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FOURTH COMMITTEE

22nd meeting

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Friday, 11 November 1977

at 3 p.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALLAF (Syrian Arab Republic)

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REQUEST FOR A HEARING

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 24: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/C.4/32/L.10, L.11, L.17, L.22, L.23)

Question of Gibraltar (A/C.4/32/L.22)

1. The CHAIRMAN, noting that the draft consensus was based on previous decisions of the General Assembly relating to that question, and in the light of the consultations which had been held on the matter, suggested that the Committee should adopt the draft consensus without objection.
2. The draft consensus in document A/C.4/32/L.22 was adopted without objection.

Question of Belize (A/C.4/32/L.23)

Statement by the Premier of Belize

3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Price (Premier of Belize) took a place at the Committee table.
4. Mr. PRICE (Premier of Belize)* said that in the period which had elapsed since a representative of Belize had last appeared before the Committee the Territory had worked to help achieve a negotiated settlement within the terms of the United Nations resolutions upholding the right of the Belizean people to self-determination and to secure an independent Belize with sovereignty and territorial integrity.
5. Belize had been present at the negotiating session held in Washington on 6 July 1977. The representatives of the United Kingdom had outlined, on behalf of Belize, various concessions and proposals aimed at allaying the fears and concerns expressed and meeting the needs invoked by Guatemala over years of negotiation.
6. Guatemala had expressed the fear that an independent Belize would be used as a base for attacks on Guatemala or would otherwise endanger its security. Belize had offered a non-aggression pact, limitations on its right to enter into military arrangements with third countries and co-operative working arrangements based on friendship and mutual respect in areas of joint concern, such as defence, security and foreign affairs.
7. Guatemala, with 60 miles of Caribbean sea coast, had expressed concern that its access to the high seas would be impaired by Belize's territorial sea. Belize had offered to negotiate a seaward boundary which would provide Guatemala with guaranteed and permanent access to the high seas through Belize's territorial sea.

* The statement by the Premier of Belize has been given full coverage in the summary record in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee during the meeting.

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Belize had also offered the use of port facilities in Belize City, the use of good road access from the inland Guatemalan Department of El Peten to Belize City and free transit of non-military vehicles, ships and aircraft.

8. Guatemala had expressed concern that an independent Belize might not wish to participate in Latin American and Central American institutions. Belize had made a proposal that it should seek membership in the Organization of American States, accede to the Rio Treaty and enter into economic arrangements with Central America, compatible with its existing commitments to the Caribbean Community.

9. In order to meet Guatemala's stated need for the development of the Department of El Peten, Belize had proposed the formulation of joint development projects and the establishment of a joint development fund to which the United Kingdom and possibly other countries would make substantial contributions.

10. The United Kingdom negotiators, on their own behalf, had also offered a substantial contribution to a major Guatemalan development project designated by the Government of Guatemala, to satisfy the Guatemalan complaint that a cart road envisaged in the 1859 border treaty had never been built.

11. Much of the substance of those proposals had already been formulated in the agreed specific terms of a draft treaty which had been worked on during 1976. Guatemala's response to all those proposals had been that they did not meet its needs. It had stated that the cession of land in the southern part of Belize was essential to Guatemala for political, economic and security reasons and that no settlement was conceivable without territorial cession - all that, despite the fact that Guatemala had more land than it had been able to develop and had two seaports on the Caribbean Sea, with a third about to be built.

12. The Guatemalan Government, in insisting on territorial cession as the basis for a settlement, had carried out the threat made to the Committee in 1976, as also in 1975, that Guatemala would disregard the resolutions passed by overwhelming majorities in the Committee and in the General Assembly.

13. The circumstances surrounding the 1977 negotiations had been disturbing. While negotiators had been meeting to seek a peaceful solution to the problem, the Guatemalan military machine had been preparing for war and had been poised to invade Belize while negotiations were in progress in Washington. Sensing the imminent danger to the survival of Belize as a country, the Belize Government had requested British reinforcements to support its small defensive garrison and those reinforcements had arrived in time to save Belize from invasion.

14. It was becoming increasingly evident that Guatemala's strategy was designed to terrorize the people of Belize in the hope that they would submit to its demands, if only for the sake of peace. It was designed to weaken international support for Belize's territorial integrity and to wear down the British, who had to go to

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great expense and trouble to reinforce their defensive garrison in Belize whenever Guatemala decided to put its finger on the trigger. It was designed to attract sympathy from Latin American countries, who were asked to feel outrage at the presence of British troops on Belizean soil.

15. After the United Nations had affirmed in two resolutions Belize's territorial integrity, and after Belize had attempted in negotiations to meet all of Guatemala's stated fears, concerns and needs, the only real response from that quarter had been the repetition of its demand for a cession of Belize's territory and it had made that demand against the background of a threatened invasion. In those circumstances, it would hardly appear that progress was actually being made.

16. Guatemala had maintained that Belize could achieve its independence only through a settlement between Guatemala and the United Kingdom. But by insisting on territorial cession as the basis for settlement, a condition which it knew Belize could not accept, Guatemala was in effect exercising a veto over Belizean independence.

17. However, there was no way to reverse the march of history or repudiate the principles established by the United Nations in its long, heroic and honourable struggle against colonialism. In its resolution 1514 (XV) the General Assembly had proclaimed the inalienable right of colonized peoples to self-determination. That right could not be subject to a veto, either by the colonial Power or by a claimant State.

18. The people of Belize had exercised their right to self-determination. In six successive national elections they had elected a Government whose primary goal was the independence of Belize. In the most recent elections, held in December 1974, the manifestos of both political parties in the National Assembly had called for independence and territorial integrity. When he had addressed the Committee in November 1975, the leader of the opposition had been present and had supported Belize's position. The opposition party had also been represented, at its own request, in the negotiations held in Washington in July 1977 and had endorsed the statement which he (Mr. Price) had made to the Conference: "Continuously over the past two decades, Belizeans have freely expressed their aspirations for independence. Today, the two political parties in the National Assembly sit at this table jointly committed to the independence of Belize. The clear outcome of the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Belize would be an independent Belize within its historic boundaries."

