue, Tolerance, Peace", is the triple principle that underlies our domestic and foreign policies [2000th meeting, para. 140]. I should like to reaffirm here that, in its foreign policy, my country has always applied the fundamental principles of peaceful coexistence and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. In this context, my country must strongly condemn any foreign intervention, whatever form it may take, including the use of international mercenaries. I apologize for repeating this, but I really felt obliged to do so.

35. Bearing in mind the political philosophy that we have just briefly defined, there can be no question for Gabon of harbouring any training base for international mercenaries as was stated in the national report of Benin.

36. As for the Beninese living in Gabon—and there are thousands of them who are sending funds, officially or covertly, to line the coffers of our detractors—, they are bound to respect the laws which govern foreigners residing in Gabon, foremost among which is that mandating non-interference in the internal affairs of the host country and a total ban on involvement in politics and on the undertaking of subversive activities from Gabonese territory, with the aim of overthrowing the régimes in power in their respective countries of origin.

37. As I have already said, Gabon has good relations with all African countries, both at the regional and continental levels. That is why my country cannot find words to express its surprise at noting that, in the national report of Benin, a meeting that took place between the Presidents of Togo and Gabon has become the subject of a gross accusation concerning a plot directed against Benin. I should like to inform the Security Council that His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo did not meet President Eyadéma on 2 January 1977. But even if he had, what is more normal than the meeting of two heads of State who have fraternal relations? I am obliged to ask myself whether, during his visit to Gabon in July 1975—and here I am in a way following the rather far-fetched logic of our Beninese brothers—President Kérékou made that visit to President Bongo to conspire against some other Government.

38. On reflection, we see that our Beninese brothers show a certain consistency since President Kérékou took advantage of his visit to Gabon, notwithstanding all the elementary rules of civil behaviour and courtesy in international relations, to direct, to put it mildly, seditious and defamatory words to his illustrious hosts when addressing the people of Port-Gentil, the economic capital of Gabon. What did the head of the Beninese revolution wish to achieve in doing this?

39. We can only describe this attitude as purely and simply one of gross interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Gabon. But the representative of the People's Republic of Benin may rest assured that Gabon will never imitate his behaviour. Gabon has no time to waste in becoming involved in the affairs of other States. Gabon knows that you do not feed a people with blandishments, even when your words are revolutionary. Our sole concern is to further all aspects of the development of our country for the well-being of our people.

40. To come to the documents presented in the report of the Security Council Special Mission and the annexes thereto, and essentially to answer the question posed yesterday [2003rd meeting] by the representative of Benin relating to the alleged decision to recruit Gilbert Bourgeaud, alias Maurin, I wish solemnly to state that my country knows nothing of that mysterious person. Surely this is a figment of the sick and overactive imagination of our Beninese brothers. As to the decision itself, I might state that, if the authors of that forgery thought they had imitated the official documents of my country very well—and that is very easy to do, because we have all been influenced by France and we all prepare documents in more or less the same way—, they did commit a grave anachro-

nistic error nevertheless. In fact, in the documents [see S/12294/Add.1, annex VI, document No. 40] they used the acronym V.P.G., that is, "vice-présidence du gouvernement", which no longer existed at the date we find on this document but had by then been replaced by the word "Primature" or by the acronym "PM", that is, "Premier Ministre". As to the so-called signature of the head of State of Gabon, it is an imperfect imitation and we are obliged to conclude that it is purely and simply a fake.

41. This clarification *ipso facto* answers the question raised by one representative on 12 April:

"Who can prove that the Government of Benin forged a single one among the many documents contained in the file? One would have to prove false only one document to demolish the whole lot." [2002nd meeting, para. 110.]

I thank him for saying that. To follow the logic of the author of the words I have just quoted, my delegation has the right to consider that all the proof submitted in the report is now demolished.

42. I would reiterate here that neither directly nor indirectly has my country been involved in this sordid, lamentable aggression. Benin should look elsewhere for those who were really responsible for the aggression of which that country was allegedly the victim on 16 January 1977.

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

44. Mr. ECUA MIKO (Equatorial Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, allow my delegation to join those which have congratulated you on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. The firm ideals of social, economic and cultural progress in Venezuela, a country you represent with so much dignity in this international Organization, combined with your vast political and diplomatic experience, which has already been demonstrated, persuade us that the present debate will conclude with just decisions reiterating the imperative need to implement and apply the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

45. Through you, I should like to express to the members of the Council our profound gratitude for allowing us to participate in the debate on the present agenda item. Apart from the fact that it is our duty to express our militant solidarity with and support for the brother people of Benin, recently the target of the evil designs of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, the report of the Security Council Special Mission makes us feel obliged to participate in this debate. In this connexion, I shall quote paragraph 142 of the report:

"Inasmuch as the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the State of Benin were 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."

Paragraph 144 emphasizes that

"From the manner in which the operation was conceived and executed, the Special Mission believes a similar operation could be conducted elsewhere against small defenceless countries for similar purposes."

Accordingly, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea cannot fail to condemn that recent dastardly manifestation of international imperialism and the puppets in its pay of which the people of Benin was victim on 16 January 1977.

46. For more than one reason my delegation wishes to congratulate the Special Mission, which consisted of Ambassador Illueca of Panama, Ambassador Kikhia of Libya and Mr. Mulye of India, for the excellent work it did with complete responsibility, objectivity and impartiality, thus satisfactorily complying with the instructions given to it by the Security Council. The report submitted not only convinces my delegation that the doubts and assumptions which were current have been dispelled—even if, as a result of short-sightedness, they are in fact still being circulated in the corridors of this great building—but also once again shows that the Western press, far from serving as a means of communication and education of the masses with regard to what is happening in the world today, is nothing more than an instrument at the service of neo-colonialism, imperialism, racism and other forces of evil, since, as I said, even at this time doubt is still being spread as to whether the People's Republic of Benin was actually the victim of armed aggression from outside.

47. The doubts and various assumptions which were expressed shortly after the events of 16 January 1977 warranted the adoption of Security Council resolution 404 (1977), which provided for the dispatch of a special mission to Benin. The report which it submitted and which is now being considered by the Council once again confirms the existence and use of another imperialist instrument which has become fashionable, namely, mercenaries. This is nothing other than the application of the law of the jungle in international relations in the present-day world.

48. There is a saying in my country, which is often invoked: "If you aim too cautiously, you will only hit the animal's tail". That is why my delegation is convinced that the members of the Council, in response to the imperatives of the Charter of the United Nations and in order to avoid "aiming too cautiously", will not hesitate energetically to condemn the wanton armed aggression which claimed human lives and caused considerable material damage in the People's Republic of Benin on the morning of 16 January 1977. The members of the Council will not allow an opportunity once more afforded them to go by without again reaffirming that the use of mercenaries is contrary to the Charter and specifically to Article 2, paragraph 4, which states that:

"All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any

other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

Accordingly, the members of the Council will be able to decide that the use of that diabolical instrument is a threat to international peace and security.

49. The reasons for our demands have been eloquently stated by several preceding speakers, particularly by my brother of Algeria, Mr. Bouayad-Agha who, in his statement on 7 April, said:

"The members of the Security Council will understand that our apprehension and that of all African countries is quite justified, since this is not a purely theoretical, but a real threat to our independence and sovereignty. The planning of the plot, as revealed by the documents collected by the Special Mission, clearly demonstrates that a scheme was drawn up that could easily be applied to each of our countries. We have every reason for concern at the training of what would now appear to be a body of professionals in subversion, prepared to place themselves at the service of any Government not too much bothered by considerations of international morality and prepared to pay large sums to get rid of political enemies without assuming direct responsibility for the act." [2001st meeting, para. 144.]

50. From the statements we have heard here we may conclude that armed aggression and the use of mercenaries have not had a single advocate, and are therefore to be condemned. As my brother, Ambassador Boya of Benin, said in his statement on 6 April:

"These different reports confirm that those responsible for the abominable crime of 16 January 1977 did not come from Mars—they are not imaginary creatures." [2000th meeting, para. 58.]

51. We therefore believe that the people and the Government of the People's Republic of Benin deserve the support and assistance of the international community in order to repair and recover in part what has been damaged and lost as a result of the cowardly armed aggression of 16 January 1977.

52. As a final observation, my delegation also believes that, for humanitarian reasons, the international community should respond to their appeal, in solidarity with the people and the Government of Benin, because, while mercenaries in present conditions are, as I said, an instrument for the application of the law of the jungle and hence do not represent any danger to the strong, the latter must nevertheless admit that "whoever sows the wind will reap the whirlwind".

53. With regard to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, a country which, despite its small size, has not been neglected by the imperialists in their hatching of evil schemes in a desperate attempt to get it back, His Excellency Comrade Macías Nguema Biyogo, President for Life of the Republic, has on many occasions reiterated that, just as our country prefers poverty in liberty to riches soiled by the blood-stained hands of the imperialists and imported by puppets



directed by remote control, so do we prefer and also accept to be the target of these evil and cowardly neo-colonialist and imperialist acts of aggression—which have just caused the loss of lives in the People's Republic of Benin—rather than allowing ourselves and our country to become a springboard for the destabilization of other countries and the creation of strife in them, since such co-operation makes possible the installation of lackeys directed by remote control from the great imperialist capitals and would mean returning our wealthy continent, which is gradually attaining complete liberation, to the same oppressive masters which humiliated it for centuries.

