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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND TWELFTH MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 21 May 1986, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. RAPIN (France)

- Examination of the annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 September 1985: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)
- The future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)
- Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1985 (continued)
- Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscite in Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, February 1986 (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1985: TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1888) (continued)

THE FUTURE OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1886) (continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): First of all I should like to inform members that yesterday evening I received a letter addressed to me as President from the National Council of the Churches of Christ signed by Mrs. Elizabeth Bounds and Mrs. Susan Quass. I have requested the Secretariat to distribute copies to members, and they will receive them during this meeting.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Council at its 1611th meeting, we shall now hear statements by the representatives of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Hogue (Australia), Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Mr. McDowell (New Zealand), Mr. Anggo (Papua New Guinea), Mr. Mauala (Samoa), Mr. Saemala (Solomon Islands) and Mr. Van Lierop (Vanuatu) took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call first on the representative of Vanuatu, who will speak on behalf of the members of the South Pacific Forum.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): At the outset, on behalf of the countries of the region, I wish to convey our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of the Solomon Islands on the tragic consequences of the recent cyclone, which caused serious loss of life and physical damage. All of us are ready to support efforts to help repair the damage, and we appeal to others in the international community to join in that effort.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Mr. President, I thank you and the other members of the Trusteeship Council for permitting me to appear before the Council today to speak in support of peoples of our region. I have the honour to speak today on behalf of South Pacific Forum Members of the United Nations. We support the call made to this Council by the representatives of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Marianas and Palau for termination of the trusteeship over their four States.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

We recall the important role that the Trusteeship Council has played in the decolonization of the South Pacific. Three member States of the South Pacific Forum are former Trust Territories whose passage to independence was decided within the walls of this historic Chamber and observed by delegations serving on the Council. More recently others have participated further in the work of the Council as members of its visiting missions.

For the past 40 years the United Nations has acted as the champion of the liberation of colonial peoples and Territories. In this role, the Trusteeship Council has been guided by Article 76 of the Charter, which recognizes that the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned should be the principal factor in determining their future status in accordance with their particular circumstances. South Pacific Governments have closely followed the progress of the peoples of Micronesia as they have come to exercise this basic right. In separate acts of self-determination supervised by the Council, the peoples of Micronesia have chosen the forms of government most suitable in their view to their own particular circumstances. Their diversity of history, culture and society is reflected in the different forms of political institutions they have chosen for themselves. And now, within this framework, they have clearly and overwhelmingly demonstrated their wish to terminate their trusteeship status.

During the last meeting of the South Pacific Forum, at Rarotonga in the Cook Islands in August 1985, the Heads of Governments of all the independent and self-governing States of the South Pacific - Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu - discussed the question of the future of the Trust Territory. Their communiqué stated:

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

"Heads of Government noted that the peoples of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands had exercised their right to self-determination in free and fair plebiscites observed by the United Nations. They looked forward to early approval of the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement over these Territories by the United Nations in accordance with the express wishes of their peoples. They also looked forward to the conclusion of arrangements for the termination of the trusteeship over the Republic of Palau."

We recognize the role already being played within our region by the four Micronesian States. The Federated States of Micronesia has already been welcomed by the South Pacific Forum as an observer and is a member of the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation. Together with Palau and the Marshall Islands, it has joined the Forum Fisheries Agency, the organization established by the Forum to promote and protect our interests in marine fisheries resources. All four are members in their own right of the South Pacific Commission, and only last month we joined fellow Asian members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in support of the admission of all four as associate members of that organization.

The four States of Micronesia have shown both a wish and a capacity to participate fully in the affairs of our region. The member countries of the South Pacific Forum support them in this, and in their call for the termination of the trusteeship to enable them to join even more fully in matters of concern and interest to our region. We have heard the leaders of the Micronesian people speak with a single voice urging the Council to take appropriate measures to terminate the trusteeship. We support them and we urge the Council to respond positively to the collective appeal of the people of the Trust Territory and endorse termination of the trusteeship.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

The relevant principles in the Charter are plainly set out. They have been fulfilled. So too have the guidelines laid down in resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). The way forward is clear. There should be no impediments to early termination of the Council's final trusteeship and to the Micronesian States' taking their rightful place in our region.

Mr. President, we thank you and the members of the Council for allowing the States of the region to be heard on this matter.

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

Mr. HOGUE (Australia): Sir, my delegation extends its warm congratulations to you on your election, not for the first time, as President of the Trusteeship Council. Your wide experience in the Council eminently qualifies you for the task you are performing. Our congratulations also go to Ambassador Peter Maxey of the United Kingdom on his election as Vice-President of the Council. My delegation expresses its thanks to you and to the members of the Trusteeship Council for allowing us to appear before it today. We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on the matter currently before the Council.

I should like specifically to associate Australia with the remarks made on behalf of us all by our friend and colleague from Vanuatu, in respect of both the Solomon Islands and the issue being discussed today. I will just make a few additional comments on behalf of Australia.

This could well be a historic session of the Trusteeship Council. The sole remaining Trust Territory wishes to end the colonial relationship with its metropolitan Power. The Council has a key role to play in that regard. My delegation has listened carefully to the statements made in the Council by the representatives of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

Northern Marianas and Palau, in which they have asked the Council to terminate the trusteeship over their four entities. Australia supports their call.

One of the underlying philosophical assumptions in the adoption of the United Nations Charter was that dependent Territories would be given the opportunity to exercise their right to self-government. The past 40 years have seen dramatic progress in this regard. Over 100 new, independent States have come into existence, while other colonial relationships have been terminated in different forms, such as free association with the former metropolitan Power.

The Trusteeship Council itself has played an important role in the process of decolonization. A number of Members of the United Nations, including three from Australia's immediate region, were former Trust Territories. Australia itself was the Administering Authority for two such countries, Nauru and Papua New Guinea, both of which achieved nationhood with the co-operation of the Council and in accordance with the wishes of their peoples.

Australia recognizes the right to self-determination of all self-governing peoples and the obligation of the United Nations to respect acts of self-determination which have been properly conducted. The Trusteeship Council has played an important role in the verification of acts of self-determination in Trust Territories. My delegation notes the report of the Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory currently before the Council, as well as the report of the Mission to observe the plebiscite on Palau held last February. All four acts of self-determination in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands were properly conducted. The peoples of the four entities have clearly and convincingly shown their desire for the termination as soon as possible their trusteeship status.

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

Australia has very close relations with its Pacific neighbours and places particular importance on regional co-operation with them. We are a member of the South Pacific Forum, which gathers together all of the self-governing States of the region. At the last meeting of the Forum, held at Heads of Government level at Rarotonga in the Cook Islands in August 1985, the Heads of Government noted that the people of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshalls and the Northern Marianas had exercised their right to self-determination. They looked forward to early approval of the termination of the trusteeship over those Territories by the United Nations in accordance with the wishes of their peoples. They expressed the same hope in relation to the termination of the trusteeship over Palau. My colleague from Vanuatu has already read out the full text of that statement.

Australia was party to the call from the Forum for the termination of the trusteeship and we believe that the present session of the Trusteeship Council is the time to begin the task of meeting the wishes of the Micronesians themselves.

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

Our own relations with the four Micronesian entities are growing and developing along positive lines. We look forward to intensifying those relations, both bilaterally and within a regional context. Already the Micronesian entities are playing important roles in various regional bodies, and we look forward to their doing so on a basis of equality with the other self-governing peoples of the Pacific. It is the duty of the Trusteeship Council to assist them to do so by recommending to the Security Council that the Trusteeship Agreement in respect of the Territory be terminated. My delegation therefore adds its voice to the call from the Micronesians for early termination of the agreement. We ask the Council to heed their wishes.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now call on the representative of Fiji.

Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji): Having sat through most of the meetings of the Council at its fifty-third session, Mr. President, my delegation is impressed by the masterly way in which you have presided. We are confident of your continuing fairness and statesmanship.

I must thank you, Sir, and the members of the Trusteeship Council for allowing me to make a statement today on agenda item 14: "The future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands". I should also like fully to associate my delegation with the statement made by the spokesman for the South Pacific Forum Members of the United Nations.