19. There was no group in any part of Belize that would consider annexation by Guatemala. After so many years, and after the expenditure of considerable human and financial resources, the Guatemalan Government had succeeded in buying over only a small handful of mercenaries for its cause. That bore eloquent testimony to the determination of the people of Belize, against all odds, to preserve their national identity and national unity, to achieve their independence, and preserve the territorial integrity for which they had struggled during the past 27 years.

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20. In an attempt to justify their demand for land, Guatemalan spokesmen had resorted to racial arguments, claiming that the southern area of Belize was inhabited by persons of ethnic Guatemalan origin, who would wish to belong to Guatemala. The fact was that the southern district, the Toledo District, was inhabited by Belizeans of Garifuna (Carib), African, Asian, European and Maya origin, who had lived there for generations. They formed an integral part of the Belizean nation and joined equally in the total rejection of Guatemala's aggressive ambitions.

21. The previous week he had visited the villages of the Toledo District, to which some residents had come from Guatemala in past decades to find a free and better way of life in accord with their human rights. The village leaders of a Maya/Kekchi village, named Crique Sarco, had expressed a strong desire that their homes and farmland should continue to be part of Belize, where there was freedom and stability of life. The Garifuna Belizeans of another village, named Barranco, had told him that they would not wish to live in Guatemala, because in Guatemala the Garifuna Black people were second-class citizens, without opportunities of advancement. As citizens of Belize they enjoyed all their human rights and the opportunities of a democratic country.

22. In its stand to preserve its homeland, Belize was heartened by the sacred commitment of the United Kingdom not to agree to any solution which did not have the consent of the Government and people of Belize, and by the well-established United Nations doctrine that sovereignty over a Non-Self-Governing Territory was never vested in the administering Power but in the people of that Territory, for whom the administering Power held the Territory in trust.

23. Any solution which involved cession of territory would offend the terms of the United Nations resolutions on territorial integrity. Moreover, any change of borders would have fundamentally adverse effects in the region, and would give rise to any number of demands within the Americas for the revision of long-established frontiers. Land cession did not solve a problem; it created a problem. Cession of land also involved people, who, as fellow human beings, had the right to determine the future destiny of their homes, farms and communities. Would poor and innocent people be made to pay the price of a neo-colonialist and mini-imperialist policy that should have no place in the world of today?

24. Would the freedom-loving nations of the world require a people, as their last act before independence, to agree to the dismemberment of the territory they had struggled to free and where they had, with the limited resources at their disposal, connected all six districts in a network of roads, had achieved considerable economic development and social progress, and had set up a stable, democratic government?

25. Belize once more appealed to Member States to support its right to survive as an integral nation by approving draft resolution A/C.4/32/L.24 which reaffirmed

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previous resolutions on Belize. It was substantively similar to resolution 31/50, but took into account the developments of the past few months, and reflected the extreme urgency of the situation.

26. In August 1977, the Heads of Government of Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, meeting at Bogotá, Colombia, had considered the question of Belize and had agreed that a solution should be found by the peaceful methods provided for in the Charters of the Organization of American States and the United Nations, and in accordance with respect for the territorial integrity of Belize and with the principle of the free self-determination of peoples.

27. He welcomed that declaration and asked all fellow Latin American nations not to become part of a process that condemned Belize to an indefinite prolongation of its colonial status and the perpetual fear of annexation. They should not acquiesce, by their silence, in the perpetuation of a situation that so adversely affected the peace and stability of the region.

28. Belize was prepared to assume its independence with any suitable security arrangements that would ensure the safety of its people and preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It was prepared to continue its efforts, both before and after independence if necessary, to reach a settlement with Guatemala. Belize and Guatemala were neighbours. They must learn to live in peace and co-operation with one another. Belize had consistently shown its willingness to make the first move in that direction, and that position would not change with independence.

29. He had tried to assess the gravity of the present situation because he felt that that information was necessary for the guidance of the Committee. He earnestly hoped that Belize would not be forced into the position of coming back to the United Nations in the face of a fait accompli which would be extremely difficult to reverse.

30. He expressed sincere thanks to all States Members of the United Nations which had helped, and continued to help, a poor and small country like Belize to become a nation, free, independent, and in possession of its sovereign and territorial integrity.

31. He was confident that with God's help, and with the Committee's continued understanding and support, Belize would be able to survive intact as an independent nation, living in brotherhood and co-operation with its neighbours in the region, and building bridges of friendship and understanding in the Americas and in the world.

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Hearing of petitioners

32. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Vernon and Mr. Martinez (Toledo Progressive Party of Belize) took places at the petitioners' table.

33. Mr. VERNON (Secretary-General, Toledo Progressive Party of Belize)* said that there were to have been three petitioners but Mr. Caliz, the Vice-President of the Maya-Kekchi Committee, had been unable to travel to New York, owing to problems with the Immigration Department in Belize.

34. He thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to express a viewpoint held not only by himself as Secretary-General of the Toledo Progressive Party, but by the large majority of the Party's members and the people in the Toledo District of Belize. He hoped that the presence of his party's representatives would enable the Committee better to understand the true situation in Belize.

35. As members of the Committee were aware, a dispute existed between the United Kingdom and Guatemala over the Territory of Belize and during the past year the United Kingdom had made certain offers to Guatemala in an effort to settle the controversy. Those offers included the provision of economic aid, free ports and a slice of the continental shelf. In making them, the United Kingdom had clearly indicated that it would like to compensate Guatemala in some form for the non-fulfilment of the 1859 Aglo-Guatemalan Treaty which, according to historians, had sought to legalize British occupation of the land between the rivers Sibun and Sarstoon, in the southern part of Belize. All were aware of the claims by Guatemala, the United Kingdom's refusal to accede to Guatemala's demands, and the obligation thrust on the Belizean people to determine their own future.

36. Guatemala had insisted that the dispute was a territorial matter, and the Belizean people were unaware of the gravity of the situation and were only schooled in the process of decolonization, and thus fought against colonialism. Guatemala could be at fault for having maintained its claim at a diplomatic level; but the United Kingdom was also at fault for having kept its subjects and colony ignorant of the claim and its possible repercussions. In fact, the average Belizean had been led to believe that Guatemala and other Latin American countries were extremely primitive, out-of-bounds, and that no worth-while benefits could be derived from them.