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

55. Mr. KANTE (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, may I add the voice of my delegation to that of preceding delegations in congratulating you very warmly and in a most brotherly manner upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You are a man of conviction who has braved the deprivations of prison and the vicissitudes of a clandestine existence in exile, and it is therefore most fitting that you should be guiding the work of the Council precisely when it is seized of grave questions such as the one we are considering today. Through you in your dual capacity as parliamentarian and Ambassador, your country, Venezuela, and its people, which you represent with so much dignity, are being honoured. I should like, on this happy occasion, to express the appreciation of my delegation for your personal, active part in strengthening relations between your country and mine. Your long and rich experience as an intransigent militant in the ranks of the progressive forces in Latin America, your knowledge of men and affairs and the role which your native Venezuela plays in the forefront of the bitter struggle which the third world wages for the advent of a new international economic order are, in our opinion, certain guarantees for the success of the Council's work during this month of April.

56. I wish next, through you, to thank the members of the Security Council for having allowed my delegation to participate in this important debate.

57. Before dealing with the serious question that concerns us today, that is, the complaint by the People's Republic of Benin about the act of armed aggression of which it was a victim on the morning of 16 January last and which was committed by a commando of mercenaries, I wish to congratulate the eminent members of the Special Mission, established by the Security Council under its resolution 404 (1977), and to commend them for their objectivity, integrity and devotion.

58. The voluminous report and its annexes, published respectively in documents S/12294 and Add.1, bear witness to the seriousness, probity and dedication of the Chairman, Ambassador Illueca of Panama, Ambassador Kikhia of Libya and Mr. Mulye of India in the discharge of their lofty mission. They deserve our warm thanks, particularly since we know that the Special Mission was limited in its

prerogatives and mandate. The speed and effectiveness with which its eminent members discharged their duties are praiseworthy. We are very grateful to them.

59. As regards the facts, the Special Mission's inquiry has rigorously established that armed aggression was committed against Cotonou, capital of the People's Republic of Benin, by a commando of mercenaries on the morning of 16 January 1977. Paragraph 141 of the report 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."

Paragraph 142 of the report is even more categorical:

"Inasmuch as the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the State of Benin were 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."

Paragraph 143 identifies the invaders as follows:

"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."

Paragraph 136 is even more specific:

"On Sunday, 16 January 1977, at about 7 a.m. (local time), a four-engine aircraft with no identification marks made an unauthorized landing at the Cotonou international airport. From this aircraft disembarked a group of about 100 persons wearing military uniforms. A large majority of this group were persons belonging to the white race. The others were black persons. They carried a large quantity of various categories of arms and ammunition with them. . . ."

To this must be added that the bodies of the two mercenaries who were killed in the fight—one European and one African—were seen by the Special Mission at the morgue at Cotonou, and that later the members interrogated the mercenary who was captured. All this constitutes irrefutable evidence.

60. The second fact which is highlighted in the report is the moral and material damage caused by that aggression against the People's Republic of Benin. Paragraph 139 states:

"The casualties on the Benin side were six dead and 51 wounded. In the fighting, a number of foreigners of different nationalities residing in Benin were also wounded."

61. As regards the foreigners who were wounded in the course of the aggression, there were two European assistants and an international expert who had to be evacuated

to their countries of origin for medical attention. That is yet another tragic aspect of the affair that has not even been mentioned by the great international press. It was not even accorded the interest usually given by the same press to miscellaneous news items—and for good reason!

62. The material damage is described as follows in paragraph 140:

“In the course of the fighting, during which the attacking force used such weapons as machine-guns, mortars and bazookas, substantial damage was inflicted on a number of public and private buildings, including the premises of some diplomatic missions in Cotonou and even a hospital.”

63. The conclusions of the report of the Special Mission on those two fundamental aspects of the case are confirmed by the statements and testimony of personalities whose honour cannot be questioned. They are the ambassadors from Europe, Asia and Africa accredited to the People's Republic of Benin who were witness at Cotonou to the tragic events of 16 January 1977.

64. The mission of the Organization of African Unity also arrived at the same conclusions after its on-the-spot inquiry. That led the OAU Council of Ministers, at its twenty-eighth ordinary session held at Lomé, Togo, from 21 to 28 February 1977, to adopt a special resolution by which it

*“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.”*

That same resolution, in its paragraph 4, commits the delegations of African States at the United Nations “to act in solidarity with Benin during the debate of the case by the United Nations Security Council”.

65. The grave matter that concerns us today is therefore no stage play, fairy tale, fable or other fiction. It is armed aggression perpetrated by a commando of mercenaries in the pay of the forces of evil against the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the People's Republic of Benin, a State Member of our Organization. That has been proved by the material evidence in the case. And, as the Security Council Special Mission affirms in paragraph 144 of its report:

“From the manner in which the operation was conceived and executed, the Special Mission believes a similar operation could be conducted elsewhere against small defenceless countries for similar purposes.”

That is why the armed aggression perpetrated on 16 January against the People's Republic of Benin first and foremost concerns the community of nations, that is, the United Nations, which guarantees peace and security in the world.

66. In that respect, my delegation is happy to note that all the delegations that have already taken part in the discussion have recognized that the aggression did take

place; they have all condemned that aggression and expressed sympathy for the People's Republic of Benin. The disagreements concerning some of the documentation or evidence in the matter in no way change the relevant responsible positions that have been taken, positions which are all to the honour of our Organization. Furthermore, controversy cannot be avoided in the consideration of so serious a question as the aggression against Cotonou, masterfully prepared by the agents of subversion and destabilization. That is why the Special Mission, in its wisdom, has made it clear, in paragraph 145 of its report, that in regard to some of the evidence:

“... the terms of its mandate, as well as the time 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.”

67. We owe it to the truth, however, to recognize that although the Special Mission did not have the jurisdictional competence, or the powers, or the freedom to act, or the means available to an examining judge in regular courts—the Security Council does not yet, unfortunately, have the powers of a world government—the members of the Special Mission did everything humanly possible to discharge honestly and correctly the very delicate and complex task entrusted to them, that is, to make known the truth and the whole truth about this serious and sombre matter.

68. It goes without saying that the Mission, with its limited mandate and its limited powers, could only suggest, as it has done, that investigations should continue on certain pieces of evidence in order that answers might be found to the rather numerous questions that are still outstanding, questions which present themselves in any preliminary inquiry of this nature. I am sure it will be agreed that these aspects of the matter could not be cleared up in a preliminary investigation, even if it were conducted with the diligence of an examining judge with his army of assistants within the framework of a regular judicial procedure. It should be noted here that the judicial investigation of an ordinary felony or misdemeanor takes one year, two years, or even five years. We must remember that the Mission had only 30 days, including travel time, to carry out its inquiry and submit its report.

69. The offer of co-operation made on 7 April to the Government of the People's Republic of Benin by the head of the French delegation to the Security Council [2001st meeting], on behalf of his Government, to seek out and punish persons implicated in the aggression of 16 January must be considered, in this connexion, as a positive reaction, an adequate response to the suggestions of the Special Mission.

70. Indeed, the subject of the aggression against Cotonou must not be closed at this meeting of the Security Council, because, for the first time, we have documentation which enables us to reach the mercenaries in their dens of recruitment and their hide-outs. The investigations should be continued on that line. Thus, it is for each State Member of our Organization to co-operate sincerely and actively with the Council in order that all possible light may be shed

on this serious matter. Above all, let us not wait for the mercenaries who survived the aggression against Cotonou to enlighten us on the tragic events. And such a possibility should not be ruled out *a priori*, because many examples of it can be found in modern history.

71. Everyone must undertake, as France has done, to co-operate in ensuring that the truth will out, so that we may know all the details of the armed aggression perpetrated on 16 January 1977 against the city of Cotonou. In that way, and only in that way, will the Security Council be able, in all objectivity and in a completely responsible manner, to take adequate and effective measures to wipe out this phenomenon of the international use of mercenaries which has constituted a serious threat to the security of African States since 1960.

72. At the outset, the villains were recruited among the survivors of the wars of colonial reconquest. Trained like wild animals for the profession of killer, to serve the needs of total war in far-off regions, they were unable to fit into the social structure after their return to their countries. They therefore became social outcasts, abnormal persons—to speak frankly, misfits who very quickly turned into hired killers. Disconsolate over the complete defeat they suffered overseas, they are wandering all over Europe, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in search of armed adventures against the young African States to appease their hatred against the peoples of the former colonial territories. Thus, they were found in the Congo, in Biafra, in Guinea, in the Sudan, in Southern Rhodesia, in Namibia, and so on and so forth. Obsessed by their bitterness, they have learned no lesson from their defeat on those fronts, and that is why we found them in the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January 1977 and, more precisely, at Cotonou, the capital.

73. The market composed of remnants of the wars of colonial reconquest is shrinking as the mercenaries of this generation grow older, and therefore the imperialist and neo-colonialist circles are now turning more and more to the dregs of European society, made up of the unemployed and the super-charged people of the extreme right, to recruit their soldiers of fortune.

74. The use of mercenaries, which we with reason regarded as a passing phenomenon because of the inevitable drying up of the traditional sources of recruitment, is unfortunately becoming established as a habit in our society. And that is the danger—the great danger—to world peace and security.

75. The United Nations cannot remain indifferent to the development and strengthening of this disturbing phenomenon. The armed aggression of 16 January 1977 against the People's Republic of Benin is further proof of the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the measures so far contemplated by the Organization to wipe out the use of mercenaries.

