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Seventeenth Special Session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 21 November 1986, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. RAPIN (France)

- Report of the Secretary-General on credentials
- Election of Vice-President
- Examination of petitions listed in the annex to the agenda (T/1905/Rev.1) and related to item 3 of the agenda

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

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CREDENTIALS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to inform members of the Council that the Secretary-General has still not received the credentials of all the members of the Council. However, we have a provisional report of the Secretary-General on credentials, which I understand has already been distributed to members. If members agree, I would suggest - as indeed I suggested yesterday - that the Council consider and take a decision on the final report on credentials at one of its forthcoming meetings.

If there are no objections, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): We shall now proceed to the election of the Vice-President of the Council.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

Mr. Birch (United Kingdom) was elected Vice-President unanimously.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I welcome the choice that the Council has just made, and I offer my sincere congratulations to our new Vice-President. His term of office will be short, but I am sure that the Council and I myself will benefit from his experience and his advice and, if need be, his action. I thank him in advance for that.

Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom): It is a great honour and privilege to have been elected unanimously to this important office. I do not think that I have ever been elected unanimously to any body before. I hope that I shall live up to the reputation and skill of my predecessor, Mr. Peter Maxey.

You say, Mr. President, that you will rely on my experience. Unfortunately, I am very inexperienced in the ways of the Trusteeship Council and the questions of Micronesia. But I am sure that I can rely on the goodwill and indulgence of my colleagues in the Trusteeship Council as I assume this office.

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS LISTED IN THE ANNEX TO THE AGENDA (T/1905/Rev.1) AND RELATED TO ITEM 3 OF THE AGENDA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The petitions under this item are contained in the following documents, which have been distributed to members of the Council: T/PET.10/462 to 475, T/PET.10/477 to 482 and T/COM.10/L.365.

I propose that we do not examine these documents one by one. I regard them as forming part of a whole, and I shall call on any representatives who wish to comment on any of them.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Before considering the petitions, I wish to put a question to the Secretary of the Trusteeship Council. Does the document to which the President referred earlier - document T/1905/Add.1 - contain the symbol numbers of all the petitions that have been received by the Secretary-General and you, Mr. President, since the fifty-third session of the Council, or do they contain only some of them? Or is it the case that some petitions have been circulated and others have not?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I discussed this matter with the Secretariat this morning, and I believe that I can reply to the question put by the representative of the Soviet Union.

The petitions that are contained in the documents to which I have just referred and which are before members of the Council relate strictly to agenda item 3. I was informed this morning that two others relating to agenda item 3 have just been received. They will be circulated to members of the Council during the day. Since we still have to have a meeting to adopt the report on the credentials of delegations, anyone wishing to comment on those two petitions will have an opportunity to do so at that time.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): We are satisfied with your reply, Mr. President - so far as it goes. I would note that on 21 October - that is, almost a month ago - the Secretary-General distributed document T/COM.10/L.366. I have tried to find that communication among the documents whose numbers you read out, but my attempts have been in vain.

Another petition, document T/PET.10/476, is also missing from the list of petitions - at least my copy of the list. In view of that and of the other remarks I have made, I would appreciate a clearer answer from the Secretary of the Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I have taken note of the two observations made by the representative of the Soviet Union. The Secretariat will provide us, as soon as possible, with information on the two documents mentioned by him.

I would repeat that other documents will be circulated this afternoon and that there will be another meeting during this special session. Hence, delegations will have a full opportunity to refer to documents other than those which I listed when we took up this item this morning. I would ask members to make observations and comments now on the documents that I mentioned. It is understood that the list is not exhaustive.

I shall now call on the Secretary to reply to the last question put by the representative of the Soviet Union.

Mr. ABEBE (Secretary of the Council): With reference to the question raised by the representative of the Soviet Union, I would point out that document T/1905/Add.1 which has been distributed to members contains all petitions and communications received since the Council's last session.

Two communications have not, however, been included in this list: one refers to the Northern Mariana Islands and the other to the Marshall Islands. They are not directly related to Palau and, since agenda item 5 indicates that the Council will consider only those relating to item 3, we have excluded them.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The explanation just given by the Secretary of the Council is quite clear and we thank him for it.

However, the Soviet delegation on 1 and 2 October received two additional statements or communications from the Secretary of the Council which are directly related to the Trust Territory of Palau. What is more, those documents contain a request "to circulate copies of the decision and this letter to members of the Trusteeship Council" - and I understand that the Secretary has acted on it. Our delegation would like to know whether those two documents or communications will be issued as official Trusteeship Council documents and specifically as documents for this special session that is dealing with the question of Palau, as the texts of these communications have a direct if not major bearing on the question now under consideration. If they are not to be issued, we should appreciate knowing why.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I would ask the representative of the Soviet Union to be more specific about the nature of the two documents that his delegation received on 1 and 2 October from the Secretariat, so that the Secretariat could be clear about the documents in question.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): On 22 September 1986 the Centre for Constitutional Rights sent to you,

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Mr. President, a communication stating that a decision had been taken by the Supreme Court of Palau confirming its previous decisions to the effect that the Compact voted on in February of this year was not legal, and to that communication was appended a copy of the Palau Supreme Court's decision. It also contained a request that the communication, as well as the Supreme Court's decision, be distributed to the members of the Trusteeship Council.

We all know that the present session was convened precisely as a result of the decision adopted by the Supreme Court of Palau. Naturally the delegations present here wonder whether it is possible to obtain the text of that decision, in their respective languages, so as to be able to study it more carefully. We could, of course, address this request to the Administering Authority inasmuch as it concerns a United Nations Trust Territory, namely, Palau. Members of the Trusteeship Council who follow developments in this Territory are obviously interested in all official information, as well as petitions or any other communications that are received about the situation there.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the Secretary of the Council.

Mr. ABEBE (Secretary of the Council): I am grateful to the representative of the Soviet Union for his clarification. Indeed, we received a communication dated 22 September 1986 from the Centre for Constitutional Rights. We immediately brought it to the President's attention and, on his instructions, promptly transmitted copies to the five members of the Trusteeship Council.

The Centre's representative, in her letter, says:

"I hope that this information is of use to the Trusteeship Council in its consideration of the situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands ...

(Mr. Abebe)

"I would appreciate it if you could circulate copies of the decision and this letter to members of the Trusteeship Council, in accordance with your procedures. Please contact me if I may be of any further assistance."

On the President's instructions, we immediately brought the letter and its enclosures to the attention of members of the Trusteeship Council in September. I do not recall the exact date, but it was shortly after their receipt on 23 September that I transmitted the copies.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I thank the Secretary of the Council for his answer to our question.

