



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

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Question of Western Sahara: amendments to revised draft decision A/C.4/37/L.5/Rev.1; A/C.4/37/L.13

1. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) introduced document A/C.4/37/L.13 on behalf of the sponsors, and drew attention to a correction: the amendment in paragraph 2 of the document should read "to organize and conduct a general and free referendum on self-determination of the people of Western Sahara". The amendments were intended to make the draft decision clearer and more specific.

General debate (continued)

2. Mrs. BERMUDEZ (Cuba) expressed her country's condolences to the Government and people of the Soviet Union on the death of Chairman Brezhnev.

3. Referring to the question of Western Sahara, she said that Morocco's continued illegal occupation of that Territory was a matter of real concern. Morocco cited the so-called Madrid agreement of 1975, establishing the division of territory between Mauritania and Morocco, but ignored the fact that the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Saharan people, had not participated in that deal and that Mauritania itself had later condemned it as an illegal agreement. The genuine wishes of the Saharan people, as indicated to the United Nations visiting mission in 1975, had never been taken into account and the United Nations had repeatedly urged Morocco to conduct a plebiscite under United Nations supervision.

4. Morocco also ignored the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice confirming that the historical links between Western Sahara and Morocco did not confer any sovereignty on Morocco that would impede the exercise of the right of self-determination of the Saharan people. Morocco's presence in Western Sahara was a violation of the principle of international law that the right of self-determination embodied sovereignty over natural resources and that their wrongful exploitation impeded independence and economic and social development. Furthermore, the military assistance provided by the United States opened the way to imperial penetration and threatened the region's peace and security.

5. If the Saharan people, who controlled 90 per cent of their territory, were not a threat to the territorial integrity of Morocco, and if the majority of Members of the United Nations were calling on Morocco to withdraw from Western Sahara, why did it persist in keeping its forces there? No one would deny Morocco's part in the struggle for African independence, but its occupation of Western Sahara and its refusal to negotiate with the Frente POLISARIO were incomprehensible.

6. The cease-fire called for by the African Heads of State, to be followed by a referendum in which the Saharan people would exercise their legitimate rights, had to be negotiated between the parties to the conflict, namely, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO. Even Mauritania, which had initially taken part in the colonial plunder, now recognized the Saharan people's sovereignty over the territory that was now the seat of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, which his Government

(Mrs. Bermudez, Cuba)

recognized. The Moroccan Government had expressed its agreement with the holding of a referendum for the Saharan people, thus recognizing in fact what it denied in law, namely the need to conclude the decolonization of Western Sahara. Obviously, a cessation of hostilities must come before a referendum. Consequently, Morocco must sooner or later negotiate with the only party which could achieve it, the Frente POLISARIO.

7. The growing international support for the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, already recognized by more than 50 States, showed that the historic will of the Saharan people could not be denied by armed force. The conflict could be ended only by a just and lasting political solution with the participation of Morocco and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). She trusted that Morocco would not ignore the international community's appeal.

8. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) said that the consistent refusal by the United Nations to endorse Indonesia's annexation of East Timor by force was a reminder that the Organization was not prepared to reward aggression. Indonesia had claimed that its annexation of the Territory had been subsequently justified by a referendum in which the people of the Territory had freely chosen unity with Indonesia, but had failed to justify its right to test the people's opinion. In response to an appeal by the United Nations to withdraw, the Indonesian Government had declared that it did not regard itself as being bound by the relevant United Nations resolution and that the only Indonesian troops in East Timor were volunteers responding to an East Timorese request for assistance in restoring peace. Even Portugal, as the former administering Power, had consistently refused to accord even the semblance of legality to Indonesia's unilateral action.

9. The presence of tens of thousands of Indonesian invading troops had had far-reaching consequences for the Territory. Most eyewitness accounts had attributed the food crises that had occurred in recent years to Indonesia's military campaign to crush resistance. Recent reports of the threat of renewed serious food shortages had been confirmed by the Vatican representative in the area, who had later been quoted as saying that he was refraining from comment on the situation because Indonesian authorities had warned him of the consequences to his missionaries if he spoke out.

