



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GBEHO (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 28: QUESTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (MALVINAS)

Hearing of bodies and individuals having an interest in the question (A/C.4/41/9 and Add.1 and 2)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at its 18th meeting, the Committee had granted requests for hearings to Mr. J. E. Cheek and Mr. D. O. Clifton (A/C.4/41/9).
2. Mr. ACOSTA (Venezuela), speaking on a point of order, said that he wished to reiterate the statement made in 1985, at the Committee's 23rd meeting (A/C.4/40/SR.23), on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, concerning the hearing of petitioners on the item under consideration.
3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Clifton and Mr. Cheek (Legislative Council of the Falkland Islands) took places at the petitioners' table.
4. Mr. CLIFTON (Legislative Council of the Falkland Islands) said that he wished to provide first-hand and up-to-date statistical and other relevant information on the Falkland Islands and to correct misinformation about a people who believed they had a right to self-determination as enshrined in the Charter.
5. He himself was a third-generation Islander, his forebears having emigrated to the Falkland Islands in the late 1800s. He had been elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1985, and had also completed one term in the Executive Assembly. His election manifesto, supported by an overwhelming majority of the electorate, had advocated the development of a better infrastructure which would provide for individual opportunity while maintaining constitutional links with the United Kingdom.
6. Much of the Islands' internal infrastructure had been destroyed as a result of the 1982 conflict. An improved electrical supply system had been completed at a cost of £3 million, and a new water supply system was under construction, to be completed in 1988 at a cost of £3.2 million. A telecommunications project was being evaluated and would cost about £2 million. The possibility of constructing a deep water jetty was being considered. A housing policy had also been established. The educational standards maintained in the Falkland Islands were on a par with those of the United Kingdom and funds from the European Development Fund would allow for the extension of the Stanley secondary school complex in 1987. Spanish was taught as a foreign language. An internal transport study would promote the development of the outer regions. Commercial development continued. Useful background information was also available in document A/AC.109/878.
7. Land transfer, providing for a reduction in farms owned by absentee landlords, was now well established. There had been 31 farms in 1980 and there were now 70. Ownership of land had shifted from 85 per cent overseas ownership in 1982 to

(Mr. Clifton)

54 per cent at the present time and local ownership was expected to rise to over 60 per cent within a short period. The change in land ownership and financing was being managed by the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, which had been created by the legislature as the official agency for the economic development of the Falkland Islands. Its principal aim was economic self-sufficiency, while maintaining the Islands' traditional way of life. A Farmers Supply Co-operative had been established in 1985 and a land improvement scheme had encouraged investment and improvement of pasture lands.

8. Tourism would yield long-term financial returns. There were three tourist lodges on the Islands and long-term tourist development was likely to result from marine-based operations. Tourism allowed for diversification of the land and could be developed in conjunction with sheep farming. A small but potentially economic inshore crab fishing industry was to be established, although catch levels must be assured to safeguard the future of stocks. Islanders would be trained to take over the direction of the industry. A pilot salmon farm had been established, in preparation for a full-scale project. Through the introduction of the Falkland Islands Interim Conservation Zone, offshore fisheries would generate revenue for the Falkland Islands and effectively control the world's last remaining unregulated fishing stocks. The Zone would also provide for the conservation of the other marine living resources of the region, which formed an integral part of the marine ecosystem.

9. Diversification of sheep farming continued, in line with local resources and demand. Sales of absentee landlord farmlands in order to constitute smallholdings had provided the nucleus of farming diversification; farms had been offered to employees on a share-farming basis, with promising results. Given time and opportunity, the Islands would, through the resourcefulness of their people, develop a future which was less dependent on external economic aid.

10. Mr. CHEEK (Legislative Council of the Falkland Islands) said that there had never been an indigenous population on the Falkland Islands, other than the Islanders themselves, who had lived there for seven or eight generations. Nor was the Falklands population a transitory one. The first settlers of more than 150 years previously had been joined by others, generally from Europe, as had happened in other countries of the Americas and Australasia.

11. His main purpose in appearing before the Committee was to plead for the Islanders' right of self-determination, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and General Assembly resolutions. The Islanders wished to choose their own form of government and to coexist peacefully with their neighbours. They could not understand why Argentina wanted to deprive them not only of those basic human rights but also of their land, where families had lived and worked for many generations.

