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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 25: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES: 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 (A/31/23 (parts II, IV and V), A/31/23/Add.1, A/31/23/Add.4, A/31/23/Add.5 and Corr.1, A/31/23/Add.6-10, A/31/42, A/31/48, A/31/52, A/31/55, A/31/56, A/31/59, A/31/91, A/31/106, A/31/109, A/31/112, A/31/114, A/31/121, A/31/136, A/31/138, A/31/197, A/31/269, A/31/283, A/31/286) (continued)

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1. Mr. PAVICEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the United Nations was actively involved in the process of decolonization of the so-called small Territories, which often gave rise to complicated situations and to tendencies or practices which were not in conformity with the letter and spirit of resolution 1514 (XV). Yugoslavia had always supported the right of peoples under colonial domination to self-determination, irrespective of the size of their Territories. All colonial peoples, without interference, pressures or influence from colonial or other

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(Mr. Pavicevic, Yugoslavia)

Powers, should apply the form of self-determination which best enabled them to decide their own fate. Only in that way could the provisions of resolution 1514 (XV) be implemented.

2. The right of colonial peoples to self-determination implied the free choice of their future status either in the form of an independent State, a merger with another State of which they would form a part, or the establishment of various links with other countries. The realization of the right of self-determination should provide a basis for the establishment of new equitable international relations and for the creation of a world free from colonialism and domination. The international community and the anti-colonial forces had the moral duty to endeavour to attain those goals.

3. Colonialism and other forms of foreign rule had drawn artificial borders separating many countries and peoples. The problems arising from that situation could not be solved by force or through a forcible readjustment of territories or borders. In colonial Territories, various alien interests should not be allowed to take precedence over the right of peoples under colonial administration freely to express their will concerning their fate. Nevertheless, there had been cases where that right had not been respected by foreign interests and colonial Powers. In the view of his delegation, no just and lasting solutions could be reached if those interests were imposed on colonial peoples by force. Strategic interests could not serve as a basis for deciding the fate of colonial peoples. Similarly, other practices such as maintaining parts of colonial Territories under colonial administration even after those Territories had acceded to independence and the forcible division of such Territories were unacceptable and contrary to the provisions of resolution 1514 (XV). Those were negative trends, and they often jeopardized the unity of anti-colonial forces and created conditions favouring foreign intervention.

4. The position of Yugoslavia with regard to the so-called small Territories, such as Belize, Djibouti, Eastern Timor, the Western Sahara and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), had been stated on a number of occasions in the various organs of the General Assembly. Yugoslavia supported the position adopted at the Fifth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo.

5. His delegation noted with satisfaction that certain administering Powers like New Zealand, Australia and, in some cases, the United Kingdom, were helping to bring colonial rule to an end in a number of small Territories, co-operating with the Committee of 24 and respecting the aspirations of the peoples under their administration. However, there were also administering Powers who showed no readiness to assist in the decolonization of the Territories they administered and whose co-operation with the Committee of 24 was only sporadic and incomplete. Co-operation between administering Powers and the Committee of 24 and the United Nations presence in the decolonizing process would redound to the interest of all, particularly the Territories under colonial administration, provided that all parties were motivated by a genuine desire to promote the realization of the right to self-determination.

6. Another extremely important factor to be borne in mind was the need for the administering Powers and the international community in general to provide

(Mr. Pavicevic, Yugoslavia)

assistance to the small Territories. The specialized agencies of the United Nations should draw up long-term assistance programmes for colonial peoples and Territories.

7. The General Assembly's appeal to Member States to offer study and training facilities to the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories had met with a measure of response, according to the Secretary-General's report. It was significant that 31 countries had offered scholarships thus far, although that was far below the actual requirements of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In order to identify the real needs, development programmes would have to be worked out together with the administering Powers, which would meet the Territories' requirements and take into account their particular conditions and interests. That would make it easier to identify the obligations of the administering Powers towards the Territories, the aid potential of the international community and the assistance forthcoming from Member States through the United Nations or bilateral channels.

8. Mr. PAYPOOL (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation attributed the greatest importance to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) so that all peoples should be freed from the colonial yoke and be able to exercise their right of self-determination. His Government strongly supported the work of the Special Committee and other United Nations bodies directed towards that end. It regretted that some administering Powers had declined to co-operate with the Special Committee and hoped that they would do so in future.

