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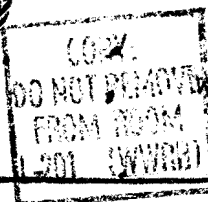
THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

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THIRD COMMITTEE
46th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 17 November 1982
at 3 p.m.
New York

UN/ CORRECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RAZZOOQI (Kuwait)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
(continued) (A/37/3 (Part II), chaps. III and IX, A/37/12 and Add.1, A/37/84,
A/37/178, A/37/324, A/37/419, A/37/420, A/37/431, A/37/438, A/37/495 and Corr.1,
A/37/505, A/37/519, A/37/522 and A/37/557):

(a) REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

(b) QUESTION OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

(c) ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. Mrs. CAMPBELL (Canada) said that refugee movements, the number of which had grown enormously in recent years, represented a heavy burden for developing countries which it was the duty of the international community to share, particularly as those countries were generally also the countries of first asylum. All countries should continue to assist the humanitarian work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and in that regard, her delegation urged those States which had not yet signed the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol to do so as soon as possible.
2. The Office of the High Commissioner was required by its terms of reference to adopt a non-political approach to refugee problems, but that was not enough to resolve the root cause of the problem. Member States had, therefore, to accept wider responsibility. In particular, those Governments whose citizens had fled man-made disasters in their homelands could not continue to take for granted that humanitarian assistance from the international community would absolve them from their primary responsibility.
3. Some of the salient points of the important study on human rights and mass exoduses, which had recently been prepared by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and which marked a step towards a more comprehensive approach to the problem, deserved attention. The study pointed out that the cause of mass exoduses of refugees were many and complex and that a co-ordinated effort was required to eliminate them. It linked the provision of adequate assistance to refugees and countries of first asylum with the elimination or alleviation of the causes of mass flows of refugees and it confirmed the relationship between mass exoduses and human rights violations. Her delegation supported the initiative, taken in the Special Political Committee, on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees.
4. Her Government was gravely concerned at the situation in Central America, and it urged all countries of asylum in that region to facilitate the operations of UNHCR in every way possible in order to achieve viable solutions for the refugees there.
5. Her delegation had been pleased with the results of the thirty-third session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, which had been held at Geneva in October. It appreciated the manner in which UNHCR had highlighted, at that session, some of the serious problems encountered in providing

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(Mrs. Campbell, Canada)

protection for those who sought asylum. In addition, UNHCR had improved the flow of information to the members of the Executive Committee and had limited the size of the Office's overall budget. Nevertheless, there remained areas where improvements were necessary, particularly with regard to the implementation of certain assistance programmes. Her delegation looked forward to receiving the report of the Administrative Management Service and to discussing its recommendations with the High Commissioner.

6. It was regrettable that the Executive Committee had not approved the establishment of 20 additional field posts requested by the High Commissioner. Canada trusted that that problem would soon be resolved.

7. Canada had undertaken to increase its contribution to UNHCR programmes, with effect from 1 April 1982, to \$Can 16,850,000. The 1983 Annual Refugee Plan of Canada provided for the admission of as many as 12,000 Government-sponsored refugees, in addition to the admission of many others who would be able to settle in the country under other schemes.

8. Mr. BHANDARA (Pakistan) said that he would like to reiterate his delegation's total support for the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the continuation of the Office for an additional period of five years. The international community had an inescapable moral obligation to protect and succour refugees, and it was essential to increase the assistance given to UNHCR in order to improve the living conditions of the millions of such people in the world at that time. His delegation was thus concerned by the attitude of some Governments that were adopting a more restrictive approach to the admission of refugees to their countries, and by the fact that there was a tendency to regard refugees as ordinary aliens, so that many asylum-seekers, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, had been forcibly returned to countries where their lives were at risk.

9. Also of concern were the continuing violations of the physical safety of refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly the recent massacre of unarmed Palestinians in camps in Lebanon. His delegation thus welcomed the decision to carry out a study of the problem of military attacks on refugee camps and settlements, and it trusted that the results of that study would lead to the adoption of appropriate measures to safeguard refugees.

10. Developing countries which admitted refugees should be regarded as major donors to the programme of UNHCR, since the hospitality those countries extended represented a heavy burden for them. In that regard, it should be recalled that Pakistan, which sheltered almost 2.8 million Afghan refugees, had the greatest concentration of refugees in the world. Despite the valuable assistance provided by friendly Governments, UNHCR and other international organizations, most of the burden continued to be borne by Pakistan, it was to be hoped that the plight of the Afghan refugees would, in future, meet with a more generous response on the part of the international community. His country wished, moreover, to state that it had not in any way interfered in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, as had been made clear in the letter of 3 September 1982 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan addressed to the Secretary-General (A/37/431), and in the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan before the General Assembly on 4 October 1982.

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(Mr. Bhandara, Pakistan)

11. The situation of refugees in Africa, Asia and Latin America remained a matter of deep concern and required a major effort on the part of the international community for extending protection and relief and for seeking long-term solutions to that problem. On the continent of Africa, attention should be drawn to the critical situation of refugees in the Horn, the Sudan and southern Africa. In order to improve the situation there. It was essential to strengthen the positive results achieved at the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, held in 1981. With regard to Asia, reference should be made to the plight of the large number of people who had been forced to flee Kampuchea, owing to the military intervention in that country.