12. Unfortunately, defensive forces would have to be stationed in the Islands for as long as Argentina pursued its spurious claims, although the idea that the forces were a threat to Argentina was laughable. Sizeable forces had been provided by the

(Mr. Cheek)

protecting Power following the Falklands war in 1982, but they had been greatly reduced since then. The actual level of protection was a matter for the protecting Power under Chapter XI of the Charter, although there was a minimum level below which it would be unwise to fall. Notwithstanding the Argentine President's statements that he would not use force against the Islands, there had never been a formal, unconditional cessation of hostilities since the end of the war initiated by Argentina's invasion of the Islands in 1982, and Argentina had a history of political instability. In view of incidents such as the sinking of an unarmed Taiwanese trawler and others involving the use of the Argentine armed forces, it was strange that it was the British Government that was being accused of introducing tension into the area.

13. The Falkland Islanders had been campaigning publicly for a fishing zone around the Islands for at least 10 years, both in the belief that they were entitled to it under international law and in the interests of conservation. The Falkland Islands Conservation and Management Zone would protect fishing stocks in the south-west Atlantic, to the benefit of those who fished the seas and also of the Islands. The conservation benefits also extended to other forms of marine life and bird life on the Islands.

14. Since the Fourth Committee, together with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, was concerned with the welfare of non-self-governing peoples, it seemed only right to concentrate on the wishes of the people who lived on the Islands. Every year, the Argentine delegation tried to turn the debate into a bilateral dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom involving not people, but land, and focusing on territory which Argentina claimed, arguing that its claim superseded the Islanders' right to self-determination.

15. While there were differences of opinion regarding the early history of the Falklands, it was indisputable that the Islanders had been there for more than 150 years. In the rest of the Americas, settlers from other countries had gained their freedom and their right of self-determination. Many United Nations resolutions referred to self-determination as an "inalienable" right, not a concession. The Committee had always maintained that the size of a population or a Territory did not lessen a people's right to self-determination. Moreover the inalienable right to self-determination was not negotiable. The Islanders had self-determination under the British Government and it was enshrined in the Constitution. If the Falkland Islands was still a dependent Territory, that was the Islanders' chosen status, for it was their express desire to retain their links with the United Kingdom. A recent opinion poll of the Islanders had indicated that 94 per cent wished to retain those links, while only 0.3 per cent wished to join Argentina. The Islanders wanted to be left in peace to decide their own future. A similar plea had been made by many peoples in the past and, since the founding of the United Nations, that wish had been granted to many of them.

16. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in a decision at its 18th meeting, the Committee had granted requests for hearings to Mrs. Susan Coutts de Maciello and Mr. Alexander Jacob Betts (A/C.4/41/9/Add.1 and 2).
17. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Coutts de Maciello and Mr. Betts took places at the petitioners' table.
18. Mrs. Susan COUTTS DE MACIELLO (Petitioner) said that, as a mother and a daughter of Falklanders who currently lived on the Argentine mainland, she was one of the many people who felt the threat of the permanent state of confrontation that United Kingdom policy provoked in the South Atlantic region. There was an urgent need to create a climate that would favour a dialogue and understanding between the two countries. The British Government claimed that the aim of its policy was to guarantee the wishes and protect the existing way of life and future of the population of the Islands, but that policy was producing many deep and adverse changes in the normal life of the Islanders and failing to promote their welfare.
19. On a number of occasions, individuals had claimed to represent the Islanders when they actually reflected the opinions of a small sector of the community which was favoured by contracts with the United Kingdom Government and other British organizations and was completely out of touch with the feelings of the genuine local population. Such spokesmen had frequently said that the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) chose to remain British, and by that argument had tried to justify their reluctance to resolve the sovereignty issue. In so doing, they had undermined the efforts of the Argentine Government and the international community's support for the resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom to settle the dispute.
20. In compliance with agreements made with the United Kingdom and within the framework of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX), communications had been established between the Falklands Islands (Malvinas) and the Argentine mainland in 1971. Those agreements had been made solely for the welfare of the residents of the Islands, so as to co-operate in a course of action to help solve the question of sovereignty. Few official statements had been made about the hundreds of Argentines from the mainland who, over the years, had worked in the Islands to promote that aim. They had built a temporary airstrip and later operated external air links, and had improved postal, cable and telephone communications. They had shipped vital supplies in Argentine naval vessels, and provided schools and scholarships on the mainland for children of the Islanders. They had also provided medical and hospital services for hundreds of Islanders over the years. The failure to recognize the merit of those efforts and their contribution to the welfare of the Islanders, which was very much the result of the work of the Falkland Islands Committee, undermined the terms of the 1971 agreements.
21. The recent move by the United Kingdom Government in setting up a fisheries conservation zone around the Islands, in violation of Argentine sovereignty, was a strong blow to achieving any solution. The situation could not continue. The sovereignty dispute over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands must be resolved, bearing in mind that for many years such a solution had been recommended by many United Nations resolutions.