Since joining the United Nations in 1970 Fiji has participated in seven Visiting Missions, three of them to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. For the past 13 years Fiji has been an active member of the decolonization Committee. In the process, we have been witness to a wide cross-section of views and circumstances of peoples moving from colonial status to independence.

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

With the background of that experience, we see the expressed wishes of the people of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as among the clearest and most unambiguous concerning the basis of terminating their dependent status and how they wish to go forward into the future. That clear message, as has been the case with other Trust Territories, must now be respected and answered.

We have listened carefully to the petitioners who have addressed the Council. Nothing they have submitted provides grounds for delaying the termination of the trusteeship. It would be a travesty of justice and of fair play, and it would make a mockery of the role of this Organization, if the influence of a few vocal, interfering outsiders were to frustrate the will of the people, so consistently and so overwhelmingly expressed.

For nearly two centuries the people of the Pacific - hospitable, easy-going and unsophisticated - have been exploited, manipulated and abused by a few unscrupulous self-seekers, bent on promoting their own interests. Listening to and reading the various submissions gives my delegation the distinct impression that some want the people of Micronesia to remain under trusteeship. Surely the time for such paternalism is over. The people should be recognized as fully capable of democratically arriving at their own considered decisions.

We believe the Administering Authority has made genuine and successful efforts to assist the people of Micronesia towards economic, social and political development. We also firmly believe that the arrangements the States of Micronesia have painstakingly negotiated with the United States, over a long period, represent a fair and viable basis for their future growth, development and prosperity. It is easy for others to be wise after the event, but the negotiations were difficult and protracted, and the outcome represents a balance between competing ends.

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

However others may view the foundation on which the peoples of Micronesia want to base their future, we believe the overriding factor should be that their wishes must be respected. That desire has been repeatedly manifested by the overwhelming majority of the people, expressed in free plebiscites. That clear expression should not now be frustrated by tenuous technicalities, but should be put into effect unimpeded.

With the concurrence of the Trusteeship Council and the approval of the Security Council, Fiji looks forward to the early termination of the trusteeship. That will enable the States of Micronesia to take their rightful place in the forums of our region and of the world. In agreeing to the termination, the Council will have taken the bold step of ending its own life by freeing the last of its wards. From the ashes of that phoenix will emerge the new States of Micronesia.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now call on the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): It is a moment of great nostalgia for me to be taking part in a Trusteeship Council session again. New Zealand was intimately involved in the part played by this body in the decolonization of much of Africa and the South Pacific. It is gratifying to be present as the Council blesses the last of the Trust Territories which have gone forth from this place to run their own affairs and to shape their own destinies.

We speak in support of the collective regional statement made by the representative of Vanuatu. That statement made it clear that, in the view of the leaders of the broad region of which the Trust Territory forms part, our Micronesian brothers and sisters have exercised their undoubted right to self-determination. We strongly support the call made to the Council by the leaders of the four Micronesian States for termination of the trusteeship.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

The doctrine of the Organization is very clear and very explicit about self-determination. Whether it is the Charter or the Declaration on decolonization contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) or a raft of other resolutions on decolonization, the universal theme is that the wishes of the people are paramount. What the people freely determine goes. As paragraph 2 of resolution 1514 (XV) puts it:

"All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

The qualifications to that basic doctrine are that the people be fully aware of the significance of the choices before them, that the full range of choices be spelled out, that they have the opportunity to make their choice freely and fairly and - not the least important - that they be able to do so in the presence, and under the surveillance of, international observers from the United Nations who can check the validity and freedom of the choice made.

Those qualifications have been met. The people of Micronesia have spent several years working out how they wish to shape their future. In acts of self-determination observed by teams from the Council, with representatives drawn from the South Pacific region, and attested as being free and fair, the Micronesian people have chosen their separate paths to nationhood.

The people have spoken. That is good enough for us. It is not for outsiders to second-guess them or patronizingly to question their choices.

We look forward to welcoming the four new countries as full partners in our regional endeavours.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

I wish to conclude by expressing the sympathy and support of the Government and the people of New Zealand for the Government and the people of the Solomon Islands, who have suffered so grievously once again from the forces of nature. At such times we stand with the Solomons and are ready to help in the painful task of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now call on the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. ANGGO (Papua New Guinea): Mr. President, I wish to thank you and, through you, the Trusteeship Council for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of the wishes of the people of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

At the outset I wish to reaffirm Papua New Guinea's support for the position of the South Pacific Forum countries, which calls for the termination of the trusteeship. The plebiscites held in the Micronesian States have been closely observed by United Nations observer teams. The duly elected leaders of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands and Palau have appeared before the Council to represent the choice their people have made.

(Mr. Anggo, Papua New Guinea)

In presenting their case to this important United Nations organ they have spoken with one voice, saying that they seek the support of the United Nations and its Members, through the Council, for early termination of the trusteeship. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Council and its members to respond positively to the request from the leaders of Micronesia.

Papua New Guinea believes that the people of Micronesia exercised their right to self-determination when the majority of those who voted decided to accept the Compact of Free Association. The people of Micronesia have made a choice. We firmly appeal to those with interests in Micronesian affairs to respect the expressed wishes and desires of the people of Micronesia, who have freely decided the nature of the relationship that they would like to establish with the Administering Authority.

Papua New Guinea is convinced that the Compact of Free Association entered into between the people of Micronesia and the United States of America, which has been approved by the people of Micronesia under the direct supervision of representatives of this Council, enables the people of Micronesia to be emancipated from colonial bondage and to become self-governing entities. The achievement of self-government by the people of Micronesia is seen by Papua New Guinea as the turning of a new page in the history of the Micronesian states.

As an island country, Papua New Guinea maintains close and active interest in the political processes that have taken and are taking place in Micronesia. Papua New Guinea was honoured to have been invited to serve as a member of United Nations observer teams to observe the different plebiscites held in Micronesia.

I wish to take this opportunity to express the sincere hope that the Administering Authority will continue to take a close interest in the development, aspirations and nation-building efforts of the people of Micronesia in the years to

(Mr. Anggo, Papua New Guinea)

come. We hope that emphasis will be placed in the area of economic development to help them achieve some degree of self-sufficiency.

In this connection, successive Governments of Papua New Guinea have always maintained that the mechanisms entered into under the Compact of Free Association arrangements must discourage any attempt to create long dependency status, but encourage economic self-reliance. This concern arose from the fear of the establishment of a system that would encourage indefinite dependency on the Administering Authority for economic survival by the people of Micronesia.

Like other Pacific islanders, the Micronesians are a hard-working people. They prefer to work for what they want. It is for this reason that Papua New Guinea appeals to the administering Power to introduce economic activities and initiate resource development, including human resource development, which would enable the people of Micronesia to participate fully in the economic development of their respective States. The Administering Authority should encourage an economic climate conducive to attracting investment from outside by introducing investment incentives so that Micronesians can participate actively in their own economic development.

I am pleased to say that there is a lot of scope for Papua New Guinea to co-operate with the emerging nations of Micronesia. We look forward to establishing mutual bilateral and regional co-operation with the people of Micronesia.

Finally, we wish to register Papua New Guinea's sincere appreciation of the opportunities it has had to participate in United Nations observations of plebiscites in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

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

Ms. MAUALA (Samoa): On behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you, Sir, on the most able way in which you preside over this Council. I also thank the members of the Secretariat for the hard work that they have done.

My delegation joins in the expressions of sympathy to the people of the Solomon Islands and in the call for assistance to them in this great calamity that has befallen them.

We should like, also, fully to endorse the statement made by the representative of Vanuatu on our behalf, but we have some remarks of our own that we should like to make.

My delegation greatly appreciates the opportunity to address the Trusteeship Council on a matter which is of importance to Samoa and the South Pacific - the future of Micronesia. Samoa speaks not only as a Pacific nation but also as a former Trust Territory. Samoa was the first South Pacific nation to achieve its independence. We achieved our sovereignty in a peaceful transition to self-government under the United Nations Trusteeship System. The Council recognized and accepted the freely expressed wishes of the people of my country. Since that time it has continued to be guided by this same simple principle as other countries have exercised their right to self-determination and have emerged from their trusteeship status.