However, the problem is that both those letters - one addressed to the President of the Trusteeship Council and the other to the Secretary-General of the United Nations - contain information relating directly to a specific part of the Trust Territory Micronesia - Palau. What is more, they are extremely important documents that were also sent to the members of the Security Council by the Chairman of the Centre.

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Inasmuch as the Trusteeship Council, at its seventeenth special session, is discussing the dispatch of a visiting mission to Palau, my delegation naturally would like to know why these documents - which were received in September - have not yet been distributed as communications containing information about the situation in the Trust Territory, in accordance with the rules of procedure and in conformity with the Council's past practice. We wish these documents to be issued as official documents in all working languages, so that they can be carefully studied and so that the members of the visiting mission that is being contemplated can have them at their disposal and use them in carrying out their functions.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The document that the representative of the Soviet Union has asked be issued as an official document is one which might be considered lengthy; it is 38 pages in length. I would point out that in that case circulation as an official document comes under rule 85 (3) of the Council's rules of procedure: the decision must be made by the President and the members of the Council.

I will take note of the fact that an official request has been made by the Soviet delegation that the document be circulated, and I would ask whether other delegations have any objection to the translation of this 38-page document into all languages and its circulation as an official document.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): Naturally, I am delighted to hear of the thirst for information which exists in the Soviet delegation. This is a thirst which normally I would like to assuage. However, I am well aware of the facility of the Soviet delegation with the English language. I am also well aware of the facility with the English language of the members of the visiting mission that we shall shortly be commissioning. At a time of acute, not to say grave, financial crisis, I think that the printing of 38 pages would be excessive, and I am therefore against it.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): This is an interesting situation. The President of the Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations have extremely important information about developments in a United Nations Trust Territory. This information is vitally necessary above all to members of the Trusteeship Council but also to the members of the Security Council and other United Nations bodies following the course of events and wishing to see how the Administering Authority is fulfilling its obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement, under the United Nations Charter and under the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The rules of procedure state that the Secretary-General shall circulate promptly petitions received by him on the situation in a Trust Territory. Moreover, rule 77 states clearly that petitioners may be inhabitants of Trust Territories, or other parties - regardless of where they live.

We in the Soviet delegation are therefore baffled by what to us is an inexplicable decision as a result of which petitions received in September and relating to the specific Trust Territory being considered by the Trusteeship Council at its seventeenth special session have not yet been circulated. There has certainly been time enough.

And I would add that the statement just made by the representative of the United Kingdom was entirely unjustified. How can it be that a member of the Council just elected as Vice-President, a member who will, it seems, be participating in the proposed visiting mission to Palau, should be objecting to the publication as an official United Nations document of the decision of the Supreme Court of Palau? This has really astonished the Soviet delegation to say the least - I might use even stronger words.

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We feel that these petitions and communications should be published immediately as official documents of the Trusteeship Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Copies of the documents to which the representative of the Soviet Union has referred - at least those addressed to the President of the Trusteeship Council, and which thus fell under his responsibility, or to members of the Council - were circulated to members as soon as they were received. They were thus immediately brought to the attention of members; it is therefore incorrect to say that this information was kept from the members of the Council.

Moreover, under rule 85 (3), referring to lengthy petitions, it is for the President to decide whether they are to be circulated as official documents. If the 38-page document in question was not circulated, it was because the President decided not to circulate it. However, the President is always in the hands of the members of the Council. Had the representative of the Soviet Union, when he received the document, considered it indispensable that it be circulated as an official document, he had plenty of time, after noting that the President had decided not to circulate it, to contact me as President of the Council, draw my attention to the matter, and inform me of what he has just told members of the Council.

Thus, we have before us a request from the delegation of the Soviet Union that the two documents in question be published as official documents, in the official languages of the Council. I am prepared to act on that request if a majority of members of the Council do not oppose it. The delegation of the United Kingdom has already stated that it opposes publication. It is my understanding that the request of the delegation of the Soviet Union stands. Do other members of the Council have any objection to the request that these documents be circulated in the official languages of the Council?

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom. His position seems to be a most reasonable one. It is quite clear that the information about which we are talking is readily available for we are in fact talking about it. The Soviet delegation handles English extremely well, and I should say that in these times of financial stringency the circulation of the document only in its original language, as the President had decided, was a quite proper and rational method.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If I have understood correctly, two delegations have spoken and it is therefore up to me to take a decision. There seems to be a very balanced position here. I share the concern expressed about the financial implications referred to by the delegations of the United Kingdom and the United States. However, as a formal request has been made by one of the members of the Trusteeship Council to publish an important document, I think that the decision is out of my hands and I shall instruct the Secretariat to act in accordance with that request.

I should now like members of the Council to turn their attention to the documents that I mentioned this morning, and invite delegations wishing to make comments and observations on the contents of the petitions to do so.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. President, we are very grateful to you and to the Secretary of the Trusteeship Council for sending us so rapidly copies of the decision of the Supreme Court in the original English. We are also very grateful to the Ambassador of the United States, who complimented me on my knowledge of English. We value that and we are sure that it will help us to work fruitfully, not only in the Trusteeship Council, but in other even more important areas.

Mr. President, I think that you and the members of the Trusteeship Council have acted quite correctly when you decided to publish this document that is so very important from the point of view of the people of Palau and of the United Nations. When we are discussing the establishment of a nation and a State and how the status of this Trust Territory will evolve, how can any member of the Council, whose primary concern must be the lot of the inhabitants of the Territory, give thought to the few hundred dollars which the United Nations would have to spend on the publication of this extraordinarily important document. We are therefore gratified by the decision that has been taken.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): Crocodile tears do not call for a response.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Would any member like to comment on the petitions?

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to draw attention to the petition in document T/PET.10/462 from J. Roman Bedor, a lawyer, in Koror, Belau, dated 27 May 1986, which states:

"I am transmitting to you a copy of the complaint filed in the Supreme Court of Palau regarding the Compact of Free Association. I urge the members of the Council to take no action that would limit the internal resolution of this matter."