22. Mr. BETTS (Petitioner) said that he was a Falkland Islander whose only interest was to ensure that the uncertainties surrounding the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and its future were ended. Although he had been born on and lived on the Islands, like hundreds of other Islanders over the years he had left because of the instability created by the sovereignty issue and the limited possibilities offered by the colony to local residents.

23. He had recently been heartened to learn of the adoption by the United Nations of a resolution declaring the South Atlantic region a "zone of peace and co-operation". However, his spirits had been dampened somewhat when he had read a few days later of the United Kingdom Government's decision concerning the colony's offshore waters. That development seemed likely to aggravate the current situation and was a further obstacle to any solution to the sovereignty dispute.

24. The United Nations interpretation of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) question had always been clear: the question was one of decolonization, requiring a negotiated settlement. In other words, all United Kingdom arguments to the contrary had been overruled by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, the political status of the colony remained the same as in 1946, when it had been included in the United Kingdom's list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

25. The United Kingdom Government had employed three different arguments to justify its claim to sovereignty. First, it had said that British sovereignty was upheld by historical facts. When that argument had been seriously questioned and doubts raised, it had said that it had acquired the Territory by prescription. That argument had now been replaced by one of defence of the right to self-determination of the Islands' residents.

26. The dispute was between Argentina and the United Kingdom, both of which claimed the archipelago administered by the United Kingdom. The Islanders neither claimed nor exercised sovereignty, nor had they shown a wish to do so. Their community of 1,800 people, a quarter of whom had neither been born on nor had their origins on the Islands, was the subject of the dispute but not the unilateral arbitrator of it. Therefore, it had no right to veto a solution to the sovereignty issue.

27. The United Kingdom had alternately exalted or disdained the Islanders, according to shifts in its policy towards the Islands and their future. The residents of the colony should also accept the harsh reality that no Government majority, however great, could guarantee that no changes would occur beyond the next general election.

28. The United Kingdom's current policy of evading the sovereignty issue created an irreparable breach between it and Argentina. Prolongation of the state of confrontation did nothing to benefit the interests of either of the parties directly concerned, because of the damage that it did to the traditional links between them. The Islanders' interests were of course of great importance and should not go unheeded, but they should not be allowed to impede any progress towards solving the question. It might be helpful for the residents of the Islands

(Mr. Betts)

to know that the relevant articles of the Argentine Constitution enabled provinces to draw up their own constitutions, organize local institutions, elect their governors, legislators and other authorities and establish their own educational system. The Constitution also contained a clause stating that the provinces retained all powers not delegated by the Constitution to the federal Government and those expressly reserved by special covenants at the time of their incorporation.

29. In conclusion, he called on the Committee to do everything in its power to ensure that Argentina and the United Kingdom resumed negotiations in order to solve the problem through peaceful means.

30. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom) said that the core of the dispute was the right to self-determination of the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory and that it was particularly appropriate for the petitioners to be speaking before the Fourth Committee, which was dedicated to upholding the rights of such Territories. In all its resolutions, decisions and consensus texts the Committee had reaffirmed the right to self-determination and independence.