Samoa now welcomes the four Micronesian States as they too move to join those of us who have had the aspirations of our peoples accepted by the Council. The people of Micronesia have chosen the way forward that is most suited to their individual needs and circumstances. They have said in this Chamber that they are now ready to move from their colonial status to a new role as full members of our Pacific community of nations. That is their wish and that is their right. We welcome them and we support them.

Western Samoa was party to the call by all Heads of Government of the self-governing States of the Pacific for early termination of the United Nations

(Ms. Mauala, Samoa)

trusteeship over Micronesia. We repeat that call now and associate ourselves with the request of the representatives of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau and the Northern Mariana Islands for the Council to endorse their request for the termination of the trusteeship. We look forward with confidence to the Trusteeship Council's taking the action requested of it by the Micronesian people. The request for termination of the trusteeship should be received by all - by all in our region and by all members of the Council - with enthusiasm. It will be a firm, practical expression of commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of the Solomon Islands and take this opportunity to express my sympathy to the sorely tried people of his country.

Mr. SAEMALA (Solomon Islands): First, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your important post, and also to extend congratulations to the Vice-President.

I thank you and the other members of the Council for granting me this opportunity to speak on agenda item 14, "The future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands".

At this juncture, I wish to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude for the kind messages addressed to my Government and people at this time of hardship resulting from the cyclone disaster that struck our country on 18 and 19 May. We are grateful to the Member States which have offered assistance with immediate relief work. The Governments of Australia and New Zealand are assisting us on the spot to assess the extent of the casualties and damage. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) also made immediate offers of assistance, for which my Government is most grateful.

(Mr. Saemala, Solomon Islands)

Until the weather clears up and communications are restored in remote areas, there cannot be any clear picture of casualties or damage. Based on primary assessments, however, it is estimated that up to 90,000 persons - or even more - have been left homeless; it has been confirmed that five persons died; many others are still missing, including at least 15 schoolchildren. Hospitals, clinics, schools and the transport and communications infrastructure have been badly damaged.

In those circumstances, it was a great relief to note the decision reached by consensus yesterday by the Trusteeship Council to invite my delegation to participate in this meeting - particularly since the winds of destruction have swept through my country.

The Solomon Islands Government has been following closely recent political and constitutional developments in Micronesia. The most outstanding feature of those developments is the advancement towards self-determination by the peoples of the four political entities that make up the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and the Marshall Islands.

Last week the Trusteeship Council heard the hopes and confidence of the peoples of those territories expressed in no uncertain terms by their respective leaders and representatives. The echoes of freedom came out clear and strong. They request the termination of their trusteeship status. Theirs is a call from within. It is the freely expressed wish of the peoples of Micronesia. Thus, in keeping with the spirit and letter of Article 76 of the Charter, this call should be considered positively by the Trusteeship Council, and subsequently by the Security Council.

(Mr. Saemala, Solomon Islands)

The Trusteeship Council has done much for the process of decolonization. In our region of the Pacific, the successful achievement of independence by three former Trust Territories was greatly assisted by decisions taken in this very Chamber. My delegation therefore earnestly looks forward to the Council's assistance and support in regard to the Micronesians' wish to attain their new status.

The countries of Micronesia are close neighbours of the countries of Melanesia and Polynesia. Our peoples share a unique affinity in our traditions and cultural heritage of the Pacific Ocean. Hence, the Micronesian countries have already been welcomed into some of the regional organizations of our Pacific Islands region. All the four countries are now, in their own right, full members of the South Pacific Commission - the regional organization established by former Administering Authorities in that region, along with France and the United States, for the promotion of the social and economic development of the peoples of our region; the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands are members of the Forum Fisheries Agency - the regional organization established by the South Pacific Forum to promote and co-ordinate our interests in marine and fisheries resources; and the Federated States of Micronesia is a member of the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation - commonly known as SPEC - and it has observer status with the South Pacific Forum. Most recently, Pacific Island Governments members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) joined with our Asian friends in welcoming all four States as associate members of that organization.

Those developments are evidence of the readiness and willingness of the Micronesian people to play their part in both regional and international affairs.

(Mr. Saemala, Solomon Islands)

The United States is to be congratulated on the work it has undertaken as the Administering Authority to assist in the advancement of the Micronesians to the stage they have reached. Now, in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of their peoples, the four Micronesian Governments have chosen to pursue a new relationship with the Administering Authority - that is, independence in free association with the United States. The Solomon Islands Government respects that choice and regards any attempts, by any State or organization, to hinder its realization and fulfilment as interference in the internal political affairs of the individual States of Micronesia. My Government also looks forward to the furtherance of this new relationship on the basis of partnership between the States of Micronesia and the United States. It is to be hoped that this partnership will encourage and enable the United States to respect the sovereignty of the Pacific Island States over their exclusive economic zones and the highly migratory species of fish therein.

Mr. President, your task is not an easy one, but I have full confidence in your expert leadership of the Council. You have a band of hard-working people, both Council members and officials. Together you will, I am sure, arrive at a decision that will further enhance the stature of the United Nations as the international Organization that champions freedom and liberty for the peoples of the world.

I am therefore pleased to have played a small part in these historic deliberations by expressing the Solomon Islands Government's support for the Micronesians' call for the termination of their trusteeship status.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I again express to the representative of the Solomon Islands the heartfelt condolences of the members of the Trusteeship Council.

I call last on the representative of Vanuatu.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): Speaking in my capacity as representative of the Republic of Vanuatu, I repeat and emphasize what I said earlier on behalf of the countries of the region with respect to our support for efforts to rebuild the Solomon Islands.

(spoke in French)

Mr. President, we are greatly pleased to see you presiding over this historic session of the Trusteeship Council. Your considerable diplomatic experience and extraordinary skills guarantee, in our view, the success of the Council's work. You represent a great nation which has left a lasting and positive imprint on much of the world. Through your efforts here in the Council, the international community has become more attentive to the voice of the indigenous peoples that are struggling to achieve self-determination. We have no doubt that in the not-too-distant future the peoples of the world that are still subjected to domination, particularly those of our region, will regain their freedom and join the great community of peoples free to decide their own fate and the future of their children.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

(continued in English)

I have already had the honour of making a statement on this subject on behalf of the seven members of the South Pacific Forum, which are also Members of the United Nations. Therefore my remarks on behalf of the Government and the people of Vanuatu will be relatively brief. This is one of those occasions on which a lengthy debate is not necessary. The people of Micronesia have in various ways already spoken clearly and most eloquently. Having listened to their voices, we now merely wish to record our support for their right to determine their own destinies.

The history of Micronesia and of the strategic trust is well known to all in this Chamber. To its credit, the Trusteeship System has enabled the people of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of Palau to express themselves freely and to negotiate with the Administering Authority the form of government each prefers.

This process has been observed by visiting missions of the United Nations. It has been acknowledged by the individual representation of the four Micronesian States in various regional bodies and by the recent unanimous decision by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to admit them as associated members. It is also evidenced by the presence here at the United Nations of the representatives of the Micronesian people. These representatives, who also travel freely to and from the countries of our region, have spoken to us all and shared the readiness of their respective peoples to stand on their own feet and to assume their own responsibility for the future.

We believe that in this less than perfect world the essential purposes of trusteeship have been achieved and the trusteeship should therefore be terminated.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Whether individual Members of the United Nations happen to agree with the particular form of government chosen by each of the peoples of Micronesia is irrelevant. The controlling factor is and can only be whether the people of Micronesia have been free to choose for themselves. From what we have seen and heard, we can only answer, "Yes, they have and they are".

These States are our neighbours and they are our friends. We will always respect their right to make their own decisions and to live in peace and harmony. We applaud their diligence and their patience. We commend the Administering Authority for its openness, its integrity and its adherence to the principles of the Trusteeship System. It is to be hoped that other administering Powers in our region will find it in their hearts to respect the wishes of the people whose territories they now govern.

Finally, we salute the Council and the entire United Nations system for its continued adherence to the full equality of all peoples and the universality of mankind. What better proof can anyone possibly submit of the importance and the sobriety of the United Nations in our contemporary world?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to tell the representative of Vanuatu that I was very touched by his words addressed to me and to my country, for which I thank him.

The Trusteeship Council has just heard statements made by the specific States that had expressed the wish to speak here and were invited to do so.

Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom): Before we move on to the next items on the agenda, could I, with your permission, Mr. President, say a few brief words on what has been said here this afternoon.

First of all, let me associate myself and my delegation fully with the words of condolence expressed so eloquently by the representative of Vanuatu and other representatives who have spoken this afternoon at the tragic typhoon that has

(Mr. Mortimer, United Kingdom)

struck the Solomon Islands and caused so much damage. Our thoughts are certainly now with those who, I imagine, have been injured or made homeless and, like the representatives who have spoken before me, our hope is that the international community will respond generously to the need for emergency relief that must surely be required.

I should like to thank the representatives of the South Pacific countries that have taken the trouble this afternoon to address the Council. Their contribution to our better understanding of the needs and wishes of the people of Micronesia is naturally invaluable and greatly appreciated and it will, of course, help us considerably in deciding what, I think, has become the central theme of this session of the Trusteeship Council, namely, the future of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

The message of support, indeed the message of unanimous support, for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement was as clear as it was unambiguous. We were particularly struck by the need expressed, I think, by all speakers to respect the freely expressed wishes of the people of Micronesia. I was impressed by the emphasis on the implicit welcome extended to Micronesian people to take their rightful place in the international community and to join with other South Pacific nations. We were particularly interested to hear the representative of Fiji's remarks about some petitioners who have spoken in the Council and the advice given by the Ambassador of New Zealand that outsiders would do well to avoid condescension concerning the decisions that Micronesians themselves have taken about their political future.

We shall have plenty of opportunity to consider what the South Pacific representatives said this afternoon. Suffice it to say now that we shall of course take their views fully into account in our future deliberations in this Chamber.

Mr. KUTOVOY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): First of all the Soviet delegation would like to express its sympathy to the people of the Solomon Islands in connection with the natural disaster that has occurred there.

With regard to the points of view we have heard expressed here by a group of countries, the Soviet delegation would like once again to emphasize that the agreement regarding the so-called Free Association and Commonwealth imposed by Washington on separate parts of Micronesia in conditions of full political and economic dependence of the population of the Trust Territory on the United States authorities is neo-colonialist in nature.

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

The plebiscites organized in those conditions by the Administering Authority in various parts of Micronesia, cannot - and I stress this - be regarded as genuine self-determination and the expression of the will of the people, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The attitude of the Soviet delegation with regard to the actions of the United States is perfectly clear. We consider such actions to be illegal and aimed at transforming by force the sole remaining United Nations Trust Territory into an American neo-colonial possession, at turning Micronesia into Washington's strategic military beach-head in the western part of the Pacific Ocean. If we consider the question on a wider scale, those actions represent a threat to all the peoples of that region and are against the interests of countries in the southern part of the Pacific that are attempting to turn their region into a nuclear-free zone.

The steps taken unilaterally by the United States clearly violate the principles and provisions of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on decolonization. The people of Micronesia cannot determine their own destiny and their form of co-operation with other States of the world freely and without outside influence until they have attained genuine independence. We are convinced that the essential consequence of the termination of the trusteeship in Micronesia is the granting of genuine independence to the peoples of that Territory in accordance with the Declaration on decolonization.

In this connection, the Soviet delegation would like to recall the position on Micronesia taken by a large group of more than 100 States Members of the United Nations and set forth in an important document adopted at a recent meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, the relevant portion of which reads as follows:

(Mr. Kutovoy, USSR)

(spoke in English)

"The Ministers noted with satisfaction the activities, particularly within the framework of the United Nations, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.

"While welcoming the progress achieved in implementing resolution 1514 (XV), the Ministers expressed their concern over persistent attempts by colonial Powers to obstruct and impede the struggle which was still being waged for the total eradication of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

"In this context they condemned the increasing exploitation of the natural and human resources of those territories by colonial Powers and transnational corporations, as well as the use of some of them for military purposes, including the stocking and/or deployment of nuclear weapons, which not only represents a serious obstacle to the exercise of their right to self-determination and independence but threatens their security and that of independent neighbouring States.

"The Ministers stressed their conviction that the opprobrious colonial system will not be overcome as long as cases of colonialism such as Namibia, New Caledonia, Puerto Rico, the Malvinas Islands, Micronesia and other dependent territories persisted. They demanded immediate implementation in these cases of resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant United Nations resolutions."

(continued in Russian)

We believe that if any of the countries that participated in the work of the Co-ordinating Bureau wish to be invited to attend and speak at this session of the Trusteeship Council, they should be afforded the opportunity to do so.

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, 1985 (T/1878) (continued)

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO OBSERVE THE PLEBISCITE IN PALAU, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, FEBRUARY 1986 (T/1885) (continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I have to draw attention to the fact that the Secretariat has in its possession the texts of the Compact of Free Association with Palau in the three local Palauan languages. Members who wish to consult those may obtain them from the Secretariat.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): If my memory serves me correctly the Soviet delegation, at the last meeting, asked a question of the Chairman of the Visiting Mission to Palau and he promised to answer it. We should like to hear his answer today, if he is prepared to give it. If not, we are prepared to go on to further questions.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I was grateful for your announcement, Sir, that copies of the Compact in the various local languages are available in the Secretariat. That was certainly my understanding yesterday, and it is comforting to have it confirmed. I am sure that the Soviet delegation will be rushing up to get a copy in Sonsorol as soon as may be.

The Soviet representative asked about a letter. I am afraid I have still not seen the letter, and therefore am not in a position to answer any questions based upon it.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation is prepared to wait until the Chairman of the Mission is ready to answer the question we have asked.

In paragraph 9 of the Mission's report it is stated that a litmus test of the effectiveness of the political education programme had to be its impact on the public and that here its success can best be described as patchy.

Could the representative of the Mission explain what those words mean? How would the Mission have liked to determine the effectiveness, and what is meant by "patchy"?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I sometimes have difficulty with the questions put to me by Soviet representatives. I hope this does not reflect on my intellectual capacity. They seem to have a habit of selecting sentences or even phrases and then asking questions about them without going on to read what the rest of the report says. The answer to Mr. Berezovsky's question as to what "patchy" means follows in the next few sentences, and I suggest he simply carry on reading it, unless he would like me to read it out again, but I do not think I need to.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I know how to read documents and can do so as well as anybody else. The document was written by the representative of the United Kingdom - at least I hope it was - nevertheless the following sentences do not clarify the situation. They

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

do not answer the question asked by the Soviet delegation as to how the Mission would have liked the effect of the programme on the population to be determined. In what way was it supposed to operate? I think the question is perfectly clear. The Chairman of the Mission should undoubtedly know in what way the Mission would have liked to see the effect of the programme determined, because the next few sentences, to which he has referred me, say nothing about how the Mission would like to see the impact determined.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I will start by taking up the hope expressed by the Soviet representative that the report was written by the representative of the United Kingdom. I do not know whether this will come as a disappointment or a source of gratification to him, but, as I have tried to make clear all along, this is a unanimous report written by the representatives of the United Kingdom, France, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. I am not quite clear as to what hope he was expressing, but I repeat that it was the unanimous product of the Mission as a whole.

As far as effectiveness is concerned, it was not for the Mission to establish a definition of "effective". The electoral law referred to in paragraph 6 set out the objective of the political education campaign. It was our assessment, as explained at some length in paragraph 9, that the objective set out in Public Law 2/14, the electoral law, had not been completely achieved. We explain in paragraph 11 why we thought that was in any case an unrealistic objective. If the Soviet representative had been to Palau, he would understand why we came to the conclusion set out in chapter VII, headed "Conclusions", that the efforts made by the Political Education Committee were sincere and that

"In our view most of the voters appeared to understand the overall issue in terms of Palau's future relationship with the United States and were aware that the 10 January 1986 version of the Compact contained improvements on the 1983 and 1984 versions." (para. 26)

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I am grateful to the representative of the United Kingdom for the information that the report was a unanimous one written by everybody working together. However, the answer to the question raised by the Soviet delegation was just as vague as many sections of the report.

