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TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR

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SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIFTH MEETING

Held in the Legislative Palace, Panama City, on Thursday, 15 March 1973, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Aquilino E. BOYD (Panama)
later: General Omar TORRIJOS (Panama).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Australia, Austria, China, France, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Panama, Peru, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Yugoslavia.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1695)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Consideration of measures for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security in Latin America in conformity with the provisions and principles of the Charter.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The provisional agenda for this meeting was drawn up in accordance with the decision adopted by the Security Council in resolution 325 (1973). If I hear no objection, I shall consider the agenda adopted.

The agenda was adopted.

Consideration of measures for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security in Latin America in conformity with the provisions and principles of the Charter

2. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to request the Chief of Protocol to escort into this hall the head of the Government of Panama, General Omar Torrijos, who will address the Council on behalf of the National Government.

3. General TORRIJOS (*interpretation from Spanish*): With the frankness that is a feature of the noble people of Panama, my country expresses its appreciation to you for coming here to represent the States members of the Security Council. I am sure that the sister republics of the Latin American region also regard your presence as an honour since they sense the positive impact that our ability to be heard in this great world forum will have.

4. We also extend our welcome to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim; to the distin-

guished representatives of the sister republics of Latin America; to the Chairman of the Latin American Group of the United Nations; to the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States; to the observers of States from other regions and of other international organs; and also to the world press, which has co-operated so greatly with this small country in order to place us on the map of world dignity.

5. I come to speak to you now on behalf of a people that does not feed on hatred and whose simple hearts have led us to forgive and forget offences and to guide our future toward the achievement of our own identity. For he who is right need not resort to insults. Martí himself said it: "The peoples, the nations and the persons who can overlook offences do so because they have very good memories."

6. Panama is a very important part of the history of mankind. When your ships sail through the canal, when they go through this obligatory passage that links the Atlantic with the Pacific, those ships are sailing through 50 miles of our not so peaceful history. Therefore, as far as we are concerned we feel it only appropriate to put before you the way we think and the way we view the scourges that threaten to destroy peaceful world coexistence.

7. Panama understands full well the struggle of peoples that are suffering the humiliation of colonialism, of other peoples that, like us, are suffering restrictions and subjection, of the peoples that refuse to accept the rule of the strong over the weak as a way of life, of those countries that are ready to make whatever sacrifice is necessary in order not to be subjected to the more powerful, of those men that do not allow political power to be exercised by a foreign Government over the territory of their birth, of those generations that are struggling and will continue to struggle to root out from their country the presence of foreign troops placed there without the consent of the occupied nation, of those indigenous inhabitants that do not accept being looked at as inferior specimens or animals, of those who struggle to exploit their own resources for their own benefit and not to underwrite the economy of an overpowering country, of those countries that refuse to be exporters of cheap labour, of those masses of people that pay with their blood to do away with the want, injustice and inequality to which powerful forces, national or foreign, have subjected them, because oligarchy knows of no nationality. In a word, colonialism is the prison cell of the free man.

8. In the soul of all Panamanians these situations that I have described come together because in one way or

another we have lived through them in the course of our republican history.

9. From this high rostrum, Panama states that we cannot accept the economic subjection of one country by another or political, economic or cultural penetration, since that is nothing more than neo-colonialism. That is only a veiled and disguised colonialism which appears in our people in the form of economic assistance with conditions, assistance that is aimed not at the development of our country but at control over our people. And we have suffered from all these scourges. Panama is very sensitive to all these conditions that have hindered our development, as it is to the struggle that is being carried out by other peoples to root out these evils.

10. The cemeteries of rebellious struggles are filled with the bodies of Panamanians who now stand as a cross because they fought for the right of their country to decide for itself its own direction and norms of conduct without foreign interference and the right of peoples to choose freely their friends or their enemies. For no people of the world can be denied the right to exploit and utilize its own resources and no one can be denied the right to create his own manner of life. No one should be placed under pressure when he wishes to draw his own international political line and to exercise the inalienable right of all peoples to communicate freely with those peoples they choose, to ensure respect for the sacred principle that each country should be able to select the method of government it wishes and provide for its own development. Let us then be left to seek our own prescription to cure our own ills.

11. I am always amazed when I see a certain group of nations that is shocked because peoples claim the right to exploit their own natural resources, the wealth of their own seas, of their ports, of their soil, of their subsoil, of their labour and of their geographical position in order to benefit their nationals and not to do them harm, and struggle so that their non-renewable resources will not be used to subsidize the economies of the rich nations and because they wish the wealth of their own soil to bear the nationality of the country that possesses it. That is an inherent right of all nations, as the right of Panama to exploit its geographical position for the benefit of its own development is inherent.

12. After 150 years in which this continent has been independent, many of these situations still exist in this sector of Latin America. Nationalization is a redundant expression. When I read in the newspapers that Chile has nationalized its copper, I ask: was that copper not Chilean to begin with? When I read in the press that Peru, with this new generation of officers that is leading the Government, has decided to nationalize its oil, I ask: was that oil not Peruvian to begin with? That is why the nationalization of those resources is, as I said, a redundant expression, since those resources carry the nationality of the nation that possesses them.

13. The awakening of Latin America must not be hampered; it must be assisted in order to encourage peace. A new awareness is gaining ground among Latin Americans, and there can be peace only if this awareness is allowed to

follow its own channels. Anyone who stands in its way is thus creating the hostility that leads to upheavals. If we are not allowed to carry out peaceful changes, we are then forcing our peoples to favour violent changes.