9. His delegation looked forward to the eradication of colonialism from the South Pacific Islands. It should be noted that the peoples of the South Pacific had had the misfortune of living under the domination of different colonial Powers, a situation which had resulted in fragmentation, political turmoil and tensions. Despite that situation, his delegation wished to express satisfaction concerning the political and economic progress achieved under the guidance of some colonial Powers and heartily welcomed those signs of change, although much still remained to be done. It sympathized with the administering Powers, which had to cope with difficult political, social, economic and geographical problems in endeavouring to implement the decolonization programme and appreciated their respect for the wishes of the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands. However, it was concerned that the wishes of the peoples might be used as pretexts for creating enclaves of the metropolitan countries designed to perpetuate their military, nuclear and economic expansionism in the South Pacific to the detriment of the inhabitants of the area.

10. It was to be hoped that, in the process of decolonization, the administering Powers would assess the political and economic viability of the fragmented nations in the Pacific. Concerted efforts by the administering Powers to foster the cohesiveness and unity of the peoples would be extremely welcome. A country's possibility of political and economic independence was largely dependent on the natural resources available to it. In the case of the islands of the southern Pacific, those resources were limited. In that connexion, his delegation appreciated the efforts made by some administering Powers to develop those resources to sustain the economic and political development of the islands. The

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(Mr. Paypool, Papua New Guinea)

natural resources of those Territories should not be unduly exploited and depleted so that, at independence, the inhabitants discovered that there was very little economic basis on which to build their nations. His delegation believed that the people of the Pacific Islands should be protected and should be given what was rightfully theirs.

11. Mr. HOMAM (Qatar) said that in the past few years the United Nations, in spite of opposition from the colonial Powers, and thanks to the action of peace-loving countries, had assisted still more colonial peoples to attain their independence. One of the most important factors in the process of decolonization was finding adequate ways of applying the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, especially General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). His delegation was concerned by the military arrangements being made by the colonial Powers to slow down the progress of peoples towards freedom, independence and economic development, as was apparent in southern Africa, where the racist régimes of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, with the co-operation of some Western Powers, were building up their strength through compulsory military service and the recruitment of mercenaries. However, South Africa's manoeuvre of granting independence to Transkei had failed; the international community had refused to recognize Transkei as an independent State.

12. Qatar demanded that an end should be put to the extermination of people in the colonial Territories of southern Africa and that the military bases located in that region and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans should be eliminated. It condemned the technological and military co-operation being extended by some Western Powers to South Africa. It also condemned the co-operation between South Africa and Israel, which was a threat to international security, since both régimes had the same destructive goals. There were obvious similarities between the racist régime of Pretoria and the Zionist entity, both of which sought to deprive the legitimate inhabitants of the territories they occupied of their right to self-determination. Qatar had repeatedly condemned the policies and practices of apartheid and zionism and had assisted peoples suffering under them. It had contributed to the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, which was useful and constructive since it assisted colonial peoples to prepare for self-government.

13. Qatar also maintained that the peoples of French Somaliland had a right to self-determination.

14. His delegation supported all United Nations resolutions aimed at solving the problems of colonial countries and at giving the Organization greater universality.

15. Mr. KOUAME (Ivory Coast) stressed the complexity of the problems facing the small Territories and the difficulties encountered by the members of the Special Committee in discharging their function of drawing to the attention of the international community the best ways of overcoming decolonization problems in those Territories. The 16 Territories being discussed were scattered about the oceans; they were characterized not only by their small land area, but, more important, by their small populations and scanty economic resources, with which to become normal and viable states. There could be no doubt that, from the standpoint of the United Nations, the principle of self-determination and the Declaration on

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(Mr. Kouame, Ivory Coast)

Decolonization in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) were applicable to them. However, the principle of self-determination should be applied to them with discretion and realism, particularly as they were Territories with no economic prospects and widely differing problems, ranging from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, with only 600 inhabitants, through the New Hebrides, which was administered by three different systems, and Pitcairn, with 80 inhabitants, to a Territory as scattered and complex as Micronesia. In addition to the special geographical, demographical and administrative features of each of the Territories, there was the problem of the inertia encountered by the competent organs of the United Nations, due principally to the hesitancy or refusal of certain administering Powers to supply adequate information or to authorize the dispatch of periodic visiting missions to make an objective evaluation of the situation in the various Territories.