I shall turn to my next question. Does the Mission consider it normal for the question of the percentage of votes necessary to confirm the result of a plebiscite to be deliberately obfuscated, and to determine the proportion of votes on the basis of the opinion of the President of Palau?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I thought I had made a shot at answering this yesterday. Perhaps I could refer the representative of the Soviet Union to annex III to our report, section 2 (8) of which reads as follows:

"The January 10, 1986 Improved Compact of Free Association conforms to the Palau Constitution."

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

This was the electoral law adopted by the Palau National Congress. So it is not only the President of Palau who thinks that the Compact conforms with the Constitution; the Palau National Congress thinks that it does.

I had better repeat, since there is room for misunderstanding on this question, that it was not our business in the Mission to take a position on what majority was required. It was for the Government of Palau to do so. There was, as we say in the report, some confusion over whether a simple majority or 75 per cent was required. As I said then, and repeat, it is my personal view that the revised wording of section 324 of the Compact mirrors exactly the Palau Constitution.

President Salii, in his statement to the Council on 12 May, said that the Compact had been approved by the people of Palau "in conformity with our national Constitution" (T/PV.1602, p. 16). That seems to me to be a statement of which we should take some notice.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Questions concerning any agreements which might be concluded by Palau with anybody else, and particularly those regarding nuclear issues, must, according to the Constitution, be decided by the people, and by the people alone. That is clear and all members of the Council are aware of the fact. That is the interpretation of the Mission, which we bear in mind in reaching further appropriate conclusions.

We have a question which we have already asked but to which we did not get a clear answer.

In view of the fact that it was the objective of the Mission to ensure that due process was followed in the holding of the so-called plebiscite, in accordance with the rules, what does the Mission have to say about the fact that the

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

participants in the plebiscite were not asked for identification and could vote at any polling place, regardless of where they had registered to vote? The report, as we read it, indicates that the Mission considers that this was a concession, but we do not quite understand to whom this was a concession. We should like to have the comments of the representative of the Mission and a clear answer as to whether the Mission considers the situation in which the plebiscite took place to have been normal and to have met the standards of conduct for such undertakings.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): The Soviet representative obliges me continually to repeat sections from my report. Of course, I am very proud of it, but I would not really have felt it necessary to go on quoting it. However, I will do so. The last sentence of chapter IV of the report on the poll reads:

"In short, we consider that the poll was very well organized and conducted by the plebiscite authorities so as to ensure the free and fair expression of the views of the voters of Palau." (para. 19)

That seems to me to be an extremely straightforward, clear statement of our view and I repeat it. As far as the words "two concessions" are concerned, these were concessions in the voting process, allowing for a greater degree of democracy. That may be a concept with which the Soviet representative is unfamiliar, but the Palauans are very familiar with it.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I am grateful to the representative of the United Kingdom for having so clearly defined his political position in this specific case. His understanding of democracy in this specific case is very interesting indeed. However, it is one with which it is difficult to agree.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

In paragraph 19 it is stated that during the voting there were some irregularities - I am obliged to keep quoting provisions of the report, because we are considering it. It is said that they were not significant, but nevertheless there were irregularities. Could we perhaps have more details on this?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): The irregularities, such as they were, were insignificant, or "minor", as we say here, "usually involving clerical errors". They consisted for the most part of the returning officer's writing names down on the wrong page of the electoral chart, but irregularities of this sort were corrected by the counting teams at the time of the counting which, as we say in the report, we were supervising throughout.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In view of the frank interest on the part of those who conducted the plebiscite in the Compact's being approved and the clear orientation of the plebiscite board and its members, what guarantees did the Mission have that the conduct of the plebiscite would be impartial?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): The electoral law, which features as annex III to our report, sets out the arrangements for the plebiscite. There were also some rules and regulations for the plebiscite, which we saw but did not annex to the report, in order to keep it within financial and other bounds. The rules and regulations are available in the Secretariat in English. I do not think they are available in Palauan, Sonsorol and Tobi, but we could probably arrange for that too. There does not seem to me to be anything in annex III, and in particular in section 4, which suggests any orientation whatsoever. It was our impression that there was no such orientation and that, as we say in our report, the poll was a model of its kind.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): A careful reading of the documents, including the Visiting Mission's report, shows that there was a definite political leaning in the conduct of the plebiscite. I do not think that it can be seriously suggested that it was an impartial plebiscite.

Although I thank the Chairman of the Mission, whose his answer was very clear, we should like to put another question. The Visiting Mission says repeatedly in its report that it strove to discover the views of the public on the Compact. But how did matters look in fact? Could a member of the Mission tell us how it tried to determine views on the Compact?

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): I am moved to speak for the first time because my delegation feels a little offended by what the representative of the Soviet Union has just said about partiality. I remind him that four totally different countries were represented on the Visiting Mission. I would not venture to say that they share the same philosophy of democracy - that is

(Mr. Rocher, France)

not the question today - but I do not think they can be accused of deliberately engaging in some kind of political game. I would ask the representative of the Soviet Union to clarify the accusation of partiality that he has just made against the Mission.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): It is said that attack is often the best defence. It is not clear why the representative of France is so perturbed. I asked a very simple question: how did the Mission determine the view of the population of Palau on the Compact? That is a matter that is repeatedly mentioned in the report. As for accusations, I have not yet made any against the Mission - I stress the word "yet". So far I have just been asking questions.

As for leaning, or bias, I used that expression with regard to the plebiscite board. I do not think the representative of France was involved in that, so it is not at all clear why he was so perturbed by my questions.

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): The explanations given by the representative of the Soviet Union are just as foggy as our report. I would remind him that he said that the Mission was tendentious and lacked seriousness. I should like in turn to ask him a question. Could the Soviet representative by any chance find a few positive points in the report? Are there only negative aspects, in his eyes?

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): When I have had answers to all the Soviet delegation's questions I shall be able to give my view on the positive and negative aspects of the report. I shall mention the positive aspects at the proper time. It is not the Soviet delegation, but the members of the Mission, who were in the Territory, who should answer questions.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

I must thank the representative of France for recognizing that the report is vague, foggy. I may be vague or foggy, but the report definitely should not be.

Following this verbal exchange of views with the representative of France, I should like to receive an answer to the question I put to the Mission.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I must, not for the first time, remind the representative of the Soviet Union of the Mission's mandate, which I shall quote from our very clear report:

"The Council directed the Mission to observe the plebiscite, including the campaign and polling arrangements, the casting of votes, the closure of voting, the counting of ballots and the declaration of results." (para. 2)

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

I see nowhere in there a reference to views on the Compact, and we did not regard it as our job to establish the views on the Compact, one way or the other, of the population of Palau.

The Soviet representative asked how we established the views that we did establish. I refer him to chapter I, which says what we did, including conducting seven public meetings and visiting 34 out of 40 polling places; to annex I, which gives full details of our activities; and to annex X, which lists the people we met and the meetings we held. I think that answers the question.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): When I said that the report was vague, or foggy, we had not come to the point we have now reached. Perhaps I do not understand English, but I thought that the United Kingdom representative said that it was not within the Mission's terms of reference to establish the population's views on the Compact.

In paragraph 5 of annex I to the report it is stated that the Mission sought the views of the people on the Compact, and this is said also in paragraph 6, which reads in part:

"On the same day, the team led by Mr. Rocher visited Angaur, where they met the leaders and the members of the community and heard their views on the Compact."

In other paragraphs other views are mentioned, in particular that at the time of the plebiscite not only was the situation quiet but the population was rather indifferent. Such statements need to be followed up by the Mission. We are interested in precisely how it determined the people's views on the Compact.

With reference to annex X, "List of people met and meetings held", the information here is insufficient. We think that the report should give not just a

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list of the people whom the members of the Mission met but also an account of what was talked about at those meetings, because this is very important. We understand, of course, that it is important for the report to give an account of the luncheon given to the Mission by the local authorities and the luncheon given by the Mission to the local authorities - it is most important for the Trusteeship Council to know that - but it is even more important to know what the inhabitants of Palau said. Unfortunately, that is not found in the report, in which there are only the political conclusions arrived at by the Mission.

