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2000th MEETING: 6 APRIL 1977

NEW YORK

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NOTE

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

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

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

2000TH MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 6 April 1977, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Simón Alberto CONSALVI (Venezuela).

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

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2000/Rev.1)

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

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Statement by the President

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): As the Security Council has with this meeting reached a numerical milestone in its 31 year history, I think that it is appropriate to say a few words in commemoration of this event.
2. Let me recall that the first meeting of the Council—I could say our first meeting, even though I am a comparative newcomer to this main organ of the United Nations—was held on 17 January 1946 in London. After four and a half rather busy years, the Council held its 500th meeting on 12 September 1950 at Lake Success. During the following years, the States Members had recourse to the Council less often, and it took almost 12 years for the next 500 meetings to be held. The 1000th meeting was held in this chamber on 3 April 1962. Almost exactly 15 years later, we meet today for the 2000th meeting.
3. Statistics should not lead one to rash generalizations but, if for the purpose of a birthday speech a generalization may be allowed, I should like to point out that, as long as one takes 500 meetings as a unit, the Security Council seems to have an irregular heartbeat, whereas, if one uses 1000 meetings as a unit, the analogy of a diagnosis for a long and healthy life comes to mind.
4. May I quickly add, in making these comparisons, that I certainly do not wish either to encourage or to discourage any Member State from requesting a meeting of the Council

or abstaining from doing so. I merely wanted to strike a note of confidence with complete conviction.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

5. The PRESIDENT: (*interpretation from Spanish*): As I assume the presidency of the Security Council, I have the great honour of expressing to Mr. Andrew Young, representative of the United States, the appreciation of all the members of the Council for the services he rendered as President during the month of March. Both during the formal meetings of the Council and in the course of intensive consultations devoted to the consideration of two of the most difficult and long-standing issues before the Council, Ambassador Young gave generously of his talent and demonstrated qualities of patience, courtesy, skill and wisdom, which quickly earned him our respect and friendship. I am very happy to be in a position to pay this well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Young, who has set an example of dedicated and impartial leadership which I shall do my best to emulate.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Benin

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

6. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): Letters have been addressed to the President of the Council by the representatives of Botswana, Gabon, Guinea, and Morocco in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the question on the agenda. Consequently, I propose, in accordance with the usual practice and with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, under the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.
7. In view of the limited number of places available at the Council table I invite the representatives mentioned above to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the understanding that they will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever they wish to address the Council.

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

At the invitation of the President, Mr. M. Modisi (Botswana), Mr. L. N'Dong (Gabon), Mr. M. S. Camara (Guinea) and Mr. A. Bengelloun (Morocco) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

8. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the complaint by Benin. I should like to recall that when the Council considered this item at its 1986th and 1987th meetings, held on 7 and 8 February, it adopted resolution 404 (1977), by which it decided to send a special mission composed of three members of the Council to the People's Republic of Benin in order to investigate the events of 16 January at Cotonou and to report to the Council. The Special Mission, composed of Mr. Ramesh Mulye of India, Ambassador Mansur Rashid Kikhia of Libya and Ambassador Jorge Enrique Illueca of Panama, who acted as the Chairman, submitted its report, contained in document S/12294 and Add.1, on 8 March 1977.

9. I should also like to draw attention to additional documents before the Council in connexion with the report of the Special Mission: S/12313, which contains a letter dated 28 March 1977 from the Secretary-General, transmitting a copy of a telegram from the President of the Republic of Gabon; S/12317, which contains a further letter dated 4 April from the Secretary-General, transmitting a copy of a letter dated 23 March from the President of the Republic of Gabon; S/12318 and S/12319, which contain letters dated 4 April from the Chargé d'affaires *a.i.* of Benin requesting the circulation of reports prepared by his Government. The first of those reports has been issued in document S/12318/Add.1 and the second will be issued as soon as possible in document S/12319/Add.1.

10. The first speaker is the representative of Panama, who, as Chairman of the Special Mission, will introduce the report of the Mission.

11. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, before addressing the Council as Chairman of the Special Mission, I should like to make an initial statement as the representative of Panama. This statement concerns the position that Venezuela occupies today.

12. The fact that the representative of Venezuela occupies the seat of President of the Security Council is a cause for genuine rejoicing not only for Panama, as the capital of the ideals of Bolívar, but also for all of Latin America and the countries of the third world, which see in the nation of Venezuela the best champion of the legitimate interests of the developing countries in the north-south dialogue.

13. On our continent of many races we can say that Venezuela, the cradle of Simón Bolívar, is not only "the land of the Liberator", but also "the land of liberators". Statesmen of that country, following in the footsteps of that genius from Caracas, have for successive generations devoted their best efforts within and beyond their boundaries to an arduous struggle for the freedom, the dignity, the development and the integration of Latin America.

14. As President Carlos Andrés Pérez stated on 16 November 1976 before the General Assembly, Venezuela has among its priority objectives in its foreign policy the "strengthening of the United Nations [because that] is the strengthening of peace and of hopes for a better destiny for mankind".¹ To paraphrase the statement by President Pérez, I might say that the political concept that Venezuela stands for in the Council and its Latin American identity are embodied in its representative, our eminent colleague Ambassador Simón Alberto Consalvi. From his country's Parliament, where he is a representative of the Democratic Action Party in the Congress, Ambassador Consalvi came to this world parliament to bring to us the wealth of his experience and his ideals, which he has upheld in prison as in the press and in his legislative post. As a diplomat, the President of the Institute for Culture and Fine Arts and Minister of Information of his country, Ambassador Consalvi brings to the Council a reputation for integrity, humanism, devotion to duty and erudition, which together with his serene wisdom will contribute to making the work of the Council during the month of April fruitful and constructive.

15. These are sufficient reasons, Mr. President, to expect every success in the exercise of your duties as President. I should like to state that at all times you will have the firm and willing co-operation of the delegation of Panama. We offer you this co-operation with fraternal enthusiasm, knowing that you are imbued with the faith of Venezuelans in Latin America as a community, in its historic destiny and the role that it will play before mankind.

16. We are also most gratified to place on record the appreciation of the delegation of Panama for the praiseworthy work performed by Ambassador Andrew Young of the United States when it was his turn to preside over the Council during the month of March last. Ambassador Young, in the brief time in which he has been in office, has given proof of his great ability as a politician and diplomat. During his presidency he made clear his firm willingness to reconcile the interests of his country with the ideals of the United Nations and with the aspirations of the oppressed peoples of the world.

17. I should like now to address the Council as Chairman of the Security Council Special Mission.

18. On behalf of my colleagues, Mr. Ramesh N. Mulye of India and Ambassador Mansur Rashid Kikhia of Libya, and on my own behalf, it is my honour to submit to the Council the report of the Special Mission established under Council resolution 404 (1977), contained in document S/12294.

19. As members will recall, when that resolution was adopted, the Council decided to send a special mission composed of three of its members to the People's Republic of Benin to carry out an inquiry into the events of 16 January 1977 at Cotonou and report to the Council. After consultations with members of the Council, the President of the Council, Ambassador James Murray of the United Kingdom, appointed the representatives of India, Libya and Panama members of the Special Mission. I was honoured to

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 67th meeting, para. 8

be selected to be Chairman of that important mission. It was also a great pleasure to work with my colleagues and friends Mr. Mulye and Ambassador Kikhia. Their great capacity for work and their spirit of co-operation and constant good humour made it possible for the Mission to discharge its arduous task quickly and productively in an atmosphere of complete harmony. May I therefore avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude once again to my colleagues for their great intellectual and practical contribution to the discharge of the task entrusted to us by the Council. On this occasion I should also like to express my gratitude to the competent and devoted Secretariat staff who went with us and contributed to the success of our mission.

20. Finally, I should like to express the profound appreciation of the Special Mission to the Government of the People's Republic of Benin, whose co-operation and goodwill made it possible for us to discharge our duties and which supplied a substantial part of the information we used in our report. The list of names of the government officials and private persons whose warm hospitality made us feel so at home in their country is so long that I cannot mention them individually, but the first among them, His Excellency President Mathieu Kérékou, will, I hope, transmit our gratitude to his fellow citizens.

21. In a lighter vein, I should like to point out that no one who has picked up the report of the Special Mission can accuse us of a lack of diligence. With the annexes, the report weighs more than a pound and contains more than 300 pages. Speaking seriously now, I can affirm my conviction that it was desirable, even essential, that the report should be lengthy so as to give a comprehensive picture of the events that occurred at Cotonou on 16 January.

22. The descriptive part of the report gives, in my opinion, a clear picture of the Mission's activities in fulfilment of its mandate. I hope it will be clear from the report that the members of the Mission did everything they could not to miss any opportunity to investigate every event and circumstance that might be relevant to what happened on 16 January.

23. In the conclusions of the report, statements are made with which the three members of the Mission completely agree; there are no dissenting opinions on any part of the report. It is the considered opinion of the members of the Mission that each of those statements is substantiated by the evidence obtained, although they did everything possible to limit the number of conclusions, in order to avoid any possibility of exaggeration. We trust that the members of the Council have had an opportunity to read the complete text and the annexes. The importance of the subject fully merits such personal attention on their part.

24. However, I should like to mention briefly the following points which deserve special attention.

25. I am confident that members of the Council will carefully consider the testimony of the member of the attacking force who was taken prisoner at Cotonou on 16 January. A summary of his testimony before the Special Mission appears in chapter II, section D of the report and a

complete transcript of his testimony is included in annex III. As members of the Council are aware, that prisoner of his own free will described in detail his recruitment and training with the attacking force, as well as his own participation in the operation of 16 January. After exhaustive interrogation, we found no flaws, contradictions or obvious omissions in his testimony, and his account in general was the same as other accounts and, in particular, accorded with the documentation captured by the Government of Benin.

26. Furthermore, I trust that the members of the Council will pay special attention to the documentation described in chapter II, section G of the report, and the photocopies and translations in annex VI. In submitting all that documentation to the Special Mission, the Government of Benin indicated that it had been captured by the armed forces of Benin after the attackers of 16 January had been forced to flee. That documentation is voluminous and constitutes a meticulous and coherent inventory corroborating the testimony of the prisoner and other evidence obtained by the Mission.