76. In recent years, we have seen Governments demonstrating a disconcerting passivity about the recruitment and induction of mercenaries on their territory, while at the same time the sensational press has been publishing

photographs of and interviews with these villains as they embark at airfields and railway stations; on the television screen we have seen large pictures of the new recruits being trained in parks. The recruiting sergeants, identified and well known, freely place their offers in the newspapers of those countries.

77. That unwonted publicity obviously gives a certain semblance of authenticity to these adventurers whose criminal expeditions are often presented as the exploits of heroes and knights by some of the mass media. As proof, I would cite the following statement by an important dignitary of a large country, who was interviewed in 1976 while civil war was ravaging Angola: "While I was stationed in Africa, many mercenaries became my friends". He added: "The cause for which one fights is more important than knowing whether a mercenary is *persona non grata*".

78. Furthermore, "Colonel Steiner"—a veteran, so to speak, of the Congo and the Fourth Biafran Commando Division, of sinister fame—sentenced in August 1971 to 20 years in prison in the Sudan for having committed a crime against the Sudanese people and the unity of the Sudan, and pardoned by President El-Nemeiri on 28 March 1974, had the audacity to sue the Sudanese Government before the International Court of Justice at The Hague for damages, asking for about 23 million francs "for having been illegally sentenced" in 1971 by those authorities to 20 years in prison.

79. It should be noted here that "Colonel Steiner" had been arrested in 1971 in Uganda, to where he had retired after the defeat of his column in southern Sudan by the Sudanese governmental forces. He had enrolled in the ranks of the dissidents, at whose side he had fought from 1969 to 1971. He had subsequently been extradited to the Sudan, where he had been tried and sentenced, in accordance with normal procedure, to 20 years in prison.

80. The summary execution in Angola at the end of 1975 by the well-known "Colonel Callan", head mercenary, of some 15 of his comrades was one of the tragic episodes in the history of the use of mercenaries; we should reflect on that too. We ought not to be beguiled by the shadow and miss the substance.

81. On the basis of the evidence before us, a number of measures can already be envisaged at this stage.

82. The Security Council must take this opportunity to complement and strengthen the resolutions adopted against the use of mercenaries, notably resolution 239 (1967), which:

"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".

83. In its programme of work, the Organization must give high priority to the elaboration of an international convention on the use of mercenaries.

84. The armed aggression of 16 January against the People's Republic of Benin, the use of mercenaries and interference in the internal affairs of States must be firmly condemned. Furthermore, the Council must consider specific measures of compensation for the damage suffered by the People's Republic of Benin as a result of this criminal aggression.

85. No Member State ought to be able to take shelter any longer behind the shortcomings of its national legislation to justify its passivity in the face of the mounting use of mercenaries, who may be compared with the criminal gangs that are condemned in the penal codes of all countries.

86. Nor can one any longer invoke democratic traditions in regard to individual freedoms to explain away the inaction of Governments in the face of the organization in their territories of destabilization operations against other States. Indeed, law itself being a relative concept, individual human rights cannot prevail over those of the community, and those of the community itself cannot prevail over those of society at large. Harmony, which is the basis of international peace and security, of necessity implies compatibility between those various rights—that is to say, between the rights of individuals and groups, both within States and at the international level.

87. Those are the conclusions which my delegation has seen fit to draw from this debate. Hence, what appears to be a controversy among African countries does not concern the substance of the issue, but only certain evidence. In fact, in our statements we all agree in our reaffirmation of the common destiny of the African States, in our firm condemnation of the act of aggression perpetrated on 16 January 1977 against the People's Republic of Benin by a commando group of mercenaries, in our active solidarity with the brother people of Benin, in our condemnation of the use of mercenaries and of interference in the internal affairs of States, and in our concern, as members of the African continent, for the collective and individual security of States.

88. The prophets of doom who thought they had detected in this controversy a fundamental divergence among African States on the substance of the problem—a divergence which would obviously confirm their evil forecasts and the tendentious split which they want to cause on our continent—will surely be repaid in kind. They do not understand that Africa has always silenced and overcome its internal quarrels so as to unite and, with equal ardour, face the danger from outside.

89. It is certainly ignorance of this cardinal virtue of Africans which explains the obstinacy of the imperialist and reactionary forces and of their hordes of mercenaries in attempting to destabilize and reconquer our States. Their criminal assaults will always be shattered against the unassailable ramparts of Africa.

90. That is the second lesson my delegation draws from this debate.

91. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mali for his kind references to

my country and my person. I reiterate that I am very pleased to have contributed to a closer relationship between our two countries.

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

93. Mr. PUNTSAGNOROV (Mongolia) (*interpretation from Russian*): Sir, first of all I should like to extend heartfelt thanks to you and the members of the Security Council for the opportunity you have given me to speak on this item on the agenda. It gives me great pleasure to see you, the representative of Venezuela, a country whose generosity and hospitality I always recall very warmly, occupying the lofty and responsible post of President of the Council for the current month.

94. I should also like to note the great tact and skill of Ambassador Young, who conducted the work of the Council last month.

95. As one of the last speakers, I might recall a Mongolian saying: "The last camel of the caravan carries the heaviest load". But I must say at the outset that I will not tax the Council with a long statement.

96. My delegation decided to make a statement because it believes that the substance of the question being examined by the Council concerns one of the most dangerous types of international crime, which is to say, an attack on the sovereignty and independence of a State. Indeed, it is not to be ruled out at all, as has been stressed by previous speakers, that an act of aggression similar to that which was perpetrated against Benin could be repeated in another place, in another country or on another continent. Therefore, the scope of the discussion of this question in the Council, as we have said, is not restricted merely to the confines of the African continent, but has a wider and more serious international significance.

97. The incontrovertible facts show that the economic capital of Benin, Cotonou, was the object of a direct act of aggression inspired from abroad, accomplished with the participation of foreign mercenaries equipped with modern weapons. The aim of the attack, as was confirmed by the investigation of the Security Council Special Mission, was to overthrow the Government of Benin which, as is well known, is pursuing an independent and revolutionary course for the development of its country. It is quite obvious that the aggression against Benin was carefully prepared and orchestrated by elements which, through the use of certain renegades from bankrupt groups of local reactionaries as their mercenary shock-troops, cunningly mounted a surprise attack on Cotonou.

98. The armed incursion into Beninese territory claimed human lives and caused great material damage. It must be viewed as an attack on the very basis of contemporary international relations and thus as a defiance of the purposes of the United Nations, which are based on the principles of respect for national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and

the non-use of force against the territorial integrity of States.

99. There is no doubt that the act of aggression against Benin is connected, to a certain extent, with the attempts of imperialism to maintain or prolong the existence of the last vestiges of colonialism and racism on the African continent. Our delegation considers the attack on Benin to be a link in the chain formed by the plot of imperialist forces against the African peoples who have chosen the path of progressive socio-economic transformation, and an attempt to weaken the unity of African States in their struggle against imperialism and racism.

100. Externally, the aggression against Benin perhaps recalls, to a certain extent, the activities of the heyday of colonialism when the pirates of expeditionary units of colonizers sealed the fate of entire peoples. But now times have changed and, as we say, other songs are being sung. Confronted with the firm fighting spirit of the people of Benin, the aggressors, to save their own skins, fled like cowards, leaving absolutely everything behind.

101. International life shows that peoples who are fighting for the right cause—and, of course, our African brothers—are not alone. They receive the firm support of progressive and peace-loving forces, including the full support of the socialist countries.

102. However, it would be unrealistic to minimize the danger of the recent event, more so since the ominous smoke of this criminal conspiracy has not yet cleared, and most of the organizers and direct perpetrators of the aggression against Benin are now beyond the confines of that country.

103. The international community should learn a useful lesson from what took place in Benin. Nowadays, any aggressive acts of imperialism and neo-colonialism against peoples that have chosen the path of freedom and independence exacerbate the international situation and constitute a threat to world peace.

104. Given the present situation, the Security Council is, we believe, in duty bound to take effective steps aimed at preventing and halting any aggressive actions in the future, on the basis of the provisions of the Charter. The Council must not only strongly condemn the aggression committed against Benin but must also once again recall the great political and material responsibility that the aggressors bear. We express the hope that the Council will, with all the force of its authority and lofty powers, decisively condemn that disgraceful phenomenon of our time: the use of mercenaries.

105. I express the hope that the decision that will be taken by the Council will not only be helpful to the people of Benin in its attempts to eliminate the last traces of the aggression, but will also serve as a serious warning to those who love hazardous adventures and to those who use violence in their attempts to exacerbate the international situation in order to throw the peoples of countries which have freed themselves of international oppression off their chosen course of building a new life.

106. The Mongolian delegation would like to express its fraternal solidarity with the people and Government of Benin in their valiant struggle to strengthen their independence and economic and social progress. We wish them all success and prosperity.

107. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of the Ivory Coast. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

108. Mr. AKE (Ivory Coast) (*interpretation from French*): Speaking on 7 April in this debate [2001st meeting], we went into the weighty reasons for which the Ivory Coast and its Government had not been and could not have been involved, either directly or indirectly, in the aggression perpetrated on 16 January 1977 against the People's Republic of Benin. We consequently rejected the accusations of complicity levelled against the Ivory Coast by the Beninese authorities in their national report [S/12319/Add.1] on those same events and by the representative of Guinea, whose Government, we know, tried to state that its neighbours were implicated in that aggression in order to justify again its slanderous campaign against the Ivory Coast.