12. Mr. MAKKI (Oman), noting that, according to the report of the High Commissioner, the number of refugees had increased over the past year, said that that regrettable situation must be attributed to the worsening of the problems existing in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

13. The tragedy of thousands of refugees deserved greater attention from the international community than ever before, for they had been deprived of their homes, were suffering hunger, disease and poverty and ran the risk of death. Through circumstances beyond their control, they led lives devoid of stability and dignity.

14. Many people had sought refuge in other countries, owing to the existence of armed conflict in their countries of origin. Upon their return after the cessation of hostilities, they had to face the difficult task of building their lives anew. Many repatriates were unable to overcome their difficulties and were condemned to a lifetime of struggle for survival. Their situation became even more wretched when their stability and dignity were undermined by poverty. It was hard to understand how contemporary civilization could allow such situations to continue well into the twentieth century and the reasons why the international community did not carefully examine the causes of the problem in order to end it once and for all.

15. The principal causes of the refugee problem were many and complex. Among the more important were: (1) lack of respect for the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes (Chap. I, Art. 2 (3)) of the Charter of the United Nations; (2) violation of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force in international disputes (Chap. I, Art. 2 (4)); of the Charter; (3) occupation by certain States of the territory of neighbouring States in recent years, in contravention of the principles of the Charter and of international law and custom; (4) the intent of certain countries to deprive their inhabitants of the right to self-determination, in contravention of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of many United Nations resolutions; and (5) persecution on the grounds of religion, race, custom, ideas and so on, in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

16. The refugee problem was becoming increasingly more critical and would not be resolved until the international community attempted to find a definitive solution to it. That problem was therefore not the exclusive concern of the Office of the High Commissioner; the international family as a whole must shoulder part of the responsibility.

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(Mr. Makki, Oman)

17. The burden being borne by countries of asylum such as Pakistan, the Sudan and Thailand must not be overlooked because, being developing countries, they had their own problems which frequently became overwhelming when the refugee problem was added to them. All necessary assistance should thus be granted to the countries of asylum in order to enable them to cope with that burden.

18. His delegation realized the important activities and continued efforts being made by the Office of the High Commissioner, particularly with regard to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 36/134 and 36/135. It was in favour of the mandate of the High Commissioner's Office being renewed upon its expiration in 1983 and felt that the position of the Office in its noble and arduous task should be supported and reinforced.

19. Mr. ABAWI (Afghanistan) said that the item under discussion was one of the most important and perhaps the most controversial before the Committee. The humanitarian aspect of the problem merited the continued attention of the international community, since it concerned the plight of vast segments of the population which, for a variety of reasons, had had to abandon their homelands and seek refuge in other countries. That mass movement of people could be attributed, in the main, to natural calamities such as drought, desertification and epidemics, and to man-made calamities, such as economic conditions and, above all, internal turmoil. Despite the gravity of the refugee problem, the international response remained inadequate.

20. It was of prime importance to identify and eliminate the causes of the problem. Although there was no single cause, it seemed that man-made situations were largely responsible for its escalation and extension. Critical economic conditions in the developing countries, resulting from colonial exploitation or the current neo-colonialist order, had forced large segments of the population of those countries to emigrate in search of employment and shelter. Among the other man-made causes were imperialist and hegemonistic policies of aggression, domination and expansionism, and other inhuman policies such as racism, apartheid and zionism. Other situations responsible for creating a large refugee population in the world included: artificial destabilization of political, social and economic conditions in a country; fomenting of tribal, religious and ethnic conflict; exporting of terrorism and banditry; use of mercenaries; hostile propaganda and inflammation of territorial disputes; and unlawful use of the territory of other countries for military purposes.

21. Hundreds of thousands of people had had to leave their countries and seek asylum elsewhere because of the repressive and brutal policies of the military juntas imposed on them through coup d'états instigated by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had been forced into exile when Zionist forces had invaded and occupied their country. Hundreds of thousands of black Africans had left South Africa because of the abhorrent policy of apartheid. Hundreds of thousands of Namibians had been expelled from their own Territory as a result of its illegal occupation by the South African racist régime. The scope of the item under consideration was not broad enough to encompass each individual cause of the refugee problem.

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(Mr. Abawi, Afghanistan)

22. In recent years, certain imperialist, hegemonistic and reactionary quarters had attempted to portray as refugees fugitive criminals who had escaped from their countries and were now in the service of their imperialist masters. Once organized, trained and armed, those mercenaries were sent to their countries of origin to commit acts of sabotage, destroy private and public property, disrupt the peaceful life of the people and assassinate social activists. Upon registering as refugees in the territory of the recipient State, they sought to avail themselves of the assistance provided by the international community. That kind of abuse was very common in areas where similar tribes or nationalities occupied areas on both sides of a border and there was no possibility of distinguishing between the local population and the bona fide refugees.

23. It was also very difficult to determine the true number of bona fide refugees in areas where a nomadic life style had been practised for centuries. The low standard of living of nomadic populations and the enormous difficulties of moving about from place to place throughout their lives had led the members of nomadic tribes to settle in recipient countries and register themselves as refugees.

