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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DOLGUCHITS (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
later: Mr. SIDDIQ (Afghanistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/33/23/Add.3, A/33/95, A/33/118, A/33/151, A/33/206, A/33/341 and Add.1)

Hearing of Petitioners

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its 29th meeting the Committee had granted a request for a hearing concerning East Timor to Professor Noam Chomsky, of the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (A/C.4/33/7/Add.3). He understood that Professor Chomsky had had to leave New York because of an emergency and that he had made arrangements for his statement to be read by Mr. Arnold Kohen.
2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Kohen took a place at the petitioners' table.
3. Mr. KOHEN, speaking on behalf of Professor Chomsky, said that Professor Chomsky's primary concern was not South-East Asia but rather Western industrial societies, and particularly United States foreign policy, the domestic matrix in which that policy arose and the ways in which it was interpreted by the press and scholars. In that context he had become much concerned over the years with the impact of United States policy on South-East Asia and other regions. He had strenuously opposed certain basic elements of that policy, and believed that it was often seriously misrepresented at home, leading to the pursuit of harmful programmes without the constraints of an informed public opinion.
4. The United States must surely have known in advance of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in December 1975, which had been widely forecast in the international press and had taken place immediately after the departure of the former United States President, Mr. Gerald Ford, and the former Secretary of State, Mr. Henry Kissinger, after a visit to Jakarta, where Mr. Kissinger had pointedly told news reporters that "the United States understands Indonesia's position on the question" of East Timor.
5. Although Indonesia had effectively sealed off East Timor from the outside world, refusing entry even to the International Committee of the Red Cross, reports by neutral or even pro-Indonesian observers had filtered through, indicating that between 50,000 and 100,000 persons, roughly 10 per cent of the population, had been slaughtered. Nevertheless, the Western press had evaded the issue or, with rare exceptions, had adhered closely to the position of the Indonesian and United States Governments, which sought to "bury" the Timor issue.
6. At every crucial point, the United States Government, with the press trailing loyally in its wake, had denied or concealed the atrocities committed by its

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(Mr. Kohen)

Indonesian ally and had taken the position that whatever minor improper actions might have occurred in the past, they were now a matter of history and no useful purpose was served by questioning Indonesian control of East Timor. The United States and its allies had thus been able to provide Indonesia with the material support it required to carry on its continuing war of aggression and with the ideological support that enabled it to do so virtually in secret. It was clear that the war in East Timor was still continuing, and that Indonesia was seeking to suppress the independence movement of East Timor, with the support of the industrial democracies.

7. The submissiveness of the news media had left the general public unaware of the massacres in East Timor and of the direct complicity of the United States and its allies. Far from giving the right of expression to oppressed peoples, in accordance with a declaration recently adopted by UNESCO on the role of the news media, the mass media in the developed countries participated in continuing oppression and major violations of human rights.

8. He wished to review some basic historical facts and their systematic distortion by the major Western Powers and the compliant press. East Timor had never been included within the colonial or post-colonial boundaries of Indonesia. As soon as Portugal had announced that independence would be granted to the colonies, the tiny élite of East Timor had formed several political parties, including the União Democrática Timorense (UDT) and the Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente (FRETILIN). In August 1975, UDT had staged a coup, probably with Indonesian complicity, setting off a civil war that had ended a few weeks later with a complete victory for FRETILIN.

9. The handling of the reports by the first foreign visitors after the civil war provided a revealing insight into the pattern of news management that had since prevailed in the United States. In September 1975, The New York Times had published an account based on a longer report carried by The Times, of London, but with significant modifications. The author of the latter article had concluded that the reports of large-scale destruction and atrocities, attributed primarily to FRETILIN by Indonesian propaganda and news coverage based on it, had been vastly exaggerated and that many of the stories had been the product of a campaign of lies. He had implicated the Portuguese, Indonesian and Australian Governments in that campaign. The New York Times, in revising the report in The Times, of London, had deleted the reference to exaggerations and to the Indonesian and Western propaganda campaign, but had retained the description of the terrible conditions in FRETILIN hospitals - the Portuguese had withdrawn the only doctor - and of the maltreatment of prisoners by FRETILIN. The process of legitimizing the Indonesian invasion had advanced yet another step in the Newsweek account based on The New York Times report. Newsweek had repeated the reports of devastation, bloodshed and atrocities by FRETILIN, and had concluded that they were true. Thus, the reading public was reinforced in the belief that what Newsweek called "the Marxist FRETILIN party" was bent on atrocities and that

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liberation movements were to be viewed with horror. The stage had been set for general acquiescence when United States-backed Indonesian military forces had invaded to "restore order". That pattern of news management continued to persist, with rare exceptions.

10. Immediately after the victory won by FRETILIN in early September 1975, Indonesia had begun its armed intervention. The expanding Indonesian attacks on East Timor and the lack of foreign reaction had led to a decision by FRETILIN to declare independence on 28 November 1975. A full-scale Indonesian invasion had generally been expected at that point. The United States, which had undoubtedly known what was about to happen, had reportedly instructed its Embassy in Jakarta to cut down its reporting on East Timor and the United States Ambassador had expressed the view that events should be allowed "to take their course", despite United States influence based on Indonesia's need for United States military assistance. The Australian Government, too, had sought to conceal its knowledge of Indonesian intervention in order to avoid complications with Indonesia.