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): I am really dumbfounded at the way in which this report is being treated, the derision with which it is being treated, while the whole world and international public opinion are focused on the work of the Trusteeship Council. What we have before us today is the future of the women, children and men of the Territory of Micronesia who are dependent on the decision of the Council and await with impatience the freedom to decide on their political, economic, social and cultural future. Their eyes are turned towards us as they wait for us to shoulder our responsibilities and act accordingly. In this report, as in that of the regular Visiting Mission, we have endeavoured to reflect their hopes. We are not helping them by treating with mockery a subject as important as the future of a people that expects so much of us.

I should like to recall once again that the traditional chiefs, the governors of the states of Palau and the elected officials have unanimously accepted the terms of the Compact of Free Association. They have freely expressed their views in this regard. We went to Palau to observe and verify that that expression of view was free. Do we have the right today to disappoint those people?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I would have enjoyed hearing the answer to our French colleague's question. However, in answer to Mr. Berezovsky's

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

question, we were indeed asked many questions about the role of the United Nations and what would happen if termination was blocked. We answered them in standard terms. We were also asked what we thought about the Compact, what we thought was in Palau's best interests and how Palauans should vote. But, as I have already said and as the Council will readily realize, our duty was not to advise people how to vote but, as my French colleague has just said, to witness the plebiscite. Whatever we might have felt about certain matters we always quite deliberately refused to answer such questions. I am sure that my Soviet colleague will agree that it would have been quite improper for us to answer such questions, particularly since a good many of them concerned a mysterious telex from the TASS news agency.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The representative of France said that the Trusteeship Council was now engaged in discussing the future of people - women, children and men - the future of Micronesia. I agree with him that indeed that is what the Trusteeship Council, that principal organ, reporting to the Security Council, is about.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

I fully agree with him: people are waiting for the Trusteeship Council to act, as he said. Fine. In fact, that is what we are now doing in the Trusteeship Council, and it is precisely why a particularly careful study must be made of the report of the Visiting Mission to Palau. It is precisely for that reason that the Soviet delegation is compelled to put questions to clarify what actually took place, what the Mission did in Palau, what occurred in Palau when the Mission was there.

Now, judging by the tone of the statement made by the representative of France, this is what we are being told: "We have given you a report. Please do not ask any questions. Just take a decision on the report". But before the Soviet delegation can express its views on the report, it must be clear about what the report states. To that end, it must ask questions. The representative of France himself admitted that the report is foggy and vague - even for him. So what about those who have to read the report?

As for the reply by the United Kingdom representative: well, we have taken note of it. He told us that the Mission was impartial. Then he made an allusion that I did not completely understand to the TASS statement on Micronesia. In that connection, we must ask him a question, as Chairman of the Mission: who authorized him, as Chairman of the Mission, to comment on and, what is more, to correct a statement by a sovereign Government? The TASS statement did reflect the position of a sovereign State Member of the United Nations. Who gave these instructions, this authorization to the Chairman of the Mission to make that correction, to issue that statement?

I should like to revert now to something said before by the representative of France - or perhaps it was the representative of the United Kingdom. I am having conversations with a representative seated on my right and a representative seated

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on my left, and perhaps I sometimes attribute to one of them a statement actually made by the other. If so, I apologize. I shall address this comment to the representative of the United Kingdom. It has been said here that the leaders of Palau, the local chiefs and the national assemblies, were in favour of the Compact, and that this correctly reflected the attitude of the people of Palau towards the Compact. But in one of the paragraphs of the report, the statement is made that, under the structure of Palauan society, decision-making is usually left to the leaders and the chiefs. The members of the Mission themselves state in their report that the programme of political education was therefore not totally successful. The Mission attempted to communicate directly with the people, but generally was not able to do so. That is the thrust of the relevant paragraph of the report.

The introductory statement regarding this report does not accord very well with the replies that we are now hearing. So it must be said that the report is quite foggy.

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): I want to make a correction. I did not admit that the report was foggy. Perhaps I expressed myself badly. What I meant to say was that it seemed to me that in the Soviet delegation's view the report was as foggy as his statements sounded to me. I wished to make that correction in case what I had said had not quite got across.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I had some difficulty following the last statement by my Soviet colleague; it went on for rather a long time. But I do recall that his first question was: who authorized me to make a statement about the TASS telex to which I referred in my previous statement and to which he referred in his? The answer is that I authorized myself to make the statement. I did so for several reasons. First, as I said before, we were asked a lot of

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

questions about it. But secondly, and more importantly, I judged it to be factually incorrect, and I therefore thought it right to put the record straight with a reassuring statement. As the Soviet representative can see, the statement focused only on the United Nations aspects. It did not comment on the politics of what some might have construed as a rather heavy-handed attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Republic of Palau.

So far as the rest of the Soviet representative's question is concerned, I repeat that I found it rather hard to follow. I think he was referring to the following passage from the conclusions to our report:

"We also felt that the Political Education Committee's mandate was bound to conflict with the traditional structure characteristic of Palauan society where decision-making, whether it be in the family, clan, village or state, is generally left to those in authority rather than to individual choice".

(T/1885, para. 26)

I do not think I can add to that statement.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): It turns out that despite the fact that the United Kingdom representative begins each statement by saying that it has been hard for him to understand the Soviet representative, he is quite good at understanding these issues being raised for him. I have to give him his due here. But let us not go into that.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

Going back to the matter regarding the TASS telex, I should like now to say in all seriousness that it was a statement giving the Soviet Union's position on the question of the illegal actions of the United States in Micronesia. The Soviet Union is a member of the Trusteeship Council and we had until now considered that Micronesia knew the Soviet Union's position. It turns out that that has not been the case. Measures have continually been undertaken to distort it and to prevent the Micronesians from understanding the Soviet Union's position on this matter.

That is not only cause for regret, but it also raises another question regarding the correctness of the actions of the Mission's Chairman. His right to express the position of one or another State as the representative of the United Kingdom and of his political affiliation is not of great concern to me, but to speak as Chairman of the Mission and to give clarification on the position of a State means, to say the least, taking on excessive authority.

We shall refer to that statement at a later stage - not today - and deal with it more substantively when we speak about our impressions and conclusions regarding the work of the Mission to Palau.

We have a number of further questions. In order to understand what is going on in this report we should like an answer to the following question. Paragraph 15 of the report (T/1885) states that

"internal political considerations which may have had little or no relevance to the Compact tended to exert disproportionate influence on the proceedings". What kind of "political considerations" exerted a disproportionate influence on the proceedings and what kind of influence was it? We should like to have an explanation from the Mission since it has referred to it in its report to the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I once again find myself in a position of simply having to ask the representative of the Soviet Union to read on. The section from which he is quoting ends as follows:

"in the short time available to us we were unable to judge the extent to which domestic political currents affected the outcome of the plebiscite." (T/1885, para.15)

I have nothing to add to that.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Finally we have gotten to the point that most clearly demonstrates what this report is all about. If during that short period of time the Mission could not judge the extent to which these internal political considerations exerted an influence on the plebiscite, then why did it refer to them at all? Why did it point them out? Since it has referred to them, it must know what it is talking about. Here is an example of that kind of fuzzy thinking - hints. What is being hinted at? What kind of internal political considerations? What are these internal political factors which exerted an influence? On the one hand, the report says that they exerted "disproportionate influence", and, on the other, at the end of the sentence it says "we were unable to judge the extent to which [they] affected the outcome of the plebiscite". Excuse me, but is this not an example of very unusual logic? If not, then perhaps the United Kingdom representative could explain what he had in mind in this sentence. We just do not understand it.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I should like to refer the representative of the Soviet Union to annex III. It contains Public Law 2-14, Section 2 (9) of which states:

"The Compact of Free Association issue is a uniquely local issue of an internal magnitude to be debated and decided by Palauans." (T/1885, p. 20)

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

That seems to me to be an impeccable statement. Incidentally, it covers the TASS telex to which he was referring.

So far as the wording in chapter III of the report is concerned, we were simply making the point that, because there was no major political campaign for or against the Compact,

"internal political considerations which may have had little or no relevance to the Compact tended to exert disproportionate influence on the proceedings". That is to say, there was no major political campaign for or against the Compact - which, in passing, answers another of his questions - and that therefore,

"in the short time available to us we were unable to judge the extent to which domestic political currents affected the outcome".