10. The Territory had been largely cut off from the outside world and until recently no foreign journalists or representatives of relief organizations or humanitarian groups had been allowed to visit East Timor. With few exceptions, the East Timorese were not allowed to leave the Territory, and a journalist who had reported signs of continuing hunger and repression had also reported that people whom he had interviewed had subsequently been interrogated by military intelligence agents. Such restrictions on the East Timorese were inconsistent with Indonesia's claims that the Territory had been fully integrated with Indonesia. Indonesia had repeatedly dismissed accounts of famine and brutality as unfounded, but it was significant that the population of East Timor had fallen from some 680,000 at the time of the last Portuguese census to approximately 450,000. The world must not forget their plight. The United Nations should set in motion a process leading to authentic self-determination by the people of East Timor.

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11. Mr. ZENTAR (Morocco) said that the colonial era had left a number of dangerous sequels in various regions which were difficult to overcome because the former colonial countries, succumbing to flattery, allowed themselves to remain in a state of dependence and servitude, to the benefit of their former occupiers.

12. North-West Africa had suffered tension for more than 20 years, partly as a result of its colonial legacy of vague or deliberately altered frontiers, and partly because the return of its Saharan territory had been so long delayed that dubious interests had intervened. That was the background to the artificial problem of Western Sahara.

13. Morocco's claim to its portion of the Sahara went back to its claim for independence, when the entire national territory had still been under colonial rule. The national movement in Morocco had claimed independence, unity and territorial integrity at a time when the Kingdom had been divided under six different administrations. However, the allegiance between the different sectors of the Moroccan population and the Moroccan sovereigns had been so strong and the prestige of the monarchy so high that the colonial administrations in the various zones had been unable to ignore the monarchy, which symbolized national unity.

14. In the case of the links of allegiance between the Moroccan sovereigns and the population of Western Sahara, the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion in response to a question from the General Assembly as to whether Western Sahara had been, at the time of colonization by Spain, a territory belonging to no one (terra nullius), had indicated that, prior to colonization by Spain, authority had been exercised over the inhabitants of Western Sahara; that allegiance existed between the Saharan tribes and the Sultan of Morocco; and that at the time of colonization of Western Sahara by Spain, the Moroccan State had had a special character and the allegiance between the tribes and the Sultan had been recognized internationally. On the basis of the historical and legal background, which was very clear, the Moroccan claim had been justified and the manoeuvrings of Spain unacceptable.

15. Following the decolonization of Western Sahara, it was Morocco which had first brought the question before the General Assembly, OAU and the non-aligned countries. The fact that the Moroccan army had had to face only Algerian troops in the recuperated territory, at a time when the mercenaries of the Frente POLISARIO were only just being recruited, showed that tension in the region had been created artificially. In the succeeding years, foreign intrigue against Morocco had increased and the Royal Moroccan Forces had had to fight an undeclared war.

16. Morocco had warned certain States members of OAU against moves which threatened the African consensus and had given many demonstrations of good will, attachment to African unity and the desire for peace. His Majesty King Hassan II had proposed a referendum on self-determination for Sahara in a spirit of African solidarity and precisely to prevent the disruption that OAU was suffering today.

17. The OAU Implementation Committee on Western Sahara had met in February 1982 to adopt a plan for the proclamation and guarantee of a cease-fire and the organization of a referendum.

(Mr. Zentar, Morocco)

18. The Secretary-General of OAU had notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the OAU decision on the cease-fire but had made no mention of the second decision, on the modalities and organizational framework for the referendum in Western Sahara (A/37/570/Rev.2). It had required the intervention of Morocco to repair that oversight, which had been clearly intended to terminate the consultations and to bury a decision which had been adopted unanimously by the Implementation Committee.

19. Two weeks after the adoption of those two basic decisions by the Implementation Committee on 8 and 9 February 1982, and at the very moment when the Acting President of OAU, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, President of Kenya, had been about to consult the parties regarding the date for the implementation of those decisions, the Administrative Secretary-General of OAU had taken it upon himself to "kill" the peace process, to repudiate the Implementation Committee and to paralyse and virtually destroy OAU by unilaterally admitting to membership a so-called Saharan republic with headquarters in Algeria and an arsenal in Libya.

20. Since 1980 OAU had adopted a prudent position in regard to whether the so-called Saharan republic was an independent sovereign African State within the meaning of the OAU Charter. In these circumstances, the behaviour of the Administrative Secretary-General of OAU could only be regarded as defiance of the wishes of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, as an attempt to thwart a peaceful solution and as being contrary to law and the interests of peace. As a result of such irresponsible behaviour, 19 States members of OAU had abandoned the session of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs held in Addis Ababa, thus depriving its deliberation of validity for lack of the necessary quorum. Other African States which had not left the session of the Council had nevertheless declared later that, for lack of a quorum, no meeting could legally be convened. Those developments had clearly revealed the strength of the attachment of those members of OAU to legality and to agreements reached within OAU. Such a victory for law, justice and common sense was to the credit of those countries which had brought it about and which had accordingly shown themselves to be worthy defenders of the principles and purposes which underlay African unity.