11. The United States had professed ignorance as to what had been happening during that period, and press reports had adhered closely to Indonesian propaganda. The sympathetic picture of FRETILIN administration conveyed by independent Western observers had appeared nowhere in the United States press, and the period had been depicted as one of continuing civil strife. In fact, there had been no civil war, and had been none for over two months, but rather a limited Indonesian incursion.

12. In December 1975, The New York Times had reported that Indonesian forces held Portuguese Timor. In fact, they had held only the capital city of Dili, which they had captured with considerable barbarism. The difference was significant: the United States Government had consistently claimed that the fighting was essentially over, so that Indonesia's "annexation" must be accepted as a fact of life. The New York Times had also carried other distorted reports and editorial comments about the situation in East Timor. It was clear that the West did not want to know about the Indonesian aggression, preferring that the issue be quickly forgotten. The official United States view was that "resolution of the matter would be best reached by the parties directly involved - the Indonesians, the Portuguese and the Timorese". As for the continuing flow of United States arms, a State Department spokesman had testified before Congress that one purpose of the supply of arms was "to keep that area peaceful".

13. In March 1977, a State Department official had testified that about 200,000 of the 650,000 people of East Timor would be considered to be in areas under Indonesian administration - an assessment that contrasted strikingly with the United States Government's claim that the war had essentially ended in early 1976 and that Timor had become a part of Indonesia. That spokesman had testified further that the people were happy with integration: they had decided that their best interests lay in incorporation with Indonesia. Of course, two thirds of the population had not yet been able to express their "decision", because they had not been under Indonesian administration.

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(Mr. Kohen)

14. The Indonesian attempt to conquer East Timor had been a story of mounting atrocities, confirmed by refugees and church officials, letters smuggled out and other sources. Virtually all independent observers estimated the number of people slaughtered at 50,000 to 100,000. It had been reported that Mr. Adam Malik, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, had given a similar estimate, but had suggested that those people might have been killed by Australians and not by Indonesians, and that in any case the figure meant little if compared with the 600,000 people who wanted to join Indonesia. The silence in the United States mass media over that admission was no less remarkable than the silence accorded to a report by Indonesian church officials who strongly opposed FRETILIN, after a visit to East Timor, that they had found that 500,000 people had not been under Indonesian military control in late 1976 and that local priests had estimated the number of people killed at 100,000. Neither that nor other information to the same effect had reached the United States media, although the Australian Parliament Legislative Research Service had described the report by the church officials as significant and disturbing, and had concluded that there was mounting evidence that the Indonesians had carried out indiscriminate killing on an unprecedented scale. There was ample evidence to support that judgement. Yet the response of the United States press could be illustrated by the fact that, in 1975, when the fate of the Portuguese colonies had been a matter of much concern in the West, East Timor had received over 10 times the coverage it had received in 1976, when the Indonesian army had begun its aggression. In 1977, when the massacre of the people of East Timor had reached awesome proportions, coverage had dropped to a few lines.

15. On the rare occasions when the press had deigned to refer to Indonesia's indiscriminate killing, it had followed the United States Government in pretending that the killings had taken place largely during the civil war. As the war had continued, many direct reports of atrocities had been systematically excluded from the United States press. For example, an eye-witness account by a journalist of Paris Match, to the effect that the Indonesians were systematically wiping out the populations of villages known or suspected to be FRETILIN supporters and destroying FRETILIN supply lines, had not reached the United States media. It had also been reported that FRETILIN, unable to provide food and medical treatment to a population of half a million under the circumstances described, was encouraging refugees to move to Indonesian-controlled areas.

16. Yet the United States indicated that there was a flow of refugees to areas where they could be "protected" by the Indonesian army. The press adhered strictly to the State Department's version of events. It had been reported in The New York Times in April 1978 that the shortage of supplies of the FRETILIN guerrilla fighters appeared to have caused them to lose much of their hold over the significant part of the population of about 600,000, whom they had forced to live in regions under their control. How could the scattered FRETILIN groups which according to Indonesian propaganda and The New York Times barely existed, exert control over the population?

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(Mr. Kohen)

17. One of those who had protested at the Indonesian invasion of East Timor was Mr. Michael Hodgman, a strongly anti-communist Australian member of Parliament. He had stated in February 1977 that for Australians to turn their backs on what was alleged to have occurred would be a gross act of national moral cowardice. That was even more true of United States Congressmen, journalists and the public, in view of the direct United States role in implementing the aggression and its consequences and building a wall of silence around it. More recently Mr. Hodgman had charged in the Australian Parliament that between 30,000 and 40,000 people had died in East Timor because defoliants had destroyed their crops. Although that allegation had been briefly reported in the British press, it had apparently received no coverage at all in the United States.

18. In December 1977 Representative Donald Fraser had written to Mr. Cyrus Vance, United States Secretary of State, citing a reliable report that Indonesian forces had been spraying chemicals on crops in areas under FRETILIN control, using United States-manufactured planes. The State Department had responded that it believed the report to be erroneous, while the press appeared to have been insufficiently interested to inquire.