37. Notwithstanding the invisible "iron curtain" which divided Belize from Central America, it had been impossible for the United Kingdom to separate Belizeans living

* The statement by the Secretary-General of the Toledo Progressive Party has been given full coverage in the summary record in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee during the meeting.

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in the Cayo and Toledo Districts of Belize from their neighbours in the Petén, Verapaz and Izabal Departments of Guatemala, because the people of those border areas were of the same race and colour, spoke the same languages, and had the same customs, music and traditions. The only difference was that, on the one side, they were under British law, and on the other, under Guatemalan law. The 15,000 inhabitants of El Cayo District spoke Spanish and were daily in touch with the inhabitants of El Petén who also spoke that language. There were relatives on both sides of the border. The Maya and Kekchi Indians of the Toledo District spoke Maya Mopan and Maya Kekchi, just like their brothers in Alta Verapaz, Izabal and Petén in Guatemala. The Caribs (Garifunas) of the Toledo District and the town of Dangriga spoke the same language, Garifuna, as did their blood brothers in Izabal in Guatemala. Nearly 60 per cent of the inhabitants of the Cayo and Toledo Districts of Belize were blood relations of the inhabitants of the Izabal, Verapaz and Petén Departments of Guatemala. Virtually every family in the town of Punta Gorda (capital of Toledo District) had a brother, uncle, son or daughter in Izabal, Guatemala. The people of those areas lived quite peacefully on both sides of the border and went back and forth daily.

38. It was that glaring fact which had obliged him to warn the Committee that, should there be an armed conflict between Belize and Guatemala, it would set father against son, brother against brother. It was not the desire of the people in the area to go to war against one another. It was their desire that the dispute should be solved in a peaceful manner.

39. He had been Mayor of Punta Gorda from 1965 to 1975, and representative of the Toledo North Division from 1970 to 1974, and was currently Secretary-General of the Toledo Progressive Party. The views he brought to the Committee were those held by the vast majority of Belizeans in the south of Belize.

40. The question arose as to whether the United Nations would condone solutions imposed by force and provide an international forum to establish voluntarily the machinery by which peace-loving peoples, of the same race, colour and blood, who spoke the same language and were merely divided by an invisible "borderline", would live in hatred of one another. He wondered whether world leaders gathered at the United Nations would hastily thrust aside the preservation of life and the pursuit of a better quality of life in favour of provisions to establish trouble spots around the globe, which would without doubt become areas of conflict.

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41. The Charter of the United Nations sought to rid mankind of disease, malnutrition and poverty, and especially war. His party was happy that much had been done in that respect. It was more effective to carry out such programmes in regions which already had certain basic elements in common. That was compatible with the implementation of regional development, as visualized by the United Nations. The Toledo District of Belize, the Petén and Izabal Departments of Guatemala had such compatibility for development, but had so far been pitifully neglected. Such a depressed area, therefore, should not become a trouble spot and thus be deprived of progress.

42. If the Committee approached the Belize question from the context of a genuine wish to alleviate the miserable conditions under which the people of southern Belize and El Petén were living, then he was sure that all efforts would be channelled towards seeking ways and means of ridding that region of stagnation and depression. In an article in the Toledo Star, Toledo's first newspaper, an eminent, international expert, who sometimes worked for the United Nations, had given his impartial views on the Belize/Guatemala question. The article said in essence that El Petén in Guatemala and Toledo in Belize, should be declared depressed zones, similar to "disaster areas", and that the United Nations should be called upon to assist the region by appointing a United Nations agency, in conjunction with the Organization of American States, to set up a commission for the joint development of agriculture, roads, medicine, education and so on, in the region. The article had concluded that, owing to the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute, the region had been kept under-developed against its will.

43. On the other hand, a solution to the under-development of that specific region could perhaps simultaneously offer a solution to the dispute, which, on Guatemala's side, would seem to be a solution to El Petén's land-locked situation (one of the reasons for the dispute). In addition, the Toledo District, as he had stated in his address on National Day, 10 September 1975, when he had been Mayor of Punta Gorda, after having suffered so long under colonialism and from the continued indifference of the richer and more powerful districts of Belize, Toledo should seek ways and means of obtaining food, clothing, and shelter for its citizens. Belizeans themselves had always referred to the Toledo District as the "Forgotten District of Belize". In 1976, the Toledo Progressive Party had been formed to agitate for the rights and needs of the citizens of Toledo, on the same lines as a party that existed in the northern District of Corozal, the Corozal United Front, which

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controlled the Corozal Town Council and was in opposition to the ruling Government P.U.P. party. The Toledo Progressive Party sought economic integration with Central America and more accessible road, sea and air communications between Belize and Central America.

44. It was abundantly clear that the majority of Belizeans were not in favour of independence at that stage. The United Democratic Party, which commanded over 55 per cent of the support of the Belizean population, reflected the views held by most leaders and the populace, namely that if Belize became independent immediately, the People's United Party Government in power would instantly convert the parliamentary system of government into a one-party dictatorship. Some elements within the P.U.P. caused people to fear that situation, and the apparent acceptance by Premier George Price of the ideology being preached confirmed their suspicions. Immediately after the Washington talks held in July between the United Kingdom and Guatemala, the opposition party of Belize (U.D.P.) had held demonstrations and public meetings throughout the country, at which it had received support for the view that Belize should not become independent immediately.

45. Three points had to be made clear to the Belizean people. Firstly, the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute had to be solved peacefully. Secondly, the economy of the Territory had to become viable; and, thirdly, there had to be a guarantee that parliamentary democracy would be the corner-stone of Belizean independence. The matter of immediate independence would definitely have to be postponed, until all doubts had been cleared up. His party thanked the United Kingdom for having agreed that there would be no sudden declaration of independence. Belizean newspapers, such as The Beacon, The Reporter and The Toledo Star had duly reported the demonstrations, as had newspapers in Mexico, the United States, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

46. He stressed those points because the Committee was perfectly aware of the P.U.P. Government's adamant desire to obtain independence immediately, and at any cost, short of solving the dispute, even to the extent of precipitating the area into war. Most members of the Committee had personal experience of colonialism and it was felt that the solution to Belize's under-development was a simple one: to grant it independence, thus ridding it of accursed colonialism. But that was not the whole problem in the case of Belize.