27. On the basis of the testimony of the member of the attacking force taken prisoner on 16 January and the documentation left behind by the attacking force, the Special Mission deemed it appropriate to indicate in its conclusions, reflected in paragraph 145 of the report, the places where the attackers had been recruited and trained and from where they had departed in order to arrive at Cotonou on 16 January, as well as the identity of the person who had been in charge of that military operation.

28. I wish particularly to draw the attention of the members of the Council to those conclusions which appear in paragraphs 136-140 inclusive, which give a substantially accurate description of the events at Cotonou on 16 January.

29. Paragraph 141 expresses the conclusion that the People's Republic of Benin was the object of an armed attack perpetrated by a force which arrived at Cotonou airport on the morning of 16 January. The primary objective of the invading force was the overthrow of the present Government of Benin. Inasmuch as the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the State of Benin were violated by that invading force which came from outside the territory of that country, there can be no doubt, as is stated in paragraph 142, that Benin was subjected to aggression.

30. It is also clear that a majority of the attacking force, not nationals of Benin, were participating in that action for pecuniary motives and were therefore mercenaries. That conclusion appears in paragraph 143.

31. From the manner in which the operation was conceived and executed, the Special Mission believes a similar operation could be conducted elsewhere against small defenceless countries for similar purposes. That conclusion appears in paragraph 144.

32. As I indicated earlier, the Special Mission reached these conclusions on the basis of its on-the-spot investi-

gations, the comprehensive testimony presented to it and the documents which were obtained.

33. The members of the Special Mission consider that as for the origins and the perpetrators of the aggression to which Benin was subjected on 16 January, particular weight attaches to the testimony of the prisoner and to the documentation left behind by the attacking force.

34. The Special Mission considers that its conclusions are well and conservatively founded. Obviously, however, the terms of its mandate did not permit the Special Mission to undertake further investigations in the time available and to verify all the evidence obtained.

35. May I conclude these remarks by expressing appreciation to the members of the Security Council and to its President for the month of February for the honour they conferred on us and for the confidence placed in the representatives of India, Libya and Panama in appointing us members of the Special Mission.

36. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to convey to the Chairman and members of the Special Mission the Council's appreciation for the goodwill and conscientiousness with which they carried out the task entrusted to them.

37. I am moved by the generous words voiced by the representative of Panama with respect to my country and myself. In particular, I am most grateful to him for recalling my years in prison. One tries to forget such things oneself. It was a useful experience, but let it not be thought that I am recommending-it.

38. I wish to inform Council members that I have received a letter from the representative of Niger, Chairman of the African Group for the month of April, in which he asks to be invited, to participate in our debate without the right to vote. Therefore, in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure and the established practice of the Council, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in our debate without the right to vote.

39. In view of the limited number of places available at the Council table, I invite the representative of Niger to take the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber, on the understanding that he will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever he wishes to address the Council.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. J. Poisson (Niger) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber.

40. Mr. BOYA (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Sir, you are presiding over the Council at a time when it is considering an important case relating to the survival of the African continent, which is threatened by many scourges that constitute real dangers for the peace and security of the nations of the world. Those scourges are to be found in all forms of imperialist, colonialist and neo-colonialist foreign domination, racism and *apartheid*—in a word, in the

barbarous enslavement and outrageous exploitation of our peoples and those of the third world who cherish peace, justice and dignity.

41. The as yet unconcluded Council debate on *apartheid*, that heinous and atrocious form of enslavement, colonialist domination and the ferocious exploitation of man by man, has increased the international community's awareness of one of those evils daily threatening the entire independence of free and sovereign Africa, which aspires only to peace, security and the welfare of its peoples.

42. Today, under your presidency, the Security Council, pursuant to the terms of its resolution 404 (1977), is embarking upon the second stage of a debate to which the revolutionary, heroic and intrepid people of Benin attaches vital importance.

43. Now that the Special Mission dispatched to Cotonou by the Council has published its conclusions, and the veil of secrecy which the imperialist Powers, their obsequious agents blindly devoted to their cause, and the press in those countries have been striving so hard to keep over the armed aggression of Sunday, 16 January 1977, has been totally stripped away, my delegation hopes this debate will take place in an atmosphere of clarity, objectivity and sincerity, and with a high sense of justice and responsibility.

44. But before coming to the heart of the matter before the Council, permit me, Mr. President, to voice here the profound and sincere gratitude of the Beninese people to the President of the Council for the month of February, Ambassador Murray of the United Kingdom. Our great comrade-in-arms, President Kérékou, was particularly appreciative of the distinguished role played by Ambassador Murray in convening the Council and having it debate the complaint of Benin, my country, which had fallen victim to a dastardly and barbarous act of aggression on Sunday, 16 January 1977.

45. My delegation highly appreciates the understanding and the spirit of co-operation shown it by all the members of the Council. We wish to thank them warmly for that.

46. I should like to extend to Ambassador Young of the United States my delegation's appreciation for the responsible manner in which he conducted our proceedings during the month of March.

47. Sir, my delegation wishes most warmly to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of April. I know that, thanks to your experience, our proceedings will be conducted in a spirit of sincerity, justice and responsibility. You may rest assured of my delegation's whole-hearted support in the performance of your important task.

48. Benin's cause is a just one. All friendly countries have defended it; their active support and their spirit of solidarity made it possible for us to conclude the initial phase of our debate in a positive manner. Although they were only doing their duty, the militant people of Benin is nevertheless profoundly grateful to them.

49. My delegation wishes to single out the decisive role played by the members of the Security Council Special Mission who went to the scene—to Benin itself—to conduct their investigation from 16 to 25 February. The Chairman of the Mission, Ambassador Illueca of Panama, and the two other members, Ambassador Mansur Kikhia of Libya and Mr. Ramesh Mulye of India, in the view of our great comrade-in-arms, President Kérékou, performed some extremely thorough, responsible and objective work at Cotonou. Their report and its annexes—more than 300 pages—are a tremendous harvest of particularly edifying, verifiable and measurable facts that is offered for the attentive perusal of the Council, whose task it is to maintain international peace and security.

50. Mr. President, my delegation is deeply convinced that, in the light of the irrefutable facts contained in the report of the Special Mission, and thanks to your eminent qualities as an enlightened statesman, you will succeed in conducting this debate in a spirit of equity, according to the wishes of the peace-loving people of Benin.

51. My delegation, which is fully acquainted with the voluminous evidence of the imperialist armed aggression committed against Benin on Sunday, 16 January 1977, has a proper appreciation of the gravity of the acts committed by the allied forces of evil against small defenceless countries of the third world, which are more concerned with finding, in a spirit of justice, equality and sovereignty, rapid and effective solutions to their development problems. That is why the Beninese people, its vanguard party and its Government have constantly displayed a great deal of perspicacity, calm and, above all, a high sense of responsibility, as members of the Council must, in all conscience, acknowledge.

52. The militant people of Benin were very quick to unmask the game of their sworn enemies who wanted to cover up their heinous crime by shamelessly spreading the most flagrant lies and the most abominable calumnies about our people, in the cynical and Machiavellian idea of misleading international public opinion, to which the imperialist press so noisily announced the presence of "mysterious mercenaries" or conflicts within the army and Government of Benin. The people of Benin refused, as was quite rightly pointed out by certain of our fellow representatives here, to rush to any hasty conclusions, ill-timed condemnations or blustering accusations before an inquiry had taken place. Although we have been deeply wounded and our dignity has been injured, the people of Benin have preferred to remain calm and lucid, as this great political scandal of our century demands, in order to be better able to determine the facts, to analyse and appreciate their profound significance, and above all to give all Governments that sincerely love peace and justice an opportunity to see, analyse and judge for themselves all the particularly edifying and irrefutable facts and all the tangible evidence of the dastardly act of armed aggression perpetrated so barbarously on 16 January 1977 against the peace-loving and heroic people of Benin.

53. This attitude is very much appreciated by all and it has, furthermore, made it possible for us to thwart the great conspiracy of silence whereby international imperialism and

its African lackeys wanted to hush up their abominable crime, once they were no longer able to impose their flagrant lies on international public opinion.

54. Indeed, no one is now unaware that many delegations have visited the actual scene of the crime committed against our people. Everyone is aware today that Mr. Peter Onu, Assistant Secretary-General of OAU, has been to Cotonou and has made a detailed report in the light of evidence he examined, and that his report has been supplemented by the report of a special mission composed of Foreign Ministers from Angola, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique and Zambia which went to Cotonou on 24 February.

55. Everyone knows today that the International Commission of Inquiry, composed of Nigeria, Guinea and Benin, worked for many weeks and submitted a report on its inquiry that shows an objectivity and depth of political analysis that compels everyone's admiration. Let us make it quite clear that that International Commission of Inquiry began its work on 28 January 1977 and submitted its report on 18 February. That report was subjected to a detailed examination by the highest organs of the Party and revolutionary State of Benin before being finally adopted on 12 March as our national report on the imperialist armed aggression of which the People's Republic of Benin was the victim on Sunday, 16 January 1977. Pending the distribution of that report in the appropriate languages as an official document of the Security Council,² each member of the Council can now at least have a copy in French.

56. Finally, everyone is aware today that the report of the Security Council Special Mission (*S/12294 and Add.1*) had an explosive effect within the United Nations.

57. These different reports have made it quite clear that Benin was the victim of an act of armed aggression financed from the outside. These reports agree in concluding that this was a clear-cut case of aggression, carefully prepared and carried out by professionals of crime on a massive scale. The report of the Special Mission says in paragraph 141:

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

In paragraph 142 of the report we find the following:

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

58. These different reports confirm that those responsible for the abominable crime of 16 January 1977 did not come from Mars—they are not imaginary creatures—and that the Beninese people were not the victims of a collective

² Subsequently circulated as document S/12319/Add.1.

hallucination that morning. These different reports confirm that international imperialism, the sworn enemy of the peoples of the world, recruited mercenaries in order to invade Benin and to deliver a stab in the back to its democratic and popular revolution. Paragraph 143 of the report of the Special Mission states the following:

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

This report is therefore quite clear and lucid.