21. The good faith shown by Morocco had been dictated both by its deep belief in the justice of its cause and by its total confidence that the population of Western Sahara would once again show the world that their attachment to the mother country was authentic and consistent with history. Morocco's position, which remained the one it had taken at Nairobi, was based on the deep belief of its people in African ideals and African unity, for which Morocco had worked steadily for 20 years.

22. His country's only request to the United Nations was that the Organization should try to help to allay the differences within OAU, that the General Assembly should unanimously renew its confidence in OAU, respect its prerogatives and help it to resume its full responsibilities.

23. Mr. SHERMAN (United States of America) said that the Charter provided a clear régime governing Trusteeship Territories separate from that relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories. Moreover, pursuant to Article 83 of the Charter, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was under a régime separate from that governing other Trusteeship Territories. Under that article, the Security Council, availing itself of the assistance of the Trusteeship Council, was responsible for exercising all functions of the United Nations with regard to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

24. Representatives of the Micronesian Government travelled to New York to attend sessions of the Trusteeship Council, and the United States annually submitted a lengthy report on the Territory. The Council examined that report, heard and questioned the Micronesian and United States representatives on developments, heard petitioners and examined communications from or about the Territory. On a regular basis, the Council dispatched visiting missions to the Trust Territory to assess conditions there; the most recent mission had taken place in July 1982. In addition, the Council had sent special missions to observe the various plebiscites and referenda conducted as part of the ongoing process of self-determination. It was the intention of his Government to invite the Council to observe the forthcoming plebiscites on the compact of free association in Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, which would constitute the most important acts of self-determination yet in the Trust Territory.

25. Each year the Trusteeship Council transmitted its conclusions and recommendations to the Security Council as part of its annual report to that body. The reports of the Trusteeship Council were detailed and full; its annual sessions were open and delegations interested in the self-determination of the peoples of Micronesia were welcome to attend.

26. It was against that background of serious consideration of the Trust Territory by the principle organ entrusted with overseeing it that the current reference to the Trust Territory in the Fourth Committee had to be viewed.

27. An important juncture was about to be reached in the history of the Territory. After more than a decade of negotiations, the elected representatives of Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, or their designated negotiators, had all signed with the United States a compact of free association which was intended to establish the future political status of those three jurisdictions and their relationship with the United States, and to make possible the termination of the only strategic trusteeship created by the United Nations. The results of those negotiations were about to be submitted to plebiscites in the three jurisdictions. Self-determination was clearly under way in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, under the supervision of the Trusteeship Council.

28. Notwithstanding the fact that the Trust Territory was not on the agenda of the General Assembly and despite the supervisory responsibility given to the Trusteeship Council under the Charter, a draft resolution had nevertheless been introduced in the Fourth Committee. It was to be noted that, while the Special

(Mr. Sherman, United States)

Committee of 24 had taken a decision on that draft resolution, the decision had not commanded a consensus of the members of that body. In insisting that the decision should nevertheless be forwarded to the Fourth Committee as a text of the Special Committee of 24, the sponsors of the draft resolution had breached not only the established precedents of the Special Committee of 24 but also its rules of procedure. Against that background, his delegation must question the motives of those, like the representative of the Soviet Union, who had been so persistent in their attempts to bring the issue before the Fourth Committee. If it was the intention of those delegations to instruct the Trusteeship and Security Councils on their responsibilities, the draft resolution was clearly unnecessary. Those bodies had exercised their jurisdiction responsibly and scrupulously for the past 35 years and needed no such instruction.

29. It was to be feared, however, that the persistent efforts of a handful of delegations reflected a more insidious intent. The question might well be asked whether those few delegations found the prospect of a legitimate act of self-determination so alien to their own political beliefs and practices that they were seeking at such a late date to frustrate the will of the people of Micronesia.

30. The people of Micronesia, through political status negotiations, their own constitutional processes and plebiscites to be observed by the Trusteeship Council, were exercising their right to determine their own future. After a decade and a half of debate on their political future, they were exercising their right to self-determination. He was confident that the members of the Fourth Committee would respect that right.

31. Mr. SAKAJJA (Uganda) expressed condolences to the delegations of the Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR on the death of President Brezhnev, who would be remembered for his statesmanship and his commitment to the liberation of all colonial Territories.

