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2049th MEETING: 24 NOVEMBER 1977

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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.

2049TH MEETING

Held in New York on Thursday, 24 November 1977, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Mansur R. KIKHIA
(Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

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/2049)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Complaint by Benin:

Letter dated 4 November 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12437)

The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Benin:

Letter dated 4 November 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12437)

1. The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken by the Council at previous meetings, I invite the representatives of Algeria, the Congo, Cuba, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali and Viet Nam to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bouayad-Agha (Algeria), Mr. Mondjo (Congo), Mr. Alarcón (Cuba), Mr. Kondé (Guinea), Mr. Rabetafika (Madagascar), Mr. Kanté (Mali) and Mr. Dinh Ba Thi (Viet Nam) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the members of the Council that letters have been received from the representatives of Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique in which they request that they should be invited to participate in the discussion.

3. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representatives of

those States to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

4. In view of the limited number of places available at the Council table, I invite the representatives of Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that they will be invited to take a place at the Council table when they wish to address the Council.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. de Figueiredo (Angola), Mr. Aseco Eyang (Equatorial Guinea) and Mr. Lobo (Mozambique) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

5. The PRESIDENT: Members of the Council have before them the revised draft resolution, which is contained in document S/12454/Rev.1, sponsored by Benin, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius.

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

7. Mr. LOBO (Mozambique): Mr. President, my delegation has the honour to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the wise and efficient way in which you have been conducting the debates of the Security Council during the present month. We are certain that under your enlightened guidance and with the contribution of all the members of the Council this series of meetings will be able to take adequate measures regarding the barbarous armed aggression committed at Cotonou on 16 January 1977 by mercenaries against the People's Republic of Benin.

8. The Government of Mozambique views with great satisfaction the successes being achieved by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the economic development and social advancement of the Libyan people. The friendly relations of co-operation existing between our two countries were further consolidated during the meeting between President Qadhafi and President Machel that took place in Libya last May. We consider this meeting an important landmark in the relations between our two countries.

9. At this point, my delegation would like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, for his consistent commitment to the principles of the Organization. My Government is very grateful to him for the rightful

stand he has always taken in favour of justice and world peace. In this particular case of the barbarous armed aggression against the People's Republic of Benin, the People's Republic of Mozambique once more pays a tribute to the Secretary-General for providing the Government of Benin with all the needed assistance to determine and assess the damage reported in document S/12415.

10. The concern reflected in that document is not only of the People's Republic of Benin but also of all the peoples and countries fighting against colonialism and imperialism to guarantee their independence and territorial integrity. The case of Benin is the concern of all Governments fighting against neo-colonialism and for a meaningful independence in the political, economic, social and cultural domains.

11. The treacherous and criminal aggression unleashed on 16 January 1977 against the citizens of the capital city of Cotonou was not an isolated act directed only against the Benin revolution but part of an over-all plan organized by the enemies of Africa who intend to destabilize the progressive States in the continent. The events that followed it confirm that there is an imperialist strategy that aims at promoting confusion in our continent either by overthrowing the progressive and revolutionary Governments or by creating pockets of tension in various regions of Africa.

12. It was within that sinister strategy that imperialism plotted the cowardly assassination of President Marien Ngouabi, a great African leader and a consistent fighter for the establishment of socialism in the People's Republic of the Congo.

13. To pursue its objectives, imperialism provides some neo-colonialist Governments with large amounts of arms and it concentrates the bulk of those arms for aggression in southern Africa. It was within that macabre plan that, in May, dozens of militants of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) were savagely murdered, as the despicable objective of the imperialist lackeys failed to materialize.

14. Unfortunately, the system of mercenaries continues to provide the Rhodesian rebel forces with a large number of these so-called soldiers of fortune, encouraging Ian Smith to continue in his murderous adventures in defiance of world public opinion and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. It is with the help of a force made up of mercenaries that Smith is launching a very ferocious aggression against my country even now as I am addressing the Council.

15. With regard to Rhodesian aggression against Mozambique, this morning I received the following communication from my country:

"Our country has once again been invaded in the last 24 hours by the troops of Ian Smith's racist army, in a raid that constitutes the biggest aggression ever perpetrated by the racist forces against Mozambique.

"The enemy has launched a large-scale attack 20 kilometres from the town of Chimoio, capital of the

province of Manica, using a large number of aeroplanes, namely, Mirage bombers and helicopters.

"This attack was prepared in the last few days, during which the enemy concentrated a large number of military contingents along the borders of our country.

"The People's Force for the Liberation of Mozambique (FPLM), with the active collaboration of the people in general, has been repelling the Rhodesian attacks, forcing the racist forces to retreat.