That petition was sent on 27 May, when the fifty-third session of the Trusteeship Council was being held and when it was considering the question of the future of the Trust Territory. The Trusteeship Council received a petition, a complaint containing an accusation to the effect that the Compact was not accepted or approved by the people and therefore information to that effect was immediately sent to the Trusteeship Council. We should like to know why the copy of the complaint which was appended to this petition has not so far been brought to our attention. Is it possible to obtain a text of this complaint not only in the original language but also in the other languages?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If I have correctly understood the representative of the Soviet Union, my answer is the following. His question was asked when I was presiding over the regular session of the Trusteeship Council, at a public meeting, as indicated in the footnote to document T/PET.10/462. On 2 June 1986, at the Council's 1619th meeting, I decided, in accordance with rule 80 of the rules of procedure, which does not permit the

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President to publish documents relating to disputes under the jurisdiction of courts, not to publish the complaint - appended to the document - that was submitted to the Supreme Court of Palau. On the other hand I did decide, also at that meeting, that the letter and the information contained in Mr. Bedor's petition would be published as an official document, and that is the document that the representative of the Soviet Union mentioned. I would therefore refer the representative of the Soviet Union to the verbatim record of the meeting of 2 June 1986.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I remember our discussion of this question perfectly well, since I participated in the work of the fifty-third session of the Trusteeship Council. At that time, it was not clear what the decision of the Supreme Court of Palau would be, and the Soviet delegation felt that the little information we had might be sufficient.

Now, however, when the second decision of the Supreme Court has been handed down confirming its first decision as well as the Palauan complaint to the effect that the Compact of Free Association with the United States was not accepted by the population in the February referendum, we consider that a copy of the complaint and the reasons this petitioner feels the Compact was not accepted would constitute very valuable information for members of the Trusteeship Council. My delegation would therefore ask you to answer this question and requests your help in arranging the publication of that complaint as an addendum to the petition.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to say that, before we began consideration of T/PET.10/462, I had decided that the text of the decision of the Supreme Court of Palau should be published in the official languages of the Council. That decision was handed down subsequent to the complaint; it is self explanatory and incorporates the complaint to which the representative of the Soviet Union is now making reference. Since the Supreme Court decision will be published in the official languages as an official document of the Council, it seems to me unnecessary for the complaint - which is no longer valid because the decision has been handed down - to be published. Unless requested to do so by a majority of the Council, I therefore do not intend to do so.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should now like to draw the attention of Council members to the next petition, T/PET.10/467, which requests the President of the Trusteeship Council to

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provide advice on the status of Palau. The petitioner also asks whether international observers were present at the 1986 plebiscite and what were the results of that vote. My delegation would like to know if an answer was sent to this petitioner and what sort of answer it was - was it from the Secretariat of the Trusteeship Council or was it sent by the President?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I would inform the representative of the Soviet Union, that the reply sent to the petitioner was in the form of a copy of the report of the Visiting Mission that was sent to Palau to observe the plebiscite.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Your answer is an important one. In our future work in the Council, I believe we could avoid many difficulties if, in publishing petitions, the Secretariat could include an annotation to the effect that an answer was sent on such and such a date, that a copy of the report of the Visiting Mission was included, and so on. That would enable us to avoid excessive questioning and show at a glance just how efficiently the Trusteeship Council and its Secretariat are functioning.

I should now like to say something with regard to petition T/PET.10/470, dated 6 June 1986. It seems to me that this petition has a direct bearing on the item we are discussing, namely, the dispatch of a Visiting Mission to Palau. A number of points are raised in that petition with regard to shortcomings in the previous referendum held in Palau. We would like to know whether the Visiting Mission will bear those points in mind and whether any answer is to be given to the petitioner.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): In reply to the question put by the representative of the Soviet Union I would state that the question of drawing the attention of members of the Visiting Mission to the points raised in the petition is, of course, up to members of the Trusteeship Council, who will

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decide whether the Visiting Mission is to be dispatched and, if so, what its terms of reference should be. Members of the Council have the petition before them, and have studied it, and it is up to them to decide what to reply to the points raised therein.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I can speak only for my own delegation, which feels that these comments should be taken into consideration by the members of the Visiting Mission. It would only be polite for the Trusteeship Council to send an appropriate answer to the petitioner. That is a function of the Secretariat and of our Bureau, in which we have full confidence.

I should like to draw the attention of the Council to one of the thoughts expressed in the petition in document T/PET.10/471 of 18 July 1986:

"We appeal to the United Nations to question whether this new Compact can in fact override Belau's nuclear-free Constitution, which has been repeatedly endorsed by the voters." (T/PET.10/471, p. 2)

In my delegation's opinion, this petition also deserves an answer from the United Nations and from the Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Would any other delegation like to comment on the petitions before the Council this morning?

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): I only wish to say that I would like to make some remarks on the petitions as a whole, but I should like to do so after other delegations have made their comments or asked their questions.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I share the respect and admiration of the Soviet Union for the inhabitants of Palau, and I do not wish to delay our getting on to the draft resolution, but I would just like to say one thing to the representative of the Soviet Union. It is that were he to take part in one of the observing missions, he might find answering these petitions rather more easy, and I do hope that he will feel able to participate in the next one.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I am delighted that the representative of the United Kingdom not only studies the petitions carefully but also takes it on himself to give advice to the

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representative of a sovereign State on whether or not to participate in a Visiting Mission. I ignored the first such comment by the representative of the United Kingdom, feeling that this sort of thing happens sometimes, but naturally I cannot let pass in silence advice given to us by a member of the Trusteeship Council. That is my first comment.

The second is that the members of the Trusteeship Council, and indeed Members of the United Nations, are on the whole aware of the Soviet Union's attitude to these Visiting Missions. We have stated it openly as a matter of principle. However, inasmuch as some members of the Trusteeship Council try to involve the Soviet Union in these Visiting Missions, we should like to show that the inclusion of the Soviet Union in such a Visiting Mission would not be productive because of a lack of balance in the composition of such missions.

The Soviet Union did in fact accept an invitation to participate in one Visiting Mission, but the majority of the members of the Visiting Mission, Western countries, did not make it possible for the Soviet representative to say everything he had to say or include all of his conclusions in the report of the Mission. Indeed, the introduction to the report of the Visiting Mission in which the representative of the Soviet Union participated - he was a well-known Soviet diplomat - included a sentence to the effect that the views of the Soviet representative would be set forth in a different report, and not in that one. That is my second response to the representative of the United Kingdom.

If I may, I shall proceed to the next petition. We have before us T/PET.10/476. We have already heard a statement by the Secretary to the effect that this petition does not relate to the subject of the special session of the Trusteeship Council; that is indeed true, for this session is dealing with a somewhat different question, namely, the dispatch of a Visiting Mission to Palau.

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But this petition is a very important one. It mentions the situation in another part of the United Nations Trust Territory. It talks about the island of Ebeye, which is part of the Kwajalein atoll, in the Marshalls. Unfortunately the Secretariat has not yet provided us with this petition in Russian. Even with my knowledge of English, it will be difficult for me to speak in that language, but I should still like to indicate what is demanded by this petitioner:

(spoke in English)

"Because of the deteriorating conditions on Ebeye, an island in Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands" -

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of the United Kingdom on a point of order.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I apologize for interrupting the Soviet delegation, which is obviously in song this morning, but, on a point of order, my agenda refers to the examination of petitions listed in the annex to the agenda (T/1905/Add.1). I do not find the petition to which the Soviet representative is referring in that list, and I am therefore in somewhat of a difficulty.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I must point out that indeed petition T/PET.10/476 is not on the list of petitions now being considered by the Council. As the Secretary has pointed out, and as the representative of the Soviet Union has himself stated, this petition does not relate to the subject of our special session.