32. He observed that, as the number of dependent Territories had diminished, it had become more difficult to decolonize them, owing to the complex nature of some of those Territories. The Fourth Committee must, however, maintain that, whatever the nature of the problems facing those Territories, the people of each of them should be enabled to determine its own future freely. It was therefore incumbent upon the administering Powers to make known to those peoples all possible avenues open to them in deciding their future.

33. On the question of Western Sahara, Uganda viewed with concern manoeuvres to delay decolonization, and wished to reaffirm its unflinching support for and solidarity with the people of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic under the leadership of the Frente POLISARIO.

34. On the question of East Timor, his delegation held that it was the duty of the United Nations to ensure that the people of that Territory exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

(Mr. Sakajja, Uganda)

35. With regard to item 99, his delegation considered that specialized agencies and institutions should make a more effective contribution to the struggle for the elimination of colonialism. A number of agencies, including UNESCO, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO, UNICEF and WHO, had made sustained efforts and had achieved appreciable results in their assistance to colonial peoples and their liberation movements. It was to be regretted, however, that only a few days previously the IMF had defied the United Nations appeal to deny racist South Africa an unjustifiable loan of \$1.1 billion. The United Nations must continue to oppose any support to the racist régime which had continued to defy the decisions of the Organization concerning South Africa's apartheid policies and its illegal occupation of Namibia. The granting of such a loan to South Africa would alleviate the régime's economic problems, thus facilitating further development of its already dangerous military capability and increasing its threat to peace in the region. Any support to the racist régime should be strongly condemned.

36. Concerning items 100 and 101, Uganda considered that both the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa and offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories were of vital importance as means for preparing the peoples of those Territories for independence. Uganda, within the limitations of its modest resources, had continued to offer educational opportunities to peoples from dependent Territories. His delegation therefore appealed to all Governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to continue to pursue their commitment to decolonization by assisting dependent peoples. In that connection, his delegation's special thanks went to the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa.

37. Mr. YOSSIPHOV (Bulgaria) said that South Africa's racists, in defiance of appeals from the international community, continued to be in a position to rely on all-round support from their Western mentors. A fact reinforcing that conclusion was the huge loan that IMF had just granted to South Africa, enabling it to bolster its oppressive military machine.

38. The support given by the imperialist States to the racist régime was motivated by their desire to continue to plunder the natural and human resources of southern Africa and thereby reap enormous profits, protect their geostrategic interests, control important sea lanes, suppress the national liberation movements, and block the peaceful development of the newly independent States in that part of Africa.

39. The colonial Powers continued to lay claim to small colonial Territories in defiance of the Charter and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The administering Powers arrogated to themselves the right to determine the future constitutional and political development of those Territories in order to perpetuate their military presence in violation of General Assembly resolution 35/118. A telling example of such a policy was that which the United States had pursued for the past 30 years with regard to Micronesia. By applying the principle of "divide and rule", the colonial Power was trying to retain its colonial domination over that Territory.

(Mr. Yossiphov, Bulgaria)

40. According to the Christian Science Monitor of 12 May 1982, the United States viewed Micronesia as forming an integral part of its naval strategy by providing bases and port facilities. The report confirmed that the United States was trying to perpetuate its exclusive military rights in Micronesia. Instead of preparing the Territory for self-determination and independence, the United States was using it for its own military strategic interests by fragmenting it into separate entities, each with a neo-colonial status. Such a policy would turn Micronesia, already a large-scale United States military testing ground, into a powerful air and naval base and an arsenal of nuclear and chemical weapons; it would become a springboard for military operations to control neighbouring regions. The Territory of Micronesia had for years been used as a site for testing thermonuclear weapons, and representatives of the Micronesian population had expressed their alarm that, as a consequence of the tests, four islands had virtually disappeared from the face of the earth. Another source of concern had been the news that several atolls, such as Kwajalein, would continue to be used as testing grounds for new strategic arms.

41. The future of Micronesia was quite clearly a problem of decolonization. United States actions with regard to Micronesia were in blatant violation of Article 83 of the Charter. The international community should make maximum efforts to enable the people of Micronesia to achieve self-determination and independence.