16. Perhaps the moment had come for the United Nations to consider the possibility of a separate solution for each of the Territories, since the definition of the political status of the small Territories posed a real dilemma: the choice between independence pure and simple and some other political formula which might safeguard their interests and ensure the survival of their peoples, objectives which should continue to be the main preoccupation of the United Nations. An objective answer to that dilemma could be found only after carrying out detailed and exhaustive studies with a view to finding solutions that corresponded to the real interests of the peoples concerned. In that connexion, the United Nations should adopt an innovative approach, using pragmatic methods which took full account of the realities and aspirations of the inhabitants of the small Territories. In view of the lack of co-operation of certain administering Powers, those studies should be entrusted to a group of qualified experts or eminent persons appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who should submit suggestions that might serve as a basis for the decisions of the Special Committee, which could then find original solutions in full awareness of the facts, since experience suggested that solutions could vary from one Territory to another according to the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. In evidence of that fact, he referred to the conclusions and observations in the report of the visiting mission of the Committee of 24 to the Tokelau Islands (A/AC.109/L.1135) and especially to the content of paragraph 383.

17. The points of view he had just outlined were not incompatible with the principles relating to decolonization as embodied in the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolutions 1514 and 1541 (XV), nor were they contrary to the right of all peoples to self-determination. In any event, in defining the status of a Territory, full account should be taken of the free choice of its inhabitants, who were the only ones really able to determine what their interests were.

Timor

18. Mr. RASON (Madagascar) said that the question of the decolonization of Timor was one of the unresolved problems which could lead to a breakdown in the application of some of the fundamental principles proposed by the United Nations since, if the legitimate aspirations of the inhabitants of the Territory were not taken into

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(Mr. Rason, Madagascar)

account, a situation would be created which might have serious consequences for the efforts being made by the international community in the struggle of peoples for freedom and independence.

19. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Madagascar had already made clear his country's position regarding the problem in the General Assembly, where he had requested that the people of Timor be granted the right to self-determination, that their rights be respected, and that all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly should be applied.

20. Whatever the special nature of the problems of Timor, and whatever the ambitions of the Government of Indonesia, the basic issue was the right of a people to self-determination, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Only the people of Timor, under the enlightened guidance of FRETILIN could determine their future status. The idea that the people of Timor had already exercised their right to self-determination was not acceptable since, if that were the case, they should have been free to act without any external pressure. The Government of Madagascar was not opposed to any decision by the people of Timor, provided that it was the result of consultations with the people and was based on observance of the right to self-determination.

21. The General Assembly and the Security Council had requested all States to respect the unity and territorial integrity of East Timor. His Government supported that request, which was the expression of one of the fundamental principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter and frequently reiterated in the Organization. In its resolution 2625 (XXV), the General Assembly had declared that all States had the duty to refrain from any measure which might totally or partially disrupt the territorial integrity of another country. Consequently, the Government of Indonesia should put an end to any action violating the territorial integrity of Timor and should withdraw all its forces to make way for the conditions necessary to enable the people of the Territory to exercise their right to self-determination. It was also difficult to accept the view that the presence of Indonesian forces in East Timor constituted a humanitarian act designed to protect human life.

22. His delegation paid tribute to the people of Timor who continued to fight valiantly under the leadership of FRETILIN, and was convinced that neither force nor terror would shake their resolve. The people of Madagascar supported the struggle of the people of Timor, which would undoubtedly contribute to the liberation of all peoples still living under colonial and foreign domination. His delegation was convinced that the Committee, in the resolution to be adopted on the question, would give its support to the struggle of the people of Timor, would oppose any interference in the internal affairs of the Territory and would demand the immediate withdrawal of Indonesian forces.

23. Mr. LOBO (Mozambique) said that a year had passed since the Committee had last considered the question of East Timor, which continued to constitute a worry for the international community, not only because decolonization had not yet been achieved there, but also because international peace and security were endangered.