19. In December 1977, Indonesia had announced yet another offensive in East Timor. The International Herald Tribune had carried a report by the Asia correspondent of the Los Angeles Times, who had quoted a Western diplomat as saying that the Indonesian arms supplies had been virtually exhausted by the operations in East Timor, even though "the guerrillas now number only about 600 men". The correspondent had not explained how a war against 600 men could exhaust the military supplies of Indonesia. He had reported, however, that arms salesmen from the major Western industrial nations were attempting to pour arms into Indonesia. That remark was quite accurate: the arms suppliers did not wish to miss such an opportunity. Both the United Kingdom and France were planning to step up their arms sales to Indonesia, while the United States Administration had requested a sizeable increase in military assistance to Indonesia for 1978.

20. Turning to the human rights reports of the United States State Department, he noted that, in the March 1977 report, covering the period when Indonesia had launched its attack, there had been no mention whatsoever of East Timor. That omission had been rectified in the 1978 report, which had devoted about five lines to allegations of genocide in East Timor, stating that the Indonesian Government had withdrawn and disciplined offending units guilty of individual excesses, but that most of the human losses in East Timor appeared to have occurred prior to Indonesia's intervention. That final statement was a disgraceful falsehood. No less disgraceful was the refusal even to concede that questions had been raised concerning atrocities by Indonesian troops after July 1976, when East Timor had been incorporated into Indonesia. The United States had not even attempted to consider the substantial evidence supporting allegations that there had been massive atrocities, that the United States Government was participating in them, and that, with the complicity of the press, it was anxious to bury the issue as quickly and completely as possible.

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(Mr. Kohen)

21. In conclusion, he wished to compare the coverage which Western news media had given to alleged Indonesian atrocities in East Timor with that which they had given to allegations of atrocities in Cambodia. In both cases, the time frame of the alleged atrocities was the same, the numbers allegedly slaughtered - between 50,000 and 100,000 persons - were roughly comparable in absolute terms, and five to ten times as high in East Timor in proportion to the population. Furthermore, the evidence was quite comparable: he had reviewed both cases in considerable detail, and concluded that the sources in the case of East Timor were more credible than those that had received massive international publicity in the case of Cambodia, although there were of course fewer sources in the case of East Timor, since the West preferred silence and apologetics.

22. For Westerners concerned with human rights, the case of East Timor was obviously of vastly greater significance. Whatever the situation in Cambodia, it was beyond the reach of Western human rights activists. But the case of East Timor was radically different. Even a show of displeasure by the great Power that had provided 90 per cent of the arms for the Indonesian invasion and that continued to provide Indonesia with material and diplomatic support for its depredations while labouring to conceal them, would be likely to have significant effects, and the same was true of the other Powers that were working to "bury" the issue as they sought to join in the bloodshed by supplying arms themselves. For Westerners who spoke of human rights out of genuine moral concern, the case of East Timor should therefore be the focus of far greater attention than alleged atrocities in Cambodia.

23. It was instructive, therefore, to compare the Western reaction to those two cases. In the case of Cambodia, stories of atrocities and repression had not only been eagerly seized upon by the Western media and offered massive international publicity, but had also been embellished by substantial fabrication, a fact that was well documented. In the case of East Timor, by contrast, the media had shown no interest in exposing what might have happened; quite the contrary. Except in Australia, there had been almost total silence. On the rare occasions when the press dealt with East Timor, it generally presented as facts the latest hand-out of the Indonesian propaganda agencies or the State Department, or else reported the iniquity of the FRETILIN resistance.

24. The difference in international reaction revealed the emptiness and hypocrisy of much of the concern for "human rights", which had moved to stage centre just at the moment when the lustre of classical colonialist and interventionist ideologies had dimmed. The nations of the world and honest journalists in free societies need not adhere to those practices and doctrines. They could demand that the International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations observers and independent journalists be admitted to East Timor, and that the flow of arms to Indonesia be halted, so that the invaders would be forced to cease their attacks and the right of the people of the Territory to self-determination might finally be exercised.

24a. Mr. Kohen withdrew.

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AGENDA ITEM 24: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued) (A/33/23 (Parts II and V), A/33/23/Add.3-7, 9, A/33/57, A/33/58, A/33/80, A/33/108, A/33/118, A/33/151, A/33/156, A/33/206, A/33/210, A/33/278, A/33/279, A/33/289, A/33/337, A/33/355, A/33/364; A/C.4/33/L.7/Rev.1, A/C.4/33/L.8/Rev.1, A/C.4/33/L.11-L.14, L.15/Rev.1, L.16/Rev.1, L.17/Rev.1, L.18-L.19)

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 92: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/33/23/Add.9, A/33/75; A/C.4/33/L.9)

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 94: QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/33/23/Add.3, A/33/95, A/33/118, A/33/151, A/33/206, A/33/341 and Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 96: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/33/23 (Part V); A/C.4/33/L.20)

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/33/3 (chap. VI, sect. F), A/33/118, A/33/278)

AGENDA ITEM 97: UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/33/109 and Add.1-3, A/33/206, A/33/297; A/C.4/33/L.6/Rev.1)

AGENDA ITEM 98: OFFERS BY MEMBERS STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/33/151; A/C.4/33/L.10)

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General debate (continued)

25. Mr. ALFARO (Guatemala), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, refuted the statement made by the United Kingdom representative in the general debate on item 24 that Guatemala's claim to the territory of Belize had first been formulated in 1939. In 1859, in an effort to restrain English incursions into and depredations in Guatemalan territory, the Republic of Guatemala had been obliged to conclude the border treaty, under article VII of which the United Kingdom was to build a road from Guatemala City to the Atlantic coast in Belize in compensation for the territory it occupied by virtue of the treaty. Since the conclusion of the treaty however, the United Kingdom had constantly tried to shirk its obligations; and since the compensatory clause had not been complied with in any way at the time, the territory that was originally to be ceded remained under Guatemalan sovereignty. Guatemala's territorial claim therefore did not date from 1939. In fact there had been complete continuity in Guatemala's position since 1859.