59. Now that the actual facts of the aggression have been 100 per cent established—the material damage, the loss of life on both sides, the arms and munitions abandoned by the mercenaries, the mercenary taken prisoner, and the abundant evidence from so many sources—one would have to be of congenital bad faith to believe that the people of Benin had recourse to falsehood in order to find where to lay the blame.

60. One would have to be naive or really ill-intentioned to believe that the People's Republic of Benin had forged the national identity card of Lieutenant-Colonel Gilbert Bourgeaud or that of Sy Sawané. One would have to be intellectually dishonest to believe that the People's Republic of Benin had invented the bank account numbers, the airline tickets, the names and addresses of those hired killers who are the mercenaries that invaded Cotonou on Sunday, 16 January 1977.

61. What the reactionaries and colonialists are afraid of and what is causing disarray in the camp of imperialism and its African lackeys is the fact that Benin is in possession of such valuable documents which completely unmask the whole diabolical imperialist plan for the colonial reconquest of Africa. It is vain, after the scrupulous inquiries conducted by various commissions and missions, to try to sow doubt in the minds of the people of the world by questioning the authenticity of the documents.

62. Everyone knows that mercenaries are skilled technicians in mass crimes, specialists in massacring innocent people and that they sell this skill for money and that, consequently, there has to be someone to recruit them, pay their salaries, assign them to a particular mission and provide them with all the necessary means to accomplish that deadly task. The question we have to elucidate now is a very simple one: who is it that is hiding behind this vast criminal operation? Who, in the final analysis, is the master mind, responsible for this desperate attempt at colonial reconquest? The bulky file of the Special Mission sent to Cotonou provides all the information necessary for obtaining a clear and unequivocal answer to this important question. Let us try to analyse these elements objectively and in all honesty.

63. First, there is the financial dossier of the act of aggression. The gross sum spent on salaries for the mercenaries whose task it was to overthrow the revolutionary régime of the People's Republic of Benin is mentioned in annex VI of the Special Mission's report. This

sum is \$US 475,000 for the pre-operational phase and \$US 530,000 for the post-operational phase, or a total of \$US 1,005,000, exclusively for salaries. This is to be found in paragraph 126, subparagraph 17 of the report and in annex VI. Furthermore, I would add that paragraph 126, subparagraphs 46-49 are sufficiently clear with regard to the financial aspect of the act of armed aggression stage-managed by the forces of evil against Benin and its peace-loving revolutionary people. As we asserted last February, no Benin citizen, no group of Benin citizens traitors to the sacred cause of our democratic and popular revolution, possess such powerful financial resources. Thus it is obvious that the vast sums necessary to finance this diabolical operation could come only from powerful financial sources.

64. Secondly, there is the list of the arms and ammunition that were used for the aggression. The bulky file of the Special Mission gives a more detailed and more complete list than the one given by my delegation last February. What group of Benin citizens traitors to our sacred cause could so easily gain access to the complicated circuit of the acquisition of such sophisticated weapons if they did not enjoy the total support of the financial powers within certain States?

65. Thirdly, there is the question of the origin and recruitment of the mercenaries. The Special Mission's report gives the following information:

(a) Most of the members of the armed force were white;

(b) Their *lingua franca* was French, that is, they spoke French without a foreign accent;

(c) The chief of staff who personally directed all the operations in the field is a French officer, Lt. Col. Gilbert Bourgeaud, born at Caen, France, on 30 January 1929; his domicile in France is at 14 rue Max Dormoy, Paris;

(d) The point of departure and arrival of all the white mercenaries was Paris; their air tickets were bought from Air France and UTA.

66. In the light of these shameful facts, which are absolutely overwhelming in their accusatory effect, Benin has well-founded reasons for proclaiming aloud that those primarily responsible for this act of armed aggression against Benin are the reactionary neo-colonialist circles in France who have never been able and never will be able to put up with the revolutionary process under way in our country since 26 October 1972. Those people are the standard-bearers of French imperialism and as such are fundamentally hostile to our democratic and popular revolution. French imperialism has armed and launched and will continue to arm and launch attacks against our country, by dispatching its secret services and its parallel and subversive networks. The Benin revolutionary process has done away with political slavery and black puppets. The Benin revolutionary process has broken the many close and sordid links woven for so long between Beninese agents of imperialism and representatives of State authorities, the exploitative capitalist monopolies. The new Benin wants to

be totally independent and free, the absolute master of its own destiny, which it is busy molding, relying above all on its own resources.

67. My delegation would like to stress here, for the benefit of the French delegation, the following point: the people of Benin have excellent relations with the people of France; France to this day remains a special partner of the People's Republic of Benin and consequently, for us in Benin, France remains a friendly country. My delegation would, through the Council, ask the French delegation for its sincere and honest co-operation in seeing to it that these persons who have committed crimes against the people of Benin are properly brought to justice. To the extent that the French people and the people of Benin remain friends and attached to much cherished traditions of justice, it is absolutely indispensable that Lt. Col. Gilbert Bourgeaud and his French and other accomplices who operated from Paris should be brought to justice. The people of Benin, victims of aggression and violence, some of whose valiant sons were assassinated in such a dastardly fashion, quite rightly call for appropriate punishment for the crimes committed against them. The people of Benin will do everything in their power to see to it that justice is done.

68. The French people, which is friendly towards the people of Benin, is a people which loves justice and is deeply devoted to democracy and liberty. The people of Benin will never allow the truth to be stifled and the authorities responsible to cover up their flagrantly criminal acts which have had such grave consequences.

69. On this particular question of the punishment of the mercenary criminals, concerning whom we have sufficient information to bring them out of their present hiding places, my delegation would like to make a fraternal appeal to all Member States to support Benin in its attempts to unmask them and to prevent them from committing other crimes.

70. International imperialism cannot carry out its dirty work without the aid of the lackeys, stooges or local agents which it keeps on the African continent with varying degrees of responsibility and under different covers. It is clear that, whatever its social and political régime, no African country, no third-world country and no country that loves peace and justice can permit such flagrant intervention in its internal affairs.

71. Benin vigorously condemns the gunboat policy and the policy of colonial reconquest of which the reactionary and neo-colonialist French circles that operate in Africa on behalf of French and international imperialism are past masters. As we have said and repeated so often, it is absolutely necessary for the people of the world to join forces in order as soon as possible to put an end to this scourge of our century: international mercenary activity.

72. All countries of the world which respect the Charter of the United Nations must give their unanimous support to the cause of Benin, which is a just cause, because, as was

stated on 7 February in the Council by the representative of Madagascar, Comrade Rabetafika:

"There will be neither international peace nor international security as long as some people believe that the interdependence which today's world calls for can be manipulated and used in order to promote the establishment of new relations based on dependence, exploitation and domination." [1986th meeting, para. 79.]

73. The people of Benin, which is still crying out in its anguish, is asking of the Council: first, vigorous condemnation of the act of armed imperialist aggression committed on Sunday, 16 January 1977, which would highlight—in order to avoid misunderstanding—the role played by the financial powers which are those truly responsible for that criminal act; secondly, firm condemnation of international mercenaries, who are used by imperialism and the forces of evil as a means of intervention to threaten the lives of the people of small defenceless countries such as Benin and attempt to destroy their institutions in order to submit those countries to pillage and their peoples to oppression.

74. With regard to the Beninese traitors, the people of Benin, which was by itself able to repel the invaders, more alert and more hardened than ever before, will be able to settle accounts with them and render them harmless for the future.

75. The case against mercenaries that Benin has just made to the Council is unprecedented but well supported by detailed information. This dossier now belongs to all members of the international community, so a concrete and decisive struggle can be waged against the use of mercenaries to commit aggression against small defenceless nations. The act of aggression against Benin was an act of aggression against all the countries of the third world, because, as the report of the Special Mission says so clearly in paragraph 144:

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

Yesterday it was Guinea and Angola; today it is Benin; and tomorrow, whose turn will it be?

76. We know it is the small third-world countries, and particularly those whose determination to achieve political independence is most irritating to the international pillagers, that are the scheduled victims of such acts of aggression for which white mercenaries, the adventurers of international capitalism, are the instruments. Under the cloak provided by certain official authorities, the imperialist countries have set up in different places centres of recruitment for mercenaries, so that they can commit their reprehensible acts against small independent countries of the third world.

77. The international community must become more and more aware of the danger to international peace and

security posed by international mercenary activity. That activity is well protected and, while it is the subject of verbal condemnation, no concrete action is taken to put an end to this evil of our time. The case of Benin will be a test of the sincerity and honesty of certain States in the common struggle against mercenaries. The bringing to justice of Bourgeaud and all his living accomplices would be a test for the whole international community.

78. As I said on 7 February [1986th meeting], and as members of the Special Mission will have noted, my country, the People's Republic of Benin, suffered a great deal from the armed aggression of Sunday, 16 January 1977, committed by a horde of armed mercenaries sent there by powerful financial circles. The damage was considerable, and the consequences have been serious for our economy. I will not repeat the detailed description of the damage which I gave in my statement of 7 February but I should like to make clear to the Council that the consequences of the aggression for our economy are tangible.

79. First, the act of aggression has forced us to pay particular attention to problems of defence and security. Secondly, the people of Benin have been mobilized, the civilian and military population has been on the alert since 16 January 1977, although this is a time when it should be much more concerned with problems of production, concerning which a national campaign was successfully launched in 1976. Thirdly, for reasons of security which the documents in our possession make it easy to understand, we have been obliged to close our western frontiers for a time. This involves certain losses to us and also, of course, has a negative effect upon our economy.

80. Damage of all kinds caused by the aggression of Sunday, 16 January 1977 is considerable. Pursuant to paragraph 133 of the report of the Special Mission, I have transmitted to the President our assessment of the damage [see S/12318 and Add.1]. It is estimated that it amounts to 6 billion CFA francs.

81. In the light of the foregoing, my country needs the support of all countries that love peace and justice and of the whole international community, so that all the damage caused by the aggression can be repaired. The people of Benin ask the Council to take measures to ensure compensation for damage and to provide considerable assistance to our economy. But I want it to be clearly understood that the people of Benin, a revolutionary people, is not coming here begging for international alms. First and foremost we shall rely on our own resources to deal with the ill effects of the act of barbarous aggression. What the people of Benin demands is that justice be done and that there be compensation for all the damage. That is a moral responsibility for the international community.