"From the beginning of November this year, the rebel régime of the British colony of Southern Rhodesia has launched at least two large-scale aggressions in the provinces of Manica and Gaza, on 3 and 13 November respectively, and its forces were repelled by the armed forces of the People's Force for the Liberation of Mozambique.

"In the second attack, the enemy lost two fighter-bombers and a helicopter which were shot down by our forces in the region of Mapai.

"However, the biggest aggression that has been known until today took place precisely in Mapai where the town was completely destroyed some months ago."

16. In that context, we see sophisticated military weapons supplied to South Africa and Rhodesia. Imperialism did not hesitate to provide South Africa with the know-how that will soon enable it to produce nuclear weapons to be used against neighbouring countries. The constant aggression against Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana and Angola show that the imperialist forces are engaged in attempts to overthrow the progressive Governments which are building an economy to serve their own peoples. In that criminal action, imperialism employs mercenaries recruited in the big imperialist capitals, whose authorities do nothing to prevent that operation.

17. The People's Republic of Mozambique takes this opportunity once again to pay a tribute to the revolutionary people and Government of Benin for the courage and determination with which they annihilated the reactionary armed aggression perpetrated by mercenaries against the Government of Benin on 16 January 1977.

18. The spirit of calm in which the Government of Benin unmasked the imperialist alliance that engendered the aggression against the Beninese people further increased the respect that the international community had for that progressive republic.

19. The People's Republic of Mozambique had the privilege of being part of the commission set up by the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at Lomé at the beginning of this year, a few days after the aggression, to investigate on the spot the material damage caused by the aggressors. Until then, the Government of Benin had abstained from levelling any accusation. At no time did it accuse the countries that were involved. What revealed the odious plot to overthrow the revolutionary Government of President Kérékou was the evi-

dence found by the Special Mission sent by the United Nations and the commission of OAU, which studied the numerous documents found on the spot.

20. We are sure that by requesting this meeting of the Security Council the Government of Benin was not moved by any intention to attract the Council's attention to Benin but by the responsibility it shoulders for the fight waged by the oppressed people still under colonial domination.

21. Justice demands that resolution 405 (1977) should be applied in its entirety, especially as regards those peoples who are victims of aggressions launched by mercenaries. It is important that the countries whose citizens are involved in the criminal system of mercenaries should co-operate with the countries that have been attacked, with a view to the elimination of this scourge that puts at risk international peace and security. The evaluation of material and human losses alone is not enough. It is necessary that all Governments should endeavour to eliminate the causes. All of us know them, therefore it is up to all Governments to prevent all acts that may lead to subversion and aggression against the peoples fighting for justice, equality and harmony between nations.

22. In that connexion, we should like to pay a tribute to Mr. Marcel Kheir and Mr. Aly Assem for their work in assessing the losses caused by the criminal aggression against the heroic people of Benin and their revolutionary Government, under the leadership of President Kérékou.

23. My delegation strongly condemns the Governments involved in the aggression of 16 January 1977, which not only refuse to co-operate with the Government of Benin but try to strangle its already weak economy, imposing on it the heavy burden of reconstructing what was destroyed during the aggression while strengthening its defensive capability.

24. My delegation further calls upon the Security Council to recommend the integral application of resolution 405 (1977), requesting that all Member States should co-operate with the Beninese authorities in divulging all information about the details of the January aggression, that technical assistance should be increased for the assessment of all material and human losses and their consequences, and that more financial support should be given to enable the Beninese Government to face the economic and social difficulties, as well as the security expenses necessary for the missions of inquiry.

25. The people and Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique reiterate their militant solidarity with the revolutionary people and Government of Benin and demand that the requests made by the Government of Benin should be met.

26. The PRESIDENT: I am grateful to the representative of Mozambique for his kind words addressed to me and to my country. I should like to assure him, on behalf of my people and my country, of our friendship and solidarity with his people and to pay a tribute to the courage and determination of the people of Mozambique, as one of the front-line countries in our fight against the racist régime in South Africa.

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

28. Mr. DE FIGUEIREDO (Angola): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to express our pleasure and honour at your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also salute the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya which, under the dynamic guidance of Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi has emerged as one of the leaders of a new, militant, progressive Africa. Further, on the occasion of the forthcoming first congress of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, please accept our sentiments of revolutionary solidarity towards our comrades in your country.