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(Mr. Lobo, Mozambique)

24. For centuries the people of East Timor had been oppressed by Portuguese colonialism and, because of that experience, had always opposed foreign intervention, either actively or passively, according to circumstances. The resistance of the people of Timor had contributed to the fall of the Portuguese fascist régime, as a result of which the patriots of Timor had decided to legalize their resistance organization, FRETILIN. At the same time, a handful of traitors who had been privileged during the fascist colonial régime had assembled their stooges and had pretended to constitute political parties; that had been how APODETI and UDT had been formed. Some had wanted to hand over East Timor to foreigners, others had defended the continuation of Portuguese domination for a few more years, but, in short, they were simply trying to maintain their own privileges. Meanwhile, FRETILIN had continued to struggle peacefully for independence, gaining more and more followers. FRETILIN had shown itself ready to enter into a dialogue with one of the groups - UDT - which, backed by Indonesia, had betrayed the FRETILIN patriots on 11 August 1975, had abandoned the coalition and, with the complicity of the Portuguese administration, had taken over key posts in the country's major cities. Earlier, the Portuguese Government had ordered the pro-FRETILIN armed forces to remain in their barracks. A coup had taken place, FRETILIN had organized resistance with weapons supplied by deserters from the Portuguese army in Timor, and had defeated the UDT forces.

25. FRETILIN had administered the country in peace and the people had concentrated their efforts on the battle for national reconstruction. Portugal had continued to be recognized as the administering Power and had been requested to hold negotiations regarding the establishment of a provisional Government in 1976 and the election of a Constitutional Assembly, to be followed by independence. Portugal, preoccupied with its own problems, had been unable to discharge its responsibilities as administering Power, and FRETILIN had had no choice but to declare independence on 28 November 1975. However, on 7 December, Indonesian armed forces had attacked the Democratic Republic of East Timor, concentrating on Dili, the capital.

26. Five days later, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 3485 (XXX), in which, inter alia, it had called upon all States to respect the inalienable right of the people of Portuguese Timor to self-determination, freedom and independence, had deplored the military intervention of the armed forces of Indonesia and had called upon the Government of Indonesia to desist from further violation of the territorial integrity of Timor and to withdraw its armed forces. The Security Council, for its part, had adopted resolution 384 (1975) in which it, too, had called upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw its forces from the Territory and had requested the Secretary-General to send a special representative to assess the situation. On 29 December, the Secretary-General had appointed as his Special Representative, Mr. Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, who had travelled to Timor but had been able to visit only a few places, since the Indonesian forces had denied him access to others.

27. Disregarding the decisions taken by various United Nations organs, Indonesia had not only maintained its occupation force in East Timor, but, in July 1976,

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(Mr. Lobo, Mozambique)

had legislated the annexation of the Territory and had tried to convince the world that the annexation was the result of the exercise of self-determination by the people of East Timor.

28. A year earlier, the international community had known that Timor could not exercise its right to self-determination while Indonesia maintained its forces in the Territory, and the representative of Indonesia was now trying to convince the international community that the decolonization of Timor had been achieved by its conversion into a province of Indonesia. In spite of its military offensive and potential, Indonesia had been unable to dominate more than a few small towns inhabited only by civil servants of the Portuguese colonial administration, while FRETILIN continued to fight and to act as the Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor in the fields of education, health and production, as could be seen from the statement of the representative of FRETILIN to the Special Committee (document A/AC.109/PV.1052). Faced with its inability to dominate a Territory of 8,000 square miles with 40,000 soldiers, Indonesia had decided to exclude all visitors from East Timor, forbidding even the Red Cross from providing assistance to the inhabitants of the Territory.

29. In the light of that situation, his delegation felt that the Committee should adopt a resolution along the lines of the proposal made by the representative of the FRETILIN Central Committee, Mr. Alkatiri, at the 13th meeting of the Committee.

30. Mr. TALES-BENDIAB (Algeria) congratulated Seychelles on its admission to membership of the United Nations and expressed the conviction that it would make a positive contribution to United Nations efforts to achieve the liberation of all peoples living under foreign domination.

31. In beginning its consideration of the question of East Timor, his delegation wished to reaffirm its support for the right of peoples to determine their own future. That was a principle which formed the basis of the measures adopted by the United Nations with regard to decolonization and to which Algeria had always subscribed unreservedly. His delegation expressed the hope that the people of Timor would be able to exercise, free of any pressure, their inalienable right to self-determination. That hope was based on the decision of the people of Timor to throw off the yoke of Portuguese colonialism, a decision supported by the international community. It was not necessary to recall the history of the problem of Timor, or its consequences at the regional and international levels; furthermore, the Secretary-General's report and that of the Special Committee of 24 contained sufficient guidelines to enable a just and equitable solution to be found. The provisions of General Assembly resolution 3481 (XXX) also constituted a basis for the settlement of the dispute in question.