82. My country calls for the support of all States to ensure its defence and security and to avoid a repetition of that barbarous and reprehensible act. That is why exemplary punishment is so necessary and why the mercenaries who came to kill our compatriots on Sunday, 16 January 1977,

should be arrested immediately. To that end the co-operation of all the Governments of the world is necessary.

83. For its part, the people of Benin has made a free and irrevocable choice in total independence and in a spirit of responsibility. Our political option is for scientific socialism, with Marxism-Leninism as our guide, and we shall defend it by all means at our disposal. I want this to be quite clear to the aggressors.

84. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): In the circumstances, some of us—myself included—must consider ourselves fortunate not to speak French with a French accent.

85. Mr. President, ever since the beginning of this year I have had the privilege, pleasure and honour of working beside you both in the Group of Non-Aligned and other countries and in the Council. We have not failed to observe the quiet, modest and friendly approach with which you so effectively and skilfully conduct the diplomacy of your great and beautiful country, which I had the pleasure of visiting a couple of years ago. The Council benefits greatly from your vast and varied experience in the fields of public communication and relations, culture, politics and diplomacy. Your noble and gentle manners, as well as your credibility and integrity, have earned you the respect of one and all and secured strong bonds of friendship from all quarters for your country. I warmly welcome, and congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I feel proud to be serving under your wise guidance and offer you my full co-operation.

86. I should like also to pay a special tribute to another former Congressman, your distinguished predecessor, our good friend Ambassador Andrew Young of the United States. Ambassador Young has brought to the United Nations, and to the Council in particular, a breath of fresh southern air. For too long we were presented with a distorted ugly face of the United States. Ambassador Young has, in a brief period, succeeded in remedying that sad situation and has presented to us an acceptable image of his great country. He has, to my mind, repaired some of the damage done both to the United Nations and the United States by some of his immediate predecessors. We no longer hear the arrogant, belligerent, provocative language of threat. We hear, rather, the harmonious language of understanding, co-operation and peace. Ambassador Young has won our confidence to a great extent. His personal dynamism and attitude have won him the friendship of all. His sincerity of purpose goes a long way towards helping to establish the credibility of his Government. He displayed saintly patience during our deliberations in the month of March and his behind-the-scenes activities in the service of truth and justice have been a source of inspiration to my delegation.

87. I thank Ambassador Young for his unswerving efforts and congratulate him on having so skilfully presided over the Council. He may rest assured of the full co-operation of my delegation for as long as he remains with us, which I hope will be for ever—unless, of course, it is his wish at

some appropriate time to run for the presidency of the United States of America. In such an event, I shall seriously consider relinquishing my post as the Permanent Representative of Mauritius so as to be free to work for my friend Andy. Working for Andrew Young will perhaps provide me with a better platform to work for the United States of Africa, the continent of the twenty-first century.

88. I shall now speak on the question of Benin.

89. First of all, I should like to congratulate the members of the Special Mission as well as the Secretariat on their voluminous report. The Mission was eminently qualified in that, apart from the wide experience of its members, it had the good fortune to be assisted by military experts from Libya and Panama. The Chairman of the Special Mission, our good friend Ambassador Illueca of Panama, deserves our highest praise for leading and guiding the Mission. I thank him for the presentation of the report to the Council.

90. Meeting at Lomé, Togo, from 21 to 28 February 1977, under the guidance of its current Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Edem Kodjo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Togo, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity adopted a resolution on the question of Benin, paragraph 1 of which reads as follows:

“Strongly condemns the act of armed aggression against the People’s Republic of Benin and congratulates the heroic brotherly people of Benin on their courageous routing of the aggression”.

91. While it is true that this sad affair is still under consideration by OAU, it is nevertheless of such importance that it is only right that the matter should be not only regionalized but internationalized through the Security Council. Indeed, in its resolution, the Council of Ministers requested the African Group at the United Nations to act in solidarity with Benin during the Security Council debates on the matter.

92. The report of the Special Mission was prepared rather hurriedly, in too short a time and without adequate facilities. That is made clear by the authors themselves at the end of their conclusion. However, in my view, the report is conclusive enough to allow the Council to arrive at an immediate decision in respect of the more serious aspects of the matter.

93. The evidence on which the authors have based themselves seems to fall into three categories: first, observation; secondly, testimony of the only mercenary held prisoner; thirdly, documents which were left behind by the mercenaries and which seem to corroborate the evidence of the prisoner.

94. It will, of course, require several forensic experts to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding this whole affair and the complexities of the documents themselves. There can be no doubt, however, about what actually happened at Cotonou on the morning of 16 January 1977. I believe it would be correct to say that all members of the Council can agree at least on that point.

95. It is obvious to all that an unprovoked armed aggression by international imperialist mercenaries³ took place against the People’s Republic of Benin. It cannot be denied that loss of lives and extensive material damage to Cotonou resulted from this barbaric act.

96. We have listened attentively to the statement of Ambassador Illueca, Chairman of the Special Mission, and to that of my beloved brother, Ambassador Boya of Benin.

97. I do not believe it is necessary for me at this stage to make an in-depth analysis of the report and the annexes. Frankly, I do not believe I could even attempt such an analysis without expert advice. But I do feel that, in the light of the report and the statements we have heard, the Security Council is in a position where it can, without hesitancy, strongly condemn the activities of international mercenaries and acts of aggression to destabilize States. The Council can, I believe, decide to appeal to the international community to assist Benin, through material aid, for the purpose of repairing and remedying damage caused. The Council could also decide that compensation should be paid to Benin by those responsible. The amount of the damage could, I suggest, be worked out by the representatives of the Secretary-General. I take the view that our international community is under a moral obligation to help Benin in every way possible.

98. Regarding the definition of the word “aggression”, as recommended by the Sixth Committee and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3314 (XXIX), I should like to point out to members of the Council article 4 of the annex to that resolution, which reads as follows:

“The acts enumerated above”—that is, in articles 1, 2 and 3—“are not exhaustive and the Security Council may determine that other acts constitute aggression under the provisions of the Charter.”

99. That leads me to attempt a brief analysis of the whole question of mercenaries, as so far dealt with at the United Nations and elsewhere.

100. I should therefore like now to dwell for a moment on the phenomenon of “mercenarism” which has been plaguing the international scene for some time. I appreciate the fact that the word “mercenarism” has not yet found its way into the English dictionary, but I hope that the members will bear with me if I use it for the purpose of convenience.

101. On several occasions the Security Council and the General Assembly have expressed themselves on the question of mercenaries in modern inter-nation relations, and those statements clearly contained elements of emerging international legal principles governing the matter. It seems to me that the following principles are now fairly well established.

³ See paragraph 207 of the present record.

102. First, mercenaries, and certainly those fighting against national liberation movements within the context of the decolonization process, are outlaws.

103. Secondly, mercenaries, if captured, should consequently be punished as criminals. This principle is to be found in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 3103 (XXVIII), entitled "Basic principles of the legal status of the combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes".

104. Thirdly, States are under an obligation to take all measures to prevent the recruitment, financing or training in their territories of any persons as mercenaries for colonial wars.

105. Fourthly, States have the same obligation concerning a much broader category of mercenaries, that is those used for violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of independent States. In this connexion, one can quote the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty, adopted by the General Assembly [resolution 2131 (XX)] on 21 December 1965:

"...no State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the régime of another State, or interfere in civil strife in another State."

106. Fifthly, the sending by or on behalf of a State of mercenaries who carry out against another State acts of armed force of such gravity as to amount to those listed in the Definition of Aggression as adopted by the General Assembly is itself an act of aggression.

107. Sixthly, as the recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries is very often undertaken by private groups, the international responsibility of the State on whose territory those activities take place will be involved if it fails to take the necessary preventive measures or if, having taken those measures, it does not punish those involved. Furthermore, the State is under an obligation to prohibit its nationals from serving as mercenaries.

108. General Assembly resolutions 2465 (XXIII) and 2548 (XXIV) therefore call upon the Governments of all countries to enact legislation declaring the recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries in their territory to be a punishable offence and prohibiting their nationals from serving as mercenaries. The international responsibility of the State is expressed clearly in Security Council resolution 239 (1967), which

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

109. Notwithstanding the clear enunciation of these principles, there are still some gray areas which, in our view,

need clarification if the problem of mercenarism is to be solved on the international level. First of all, there is still no agreement on how to define precisely the term "mercenary". During the third session of the Humanitarian Law Conference, which is entrusted with reviewing the 1949 Geneva Conventions, a definition was submitted by the delegation of Nigeria. That definition runs as follows:

"A mercenary includes any person not a member of the armed forces of a Party to the conflict who is specially recruited abroad and who is motivated to fight or to take part in armed conflict essentially for monetary payment, reward or other private gain."⁴

110. That proposal, however, has not yet been adopted, and it is expected that the Conference will come up with a generally acceptable definition at its fourth session to be held during these weeks at Geneva. The question of defining mercenaries was examined also by the Committee of Privy Counsellors of the United Kingdom appointed by the British Prime Minister in 1976 to inquire into the recruitment of mercenaries—the so-called Diplock Committee. That Committee adopted the following definition for "mercenaries in the broad sense":

"'Mercenaries' in the broad sense are persons who serve voluntarily for pay in armed forces other than the regular forces of their own country."⁵

111. Another area which needs clarification is the extent to which the national legislation contains statutes or rules concerning mercenaries. We may recall that the General Assembly has, in several resolutions, called upon States to take appropriate measures to prevent the recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries. We have not been able to verify to what extent Member States have followed up on those recommendations. The Diplock Committee, which I have just mentioned, was appointed in order to consider the need for legislation, including possible amendment of the Foreign Enlistment Act in the United Kingdom. Other States may have taken either legislative or administrative measures in order to cope with the problem of mercenaries, and it would be extremely useful to gather more information on the nature and content of those measures in order to start a comparative study from which one could draw generally accepted legal principles to be incorporated in an international convention.