29. The Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Angola was one of a group of African militants, which included representatives of Angola, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria and Zambia, which visited Cotonou on 24 February 1977, a few weeks after the infamous and barbaric act of aggression committed against a sovereign, independent African State, the People's Republic of Benin. The facts that emerged from that mission, together with the results of the inquiry carried out by the Special Mission composed of yourself, Mr. President, and the representatives of India and Panama,¹ as well as the evaluation report of the Government of Benin [S/12318/Add.1], including its revised version [S/12415], together with the report of the International Commission of Inquiry composed of Benin, Guinea and Nigeria, all lead to some profoundly disturbing conclusions. These do not surprise us, for after centuries of having been victimized by a most brutal system of imperialism, we are well aware of the underlying assumptions of colonial ventures.

30. However, because Africa has for so long borne the brunt of the West's insatiable demand for materials, markets, manpower and *lebensraum*, and having been part and parcel of a colonialist infrastructure and ourselves fought one of the bloodiest and longest wars of liberation in Africa, my delegation feels we have the right to know about factors that influence our destiny, the right to protest when our security is threatened and a duty to our revolutionary martyrs and to the coming generations to act decisively against any threat whatsoever to our territorial integrity and sovereign statehood.

31. When I say "we" I refer not only to my own country, the People's Republic of Angola, but to those countries and forces in a militant Africa and to all progressive forces all over the world. That is why the aggression committed against Benin in January 1977 is viewed by my Government and people as a threat not only against the sovereignty of Benin but against the safety of all progressive countries and societies. We are aware that the imperialist, colonialist danger is not entirely over. Our colonial past is not entirely dead and buried.

32. We are witnessing attempts at a recolonization of Africa. Our natural resources and our large populations are viewed with greedy eyes by the West to feed its societies

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-second Year, Special Supplement No. 3.*

choking on over-consumption. No wonder that in the past 30 years the West has used more mineral resources than since the first century A.D.

33. One of the most shocking aspects of the aggression against Benin was the use of mercenaries. The People's Republic of Angola is no stranger in this respect. We have long been acquainted with the institution of mercenaries, that despicable genre to which Shakespeare referred as "the dogs of war". The blood of countless martyrs is on their hands, as well as on the hands of the foreign Governments that recruit mercenaries, train them, support them and finance them. It is remarkable that the West, which considers itself the law-giver to the world, does not appear to have adequate laws to prevent the recruitment and enlistment of mercenaries. The various General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that deal with the matter directly or indirectly, such as resolutions 2465 (XXIII), 2548 (XXIV) and 239 (1967) go unheeded. In fact, by its resolution 239 (1967), the Security Council

"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".

34. These resolutions are conveniently ignored by various Governments, as witness the events in the recent past in Guinea, Angola and Benin. We wonder whether even a minor hint of this sort of episode would have been tolerated against a Western country. And yet when this heinous crime is committed against a black African nation, the representative of a country whose citizens are known to have been the key mercenaries involved, declared here on 22 November that his Government had undertaken an investigation on its own and the investigation had produced nothing.

35. The entire episode could not have been a case of collective hallucination, a figment of mass imagination, a myth concocted to no conceivable purpose. My delegation finds it odd that certain countries have chosen to refute and repudiate the findings of the various reports I have referred to, and to question the validity of the consideration of this issue in the Security Council. It is lamentable that the international community has not been more vocal in its outrage. But to expect that the victim should suffer in silence smacks of conspiracy.

36. The people of Benin can never be fully compensated for the material, physical, economic, social and political damage it has suffered. To add insult to injury, no effort has so far been made to mobilize resources to aid in the recovery of the losses suffered by Benin. Although it will not be possible to calculate the total losses incurred as a result of the attack, this is being compounded by certain countries which have generated a vast propaganda campaign against Benin, damaging its commercial relations with many of its partners by means of tactics such as the freezing of suppliers' credits, the insistence on cash payments and international financial institutions waiting on the sidelines to see how the situation evolves. Some Western countries are fond of boasting that the budget allocated for some of

their national agencies is equivalent to the entire national budget of many of the developing countries in the third world.

37. Then, surely, the sum of \$28 million as an evaluation of the direct and indirect losses incurred as a result of the attack on 16 January 1977 is not too large a sum; yet it would mean so much in terms of assistance to Benin. The United Nations is debating the revision of the Charter and the strengthening of the role of the Organization. It might be well to start with a practical demonstration of the United Nations fulfilling one of its own obligations under the Charter.

38. We wish to deliver a warning to those imperialists who once again cast covetous eyes at Africa and its wealth. Do not make a mockery of our institutions, our sovereignty, the poverty into which we have been thrust after centuries of imperialist rape. We are men of integrity, men of peace, people with a vision of the future and a memory of the past. But the dove of peace must have wings of steel if it is to survive. It is well known that the connexion between the West and its colonial empires is imperialism's weakest link. And it is at that point that we stand ready to defend our freedom and to extend full support when our comrades, whether in Benin or elsewhere, are threatened by a resurgence of imperialist colonialist desires and designs.