I can go on repeating this until midnight tonight if necessary, but I would rather not.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The United Kingdom representative has repeated the same thing for three days. Nothing is going to become any clearer, and it is perfectly obvious that this sentence in the report either means something very significant - which the representative of the United Kingdom as the Chairman of the Mission does not want to say here or tell the Council about - or it does not mean anything at all, in which case it is incomprehensible why it should be included in the report.

Regarding his comments on internal affairs in Palau - and once again this deals with the TASS statement - I wish to recall here to the United Kingdom representative that, had the question of the agreement between the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the United States been going on at a time when a Trust Territory had become a sovereign State, then it could have meant that no one should interfere in their bilateral relations. However, the question now being considered

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is that of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, to which a Trusteeship Council Mission was sent. Therefore, when one talks here of interference in internal affairs, please excuse me for recalling that there is a definite system existing here - a system provided for by the United Nations Charter - and changing it is something that neither the United Kingdom representative nor anyone else can do, in any case not at the present time.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

Further, there is the question of there being no political campaign. That is another example that does not speak for or against the Compact. The report states that before the plebiscite the President favoured the Compact, the governors favoured it, national public meetings favoured it, but it also states that there was no political campaign as such. How are we to understand that? It is one more example of the utter lack of logic in the report.

There is another statement in the report that in the absence of anything approaching an organized political campaign and given the confidence that the Compact would carry, there was no need for a pro-compact campaign and the influence of Compact opponents was neutralized. I do not know how we are to understand that. Perhaps the representative of the United Kingdom can explain what the political situation was. If there had been no opposition, would it have been necessary to "neutralize" the opponents of the Compact? Perhaps they had already been neutralized. How are we to understand that?

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I am sorry, but I am lost. I do not know where the word "neutralize" appears in the report. Perhaps the representative of the Soviet Union could enlighten me.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The word appears in paragraph 27. I do not have the English text of the report before me, and perhaps the Russian translation does not correspond to it. In any case, it reads:

"The explicit support for the Compact by the Olbiil Era Kelulau, the traditional leaders and governors, probably eliminated the need for a pro-compact campaign and marginated the influence of Compact opponents."

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I am happy to assure the Soviet representative that there is an error of translation in the Russian text. In fact, we had some argument with the editors about the word in the English text, as the

Secretary will know. The word in the English text is "marginated," by which we intended to mean "side-lined" - or perhaps "marginalized" would be a better word. It does not, however, carry the connotation that the word "neutralized" carries.

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): In answer to the concerns expressed by the Soviet delegation, which was unfortunately unable to go to the Territory to see what we are talking about, I should like to state that although there was no intense political campaign, that was as compared with what occurred in 1983, when the compact of free association was not unanimously approved. In 1983, the opponents of the Compact, particularly among the traditional chiefs, expressed themselves far more vigorously. Everyone here is well aware that in 1983 one part of the compact was not accepted because of the opposition of the traditional chiefs, and, as I have had occasion to recall at the present session, the traditional chiefs have a very great influence on the people of Palau.

The absence of a political campaign, therefore, can be explained by the fact that the chiefs rallied to the support of the new Compact.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Unfortunately, the clarifications that have come simultaneously from my left and my right do not make the picture any clearer. If, as my British colleague has said, that sentence does not have the connotation of "neutralized", does not imply that the opponents of the Compact were neutralized, I do not understand the point of the sentence, even though it is one over which the members of the Visiting Mission laboured for some time according to the statement of the United Kingdom representative.

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): To say that the opposition was "marginated" means that opposition was non-existent because there was unanimity in favour of the Compact. In that sense, it was marginalized; it had no support, it could not express itself.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I am not going to quibble about the word "opposition" and whether it was silent or non-existent, because the material available to the Trusteeship Council shows that opposition to the so-called Compact does exist and is quite considerable. As to how it was "marginated", that is quite another story.

Further, if I understand correctly the objectives of the Council's Visiting Mission to Palau, its functions included going to the island and determining the extent to which the voting process was carried out in a good and orderly manner. The Chairman of the Visiting Mission said that they tried not to go beyond those bounds, although I see indications that in fact they went significantly beyond them. But apparently the Mission found it necessary to familiarize itself with the documents and actions in the Territory in connection with the plebiscite.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

Apparently it quite deliberately provided itself with the material in certain annexes to its report, including the memorandum on the political education campaign. Why was that? As I understood it, the Mission's objective was only to see whether the ballots were being dropped into the ballot boxes correctly and whether people had free access to them, and how many votes were cast pro and con. But apparently that was not so. It should also have been the Mission's objective to see what kind of documents existed and how people were informed on the issues on which they were voting.

The Mission quite seriously concludes - and this is a conclusion with far-reaching political consequences - that the plebiscite was the expression of the will of the people, that it was conducted in an exemplary manner, that it was an act of self-determination. To arrive at such serious political conclusions, doubtless it was necessary to determine what the inhabitants were defining. What did the plebiscite mean? What was it all about? What were people voting for? Were they given the opportunity to come to a real conclusion? Did they really have a choice? Did they really have alternatives? That is something the Mission should have clarified and told us about. What were the alternatives?

In fact the population of Palau did not have any alternative. They were given the right either to vote for the Compact or against it. Well, it was perfectly clear to everybody that if they voted against it they were not going to get any money and they would not have anything to live on.

So once again I should like to say that, if the Mission arrived there with the definite goal of coming to political conclusions such as those it has ventured to make here, then doubtless it should have gone into the questions in depth: what the vote was all about, what the people of Palau were being asked, and what their attitude was in that regard.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

Earlier I deliberately asked whether the attitude of the people of Palau was discussed in advance, but apparently only the Governors were asked for their opinion - those Governors who before the plebiscite stated that they favoured the Compact of so-called Free Association.

By this I mean that in the annexes and the memorandum on the political education campaign there are quite a number of things the Mission should have investigated, to which it should have paid attention. In any case, the most important issue is the non-nuclear provisions of the Constitution.

From the memorandum on the political education campaign it is perfectly obvious that the people of Palau were being misled plain and simple. They were simply deceived. It states that the Compact "conforms to Palau's Constitution"; the Mission did not take it upon itself to say whether it conformed with the Constitution or not; it simply announces that it was so because the President said it was so and because the National Congress made some sort of statement. But this document says nothing about the United States having the right to bring nuclear weapons into the Territory; for some reason, the Mission pays no attention to that. I should like them to comment on this.

What, in fact, were their objectives, and how did they deal with them? What did they do? Did they carry out the technical registration of the results of the votes, or did they deal with political issues? As far as I understand it from the answers we have been given and from this report, they dealt with technical questions and came to political conclusions, which is inconsistent.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): Perhaps our Soviet colleague has his eye on the clock and does not wish to leave a gap between now and 6 o'clock, but I begin to feel that he is going over ground that we have been over several times already. I do sympathize with him since he has to scrape the bottom of the barrel,

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

as we say in my language. But he has 20 years' experience of it, and he is pretty good at it.

I can see his reaction if in fact the Mission had gone and taken a position on the non-nuclear provisions of the Constitution. The Mission would then have been accused of interfering in the internal affairs of Palau. He really cannot have it both ways and tell us not to interfere and then criticize us for not having done so.

I repeat, as I told Mr. Kutovoy yesterday, that it was not part of our mandate to answer the question about the nuclear or non-nuclear provisions of the Compact and the Constitution and the compatibility between the two. But I will repeat two things I have said: first, that the Palau National Congress said in the electoral law that it considered that the Compact - I shall quote exactly the 10 January 1986 Improved Compact of Free Association - "conforms to the Palau Constitution". I gave it as my personal view, which I must repeat to Mr. Berezovsky, that I thought that the Compact conformed exactly to the Constitution and therefore to its non-nuclear provisions. I can add nothing to that.

In answer to an earlier question from my French colleague, he denied that he was attributing any political complexion to the Mission, but he has just done it again, and several times. He suggested we had gone with the definite goal of coming to political conclusions. I find this to be another case of his trying to have his cake and eat it.