112. At the twenty-seventh regular session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Port-Louis in June and July 1976, a resolution was adopted calling for a further study of a draft convention on mercenaries submitted at that session by Angola. That was the first proposal to deal with the question on an international, albeit regional, level. It is our view that the adoption of international criminal legislation through a convention would be a timely initiative for dealing with mercenarism, which should be outlawed as an international

⁴ Diplomatic Conference on Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts. See A/31/163 of 18 August 1976, para. 70.

⁵ Cmnd. 6569 (London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1976), p. 1.

crime of the same kind as, for example, piracy and genocide.

113. I suggest that the more powerful nations of the world should not be too complacent. I shudder at the thought that what happened at Cotonou could easily happen in most capitals. It is neither too early nor too late to deal with the question of mercenarism for the evil is very much with us, even today, when we are discussing the complaint by Benin.

114. It is not my intention to provoke a debate on what is happening in another African State, but I cannot help drawing the attention of the Council to an article by David Anable published yesterday in the widely read *The Christian Science Monitor*. I shall quote the following passages without comment, in support of my plea that a convention on mercenarism has become imperative. The title of the article is "Africa mercenary recruiting resumes":

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

"A previous mercenary venture involving Britons and Americans ended in fiasco, imprisonment, and death in Angola last year.

"Now, if sources involved in both the 1976 Angolan episode and the current effort are to be believed, the ostensible aim of the recruiting is to find 100 American ex-servicemen and 350 Britons to join Zaïre Government forces fighting Katangan rebels in southern Zaïre.

"...

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

"In addition, an American mercenary source who recently returned from Africa claims that the organization which last year recruited the Britons for Angola now is looking for fresh British recruits to go to Zaïre.

"Neither Britain nor the United States appear to have adequate laws to prevent mercenary recruitments and enlistments. But both governments expressed strong disapproval of the 1976 Angolan mercenary intervention and denied any involvement."

115. To be fair, I think I should also quote what Mr. Herbert Hetu, a spokesman for the United States Central Intelligence Agency, said when asked about the latest reports of mercenary recruiting. He said:

"We have absolutely, categorically nothing to do with recruiting Americans or anybody else as mercenaries anywhere in Africa."

116. I hope that these quotations will help members of the Council to realize the seriousness of the problem and how even more serious it will become if a solution is not found as soon as possible.

117. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mauritius for the kind words that he addressed to my country and to me. I am pleased to inform him that I agree with his remarks about Ambassador Young's future plans and about the possibility of his wishing to form an international cabinet. It would be very good experience for the third-world countries to be represented in the cabinets of the great Powers.

118. The next speaker is the representative of Niger. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

119. Mr. POISSON (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, before going into the substance of the question with which we are dealing today, I should like, first of all, to congratulate you most warmly on your accession to the important and responsible post of President of the Security Council. We know that your long experience and your unanimously recognized competence will be equal to the delicate task that you will be carrying out during this month.

120. I should not wish to conclude this brief introduction without paying a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, the representative of the United States, Ambassador Andrew Young, who was called upon to guide the work of the Council when one of the most burning issues of our time was being considered, namely, the situation in South Africa. Everyone is aware of the commitment and the militancy of Ambassador Young in all matters concerning men and their rights. His presence here is, beyond doubt, a patent sign that there is a new spirit in the international policy of the United States. We can only rejoice and congratulate our colleague Ambassador Young for the hopes that he has aroused for our struggle in Africa to find peace and international security and to inaugurate the reign of justice throughout the world.

121. While I am speaking about peace in the world, the Security Council is considering a situation which, unfortunately, makes the attainment of peace more difficult. I am speaking, of course, of the airborne armed aggression against the independent and sovereign State of Benin.

122. Before going into the substance of the question, I should like to thank all the members of the Council for allowing me to address this august body in my capacity as Chairman of the African Group for this month.

123. Approximately two and a half months ago, when the first information on the stupid and barbaric aggression against the State of Benin reached us through the deforming prism of the international press, world opinion could not fail to wonder whether that aggression was real or not. Was it possible? Everything had been skilfully orches-

trated, to camouflage and distort the truth. It was apparently necessary at all costs to prevent international public opinion from seeing clearly the plot that had been hatched against a brother State for reasons which could only be ideological and material. Some had certain doubts for a moment, since they were not used to seeing African problems in the post-colonial context. But the facts are there and they are unyielding.

124. Be that as it may, as far as we in Africa are concerned, we had no doubt that the brother State of Benin had actually been the object of an act of aggression planned, organized and controlled from abroad. That is why spontaneously from every part of the continent and the islands messages of support were sent to President Kérékou, the head of State of Benin, as well as to the valiant people of Benin in their struggle against that unjustifiable attack.

125. My country, Niger, which shares a long common history with Benin and which works with Benin in many international, continental, regional and bilateral organizations for the socio-economic development of our two peoples, felt profound indignation at that savage act perpetrated against a brother State by a horde of mercenaries with no faith and no country, in the service of powerful financial circles. That is why the President of the Supreme Military Council and chief of State of Niger, Lieutenant-Colonel Seyni Kountché, immediately addressed to his brother and friend, President Mathieu Kérékou, a message of solidarity, the text of which reads as follows:

"We have learnt with deep anguish and profound indignation that mercenaries in the pay of international imperialism attacked the airport at Cotonou on Sunday, 16 January, with the mad intention of overthrowing the régime which you lead.

"The people of Niger congratulate the people of Benin and the armed forces for their vigilance and assure President Kérékou of our fraternal and constant solidarity. All Niger denounces that attempt and calls on the solidarity and vigilance of Africa unanimously to deter and discourage such attempts wherever they may be made."

Some days later, the chief of State of Niger sent to Cotonou His Excellency Moumouni Djermakoye Adamou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, bearing a special message of solidarity to President Kérékou. In replying to questions from journalists in the capital of Benin, Minister Djermakoye declared: "The aggression of 16 January was an abject act committed against all of militant Africa which wants to be free."

126. That example of African reaction, among others, is an expression of the profound indignation felt throughout all Africa at that perfidious aggression. Africa is indignant and denounces those new techniques conceived and practised by those who still dream of keeping Africa in their grip solely for the benefit of their base material interests.

127. At the recent summit meeting of OCAMM [*African, Malagasy and Mauritian Common Organization*] at Bangui as well as at the last meeting of the OAU Ministerial Committee at Lomé, the voice of Africa was unanimously raised to condemn strongly the use of mercenaries to destabilize certain régimes. For many years now imperialism, scared, in retreat and at bay, has been developing a new technique for colonial reconquest by the use of mercenaries. At OAU as well as in the non-aligned group, the third world has protested against those new manoeuvres. Africa must put an end to mercenary activities, and the Security Council must assist by adopting appropriate measures and by unequivocally condemning such manoeuvres.

128. Nevertheless, imperialism at bay does not despair, in spite of its terrible failures in the former Congo as well as in Guinea. Let us hope that the lesson of Cotonou will be cause for reflection. In any case, no country, small or medium-sized, can henceforth rest secure. The air piracy of Entebbe, the attempts to destabilize Mozambique and Angola and the territorial occupation of Zaire are all cases which require Africa to be vigilant and firm.

129. Today we have before us the reports of both the Security Council Special Mission and of the OAU secretariat. The facts are overwhelming and decisively foil the attempts at diversion orchestrated by the very ones who are attempting to destabilize certain African Governments which are working with dignity for the freely conceived emancipation of their peoples.

130. The Security Council cannot be blind to these ignoble acts whose seriousness not only endangers the sovereignty and integrity of small States but also international peace and security.

131. As the peoples of both Guinea and Benin proved when they fell victim to dastardly attacks, we believe first of all in our own choices. We are devoted above all to the values and systems that we have freely chosen. Other Powers must realize that we cannot be like them. To be ourselves with our conception of life in a humane, just and tolerant community--that is what our peoples aspire to.

132. Mercenaries and the Powers which support and maintain them will bring desolation and ruin for a time, but our independent States will fight steadfastly with the help of all peace-loving peoples so as to bar the way to the forces of reconquest and domination.

133. The aggression against Benin caused enormous losses whose consequences will be felt for a long time by its people. Many human lives were lost and civilian and official installations were destroyed or seriously damaged. All Africa, side by side with Benin, demands compensation. The proud people of Benin, which has laboriously worked to build a new society, never hesitated to make major sacrifices to give Cotonou, its capital, a new image worthy of the aspiration of a people in a revolution which admits no disguise. Mortars, bazookas, machine-guns, the engines

of death of the imperialists, coming from beyond the sea, have killed and destroyed. Is it fair that, after that horrible storm, the courageous people of Benin should be condemned to repair everything themselves? It is not a matter of international charity but one of just reparation.

134. We therefore expect the Security Council, in its wisdom and objectivity, to decide not only firmly to condemn that dastardly attack against Benin but also to provide the means necessary for making just and equitable compensation for the moral and material damage caused the brother people of Benin.

135. We are pleased at the failure of that cowardly attack. The Council must face its historical responsibility, namely, to safeguard international peace and security so as to put an end once and for all to the use of stateless mercenaries. Africa needs stability to build, and we ask that that be respected.

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

137. Mr. N'DONG (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): I should like first of all to thank you, Mr. President, and all the members of the Council for permitting my delegation to take part in this debate. I should also like to associate myself with those representatives who have congratulated you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I am convinced that your experience in international relations, your talents and your tact are sufficient guarantee that we will find a good solution to the problem with which we are concerned right now.

138. Permit me also to pay a warm tribute to Ambassador Andrew Young, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, for the masterly way in which he conducted the proceedings of the Council during the month of March.

139. After having acquainted ourselves with the report of the Security Council Special Mission to the People's Republic of Benin, established under resolution 404 (1977), a report which alludes to Gabon, my own country—I repeat “which alludes to Gabon”, because I cannot and will not believe that Gabon is in fact involved in this affair—the Gabonese delegation protests with the utmost vigour against those unfounded and unverified references and solemnly denies them because their only purpose is to tarnish the image and good standing of my country, a founding member of the African Democratic Assembly, the Organization of African Unity and the movement of the non-aligned countries; a country which, moreover, in its international policy, has been particularly devoted to the five principles of peaceful coexistence which are in all respects in keeping with those of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations itself. The President of the Gabonese Republic, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, made a point, during his press conference on 11 March at Libreville, of refuting those allegations, which are, to put it mildly, fantastic.