24. Although attention should be given to the adoption of strict verification procedures, everything possible should be done to repatriate refugees. While the provision of assistance for the resettlement of refugees in their own countries would greatly encourage the remainder to return to their homelands, all restrictions for those who wished to return should be removed. Genuine co-operation between the Governments of recipient countries and those of the countries of origin could contribute greatly to the return and resettlement of refugees. Financial and material assistance from international and humanitarian organizations could also help to alleviate the difficulties encountered in that matter by national Governments.

25. With regard to the problem of Afghans living abroad for various reasons, his delegation rejected the slanderous accusations made by some delegations as to its cause and reiterated the firm commitment of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to do everything possible to help solve the problem.

26. Immediately after the beginning of the second phase of the April revolution, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan had declared a general amnesty for all compatriots living outside their country. The Government had unconditionally guaranteed the safety and immunity of all returnees and had pledged to provide all the facilities necessary to enable them to resume a normal and peaceful life in any part of the country they chose. Furthermore, as a result of democratic reforms, each returnee would receive free of charge a piece of land together with material, financial and technical assistance for its cultivation. The property they had abandoned on leaving the country would be returned to them. However, that treatment would not be extended to individuals who were not bona fide refugees.

27. Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland) said that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was at the hub of the international community's efforts to solve the problem of refugees. Although, under the terms of its Statute, the work of UNHCR was humanitarian, social and non-political in character,

(Mr. O'Donovan, Ireland)

it was impossible not to be aware that in many cases the refugee problem had political roots, and the debates in the Third Committee and other bodies had shown a marked tendency towards politicization in the past five years.

28. There was a need to develop among Member States a better understanding of the difficulties faced by UNHCR and especially the political and economic demands that were placed upon it. Since its establishment, UNHCR had broadened its sphere of activity, which currently covered a wide range of situations. The search for a durable solution to the refugee problem had drawn UNHCR into new and complicated subject areas and had demonstrated its ability to adapt to changing requirements. His delegation would welcome a simple renewal of the existing mandate of UNHCR.

29. The involvement of UNHCR in new areas of activity and the enormous increase in its budget during its current mandate had created new difficulties. His Government's direct contributions to UNHCR had increased considerably during the past five years, as had its indirect contributions through the European Community.

30. UNHCR should retain its humanitarian character without any discrimination against, or favour to, any country, race or creed. That was the only basis on which it could continue its successful work. His delegation supported the humanitarian principles of asylum and non-refoulement and urged world-wide accession to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees.

31. Mr. MOLI (Uganda) said that upon attaining independence, Uganda had inherited, and had since experienced, problems relating to refugees. Within the context of international protection, his country fully shared the global concern about the increasing tendency of States to resort to measures that were essentially incompatible with the principles of international law relating to refugees. Particular sources of concern were the increasing number of violations of the principle of non-refoulement and the denial by States of temporary asylum. The practice of launching military attacks on refugee settlements was likewise abhorrent, and in that connection it was appropriate to single out the numerous and massive attacks launched by racist South Africa against refugee populations in Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and other front-line States and the recent attacks on Palestinian refugee settlements by Israeli troops. Uganda joined the rest of the international community in strongly condemning such attacks and welcomed the decision to study the various aspects of the problem of military attacks on refugee camps and settlements.

32. Clarification was called for in connection with recent reports of an influx into the Republic of Rwanda of Rwandese refugees living in Uganda and some Ugandan nationals of Rwandese origin. That influx had been caused, not by a mass expulsion by the Government of Uganda but by a local quarrel between a group of Rwandese refugees living in Uganda and some Ugandans living in the same area, which had prompted the refugees to flee from their settlements.

33. The President of Uganda had condemned the incident and reaffirmed his Government's commitment to uphold the fundamental human rights and freedoms of all individuals living in Uganda, irrespective of their nationality. With a view to

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(Mr. Moli, Uganda)

seeking a genuine solution to the problem, the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda had established a Joint Committee at the ministerial level, which following its first meeting had issued a joint communiqué setting forth the agreement of the two Governments on a series of issues, including the voluntary repatriation of Rwandese refugees living in Uganda and of Ugandans living in Rwanda. UNHCR could play an important role in the search for a solution to the problem.

34. His delegation shared the view that the international assistance provided to refugees should not consist solely of emergency relief but should be aimed at enabling the refugees to achieve viable degrees of self-sufficiency. Similarly, refugee programmes should encompass assistance to people returning to their countries of origin during the initial period of repatriation. In that connection, he noted that Uganda had made significant progress in reabsorbing large numbers of Ugandan citizens who had taken asylum in the Sudan and Zaire. The Government of Uganda was currently implementing a comprehensive programme for the rehabilitation of the returnees.

35. His Government considered that UNHCR had exhibited the flexibility and adaptability necessary to cope with the evolving refugee situation. It therefore supported the renewal of its mandate.

36. Mr. SAHNOUN (Algeria) observed that the number of refugees was constantly increasing in all regions of the world, owing to the existence of political and economic systems that were based on domination and exploitation and hence gave rise to conflicts which were the immediate cause of mass exoduses.