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47. Guatemala had claimed Belize before Belize had requested self-government and eventual independence from the United Kingdom. The P.U.P. Government claimed that Guatemala wanted to recolonize Belize, and that Belize would fall from colonialism into neo-colonialism. Guatemala contended that such would not be the case because it would not be administering a colony, a foreign dependency, since Belize was joined geographically to the Republic, and all its citizens would enjoy equal rights as citizens and not as subjects of a foreign or extracontinental power. While Guatemala also argued that an independent Belize would dismember the Republic, Belize's Government had stated that the ceding of a portion of Belize territory to Guatemala would "amputate" an emerging nation. Therefore, as members of the Committee were aware, the Belize Government's terms governing the negotiations between the United Kingdom and Guatemala were so rigid that the solution to the dispute could not involve the cession of any land. Guatemala, on the other hand, had called for the reincorporation of the whole of Belize, but had shown a tendency to relax the original claim and its terms for a solution had become elastic, in that it would settle for less. It would seem that a right-of-way for land-locked Petén to the sea would be one of the provisions for a settlement.

48. The United Nations resolutions of 1975 and 1976 did not seem to provide the United Kingdom and Guatemala with any room for a solution, for they prejudged the outcome of the negotiations to the satisfaction of the P.U.P. Government, but not to the satisfaction of Guatemala. It hardly seemed possible, therefore, that the United Nations resolutions could be a basis for fruitful negotiations. Guatemala had become quite flexible in the negotiations, and the United Kingdom had not rejected Guatemala's proposals, but it was the P.U.P. Government that had become intransigent, and any Belizean who dared to entertain the thought of even agreeing to one square inch of Belizean territory falling under Guatemala's jurisdiction was being labelled as a traitor. It was because of that stalemate, and because the Belizean and United Kingdom negotiators were aware that Guatemala would not settle for anything less than some land, that the Belize Government had decided to seek a defence guarantee which it thought would provide a "secure independence".

49. If the United Nations voted for an independent Belize, without considering the age-old dispute, it would in essence only be providing for an area of conflict to be established in Central America, although not appearing to do so. On the other hand, were a resolution of the United Nations to provide for, or become instrumental in providing for, a defence guarantee for Belize, it would only precipitate the conflict on the soil of Belize, and that would definitely not guarantee the safety of Belizeans or the protection of their rights.

50. The one inescapable fact was that the majority of Belizeans were not as united today as they had been in 1960. They were confused, because they had no trust in the

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P.U.P. Government; they were genuinely unaware of the seriousness of Guatemala's claim. Some might want independence; but the majority wanted no war; and many had close ties with Guatemala. A clear fact therefore was that they were not in favour of independence at that time.

51. The P.U.P. Government leaders had threatened the Belizean people at various public meetings in the past three months: Attorney General, Assad Shoman, had said to the people in San Ignacio, "You will get independence whether you want it or not!"; Minister of Works, Fred Hunter, had said to the people in Punta Gorda: "You will get independence, whether you want it or not!" and Premier Price had said at Courthouse Plaza in Belize City: "You will get independence, even if the malcontents are against it!".

52. Those words, coming from the lips of Government leaders, could only show that there was strong opposition to immediate independence. The citizens were annoyed, fearful and downright disgusted at the idea of an independence that was full of pitfalls. The people of Belize would gladly accept a solution which would provide for a peaceful Belize, and not a Belize which would be living in a permanent state of siege.

53. Even though the onus was on the United Kingdom to offer a solution, it was imperative that the United Nations should exercise extreme caution in voting for a resolution promoting the independence of Belize, but which might not take into account the preservation of the lives of Belizeans. Such an independence was false. A safe, secure and independent Belize should be a Belize that had no claim hanging over it; one that harnessed all its efforts for the development of the land and the education of its people, and not for using the land for army barracks, ammunition depots and dumps - not for teaching the people to shoot and kill instead of to build houses and roads, cure the sick and educate the ignorant. Would the United Nations help to make Belize a jewel with its own doctors, agronomists, engineers and nurses, or would it set up an area for militarism, guerrillas and mercenary troops?

54. An editorial in the Belize Times, the organ of the P.U.P. Government, dated 21 November 1970, had stated: "First, if Britain fails to settle the dispute or to do anything about it, she has nothing to lose but face. The people who stand to lose are the Belizean people whose land is being claimed. Second, when Britain is long gone it is the Belizean people who will forever live next door to Guatemala and will either do so on friendly terms or as enemies. If we live as enemies, we shall continue to live in fear. In real fear that any day Guatemala bigger and more populous, could walk across our borders and cause untold trouble and suffering."

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55. "Realizing all this, the only reasonable course Belize can adopt is to INSIST that Britain should settle her dispute with Guatemala and that Belize and Guatemala should make friends. In other words, it is in our interest, more than anyone else that the dispute should be settled. We must therefore take all prudent and wise steps to see to it that it is settled and also that we become friends with our neighbours with whom we shall forever live and with whom we have no quarrel or difference."

56. In 1957, the Premier of Belize, Mr. Price, along with Guatemala's Ambassador, Jorge García Granados, had agreed to Belize's becoming an Associated State of Guatemala, in the hope that that would solve the dispute. The United Kingdom had opposed such an arrangement at that time. The Belizean people, however, seemed to have agreed with the P.U.P. Manifesto which had stated inter alia: "The P.U.P. will continue to oppose international communism. The P.U.P. will continue to oppose Federation with the West Indies. The P.U.P. will take its place on the mainland of Central America, and derive any benefits from this geographical fact."

57. The people had voted for all the P.U.P. candidates running for the Legislative Assembly. In 1960, the P.U.P. had held that same doctrine, and once more it had won all the seats in the Assembly. But once it had changed its Manifesto, once it had joined the Caribbean Free Trade Association and CARICOM, and once it had turned its back on Central America, it had begun to lose seats in the Assembly. In 1974, it had lost six seats. In that same year, it had lost the Belize City Council elections (those of the largest and only city in Belize). Its ideology currently accommodated even association with intruder foreign interests, and it has met with strong opposition from all quarters in the country. The elections had shown that the people preferred friendship with Guatemala and Central America. The United Kingdom, in Washington last July had agreed to continue consultations with Guatemala and had affirmed that Belize would not be granted unilateral independence. That had caused great joy among the whole population of Belize.