140. Permit me to recall here the motto of the national political party of our country—the Democratic Party of Gabon: “Dialogue, Tolerance, Peace”, a motto which underlies both our domestic and our foreign policy. In this regard, there is really no need to reaffirm that, in its foreign policy, my country has always applied the fundamental principles of peaceful coexistence and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, as I previously asserted. Is there any need to remind the Council that Benin and Gabon have at all times maintained and continue to maintain fraternal and special relations? Is there any need to remind the Council that the Republic of Gabon maintains excellent fraternal relations with all African countries, whatever their political orientation, both regionally and on the continental scale? Is there any need to remind the Council of the multifaceted and disinterested assistance which Gabon has continually given to fraternal countries?

141. Benin, whose President, His Excellency Mr. Mathieu Kérékou, made an official visit to Gabon, is best placed to appreciate the fraternal and disinterested co-operation of the Gabonese authorities, as well as their sincerity, good faith and militant devotion to the cause of African unity. President Kérékou, incidentally, paid eloquent testimony to this himself at the end of his official visit.

142. The Government of Gabon ventures to hope that the Government of the People's Republic of Benin will come to understand that it has been misled by the enemies of Africa in general and of Gabon in particular. Otherwise, we should have to conclude, as did the President of the Republic of Gabon, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, that “Decidedly, the vagaries of the revolution are most comical and depressing in Africa.”

143. In this context, my country cannot but vigorously condemn any foreign intervention, whatever its form, including the use of international mercenaries.

144. The major concern of the Government of my country is, on the one hand, to strive for the well-being of its people by promoting its development in all areas and, on the other, to foster the realization of the ideal of African unity. In this connexion, as was stressed by His Excellency Mr. Martin Bongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Gabon, in his press conference of 4 March at the Waldorf Astoria in New York: “Gabon does not have the time to waste in meddling in matters which do not concern it. Gabon is busy working and building.”

145. I hope that our brothers in the People's Republic of Benin will be reassured: my country did not intervene, either directly or indirectly, in this murky business, in this brazen piratical raid by outlaws who know no allegiance and whom my country can never condemn sufficiently, because the attack on Benin is tantamount to an attack on the whole of Africa, whose hard-won independence was thus called into question.

146. That said, let us consider the report before us. What evidence does it provide to substantiate the conclusion that my country may have been involved in this unprecedented affair? Let us consider the evidence provided and begin

with the testimony before going into the documents. Let us consider, in turn, the testimony of the one alleged prisoner, the testimony of Beninese citizens and the testimony of foreigners living at Cotonou.

147. It is particularly difficult for us to remain unmoved by the meanderings of Mr. Bâ Alpha Oumarou, who, to our great surprise, turned out to be the only "prisoner", although my colleague and brother from Benin, Mr. Boya, had stated here on 7 February:

"Their pirate aircraft had to take off very rapidly, leaving behind quite a number of mercenaries, who were heavily drugged and out of their minds, as well as the bodies of their accomplices which they could not take with them." [1986th meeting, para. 19.]

We cannot help wondering what became of those mercenaries and why the Security Council Special Mission restricted itself to the testimony of a single alleged prisoner, who, it so happens, is a citizen of Guinea and the circumstances surrounding whose arrest remain, to say the least, dubious. Are we thus to believe that "quite a number of mercenaries, who were heavily drugged and out of their minds, as well as the bodies of their accomplices"—to use the words of my colleague and brother from Benin—and I emphasize "quite a number of mercenaries, who were heavily drugged and out of their minds, as well as the bodies of their accomplices"—seem not to have been presented to the members of the Mission because they had disappeared as if by magic? Indeed, as was stated by the President of the Republic of Gabon in his 11 March press conference at Libreville: "All the white mercenaries have disappeared and been transformed into a single black." Is there any need to remind the members of the Mission—whose objectivity is beyond question—of the old Latin adage: "*Testis unus, testis nullus*"?

148. As to the testimony of the Beninese citizens, it is of no objective value to us, to the extent that they cannot be both judges of and parties to the event. I am a nationalist and a patriot, as they are, and we know that in a country's dark hours the national feelings of its inhabitants are strengthened.

149. With regard to the testimony of the foreigners living at Cotonou, it would have been difficult for them to make statements different from those in the report, since their interests were at stake. In this regard, all of us here know what happens to foreigners who, after events which have occurred in their country of residence, have ventured to give a version differing from the official one.

150. Let us turn now to the documents which were found. I find it rather paradoxical that a highly trained commando group, composed of professional "mercenaries", should have embarked on the attack of a country taking with them such compromising personal articles as identity cards, cheque-books, family photos, credit slips and even pay slips and bank statements. Are they trying to make us, responsible adults, believe in Santa Claus? No, we in Gabon are firmly convinced that this was a rather clumsily staged scenario, hastily pieced together, and we would even go so far as to say that it is a joke in very bad taste.

151. In the light of all this alleged evidence, instead of speaking to us of a commando operation by professional mercenaries, they should really have spoken about a piratical act committed by privateers whose motives were not very praiseworthy. One of the eye-witnesses, in his statement, expressed surprise at seeing them—the mercenaries—all looking so relaxed and casual.

152. Inasmuch as my country has been named in the report, and in the light of all the foregoing, we cannot but conclude that this whole affair was thought up in order to sow discord among African States. While conceding to its authors that this scenario was quite well staged—from their point of view, of course—and might even make a good movie, Gabon wishes to repeat that no one is convinced by it.

153. All this leads us to call into question not the objectivity of the report—because my country has every confidence in the members of the Council—but the credibility of the information it contains, particularly because the Mission itself states that it was unable to pursue its inquiries any further and, "for lack of time", to verify the evidence gathered. The same applies to the authenticity of the documents mentioned in the report.

154. We believe that the Security Council is here faced with a problem of choice. The Council, the supreme organ of the United Nations, should first of all analyse the information contained in any report submitted by a mission it has set up before allowing Member States to be publicly impugned.

155. There is another choice that faces the Council, now that it has taken cognizance of this affair. Are we to impugn the good name of distinguished heads of State on the evidence of a single alleged mercenary who was taken prisoner, whose allegations have not been verified for "lack of time", as we have said, and on the basis of alleged documents abandoned by alleged mercenaries whose actual existence has not even been clearly and finally established, again for "lack of time"? Also, what proof is there that that alleged prisoner, the conditions of whose arrest remain, to say the least, dubious and who was detained for more than a month by the authorities of the People's Republic of Benin before his deposition—what proof is there that this alleged prisoner was not subjected to pressure on the part of these same authorities, since he asks them, according to the report, to deal with him leniently?

156. Gabon can never sufficiently express its surprise at these allegations since, so far, there has never been any provocation on either its part or on that of Benin. We should like to repeat here that we will never allow ourselves to be intimidated by the hostile policy or statements of any country.

157. The Gabonese Government hopes that Benin will not allow itself to be taken in by the subtle and insidious manoeuvres of Africa's enemies who relish its divisions and thus seek to increase and entrench the polarization of the so-called revolutionary or progressive countries and the so-called moderate countries, which my President describes as realistic countries. I would, in this regard, like to make it

clear that Africa is one, indivisible, anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist, and those are the only epithets that can be properly applied to it.

158. Gabon remains convinced that these attempts at implicating our country—which are, to say the least, a matter of fantasy—serve no purpose other than to divide Africa and to call into question our country's sense of commitment which has led us to agree to act as host to the forthcoming meeting of the Organization of African Unity.

159. In conclusion, I should like—still in connexion with the matter before us—to quote a passage from an article that appeared in a weekly with a good reputation in the field of African and international politics:

“The file is not complete. We believe, for our part, that we must continue to look for and to establish the truth about this matter.”

I would add that this must be for the benefit of that African unity which we cherish so much, and for international peace and security which remain the fundamental objectives of this organization.

“Otherwise, wrapped up in partial and one-sided arguments resting only on untrustworthy evidence, the aggression against the people of Benin is liable to remain unexplained and even unbelievable. It is not Benin which will benefit from this.”

160. Therefore, in order to demonstrate our good faith and to contribute towards establishing the truth, I would venture to repeat here the invitation which His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon, extended through the Secretary-General to the Security Council Special Mission to come to Gabon, together with the alleged mercenary captured at Cotonou, in order to supplement his information on the spot [see S/12317]. The Republic of Gabon would particularly like to stress this point so that the truth may be established on the basis of a countervailing and more detailed inquiry.

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

162. Mr. M. S. CAMARA (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, the delegation of the Republic of Guinea is most happy to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Council. We are pleased to see you presiding over the Council because of all the hopes that we place in you, in view of the exceptional qualities you possess as the spokesman of a country friendly to us and better able to understand our problems.

163. In accordance with Security Council resolution 404 (1977), we are meeting to discuss the report prepared by the Special Mission to the People's Republic of Benin. My delegation wishes to congratulate the members of the Mission who brought from Benin a harvest of objective information that will enable us to make a valid assessment of what happened at Cotonou on 16 January 1977. We

express our gratitude, also, to Ambassador Illueca of Panama, Mr. Mulye of India and Ambassador Mansur Kikhia of Libya, as well as to their assistants for the efforts they made in order to shed light on the aggression of which the heroic people of Benin were the victim.

164. At the first meeting of the Council, my delegation explained [1986th meeting] the importance of our debate and its impact on the life of the African peoples in general, and the people of Benin in particular. Indeed, His Excellency President Ahmed Sékou Touré, the supreme leader of the revolution in Guinea, applied personally to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, requesting that the consideration of the complaint by Benin should not be subjected to any manoeuvre that would distract us from the truth.

165. The people of Guinea are fully aware of the existence of renegades and stateless persons in the pay of imperialism, trained by evil people so as to participate as mercenaries in interventions in certain African countries. We denounce to the world the complicity of certain brother countries which give asylum to those bandits and, what is worse, provide them with arms and ammunition so that they may perpetrate their crimes.