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I have taken note of the fact that this petition has not yet been provided to the Soviet delegation in Russian. I would ask the Secretariat to make enquiries on this point, and I would ask the Soviet representative to be good enough to make comments, in keeping with our agenda, on the petitions and other documents that relate directly to the purpose for which this special session was convened.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I am aware - indeed I said so myself - that this petition is not in the list. My question is: when will the Trusteeship Council be able to consider other petitions - petitions relating not only to Palau - so that we may be able to obtain the necessary information?

I must say this to the representative of the United Kingdom: Even after my second intervention, you still take it upon yourself to make snide digs at the Soviet representative.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The petitions that do not relate to our agenda could be considered by the Council at another meeting.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I wish now to call attention to a petition that is directly related to the matter we are discussing - that is, Palau. I have in mind document T/PET.10/479, which states that the Clydebanks District Council received representatives from Palau who visited the United Kingdom. In that connection, I would call attention to the fact that the Clydebanks District Council requests the Trusteeship Council to consider a series of points which are set forth in the petition.

The Soviet delegation directs the attention of the members of the Trusteeship Council - especially those who will be participating in the Visiting Mission - to the comments made by that District Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Does the Soviet representative wish to make any observations on other documents in the list before us now? If I have understood correctly, apart from the United States delegation, no other delegation wishes to make such observations. In fact, the representative of the Administering Authority wishes to make a general statement on the petitions, when all observations by other members have been made.

If the Soviet representative wishes to make other observations on the petitions, I am prepared to call on him for that purpose.

Mr. LEVCHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I could undoubtedly put further questions with respect to the other petitions. Since, however, the other members of the Trusteeship Council are not interested in the contents of these petitions, it seems futile for me to go on calling their attention to one petition after another. Hence, I am willing to postpone comments on them until a more appropriate occasion - perhaps at the next meeting of this special session.

Mr. GUINHUT (France) (interpretation from French): I wish only to make it clear that the fact that my delegation does not wish to speak on all these petitions now does not mean that we have no interest in their contents.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I shall now call on the representative of the United States to make the statement which she informed us she wished to make.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): My delegation has studied the petitions before the Trusteeship Council. I should like to make the following observations.

First, I would refer those petitioners who posed questions of fact to my opening statement and to the records of the Council's most recent regular session.

(Miss Byrne, United States)

The answers to the questions of fact posed in the petitions before us are available there.

Secondly, it would appear that a good number of the petitions before us are based on misinformation. I would refer by way of example to several petitions whose authors are under the impression that Palau has already conducted five or six plebiscites on the adoption of the Compact of Free Association. Those persons under the impression that the United States seeks to override the Palauan Constitution or pressure the Palauan people are also incorrect. The Compact does not override the Palauan Constitution. I would refer those petitioners also to my opening statement and to the records of the Council's previous sessions.

Thirdly, I would note that the vast majority of petitioners are foreign to Palau. In fact, with the exception of the petition from the Airai State Legislature - which requests that the State become part of the United States - it appears that not one resident of Palau has felt the need to communicate with this Council. Of the many possible reasons for that, let me offer one: the people of Palau are satisfied to have their say at the ballot box.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): As I have already said, we shall have another meeting to consider the credentials of delegations. I confirm that at that meeting delegations that wish to speak on petitions that we have not considered this morning will have an opportunity of doing so.

As agreed at our meeting yesterday, the Council will now consider and take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document T/L.1254 with regard to the arrangements for the dispatch of a Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscite in Palau on 2 December.

I would remind members that the draft resolution was introduced by the United Kingdom representative at our meeting yesterday. I would also draw members'

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attention to the statement by the Secretary-General regarding the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution. That statement is contained in document T/L.1255.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. President, do you have in mind statements on the draft resolution, statements of a general nature, or both?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): My only concern was to reach the stage of voting on the draft resolution. However, before doing so it was my intention to allow delegations wishing to make general statements at this point to do so; if there are no general statements, I intend to call on delegations in explanation of vote before the vote. Delegations wishing to explain their vote after the voting will be able to do so; or, if at that point they wish to make general statements, they will be able to that. There are several options.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to make some comments and ask some questions about various aspects of the draft resolution to which the President just referred.

We know that Palauan citizens living outside Palau participated in previous referendums and plebiscites in Palau. In the document under consideration mention is made of a plebiscite in Palau, and we know that Palauans in other places want to participate in it. Yet draft resolution T/L.1254 of 20 November makes no provision for visits to regions other than Palau by this Visiting Mission. Perhaps our information is not complete, but perhaps the votes of Palauans living outside Palau will not be taken into consideration in the forthcoming plebiscite. If that is not the case, it is unclear how the Visiting Mission could take into account the votes of Palauans who do not live in Palau?

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

As regards draft resolution T/L.1255, if we are to apply the logic of the representative of the United Kingdom, it is difficult to understand why, in the present difficult financial situation of the United Nations - which, by the way, was created artificially for political reasons by a country represented here - we must spend \$43,400 on this Visiting Mission. Surely this amount could be reduced by at least one-half.

It is not clear whether it is the intention to request the Fifth Committee for that amount, in view of the fact, as we have often heard, that the United Nations Treasury is empty. Or will funds be found from some other source?

We would appreciate answers to those questions.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): As I understood the representative of the Soviet Union, his first question was essentially about how the Visiting Mission would handle the observation of Palauan voters not living in Palau. I can base my answer only on what happened in February, for we do not yet know exactly how the Government of Palau will handle this matter this time. We assume that what it does will be similar to the method it employed in February: in addition to the polling places in Palau, others were set up in Honolulu, Saipan, Guam, other parts of Micronesia and the West Coast of the United States, where Palauans live outside their native land. The Visiting Mission, in its report, declared itself - I am paraphrasing - satisfied that Palauans outside Palau had been able to vote in conditions of propriety.