109. We would have refrained from speaking again in this debate if, in exercising his right of reply [2004th meeting], the representative of Guinea had not repeated those very same accusations and made some slanderous remarks about our head of State and the Government and people of the Ivory Coast.

110. It is not our intention to become involved in this because we are used to these Guinean calumnies. One only needs to leaf through the issue of the Guinean paper *Horoya*, the central organ of the Guinean State Party, or the statements of President Sékou Touré to be convinced of this. We will not lower ourselves to their level. We will not even give them the pleasure or honour of repeating those accusations and slanders. Nevertheless, we should like to refer to one of them, the description of our Head of State as a "puppet", a "traitor to Africa" or a "lackey of imperialism". We are quite happy that our colleague should discharge his duty in the way he did this morning, in the true Guinean style that we know so well, but he will agree with us that President Houphouët-Boigny is perhaps one of the few African heads of State to which those descriptions do not and cannot apply. My colleague from Guinea is a militant of the Democratic Party of Guinea, a part of the African Democratic Assembly, and he knows full well the role played by that great African patriot and nationalist in the struggle for the liberation of Africa, a role to which history will bear witness. We therefore scornfully reject those slanders and that judgement passed on our head of State. Impartial observers will make the distinction between what happens in the Ivory Coast and what happens in Guinea. The people of the world will be able to sum up what has been said by our two leaders, and they will judge.

111. Nevertheless, I should like to raise a question. If Guinea is indeed the paradise that has been described this morning by our colleague, how does he then explain that hundreds of his compatriots have fled the country, 300,000

having come to find refuge in my country and 500,000 in Senegal?

112. For us the policy of a country can be measured by its results. A policy which gives the people more freedom, more dignity, greater well-being and better social standing inspires confidence. On the other hand, a policy which aims at depersonalizing a people in the name of imported ideologies, which leads the country to ruin and poverty, which sets up a system of government consisting of public delation, persecution, oppression, political assassination and the suppression of individual democratic freedoms, can only inspire pity for the people who are subjected to its régime.

113. We should like to make one last comment. Yes, it is true that President Houphouët-Boigny is going to Europe. But what may be forgotten is that he will also be going to numerous African countries, as is indicated by the official visit he is making right now to the Republic of Liberia at the invitation of President Tolbert and the visits he has made to Lagos, Nigeria, several times in recent months, and to Kigali, Lomé, Bamako and Ouagadougou to take a personal part in inter-African summit meetings and talks. One cannot say the same for the President of Guinea, who has not been seen for years. They alone know the reasons for this. We will not say anything more about that.

114. In his statement of 6 April, and again this morning, the representative of Guinea repeated, somewhat docilely, accusations to the effect that mercenaries were massed along the frontiers of Guinea and of certain fraternal neighbouring countries, ready to invade Guinea. He added:

"The Government of the Republic of Guinea has used all possible diplomatic means to bring the Governments of certain neighbouring States to cease giving assistance to the mercenaries grouped in their countries. They have always denied the existence of those renegades assembling on our frontiers. Yet their peoples know that every day our national radio station, the voice of the revolution of the Republic of Guinea, broadcasts evidence of the training of those mercenaries in neighbouring countries." [2000th meeting, para. 177.]

115. We reassert staunchly that these so-called renegades are not present in the Ivory Coast and if they exist it is only in the minds of those who imagine them. It will be difficult for us to convince the Guinean authorities that those mercenaries do not exist on the border between our two countries any more than on the Senegalese side. In spite of all the assurances given directly or through our mutual friends, they continue to believe in the existence of those mercenaries. This is an obsession, a hallucination. The accusations of our colleague from Guinea are not new: they are part of the deliberate policy of the President of Guinea to find scapegoats to whom he can shift the responsibility for the difficulties of Guinea.

116. The aggression of which Benin was the victim gave him a marvellous new opportunity to accuse the Ivory Coast. We are therefore not surprised by these manoeuvres and slanders, which do not affect us but which unmask their authors. These lying accusations and slanders are not

going to distract us. In the Ivory Coast we are too concerned with giving substance to our political independence and ensuring the happiness of our people to waste our time in pointless bickering or to train mercenaries, whether Guinean or otherwise, to prepare an aggression against their country. Faithful to our policy of non-interference in the affairs of other States, we respect their institutions and the path they have chosen. The Ivory Coast, a land of hospitality and freedom, fraternity and dialogue, will never consent to our land's being made a training camp or base for subversive activities against an African country, in particular against the Republic of Guinea with which we have so many links, in spite of the bitterness caused by the far-fetched accusations and the evil words repeated by the representative of Guinea. Today, as yesterday, we deny categorically all these allusions and accusations, because there are no mercenaries in my country who wish to overthrow the Government of Guinea. There are no camps of that kind—none at all—in the Ivory Coast.

117. Because the assurances that we give do not seem to allay the fears or dispel the hallucinations of our friends from Guinea, we should like, through the President of the Council, to renew our invitation to all the members to send a visiting mission to the Ivory Coast to check into the existence or otherwise of those mercenary camps. This invitation is also extended to the Secretary-General, who could bear witness to the truth. Such a mission of the Council or the Secretary-General could have free passage in the Ivory Coast and interrogate whomever it wished in order to shed light on these new accusations levelled against us, because we sincerely believe that once and for all we must destroy this myth of a plot that haunts our Guinean friends.

118. The Ivory Coast has nothing to hide. We have a clear conscience. We bear no ill will towards Guinea. We have no quarrel with it, apart from our constant and abiding refusal to deliver to President Sékou Touré his political opponents who have found asylum in our country.

119. The Ivory Coast, I repeat, has nothing against Guinea. That is what President Houphouët-Boigny has always stated to President Sékou Touré. In a message addressed to the President of Guinea a short time ago, President Houphouët-Boigny, in a statement which shows his stature as a leader and the grief he feels as a result of the Guinean leader's behaviour, said the following:

"I have always said, and I repeat it solemnly now, that we have no reason to harbour hostile feelings with regard to you and your country. If we are occasionally sad in the face of the depressing atmosphere and the disunity among the Guinean intellectual elite, we do not think that that can be remedied by us, because it is an internal Guinean affair. More than that, we believe that if there is to be any change, it will not come from outside but rather from inside your own country, at the initiative of leaders who daily confront the problems of Guinean life. That is why we prohibit any political activities on the part of the numerous Guineans who seek refuge here, or any action directed against your régime, under pain of expulsion. We cannot root out from their hearts the feelings you inspire

in them, but, on the other hand, if you give us the slightest proof of subversive activity organized from our territory or from outside the Ivory Coast by residents of our country, we shall not hesitate for an instant to ask them to do their work elsewhere.

"While I lack such proof, threats of this kind against me on your radio will not make me flinch in my determination to welcome and to try to find employment in the Ivory Coast for each of our Guinean brothers who prefers to live away from his country. My attitude is dictated by humanitarian feelings, but I am aware also of the fact that one day Guinea, reconciled to them, will be happy to gather in all its sons who are now separated from their country so that they may participate in its development."

120. We are not distracted by these accusations. We believe in peace for all. We believe in a free, humane Ivory Coast, fraternal prosperous development and friendship with all peoples of Africa and elsewhere.

121. I now come to the report of the Security Council Special Mission. In our statement last week, we refrained from commenting on certain evidence provided by the Mission because we did not deem it necessary to do so. Some may think our silence marked slight embarrassment, and we should therefore like to make the following brief comments.

122. Among the documents the invaders left behind them in their canteen were found three certificates of vaccination given in the Ivory Coast, a certificate of declaration of loss made out by the Ministry of the Interior of the Ivory Coast on 2 September 1970 for Mr. Gilbert Bourgeaud concerning the loss of his driving licence in Morocco and air tickets delivered by Air France, UTA and Royal Air Maroc for the routes Paris-Dakar-Abidjan, Abidjan-Casablanca and Abidjan-Dakar-Paris. We say right away that those documents prove nothing. In New York, Cotonou, Abidjan, Paris or anywhere, anybody can go to a health office and obtain an international vaccination certificate, make a statement of loss to the police or buy an air ticket in a travel agency. Furthermore, the report states in paragraph 145:

"According to the testimony of the prisoner and parts of this documentation, the attackers, who were recruited in Europe and Africa, came to Morocco from Paris, Dakar and Abidjan."

123. We do not exclude the possibility that some of those incriminated were indeed on the flights serving Abidjan, Dakar, Casablanca or Paris. However, what people seem to be unaware of is that the Beninese, like the majority of African nationals, particularly those of the former Franco-African community, come and go freely to and from the Ivory Coast and do not need entry or exit visas. The movements of these persons prove nothing unless they benefited from the complicity of local authorities, which remains to be irrefutably proved. Those journeys may be checked, certainly, but that would in no way mean that they had been made with the assistance of the Ivory Coast authorities.

124. We should like to point out that those documents can in no way constitute valid proof on the basis of which, unless one is dishonest, one could try to implicate the Ivory Coast. Even if the tickets were purchased at Abidjan and some of the mercenaries did make a stopover at the Abidjan international airport and vaccination certificates were delivered to some of them by Ivory Coast authorities, it seems strange, since these documents were acquired in the normal way and the journeys were made on regular flights, to try to establish some link between the commando group and the Ivory Coast authorities, unless it is established beyond the shadow of a doubt that the tickets used for those journeys or the means of acquiring them were put at their disposal by the Ivory Coast authorities so that they might perpetrate aggression against the People's Republic of Benin or any other African country. That was not the case, and there is no proof of it.