58. In 1968 an attempt at mediation by the United States, through the American lawyer Bethuel M. Webster, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson, had not helped to solve the Belize/Guatemala question. In the absence of the Guatemalan claim, the logical step would have been for Belize to become independent. Guatemala would never drop its claim, which was reinforced in its very Constitution. In view of that circumstance, perhaps the "Associated State" formula entertained by Guatemala and Mr. Price in 1957 would have provided a first step towards eventual sovereign independence for Belize.

59. Various suggestions had been made in the past, and even lately. Mr. Henry Bowman, J.P., addressing the Chamber of Commerce, had called for

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concessions to Guatemala, with a tripartite authority to attend to various matters such as foreign affairs, defence and economic integration with Central America. The Reporter newspaper, in an editorial had called for a revision of the "not one square centimetre" slogan of the P.U.P., and had suggested a modest land-swap in favour of Guatemala. The Belize Investment Magazine of November 1976 had acknowledged the United Kingdom's debt and had urged that Guatemala should be paid in some form. He himself had declared to international reporters in 1975 that Guatemala had a moral right to a right-of-way from El Petén through southern Belize.

60. There were two avenues open to Belize. The first would be for the Belizeans to remain inflexible in the negotiations going on between the United Kingdom and Guatemala and supported by the United Nations resolution that called for an independent Belize with its territory intact. That attitude bore the mark of patriotism, of nationalism. In that case, however, Belize would have to decide to live by the gun; to accommodate a clash of ideologies and to have a hostile neighbour bordering it on the west and the south. The United Nations resolutions had been rejected by Guatemala.

61. The other avenue open to Belize to ensure a peaceful future would be the road to conciliation, the search for a formula, as recommended by the Republic of Costa Rica, which advocated a negotiated settlement that took into account both Belizean and Guatemalan rights.

62. The Mayor of Punta Gorda in the Toledo District had said, during the 7 July crisis: "I would not go against Belize being associated to Guatemala, if this would solve the dispute, and we can bargain with her eventually for complete autonomy, if the people so desire."

63. Belize was not a Caribbean island. Belize was a territory on the Central American mainland, geographically joined to Mexico on the north and to Guatemala on the west and south. Belize was divided into six districts for administrative purposes. Four of the districts were greatly influenced, and were tied by race, blood and language to the neighbouring countries.

64. It would be erroneous to catalogue Belize as an African colony. It was not. The Central District of Belize was made up almost completely of descendants of the African slaves brought over by the British, who now constituted about one third of Belize's total population. That District, normally called Belize District, was perhaps the only one which irradiated the Caribbean culture; Creole was spoken, and racially there were similarities with the English-speaking Caribbean islands. The Stann Creek District was

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somewhat separated from Caribbean or Central American influences, but most of its inhabitants, in the capital town of Dangriga, were Garifunas (Caribs), and they, like those of Toledo, had ethnological ties with the Garifunas of Guatemala.

65. It would be unfair therefore to impose a Caribbean-like culture on Belize, or to believe that Belize was entirely Caribbean in language, race and colour. It was not. And because of that unique circumstance, it would also be unfair for a solution concerning the future of Belize to take into account only the racial, cultural and linguistic composition of the central district of Belize, and not the other four districts he had mentioned. Unfortunately, the Committee, or the United Nations General Assembly might not be aware of that fact.

66. The United Nations was still in time to spare Belize and Central America from becoming a militarized zone. The Committee should take into account the intensive and exhaustive work being at present undertaken by peace-loving nations to demilitarize areas of military conflict. Treaties were being signed for the disarmament of powerful nations. The United Nations could not work to demilitarize zones and to disarm the great Powers, while at the same time providing regions with arguments for the establishment of guerrillas, mercenaries and standing armies.

67. It was because of the racial, linguistic and cultural composition of at least four districts of Belize that he was appealing to the Committee to listen to the pleas of the inhabitants of those areas. They did not want a confrontation to arise, for if the independence of Belize necessitated a defence guarantee, then it was the collective voice of the mestizos, the Maya-Mopan, the Garifunas and the Maya-Kekchi that would say: "No independence"! "Let the dispute be solved first"! "Let us postpone independence!"

68. It was the duty of the United Nations to listen and to take into account the statements made by the ruling P.U.P. Government, a Government that had shown ambivalence in its policies with regard to federation, Central America, and free enterprise. It was failing to define its ideology and therefore becoming highly suspect of trying to impose a one-party dictatorship. It was also the duty of the United Nations to listen to and to take into account the statements made by representatives of large ethnic areas of Belize, who, together with the leading opposition party of Belize, the U.D.P., and the T.P.P. strongly recommended that independence should be postponed while negotiations were carried on between the United Kingdom and Guatemala for a peaceful solution to the dispute.

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69. It was necessary that the world should know of the exact position in Belize. That had been his concern since his resignation from the People's United Party in May, 1976, when he had stated: "The Government of the P.U.P is causing Belize to become embroiled in a war which would take place on Belizean soil and would lead us into desolation, poverty and a permanent state of siege."

70. He believed that the reason behind the intention of the Belize Government to censor his newssheet, the Toledo Star, and to drag him into court on any pretext and thus discredit him, was to prohibit Belizeans from listening to diverse views on such public matters of concern to all. That was the most flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and human rights. He sincerely believed that Belizeans should freely choose whether a defence guarantee would indeed guarantee the safety of all Belizeans, or whether such a treaty would aggravate a conflict prejudicial to them. He sincerely believed that a majority of the supporters and members of both the Government Party and the opposition parties should be free to approve either early independence, or a postponement of independence. As Secretary-General of the Toledo Progressive Party, he should have the right to express views which were embodied in his Party's Manifesto which sought friendship, and economic integration with Central America, through Guatemala.