37. Because of its apolitical and humanitarian character, UNHCR possessed the credibility it needed to perform its tasks successfully. The steps taken to intensify co-operation between UNHCR and the Executive Committee, to transmit to Member States documentation on the activities of the High Commissioner and to enable those States to participate in the work of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters would enable the Executive Committee to fulfil all its obligations in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Algeria supported the renewal of the mandate of UNHCR.

38. It was gratifying to note the progress made in the performance of the two main functions of UNHCR, namely the international protection of refugees and the provision of assistance to refugees. Despite the efforts made by UNHCR, however, there had been serious violations of that protection, such as the arbitrary return of refugees and attacks on their personal safety. His delegation endorsed the statements made condemning the acts of piracy committed at sea and the military attacks on refugee camps, particularly the recent massacres of Palestinian refugees and Lebanese civilians committed in Beirut by the aggressor forces of Israel and the criminal acts perpetrated by their allies in Pretoria against Namibian and South African refugees living in neighbouring countries. The international community and especially the High Commissioner had an obligation to guarantee the safety of refugees in their camps and it was to be hoped that the High Commissioner's decision to carry out a study on military attacks on refugee camps would make it possible to devise operational measures that would prevent a

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(Mr. Sahnoun, Algeria)

recurrence of such attacks. Lastly, it was gratifying to note that the voluntary repatriation operations undertaken by UNHCR in Zimbabwe and Chad had been successful and that similar operations were currently underway in Indo-China.

39. As to assistance activities, the emergency, resettlement, rehabilitation and integration operations for refugees carried out by the High Commissioner were commendable. In that respect, it was increasingly necessary to promote activities to ensure the economic self-sufficiency of refugee populations.

40. The assistance provided by the international community continued to fall far short of the needs of the countries bearing the burden of hundreds of thousands of refugees in their territories, particularly in Africa where most of the refugees were. When allocating international assistance, the particularly difficult situations of the countries of first asylum must be taken more fully into account.

41. Currently the Algerian people were offering refuge in their territory to over 165,000 Saharan refugees who had fled from their country after its occupation by foreign-troops. Algeria sincerely hoped that the voluntary repatriation of those refugees would take place in the context of the exercise by the people of Western Sahara of their right to self-determination and independence. In that case too, the contribution of the international community fell far short of meeting the basic needs of those people.

42. The report of the Secretary-General on the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (A/37/522) clearly showed that it had not been possible to attain the objectives of that Conference because the sources of financing needed to implement the priority projects of the Conference had not been found. Throughout the African continent the situation of refugees was even more tragic than appeared from the report of the Secretary-General; the international community must intensify its efforts to alleviate the plight of over 5 million people, and a second international conference on the question must be convened.

43. Mr. PHEDONOS-VADET (Cyprus) said that the concept of asylum had changed so much since the adoption of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees that currently there were many people who had been uprooted as a result of armed conflicts or internal disorders to whom the criteria of the Convention could not be applied. UNHCR must apply broader criteria to such people.

44. Cyprus had a direct interest in the activities of the Office of UNHCR since it was providing refuge to some 200,000 displaced persons and, to the extent of its limited possibilities, it was offering a modest contribution to UNHCR assistance programmes.

45. In Cyprus itself, where a third of the population had been driven out of their homes and properties during the Turkish aggression in 1974, the situation remained disturbing. Turkey had uprooted the indigenous population of the territory it had occupied in order to establish settlers transferred from Asia Minor and it seemed unwilling to permit the voluntary return of individuals whose property had been offered to the Turkish settlers. The Government of Cyprus had introduced a number of measures aimed at securing the economic and social autonomy of the displaced Cypriots. To enable them to resume a normal life, assistance was needed from the international community. He called upon all countries, large and small, to provide assistance to the displaced Cypriots.

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46. Mr. LUNGU (Zambia) said that his country was host to thousands of refugees from South Africa, Namibia and other countries of the region. Because of the serious economic and financial problems Zambia was experiencing, his Government was confronted with the difficult task of allocating limited resources between the needs of the Zambian people and those of refugees. Bearing in mind the responsibility Zambia had undertaken towards refugees, he appealed to the international community to provide increased assistance to Zambia. At the same time, he expressed his delegation's support for the continuation of the programmes being undertaken by the Office of UNHCR and the renewal of its mandate.

47. The root cause of the existence of so many refugees in southern Africa was South Africa's policy of apartheid and its illegal occupation of Namibia. In South Africa thousands of oppressed people were being detained on flimsy and trumped-up charges and imprisoned without trial. In prisons and detention camps, political prisoners were subjected to terrible torture. As a result, thousands of people were forced to seek refuge in some of the neighbouring independent countries. The Namibian people, who were struggling for the liberation of their country, were being subjected to all kinds of torture, detention and even murder by the racist troops occupying Namibia. It was for that reason that thousands of Namibians, mostly women and children, had fled the country and were continuing to flee to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

48. Moreover, because of the aggression and atrocities committed by the troops of the racist régime of Pretoria against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Angola, thousands of Angolans had been forced to seek refuge in some of the neighbouring independent countries, including Zambia; thus the cause of the influx of the majority of refugees living in Zambia was the racist South African régime's policies and practices. The solution was for South Africa to abolish its policy of apartheid, end its illegal occupation of Namibia and stop its acts of aggression against neighbouring countries and its instigation and support of dissident elements seeking to destabilize independent Governments of the region. His delegation appealed to countries maintaining friendly relations with South Africa to exert pressure on the régime of that country to comply with the decisions of the United Nations.