The second question, as I understood it, concerned the financing of the Visiting Mission and whether extra funds would have to be requested of the Fifth Committee or sought elsewhere. My reading of the Secretariat's report indicates quite clearly that the estimated cost of the Visiting Mission could be met from the appropriation approved last year in the programme budget for the 1986-1987 biennium under section 3A to finance the programme of activities of the Trusteeship Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On that last point I would confirm that the cost of the Visiting Mission will be met from funds currently available under the Trusteeship Council's budget appropriated by the Organization for the biennium 1986-1987.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I thank the representative of the United States for her replies to my first two questions. But in the light of her answers I have even more serious doubts about a very important point. According to what we have heard, those who are to participate in the plebiscite will not be the indigenous inhabitants living on Palau, but rather Palauans living elsewhere. And considering everything that is going on in connection with these so-called plebiscites and referendums, it would even seem that Palauans living outside Palau outnumber those living on Palau. Would that not mean, in the final analysis, that the fate of Palau is to be determined not by the indigenous inhabitants living in its own homeland but by people living far away from Palau? All this gives a rather sad impression of the political life of Palau.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): This may be a question of interpretation, but I understood the representative of the Soviet Union to say that he had obtained from what I said the idea that native Palauans living in Palau would not be voting. If so, I wish to assure the representative of the Soviet Union that the plebiscite is to be held in Palau on 2 December. We requested a visiting mission to observe that plebiscite, in Palau, on 2 December. The other polling places, outside Palau, were established to enable citizens of Palau living elsewhere and wishing to take part in the electoral process to do so, as is normal in a democratic society.

As to numbers, I can assure the representative of the Soviet Union that there are not more Palauans living outside Palau than on Palau. In the last referendum, on 21 February 1986, less than 1,000 votes were cast in polling places outside Palau. The total number of votes cast in that referendum was 7,000. Thus roughly 6,000 came from within Palau and under 1,000 from outside Palau. I think the

(Miss Byrne, United States)

representative of the Soviet Union need have no fear that outsiders, or people who no longer live in Palau, are determining the outcome of elections, referendums or plebiscites in Palau.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Let me make it quite clear that the thought never crossed my mind that indigenous Palauans would not be participating in the plebiscite. After all we assume that the plebiscite farce does not go so far as to deprive indigenous inhabitants of the right to participate in the plebiscite.

What we wished to find out was mainly whether United Nations Visiting Missions dispatched to observe previous plebiscites in Palau studied how Palauans living outside Palau voted, and whether the results of their analysis had been compared - in percentage terms - with the way in which Palauans living in Palau voted. The representative of the United States has spoken about the number of Palauans living outside Palau - presumably in the United States or in areas under the control of the United States - but there might well be Palauans living in other places as well.

We have among us representatives who participated in the last Visiting Mission, the findings of which were discussed by the Trusteeship Council at its fifty-third session, and possibly they could enlighten us on this point, which is of considerable importance.

Mr. GUINHUT (France) (interpretation from French): I wonder whether we are being bedevilled by interpretation problems. Did I really hear the representative of the Soviet Union say "plebiscite farce"?

What does that mean? The word plebiscite is a common international term; I think it can be found in most, if not all, of the basic international texts to which all countries refer. Was the representative of the Soviet Union referring to a particular "farce" that is to be played out soon, or was he suggesting that all

(Mr. Guinhut, France)

plebiscites are a farce? I would be very grateful if the representative of the Soviet Union could give me an answer.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): As I do not wish anyone to think I am making unsubstantiated statements, I would draw the attention of the representative of France to two petitions circulated yesterday by the Secretariat. The first is document T/PET.10/483, the text of which I should like to read out:

"We, 68 members of the European Parliament," -
including representatives of France, among other countries -
"are shocked and concerned"

and I would emphasize the words "shocked and concerned" -

"that the United States Administering Authority of the Trusteeship Territory Republic of Palau has still not accepted the wishes of the people of Palau to remain nuclear-free. Although Palauans have voted six times to uphold their constitutional nuclear ban, a seventh vote is now planned at very short notice."

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

"We urge the United Nations to ensure that the United States of America respects the wishes of the people of Palau and that the United Nations Trusteeship not be terminated until this is the case. We request that the referendum set for 2 December be postponed to ensure a fair campaign and proper supervision."

I should also like to draw attention to T/PET.10/466, which reads:

"We, the undersigned, would like to protest the repeated attempts to get the inhabitants of Palau to change their non-nuclear Constitution. To date we believe that there have been five referendums, each time the result being against any change in the Constitution. We sincerely hope that this travesty" - and I wish to direct the attention of the representative of France to the word "travesty" - "of the democratic process will not continue, particularly as the instigator of the referendums is America, the world's self-appointed guardian of 'freedom' and 'democracy'. The events in Palau only serve to illustrate the hypocrisy of this claim."

I should like to point out, Mr. President, that this petition did not come from the Soviet Union or from some other socialist country.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): The previous Soviet representative accused me of sticking needles into the Soviet delegation. I feel that the Soviet delegation is trying to rain hammer-blows on our heads so that we will be stunned into submission. I propose, nevertheless, to go on sticking a few needles. I am delighted that the Soviet delegation should attach so much importance to the opinions of the European Parliament, a body to which your country, Mr. President, and mine elect representatives by direct suffrage, a fact of which we are proud, and also to that of an inhabitant of Ivy Cottage, Cunliffe Brow, Bolton BL1, 6EN, England. Unfortunately, as the representative of the United States pointed out

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

earlier - perhaps Ambassador Kutovoy was not listening - both these petitions contain errors of fact. The European Parliament petition refers to six occasions on which there has been what he describes as a farce, and the lady from Bolton, England, refers to five referendums.

As the Ambassador of the United States pointed out, both those figures are incorrect, and I would repeat my earlier comment that representatives of the Soviet Union would find it easier to establish the facts if they were in fact to visit Palau.

The Soviet representative has asked me to comment, as the leader of the earlier mission, but I am not quite sure whether he was complaining about the financial implications or suggesting that we should spend more money. There seemed to be an implication that the size of the mission should be increased and that it should visit all the external polling stations, in which case the figure of \$43,000 would fall far short of the amount required. My own view is that the figure of \$43,000 is rather reasonable. If the Soviet representative thinks otherwise he could, by my calculation save us \$22,800 by withdrawing his request for an earlier document to be translated into his language. I think that would be a gesture that would enable us to make financial savings all around.

I must add that I do not accept that the financial crisis has been created artificially by one country. If the Soviet representative would look into his own eye, I think he would find that his own country has rather a substantial record of shortfalls in this matter.

Mr. GUINHUT (France) (interpretation from French): With respect to the answer to the question that I raised, I note that the Soviet representative does not wish to be taken literally on this matter, and we are quite satisfied with his statement.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Our delegation asked several questions in connection with the draft resolution submitted to us. We have not received answers or, at least, we have not received the sort of answers that have satisfied us. In any case, before we vote, the Soviet delegation would like to speak on the draft resolutions and on the matters which the representative of the United States described as background material in her statement yesterday.