125. The Ivory Coast is not a police State which suspects every visitor or foreigner. We want all visitors to feel free in our country. We are a country in which foreigners of all nationalities come and go as they please. What is important, we would repeat, is that foreigners should respect our laws and the principles which guide our policies and not abuse the hospitality we extend to them to jeopardize the good-neighbourly relations we maintain with other African countries. If it were established that foreigners had contravened our laws, and if proof of that were available, we can assure the Council that the authorities of my country would not fail to take the necessary steps.

126. In conclusion, we should like to add that our country, our Government is ready to co-operate in every possible way to shed full light on the aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin. But we also reiterate our request that the Security Council send to the Ivory Coast a mission to confirm the truth regarding the presence of mercenaries on our soil. We believe that, in so doing, the Council would render a great service to Guinea, to the Ivory Coast and to their peoples and would be serving truth and peace in Africa.

127. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of Senegal wishes to speak in exercise of his right of reply. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and I give him the floor.

128. Mr. FALL (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): The representative of Guinea started his statement this morning by protesting against the disgusting comments made by some delegations against his Government. The members of the Council heard him, and I am sure that they got the impression, just as I did, that the text which he read out did not exactly contain lofty views either.

129. He reproached us for having said that he had not even leafed through the report of the Special Mission. It is my impression that my colleague from Guinea is actually a recidivist, because he replied to my statement without having listened to it and also without having read it properly. Had he read that statement, he would have realized that at no point in it did my delegation question the fact that an act of aggression had actually been perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January.



130. I must add further that there is actually a great deal that my colleague from Guinea is unaware of. He has declared here that his country lives in opulence, when everyone knows that Guinea is listed among the 25 poorest countries of the world—to be poor is no shame, but it is a fact—although it is considered to be potentially one of the wealthiest in Africa. Our colleague from Guinea spoke to us of the happy people of Guinea. I do not want to go into this question, for it would be too easy to demolish his arguments. To speak of the happiness of the people of a country with 4 million inhabitants, 1,200,000 of whom live in exile is, I believe, the height of impertinence.

131. The delegation of Senegal has asked to be allowed to exercise its right of reply after hearing the latest slander from the delegation of Guinea, not in order to provoke an argument, which would be as useless as it would be sterile and harmful, but to draw the attention of the Council to the reasons which have led to our conflict with the Government of Conakry.

132. The problem of our dispute with Guinea is, as I said to the Council the other day, the presence of 500,000 Guineans in Senegal. This situation, which Senegal has neither desired nor created, has led to an influx of additional workers, with all the inconvenience which that entails in the economic, social and political fields. That is to say that my country has found itself grappling with a problem from which it is far from drawing advantages.

133. The first refugees from Guinea arrived in Senegal in the spring of 1958, that is to say, four months before the independence of Guinea. They had been chased by the régime of terror established by the party in power at the time. The movement gathered strength as the years went by and was to affect every ethnic group and every social category of that country. Therefore, today 500,000 Guineans are living in Senegal, thus escaping the atmosphere of insecurity and terror reigning in their country.

134. Senegal's attitude in the face of this displacement of the population of Guinea was guided by purely humanitarian considerations. My Government, faithful to its tradition of hospitality, has welcomed these African brothers, as it has done other foreign communities, establishing as the only condition that they respect the laws of our country and refrain from any activity which might jeopardize our relations with their country of origin.

135. The Government of Senegal has been mainly guided by two considerations as regards the Guinean refugees: respect for human rights and non-interference in the internal affairs of a neighbouring State. That is why those refugees have never been given any encouragement by the authorities of my country or any direct or indirect support for subversive activities. On the contrary, all those who tried to abuse our hospitality in order to embark upon actions contrary to our policy of good-neighbourliness, rapprochement and co-operation with the neighbouring States of our subregion have been expelled from Senegal, because for us the first objective is freedom and the unity of Africa. This implies that the presence of several hundred thousand Guinean nationals on our territory must be considered as a humanitarian problem, which in no case should give rise to political implications.

136. Nevertheless, this attitude in no way means that the refugees involved should be considered as hostages subject to surveillance during their residence in my country. For my Government, those refugees are neither a political weapon against our neighbours nor prisoners. They have the opportunity to seek employment and to circulate freely throughout our country. This humanitarian treatment reserved for our African brothers has never been to the liking of the Conakry authorities, which would have wished the Government of Senegal to consider those persons, in the name of African solidarity, as criminals which could be returned to them whenever the Conakry authorities wished. My Government has never accepted that and will never accept it.

137. The Government of Senegal refuses to be associated with the execution of crimes the authors of which and the accomplices in which will be severely judged one day by history. No one, neither the Government of Guinea nor any other Government, can compel us to renounce our solemn moral obligation to respect the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which we have subscribed freely and in complete sovereignty.

138. Unsuccessful in its efforts, Conakry has embarked on violent attacks by radio accusing the Senegalese Government of harbouring and training Guinean refugees to set them up against their own country. In the face of those acts of deliberate provocation, my country has always exercised the utmost calm and has refused to embark on a "radio war". We felt that a war by radio broadcast was unworthy of a self-respecting country. Nevertheless that calm attitude on the part of Senegal has never disarmed the Guinean authorities. They have persisted thus in an endeavour to distract the attention of their people from the grave economic and social problems that the country confronts.

139. I would add that, to the Conakry authorities, any Guinean national who is not subjected to their dictatorship is a traitor or a mercenary. We, for our part, consider that political intolerance is contrary to fundamental human rights, because it goes without saying that, in the logic of that interpretation, any action of political adversaries to re-establish democracy and freedom in a country can be considered only as foreign aggression directed by mercenaries at the service of an imperialist Power.

140. That Machiavellian distortion of facts should be given no credit, no matter in what form it is presented to our Organisation. The Government of Guinea has used and abused these terms. It has thus sought to camouflage the growing opposition of the population of Guinea on its own territory. The strong internal opposition, regrettably, has affected the external policy of Guinea and given it this disorderly, chaotic character which we have all observed.

141. African unity or subregional or regional integration, has little weight in the eyes of the Conakry authorities, because they need to make believe that their régime is threatened by external forces so as to win over African solidarity to ensure the survival of their régime. Thus Conakry is always brandishing threats of all kinds, transforming internal or external adversaries into mercenaries who are manipulated by imperialism. While those manoeu-



vres were able to deceive some people a few years ago, today we must recognize that the world sees things more clearly.

142. The representative of Guinea said that Senegal and the Ivory Coast were showing hostility to the Republic of Guinea, but forgetting to commit themselves, or rather refraining from committing themselves, to the combat which Africa is now waging against the white racist régimes of southern Africa. I am not the representative of the Ivory Coast, but I am the representative of Senegal, and I should like to recall or to state—because I am sure my colleague from Guinea does not know this—that Senegal is at present a member of the Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa. Senegal is a member of the United Nations Council for Namibia. In 1974, it was on the proposal made on instructions from my Government by the delegation of Senegal, which I headed, that the Credentials Committee, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, took the decision to reject the credentials of the representative of Pretoria, and it was on the basis of that decision of the Committee that from that day the representative of Vorster has ceased to occupy his seat in the General Assembly. That is Senegal's contribution with regard to the struggle in southern Africa. How happy I would be if the representative of Guinea were to say what the representatives of his Government have done.

143. The representative of Guinea has told us that in Guinea everything belongs to the people which works and struggles. In this respect, I should like to quote the following, which shows what the newspaper *Africa* thinks of that affirmation, from its January 1977 issue, page 90:

“As foreign capital increases its control over the economy through direct investments, Guinea becomes increasingly indebted to foreign governments and international financial institutions.

“Furthermore, the domination of the commodity market by the aluminium trusts gives Guinea little manoeuvring room. And what becomes of Guinea's socialist options when the key sector of the national economy is virtually under the domination of foreign trusts and banks?”

144. We will be told that that is the opinion of a reactionary press, but that cannot change the facts. What that newspaper states can be checked at any time. There is no need for any lengthy demonstration to show that never before has imperialism felt as safe as now in Guinea. The anti-imperialist rhetoric uttered by Conakry is plainly intended to camouflage the penetration and establishment of international imperialism and the money Powers. What is at stake today in the feverish activities of the Government of Conakry is not the anti-imperialist combat but, rather, the desperate efforts of a dictatorship at bay striving to ensure its survival.

145. Mr. LAI Ya-li (China) (*translation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has studied the report of the Special Mission to the People's Republic of Benin established under Security Council resolution 404 (1977) and composed of the representatives of Panama, Libya and India.

146. In our statement on 8 February 1977 [*1987th meeting*], when the Council was considering the complaint by Benin, the Chinese delegation pointed out that the incident which had taken place on 16 January at Cotonou constituted an encroachment by imperialism and its mercenaries on the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the People's Republic of Benin. We condemn the invasion of the People's Republic of Benin by imperialism and its mercenaries. At the same time, we strongly condemn that super-Power which styles itself a “natural ally” of the African people for engineering single-handed the grave incident of a massive invasion of Zaire by mercenaries. This grave incident is another glaring revelation of the aggressive and expansionist features of social-imperialism, and it is only natural that it has been strongly condemned and firmly opposed by the peoples of Zaire, the rest of Africa and the whole world.