49. His delegation also called upon Israel to stop forthwith its policy of settlement in the occupied Arab territories and to withdraw from them so that the Palestinian people could exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

50. Mr. SOERIAATMADJA (Indonesia) said the 10 million refugees currently scattered around the world constituted an increasingly heavy burden which the developing countries could not bear without substantial external support. The assistance activities of UNHCR had grown very fast but, when tragedies occurred such as the massacre of thousands of refugees recently perpetrated in Lebanon, which his delegation firmly condemned, there was no doubt that much remained to be done. Thus, Indonesia fully supported the continuation of the mandate of UNHCR.

51. Mrs. DRACHEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the cause of the recent intensification of the refugee problem in the world was the imperialist policy of maintaining colonialism and racism, seizing foreign territories, creating hotbeds of tension and armed conflict and interfering in the internal affairs of

(Mrs. Dracheva, Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics)

other States, and furthermore the economic situation in newly independent States, which also originated in the policy of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Thus the solution lay in eliminating those policies, strengthening peace and security in the world and restructuring international economic relations on a just and equitable basis.

52. The aggression perpetrated by Israel against Lebanon had caused the deaths of thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese of both sexes and all ages and had recently culminated in the genocide carried out in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila in the western sector of Beirut. Responsibility for those crimes, which had appalled the world, lay not only with the Israeli aggressor but also its protectors, from the United States.

53. In South Africa, apartheid had converted the black majority into refugees in their own country and had forced many inhabitants of South Africa and Namibia to seek refuge in neighbouring States, which were also subject to constant acts of aggression on the part of Pretoria. In that case too, responsibility for the tragic fate of the African refugees lay with those who were supporting the racist régime, and in the first place the United States.

54. Most delegations had taken a responsible position on the question under consideration. Some representatives, however, did not seem to be satisfied with the constructive approach and method of work followed in the Committee and wished to divert the Committee's attention and distort the substance of the problem. For example, in his statement on 15 November, the representative of the United States had tried to spread confusion among other delegations. It was precisely the countries that were directly responsible for the emergence and intensification of hotbeds of conflict which made attempts of that nature. The United States was playing the principal role in complicating the situation around Afghanistan by organizing, training, arming and sending to the Afghan territory bands of counter-revolutionaries who were engaged in an undeclared war against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

55. Currently, many Afghans who had left Afghanistan because they did not understand the progressive changes which had been brought about by the April revolution for the benefit of the working masses were returning to the country to participate in the task of building a new life. The Government of Afghanistan was encouraging them to return by offering them the necessary conditions for a peaceful and secure life. Nevertheless, certain forces which were opposed to the return of the Afghans were trying to use them as a weapon against the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and the United States was at the head of those forces.

56. As to United States aggression against South-East Asia, during its war of aggression against Indo-China the United States had not concealed its attempt to bombard the region until it returned to the stone age. For many years the United States military had spread destruction in the territories of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea, showering them with napalm and poisonous chemical products. It was well known that more explosives had been used in Indo-China than in the entire Second

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(Mrs. Dracheva, Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics)

World War. It was utterly cynical to try to annul such indisputable facts. The United States was resorting to calumny about the use of Soviet chemical weapons and products in an attempt to obliterate the vestiges of its own monstrous crimes in Indo-China. The repugnant lies about the use of chemical weapons in South-East Asia and Afghanistan were designed to justify the United States' decision to manufacture new types of weapons on a large scale. For that reason the United States was systematically opposed to holding serious negotiations on disarmament, as proposed by the Soviet Union. The baselessness of the data and evidence with which the United States tried to support its calumnies was demonstrated in the critique prepared for the United Nations by competent organizations of the Soviet Union and circulated as document A/37/233, and in a report prepared by a group of experts of the United Nations. The Soviet Union rejected and condemned the attempts of the United States representative to evade his country's responsibility for the current situation in South-East Asia and divert the attention of the international community from the tragedy suffered by the victims of Israeli genocide, as well as the crimes of the racist régime of South Africa which the representative of the United States had not seen fit to mention. Indeed, the "humanitarian assistance" provided by the United States to, for example, Palestinian refugees, took the form, exclusively, of using them to test the most sophisticated means of destruction manufactured in the United States, such as new types of bombs.

57. Mrs. ZOGRAFOU (Greece) said that, according to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his statement to the Committee, the world refugee situation continued to be of serious concern although, fortunately, in the previous year there had been no major new flows of refugees. Nevertheless, refugee problems remained severe in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Although it was encouraging that the international community had responded positively to its obligations and the initiatives undertaken by the High Commissioner, it was not enough to deal with the consequences of the problem: it was necessary to eradicate the root of the evil. No lasting solution could be found to the problem of refugees and displaced persons as long as warfare continued to be used as a means of imposing the will of the stronger.