Today the Trusteeship Council is meeting at its seventeenth special session pursuant to the request, contained in a letter dated 11 November 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, to consider the dispatch of a mission to observe a plebiscite on 2 December 1986 in Palau on the so-called Compact of Free Association in respect of that part of the United States strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific islands, of Micronesia. However one looks at this question, it is not a technical one, as the representative of France tried to maintain yesterday. Quite the contrary, this question is extremely important. It is indissolubly connected with the heart of the problem of the future of this strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Ocean. There is a close dialectical and political interrelationship between the forthcoming plebiscite on Palau and the situation in the Territory as a whole, and with the future status of this Territory in the context of the well-known plans and actions of the Administering Authority in connection with the ending of its Trusteeship status. Indeed, the request to convene a special session of the Trusteeship Council to examine the question of the dispatch of a mission to Palau followed very shortly after the 23 October letter of

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the representative of the United States to the United Nations, notifying the Secretary-General of Washington's intent to bring into force the United States Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands and with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Pact on Friendship and Co-operation of the United States with the Northern Marianas.

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

What in that letter from the Permanent Representative of the United States was made out to be simply some sort of new status for those three groups of Micronesian islands, is described in the Proclamation by the President of the United States of America of 3 November of this year as the termination of Trusteeship. That Proclamation states unambiguously:

"The Trusteeship Agreement for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands is no longer in effect after 21 October 1986 with respect to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, on 3 November 1986 with respect to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."

If we are to call those acts their proper name, we would say that the United States has embarked upon the final stage of the implementation of its plan to annex Micronesia. The action taken by the United States aimed at absorbing Micronesia, in violation of its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter and the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement, is illegal and devoid of any legal force or effect. In implementing its plan to absorb the strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the United States, as is well known, conceals its intentions by references to Trusteeship Council resolution of 28 May 1986 -

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call upon the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): It is quite clear that the remarks of the representative of the Soviet Union are out of order. The agenda concerns the request for a special session of the Trusteeship Council to consider the dispatch of a mission to observe a plebiscite on 2 December in Palau. Matters outside Palau are extraneous to this discussion.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I would ask the representative of the Soviet Union to confine his statement to the item on our agenda and to the vote on the draft resolution that will be held this morning.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): With regard to the comment of the representative of the United States, I would stress that what I am saying has a direct connection with the forthcoming plebiscite in Palau and the mission that is to be sent there to observe it. Palau is an integral part of the strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the question to be voted on there, and which was read out to us yesterday by the representative of the United States, concerning to the future of that strategic Trust Territory.

I fail to understand why the representative of the United States of America felt it possible to mention these matters yesterday in her statement and in her answers to questions and yet today, when we are dealing with them in our statement, she finds it out of order. We did not interrupt the representative of the United States of America when she was making her statement yesterday, and we therefore request that the Soviet delegation be given the opportunity to state its views.

Everything we are saying has a direct bearing on the forthcoming mission. That mission, which is being sent to observe the plebiscite in Palau, must be aware of more than just one point of view, namely, that of the Administering Authority, and it should not observe the plebiscite only through the rose-coloured glasses provided it by the Administering Authority, but bear in mind the views of the other members of the Trusteeship Council.

Regardless of the procedural devices used, it is absolutely clear that the Trusteeship Council's mandate does not authorize it to take any decisions relating to a change in the present status of this United Nations Trust Territory nor to make any recommendations with regard to any new status of the strategic Trust Territory as a whole or any of its parts.

Today the Trusteeship Council has to examine the question of sending a mission to Palau to observe the seventh referendum or plebiscite being held in that

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Territory, and we are justified in asking - as we attempted to ask yesterday - whether this forthcoming plebiscite can add anything new to the ongoing discussion of this Compact of Free Association. Is there any reason to believe that this plebiscite will not simply be another travesty of the principle of self-determination as proclaimed by the United Nations? The answer, I believe, is "No". It is quite obvious - as indeed was pointed out at the last session of the Trusteeship Council - that the plebiscites being stage-managed by the Administering Authority as a means of endorsing the so-called Compact of Free Association between Palau and the United States of America are not intended to reveal the freely-expressed desires of the people of Palau, and have nothing to do with true self-determination by colonial and dependent countries along the lines provided for by the United Nations.

For years the population of Palau in the broad sense of the term has been under political siege and experiencing economic pressure, threats and much else besides - all of which has been concealed from the eyes of the United Nations and its visiting missions. How many times have the people of Palau been asked to revise their constitution, their basic law, but not the Compact?

Yesterday, in response to our query on this subject, the representative of the United States said that there is no question of any alternative to the Compact of Free Association - in other words, the inhabitants of Palau are not being given an opportunity to choose true independence because that question was put to them in 1983. But let us, for a moment, look at the document prepared at that time by the Visiting Mission, and specifically page 14 of the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscite on Palau in February 1983, which indicates that the population of Palau was asked to vote on the following question:

"PROPOSITION ONE: Do you approve of free association as set forth in the compact of free association?" (T/1851, Supplement 3, chap. IV, p. 14, para. 35)

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

That was the question put. Now we know - and yesterday the Soviet delegation presented a very long extract from the last report in which even the members of the Visiting Mission themselves admitted this point - that it is very difficult to study this Compact. None the less the question was asked in that form.

The second question was:

(spoke in English)

"Do you approve of the agreement concerning radioactive, chemical and biological materials concluded pursuant to section 314 of the compact of free association?" (Ibid.)

(continued in Russian)

Along with these two questions, there is a third one, "Proposition Two":

(spoke in English)

"You may mark a box below to indicate your choice for the future political status negotiations for Palau in the event free association is rejected."

This is followed by one possible answer:

"I approve of a relationship closer than free association with the United States on terms to be mutually agreed to between the Republic of Palau and the United States." (Ibid., p. 15)

(continued in Russian)

And then by an alternative answer:

(spoke in English)

"I approve of independence." (Ibid.)

(continued in Russian)

But give this a little thought - "I approve of independence". Whose independence? Personal independence? The independence of the entire territory? The independence of Palau? What kind of independence?