39. The struggle continues. Victory is certain.

40. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Angola for his kind words addressed to me and to my country. I should like on this occasion to express to him, on behalf of my people, our admiration for his country and for the struggle of its progressive and militant revolution against the racist régime of South Africa and against international mercenaries.

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

42. Mr. ASECO EYANG (Equatorial Guinea) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating you upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council during the month of November. We are convinced that, given the strong ideals of social, economic and cultural progress so worthily upheld and represented by Libya in this United Nations organ, added to the vast store of political and diplomatic experience of which you have given ample proof, the outcome of the debate in progress will be the adoption of just decisions reiterating the imperative need to give practical effect to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. And this is true, too, because you represent a Government and a people that maintain in the African continent a policy of participating in the efforts of all those who fight for freedom from slavery. This has won for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, its Government and its representatives, the highest esteem of all the justice-loving peoples of the world, among them the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

43. Permit me also to express the profound gratitude of my delegation to the members of the Council for allowing

me to take part in this debate on the barbarous aggression committed against the sister Republic of Benin.

44. Independently of our duty to express our solidarity with and militant support for the people of Benin, which was the target of the continued diabolical manifestations of colonialism and imperialism, the documents before us on the subject warrant our participation in this debate. Consequently, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and its Single National Workers Party cannot but strongly condemn this cowardly act perpetrated against the people of Benin on Sunday, 16 January of this year, by the Fascists and their hirelings.

45. For more reasons than one, my delegation wishes once again to congratulate the team of expert consultants comprised of Mr. Aly Assem of Egypt and Mr. Marcel Kheir of Lebanon for their excellent work: they complied responsibly and satisfactorily with the instructions given to them by the Security Council. Moreover, the on-the-spot evaluations enable us to appreciate the extent of the damage sustained by that courageous people as a result of the totally unjustified aggression perpetrated not only against the Government but also against the Beninese citizens of Cotonou and elsewhere, who were the victims of that cowardly aggression without precedent.

46. The figure of about \$28 million mentioned the day before yesterday [2047th meeting] by Mr. Boya, the representative of the People's Republic of Benin, is far from reflecting the true magnitude of the direct or indirect losses sustained by Benin on 16 January 1977, in terms of either the suffering resulting from the loss of life and bodily injury caused by that treacherous attack, or the sacrifices and efforts which Benin has made and will have to go on making to safeguard its independence and territorial integrity.

47. It has been shown yet again that the Western press, far from serving as a means of communication and information of the masses on contemporary realities, is no more than a tool at the service of neo-colonialism, imperialism, racism and other forces of evil, inasmuch as even at present doubts are still being bruited about as to whether the People's Republic of Benin was actually the object of outside armed aggression for the purpose of hampering its revolutionary process.

48. The existence and use of another imperialist tool that has become fashionable, namely, the mercenaries, which is no more, no less than the application of the law of the jungle to present-day international relations, are in contradiction with the Charter of the United Nations, and specifically with Article 2, which states, *inter alia*:

"All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations."

Hence, the members of the Council are in the position to declare that the use of this satanic instrument threatens international peace and security. The reasons for our

demands have been expressed very eloquently by most of the previous speakers.

49. For this reason, and in the light of the statements we have heard here, we can arrive at the conclusion that nobody is in favour of armed aggression or of the system of mercenaries. Therefore they should be condemned. As Mr. Boya of Benin said in his statement of 6 April last:

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

50. Hence we sincerely believe that the people and Government of the People's Republic of Benin deserve the support and assistance of the international community to offset in part the damages and losses they sustained as a result of the cowardly armed aggression of 16 January 1977.

51. Before concluding, allow me to express once again our full support for and solidarity with the courageous people of the People's Republic of Benin and to reiterate our decision to continue to live by the revolutionary principles we share, in the certain knowledge that under the guidance of its Government the Party and the people of Benin will safely overcome all obstacles and achieve the objectives of its people's revolutionary régime.

52. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Equatorial Guinea for his kind words addressed to me and to my country. I should like to assure him of the solidarity of our two peoples in our common struggle against imperialism, aggression and injustice in Africa and in the world.

53. Mr. CHEN Chu (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has listened attentively to the statement made by the representative of Benin [2047th meeting], in which he gave us an account of the losses suffered by the People's Republic of Benin in the incident that took place at Cotonou on 16 January 1977 and the result of the investigation into the incident.