26. The United Kingdom representative had sought to discredit the statements made in the Committee by the petitioners Vernon and Martínez, claiming that they were spokesmen for the Guatemalan position rather than petitioners from Belize. In fact, both petitioners were Belizeans, but they represented the genuine opposition in the territory, as opposed to the political groups in the official government apparatus of the colony. Now, with the failing prestige and diminishing electoral chances of the current members of the Government of Belize, who were in the service of the Crown and helping to maintain the colonial system, the opposition was an opposition in name only, and was actually helping to maintain the colonial status quo by its complaisant attitude. Moreover, the United Kingdom representative had carefully avoided making any mention of the third petitioner, Mr. Caliz, who indisputably represented the original indigenous population of Belize, currently confined to the extreme south of the territory, and was thus fully qualified to inform the Committee of the conditions of poverty and inequality in which those people lived.

27. The United Kingdom representative had said that agreement had been reached in New York on 2 June 1978 between the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and the Premier and the opposition leader of Belize, to the effect that the dispute and its settlement would henceforth be considered a matter of Belizean domestic policy. The United Kingdom Government had clearly been manoeuvring behind the scenes to accommodate the majority opposition in Belize and thus make it possible to maintain the official intransigence that was preventing a just and equitable solution to the dispute whereby Belize would be given the right to self-determination and the chance to decide its own economic, social and political future. His Government would welcome a new, serious and constructive approach to the question; it had made the necessary efforts and taken the necessary steps within its power to reduce tensions in Belize, but irresponsible statements could only stir up ill-feeling, cause offence and make the climate unpropitious for fruitful negotiations.

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(Mr. Alfaro, Guatemala)

28. His delegation had been surprised when Mr. Richard had made public the contents of the latest United Kingdom proposals in the negotiations on the subject. That had been an unconstructive step, in view of the prior agreement that the negotiations should be conducted in private, and it was at variance with accepted standards of diplomacy. Tugging with words, distortions and appeals to local political interests would not pave the way for a clear-cut and lasting solution to the problem, which Guatemala was determined to seek by peaceful means, in keeping with the vital interests of the people of the region.

29. Mr. de FIGUEIREDO (Angola) said that the people of his country considered it their revolutionary duty to extend solidarity to all peoples and liberation movements fighting against racism, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, racial discrimination, fascism and economic imperialism.

30. The classical institutions of colonialism had taken on slightly different forms: instead of State trading companies, there were transnational corporations; instead of overlords in European capitals, there were local minority régimes with close ties to Western imperialist Governments. But it was horrifying that countries which had only recently achieved their own independence were now colonizing and oppressing other peoples and nations. The colonized had become the colonizer, and no euphemism such as "incorporation" or "the Green March" could explain, condone or justify expansionist colonialist tactics.

31. The people of East Timor, led by their liberation movement FRETILIN, were waging a bitter fight against the military might of a State seeking to deny them the right to self-determination and independence. It was tragic that some Governments, instead of condemning the invasion of East Timor, had indirectly defied United Nations resolutions by formally acknowledging a neighbouring State's colonial "sovereignty" over the Territory. It was the duty of all progressive forces to give every support to the people of East Timor. The Fourth Committee must keep the issue alive and refuse to accept the incorporation of East Timor against the wishes of its people.

32. The "Non-Self-Governing" Territories were also brutally colonized nations, whose so-called "assemblies" were a farce, and whose freedom a myth. One prime example was Puerto Rico. Fortunately the resolution adopted by the Special Committee could be viewed as a victory for those who had been fighting for Puerto Rican rights for so long, for it paved the way for the drafting of a decolonization plan for Puerto Rico.

33. His delegation rejected the argument that military bases and troops stationed in Non-Self-Governing Territories did not impede the exercise of the right of self-determination and independence by the peoples of those Territories. All the arguments of the colonial Powers, and often their reluctance and refusal to allow a debate on the issue, demonstrated that the essential interest of the administering Powers was to maintain those bases and other military installations. Freedom of the ballot under the shadow of guns was a farce regularly enacted in such Territories. One instance was Guam, the entire territory of which was treated as a base by the colonial Power concerned: the heavy military installations

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(Mr. de Figueiredo, Angola)

there endangered the peace and security of the entire region, and not of the island alone. The policy of maintaining military bases and installations in Non-Self-Governing Territories was incompatible with various General Assembly resolutions, and provided one more example of the refusal of certain Western Powers to comply with the wishes and decisions of the international community.

34. Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the current situation in Western Sahara represented attempts to dictate to the peoples of the region on the basis of a colonialist situation. His delegation hoped that the parties to the dispute would be able to reach a cordial agreement ensuring full respect for the people's right to self-determination and to national sovereignty, in accordance with the principles underlying the Charter of the United Nations, the new international order and his own country's foreign policy. His delegation applauded the mature decision taken by OAU at the recent conference at Khartoum, and hoped that the Commission set up by OAU at that conference would find a way of sparing the Saharan people further suffering. It appealed to the parties to find a solution without delay, and warned that any solution which did not entail full recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination would undermine the attempts made by the Committee to achieve solutions in other areas, and would promote the cause of Israeli Zionism. All States should help the Saharan people to develop and to realize their full potential. In conclusion, he announced that his delegation had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/33/L.7.

35. Mr. GUNA-KASEM (Thailand) said that his delegation firmly believed that the inalienable right to self-determination was one of the cardinal principles of the United Nations. The Organization's record in rendering consistent support to peoples in colonial countries and Non-Self-Governing Territories to enable them to determine their own future spoke for itself. The ways and means of exercising the right to self-determination, however, varied according to the specific historical background and circumstances of each Territory.

36. With regard to the question of East Timor, his delegation was of the view that Indonesia had consistently demonstrated that it was completely prepared to accept the will of the Timorese people, freely and democratically expressed, in the exercise of their right to self-determination. On 31 May 1976, the people of East Timor, through the elected members of the People's Representative Assembly, had decided in favour of integration with the Republic of Indonesia. That decision had been freely made by the people of East Timor themselves. Subsequently, integration with Indonesia had been carried out on the basis of complete equality between the people of East Timor and the people in the rest of Indonesia. His delegation therefore believed that the people of East Timor had, in a manner consistent with their traditional and customary practice, freely exercised their right to self-determination, and that the process of decolonization had been completed in East Timor, thereby terminating the Territory's colonial status.

37. Mr. AMPAT (Congo) said that colonial Powers sought to maintain their domination over subject peoples either by granting a nominal, fictitious independence or by erasing a territory from the map as a separate entity. The latter course had been followed in the case of Western Sahara.

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(Mr. Amapat, Congo)

38. The shameful Madrid Agreement of 1975 clearly endorsed the betrayal by the administering Power and the long-range expansionist and annexation aims of the two neighbouring countries, which left the brave Saharan people no choice but to fight to recover their freedom and dignity under the dynamic leadership of their vanguard, the Frente POLISARIO.

39. The Saharan people had for centuries kept alive their spirit of resistance against foreign domination and the pillage of their resources, and, realizing that armed struggle was the only way of securing independence had, in 1973, formed the Frente POLISARIO, which had shortly thereafter carried out its first armed action. It was therefore shocking to hear assertions to the effect that the Saharan people had manifested their will to free themselves only after the administering Power had withdrawn from the Territory.

40. The bloody battles raging in the Territory, which were a logical consequence of the ingenious manoeuvres to thwart decolonization, should be a matter of serious concern to the United Nations, which should reaffirm the right of the Saharan people to decide their own future and provide for effective measures to ensure that that right was realized in practice. The constant efforts by the OAU to end the murderous war were certainly encouraging and should be supported, but the United Nations could not sacrifice its historic role in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and merely refer the question to the OAU extraordinary session.

41. The unilateral cease-fire announced by the Frente POLISARIO on 12 July in order to promote a dynamic process of peace in Western Sahara was a unique act of great political significance on the part of a national liberation movement. Surely the party affected by the cease-fire would take the opportunity to start to relinquish its territorial claims. The cease-fire should also give food for thought to the colonial Powers that were helping the expansionists achieve their designs. Those Powers should stop supplying the sophisticated weaponry that would enable the occupying forces to exterminate the Saharan people who were struggling for their fundamental freedoms.

42. The existence of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, already recognized by a number of United Nations and OAU member States, was a living reality that could not be contested. Any attempt to remove that young State from the map of the world was doomed to failure. His delegation hoped that all the peoples of the region, who shared a common history, would soon come to recognize that incontrovertible fact, so that a durable peace could prevail in that part of struggling Africa.

43. Ms. CHEW Beng Yong (Singapore) said that the Special Committee's report showed that there had been continuing progress in the field of decolonization. The United Nations had played a significant role in accelerating the process of decolonization. The United Nations Charter had made provision for a trusteeship system and set out certain obligations for administering Powers with a view to protecting the interests of the peoples concerned. General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) had become the framework for the work of the Special Committee of 24, and the right to self-determination had now become a universally recognized principle. The principle underlying those documents had been respect for the

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(Ms. CHEW Beng Yong, Singapore)

freely expressed wishes of the people by both the administering Powers and the Member States of the United Nations. The free expression of the people's will had led to the attainment of independence in nearly all the regions of Asia, Latin America and Africa.

44. Of the Territories still remaining on the Committee's agenda, the majority were small island Territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific. They were at different stages of economic and political development, and each had to be considered on its own merits. Although geographical remoteness, territorial size, or limited resources and a small population should not be used as a pretext for denying the people's political aspirations, those factors did pose very real difficulties for the people of some of the small Territories. Members of the international community should avoid the temptation to impose on those peoples their own notions of what was best for them, especially with regard to their future political status. The people themselves should be fully aware of the various options outlined in Principle VI of General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV), when exercising their right to self-determination, and the administering Powers were legally and morally bound to prepare them adequately for the assumption of the responsibilities that came with self-government. The presence of military bases on some of the small Territories should not in any way inhibit the people from exercising that right.