58. Although the High Commissioner's humanitarian assistance had benefited millions of people, it remained a provisional solution. Because of the difficulty of reaching permanent solutions, all humanitarian activities of the High Commissioner were to be welcomed. In particular, her delegation expressed appreciation to the High Commissioner for co-ordinating humanitarian aid to displaced Cypriots.

59. It was well-known that in 1974, about 200,000 Greek Cypriots had been forced to leave their homes because of the invasion of the island by Turkey. They were still waiting for an opportunity to go back and were refugees in their own country.

60. Mr. ZARIF (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that although it was justified and to a certain degree necessary that the humanitarian nature of the work of UNHCR should be stressed, the political roots of the problem could not be ignored. A non-political consideration of the problem was inherently incomplete, and the

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(Mr. Zarif, Iran, Islamic Republic of)

solutions proposed were bound to remain only partially effective, at best. As an example, it sufficed to mention the recent massacre of Palestinian refugees. The United Nations bodies responsible for their protection had not been able to carry out their humanitarian duty because of their unwillingness to tackle the political cause of the problem of the Palestinians, which was the usurpation of their land by the Zionist entity.

61. The painful and prolonged experience of the displaced Palestinian people had clearly demonstrated that the only lasting solution to the problem of refugees was their voluntary repatriation to their countries of origin; the indefinite settlement of refugees in the countries of first or second asylum was not a reasonable alternative.

62. According to the teachings of the Koran, Moslems should not merely provide financial assistance and hospitality to refugees, but also join in solidarity with the oppressed masses and fight against aggression so that the political situation could be made favourable for their return to their countries. In that spirit, the Government and people of Iran had accepted the 1.5 million Afghans who had been forced to flee from their country because of the invasion by the Soviet Union. The presence of those refugees, together with over 2 million Iranians displaced as a result of the Iraqi war of aggression, had created great economic, demographic and social problems for Iran. In that respect, his delegation pointed out that, although two UNHCR commissions had visited Iran in connection with the problem of Afghan refugees, his Government had not so far received any support from the international community.

63. As in the case of the Palestinian refugees, the problem of the Afghan refugees could be solved only through voluntary repatriation once the Soviet army had withdrawn from their country. As to the presence in Iran of 120,000 Iraqi nationals driven out of their country because they were of Iranian ancestry, it should be noted that the Iraqi régime had always used the tactic of expelling innocent Iraqi citizens in order to put political pressure on the Iranian authorities.

64. UNHCR must not become another means of exerting political pressure on behalf of the Government of the United States. His delegation had evidence that some officers of UNHCR might have been involved in activities on behalf of the United States which were not within the framework of UNHCR's humanitarian and non-political objectives.

65. Mr. GONZALEZ DE LEON (Mexico) joined those who had praised the able, efficient and productive manner in which the work of UNHCR was carried out in politically delicate and, in many cases, dangerous situations. The continuation of UNHCR's mandate should not even be placed in question.

66. The deterioration of the political, economic and social situation in areas bordering on or near Mexico had increasingly made it a country of asylum for thousands of Central Americans crossing the frontier in search of protection and security which they were not able to find in their own countries. Mexico had in the past received considerable groups of Europeans, especially Spaniards fleeing from the terror and repression unleashed in their country after the Civil War, in

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the 1930s and 1940s. All those who had remained had become fully integrated in the Mexican community and had enriched it not only with their cultural contributions but also with their spirit of enterprise and their desire for a better life.

67. However, his country had not previously experienced the kind of large-scale flow of displaced persons which had been caused by the events of recent years in a number of republics of Latin America and particularly of Central America.

68. His country had welcomed those refugees and provided them with all the facilities at its disposal. In so doing that, it had received the support and co-operation of the Office of the High Commissioner. The advisory services of UNHCR were invaluable, especially since his country had not yet been able to accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, fundamental instruments which it would undoubtedly sign in the very near future. In the meantime, the Mexican authorities had endeavoured to apply the principles of protection and to respect the rights of the refugees, either by granting them formal asylum when they met the necessary conditions or by according them the status of immigrants which enabled them to remain in the country and to work. His country would continue to grant political asylum to persons who, by reason of their activities or political ideology, were subject to persecution and whose freedom or lives were in danger. In the vicinity of the border with Guatemala, the Mexican authorities would admit and protect foreigners dwelling in nearby population centres when, for reasons of personal safety, they sought to enter Mexican territory. Persons entering the country in those circumstances would not be turned back or deported.

69. Mr. BHANDARA (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Kabul régime had tried to give a false impression of the causes underlying the exodus of Afghan refugees to neighbouring countries. Since April 1978, a quarter of the population of Afghanistan had been compelled to take refuge in neighbouring countries. Of that total, approximately 2.8 million were in Pakistan. That figure, based on records verified by international agencies, appeared in the report of UNHCR (A/37/12/Add.1, para. 35). The assertion made by the representative of the Kabul régime that that figure was an exaggeration was simply an attempt to conceal the truth. The fact was that the flow of Afghan refugees had begun as a result of the repressive policies of the régime which had taken power in Kabul in April 1978. By December 1979, some 400,000 refugees had arrived in Pakistan and, following the foreign intervention which had taken place in Afghanistan at that time, the exodus had taken on even more gigantic proportions because of attempts to stifle the national resistance of the Afghan people in the face of the presence of foreign troops.