166. In 1970, President Ahmed Sékou Touré drew the attention of the people of the world to the preparation of an act of aggression against the Republic of Guinea. The imperialist press at the time protected the evil-doers by spreading false rumours. A few weeks later, the brother Government of Gambia proceeded to arrest mercenaries who were about to invade Guinea. That brotherly act by President El Hadji Kairaba Jawara could have been an inspiration for all African States, but for some it was not. The recruiting and training of the mercenaries continued and on 22 November 1970 it was proved to the world that the people of Guinea had been right. The failure of the Conakry invasion did not teach imperialism a lesson. Thus the continuing conspiracy was aimed at other traitors within the Government of Guinea, with the objective of staging another aggression of the same kind. The vigilant people of Guinea was able to defuse the new bomb in time and, after the inside acolytes of the aggressors had been identified and neutralized, the aggression scheduled for 1976 was aborted.

167. The renegades have used every means to bring about a civil war, vainly trying to create an ethnic conflict in Guinea. But the Guinean revolution has gone beyond the stage of tribalism, and that is why the Peulhs, Guézés, Malinkés, Soussous, Tomas etc., in the Republic of Guinea are Guineans of African race.

168. Paragraph 63 of the report of the Special Mission [S/12294] is very explicit about the shameful manner in which persons of ill repute go about training Guinean citizens abroad for criminal action against their country. The Association of Guineans Abroad, enjoying the support of African Governments not of the people, has just shown what its intentions are and has revealed the true nature of those journalists of a certain press who claim that they speak objectively about what is happening in Guinea.

169. The confession of the mercenary Bâ Alpha Oumarou is edifying. It reveals not only the identity of the instigators of the crimes but further informs us that

“... if the States themselves were not directly involved, some of their officials were, because they did document forging, camouflaging and so forth. Those officials of the countries concerned knew all about this matter.” [*Ibid.*, para. 69.]

This specific information given by a participant in the ignoble aggression of which Benin was the victim is of great importance to the Security Council, all the more since the criminal actions of the mercenaries are supported and encouraged by authorities of States Members of the United Nations.

170. The butchery which was to have taken place at Cotonou would have spared no country, and, in this respect, the statements of the diplomats accredited to the Government of Benin have enlightened us as to the gravity of the aggression. In fact, the Embassies of the United States, the Soviet Union and Nigeria, for example, and the lodgings of the foreign experts etc., still bear traces of the deadly bullets. Only providence saved the life of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who was on an official visit to Benin.

171. In previous debates, my delegation insisted on the imperialist nature of the aggression and stated that it was nothing new. A correct analysis of the situation will enable us to find elements of every stage of the history of Africa and, as proof, you will find that some of those who committed aggression against Benin actively participated in the war in Algeria, as is borne out by the AFN insignia, or in the Biafra war, as is attested to by the identity cards of the mercenary Isberg Bjorg Leo, issued in 1968 and 1969 by the Swedish and the Swiss Red Cross.

172. The white mercenaries captured in Benin are certainly fellow travellers of Congo Muller, Schramm or Steiner, who, as indicated in the documents of the mercenary Gilbert Bourgeaud, were to Africanize their murderous activities by using emotionally sick blacks of the Bâ Alpha Oumarou kind. Those men who know no faith and no law, can only commit their evil deeds with the complicity of imperialism, which finances movements like the Association of Guineans Abroad and the Front for the Liberation and Rehabilitation of Dahomey. The purpose of imperialism is to set up in the front-line States in Africa régimes that are in their pay. Secret service agents are found in profusion in African capitals seeking accomplices and are well camouflaged as technical counsellors in certain countries whose Governments they control. They are prepared to assassinate and massacre any African people that wants to remain authentic and sovereign. The remuneration of agents of the Bourgeaud type tells us much about the situation.

173. By consulting the documents about the planning and execution of the 16 January attack, members will see that the commander of the armed intervention had a discreet meeting with heads of State on 2 January. One may also

learn of the intentions of the master-minds of the aggression by reading the “proclamation” which provided for the establishment of the Leadership Committee of the Front for the Liberation and Rehabilitation of Dahomey.

174. The aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin is far from being an isolated act. As representative of the Republic of Guinea, I know what armed aggression is. If we analyse the informative report of the Special Mission and the important documents included in it, we shall see that that diabolical operation, far from being an isolated adventure, was a vast plan of neo-colonial reconquest, aimed at the destabilization and overthrow of régimes whose options and tendencies are contrary to the objectives of imperialism on the African continent. If imperialism did not enjoy the complicity of certain African Governments that are already won over and subservient to its cynical designs, you can be certain that we should not be here today in the Council because, for aggression of the scope of that committed against the Republic of Benin on 16 January 1977 to have been carried out, imperialism had to have the support of puppet régimes that have become past masters of the betrayal of their peoples and of all Africa.

175. In this regard, I should like to provide some very interesting information received from a patriot of a neighbouring country, who speaks not only of the aggression of which Benin was the victim, but also of that being prepared against the Republic of Guinea:

“... The operation against Benin had been planned for the benefit of the former President Derlin Zinsou and his partisans. The contacts to obtain the support of African Governments had been made under the direction of the Organization of Free Africa. This movement, in which are numbered all the puppets and the stateless persons of Africa, was formed by imperialism to serve as a screen for it. That it should enjoy considerable financial support from the Powers seeking the neo-colonization of our continent is therefore to be expected.

“Mr. Zinsou himself and Mr. Pognon, as well as other leaders of the Organization of Free Africa, have had frequent contacts with African heads of State. They had tried to involve other heads of State who categorically refused to act against peace in Africa.

“... To avoid any leakage of the plot hatched against militant Africa, imperialism and its Organization of Free Africa had entrusted a certain Michel Laminé, a journalist with *Lettres d'Afrique*, residing at 37 Rue Etienne Marcel, in Paris, with finding a former officer specialized in commando operations to direct the aggression.

“Thus was found Colonel Bob Donare, who agreed to conduct military preparations for the attack, provided that the indispensable psychological conditions were created in the country with the complicity of civilian and military authorities of Benin. He did receive assurances to that effect, after direct consultations with certain Presidents who, thanks to ex-General Soglo and certain embassies in Cotonou, had established the necessary contacts at a price. At the outset, imperialism and its

anti-African Organization of Free Africa movement had also considered forming mercenary units the majority of which would be of Beninese origin. But the funds for the aggression transmitted to Colonel Donare were such as to lead him to try to help former soldiers in financial difficulties or unemployed. That is why he decided that the shock troops should be Europeans, who were reputed to be effective. The price of 7,000 French francs per man proposed by the recruiters was not accepted by the European mercenaries, who asked for 10,000 French francs. The sum of 9,500 French francs was finally agreed upon—that is, 475,000 CFA francs . . .

“... All these preparations were made in only three weeks: studies of the lay of the land and the training of shock troops and supportive troops in African countries, where many mercenaries were recruited and trained before their transfer with weapons and munitions to their departure base. The recruiters of the mercenaries were Guinean traitors in the pay of international imperialism.”

(That statement appeared in our national newspaper *Horoya*, No. 2264, of March 1977. It was widely distributed.)

176. This letter was accompanied by important documents now in the possession of the Guinean authorities who may bring them to the attention of international public opinion, which was quite recently put on alert by our head of State, President Ahmed Sékou Touré. At the opening of the thirty-eighth session of the National Revolutionary Council, Comrade Ahmed Sékou Touré declared:

“Imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism are ever vigilant with regard to the Guinean revolution. The national bourgeoisie, all those who have fraudulently amassed funds at the expense of the people and who wish to enjoy their gains without being discovered or punished by the people, strive to weaken the basis of the revolution and to strike blows against it so as to bring to power those who will favour their capitalist and reactionary aspirations.

“African puppets always at the service of imperialism continue to hatch plots and organize attempts at aggression using stateless mercenaries with the aim of halting the normal course of the revolution both in Guinea and in other progressive countries.

“We are informed that, all along our frontiers with our brother countries, mercenary troops are massing. We await them steadfastly night and day, and we are prepared pitilessly to throw those European and African mercenaries into the grave dug for imperialism and its lackeys . . .”.

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

Republic of Guinea, broadcasts evidence of the training of those mercenaries in neighbouring countries. Today we have proof. From the report of the Special Mission it can be seen that Guinea is right.

178. We reaffirm our total solidarity with the people and Government of the People's Republic of Benin, our complete support for the Charter and our unwavering devotion to the principles which govern the coexistence of States. The delegation of the Republic of Guinea is firmly convinced, first, that the Security Council will take the necessary measures to permit the people of Benin to receive compensation for the injuries caused by the mercenaries in the course of their adventure of 16 January 1977; secondly, that the Security Council will most strongly condemn the act of aggression against the People's Republic of Benin as well as all those who directly or indirectly assisted the mercenaries; thirdly, that in the near future the General Assembly will decide to adopt a convention to put an end to the use of international mercenaries and to condemn the use of force to destabilize States.

179. May I express my support for the statement in paragraph 144 of the report, which reads:

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

180. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Saudi Arabia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the question on the agenda. Accordingly, I propose, in accordance with the usual practice and with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, under the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. J. M. Baroody (Saudi Arabia) took a place at the Council table.

181. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia): Mr. President, besides the fact that Venezuela and Saudi Arabia have something in common, namely, that we are both members of OPEC [*Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*], we have always done well in our mutual negotiations. I believe the Venezuelans are a very reasonable people. You represent them and I have observed you here. You are the epitome of kindness and moderation and, no doubt, sagacity. No wonder. Perhaps the good virtues of the Arabs that were transmitted to your country through Spain make me a little prone to praise you. I shall not engage in flattery because we have enough inflation in currencies and do not want to have inflation in personalities. But you are immune to any praise I may offer you.

182. I thank you, Sir, and the members of the Council for allowing me to speak. I had not intended to speak at this meeting, and I was hesitant to do so until I had had the time to listen to all my African friends, especially those belonging to the same region as Benin. However, something

very serious has caught my attention and I feel it my duty to speak lest things get out of hand and we have fragmentation among our African and Asian friends, not in the sense of geography but in the sense of disunity.