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

But let us go further and take a look at the other facts presented in this document - page 20, for instance. We do not know about all the things that happened after these propositions were formulated, but the Administering Authority recommended that question B should be worded in quite a different way. Just think how this question was formulated:

(spoke in English)

"Do you approve the agreement under section 314 of the compact which places restrictions and conditions on the United States with respect to radioactive chemical and biological materials." (Ibid., p. 20, para. 64)

(continued in Russian)

It is not surprising that after this amendment even the Supreme Court of Palau was forced to intervene in 1983 and decided to revert to the original wording drawn up earlier by the authorities. We will not burden the Council with all the details, but we should like to draw its attention to page 38 of that same document. First of all, we should like to point out a remarkable fact, namely, that despite all this pettifogging, vagueness and complexity, 44.5 per cent of the local inhabitants, who are illiterate, who were subjected to a political campaign designed to influence their views, who answered the second question - and I should like to draw attention to subparagraph (e) in particular - and who participated in the voting on the so-called second proposition, voted for independence. Why, then, in 1986 is there any need to conduct two plebiscites on the same issue, on the same compact? Why under present circumstances, when the fate of a small defenceless people is at stake, should the Administering Authority consider that this question need not be asked? The question of independence is exceptionally important and topical.

In this context in which the Palauans have been placed, plebiscites and referendums - and I am not afraid to repeat this - are being turned into

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pseudo-referendums and pseudo-plebiscites which are a mockery of common sense.

In the course of so-called campaigns for the political education of the population - about which we have heard a great deal both here as well as during the last session of the Trusteeship Council - which are in essence campaigns for the political brain-washing of the population, the Administering Authority has tried to impose a new neo-colonialist status on the local inhabitants, and to convince them that, if they failed to vote for so-called free association, things would be difficult for them. The authorities are even engaging in the outright intimidation of the people by threatening to discontinue economic assistance if the compact is not approved.

Petitioners have presented relevant facts in this regard, and the Soviet delegation at the fifty-third session of the Trusteeship Council submitted a very important letter addressed to President Salii by one of the governors, specifically recommending how the funds received from the Administering Authority should be spent and what propaganda was to be carried out in this regard. Today, we should like to point out, first, that this letter has not been refuted and, secondly, that the Secretariat has still not published this important document.

In making arrangements to stage-manage yet another plebiscite on Palau on 2 December - the second this year - the authorities are not talking of organizing any real activities for the political education of the people of Palau in the broad sense of the term or of explaining to the people of Palau their rights to self-determination, the free expression of their wishes and independence. The sole purpose of the Administering Authority is to use every possible means to force the Palauans to accept a so-called neo-colonialist status and to deprive them completely of any hope of freedom, independence and genuine self-determination.

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On the basis of its position of principle, the Soviet Union opposed the dispatch of a special mission to observe the plebiscite in Palau, because it is clearly aimed at using the name of the United Nations as a cover for yet another attempt to impose on the population of Palau, by means of economic and political pressure, the status of a nuclear spring-board for the United States which they have repeatedly rejected. The Soviet Union will therefore vote against the draft resolution. That the nature of the Council's mission to Palau is at variance with the Charter is also apparent from the fact that its essential purpose is to give the appearance of legitimacy to the splintering of an indivisible Trust Territory by the United States in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, according to which any decision to amend the trusteeship agreement can be taken only by the Security Council.

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

We should like to stress another equally important factor in connection with the question under discussion, namely the dispatch of a Mission to Palau. Experience with sending Council missions to Territories has shown that they do not live up to the hopes placed in them. As a rule, their reports contain conclusions and recommendations that do not reflect the true state of affairs in the strategic Trust Territory and essentially camouflage the objective fact that the transformation by the United States of the Trust Territory of Micronesia into a military and strategic spring-board creates a serious threat to the security of the peoples of Asia and the Pacific and of the world as a whole.

We wish once again to stress, in connection with the dispatch of a Mission to Palau and the forthcoming plebiscite, that the Soviet Union has repeatedly drawn the attention of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies to the situation that has emerged in the strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In our statements we have pointed out to the international community of States that the population of that Trust Territory cannot freely exercise its inalienable right to genuine self-determination and independence as proclaimed in the United Nations Charter and in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The problem of Micronesia is part of the problem of decolonization. The United Nations is called upon to ensure the genuinely free exercise by the Micronesian people of its inalienable right to genuine self-determination and genuine independence, as it has done in the case of other United Nations Trust Territories, in full conformity with the United Nations Charter, with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and generally-accepted norms of international law.

The Soviet Union condemns the illegal acts of the Administering Authority, which are contrary to the Charter, in connection with the dispatch of a Mission to

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

Micronesia. These acts are all the more inadmissible because they are being carried out by a permanent member of the Security Council, and permanent members have a particular responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Moreover, these acts are being carried out in violation of the United Nations Charter, the Trusteeship Agreement, the Declaration on Decolonization and the prerogatives of the Security Council.

The Soviet Union's position of principle was once again expressed forcefully in a TASS statement of 12 November 1986, which states among other things that

"The action taken by the United States with respect to the United Nations Trust Territory of Micronesia is unilateral, arbitrary, and without the force of law. According to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is the only body that may take a decision to terminate a United Nations trusteeship agreement. It is the duty of the United Nations and the entire international community resolutely to repudiate the illegal claim of the United States to act as the arbiter of the fate of peoples. The United Nations will continue to bear responsibility for this Territory until its people achieve genuine independence."

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Does any other representative wish to speak before the vote?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I am relieved to hear that we have in fact started the voting process. I was unsure whether what we had just heard was a statement or an explanation of vote. I should like to speak in explanation of vote before the vote.

The issue before the Council this morning is a serious one. We are considering the dispatch of a Visiting Mission to observe a plebiscite in Palau.

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

The plebiscite is important because it represents another opportunity for the people of Palau to pronounce themselves on their political future: another stage, in the words of Article 76 of the United Nations Charter, in their "progressive development towards self-government". Of course, this is the fourth - I repeat fourth - time that the Palauan voters will vote on the Compact of Free Association that has been negotiated by their democratically elected representatives with the administering Power.

Those like my colleague from the Soviet Union who may be unused to the rough and tumble of democratic politics may feel that this is at first sight a rather unsatisfactory way to do business. Perhaps that is why he takes refuge behind such pejorative terms as "so-called plebiscites" and "democratic farces" and calls the frequent valid acts of self-determination in Palau "travesties". He has even said that they have nothing in common with true self-determination. If true self-determination is on the Afghan, Czechoslovak or Hungarian models, perhaps not. However, I can assure -

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of the Soviet Union on a point of order.

Mr. KUTOVOY: (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I do not like to go to such extremes as interrupting the representative of the United Kingdom, but today we are discussing the question of the strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and I would request you, Sir, to ask him to continue discussing that question.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): We are talking about self-determination, and the Soviet delegation made certain qualifications or definitions of self-determination, and I was simply doing the same thing.