45. The United Nations and the Special Committee should continue to play the valuable role of supervising the process of self-determination. Her delegation was thus glad to note the invitation extended by the United States Government to the Special Committee to send a visiting mission to Guam to observe the status referendum to be held in June 1979. Similarly, it hoped that the United Kingdom and France would welcome a visiting mission to the New Hebrides to observe at first hand the situation in the Territory as it progressed towards independence.

46. Certain Territories were prevented from achieving early independence by the territorial claims of neighbouring countries. The United Nations had generally favoured the principle of self-determination and territorial integrity within former colonial boundaries. Any change in the boundaries of a colonial Territory could be allowed only in response to the expressed wishes of the people, as ascertained by the United Nations, and not in response to pressures or claims by others. Thus her delegation fully supported the right of the people of Belize to self-determination and independence and to territorial integrity, and urged the United Kingdom, Belize and Guatemala to pursue their negotiations vigorously.

47. Mr. DLAMINI (Swaziland) said that all Non-Self-Governing Territories had to be aided politically, economically and otherwise so that they could freely determine their own future. He commended those administering Powers which were engaged in negotiations to ensure that Territories under their administration attained independence peacefully. Such negotiations would be fruitful if the Powers concerned co-operated with the Special Committee of 24, whose excellent work he appreciated.

48. No matter how small the Territory, the principle of self-determination had to be supported and the Territory protected. Some dependent Territories had vast natural resources that were coveted by either neighbouring or distant nations. It must be remembered by all that those resources belonged to the peoples concerned.

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(Mr. Dlamini, Swaziland)

His delegation welcomed the progress made in the Gilbert Islands, Tokelau and other Territories. The people of Belize, East Timor and Western Sahara also had the inalienable right to self-determination, and the partitioning of their territories should not be encouraged by the United Nations or any individual Member State.

49. His Government supported the move by the OAU to find a solution to the question of Western Sahara and hoped that that organization's efforts would be supplemented by the United Nations, because co-operation between the OAU and the United Nations was of vital importance to Africa.

50. Mr. BRIGHTY (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Guatemala had dwelt at some length on the history of the dispute over Belize and events in the nineteenth century. The United Kingdom also had archives from which it could quote at length but, in its view, the Committee had more pressing concerns than to review the details of conversations held over 100 years earlier.

51. As for the three petitioners mentioned by the representative of Guatemala, he pointed out that Mr. Martínez and Mr. Vernon had been described as representatives of the minority. If that was so, the minority was a very small minority indeed. All adult Belizeans had the right to vote, and the voters of the Toledo district had now shown sufficient enthusiasm to elect a single representative of Toledo. The third petitioner mentioned by the representative of Guatemala was virtually unknown, and probably represented only a handful of individuals.

52. The representative of Guatemala had also claimed that the United Kingdom Government was manoeuvring for a position of "official intransigence" in the Government of Belize. However, the presence of the Deputy Premier of Belize and the leader of the opposition at the current session of the Assembly belied that assertion. Those two leaders spoke for the entire population of Belize. The people of Belize were seeking independence and the United Kingdom Government supported their wish.

53. As to the priority of the United Kingdom delegation's action in making public its proposals regarding Belize in the General Assembly, he recalled that the proposals in question had been communicated in advance to the Government of Guatemala, which had been informed that in the absence of a reply the United Kingdom might take the opportunity of the Fourth Committee's discussion of the matter to divulge the details of the proposals. No reply had been received from the Government of Guatemala and, accordingly, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom had described the proposals at the Committee's 27th meeting. His delegation had, moreover, observed the diplomatic courtesy of providing the Government of Guatemala with an advance text of its statement.

54. Lastly, his delegation had been deeply disappointed at the announcement made the previous day by the Foreign Minister of Guatemala to the effect that he categorically rejected the United Kingdom proposals and continued to maintain that the United Nations was not competent to deal with the case of Belize which, Guatemala asserted, was part of its national territory.

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AGENDA ITEM 24: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued) (A/33/23 (Parts II and V), A/33/23/Add.3-7, 9, A/33/57, A/33/58, A/33/80, A/33/108, A/33/118, A/33/151, A/33/156, A/33/206, A/33/210, A/33/278, A/33/279, A/33/289, A/33/337, A/33/355, A/33/364; A/C.4/33/L.7/Rev.1, L.8/Rev.1, L.11-L.14, L.15/Rev.1, L.16/Rev.1, L.17/Rev.1, L.18-L.19)

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

Western Sahara: hearing of petitioners

55. The CHAIRMAN announced that the representative of the Frente POLISARIO had requested permission to address the Committee for a second time.

56. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Omar (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO)) took a place at the petitioners' table.

57. Mr. OMAR (Frente Popular para la liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO))* said that before the beginning of the colonial era, political power had been organized vertically in Morocco and Mauritania. The Western Sahara, on the other hand, had had one of the oldest political democracies in Africa: Western Sahara had had as its executive body a 40-man Assembly which had regularly met twice a year, or more often if necessary, and elected its President, whose term of office lasted for the intervening period between meetings. The Assembly had had a judicial and legislative Council, which it convened as necessary, and an army responsible for safeguarding national security, while internal affairs were handled by a special commission. The International Court of Justice had corroborated those facts and handed down a judgement affirming that the Saharan people had never been under Moroccan or Mauritanian sovereignty.