71. He therefore wished to place on record in the Committee the fact that if any harm was inflicted upon his person or reprisals were taken against his publication in Belize, it was only because he had dared to publicize and express certain views held by the Toledo Progressive Party which were not entirely parallel to the views of the Government. At one time, the Government had agreed that the opposition should have its say, but that the Government had to have its way. However, the members of the Committee had seen for themselves, that Belize was intending to deprive its citizens their right to freedom of speech, freedom of movement and freedom of political affiliation. At a meeting of the House of Representatives in Belmopan, Belize, the previous month, the Minister of Home Affairs had announced that the Government would take steps to check on "subversive" moves in the south of Belize. Later it had been reliably reported that that meant that the Government would increase the police detachment in Punta Gorda, and its security officers, with specific instructions to tail Alejandro Vernon and drag him into court for any offence, whether he had committed it or not. He therefore appealed to the Committee to comment on the intimidation, threats and ostracism which were being practised by a Government that had come before it to seek decolonization.

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72. Those members who had once been in the opposition parties in their own countries should bear in mind that if Belize became independent at that stage, the opposition parties there would lose their freedom of expression and even be prevented from participating in Belizean politics. The reason given would be that opposing parties were not opposing constructively, but were doing so because they were in collusion with Guatemala. The U.D.P. and the T.P.P. opposition parties had already been labelled as enemies of Belize and traitors to Belize, simply because they opposed independence, and Guatemala also opposed independence. But the U.D.P.'s reason for opposing independence was quite different from that of Guatemala. The Government of an independent Belize (if the dispute remained unsolved) would become dictatorial, a one-party Government, a police State, where any constructive opposition would be censored, and opposition leaders put in gaol. For what cause or reason? Because of Guatemala.

73. When the United Nations had voted in favour of Belizean independence with territorial integrity, it had also agreed that the United Kingdom and Guatemala should settle their differences. The dispute between those countries was precisely over territory and it was hardly possible, therefore, to settle differences without including land.

74. As for the Belizean Government's decision, after the adoption of United Nations resolutions, that a defence guarantee would secure the independence of Belize, it could be agreed that the Belizean Government preferred to bypass the resolution for sovereign independence and the settlement of the dispute. That was because, on the one hand, the Belizean Government preached full sovereign independence for Belize to the United Nations and to the people of Belize, but was, in fact, seeking to entrust a nation, or nations, which might be alien to Belize, with the obligation of "defending Belize". That meant that Belize would cease to be subservient to the United Kingdom and immediately become subservient to the new protector-nation. That would not make Belize sovereign.

75. As for the allegations of the Belizean Government with respect to making Belize the link between the Caribbean and Central America, it was not possible to see how Belize could become a useful link when it was seeking to erect an iron curtain between Belize and Central America, preferring to line up armies on the Belize-Guatemala border instead of holding discussions with Guatemala.

76. He wished to point out that the Fourth Committee had voted in sincerity for a sovereign and independent Belize, but the harsh reality was that the Premier of Belize and his Government had taken that vote of confidence to use it to achieve exactly the opposite results in Belize. The Belizean Government did not want Belize to be sovereign. It had gone to the Commonwealth nations and the

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third world seeking for a defence treaty which would make innocent Belizeans subservient to a new protector-nation (contrary to the decolonization process of the Committee). It had bypassed the United Nations resolutions which requested a settlement of differences, by taking the initiative in inviting more United Kingdom troops to Belize, especially in the Toledo district, which complicated the delicate negotiations going on between the United Kingdom and Guatemala. Finally, the Belizean Government had gone against its own political Manifesto by which it had previously assured Belizeans that an independent Belize would form a useful bridge between Caribbean and Central American nations. A standing army in Belize for defence purposes would only antagonize the Central American nations immediately bordering Belize, which had voted for a just and honourable settlement of the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute over Belize.

77. Guatemala, in response to United Nations resolutions, had become flexible in its requests. The Belizeans had witnessed a desire on Guatemala's part to assist in easing the border tension created in July 1977, by allowing free entry at the border points at Izabal and Petén for all Belizeans, and providing facilities at border points for Belizeans to purchase staple items and receive medical treatment when there were sporadic shortages and a lack of services in Belize. It was the wish of the T.P.P. that the whole matter should be reviewed and that military installations, British "Harrier" jets based in Belize and the Guatemalan tanks would not in future provoke a confrontation such as had recently occurred in the area. He therefore strongly admonished all members of the Committee who had once been on the minority side in their countries, to ponder a while on that important and sorrowful aspect of the question. If they wanted Belize to develop into a showcase of what a multiracial community could do for Central America, then they had to request that the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute be resolved first. If, as world leaders, they genuinely wanted to preserve the lives of the Belizeans, then they had to demand that independence be postponed until Belizeans were satisfied that the dispute was solved, the economy was in a better state, and that parliamentary democracy would prevail.

78. Mr. MARTINEZ* (Chairman, Toledo Progressive Party of Belize) said that he was extremely honoured to have the opportunity to inform the world, through the United Nations, of the situation of Belize on the Central American mainland. Much had been said by the Belizean Government and by other Governments friendly to Belize and/or interested in its future. But while all that talk went on for and against its independence, the Belizean population had been melting away. Many Belizeans had left for the United States, while others had gone to Canada, Guatemala and other countries of Central America.

* The statement by the Chairman of the Toledo Progressive Party is given full coverage in the summary record in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee during the meeting.

79. Were it not for the fact that the little country of Belize was involved in a territorial dispute, he would certainly not be addressing the Committee. Whatever complaints or opinions he might have had about the Government's handling of the question would perhaps never have reached the ears of the United Nations.

80. Belize had been a formal colony of the United Kingdom for nearly a century, since 1882, and its present condition was just plain awful.

81. The British, in their years of rule, had done the best they could to divide the people and sow the seeds of hatred among various races. Suddenly they had decided to leave, after making sure that the men whom they were leaving behind had learnt their lesson well and would continue ruling as they had done: keeping the races apart, keeping the people as poor as possible, keeping them ill-informed or not informed at all, causing them to live in fear. A visit to Belize City could give the impression that the Belize City man was well-informed, but that was not so. The Belize City man knew little or nothing about the rest of the country, so that often some Belize City-born civil servants preferred to resign or emigrate rather than be transferred to another district of the country, in other words, outside the district of Belize. The Belize City people (who made up roughly one third of the country's total population), believed that the people of the south were inferior to them and that the people living to the north and west of them were superior to them. That predicament had always suited the Government in power and the United Kingdom.