32. The presence of foreign forces in the Territory was an obstacle to the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Timor and was a source of conflict which threatened the peace and security of the region. Consequently, the provisions of resolution 3481 (XXX) should be implemented urgently. His

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(Mr. Tales-Bendiab, Algeria)

delegation, in reaffirming its adherence to the principle of self-determination of peoples, a principle which had always guided the activities of the international community with regard to decolonization, emphasized that no exception should be made to that principle, particularly not in the case of a country whose role in the struggle for the liberation of peoples continued to be a source of inspiration for liberation movements in various regions of the world.

33. His delegation expressed the hope that reason would ultimately prevail and that the people of Timor would be able to exercise freely their right to self-determination, in accordance with resolution 3481 (XXX).

34. Mr. WU Miao-fa (China) said that the people of East Timor, who had been subjected to prolonged Portuguese colonial rule, had finally managed, under the leadership of FRETILIN, to free themselves and on 28 November 1975 had proclaimed the founding of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Shortly after taking that measure, which had won the support of numerous third world countries and other peoples and countries that upheld justice, it had been subjected to armed aggression by Indonesia - an act that had aroused the opposition of the people of East Timor and world public opinion.

35. The General Assembly and Security Council had adopted three resolutions on the situation in East Timor condemning the Indonesian authorities for their acts of aggression and calling upon them to withdraw their invading troops from the Territory without delay, and urging all States to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor and the inalienable right of its people to self-determination and independence. Those resolutions reflected the just demand of the great majority of United Nations Member States and the people of the world. His delegation was firmly opposed to the action by Indonesia which, in violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council, had intensified its armed aggression and, invoking the "wishes of the people", had declared East Timor to be a "province" of Indonesia, thereby undisguisedly annexing a sovereign State.

36. Since both Indonesia and East Timor belonged to the third world, and the peoples of those two countries had shared the experience of being subjected to imperialist colonial rule, there was nothing to prevent them from establishing normal relations on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. His delegation maintained that Indonesia should forthwith implement the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council by immediately withdrawing their invading troops from East Timor, so that the people of East Timor could exercise their right to independence and self-determination without outside interference.

37. For more than a year the people of East Timor had been waging an unrelenting struggle against the invader, under the leadership of FRETILIN and the Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. The Chinese Government and people firmly supported that struggle and were convinced that it would win the support of all countries and peoples in the world that upheld justice. In his delegation's

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(Mr. Wu Miao-fa, China)

opinion, the Committee should give unequivocal and effective support to the people of East Timor in their struggle to safeguard their national independence and territorial integrity.

38. Mr. IBRAHIM (Malaysia) said that his delegation firmly believed in the purposes and principles of decolonization and had consistently supported the right of peoples to self-determination. While principles were of paramount importance and should be strictly adhered to, the process of decolonization need not always follow the same pattern. It was necessary to take account of the attitudes of the colonial Powers, the social and economic systems of each territory, the size of its population and the territory's economic viability and stage of development, as well as its historical development and relations with neighbouring countries.

39. In East Timor there had been no orderly transition towards self-government when the colonial Power had decided to grant independence to the Territory. The failure of the colonial authorities to maintain law and order, which was vital for the smooth transfer of power, had led to confusion, chaos and civil war, and had thus also threatened the peace and security of a neighbouring State, Indonesia.

40. It was only after the total collapse of duly constituted authority in the Territory that Indonesia had responded to a request for assistance from the parties in the Territory, issued on 30 November 1975. Once peace had been restored, preparations had been made for the exercise, by the people, of their right to self-determination. On 31 May 1976 the people of East Timor had exercised that right through the People's Representative Assembly, whose members had been elected in accordance with established practice in the Territory. The Assembly had decided on independence through integration with Indonesia and, when that step had been taken, the people of East Timor had declared that they had exercised their right to self-determination and that the process of decolonization had been completed. Those actions had been witnessed by foreign observers invited to the meeting of the People's Representative Assembly. Moreover, every step of that process had been reported to the United Nations, which had also been invited to send observers. It was regrettable that those invitations had not been accepted. The people of East Timor could not be expected to wait indefinitely for the United Nations to implement General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

41. His delegation considered that the statement made by the Indian representative in the Committee of 24 on 9 September 1976 was particularly relevant to the situation in East Timor. He had said that the process of decolonization was bound to be different in each territory and that the unique character of the decolonization of East Timor was without precedent.