54. The Chinese delegation once again condemns imperialism and its mercenaries for their encroachment upon the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Benin. We support the just position of the Government of Benin in condemning the use of mercenaries to threaten and overthrow sovereign States. We extend warm congratulations to the Government and people of Benin who, under the leadership of President Kérékou, won a major victory in the struggle to crush the invasion by mercenaries, and we express profound sympathy for the losses suffered by the people of Benin in the incident.

55. In order to carry out aggression, interference, control and subversion against the African States, imperialism, particularly the super-Powers, has in recent years resorted to all despicable means, including the organization of mercenaries for armed invasion. With the intensification of the contention and rivalry between the super-Powers in

Africa, the organization and use of mercenaries have assumed greater importance in their acts of aggression and expansion. That super-Power which styles itself the "natural ally" of the African people has been carrying out these criminal acts even more frequently and unscrupulously. Not long ago, with the support of other African countries and people, the Government and people of Zaire scored the major victory of defeating the mercenary invasion engineered by this super-Power. Last July, at its fourteenth session, held at Libreville, capital of Gabon, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted a significant resolution against interference in the internal affairs of African States and approved a convention on the prevention and suppression of mercenaries submitted by the OAU Council of Ministers. These victories and voices of justice give expression to the unity of the numerous African countries and people against the common enemy and their firm determination to combat super-Power hegemonism and its use of mercenaries for aggression and expansion.

56. The Chinese delegation is deeply convinced that the Government and people of Benin will further increase their vigilance and continue to defend their national independence and state sovereignty. We are also convinced that the numerous African countries and people will further strengthen their unity, make concerted efforts to frustrate the conspiratorial schemes of imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism and win new victories in their just struggle to consolidate and defend their state sovereignty and national independence.

57. The Chinese delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/12454/Rev.1 sponsored by Benin, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius.

58. Mrs. HYDER (Pakistan): The Security Council, in pursuance of the terms of resolution 405 (1977), is considering again the question brought before it by Benin regarding the armed aggression to which the Republic of Benin was subjected on 16 January 1977. It will be recalled that when the Council first took up the complaint of Benin in February of this year, it adopted resolution 404 (1977), under the terms of which it was decided to send a Special Mission composed of three members of the Council to investigate the events and submit a report. The Special Mission, under the able chairmanship of the representative of Panama, prepared a very comprehensive report¹ on the subject. In accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 405 (1977), the Secretary-General provided two consultants to the Government of Benin to evaluate the losses suffered as a consequence of the aforementioned incident. According to that evaluation, contained in the report published in document S/12415, the loss suffered by Benin is estimated to be around \$28 million.

59. My delegation has always maintained, as it stated earlier [1987th meeting] when this question was being considered, that a large number of countries in Africa, both large and small, are engaged in the task of economic development, relying mostly on indigenous effort and resources, to better the lot of their people and ensure for them a more prosperous future. These countries are peace-loving States and have no political designs. They do

not have the resources to build or maintain military capability of any significance. It is therefore regrettable that they should be subjected to unprovoked aggression, which affects not only their political and social fabric but also puts in serious jeopardy their economic future.

60. My delegation fully supports the request of the Government of Benin, as reflected in the draft resolution submitted by Benin, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius in document S/12454/Rev.1, that the international community should concern itself with the question of mercenaries to end their use against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of small and practically defenceless States. The Security Council in that regard has a special responsibility by virtue of the fact that it is, under the Charter, entrusted with the task of acting on cases which pertain to threats to the security and political independence of Member States. It is therefore important for the Council to take cognizance of the request of Benin to condemn the aggression of 16 January and recommend measures which would help to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Benin resulting from it.

61. We sincerely hope that all States will co-operate with the Government of Benin in the task of repairing the damages suffered as a result of that aggression and also take measures to guard all Member States against the dangers of such adventurist action in the future. My delegation therefore supports the draft resolution that is before us and feels that its adoption by the Council, though not likely to compensate Benin fully for what it has suffered, will at least help it to overcome some of the difficulties and, it is to be hoped, prevent the recurrence of similar incidents.

62. Miss LOPEZ (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): By way of explanation of our vote before the vote, we would say that we cannot but categorically repudiate the activity of mercenaries against the stability of States, wherever it may occur, and in particular when it is carried out against those whose fragility makes them the best targets for such attacks. In that connexion, we wish to express our solidarity with the cause of peoples affected by the mercenary phenomenon and support measures designed to combat it.

63. We regret that a friendly country like Benin, with which we share in the struggle for the claims of the third world, should now be the object of aggression and that its sovereignty should have been attacked. For that reason, we shall support the draft resolution contained in document S/12454/Rev.1. However, we hope that appropriate ways and means will be sought to examine and study this type of aggression and that we shall consider solutions that are in keeping with the gravity of the problem.