147. Under the leadership of His Excellency President Kérékou, the Government and people of Benin victoriously repulsed the invasion of 16 January and defended their national independence and sovereignty. Once again, we wish to express our congratulations to them and our profound sympathy for the losses suffered by them in the above-mentioned incident. We are firmly convinced that the people of Benin will certainly heighten their vigilance, strengthen their unity and continue to safeguard their national independence and State sovereignty.

148. Based on the foregoing, the Chinese delegation supports the draft resolution sponsored by Benin, India, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius and Panama, as contained in document S/12322.

149. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of Guinea wishes to speak in exercise of his right of reply. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and I give him the floor.

150. Mr. M. S. CAMARA (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of the State Party of Guinea can easily understand why the representatives of the Ivory Coast and Senegal should be striving to divert the Security Council's attention from the agenda with which we are familiar. We understand why they are hounding the Republic of Guinea instead of replying to the questions raised by the report before the Council. The Republic of Guinea is not a permanent member of the Security Council. Hence, it has had no influence in the Special Mission. That Mission, established after consultations, had no Guinean representative. We understand full well that the documents prepared by the Mission belong to the Security Council and, unless they wanted to harass the members of the Council, Senegal and the Ivory Coast could only play the Guinean card in order to sow confusion.

151. At this stage of the debate, a clear view has emerged of what happened at Cotonou. It has been proved that subversive movements are installed in Senegal and the Ivory Coast. The Governments of those countries could help the international community by putting a halt to the actions of adventurers like Bâ Alpha Oumarou. In accordance with the laws of Senegal and the Ivory Coast, Guinean nationals living in their countries enjoy all their rights as Africans,

provided they do not engage in any subversive activity. If our brothers from Senegal and the Ivory Coast had ensured scrupulous respect for those principles, we certainly would not be here today paying the price for a shameful aggression perpetrated against the sister Republic of Benin.

152. For our part, our concern is to lend Benin all the support it needs to get out of this unfortunate situation caused by the actions of unprincipled bandits. That is why our delegation, faithful to the options worthy of the State Party of Guinea, refuses to utter uncomplimentary words and feels duty bound to express once again to the heroic people of Benin all the militant solidarity of its constant ally, the people of Guinea.

153. Nor shall we reply to the plagiarism of the reactionary press. Persons who visit Guinea frequently and who have had occasion to come in contact with the masses in our country, with all strata of our workers, are perfectly capable of stating whether people live well or badly in Guinea. We already gave a reply in that connexion in our statement this morning and one need only refer to that statement.

154. With regard to the many Guineans living in Senegal and in the Ivory Coast, we shall not reply, since the representatives themselves recognized, in their statements, that those countries were keeping a close watch on the activities of the Guineans in question. Nevertheless, the sole mercenary captured, Bâ Alpha Oumarou, did say, in his statement, that in Senegal these Guineans were perfectly free to make all kinds of insane remarks against the Government and people of Guinea, with the full knowledge of the Senegalese authorities. In my Government's view, that is inadmissible.

155. Many meetings have taken place between Senegalese and Guinean leaders; statements of consensus have been drawn up and agreed upon, but the Senegalese party has always refused to respect these agreements.

156. For our part, in the Republic of Guinea we are not in the pay of any money Power and, as Guineans, we are aware that the future of Guinea is in good hands: the hands of Guineans. And it is the Guineans themselves, masters of their fate, who, before the eyes of the world, always declare their readiness to fulfil their obligations to the international community.

157. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Soviet Union, who wishes to speak in exercise of his right of reply.

158. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): Since one delegation has referred to the Soviet Union in connexion with events in Zaire, I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to exercise my right of reply by explaining our position on this matter, as it appears in a TASS statement of 12 April, that is, the day before yesterday:

"As is known, in recent weeks Zaire has been beset by disturbances. In the southern part of that country, the former province of Katanga, there have been attacks

against the authorities of the central Government. The situation appears to be entirely clear: it is a strictly internal conflict, which need not concern anyone outside that country.

"However, from the outset, there have been those who wished to interfere in these events. There are such people in the West, in the Middle East and in the Far East. A number of Western countries, as well as China, are hastily sending arms and military supplies to the central Government of Zaire."

The statement goes on:

"As can be seen from the aforesaid facts, hands that are at first sight very different from one another have been outstretched towards Zaire, all out of a common desire to impose, at all costs, their own régimes on the people of Zaire. They are the hands of those who would like to create a new international problem, a new and dangerous hotbed of tension in the world—those who are clearly anxious to warm themselves at the fire to which they themselves are adding fuel.

"In a bid to cover up their interference in the internal affairs of Zaire, the imperialist forces and their accomplices began by circulating a false account alleging an invasion of Zaire by Angolan troops and Cuban servicemen. That was a short-lived lie. Today, no one attempts to deny the fact that there is not a single Angolan or a single Cuban among the rebels in the south of Zaire. Nevertheless, the slanderous campaign continues with the aim of casting suspicion on Angola, Cuba and also on the Soviet Union, which are alleged to be behind the events occurring in Zaire.

"This is an old, time-worn trick. It is as if the thief were shouting 'Thief!' louder than the others in order to divert suspicion from himself. However, in politics this trick holds no promise of success for those who resort to it. The peoples of Africa know how to tell genuine friends from those unfriendly to them, and still more from their enemies.

"The Soviet Union resolutely rejects as absurd any allegations of complicity in the events in Zaire. At the same time, the leading circles of the Soviet Union deem it inadmissible for any external forces to interfere in the internal struggle in Zaire. Each people, and it alone, must manage its own internal affairs. Let no one entertain the illusion that he will be able to deprive peoples of this inalienable right."

159. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of China, who has asked to exercise his right of reply.

160. Mr. LAI Ya-li (China) (*translation from Chinese*): In its statement just now, the Chinese delegation referred to the fact that Soviet social-imperialism had been organizing its hired mercenaries for an invasion of the Republic of Zaire. Apparently this has hit social-imperialism where it hurts. That is why the Soviet representative hurriedly came forward to justify and whitewash these crimes of aggression

and to attack and vilify the just stand of China. We deem it necessary to say a few words in reply.

161. In order to cover up the crimes of aggression committed by its hired mercenaries against Zaire, Soviet social-imperialism is telling another big lie. While it is a glaring case of several thousand Soviet-hired mercenaries launching a flagrant large-scale invasion of Zaire from outside its borders, Soviet social-imperialism has arbitrarily described it as the so-called internal military conflict in Zaire and an uprising in the south of Zaire. How can this deceive anyone? Can the several thousand Soviet-equipped mercenary troops have dropped from outer space or emerged suddenly from under the ground in the south of Zaire? No. As is known to all, the mercenaries invading Zaire are mainly composed of part of the remnant forces of the old colonialists, ex-gendarmes of the former Katanga province who had fled to Angola. At the time of the Soviet armed intervention in Angola, they were already rigged up as a part of the mercenaries hired by the Soviet Union and serving its aggressive activities. Under the command of Soviet social-imperialism, they ruthlessly butchered and suppressed the Angolan people and carried out repeated armed provocations against and an invasion of the Republic of Zaire. In January last year, the Soviet Union instigated its hired mercenaries to bombard savagely the cities in the south of Zaire. The current invasion of Zaire by mercenaries from Angola is unprecedented in scale, scope and duration. Things are crystal clear: it is none other than Soviet social-imperialism which is the boss of these mercenaries. Despite the various lies spread by Soviet social-imperialism, describing its premeditated aggression as a Zairian civil war in an attempt to cover up its glaring acts of aggression against Zaire, the people of Africa and throughout the world have a discerning eye and will not be deceived by any lies.

162. It has been repeatedly pointed out by fair-minded world opinion that the Soviet-engineered invasion of Zaire constitutes a new round in its offensives of political and military aggression in Africa, in the wake of its massive aggression in Africa early last year, as well as another major move in its rivalry with the other super-Power to seize Europe.

163. Under the leadership of President Mobutu, the Zairian Government and people, defying brute force, are waging a valiant struggle to defend their national independence, territorial integrity and state sovereignty against foreign aggression. The just struggle of the Zairian people is winning more and more extensive sympathy and support from the people of Africa and the whole world. We firmly believe that the Zairian people will win final victory in their resistance to aggression. Africa belongs to the African people. Upholding unity and persevering in struggle, the heroic African people will surely drive all external forces of aggression out of Africa.

164. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of the Soviet Union has asked to be allowed to exercise his right of reply and I now call on him.

165. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): I do not think we really need occupy the attention of the Council with any

further argument on this matter. I should simply like to say that what I read out from the TASS statement was a reply to the fantastic allegations which have just been made by the representative of China.

166. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of Senegal put a question this morning to the Security Council Special Mission [2004th meeting, para. 67]. We deliberately waited until the list of speakers was exhausted before answering that question or any other that might have been asked, so as to abide by the promise that we made to give a forthright answer to any questions that might be asked about the contents of the report, its annexes and the work done by the Special Mission.

167. The representative of Senegal specifically asked whether the Special Mission had asked the Government of Benin if it could see the white prisoners and, if it did, what had been the reply of the authorities. So the question might be divided into two parts: one concerning the Mission and the other the Government of Benin. We shall answer it in that order.

168. The first part of the question can be answered affirmatively. As soon as it began to organize its work in New York, the Special Mission asked about the number of mercenaries held and which it might be possible to interrogate for purposes of investigation. After its arrival at Cotonou, the Mission stressed that point which it considered important.