42. Guam, too, was an important link in the network of military bases allegedly protecting the spheres of vital United States interest around the world. The presence of military bases constituted a major obstacle to the exercise of the rights of the oppressed people of Guam to self-determination and independence. Guam's image was tied to the presence of the United States military in very large numbers. According to a petitioner from Guam who had testified before the Special Committee of 24, the fact that one third of the island was held for military purposes and that 20 per cent of the inhabitants of the islands were military or their dependents, was in itself creating a climate in which self-determination was being bent in a particular direction. Instead of developing independently, the economy had become reliant on the military presence. Furthermore, the military personnel on the islands were eligible to vote in Guam elections, including elections on political self-determination.

43. The situation was identical in all other small Territories where United States and British military bases and installations existed. For many years past both the United States and the United Kingdom had refused to comply with pertinent United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 35/118.

44. His delegation had noted with satisfaction that the Fourth Committee had adopted a decision on military activities by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration (A/37/23 (Part II)/Add.1, chap. IV, para. 13). He drew attention to paragraph 15 of that decision, in which the Secretary-General was requested to undertake an intensified campaign of publicity concerning those activities.

(Mr. Yossiphov, Bulgaria)

45. In conclusion, he expressed his country's unflagging support for the just struggle of all peoples still under colonial domination, including the Puerto Rican people for the immediate and unconditional implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

46. Mr. BOLD (Mongolia) expressed deep sympathy in connexion with the death of Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

47. The process of decolonization was irreversible; as a result of the national liberation struggle, colonialism as a world system had disintegrated. The international solidarity of the socialist countries and their political, moral and material support had always been an important factor in the success of the national liberation movement. The role played by the United Nations had also been considerable. The vestiges of colonialism were a source of international tension: the forces of imperialism and colonialism were stubbornly clinging to the last colonial enclaves in order to exploit their resources and progressively transform them into the economic, military and strategic bridgehead of imperialism. That was true of Namibia, Micronesia, Puerto Rico and other Territories.

48. The United States, in violation of its obligations as Administering Authority, was seeking to dismember its Trust Territory, in order to incorporate some of the islands into the chain of American military bases surrounding the world. The US News and World Report had described in detail how the Pentagon had turned Micronesia into a testing ground for nuclear weapons and missiles and how the inhabitants of the Bikini and Eniwetok atolls in the Marshall Islands had been forcibly resettled in other islands and, because of the high level of radiation, had not yet been able to return. One of the largest testing grounds in the Kwajalein atoll was designed to test anti-missile systems and track intercontinental missiles, including the newest type of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

49. In building up its military presence in the Pacific Islands, the United States was not in the least concerned about their socio-economic and cultural progress. There was no industry, and agriculture was at a rudimentary level. The inhabitants were afflicted by various illnesses including those linked with radiation, and medical services were virtually non-existent.

50. Ignoring United Nations decisions and its obligations as Administering Authority, the United States was trying to annex parts of the Territory by imposing on them agreements on "political union" or "free association". The same devious devices were being used in relation to Puerto Rico; its right to self-determination and independence in accordance with the decision of the United Nations was undisputed.

51. His Government's position on questions of decolonization remained unchanged. With the deteriorating international situation and the growing danger of nuclear

(Mr. Bold, Mongolia)

war, the granting of independence to the small Territories was particularly urgent because of their intensive use for military purposes. The fate of the peoples under colonial oppression must be resolved on the basis of the free expression of will of those peoples and the safeguarding of their vital interests in full accordance with the relevant United Nations decisions. His delegation supported the draft resolution on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands in document A/37/23 (Part V)/Add.2.

52. Mr. LE KIM CHUNG (Viet Nam) expressed condolences in connection with the death of Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

53. He said that the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was facing increasing obstacles on the road to independence. After dividing the Territory into three different administrative entities in violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the United States, under the cover of separate accords described as "political union" and "free association", was trying to annex those entities and use Micronesia for military purposes in total disregard of the lives and well-being of the local population. The United States had resorted to all kinds of pressure and even threats against the inhabitants of the Territory, without succeeding in silencing protests. The kind of accords promoted by the United States as "covenants" or "compacts" for the status of "commonwealth" or "free association" could in no way be a substitute for the status of free and independent State to which the Territory had an inalienable right.

54. The expansionist policy of the United States in Micronesia was a grave threat to peace and security in the region. The Vietnamese people well remembered how the United States, in its war of aggression against Viet Nam had used bases in Guam to send their bombers into Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea. There was no assurance that in future American bases set up in Micronesia would not be used for armed action against neighbouring countries which resisted American diktat. The situation was all the more dangerous in that the American imperialists were acting in collusion with other militant and expansionist forces and in particular with hegemonist forces which had always considered South-East Asia to be their natural area of expansion and had territorial claims against many neighbouring States.