14. The struggle being fought by the peoples of the third world to obtain their true political and economic independence constitutes the worthiest example that we can leave as a heritage to succeeding generations

15. The stand adopted by the peoples of Africa, who are bearing their poverty with dignity, but without resignation and without subjection, is an example that should be taught in the schoolrooms of our adolescents.

16. Blockades and pressures should be more shameful for those who commit them than for those who suffer them. Every hour of isolation suffered by the sister republic of Cuba spells 60 minutes of hemispheric shame.

17. We want to urge the United Nations not to stand by as a mere spectator or to be satisfied with the role of a fireman before the drama of mankind. Let the United Nations take a more active role in the solution of the true problems besetting our peoples. As this Organization becomes valid and acts in these fields, so we, the smaller nations, can guarantee to our peoples that they will live in lasting peace. Our problems are joint problems; our desires are the same. The cross of a patriot in a cemetery of any country in the world is the same. It is no different from the crosses that in our own country have resulted from the struggle for our true independence.

18. Panama cannot accept as rules of international law considerations of so-called vital interests or national security, for we know the humiliation that we have suffered during 70 years of republican life and we fully share and endorse the thought of Amílcar Cabral, the great leader of independence of Africa, when he said:

"Solidarity without equality is charity, and charity has never contributed to the progress of nations or human beings. Security without equality is only authoritarian paternalism, protectionism, pure and simple colonialism, and this must conflict with the feelings for liberation of both nations and peoples."

The thoughts of that great man, now that great martyr, are perfectly valid for the problems that are besetting my own country.

19. If Benito Juárez was able to say, "Respect for another's right is peace", why are we not respected, why are we provoked, why are we subjugated, why is the inoffensive, happy, peace-loving people of Panama not left in peace?

20. In the specific case of my own country, a country which 70 years ago opened its arms for the benefit of the merchant fleet of the world and which today opens its heart to this historic meeting, it becomes extremely difficult to understand how a country whose hallmark has been not to be colonialist insists on maintaining a colony in the very heart of my country. Surely for that people this

must be a shame, since they were a colony and they knew how degrading it was to be so, and they struggled heroically to achieve their freedom. I say to the representatives of the United States that it is more noble to redress an injustice than to perpetuate an error. From the world which is represented here today, we ask for moral support in this struggle engaged in by the weak. This struggle can triumph only when it is assisted by the conscience of the world and our people is already reaching the limit of its patience.

21. Our people would ask the members of the Security Council and distinguished guests to consider the following questions and give us an answer to them. Is it just to refuse respect for a flag that has never been used to lead the way into aggression? Can it be moral to deny a country its natural advantages that are inherent and inalienable simply because the claim to them comes from a weak nation? In what modern legal dictionary is there set forth the concept of perpetuity as the basis for negotiation?

22. Finally, as a very special message I have been asked to deliver to you from the people of Panama, I would say to you, and through you to the world conscience, that you must all bear clearly in mind that we have never been, are not and never shall be an associated State, a colony or a protectorate, nor do we wish to add one more star to the flag of the United States.

23. As PRESIDENT I now am pleased to call on the Secretary-General.

24. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: At the outset I should like to express my warm and sincere thanks—and, I am sure, the thanks of all members of this Council—to the Government of Panama for its generous hospitality. We owe particular gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to Ambassador Boyd, for all that you have done to assist us.

25. This series of meetings, following that held in Addis Ababa last year, is a further indication of a general recognition of the fact that occasional meetings of the Security Council away from Headquarters have great value. It is important that the Council should understand particular problems by direct contact with the regions concerned; and in this respect I have no doubt whatsoever that the meetings in Addis Ababa were a notable success. Each region has its own specific problems, and I would not wish to make any close comparison between Africa and Latin America, but in both we can see how the many problems—political, economic and social—in many developing countries can be resolved by regional co-operation and by active involvement in the United Nations.

26. I should like to remind the Council that it was in this city, in 1826, that the first attempt at regional co-operation in this area was made. The contribution of Latin America to the development of international law is very substantial, and places us all in the debt of Latin America.

27. Regional co-operation has been fostered by the United Nations since the earliest days. In fact, even in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, which is the primary responsibility of the Security Council, regional action is not precluded. In that respect, the Charter of the United Nations provides for regional arrangements as long as they are consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter. The Organization of American States (OAS) has rendered valuable assistance in the settlement of regional disputes by peaceful means. The records of the Security Council—which is kept informed by the OAS under Article 54 of the Charter—bear eloquent witness to these efforts made by the United Nations on behalf of all Latin American States.

28. In the economic field this co-operation is fostered through the work of the regional Economic Commissions, the specialized agencies, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. Such co-operation is of value not only to the regions themselves, but to the wider objectives of the United Nations. And it is in the United Nations itself, and in no other body, that this experience can be brought together and utilized for the value of all mankind.

29. It is right that the Security Council should be made aware of the particular problems and potentialities of Latin America. We all have very much in our minds the tragic disaster which had recently befallen the people of Nicaragua, and the sympathetic and practical immediate response of the international community to that catastrophe. This response, and these meetings of the Council here in Panama, should clearly demonstrate to the peoples of Latin America the deep concern and involvement of the United Nations in the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous future for them.

30. In this process, the United Nations is very willing to do all in its power to make a major contribution. I am confident that the Security Council, at these meetings, will provide a new impetus to the regional political co-operation and goodwill which are essential to the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Governments and the peoples of Latin America.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.