31. There was a major distinction between the two sets of petitioners, in that Mr. Clifton and Mr. Cheek were representatives elected by the residents of the Islands and mandated to speak on their behalf, while Mrs. Coutts de Maciello and Mr. Betts were private citizens who could surely claim only to speak for themselves. It was for the members of the Committee to decide to whom they would give credence. He asked Mr. Betts whether, as a former Islander who had chosen freely to leave the Islands and become an Argentine citizen, he would deny to the Islanders, including his own relatives, the right to choose their own nationality, system of government and way of life.

32. Mr. BETTS (Petitioner) replied that Falkland Islands nationality had never been put at risk. However, the right of the Islanders to decide their future had to be balanced against the geopolitical realities and other rights involved in the issue. The dispute concerned sovereignty, a fact which the United Nations had recognized in resolutions 1514 (XV), 2065 (XX) and 3160 (XXVIII), among others. The reason for the deadlock was that two of the concepts involved, namely self-determination on the one hand and national unity and territorial integrity on the other, appeared to conflict. Sovereignty did indeed belong to a people, but its limits were defined territorially, with carefully marked boundaries. In the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the United Nations had enshrined the principle that any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In the case at hand, the Islanders' right to decide implied a disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of Argentina and must therefore be ruled out as a potential solution.

33. Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) recalled that, in all its communications and documents, his country had made it clear that it was prepared to consider, in negotiations with the United Kingdom, all means of guaranteeing the way of life,

(Mr. Delpéch, Argentina)

culture and language of the Islanders and, most importantly, the possibility of including them in the Argentine legal system.

34. He did agree with the petitioner who had stated that the Malvinas did not have an indigenous population. Until 1833, when the British had illegally occupied the Islands, the sole inhabitants had been 40 or 50 Argentines living there peacefully. Since it was a universally recognized principle of international law that no one could transfer a right better than the person enjoying that right, however, it had to be said that the present inhabitants could not enjoy a right resulting from an illegal act.

35. His delegation was pleased to note that 94 per cent of the Islanders had expressed the desire to remain British citizens: since the Islands contained no Argentine citizens at all, it was quite significant that that figure was not 100 per cent.

36. In the debate at the previous meeting and in the plenary, the United Kingdom had recognized the existence of a dispute over sovereignty but had stated that it would only discuss secondary issues such as diplomatic and consular relations, transport, etc. His delegation found that attitude incomprehensible and wondered how a dispute recognized by the British Government was to be settled if that Government refused to discuss one of the major elements involved. In his delegation's view, General Assembly resolution 40/21 and the draft resolution currently before the plenary represented a balanced, neutral and logical recognition of the international community's concern. As the Brazilian representative had correctly stressed, all aspects of the future of the Islands should be included in the negotiations.

37. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom) asked Mr. Cheek whether Argentina's offer to take the greatest care of the interests of the Falkland Islanders was acceptable to him.

38. Mr. CHEEK (Legislative Council of the Falkland Islands) said that, despite initial claims to the contrary, 24 hours after invading the Islands the Argentines had wanted to change the Islands' educational system and the system of traffic circulation. Certainly no changes had been necessary in those first few days, even for security reasons, since it had been one month before any British action had taken place.

39. As for the interests of the Islanders, one such interest was their right to self-determination and he found it difficult to accept Argentina's argument that the present-day Islanders did not have that right. In his view, the lands that had been taken from the Indians since 1833 to form what was now Argentina were no different from the lands on which the Islanders were now living.

40. Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) asked Mr. Cheek whether he was a British citizen and to indicate the national origin and capital of the companies for which Mr. Cheek had worked over the past 10 years.