It was perfectly open to the Soviet Union, as we all know, to accompany us on the Mission. We would have enjoyed having a representative along. But it is not good enough to vote no, to refuse to come, and then to spend his whole time criticizing the conclusions we came to in his absence. If he had wished to criticize, he should have been there.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Regarding the matter of whether I am looking at the clock or not, even if I am glancing at it that is not because I am eagerly awaiting the end of the meeting. If my British colleague is ready, I am ready to spend another two hours sitting here with him - and not to scrape the bottom of the barrel, ferreting out questions for him. I never do that. When I do not have any questions, I do not ask any. When I have a lot of them, I ask a lot of them. And I have quite a few more I could ask him now.

I should honestly like to get answers from him, but unfortunately I keep asking him questions and not getting answers. That is why I have to keep repeating my questions, rephrasing and paraphrasing them, as they say in English courts. This is not very helpful.

Regarding the cake, I must assure the representative of the United Kingdom, for the English version, that I do not feel like eating that cake because it smells pretty bad and is not very edible - at least what I see of it so far. If he manages to convince me of the opposite, I shall only be too happy.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

Further, the representative of the United Kingdom said here that he personally thought that the Compact was in keeping with the Constitution. That is his personal opinion and he is free to express it to Mr. Berezovsky or to anyone else. Right now it is not of particular interest to us. We are interested in the political actions and conclusions of the Mission in the territory of Palau, which are reflected here in the report. That is what concerns us here. The personal impressions of the representative of the United Kingdom do not really concern us. We are interested in the extent to which the actual state of affairs is objectively reflected here, the extent to which these events actually took place, and not what we are being asked to believe here.

I should like once again to repeat to the representative of the United Kingdom that the question of interference in internal affairs should not be brought up here. Other people might have the right to bring this up, but the representative of the United Kingdom, given the legal traditions of his own State - let alone its colonial experience - ought to be fully aware of this. He certainly should know that the Trusteeship Council deals with Trust Territories. Further, may I be excused for saying that to drum up here some kind of non-existent notions to the effect that the Mission could not look into the documents because it thought that that was interference in internal affairs really smacks of incompetence. I did not want to use that word, by the way, but, in any case, that is the impression we get.

It has been time and again repeated here that the Soviet Union did not want to participate in the Mission. The representatives of the United Kingdom and of the Administering Authority say to the Soviet Union, "Look here, you did not come for 10 days, and therefore you have no idea of what is going on there in general; hence the Soviet Union has no right to express its opinion on what is happening there". That is wrong; it is simply incorrect. A 10-day stay in a Territory does not give one a licence or the right to preach as if one could not be challenged, in

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

particular since what we hear regarding certain politically oriented actions is inaccurate. I am absolutely not afraid to say that here, and I take responsibility for my words.

Furthermore, I must say to the Council that when the Mission went to Palau a Soviet correspondent wanted to go. He wanted to take a look at what was going on there, perhaps even to meet with the Mission and follow on its trail to see what was being done and how it was being done. However, the Soviet correspondent could not get there - and not because he had changed his mind. He could not get there for the simple reason that he was not allowed to go. Moreover, that was accomplished in a rather elegant style. When he requested the re-entry visa - because he had been assigned to work here and his family was living here - he was told, "Mr. So-and-So, you can go, but as for your return, well, we cannot tell you anything about that for the very simple reason that there is no Consulate in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and there is no office that can issue you a re-entry visa; hence you will get a one-way ticket". That was the situation.

That is just by way of illustration. Apparently, even something as insignificant as a correspondent's trip to the Territory was prevented by the Administering Authority. I am not saying this as an accusation directed against the representative of the United Kingdom, who perhaps did not even know anything about it, but in so far as he has touched on the question, I was obliged to refer to that specific fact for illustrative purposes.

Mr. ROCHER (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to go back to the previous statement of the representative of the Soviet Union, to which my British colleague answered, and I associate myself with his reply. During that statement of the representative of the Soviet Union I had nourished the vain hope that he would finally demonstrate perspicacity in reading the Mission's report, and in particular its mandate, to which I should like once again to refer, as follows:

(Mr. Rocher, France)

"The Council directed the Mission to observe the plebiscite, including the campaign and polling arrangements, the casting of votes, the closure of voting, the counting of ballots and the declaration of results." (T/1885, chap. I, para. 2).

Hence, as I was saying, I welcomed his perspicacity, but we seem to have digressed and I am afraid that - this is a purely personal opinion - the atmosphere here is deteriorating. I have the feeling that the members of the Visiting Mission - and I include myself - are being put in the dock here. To me this is an unhealthy situation. I recognize the right of the Soviet Union to give its opinion and to ask questions of the members of the Visiting Mission. I even vigorously urge the Soviet Union to do so to animate our debate and enliven our session. Hence I find it quite natural that these questions should be asked. I also find it quite natural for answers to be given. However, I would hope that we refrain from distorting the facts and the reality.

As far as my delegation is concerned, the Visiting Mission did not go to Palau to discuss the terms of the Compact of Free Association. That was not part of its mandate. The Mission went to Palau to observe the plebiscite - I repeat, to observe the plebiscite. The Mission was directed to observe - I am repeating for the third time - that the plebiscite took place in a free and impartial manner. That is clearly stated in the report, and I should like to say that not only is it clearly spelled out but there is nothing hazy about the way in which it is presented in our report.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I associate myself with the remarks of my French colleague and shall return to some of the things that the representative of the Soviet Union said. First, however, I want to ask you, Sir, how you foresee the rest of this item being handled. We are now at the end of the second afternoon on it. Could you give us some indication of how much more time you want to devote to it? I am prepared to give 22 more hours to it, but I am not sure that it is necessary.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I had intended to invite delegations not to raise new questions at this meeting. I invited members to give answers and I had intended after that to ask if there were any comments on those answers. I had planned then to propose that the Council adjourn and resume consideration of this item later. The contacts I had with delegations before we began our meeting this afternoon showed me that we were not in a position to complete consideration of the item this afternoon, but I think we should be able to finish it at a later meeting.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I wish to answer very briefly what was said by the representative of France and supported by the representative of the United Kingdom. The Soviet delegation, like the French delegation, is interested in ensuring that facts are not distorted. It is precisely for that reason that the Soviet delegation is asking these questions. Moreover, we are asking them in the most positive tone. The Soviet delegation is not to blame for the fact that each of its questions is greeted like a deliberate accusation directed at members of the Visiting Mission and the Mission as a whole. The reaction does not depend on who asks the question. We are interested in seeing that the facts are not distorted and that such distortions do not affect the Council's work.

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

The statement that the Mission had a very limited function, that it was interested solely in observing the holding of the plebiscite and the political campaign - I stress the reference to the political campaign - in connection with the plebiscite is not in keeping with our understanding of the Mission's function. It is stated that the Mission had functions of a purely technical nature, but the report makes far-reaching political conclusions. Logic is being violated here.

What we are considering ends up looking like the story of the child whose mother told him to watch the milk and not let it boil over. In comes the cat and drinks up the milk, and out goes the child. The mother says, "Why aren't you watching the milk?", and the child replies "Because there is no milk to watch; the cat has drunk it." That is the sort of thing that is going on here. The Mission went to the Territory and watched the plebiscite, and then there was nothing else to watch. But the Mission had to reach conclusions at the level at which it could and should have reached them. I repeat that we are extremely interested in seeing that facts are not distorted or violated.

I do not know whether I have understood you correctly with regard to the future conduct of our work, Mr. President. Are you proposing that we extend our meeting today or that we finish now and express our views on the Mission at a later meeting? If the latter, that is fine, but if you are suggesting that we state our views and our general assessment of the Mission today, we shall have to reserve our right, because we have just received answers to a large number of questions and we need to evaluate and assess them. We have a professional approach to the discussion of all these questions, because the Council's decisions concern the destiny of peoples and are eagerly awaited by the peoples of the Trust Territory. Our work must be conducted in that serious spirit.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I propose that we adjourn now, since, as I have already said many times, the cost of the services rises very rapidly after 6 p.m. - indeed, it practically doubles. We shall therefore complete our consideration of this item at another meeting.

Miss BYRNE (United States of America): In keeping with your statement, Mr. President, we shall comment later on several matters that have arisen today.

I am speaking now only to join others who spoke earlier in expressing the deepest sympathy for, and solidarity with, the delegation and people of the Solomon Islands in the wake of the cyclone that has struck that country. We hope that their suffering will be alleviated soon, with the help of the international community.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.