82. It could be said that certain people of the different races did hold important jobs, but the number of such people was so small as to be negligible. In fact, certain people had been chosen by the Government for certain jobs to make it appear that there was no discrimination in Belize. However, the truth was quite different. The misery and deprivation of the people in the south and west was vivid proof of discrimination and a regrettable degree of segregation. He did not wish to bore the members of the Committee with a lengthy presentation of some of the ills affecting Belize, but he asked members to bear with him. The British Government would like to grant independence to Belize or, to be a little rude, to Price and his few chosen ones. Independence would certainly not help people like him - the Garífunas - living south of Belize City. The Belizean Government had been in power for the past 17 years, and had had complete control of the internal affairs of Belize under self-government for the past 13 years, yet that Government had not even seen fit to provide a single dentist for the Toledo district, which had about 10,000 inhabitants and covered practically one quarter of the territory of Belize. He stressed that his own people, in the south, had not been sufficiently developed in any way even to think about independence. It was easy for the Government to say that independence would bring the development to which Belizeans aspired, similar to the development enjoyed by other countries which had

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once been colonies. But the truth was that Belizeans were not any more convinced that under the present Government that would be so, for the latter had failed the test, after administering the Territory for the past 17 years. Furthermore, the United Kingdom and Price had not taken the trouble to inform his party about the talks that they were holding with Guatemala. While the talks continued, the people of Belize suffered, and especially the Garífunas. The Garífunas suffered in every way and, worst of all, economically.

33. The Fourth Committee was concerned exclusively with decolonization. However, he would like to ask it to be a little concerned about humanity or perhaps humanism. He suggested, as a solution, that Belize should be administered temporarily, perhaps for three years, by the United Nations, the United Kingdom and Guatemala. The existing claim should be made clear to the people and travel for Belizeans to any part of Central America and Guatemala should be facilitated. Moreover, Guatemala should be given the right of way for a road and port. Finally, a referendum should be held in three years. With enough economic and technical aid, Belize and all its people would then be ready for independence or interindependence on the Central American mainland.

34. He wished to bring to the Committee's attention a clear case of Belizeans being restricted in their movements and prevented from expressing their feelings, views or dissatisfaction. The incident had occurred on 21 October at Punta Gorda, in Belize.

35. Mr. Cirilo Caliz, Vice-President of the Maya-Kekchi movement of the Toledo District of Belize, had been travelling to Guatemala to visit his counterparts there. He was then to have visited the United Nations, not only to familiarize himself with the Indian Treaty Council, but also to speak before the Committee as a petitioner on the question of Belize.

36. At a meeting held in San Antonio, Toledo, and subsequently at another meeting held at San Pedro Columbia of Toledo, the Maya-Kekchis had appointed Mr. Caliz to represent them in their efforts to affiliate to the Indian World Movement and to expound on the injustices they suffered as a minority group in Belize.

37. On 21 October, Mr. Cirilo Caliz (accompanied by his secretary Mr. Ponciano Bolon) had been prevented from leaving Punta Gorda. His travel document - a permit issued by the Immigration Department - had been rudely taken away by the Inspector of Police, Mr. Hugh Moguel, on instructions, according to Mr. Moguel, from the Belizean Government at Belmopan.

38. Mr. Caliz's travel document had been taken away simply because he had been travelling to Guatemala, the neighbouring country where he would meet his Maya-Kekchi counterparts and informally discuss common problems affecting their respective areas for referral to a world organization, so that a poor and helpless people should no longer suffer discrimination, prejudice and bias.

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89. Upon arrival in Guatemala, he had learnt that Mr. Caliz and Mr. Bolon continued to be harassed by the police. He had been informed that Mr. Caliz had been dragged into the police station for questioning and threatened with imprisonment.

90. Mr. Caliz had therefore been unable to come to New York, and he would read a prepared statement on his behalf.

91. Speaking on behalf of Mr. Caliz,* Vice-President of the Maya-Kekchi Committee, who had been prevented from appearing before the Fourth Committee for the reasons indicated above, he thanked the Fourth Committee for having given him the opportunity to express his point of view, which was also that of the great majority of the inhabitants of southern Belize.

92. In 1975, Belize had had approximately 130,000 inhabitants, of whom, according to an official publication entitled Belize: a new nation in Central America, 60 per cent were of African and Afro-European origin and the rest a mixture of Mayas, mestizos, Afro-Caribs, Europeans and Asians. However, the population of the Toledo District, from which he came, was composed to a large extent of Maya Indians and Maya-Kekchis. Their ancestors were the Mayas, the ancient colonizers of the land, from whom the Maya Mopanes and the Maya-Kekchis were descended; the Maya-Kekchis constituted over 50 per cent of the population of the district of Toledo. That region also had inhabitants of another origin, the Caribs or "Garífunas", who had arrived during the previous century from the Bahia Islands and the regions in the northern part of Honduras. The Caribs were concentrated at Punta Gorda, the capital of the district, while the Indians lived mainly in the interior of the country. In the Toledo district, the inhabitants of African origin were in the minority and represented only 12 per cent of the total population.

93. That indigenous population was perhaps the most highly differentiated and had the least close relationship with other racial groups. It had conserved its own culture, beginning with the language and, as was indicated in the above-mentioned publication, it had continued to cultivate the land by the old method, that of the "milpa", a traditional method for cultivating maize, black beans and rice. In the Toledo district it was the Indians who cultivated the land.

94. The Indians had preserved the traditions of their brothers, who were natives of Guatemala, and with whom they had maintained relations for centuries, both because they were of the same race and the same blood and because the latter supplied the population of Toledo with provisions. They communicated, as they always had, by dirt roads, on which they travelled by foot. Many of the villages in Belize had been founded and populated gradually by people from Petén and the Verapaces, who were natives of Guatemala.

* The statement by the Vice-President of the Maya-Kekchi Committee, delivered on his behalf by the Chairman of the Toledo Progressive Party of Belize, has been given full coverage in the summary record in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee during the meeting.

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95. The Indians had always worked in the region, crossing the border without understanding the geographical divisions created to satisfy political interests or expediency. Their situation was analogous to that of the Papagos Indians, who wanted to travel freely between Mexico and the United States, as had been mentioned at the first Congress of the Indian Peoples of Central America, Mexico and Panama, held in Panama in January 1977. Like the Papagos, they were separated (parents, children, grandparents and relatives) by a borderline that was entirely arbitrary, because they had the same culture and traditions, and now they were separated for reasons they did not understand.