42. The people of East Timor had exercised their right to self-determination in opting for independence through integration with Indonesia. In pursuance of the decision of the People's Representative Assembly, Indonesia had sent a mission of government officers and parliamentarians to verify the wishes of the people of East Timor and, on 17 July 1976, it had completed the constitutional process by passing a bill formalizing the integration of East Timor with Indonesia. The administrative authorities in East Timor had brought peace and order to the Territory, conditions had returned to normal and the people were concentrating

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(Mr. Ibrahim, Malaysia)

their efforts on reconstruction and development. In the light of those considerations, his delegation respected the decision taken by the people of East Timor, which was fully in accord with the provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly. The absence of the United Nations from that process was not the fault of the people of East Timor and did not constitute a sufficient reason for nullifying their achievements. The international community should therefore support that act of self-determination by the people of East Timor and thus make an important contribution to the process of decolonization in that Territory and in all Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Belize

43. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) recalled that Mr. Richard, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, in explaining his Government's position on the question of Belize the previous year, had gone into some detail about the history of Belize and the problems caused by Guatemala's unfounded territorial claim. At that time Mr. Richard had informed the Committee that the United Kingdom Government was ready to open negotiations with the Government of Guatemala as soon as possible after the end of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly. In resolution 3432 (XXX), which had subsequently been adopted by an overwhelming majority, the General Assembly had reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Belize to self-determination, independence and territorial integrity and had requested the Governments of the United Kingdom and Guatemala to pursue urgently their negotiations for the earliest possible resolution of their differences of opinion concerning the future of Belize, in order to remove such obstacles as had hitherto prevented the people of Belize from exercising freely and without fear their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

44. He further recalled that Mr. Richard had stated that the United Kingdom would not allow the negotiations with the Government of Guatemala to fail through lack of imagination and hoped to discuss various subjects on which there could be co-operation between Belize and Guatemala and to arrive at arrangements that would form the basis of a new and mutually advantageous relationship between Belize and Guatemala.

45. The same spirit of respect for the rights and interests of Belize and Guatemala had prevailed in the negotiations conducted that year between the Governments of Guatemala and the United Kingdom, in close consultation with the Government of Belize. It was the desire of the United Kingdom and of Belize that the Territory should serve as a bridge with its Caribbean and Central American neighbours and not as a focus of discord. Furthermore, the United Kingdom was prepared to meet any fears Guatemala might have for the peace and security of the area once Belize became independent, without overlooking Belize's legitimate concern for its own future security.

46. Negotiations were in progress between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Guatemala. Furthermore, formal negotiations had begun in New Orleans in April of the current year, which had been attended by the Foreign Minister of Guatemala,

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(Mr. Murray, United Kingdom)

Dr. Molina, the Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr. Rowlands, and the Premier of Belize, Mr. George Price. Subsequent meetings had taken place at official level in New York in June and July, and at ministerial level in Panama City in September. There had also been discussions between Guatemalan and Belizean officials on certain economic questions. At the meeting in New Orleans in April, Mr. Rowlands had put forward certain proposals which represented a constructive attempt to take account of Guatemala's special needs and a means of resolving the controversy with Guatemala, and of providing a foundation for future relations between Belize and Guatemala. The United Kingdom approach had been, and would continue to be, constructive and flexible at all times but the United Kingdom could not depart from certain principles which had always guided its policies in decolonization and which, moreover, were shared by the world community as a whole.

47. Within a year from the present time, his delegation should be able to announce that the negotiations had been crowned with success. It was urgent that agreement should be reached, since Belize could not continue to exist in an ambiguous situation, as it had done for more than 12 years. That situation had hampered the country's economic development and been unsettling for its inhabitants. His Government wished to bring Belize to independence at the earliest possible time, in peace and security with the co-operation and friendship of its neighbours, and no effort would be spared to achieve that goal.

48. The previous year, his Government had been obliged to increase the size of its garrison in Belize in its desire to guarantee the country's security, but during the current year it had been able to withdraw some of its reinforcements. His country's troops remained in Belize in a purely defensive capacity and at the wish of the Belize Government. At the same time, he expressed his regret that statements continued to be made in Guatemala which gave rise to concern both in Britain and in Belize, and he requested the Guatemalan authorities to exercise restraint so as to produce the best possible climate for the negotiations.

49. Finally, he appealed to the Latin American countries to understand that in Central America a new nation was taking shape whose inhabitants, through their own democratically elected Government, had exercised effective control over its affairs for 12 years, and to support all efforts to reach a just and a satisfactory outcome through negotiations.

50. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Rogers, Deputy Premier and Minister for Internal Affairs and Health of Belize, took a place at the Committee table.

51. Mr. ROGERS (Deputy Premier and Minister of Internal Affairs and Health of Belize) recalled that when the Premier of Belize had addressed the Committee the previous year, he had explained that the one obstacle which prevented Belize from assuming independence was its fear for survival in the face of Guatemala's unfounded claim and its threat to pursue that claim by force. The Premier had pointed out that the dreadful dilemma facing his country, which was condemned to choose between an indefinite prolongation of colonialism on the one hand and amputation and the imposition of a new colonialism on the other, and had appealed for support to help achieve independence for Belize with its territory intact.

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(Mr. Rogers)

52. The Committee, and later the General Assembly, had expressed its overwhelming solidarity by adopting resolution 3432 (XXX), reaffirming the inalienable right of the people of Belize to self-determination and independence, declaring that the inviolability and territorial integrity of Belize must be preserved, and calling for negotiations between the United Kingdom and Guatemala to remove such obstacles as had hitherto prevented the people of Belize from exercising their inalienable rights.

53. Belize had participated in the negotiations that had taken place during the past year at both official and ministerial levels in pursuance of resolution 3432 (XXX). The declaration made by the Premier of Belize in November 1975 still held good. He had stated that Belize's endorsement of the call to negotiations did not imply that Guatemala had any right over the destiny of Belize, but rather that it recognized that a negotiated settlement which fully respected the inalienable rights of the people was the best possible solution.

54. Belize had participated in the negotiations with a genuine desire to reach a just solution, but it could not renounce its sovereignty and independence or sacrifice its territorial integrity, and it continued to hope that at the end of the current talks, if not sooner, Guatemala would accept that position.

55. Belize had been supported unreservedly in its just aspirations by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, but there were certain disquieting facts to be noted. Guatemala proclaimed that the United Nations resolution was not valid and it was interfering in the internal affairs of Belize, as well as continuing to increase its military capacity near the border with Belize. It was Guatemala's preposterous proposal that Belize should surrender a substantial part of its territory, as the price for the independence of the remainder, that had driven Belize to seek the support of the United Nations.

56. Belize continued to hope that it would achieve independence in an atmosphere of peace and good neighbourliness, and trusted that Guatemala would have the vision to heed the voice of the world community, set aside its desire for territorial expansion and political domination and accept the principle of self-determination and the coexistence of nations in a world of peace, harmony and co-operation.

57. He hoped that the draft resolution on Belize currently before the Committee, reaffirming resolution 3432 (XXX), would gain wide support, especially among the countries of Latin America.

58. Mr. Rogers withdrew.

59. Mr. VASTILLO ARRIOLA (Guatemala), exercising his right of reply, said that the previous year, when the Committee had decided to consider the problem of Belize, the Special Committee had already been informed that direct negotiations between the United Kingdom and Guatemala were taking place, and had therefore decided to postpone consideration of the question until the following year.

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(Mr. Vastillo Arriola, Guatemala)

60. His country had always held the view that the Charter and international law afforded peaceful means of settling disputes and that when a dispute was submitted to a legal procedure it was not for the General Assembly to find a political solution. When General Assembly resolution 3432 (XXX) had been adopted, his country had deplored the introduction of a resolution into a dispute submitted to a legal procedure in accordance with international law by two legitimate parties, the United Kingdom and Guatemala. His country had participated in the negotiations in good faith and with an open mind, attempting to arrive at a solution conducive to an equitable settlement. Guatemala's dispute was with the United Kingdom, not with Belize, but it was necessary first to settle that dispute and then consider formulas for co-operation with the people of Belize. It should be noted that only a few days earlier a high-level conference, held for the purpose of seeking economic formulas for technical assistance to promote development throughout the region, had ended in Honduras.

61. The dispute between the United Kingdom and Guatemala had arisen from an international convention which, as was customary, gave rise to rights and obligations. Non-fulfilment of an obligation by one party was not a matter that could be settled by a purely political decision of the General Assembly to grant independence. First it was necessary to end the dispute. His country was striving to reach agreement and had been reluctant to accept a political decision before the legal dispute was settled.

62. The statement by the Deputy Premier of Belize added nothing to the search for a peaceful, calm and legal solution. He regretted that he could not give a full and detailed reply to all the questions raised during the discussion and he reserved the right to do so later and to refer to certain points in the United Kingdom report.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.