169. Before turning to the second part of the question, we should like to explain to the Council that it is obviously designed to determine whether or not there were mercenaries. The Mission can now tell the Council, and also the representative of Senegal, in all cordiality, that all the evidence produced regarding the existence of mercenaries can be said to have been overwhelming. That question was resolved, in the Mission's view, by statements made by not just one but many witnesses, African as well as European and North American—I am referring to Canadians and to Americans—and also by the fact that the diplomatic corps made it clear that not only had there been mercenaries but that fierce and cruel action had taken place.

170. Among the diplomatic representatives, we might mention first, because of the clear, categorical and specific testimony he provided, Mr. Christian Blanchard, a representative of the European Economic Community, a French citizen who not only described the mercenaries but also the weapons they carried: automatic weapons and bazookas.

171. The Ambassador of the Soviet Union, Mr. Ivan S. Ilyin, also confirmed the existence of the mercenaries. He said that he was not an eyewitness but that Soviet citizens had informed the Embassy and also that he had heard heavy shooting.

172. The Chargé d'affaires *a.i.* of Ghana, Mr. Kwadwo Kwakye, also confirmed the existence of the mercenaries.

173. So did Mr. Muabi Kumumba, the Ambassador of Zaire to Benin, who was not an eyewitness but who did

allow the Special Mission to inspect his Embassy, which had been damaged by the firing.

174. We also heard the statement of the dean of the diplomatic corps, Mr. Jean Meadmore, Ambassador of France, who provided some explanations. He was not an eyewitness either, but he did have information from French citizens and he co-operated with the Special Mission in his function as dean of the corps. It was he who arranged for the appearance of diplomatic representatives before the Mission. The French Ambassador said in his statement that he had heard over the radio certain warnings issued to the Beninese citizens, urging them to attempt to cut off the flight of mercenaries who were escaping towards Togo. We shall refer to this point later.

175. The Chargé d'affaires *a.i.* of the United States of America, Mr. W. Kenneth Thompson, was not present the day the events took place, but he informed the Mission of the heavy damage sustained by the United States Embassy and the Ambassador's residence and of the fact that two of their guests had been in danger of being killed in a place where there had been a good deal of shooting.

176. The Chargé d'affaires *a.i.* of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also confirmed the existence of the mercenaries.

177. The Special Mission heard testimony from two French nationals, a Spaniard, a Canadian and six Beninese in formal meetings held in the room assigned for the Mission's work. Then, going to the places where the events had taken place, it took statements from a Soviet citizen and from five Canadians, including a young Canadian who had been seriously wounded.

178. In addition, immediately after the events of 16 January, according to what two witnesses said—they were definitely French and the veracity of their statement can be checked—, the Beninese authorities took measures to round up all those who might possibly have been involved in the events. That naturally meant that a great number of whites were assembled in one place, in a camp. Mr. Jean-Jacques Georges Mischel said so at the end of his statement: "All the occupants of the building were taken to a military camp in order to be interrogated".<sup>1</sup> So there were a large number of individuals who had been detained. Another French witness, Mr. Christian Lecadre, said that they had been detained and added: "until early in the morning of the nineteenth".<sup>1</sup> That means that, from 16 to 19 January, an indeterminate number of whites suspected of being mercenaries were held. Obviously, that can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but we have endeavoured to interpret it in the most objective way possible. Those are the facts that the Mission was able to establish.

179. The Mission, I repeat, asked the Government of Benin for information about the number of mercenaries detained and was informed that there was only one prisoner, Mr. Bâ Alpha Oumarou. It was also shown the corpses of two members of the group of mercenaries, one white and the other black. The prisoner, Bâ Alpha

Oumarou, to whom I should like to refer very briefly, made an exhaustive statement before the Mission and was intensively questioned over many hours.

180. Because of the concern of the Mission and because of the statements of the Ambassador of France about the information he had heard over the radio, the Mission made a formal statement. To satisfy the representative of Senegal, I should like to read what appears in the verbatim record. To a question asked by a member of the Mission, Prefect Ogouma, Vice-Chairman of the Committee established by the Government of Benin for the investigation requested by the Security Council, replied the following, as it appears in the verbatim record:

"Bâ Alpha Oumarou's case indicates that it is very possible that what he said is true. Bâ said that he looked all over and saw the plane take off. If other mercenaries were in his same situation and could not have boarded the plane when it took off, it is very likely that they fled either to Togo or to Nigeria; this is possible. On our part, even though we did not have evidence that the mercenaries took off to Togo or Nigeria, we gave instructions on 16 January to our militants that they should block the road to Togo or Nigeria because these were the normal security measures to be taken. We do not know whether the mercenaries really crossed our country to those other countries, but these instructions were given by the Beninese State."<sup>1</sup>

181. That was the result of the inquiry of the Special Mission, and I hope that that information will be entirely satisfactory to the representative of Senegal.

182. Before concluding, I should like to refer briefly to the prisoner, Bâ Alpha Oumarou. After he had been questioned very closely by the members of the Mission—as is very clear from the transcript of his statement—, the Mission considered that there was nothing in his testimony to justify doubt being cast on his credibility. He was born in Senegal of Guinean parents. He belongs to the ethnic group known as Peulh. He is a Muhammadan. The Peulhs number approximately 6 million. They live not only in that part of Guinea and Senegal but throughout the States which are part of the Sahelian region.

183. The Mission was there to determine the facts, not to establish responsibility. It was trying to collect the facts so that the Security Council, in its wisdom, could take appropriate and just action in keeping with the functions assigned to it and with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

184. Bâ Alpha Oumarou was asked by one member of the Mission whether he could say if the authorities of the countries that he said he had travelled through during the plotting were aware of what was going on or actually involved. It is important that the members of the Council pay close attention, because this is what is at stake in the inquiry. Bâ Alpha Oumarou answered this question as follows:

"The only thing I know is that if the States themselves were not directly involved, some of their officials were,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in English by the speaker.

because they did document-forging, camouflaging, and all that. Those officials of the countries concerned knew all about this matter.

"For instance, in that base where we were, there were members of the Moroccan army guarding the place, and I saw a helicopter of the Moroccan army flying over the base. It would even transport the Colonel, and they would shuttle him between the base and some other place. There were some soldiers of the Moroccan army with the Arabic letters "*dal*" and "*mim*" on their uniforms. They were gendarmes of the Moroccan army. Obviously, if something happens in a country, the high authorities may not know about it, but some of their officials should obviously know about it. And they are the accomplices in this matter." [See S/12294/Add.1, annex III.]

Those were the exact words of Bâ Alpha Oumarou.

185. I repeat that the Mission was endeavouring to establish the facts for presentation to the Council, as it did in the report and its annexes and in the verbatim records, in order to give the Council what it needed.

186. Bâ Alpha Oumarou is not a man who appeared out of the blue in a place other than where the events took place. One representative said that Bâ Alpha Oumarou had been found in rather picturesque circumstances in a different place carrying all kinds of documents, including his birth certificate and school diploma. But that matter was cleared up by the Special Mission. In actual fact, Bâ Alpha Oumarou had no documents on him. That was explained in his statement and was part of the system which the recruiters of the mercenaries probably used to keep a hold on those who were not acting just for profit, but who might have political motives. The documents were taken away from the individuals. It is a little like taking a passport away from someone who wants to travel; it is a very subtle way of keeping control over him.

187. My colleague from India, Mr. Ramesh N. Mulye, asked this question: "You mentioned this Guinean identity card. Do you have that Guinean identity card with you?" Bâ Alpha Oumarou replied:

"The day we were about to leave for Morocco, this Joseph demanded all the identification papers from everyone. We had to surrender them. I gave him my identity card, my certificates of studies, my working papers—everything. Everything had to be given to the authorities." [Ibid.]

188. It is therefore abundantly clear that those men who had been drawn into the group who were of Guinean nationality and had been involved in this special training for political reasons could on the way have become aware of the fact that they were being used for other purposes and could have got out. But they did not get out. Had they tried, they would perhaps have been shot.

189. Such, then, is the personality of Bâ Alpha Oumarou.

190. The Special Mission has also presented to the Council a table with a complete description of the airline tickets

that were used by the members of the attacking force in the period directly before preparations for the operation were made [ibid., annex VI, document No. 52]. The members of the Mission were entirely satisfied that those tickets were authentic. Most of them had been partially used. They were round-trip tickets and had been used only for the outward journey; the return half had not been used.

191. I must confess that, when I heard the Ambassador of France making his statement, I was much impressed with his equanimity and objectivity. He said something that is a fact and shows a very reasonable approach: buying a ticket from an airline is, after all, legitimate; opening a bank account is equally legitimate. I think that that is very fair because, since those tickets were issued by Air France and by Royal Air Maroc, it was very easy to establish whether or not they were genuine.

192. The Special Mission was very careful to check each ticket for the name of the airline and the serial number. It did what it could to ensure that anyone having any objection could make the necessary investigations: the name of the passenger, the date of issuance of the ticket and the route followed, that is, the place of embarkation and the destination, the date of the flight and whether the ticket had been used up or whether it was open, and the means of payment. Naturally, the tickets were paid for in cash.

193. Obviously we could not check into every aspect of the 103 tickets that were contained in the box of munitions, in which all kinds of other objects were found. As the report of the Mission says, from the tickets it was clear what the routes were.