41. Mr. CHEEK (Legislative Council of the Falkland Islands) replied that his ancestry was half English and half Scottish and Irish and that his principal citizenship was that of the Falkland Islands, although he also had British citizenship. His company was an international firm which had its headquarters in London but was owned world-wide.
42. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom) asked Mr. Betts whether, irrespective of his feelings about British policy in the Falklands, he would not agree that it was reasonable for the United Kingdom, as the recognized United Nations administering Power, to work on the assumption that the wishes of the Islanders were relevant to their political future.
43. Mr. BETTS (Petitioner) noted his earlier statement that the interests of the Islanders were of great importance but should not be allowed to impede any progress towards solving the question.
44. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom) pointed out that his question had concerned the wishes, not the interests, of the Islanders. A simple "yes" or "no" answer would suffice.
45. The CHAIRMAN observed that procedure in the Committee was somewhat different from that of a court of law. He would therefore not insist that the petitioner reply "yes" or "no" to the question.
46. Mr. BETTS (Petitioner) replied that the wishes of the Islanders had always been considered by Argentina, as Argentine delegations to the Fourth Committee had repeatedly stated. In fact, in 1981 the two Island representatives had been asked to draw up their own list of safeguards if they found those of Argentina to be insufficient. Unfortunately that request had never been answered.
47. Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) pointed out that the United Kingdom question might be confusing. The United Nations term traditionally applied to the Islanders' expectations was "interests". The Islanders' desires were certainly important, but that term might imply a veto power, which the United Nations did not recognize.
48. Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom) said that he had used the term "wishes" advisedly, for it was on those wishes that his Government rested its policy. As for traditional United Nations terminology, that used in cases of decolonization, which was how Mr. Betts had described the issue, recognized the inalienable right of the peoples concerned to self-determination. That was exactly what his Government wished to see applied to the Falkland Islands.
49. Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) said that the United Kingdom delegation favoured the use of the word "wishes" since it wanted the wishes of 1,800 British inhabitants to be registered so that they could remain British. That seemed to be a total distortion of the philosophy underlying the concept of self-determination. He gave the example of an unoccupied territory to which a particular Government sent 200 or 300 families. A century later, that Government claimed the territory through the

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

exercise of the "right of self-determination" of its own citizens. The term "wishes" implied the enshrinement of usurpation by citizens over a period of time.

50. Mr. Clifton and Mr. Cheek withdrew.

51. Mrs. Coutts de Maciello and Mr. Betts withdrew.

CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

52. The CHAIRMAN, summing up the Committee's deliberations at the current session, said that it had adopted 20 draft resolutions or decisions, 14 of them unopposed. It had also heard a large number of petitioners.

53. Non- of the colonial Territories had attained independence or joined the United Nations in the past year and it was still widely accepted that decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories remained high on the agenda of the international community. In that regard, all the petitioners who had appeared before the Committee had emphasized the urgent need to grant self-government and independence to all Non-Self-Governing Territories.

54. There were some Territories, however, the colonial situation of which constituted an affront to the Charter and to human dignity and a challenge to the moral conscience of the international community. The Committee must help those Territories to become independent as soon as possible. Namibia was a case in point. Even though the United Nations had revoked South Africa's mandate over the Territory and had established the Council for Namibia to administer it until independence, South Africa had stubbornly and illegally clung to the Territory and refused to co-operate in the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The debate in the Committee had reflected the concern and sense of urgency of Member States at the intolerable delay in the granting of independence to Namibia by the apartheid régime of South Africa.

55. The statements made on the question of Namibia had also reflected justifiable outrage at the ruthless exploitation of the Territory's natural resources, in contravention of Decree No. 1 of the United Nations Council for Namibia. The link between foreign economic interests and Namibia's independence should no longer be ignored or condoned by the international community. All forms of illegal exploitation of the resources of the Territory must be condemned and firmly proscribed. Similarly, members had expressed strong disapproval at the policy of constructive engagement and the linkage of the independence of Namibia to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

56. Considerable attention had been focused on the situation of small Territories. The majority of speakers had underscored the need to continue to apply the same decolonization principles to those Territories as had been applied to larger ones in the past. However, that did not mean that they ignored the special problems which characterized such geographically and demographically small Territories, most of which were also islands. Those special problems, which were

(The Chairman)

mainly economic, required the sympathy, inventiveness and generosity of the international community, but should not be allowed to detract from the fundamental and other rights of small Territories under the Charter. Members had also stressed the need to continue to send visiting missions to colonial Territories and had urged the administering Powers concerned not only to permit access by those missions but also to co-operate fully with them.

57. He was sure that he was echoing the sentiments of the Committee in paying sincere tribute to the Special Committee of 24 for its work in advancing the objectives of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. As in the past, that Committee had facilitated the work of the Fourth Committee, in particular on the question of Namibia. The report and draft resolutions submitted by that Committee had been considered carefully and recommended to the General Assembly for adoption.