70. He categorically rejected any accusation that his country was interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Afghan resistance was entirely national. The officials of the Office of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies frequently visited the refugee camps, a fact which further refuted the accusation that those camps were used for military training. Moreover, the presence of millions of refugees in its territory made it very greatly in Pakistan's interest that an early political solution to the crisis should be found and had prompted it to participate in all international efforts directed to that end.

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71. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that Algeria had repeatedly refused to comply with UNHCR's request that it should carry out a census, based on true figures reflecting no political bias, of the so-called Sahrawi refugees. Instead of responding to that request, Algeria simply raised each year the figure which it gave for the number of refugees. In 1976, it had claimed that there were fewer than 50,000. Two or three years later, that figure had become 100,000 and it was currently being given as 165,000.

72. To judge by those ever higher figures, Sahrawi women would have to be considered quite phenomenal, each one capable of giving birth every year since 1976 to more than 50 children, all of them at least 15 years old.

73. His Majesty King Hassan II had on a number of occasions urged the Sahrawis living in Tindouf to return to their homeland and had made a solemn commitment to the international community to guarantee tolerance and pardon for all those who had misgivings on account of their earlier conduct.

74. Similarly, her delegation urged the Algerian authorities to make sure that in future the interest and welfare of the genuine Sahrawi refugees alone would dictate their actions. Such a positive attitude on the part of Algeria would be extremely useful to the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, which, in spite of its outstanding work, was encountering major difficulties in fulfilling one of the most important objectives of its mandate: finding permanent solutions to the refugee problem.

75. Mr. GERSHMAN (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the recent attacks made by certain representatives on his country were an example of how authoritarian countries twisted the truth in order to conceal realities which would reveal their own guilt.

76. An illustration of the reasons which had driven half a million people to risk their lives in order to flee Viet Nam was to be found in an article recently written for the New York Review of Books by refugee Truong Nhu Tang, one of the founders of the Viet Nam National Liberation Front, who stated that, in his country, no régime prior to the current one had ever driven such a large number of people to desperation. Only that desperation which could have impelled so many hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese to put out to sea in the most wretched conditions in order to escape from their own land.

77. The delegation of Cuba had had the temerity to refer on the previous day to the exodus of 1980 and to assert that it had been provoked by a statement made by President Carter, a statement which had actually been made two weeks after the exodus had started. The real reasons were to be found in the events of 1979 when Castro, greedy for dollars, had allowed thousands of Cubans who had taken refuge in the United States to visit their relatives on the island; those refugees had painted a picture of the United States quite different from that put out by Castro's anti-American propaganda. That had led to the events of 4 April 1980, when 10,800 people had overrun the premises of the Embassy of Peru in Havana, taking advantage of Castro's decision, prompted by an incident, to withdraw the military guard assigned to that Embassy. Castro had then sought to avoid the

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embarrassment caused by his régime's evident lack of popularity by trying to divert world attention to the United States, permitting Cubans with relatives in that country to leave Cuba, with the result that the United States had had to cope with the human tidal wave which such a measure could not fail to provoke. Furthermore, the Government of Cuba, in its desire to show that all the refugees were "worms", had allowed thousands of criminals, persons suffering from mental illness and similar "undesirables" to go with them, but analysis of the 125,000 refugees showed that most of them were normal, ordinary Cubans and that many of them were of the working class. The vast majority of that great mass of refugees, who in fact were only the tip of the iceberg, cited as their main reason for leaving Cuba the fact that they could not endure living under the island's communist régime.

78. Mr. Al-QAYSI (Iraq) said that the representative of the régime of Iran, in the several references which he had made to Iraq, had been opportunistic and put forward arguments which conflicted with the truth.

79. The report before the Committee indicated exactly the areas in which the refugees were present. To speak of other areas and to claim that there were refugees there was to contradict the truth. The representative of the régime of Iran took every opportunity to give figures for persons expelled from Iraq on account of their Iranian origin or their political or religious convictions. The truth was that since the present régime in Iran had come to power it had been seeking, in spite of the welcome it had received from the Government and people of Iraq, to export its revolution to Iraq and to the Gulf region. The crimes committed by Iranian infiltrators, abetted by certain persons of Iranian origin, had provoked indignation throughout the international community. On 1 April 1980, during a student demonstration at the University of Baghdad, a bomb had been thrown with the intention of assassinating the Prime Minister of Iraq. Many students and children had died as a result of that attack. On 12 April of that same year, the Minister for Education of Iraq had been the victim of an attack. The security services had in their possession documents proving the participation of Iranian elements in those and other incidents of violence whose purpose was to destabilize the region.

80. In that connection, he wished to point out that: (1) any State had the right to expel from its territory foreign elements which were there illegally; (2) any State had the right to expel from its territory foreigners who had violated its laws; (3) any State had the right to revoke the citizenship of any foreigner who had become a naturalized citizen of that State on the basis of false documents or information or who had concealed information which, had it been known, would have prevented his naturalization; (4) any person who assumed the nationality of a State must respect the nationality laws of that State, and risked the loss of his acquired citizenship and expulsion from the country if he failed to do so. Those facts were submitted to the Committee for purposes of information only, and were not intended as a response to groundless arguments which did not change reality in any way.