96. That was the situation of what had previously been one and the same country but was now to be divided. The separation had become increasingly strict as a result of the dispute between the United Kingdom and Guatemala over the territory claimed by both countries. The situation had become even more difficult because of the dispute and because of the efforts of the Belizean Government to attain independence, a subject on which the people had not been consulted. The Guatemalan Indians were no longer allowed to sell to their brothers in Belize their tools, their fabrics, their work clothes or their farm products, items which the people of Belize were not able to purchase elsewhere, apart from the fact that they had no possibility of achieving their own development. Everything that the Indians of Belize produced had to be sold to the Marketing Board in Punta Gorda, at prices set by the Government. Nor could they export their products, because in Belize trade in grains and other food-stuffs was centralized.

97. Furthermore, such centralized trade was even more difficult because the Marketing Board was not always able or willing to make a purchase. The Indians were sometimes forced to walk many miles with their sacks of maize, black beans or rice, only to be told upon arriving that they should return the following week and had to wait yet another week until the Marketing Board had money or was willing to purchase their products.

98. That situation and the discrimination to which they were subjected had opened their eyes and led them to seek at the international level a means of ensuring their own well-being and development. Thus, they had created a committee in order to affiliate to the International Indian Council in the United States and the Indian World Movement. But the Government of Mr. George Price (People's United Party) was opposed to such action and had informed them that they were not authorized to establish relations of an international nature, because that was a prerogative of the Government alone. They could not understand that viewpoint, which limited their rights and kept them in the state of backwardness and isolation they had suffered up to now. They were even less able to understand it because they were aware of the existence, in all other countries, of Indian organizations which had fruitful relations with each other and co-operated with a view to improving the living conditions of their peoples and promoting their development.

99. For centuries, they had been oppressed and kept in the background as a result of colonial domination. Now their freedom of movement was being restricted and they were being placed in a precarious situation, all because the political leaders had decided to precipitate accession to an independence which, as conceived, would

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only lead to ruin and bloodshed. The prospect was even more disturbing for the Indians because it would force them into a conflict in which they would have to fight their own blood brothers, whose cultural past and customs they shared. That was not the kind of future they desired. They wanted to live in peace and harmony with their brothers and their neighbours. They also wanted their voice to be heard and that was why he was now addressing the Fourth Committee, which he thanked for having given him an opportunity to be heard.

100. Union with Guatemala was inevitable, for reasons of race and proximity; furthermore, it would enhance the well-being and development of the people of Belize. For that reason, his people joined those who were opposed to the action taken by the Government of the People's United Party, since they believed that, before provoking painful conflicts, it was essential to settle the dispute between the United Kingdom and Guatemala.

101. The question was one which deeply affected and concerned the Indians of Belize, because they lived in the region which would be either the scene of a continuing conflict or a place of harmonious coexistence. The Prime Minister's attitude seemed to be leading towards conflict, in view of the intransigence and arbitrariness of the plans drawn up by the officials of his Government. Thus, on 21 October last, the police had prevented Mr. Caliz from leaving Belize and had even taken away his papers and his travel documents without giving him any explanation whatsoever.

102. He (Mr. Martinez) had addressed the Fourth Committee in the hope that the whole world might hear the voice of the Belizean Indians. They would continue their struggle to be heard, to take part in the management of local affairs that concerned their community, and to be admitted to international organizations, whose aid was indispensable in order to ensure their future security and development.

103. The destiny of Belize should not be confused with that of the handful of men who temporarily held power. A large part of what constituted the essence of the peoples of America, and gave them continuity, was to be found in the Indian communities. There were many of them in Belize and they wished to be heard in order that they might no longer be ignored and threatened by an uncertain and bitter future because of the thirst for power and the intolerance of certain politicians who would sacrifice the Indians to their own interests and separate them from their brothers in Guatemala.

104. Mr. Vernon and Mr. Martinez (Toledo Progressive Party of Belize) withdrew.

105. Mr. PAGUAGA (Nicaragua) proposed that, in view of the significance of the petitioners' statements, they should be reproduced in extenso in the record of the meeting.

106. Mr. JACKSON (Guyana), supported by Mr. CASTILLO ARRIOLA (Guatemala), associated himself with the proposal made by the representative of Nicaragua. It would not be right, however, to issue in extenso only the statements of representatives of

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parties in Non-Self-Governing Territories. He therefore proposed that the statement made by the Prime Minister of Belize should also be reproduced in extenso in the summary record.

107. The CHAIRMAN reminded members of the financial implications of reproducing statements in extenso. Noting that there were no objections, he suggested that the statements by the petitioners and by the Prime Minister of Belize should be reproduced in extenso.

108. It was so decided.

109. Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom) reserved the right of his delegation to reply at a later date to certain tendentious remarks that had been made during the meeting.

Question of Guam (A/C.4/32/L.10, L.11, L.17)

110. Mr. HACHEME (Benin), on behalf of Madagascar, Zambia and his own country, proposed an amendment to draft resolution A/C.4/32/L.10, whereby the present text of the seventh preambular paragraph would be replaced by the following:

"Considering that the policy of maintaining military bases and installations in Non-Self-Governing Territories is incompatible with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly,".

111. Mr. DUBEY (India) said that the amendment proposed by Benin did not take into account the views expressed by the freely elected representatives of the people of Guam and did not enhance the prospect for co-operation between the Special Committee of 24 and the administering Power. He therefore proposed that the seventh preambular paragraph should read:

"Considering that the policy of the maintenance of military bases and installations in Non-Self-Governing Territories could inhibit the attainment of the objectives of Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV),".

112. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the various delegations should re-examine the question in the light of the new amendments proposed by the delegations of Benin and India, and that the Committee should continue its study of the question at the following meeting.

113. It was so decided.

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REQUEST FOR A HEARING

114. The CHAIRMAN informed members that he had received a request for a hearing concerning Southern Rhodesia. He suggested that, in accordance with the usual practice, the communication should be circulated as an official document of the Committee (A/C.4/32/10/Add.1), for consideration at the following meeting.

115. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.