64. The PRESIDENT: Before I call on the representative of India, I should like, on the Council's behalf, to express to the people and Government of India our deepest condolences over the tragic loss of several thousands of lives as a result of the natural disaster which occurred in India this week. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all members of the Council in requesting the representative of India, our colleague Ambassador Jaipal, to convey to his Government and to his people the deepest sympathy of the members of the Council.

65. Mr. JAIPAL (India): Mr. President, may I express to you and, through you, to the Council our gratitude for the expression of condolence which you have expressed on the occasion of certain natural disasters that have visited parts of my country and which I shall convey to my Government.

66. My delegation has placed on record its views on a man-made disaster that visited Benin in January of this year. Our views have been placed on record on two previous occasions [*1987th and 2003rd meetings*]. We join with others in condemning this and other such acts of aggression by so-called international mercenaries.

67. However, it does seem odd for the Security Council to be condemning acts of aggression without being able to identify the aggressors. Who are these unknown persons and where are they now? Should they not be apprehended? And should there not be laws under which they could be tried and punished wherever they might be? How can these phantom forces operate without some kind of clandestine assistance from others?

68. There is no doubt that these ghost armies pose potential threats to many Member States—threats of attack, threats of destabilization, and sometimes even threats of overthrow of established Governments. It makes one wonder which Governments are safe from external interference by international mercenaries, mercenaries who by definition have no political coloration. Are democratic régimes which respect human rights any safer than dictatorships? Apparently, immunity from mercenary attack cannot be assured in purely political terms.

69. The United Nations has now become largely an organization of small States. So it is only through international co-operation that the threat posed by mercenaries can be neutralized. To that end, there has to be an agreed code of conduct among Member States, a code that sets out the areas and methods of co-operation.

70. Benin has become a symbol of the vulnerability of small States to mercenary action. Although, fortunately, there were only seven deaths and 51 wounded, the damage caused by the attack has been estimated at \$28 million which is indeed a heavy burden for Benin. It is indicative of the scale of destruction that can be caused by such mercenary attacks. It is necessary, therefore, for the United Nations to take collective steps to deter mercenary attacks. The draft resolution before us, in our view, does not go far enough in the direction of preventive or punitive measures. However, it does heighten the dilemma facing the international community without providing any satisfactory solutions. Assistance to Benin is, of course, essential and we hope that it will be forthcoming in adequate measure. But financial assistance is not the final answer to the hidden mercenary menace to the present system of international peace and security.

71. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Panama has followed very carefully the statements made by the representative of the People's Republic of Benin, by other African delegations and by members of the Council in connexion with the acts

of aggression and threats of aggression by mercenaries hired for unlawful purposes. The international community categorically condemns and repudiates those acts and threats as stated so eloquently today by the representatives of Pakistan and Venezuela who honour and bring great prestige to the work of the Council.

72. The fact that I should have had the signal honour of acting as Chairman of the Security Council Special Mission, composed of India, Libya and Panama, which investigated the acts of armed aggression perpetrated against the capital of the People's Republic of Benin by a contingent of mercenaries on 16 January 1977, enables me to reiterate here today with a full knowledge of the facts that the danger that international mercenaries represent for all States and in particular for small States is a real, constant, serious and disruptive danger for good international relations. There is, therefore, full justification for the condemnation of the aggression against Benin by the Council in resolution 405 (1977), compliance with which is absolutely necessary. By reason of these facts and events the Council must use its authority to prevent the continuation of any form of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Member States. Similarly, serious measures must be taken against the use of international mercenaries to destroy the stability of States and to violate their territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, or for any other unlawful purpose. The case of Benin is an eloquent example that should serve as a good platform for strong action which will eliminate the scourge of international mercenary action in all latitudes but more particularly in the African continent.

73. For this reason the delegation of Panama supports fully the draft resolution submitted jointly by the African members of the Council and contained in document S/12454/Rev.1. We believe that the measures provided for in that draft resolution are appropriate, necessary and urgent. In particular, Panama advocates that, as is suggested in the draft resolution, all States and competent international organizations, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, should provide economic assistance to Benin which needs such assistance so badly, particularly after the barbarous act of aggression perpetrated against it. That would be but an act of justice that would help international peace and solidarity.

74. My delegation would not wish to conclude this statement without first acknowledging the positive efforts made by you, Mr. President, with tact, knowledge and understanding to maintain a conciliatory climate in the debate and to achieve through your unremitting efforts the adoption of a draft resolution which will, as we hope, express fully the will of the Council.

75. The PRESIDENT: As there are no further speakers at this stage, I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA.