55. His delegation fully supported the draft resolution on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands in document A/37/23 (Part V)/Add.2. The international community must be alerted to the imminent danger posed by the activities of the Administering Authority. The Special Committee must try to ensure that the United States scrupulously fulfilled its obligations and allowed Micronesia to achieve true self-determination and independence. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly and the Security Council would fulfil their responsibilities vis-à-vis those Territories until all powers were effectively transferred to their peoples. It also reaffirmed its support for the self-determination of the people of East Timor in the interests of the people themselves and of peace and stability in the region.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

56. The Vietnamese Government and people firmly supported the struggle for self-determination and independence. The Vietnamese people believed that its long struggle against colonialism and imperialism was an integral part of the struggle of all national liberation movements. Viet Nam had recognized the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and had established diplomatic relations with it. The Vietnamese people had provided full support to the struggle of the Saharan people under the leadership of the Frente POLISARIO. Having co-sponsored General Assembly resolutions 35/19 and 36/46, Viet Nam was now co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.4/37/L.6/Rev.1 in token of its continued support for the Saharan people and the full realization of their right to self-determination and independence. His delegation firmly believed that the question of Western Sahara could not be solved without the participation and consent of the Frente POLISARIO and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic.

57. His delegation fully supported resolution A/AC.109/707 of the Special Committee reaffirming the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence. It believed that the United States should take the necessary measures to transfer all sovereign rights to the people of Puerto Rico. Viet Nam would provide militant support to their struggle.

58. Mr. ZAGAJAC (Yugoslavia) expressed regret at the death of Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

59. The problem of the consistent implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had arisen from the outset because of differing views about the substance and the implementation of the Declaration, some of which took into account only one aspect of decolonization, neglecting its overall significance. Some of the interpretations masked attempts to change the substance and spirit of the Declaration, in order to further alien interests.

60. The principle of the universality of the United Nations had almost been achieved. More than ever before, vigilance was indispensable in order to prevent the interruption of the process of decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories under the pretext of the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence or its completion only to the degree suitable to foreign political, economic or strategic interests. Such attempts could be made by withdrawing a former colony from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, thus circumventing the obligation under article 73 e of the Charter to disseminate information concerning a Non-Self-Governing Territory and making it possible to place such a Territory under the full legal and military jurisdiction of the administering Power. There had also been military intervention aimed at furthering foreign interests regardless of the wishes and rights of the peoples of colonial Territories. Military action had turned some colonial problems into international political conflicts, which must be solved in accordance with the Charter; that implied respect first of all for the interests of the inhabitants of such Territories, and then for other interests if they were justified and legitimate.

(Mr. Zagajac, Yugoslavia)

61. Yugoslavia called for the peaceful settlement of all international disputes but it also supported the legitimate liberation struggle of peoples against colonial rule and all forms of foreign domination and occupation. The future of a colonial Territory should be decided primarily by the population of that Territory without force and foreign military presence and influence. Only then, and pursuant to the wishes of the population, should other factors be taken into account which might lead to a change of political status of the Territory or other possibilities as provided for by the United Nations.

62. Any attempt to shorten that process or bypass it and reach solutions in ways not envisaged in the Declaration violated the Charter and transformed the problem of colonialism into a political, diplomatic or even military confrontation of the people of the colonial Territory with the former or new colonial Power. It also gave rise to growing tension in relations with other countries and to foreign intervention. There had been a number of such cases over the past decade.

63. The roots of the problem of Western Sahara were to be found in a lack of understanding of the process of decolonization and a one-sided interpretation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. As in other cases of use of force and illegal conduct in solving colonial problems, without taking into account the interests of the indigenous population, the attempt to determine the status of the Territory had been counter-productive.

64. Yugoslavia continued to support attainment of independence by the people of Western Sahara based on decisions adopted by the Heads of State and Government of OAU. It also supported the initiative of the OAU Implementation Committee aimed at reaching agreement on the cessation of hostilities and organizing a referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. Yugoslavia believed that, after the implementation of decisions adopted by those whose status had caused difficulties in the work of OAU, it would be possible to revive the process and implement the programme adopted by the Implementation Committee. The people of Western Sahara should be given an opportunity to decide freely on their political status and future. By achieving that goal, OAU would gain respect in the world and that would further contribute to overcoming the difficulties which the United Nations faced in solving crucial international problems.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.