58. One of the most delicate issues before the Fourth Committee at the current session had been the question of Western Sahara. Unlike at previous sessions, the Committee had not had the benefit of the participation of one of the parties to the dispute on the Territory, since dialogue between the contending parties was still non-existent. None the less, the Committee had reaffirmed that Western Sahara was still a cause for decolonization and had appealed to both Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO to display the political will necessary to implement resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) of the Organization of African Unity and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The Committee had supported the initiatives being taken by the current Chairman of OAU and the Secretary-General to find a lasting solution to the question.

59. With respect to the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, the draft resolutions submitted and the statement made by the Chairman of the corresponding Committee had testified to the importance and urgency of the Programme. Delegations had called for greater financial support for the Programme and had invited States to make generous offers of study and training facilities to peoples of colonial Territories. He joined in the appeal also addressed by members of the Committee to the specialized agencies to render the necessary assistance in facilitating the education and training of young men and women from southern Africa.

60. At the current meeting, the petitioners on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) had reminded members of the political impasse over the Territory. He hoped that the parties concerned would find it possible to respond favourably to the call by the international community to resume a dialogue as soon as possible on the future of the Islands. It was only through dialogue that the question could be satisfactorily resolved.

61. To sum up, the Fourth Committee had fulfilled its responsibilities expeditiously, without sacrificing detail or earnestness. In so doing, it had brought the decolonization process one step closer to the goal of total independence for the remaining colonial Territories. The Committee's contribution

(The Chairman)

had also served to disseminate information on decolonization in general and to make international public opinion aware of the problems inherent in the process. He hoped that that effort would be rewarded with greater support for the decolonization process throughout the world.

62. He thought it appropriate at the current stage to depart somewhat from tradition in order to pay a sincere tribute to the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization, Mr. Rifai, who was retiring from the United Nations. He considered it necessary to do so because of the impressive contribution that Mr. Rifai had made to the Committee's work during his years of office. Mr. Rifai had dedicated a total of 32 years of his working life to the United Nations, 12 years in the service of his country, Syria, and 20 years in the Secretariat. Throughout those years, he had worked in the field of decolonization and there was no greater authority on the subject. The extent of Mr. Rifai's dedication, political commitment and intellectual capacity had been judged as far back as 1962, when he had been appointed United Nations Commissioner for the plebiscite which had preceded the attainment of self-government by the Territory of Western Samoa. Since then, he had worked with assiduity and pragmatism to enable many other colonial Territories to exercise their inalienable right to independence.

63. The United Nations and colonial countries and peoples would be the poorer for the retirement of Mr. Rifai, but he would now be devoting his energies to serving the same cause in a different manner, for example, by teaching young people the lessons of decolonization. He was certain that he was speaking for all delegations when he assured Mr. Rifai of the respect and gratitude of the entire Committee. He wished him a happy retirement and every success in his future endeavours. The Committee would miss his wise counsel but its loss would be the gain of others with whom it could work closely and harmoniously for the final eradication of the scourge of colonialism.

64. Mr. RIFAI (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization) said that his thanks went to the Chairman and to all the members of a Committee with which he had been associated for 32 years. He would retain his deep attachment to the Committee as long as its objectives were not totally fulfilled, and would continue to follow its work even from a distance. If, as a philosopher had put it, the story of mankind was the struggle for liberty, the Fourth Committee was a protagonist in that story.

65. He himself was proud of his association with the United Nations from its early days. He had joined the Trusteeship Council in 1953 and had since devoted all his efforts to decolonization. Three episodes in the course of that rich experience stood out: his participation in the committee responsible for drafting the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; his service as plebiscite Commissioner in Western Samoa; and his recent involvement in organizing the highly successful International Conference for the Immediate Independence of Namibia. It was his hope that all dependent peoples would one day, very soon, become free and independent. History was on the march and could not be stayed.

(Mr. Rifai)

66. After an exchange of courtesies in which Mr. ENGO (Cameroon) spoke on behalf of the Group of African States, Mr. POTTS (Australia) on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, Mr. KULAWIEC (Czechoslovakia) on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, Mr. LUKASHA (Jordan) on behalf of the Group of Asian States, Mr. NAVARRO RIVAS (Nicaragua) on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and Mr. BILAL (Qatar) on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had completed its work for the forty-first session.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.