76. My country, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, has placed its views on record on previous occasions. We also had the honour to be entrusted by the Council with the task of serving on the Special Mission to Benin under the able chairmanship of Mr. Illueca of Panama. Today, I should just like to complement the statements made by my delegation

to the Council in the past by trying to indicate the infernal and global machinery which is behind this kind of aggression in our present world and give a reason for what happened in Benin.

77. The Security Council, in resolution 405 (1977), strongly condemned the act of armed aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January 1977. In paragraph 10 of that resolution, the Council

"Calls upon all States to provide the Security Council with any information they might have in connexion with the events at Cotonou on 16 January 1977 likely to throw further light on those events".

78. The Security Council Special Mission was able to establish certain facts. It was clear that the People's Republic of Benin had been the victim of aggression. On 16 January 1977 an unmarked aircraft made an unauthorized landing at Cotonou airport. Approximately 100 men emerged from it, both white and black. They were very heavily armed. They proceeded to carry out assaults on the presidential palace and the military camp at Guezo. They clearly intended to capture or assassinate President Kérékou. They clearly intended to overthrow the People's Republic. The assault group was well organized. Its members spoke French among themselves, many without a foreign accent.

79. The attempt to overthrow the People's Republic failed. That does not mean that investigation of the matter is any less important, for there is much evidence that points to organized foreign involvement and support for this armed aggression. The Special Mission was not able to verify or authenticate that evidence because its work was only to investigate the events of 16 January 1977 at Cotonou. An attempt should be made to investigate the matter further in order not just to seek to establish that certain things happened but to determine who was responsible for what happened. If the Security Council should choose to turn its back on the matter, it would in effect be issuing an open invitation to various Powers to continue using tactics which are already wreaking devastation in many countries of the third world.

80. It may be that the operation carried out on 16 January at Cotonou was the work of adventurers, but it is highly likely that it was not. My delegation believes that we must investigate this matter and fix responsibility for the aggression against the People's Republic of Benin if we are to have even a hope of preventing such things from happening in the future. There is a growing assault, especially through the use of covert operations, on the sovereignty and integrity of nations in every part of the third world. It is the duty of the Security Council to do something about it. We can take a first and important step to bring the growing problem of mercenary activity into the public limelight by pressing the investigation of the events which occurred at Cotonou on 16 January 1977. However, the Council now finds itself in an awkward situation for, having condemned the aggression, it remains unable to do anything more. It has not been able to establish who was responsible for this aggression. It has received no assistance or information that would shed light on the events of 16 January from States which are in a position to help it with its inquiries.

81. At the present juncture, therefore, the Council cannot proceed to fix responsibility for this matter or take the measures which might help to prevent such occurrences in the future. The situation thus reflects a serious weakness in the position of the Council itself. Charged with responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council once again finds itself unable to carry out its obligations under the Charter. Having taken note of an act of aggression, and having condemned it, it has so far not found any means of proceeding further.

82. This is a serious matter. It is a serious matter, first, because the kind of aggression that was committed against Benin is occurring with ever greater frequency. It is a serious matter also because the Council should, and indeed must, find the means to prevent the use of armed mercenary forces to carry out acts of aggression against Member States. It is clear that if the Council does not find the necessary means we shall be faced with greatly intensified mercenary activity everywhere, and particularly against the small States.

83. I should like to put this matter into perspective in order to underline the gravity of the problem which confronts us. We must look at the aggression carried out against the People's Republic of Benin against the background of certain basic facts of international relations today.

84. First of all, the fact is that, despite the long period of political decolonization, many countries of the third world today find themselves enmeshed in a new colonial system. It is a system which all acknowledge but which some call the interdependent world economy. Those who use this bland terminology ignore the fact that within that system there are rich nations and poor nations. More important, they ignore the fact of the exploitation of the poor by the rich. In the third world we know that the growing gap between the rich and the poor is the consequence of this new system. That is why there are growing demands for a reorganization of the world economy.

85. Secondly, it is also a fact that many countries of the third world have come to see that they may also break free of this system and seek to find their own paths to independence and justice. Many nations have realized that there is little prospect of an escape from poverty for the poor as long as the present global economy is organized as it is. They have therefore chosen to break the ties which bind them to the former colonialist countries, the ties which ensure that they provide the cheap labour and the raw materials for the wealthy at the expense of their own children's future. Many nations of the third world have thus chosen to break free of the colonialist sphere of influence and to reach out for a new economic way, one which will be more beneficial for their people, in each case creating the forms appropriate to their own history and possibilities. Every nation has the right to make such choices. That right is the essence of the exercise of sovereignty. It is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

86. The third fact, which we all acknowledge, is that exercise of this right is feared by the colonialist countries which dominate the global economy. They see every

movement in the direction of real independence in the third world as a threat to their global interests. They fear the loss of sources of raw materials, of increases in the prices of minerals. They fear the loss of free access to investments in the third world, investments which often arrest the development of the typical poor economy. They fear the loss of access to cheap labour, whether it is used in the third world or imported from the third world. In short, colonialist powers fear the dissolution of the global economy, a system which functions very well for them but very badly for the poor nations of the periphery.