58. Numerous historical legal documents had clearly established the limits of Moroccan sovereignty. Mauritanian history contained a long list of battles fought with the people of Western Sahara, which were still remembered. When the Spaniards had colonized Western Sahara, and the French had colonized Mauritania, they had done no more than accept a geographical situation which had existed long before their arrival. The international treaties governing relations between Sahara and its neighbours made up a body of international law which the international community must respect under the Charter of the United Nations, the charter of OAU, and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the principle of State succession. The frontiers inherited from the colonial era in Africa were, under international law, intangible. The aggressors should respect their obligations under that law, and the international community should make them fulfil their commitments.

* The full text of this statement will be issued as a separate document.

59. The Saharan people, whose destiny could not be dissociated from that of the other peoples of Africa, were struggling for self-determination and independence in accordance with the right, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, of all peoples to choose their own destiny.

60. In past discussions of the question of Western Sahara in the Fourth Committee, and in other international fora, Spain, Morocco and Mauritania had all at various times recognized the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence. They had voted for and even sponsored resolutions on the subject. They could not now escape the obligations they had assumed under those resolutions.

61. Attempts had been made to dismiss the Frente POLISARIO as a creation of the Spanish Government. In fact, the Frente POLISARIO was a logical and natural extension of the resistance movement of the people of Western Sahara, who had had throughout their history to contend with efforts to invade and colonize their land. The Frente POLISARIO had been formally established on 10 May 1973 to wage an armed political struggle as the only means of achieving liberation from the colonial yoke. The desire of the Saharan people for independence had been confirmed by the United Nations visiting mission to the territory, headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Ivory Coast.

62. It was absurd to continue to claim that the Saharan people had exercised their right to self-determination through the Jema'a on 26 February 1976 when that body had been dissolved on 28 November 1975. At that time the members of the Jema'a had issued a declaration explaining why they had up to that date participated in the colonialist institution of the Jema'a and recognizing the Frente POLISARIO as the sole legitimate representative of the Saharan people and reaffirming their determination to continue the struggle to defend the homeland and safeguard its territorial integrity. In spite of that stand, the Moroccan régime had staged a special meeting of the Jema'a on 26 February 1978 at El Aaiún. The administering Power, the international community and the Saharan people had not been deceived by the Moroccan machinations, and they had rejected its policy based on falsehood and the fait accompli. The Spanish Government had informed the Secretary-General that the meeting of the Jema'a did not constitute the popular consultation envisaged in the Madrid Agreement or in General Assembly resolution 3458 B (XXX). The Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his part, had been no less categorical in replying to the Moroccan Government's request that he send a representative to the so-called special meeting. The Secretary-General had written to the Mauritanian Minister for Foreign Affairs in much the same terms, asserting that the special meeting did not constitute application of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. On 27 February 1976, the Saharan people, responding to the challenge of the aggressors, and in order to fill the legal vacuum which would be created by Spain's withdrawal from the Territory without transfer of sovereignty to the legitimate representatives of the population, had proclaimed the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic.

63. In his statement at the 22nd meeting of the Committee, he had drawn attention to the grave threat posed by the most recent manoeuvres of the Moroccan aggressors.

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(Mr. Omar)

The Moroccan expansionists, moreover, had recently begun to colonize areas under Moroccan occupation, replacing the Saharan people by unemployed Moroccans, of whom there were so many in Morocco. The first contingent of settlers had been installed at Lehcheicha near El-Aaiún on 15 November 1978. Obviously, the aim of the state terrorism being applied by Morocco was to thwart any action which the United Nations might take to protect the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence. The international community must realize the seriousness of the situation and increase its vigilance. The Frente POLISARIO, for its part, was confident that the latest Moroccan manoeuvre, as in the case of Morocco's previous attempts to mislead the international community, was doomed to failure.

64. The Moroccan expansionists also claimed that the people in the occupied areas were living in peace. However, just a few days earlier, the Saharan people both in the occupied areas and elsewhere in the national territory, had once again risen in resistance to the Moroccan-Mauritanian occupation, organizing widespread demonstrations in support of the Government of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. The expansionist tyrants had reacted with unprecedented brutality by massacring elderly persons and women and children, and imprisoning hundreds of others. Many prominent persons had died in the recent outbreak of repression. He appealed to the Fourth Committee to take action forthwith to bring about the cessation of such criminal activity.

65. Lastly, he reiterated the request of the Frente POLISARIO that the report of the Secretary-General's Special Representative be transmitted to the Fourth Committee.

66. Mr. Omar (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO)) withdrew.

+ 67. Mr. HACHEME (Benin), supported by Mr. BIN-HUMAM (Democratic Yemen), proposed that the statement just made by the petitioner for the Frente POLISARIO should be issued as an official document of the Committee.

68. Mr. GRAHAM (United States of America) recalled that the cost of issuing the statement made by the petitioner for the Frente POLISARIO at the 22nd meeting, on 21 November (A/C.4/33/L.22), had been approximately \$10,000. In the interests of economy he suggested that, if a separate document was to be issued, only the new information provided at the current meeting should be included in it.

69. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to the financial implications of issuing statements as documents. As the representative of the United States did not seem to be raising a formal objection to the proposal made by the representative of Benin, he took it that the Committee wished the statement made by the petitioner for the Frente POLISARIO to be issued as a Committee document.

70. It was so decided.

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71. Mr. ABDULLAH (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the continuing dispute between the United Kingdom, the administering Power of Belize, and Belize's neighbour, Guatemala, had prevented the Belizeans from exercising their right to enjoy independence with their Territory intact, a right recently asserted before the Committee as a national, bi-partisan objective, against the Guatemalan claim to the Territory, by the Deputy Premier of Belize. Representatives of the Government of Belize and of the opposition had participated in discussions relating to the negotiations called for under General Assembly resolutions, and in particular resolution 32/32; and the representative of the administering Power had indicated that, after discussion with the Government and opposition in Belize, proposals to end the dispute had been made to the Guatemalan authorities. His delegation regretted the lack of adequate response so far by the Guatemalan authorities to those proposals, and considered that that attitude was informed by expansionist ambitions designed to dismember the Territory of Belize at all costs. His Government was totally opposed to the cession of any part of the territory of Belize in settlement of Guatemala's ill-founded claim to the Territory and it supported the Belizeans' rejection of any attempt to divorce the right of self-determination from their right to preserve Belize's territorial integrity. It was therefore with great satisfaction that his delegation had noted the remarks of the representative of the administering Power on that particular aspect of the problem and it would no longer expect the question of cession of territory to form part of the continuing negotiations between the United Kingdom and Guatemala.

72. His delegation believed that the necessary framework for a just and honourable settlement, satisfying both the Guatemalans and the Belizeans, existed on the basis of the proposals for free port facilities in Belize City and access by road to the port, a seaward boundary to guarantee Guatemala secure access to the high seas and a treaty of amity and mutual security between an independent Belize and Guatemala. Failure to grasp that opportunity could only result in a further deterioration of peace and stability in the area, with consequent disruption of its economic development. He therefore urged all the parties involved to proceed vigorously towards removing that cause of friction from a region that had long supported freedom and justice for all its peoples.

73. He introduced draft resolution A/C.4/33/L.19 on the question of Belize. It was an expression of international solidarity with the just aspirations of the people of Belize, and he hoped that it would receive the overwhelming support of the members of the Committee.

74. Mr. ROBINSON (Guyana) introduced draft resolution A/C.4/33/L.7/Rev.1 on the question of Western Sahara, which fell within the scope of decolonization matters and had been the subject of yearly General Assembly resolutions and numerous OAU resolutions affirming the right of the people of the Territory to self-determination and independence.

75. The initiatives taken by the United Nations and the OAU in that regard had complemented each other admirably, and that correlation and effective interaction had enhanced the Committee's consideration of all Territories in Africa which had not yet achieved self-determination.

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(Mr. Robinson, Guyana)

76. Underlying the draft resolution were the provisions of two earlier resolutions adopted by consensus: General Assembly resolution 32/22 and OAU resolution AHG/Res.92 (XV). The draft resolution had thus been conceived as a consensus resolution, faithfully reflecting as it did principles previously recognized at both the regional and international levels, and consciously retaining the same unanimity of conception, so as to comply with the OAU request to refrain from any action likely to hamper the work of the OAU ad hoc committee.

77. The sponsors considered the eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution particularly significant since, in them, the Assembly would recognize both the OAU decisions and the ongoing and characteristic co-operation between OAU and the United Nations. In devoting a paragraph to the OAU ad hoc committee, they registered their approval of OAU efforts towards a solution of the problems of Western Sahara, which they hoped would soon be successful. The operative paragraphs reaffirmed, inter alia, the continuing responsibilities of the United Nations Special Committee of 24 and of the OAU on the question of Western Sahara.

78. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to the draft consensuses in documents A/C.4/33/L.12, L.13, L.14 and L.18, and invited the Secretary to make a statement concerning their financial implications.

79. Mr. RIFAI (Secretary of the Committee) said that the draft consensuses contained in documents A/C.4/33/L.13, L.14 and L.18 envisaged the possibility of dispatching visiting missions to a number of territories. The estimated cost of such visiting missions could be met within the appropriations approved for the over-all programme of the Special Committee for the biennium 1978-1979, and adoption of the draft consensuses would not have any additional financial implications.

80. The draft consensuses were adopted without objection.

81. Mr. BROCHENIN (France) said that his delegation did not intend to dissociate itself from the consensuses which had just been adopted, or from any which might subsequently be adopted. Nor did it intend to raise objections to other draft resolutions and consensuses which the Committee was planning to adopt without a vote. His delegation, nevertheless, continued to have reservations regarding certain resolutions to which it had never given its approval and which were mentioned in the draft consensuses. In order to expedite the work of the Committee, the French delegation would refrain from restating that position whenever it pertained to decisions taken subsequently during the session.

82. Mr. RIFAI (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Japan had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/33/L.6/Rev.1; Barbados, Kenya, Lesotho, the Syrian Arab Republic and Trinidad and Tobago had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/33/L.7/Rev.1; Costa Rica had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/33/L.16/Rev.1; and India, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Norway, Oman, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Sweden, the United Republic of Cameroon, Yugoslavia and Zambia had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/23/L.19.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.