183. I listened attentively to Ambassador Boya and was deeply touched when I heard him talk about the subversion perpetrated against his country. This kind of thing could happen to any country, but we feel particularly sympathetic when it happens to small States. For, like all new States, they are in an evolutionary process and have not yet become consolidated, and these mercenaries come there to subvert the sovereignty of these States and their way of life. The purpose is perhaps to bring about upheaval, not only in Benin but elsewhere, which will redound to the interests of States hiding behind the screen.

184. As I have said, I was deeply touched by the statement of Ambassador Boya, our brother from Benin. But my attention was caught by certain passages in the report he circulated to the members of the Security Council. Of course, the representative of Benin is free to circulate any report he wishes to place before the members of the Council, even if it contains tendentious passages about certain personalities. Ambassador Boya has the right to do with it what he wants; that is his prerogative. But if a report like this becomes official in the sense that the Council agrees—and I hope it will not agree—to circulate it as a Council document, I shall have to take strong exception. Ambassador Boya may circulate the report, if he so desires, to each and every Member State of the United Nations, just as he has circulated it to all the members of the Council. If, however, the report should come out as an official document of the Council, that would in my view set a very dangerous precedent. Why? I shall explain.

185. The report is entitled—and I shall read this out in French—“Rapport sur l’agression armée impérialiste du dimanche 16 janvier 1977 contre la République populaire du Bénin”.

186. I was relieved to find that Ambassador Boya spared the Prime Minister of France, Mr. Barre, and the President of the French Republic, Mr. Giscard d’Estaing. I was afraid that he might say something about them and that would have embarrassed me, not only because we have friendly relations with France, but also because no one should throw mud at a chief of State without having proof of the accusation. Fortunately, so far as I know—of course, I have not read the entire report—there is no proof that the Government of France was implicated in what happened.

187. But what do I see in the preliminary statement of this report? I shall read it out:

“How else can one describe the role played by the Kingdom of Morocco and its head of State, Hassan II, who placed the military base of Benguerir, near Marrakesh, at the disposal of the mercenary army for training purposes?

“How else can one describe the role played by King Hassan II, who supplied the aggressors with a DC-8

aircraft, military weapons and ammunition, and all the necessary logistical support (provisions, medicines etc.)?”⁶

188. That passage makes it appear that those who sent instructions to Ambassador Boya have absolute proof of what they are saying about a chief of State, none other than King Hassan II. I knew his father, Mohammed V. He was one of the Arab patriots, not only in North Africa but in the whole Arab world. He fought against colonialism. I have had the privilege of meeting King Hassan on several occasions. It is not in his nature to be a conspirator. Someone might say “Well, anything can happen”. But do those who have sent instructions to our friend and brother Ambassador Boya have any proof of what is said in this report about King Hassan?

189. They hint that there were some Frenchmen involved. Why do they not mention the President of the French Republic or the Prime Minister? And I would say right away that I am glad they did not do so. But why, then, do they mention King Hassan? They implicate Morocco. Is it merely because this DC-8 passed through Morocco? After all, even in this great country, our host country, the Government does not always know what is happening. Everywhere, there are gangsters in gentlemen’s clothing; I hope there are none among us here. Sometimes they even run parts of the Government. In fairness to the United States, I must say that that can happen in any country. For instance, in Marseilles, they used to manufacture narcotic drugs; I do not know whether they still do. Does this mean that the French Government says amen to that? No. France fights all the crimes and misdemeanours of which it is aware. If it does not know about them, what can it do? No Government can know everything.

190. It is the privilege of the authorities in Benin to be leftist. They can choose their own ideology. Is Hassan II to be accused of imperialist machinations just because he is a king? There are probably kings who are more leftist in the way they treat their people than many so-called ideologically leftist leaders. The tribal system which I have studied and to some extent represented is the most democratic. The king is accessible. In some leftist countries can one go up and talk to the head of State? Anybody in the street can call our king by his name and address him. That is the essence of democracy, not the ritual of ideology.

191. If we allow these unproved accusations to be made, God help us. Everybody will be throwing stones at everybody else because of ideology. Benin has a right to be leftist, and nobody should interfere. Nobody should think that it will redound to his benefit to interfere in Benin. But, on the other hand, nobody should be implicated lightly, without full proof. To the glory of Anglo-Saxon law—and this is true of Islamic law too—a person is innocent until proven guilty.

192. And here a king, who happens to be a good man, has been put in the dock on hearsay evidence. Where is the proof? Why has the proof not been included? It is not fair.

⁶ Quoted in French by the speaker.

If we should establish such a precedent, God help us all, because we might then find fault which did not exist and we might go on to expand and dramatize it. Then, instead of trying to find solutions to our problems, we would be casting stones at each other's glass houses.

193. We have recently had an example of what can happen. Almost everybody— but not we, because we are not involved in this—wants to reform the way in which human rights are applied by other peoples. My message is that each country has a glass house and each country has stones. Let each country, each Government and each people reform itself before it tries to reform others and not go by hearsay. Who is perfect?

194. This report should not have been allowed, and I warn the Council gently but firmly that, should this report be circulated as an official document, God help the Council and me. It should not be done, otherwise we shall be opening the door to mud-slinging, to accusations on the basis of doubt. We have an Arabic proverb which says: "A little doubt is sinful, unless you have proof."

195. Also, when many representatives around this table call us imperialists, without naming us, just because we happen to have kings, let those who do not have kings look closely at what they do and see on what machinations their intelligence services are spending billions—and I am not going to mention in what currency—in order to subvert other peoples. I should not want representatives to think that I was speaking only of the big Powers. I am also referring to the lesser Powers, because we learn from the big Powers, we ape them. It used to be that intelligence services were to gather information, to find out if anybody was conspiring against the State. I bet you anything—to use a phrase coined by our American friends—that only a fraction of the money allocated for intelligence services is actually spent on gathering legitimate information in order to determine if anyone is conspiring against the State. Ninety per cent of it is spent on subversion, *coups d'état*, cloak-and-dagger and surreptitious activities, bribing, collusion—money, money: mammon.

196. How does my good friend and brother from Benin know that some of those intelligence service funds were not siphoned from outside instead of from inside an African State? We have no right to come to a conclusion unless we can prove it. One should not put it the way it was put in the report, throwing mud at a gentleman whom I have known for some time. He is human; he may have made mistakes. One's own brother makes mistakes. But prove it; do not throw mud just because he happens to be a king and does not espouse a so-called leftist ideology.

197. It is not my wish to make things worse. I was amused, but I am not so amused any more. One of our colleagues here has called another colleague "socialist-imperialist". I do not have to mention them; representatives know whom I mean. Now, I am lost—leftist and imperialist? But the rubric has always been that kings are reactionary and, therefore, because we are leftist and Benin is leftist and Morocco has a king, let us sling some mud. This is not fair.

198. We have all ideologies represented at the United Nations, and rightly so. There is always some gain to be derived from variety. Why? Perhaps it is because it prevents us from becoming too self-righteous. If we can observe the different kinds of governments of others, we might learn from them. But no one should be sanctimonious and holier-than-thou, saying "I am a communist" or "I am a capitalist", as they say here when they refer to private enterprise. What private enterprise? With the kind of taxation here, there is no more private enterprise. But they cling to their "private enterprise", although a man earning \$20,000 is left with \$12,000 after taxation, and he has to pay \$500 for a room. I am sure that the technocrats in the Soviet Union live much better than those making \$20,000 here. I do not know the worth of the rouble. But that is the business of the Russians and the Americans.

199. I take exception to what was mentioned here about an illustrious gentleman whose father I knew. We are loyal and if we find something wrong we tell our leaders about it. I have spoken openly to kings and prime ministers outside the Arab world. Why? Because it was in good faith and not with the desire to hurt or calumniate them. And they accept the remarks of those who may sometimes have criticism. These are our kings.

200. How does anyone know that when, a few years ago, there was trouble and it was alleged that the army had rebelled against King Hassan II and he re-established order, the rebellion was not financed from outside? We do not know. Never did the king say that a foreign Power had paid some of his men to rebel against him; because he is a gentleman. Perhaps he had no proof or he thought that the better part of wisdom was to keep silent.

201. So, without bitterness or acrimony I say to my brother from Benin, in order that he may tell his leaders, that this is not done here at the United Nations, that one does not pick on some people just because an aircraft passed through their territory. As I said, many aircraft pass through territories everywhere carrying drugs and ammunition. I say this without acrimony and as an elder who has seen a lot in his life—eruptions, revolutions and upheavals. Let us not be hasty and implicate others. And even if we do have proof, it should be sound proof not based on a little doubt.

202. I beg to be forgiven if I have perhaps been a little vehement in making my remarks. I feel well disposed towards all the members of the Council, regardless of their ideologies, because we are all brothers under the skin. We are all human beings. We are guests in this world—here today, gone tomorrow. Each one, including me, is but a grain of sand on the shores of eternity. So let us behave with good manners while we are still on the face of this earth because sooner or later we shall make our exit, and let us make it gracefully.

203. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for the reference that he made to the deep bonds which unite his country and mine.

204. I give the floor to the representative of Benin who has asked to be allowed to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

205. Mr. BOYA (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to mention very briefly that, just now, my delegation displayed its sense of responsibility and confined itself in our statement essentially to the chief instigator of the armed aggression which was perpetrated on 16 January 1977 against my country. However, the representative of Gabon, in his statement, gravely offended the honour of the Benin people as a whole. My delegation would like to reserve its right to reply to the representative of Gabon point by point when the time is ripe.

206. With respect to the representative of Saudi Arabia, for whom we have great admiration and, above all, respect, we should merely like to say that the People's Republic of

Benin has never made, nor would it ever make, accusations lightly against any country.

207. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): I feel that I ought to thank Ambassador Baroody for having spoken about the word "imperialist". Looking again at the text of my statement, I find that although I spoke of the activities of international mercenaries, there was one paragraph in which I referred to "unprovoked armed aggression by international imperialist mercenaries" [*see para. 95 above*]. I should like to inform the members of the Council that when I used the word "imperialist" I was not thinking in terms of kings and queens, but rather in terms of former or present colonial or reactionary Powers, and that I was not aiming at any particular country. I wish to make this very clear. If this term causes confusion, I should like the verbatim reporters to withdraw it from my statement, which I wrote in rather a hurry.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.

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