87. Finally, those nations which now dominate the new colonial system seek by many means to prevent the gradual disintegration of the system. They seek above all to ensure political stability in the periphery of the global economy. They want to ensure that the nations of the periphery remain friendly. If they should become unfriendly, they try to change that. Many means are employed in pursuit of these ends. The imperialist countries employ persuasion and propaganda. They employ, as we all know, pressure and political subversion. And, in many instances, they employ open aggression.

88. We are therefore living in a period of tremendous stress in international relations. There is a growing awareness around the world of a clear conflict of interests between the poor nations of the third world and the wealthy capitalist countries. This conflict is sharpening. Efforts to break free of the constricting relationships of the global economy are intensifying and the response of those who dominate this moribund system is increasingly savage.

89. All this is well known. The facts, however, point to an important conclusion for the Council, for the facts set out above explain why the kind of aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin is encountered so frequently today. To protect what they see as their interests, the neo-colonial Powers often conclude that it is necessary to use armed force. However, there is no domestic consensus in the liberal democracies to support open, arbitrary aggression, especially when there is a danger that it can lead to deeper involvement in war. Consequently, aggression must increasingly be carried out covertly, away from the scrutiny of parliaments and the media. That is why mercenary activity is rapidly becoming one of the principal instruments used by the colonialist countries to seek or maintain so-called order in the third world.

90. We must be aware that the use of mercenary forces to carry out acts of armed aggression is far from casual. It is becoming a systematic part of the covert foreign policy of the neo-colonial Powers. As such, it is part of an effort to deprive nations of their sovereignty by arbitrary force.

91. This is the question which the Council must now consider in deciding how to proceed. Can the Council countenance the spreading use of armed force by this means? Can it allow small nations increasingly to be threatened by covert action?

92. It is clear that the armed aggression against the People's Republic of Benin may be an example of the kind of aggression I am talking about. The nation of Benin was part of the neo-colonial system. It was a small, vigorous but poor nation of West Africa, systematically exploited by

imperialism. Its people saw that there was little hope for them as long as they allowed themselves to be exploited. In 1972—on 30 November—the nation proclaimed a new policy of national independence. Two years later—on 30 November—Benin proclaimed to the world that it had chosen the socialist road to development and that it was determined “to escape forever from the capitalist ghetto”. On 30 November 1975, the Party of the People's Revolution was established and the People's Republic of Benin was founded.

93. These events shook the colonialist world, for the decision of one more country to begin the break with the capitalist bloc in Africa was seen as a dangerous example to others. And we know that it was discussed in various circles as a problem.

94. We must be clear that we do not at this stage know whether the People's Republic of Benin was the victim on 16 January of aggression organized by the neo-colonial Powers. However, it would be foolish to dismiss this possibility, for everything that is happening in the third world today argues that it is a possibility. If it is a possibility, we must ask ourselves whether we have an obligation to pursue the investigation which began with the Security Council Mission to Benin earlier this year.

95. I now resume my function as PRESIDENT of the Council.

96. It is my understanding that the Council is prepared to take a decision on the draft resolution before it. In the absence of any objection, I shall declare the revised draft resolution sponsored by Benin, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius and contained in document S/12454/Rev.1 adopted.

The draft resolution was adopted.²

97. Mr. BOYA (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I merely wish to tell you and the other members of the Council how happy my delegation is at the way in which this debate took place. We are also happy at the active participation of our friends in this debate and this is why we consider the conclusion that we have reached a positive one. Benin is satisfied, despite the inadequacies of the resolution that has just been adopted.

98. We thank you personally for the efforts which have led to this unanimous conclusion. I thank the members of the Council for their co-operation and solidarity. My delegation also wishes to thank all the Members of the Organization that are friends of Benin which have taken an active part in this debate. The echo of their militant solidarity is already being heard in the People's Republic of Benin.

99. My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for all his efforts. We are convinced of the important role that the Secretary-General will be called upon to play in the implementation of this resolution. The Beninese Government considers the co-operation of the Secretary-General as essential for future action. We are certain that he will certainly not fail in this duty and we thank him in advance.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

² See resolution 419 (1977).

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