81. Mr. MESSAHEL (Algeria) said that the UNHCR acknowledgement of the refugee status of the Sahrawis by virtue of the 1979 Agreement was in itself an answer to the statement made that afternoon by the representative of Morocco concerning the

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(Mr. Messahel, Algeria)

refugees at Tindouf. It must be recalled, of course, that the Sahrawi people had arrived there in two waves. The first wave had followed colonization by Spain. In 1975, the head of the United Nations delegation had been able to verify on the spot that persons belonging to that category of refugee had been displaced to Algeria.

82. The second phase of that displacement had followed the Moroccan intervention in Western Sahara, which had provoked a mass exodus of persons from that territory. The United Nations had also taken note of that movement, as the corresponding report stated. The international press and many delegations had learned on the spot of cases of torture of those displaced persons. While there, they had also verified the conditions in which the refugees had had to leave their homeland, how their lives had been ruined and poisoned, and how their flocks had been decimated.

83. In her statement, the representative of Morocco had referred to voluntary repatriation of the Sahrawi refugees. However, as was well known, voluntary repatriation presupposed specific conditions. Those conditions had been determined by the High Commissioner himself. Repatriation involved negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Lastly, he asked how a Sahrawi could return to the territory of Western Sahara knowing that it was under Moroccan influence.

84. Mr. ABAWI (Afghanistan) said he did not wish to respond to the falacious arguments of the representative of Pakistan. His intention was to analyse the real causes of the refugee problem. The real situation of the so-called Afghan refugees was well known to all. Pakistan's long-term designs with regard to the Afghans who lived in that country and its plans to use them as a pretext for securing foreign or international aid in its eagerness to obtain new resources were obvious. His country was aware of all the details of Pakistan's intentions in that respect. Many migrant workers and nomadic local tribes had been registered as Afghan refugees in Pakistan. His delegation demanded that strict measures for the verification of identities should be introduced in order to distinguish refugees from the local population.

85. Mrs. DINH THI HUYEN (Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement made by the representative of the United States was a sufficient explanation of that country's policy towards Viet Nam and was marked, as always, by lies and hypocrisy. The Vietnamese people would never forget the consequences of the use of bombs and chemical weapons in Viet Nam by the United States. The United States had not shed tears for the deaths of millions of people in Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea as a result of those bombs and chemical weapons; now it was shedding crocodile tears for Indo-Chinese refugees. United States imperialists were in the habit of calling wars of aggression assistance to peoples in achieving freedom. That aggressive policy was continuing.

86. Mr. ZARIF (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the majority of the 120,000 Iraqi exiles found in the Islamic Republic of Iran had lived in Iraq for many generations and possessed Iraqi documents. He asked how the representative of Iraq could call those 120,000 persons, 70,000 of whom were elderly, children or disabled, infiltrators and saboteurs. During the time of the Shah, when there had been no talk of exporting revolution, the Government of Iraq had expelled thousands of Iraqi nationals of Iranian origin, and before the triumph of the revolution, the Government of Iraq had reached an agreement with the Shah's régime to repatriate some of the Iraqis expelled in 1969.

87. Mr. BHANDARA (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the accusations made by the representative of Afghanistan to the effect that Pakistani authorities were preventing the return of refugees to their country could not be more unfounded. The Afghan refugees in Pakistan were free to return to their country if they so desired.

88. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that her delegation disseminated information and not propaganda. The figures concerning Sahrawi refugees had been based on the total population of the Territory as determined by the most recent Spanish census, taken in 1973. The data from that census were contained in the document which the Government of Spain had officially transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

89. Mr. AL-QAYSI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the statement of the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran that, at the time of the Shah's régime, Iranians had been expelled from Iraq. He felt that that was normal, since Iraq had been opposed to the Shah and his policies. He further observed that the Iranian authorities had recently been preventing Iraqi Kurds from leaving Iran to go to Iraq.

90. Mr. GERSHMAN (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Viet Nam had not responded to any of the questions which his delegation had asked in its prior intervention, in which it had quoted a statement by one of the founders of the national liberation front who had recently fled Viet Nam by boat. In his words, no earlier Vietnamese régime - neither the military dictators nor the colonialists, not even the ancient Chinese feudal lords - had reduced so many people to such a desperate situation.

91. Mr. ZARIF (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, with respect to the statement made by the representative of Iraq concerning Iraqi citizens in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the relevant documents were available to the international community; furthermore, representatives of UNHCR had been invited by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to meet those citizens. He also wished to point out that the remarks of the representative of Iraq were tantamount to saying that, since Iraq had been having differences with the Shah's régime, it had used Iranian nationals to pressure that régime.

92. Mrs. DINH THI HUYEN (Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that she would not waste the Committee's time citing new examples of the lies and hypocrisy of the United States.

93. Mr. HARTLING (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that, while it was inevitable that reference should be made during the discussion to delicate issues of a political nature, what had predominated had been the reaffirmation that the Committee continued to work for the cause of refugees. He and his colleagues had felt particularly encouraged by the repeated references to the purely humanitarian and apolitical nature of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Those affirmations gave them new courage to continue in their work.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.