I can assure him that democracy is alive and well in Palau, since I, unlike him, have seen it at first hand. As the February 1986 Mission, which I had the privilege to lead, said in its report - and I shall quote the whole paragraph, so as not to quote selectively:

"We conclude that the plebiscite held on 21 February represented yet another valid act of self-determination by the people of Palau in which all eligible voters had the opportunity to participate of their own free will. The turn-out of 71 per cent was commendably high, given the low-key atmosphere and a certain weariness with plebiscites. A 72 per cent positive vote in what was in effect the third plebiscite on virtually the same issue is a remarkable achievement in any democratic society in which the vote is not compulsory. It testifies to the political awareness of the Palauan people and the importance they attach to their future constitutional status."

As trustees for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, our job is to ensure that the people of Micronesia, not their Governments, nor the United States, and still less the Soviet Union, have the final say in deciding their political future. We believe that this be done only through the ballot box.

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

That is why plebiscites - real plebiscites - are so important and why we have willingly participated in them in the past as observers, and take pleasure in doing so again this time.

In so doing, we of course make no judgement on the Compact of Free Association. That is something for the Palaun voters to decide. We shall go to observe, to see fair play. We shall not - as my colleague from the Soviet Union has just done, in what I considered a disgracefully polemical statement (which will no doubt appear in another TASS telex to Palau) - take sides in the political campaign and seek to influence voters by taking a position on the merits or demerits of the Compact of Free Association. That is not our task, and it ill becomes members of the Trusteeship Council to pretend otherwise and to use their privileged position in this Chamber to attempt to prejudice the outcome of the plebiscite on 2 December.

As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution which was introduced yesterday, we call on all members of the Trusteeship Council to support it. We naturally hoped that it would be adopted by consensus. Since that appears to be impossible, my delegation will vote in favour of it.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now put to the vote the draft resolution in document T/L.1254.

The draft resolution in document T/L.1254 was adopted by 3 votes to 1.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Members will note that by the resolution just adopted the Council has decided, inter alia, that the Visiting Mission will be composed of the representatives of Fiji, France, the United Kingdom and another country from the South Pacific region.

(The President)

Following past practice, I suggest that the Council decide that the names of the persons to be submitted by the Governments concerned be approved automatically as soon as they are received by the Secretary-General. These names will of course be communicated to the members of the Council.

If there are no comments, I shall take it that members agree to that suggestion.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Despite the late hour, would any representative wish to make a statement after the voting? I would remind members that there will be another meeting of this special session - the date of which will be set after I have consulted the Secretariat and delegations - to adopt the credentials of delegations and to hear any other comments that any representatives may wish to make on petitions. I shall also call on any representative who wishes to make a brief closing statement at that time.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The representative of the United Kingdom referred to the TASS communiqué of 12 November 1986. We should like to draw attention to the fact that in a letter (A/41/822) of 12 November 1986 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Secretary-General was requested to bring that TASS communiqué, relating to Palau, to the attention of the Trusteeship Council. The members of our delegation have checked and found that this document has still not been made available to the Council. We would therefore request you, Mr. President, to give the necessary instructions to ensure that the document is made available at the documents counter in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, along with the other documents.

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

I also wish to ask you, Mr. President, when you plan to have the report of the seventeenth special session of the Council adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I have taken note of the first point made by the representative of the Soviet Union and shall look into the matter with the Secretariat.

With regard to the question he asked, we have just adopted a resolution providing for the dispatching of a Visiting Mission to observe the referendum that is to take place in Palau on 2 December. From past experience, I believe that it will take the Visiting Mission several days to prepare its report after it returns from Palau, and a few weeks will be required to translate and issue the report in the official languages of the Trusteeship Council. Hence - and this is, of course, my personal opinion - the document will not be available before the beginning of next year, that is in January 1987.

Obviously, consultations will have to take place on this matter. Hence, I shall not be able to give a more precise reply to the question put by the Soviet Union representative until a subsequent stage.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): We were not referring to the report of the Visiting Mission, but to the report on the work of this seventeenth special session. Will such a report be prepared and, if so, when do you intend to submit it to the Trusteeship Council, Mr. President?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I shall be able to answer that question after I have held the necessary consultations.

I now call on the representative of the United States.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): I chose not to answer in detail the charges made by the representative of the Soviet Union in his statement before we proceeded to the vote. I shall not do so now. But I wish categorically to reject his allegations, comments and statements. They are false. They are based either on inaccurate information or on such a distorted perspective of what is going on in the world that it is very difficult to understand.

(Miss Byrne, United States)

All his statements have been made before; I have heard not a single new element. They were answered today, yesterday, at the regular session in May and June, last February at the sixteenth special session and, I am sure, many times previously, before I became a representative in this Council.

As I said before, it is extremely difficult to understand the perspective of the Soviet Union. A very, very limited number of other States share its views, which seem to run counter to those of most of the world, and in particular those of the States of the South Pacific region whose representatives spoke so eloquently here at the fifty-third session. Once again, I reject his comments.

I should like now to express my delegation's appreciation of the Council's decision to send a Mission to observe the plebiscite in Palau on 2 December. My Government believes that, although the time available for consideration of the subject was short, the Council has acted with wisdom and foresight. Once again the United Nations will be in a position to observe democracy in action in the Trust Territory.

My delegation has full confidence that the members of the Mission will provide a report that is accurate, clear and fair. We base this confidence, in part, on the fact that at least three countries represented on the Mission, namely, Fiji, France and the United Kingdom, have participated in similar missions in the past. Their experience will ensure the expeditious and thoughtful completion of the Mission's task. Our confidence is also based on the expectation that an experienced and capable support staff from the Secretariat will accompany the Mission.

The Government of the United States, as Administering Authority, stands ready to assist the Mission in any appropriate manner, as does the Government of Palau.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): At this late hour I do not want to carry polemics to the extreme, but the representative of the United States of America has tried to give the impression that there was no truth in anything said by the Soviet delegation. Was there an error in the quotation that the President was proclaiming the end of the trusteeship agreement? Perhaps she rejects that. If so, she should say as much. But the President quite clearly stated - and we quoted him - that "The trusteeship agreement is no longer in effect." By what right is it "no longer in effect"? Have we in the Trusteeship Council discussed the matter?

In addition, the representative of the United States said that many things were repetitive and not new. But is the Compact that is to be voted on in the plebiscite something new? Why is the old Compact being voted on for the third or fourth time? The representative of the United States undoubtedly knows how many times one and the same Compact has been voted on. Or possibly the United States is proposing a new Compact, although this was not at all apparent from the explanations given by the United States representative yesterday.

We are proposing that this question should be presented in a new form. Were the subject of the forthcoming plebiscite to be the question of genuine independence for that country so that it could become a full Member of the United Nations, a great many new things would be said. But so long as we are talking about the old Compact, we must alas, repeat many things that are undoubtedly familiar.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If there are no other comments, I shall inform members of the Council in due course of the date and time of our next meeting, which will take place next week.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.