194. I should also like to refer to three individuals, one of whom is identified as the leader of the operation—Gilbert Bourgeaud—who had four tickets for various flights. The route shown on the first was Paris-Marrakesh-Paris. The date of issuance and flight was 12 November 1976. For a date immediately preceding the operation, we found a ticket for the route Paris-Libreville-Paris. The dates of the flights were as follows: from Paris to Libreville, 8 January and from Libreville to Paris, 10 January 1977. There was another ticket, for Paris-Casablanca-Paris. The Paris-Casablanca part of the ticket was the only part used—on 11 January, five days before the operation. Another ticket, dated 29 December 1976, was also routed Paris-Casablanca-Paris.

195. The other tickets listed also have special significance. There is one which corroborates a statement made by Bâ Alpha Oumarou. He said that when he had entered the aircraft he had been given a ticket with a false name, Mohamed Djougou or a similar name. Such a name does appear on one of the Air France tickets.

196. Mr. Sy Sawané, who was in charge of the Africans, had three tickets, whose dates are again revealing. He had one ticket dated 22 December, Abidjan-Dakar-Paris. No date is indicated, but there is a coupon missing. Another ticket was used on 24 December, Paris-Dakar-Abidjan. Another ticket, Dakar-Casablanca-Dakar, bears a date which is significant: 30 December 1976. The prisoner Bâ Alpha

Oumarou indicated that that had been the date on which they had travelled from Dakar to Casablanca, the date when they had been at Yoff airport.

197. So there are details which are particularly enlightening. There are others which also would require additional investigation, but which, as has been said, were not within the terms of reference of the Special Mission. There is an Air France ticket No. 24659496234, issued in the name of Henri Simon, who also travelled on 30 December from Paris to Casablanca.

198. There is a point in the annexes which requires clarification. It is against the dictates of conscience, the dignity of men and normal behaviour in society that something as shameful and harmful as what happened at Cotonou should occur and that, after this debate and the resolution which, we hope, will be adopted and which will obviously have great significance, no action should be taken with respect to the members of the group of mercenaries involved and that we should have to come to the sad conclusion that, in spite of a condemnation issued by the highest political body of mankind, the Security Council, those mercenaries are still on the loose without having to bear any kind of responsibility or be punished, even though they can be characterized as both common and political criminals engaged as mercenaries in some type of political conspiracy in which other private or public persons may be involved.

199. The ticket of the individual listed here—Henri Simon—has a bearing on other documents found in the same box and according to which an official of the Republic of Gabon by the name of Louis Martin appears to have issued a permit to bear arms to Mr. Gilbert Bourgeaud. Later, on 29 December, one day before the African members of the group travelled to Casablanca, a receipt was signed by Henri Simon for 200,000 CFA francs received from General Louis Martin [*ibid.*, document No. 24].

200. Similarly—and I wish to conclude my statement so as not to prolong the debate—there is evidence not only of a decision in which Mr. Gilbert Bourgeaud appears to be connected with a given Government but there is also the bank statement of the pay received by this Mr. Gilbert Bourgeaud for his activities. If the existence of this decision is denied, then where does this document of the Banque du Gabon et du Luxembourg come from [*ibid.*, document No. 41]? Is Gilbert Bourgeaud perhaps a ghost?

201. I confess that I was very much surprised to hear, in the course of the debate, someone saying that Gilbert Bourgeaud did not exist. However, there is a whole series of documents, there are bank statements, there are airline tickets. We wonder whether it would not be feasible for an investigation to be launched by the States where some of these journeys took place, and this does not imply an accusation against any State. This is how an objective inquiry could be undertaken. After all, when someone goes to an airport, it is necessary to fill out an embarkation card; when one buys a ticket from the airlines, there is a record of the individual who is travelling and his telephone number and his address are taken down; when a person is vaccinated and a certificate is issued, a record is also made. Those of us

who have been vaccinated know that there is a record of the patient. Could not some States carry out an investigation so as to safeguard something which is absolutely essential for good relations among peoples, namely, elementary and mutual respect for the human condition where criminals are not protected, where situations are not created in which we are made to feel that we are living in a society in which we are exposed to criminal conspiracies without even the hope that at a given time justice will be done and the criminals punished?

202. I conclude by saying, as the representative of Panama, that the draft resolution which has been circulated [*S/12322*] is, in my opinion, prepared in such a way that its authors merit our thanks because of the intelligent and serious manner in which it was drafted and because it contains the foundations for further positive action in defence of the best interests of the members of the international community. I should like to announce my support for it.

203. I would ask the members of the Council to accept my apologies for having prolonged the meeting somewhat, but I did feel that it was necessary to prove that an effort had been made to carry out a serious, objective investigation without exaggerations, exhausting whatever means the Mission had within its terms of reference.

204. Mr. BOYA (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation feels, at this stage in the discussion, that it is hardly necessary for us any longer to reply to the statements made by certain delegations. Our statements of 7 February [*1986th meeting*], 6 April [*2000th meeting*] and 13 April [*2003rd meeting*] speak for themselves. We repeat that the People's Republic of Benin has never accused or will ever accuse Governments lightly. The facts are there; we shall not repeat them.

205. We should simply like very sincerely to thank all those delegations which, during the very lengthy meetings we have held, have spoken here in order to express support for the cause of Benin, the cause of justice, the cause of peace and security, which is surely a *sine qua non* condition for a just international order in which the inalienable rights of small defenceless countries are respected and safeguarded.

206. We should also like very sincerely to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who made available to the Special Mission sent to Cotonou a devoted and very conscientious staff of high calibre, whose constant technical support was decisive for the success of the Mission.

207. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Council will now take a decision on the draft resolution submitted by Benin, India, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius and Panama in document *S/12322*. As a result of consultations, I understand that the members of the Council wish to adopt the draft resolution by consensus, that is, without putting it to a vote. Consequently, if I hear no objection, I shall declare the draft resolution adopted.

*The draft resolution was adopted.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> See resolution 405 (1977).

208. Mr. SHERER (United States of America): The United States was able to support the resolution just adopted by the Council because of its concern at the armed attack on Benin and the loss of life and damage to property suffered by the people and Government of Benin. We want to extend our sympathy to the people of Benin through their Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Thomas Boya.

209. The United States also wishes to express its concern at the apparent violation of the territorial integrity of Benin. As members of the Council know very well, threats to the territorial integrity of African States have become a serious problem, whether made by mercenaries or any other type of armed intervention. More than mere lip service and selective concern must be paid to the principle of territorial integrity if international peace and security are to be maintained.

210. I should also like to express briefly the views of my Government on the question of mercenaries and comment paragraphs 4 and 5 of the resolution.

211. Under United States law, it is a criminal offense for any person to recruit an American citizen in the United States for service as a soldier in foreign armed forces or for any American citizen to enlist in the United States for such service. In the event of there being evidence of such activity taking place in the United States, my Government would move vigorously to investigate and, where sufficient evidence is available, to prosecute. We are opposed to the use of mercenaries to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries and are committed to the enforcement of our laws concerning the recruitment of American citizens as mercenaries.

212. While a literal interpretation of paragraphs 4 and 5 of the resolution would inevitably pose problems for any Government in terms of effectively controlling activities of its citizens outside its territorial jurisdiction, the United States will make every effort to ensure that its laws on the subject are complied with strictly, so as to discourage American citizens from becoming involved in any type of unlawful mercenary activity.

213. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for having presided over the debate on Benin's complaint so successfully and with your usual integrity and patience.

214. Ambassador Illueca of Panama, Ambassador Kikhia of Libya and Mr. Mulye of India, as well as the Secretariat, deserve our praise and thanks.

215. I was very heartened a moment ago as I listened to the representative of the United States stating his Government's position in connexion with mercenaries.

216. I also thank all the members of the Council who have co-operated fully with us African members in crowning our efforts with a consensus of all the members. The non-aligned members of the Council, as well as Pakistan, Romania and Venezuela, have shown great understanding of the African problem of which the Council was seized. We African members appreciate the co-operation we have received from the Western European members, as well as from China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Seldom has a consensus been so easily negotiated in the Council. Like the Organization of African Unity, the Council is today united—at least on the question of Benin.

217. It is true that the debate on Benin's complaint took a sad turn the moment a national report was circulated. We witnessed a rather unfortunate spectacle of Africans shouting at Africans across this chamber. Our attention was diverted from the more important aspect of the question, that of international mercenaries. We were even taken on a short surprise journey to Zaire. But as Lady Macbeth would have said: "There is a soul of goodness in things evil would men observingly distil it out". The exchanges of views between my beloved African brothers have been, in a sense, a healthy exercise.

218. It is not uncommon for members of the same family to thrash it out publicly, so to speak. These contradictions have been a sign of African virility, which is itself a sign of African strength. We have demonstrated that members of the Organization of African Unity are not afraid to agree temporarily to disagree. My African brothers have proved that diversity is the crucible in which friendship is tested and that there can exist unity in diversity.

219. At Niger's reception this evening, all my African brothers will be found shaking hands in the English manner, kissing each other on the cheeks in the French manner, hugging each other in the Arab manner, laughing loudly with each other and exchanging endearing and affectionate terms with each other in the African manner. They will be doing so in the best traditions of African unity, because we Africans will not be divided.

220. All's well that ends well.

221. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Council has now completed this stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. As mentioned in the resolution just adopted, the Council will remain seized of the question.

222. I should like to express the Council's appreciation to the members of the Special Mission—the representatives of Panama, Libya and India.

*The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.*

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