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at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GAZDIK (Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: QUESTION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA (A/31/23/Add.1-2, A/31/61, A/31/62, A/31/66, A/31/71, A/31/77, A/31/155, A/31/197, A/31/237, A/31/258, A/31/274; A/C.4/31/L.45, L.46) (continued)

1. Mr. QUARTIN SANTOS (Portugal) said that, although there had been an intensification of the armed struggle waged by the Zimbabwe nationalists against the illegal minority régime of Salisbury during the past year, there had also been a significant increase in the diplomatic and political pressures exerted by the international community as a whole with the aim of compelling the rebel régime to terminate its domination over the territory and allow the overwhelming majority of its population to exercise its right to self-determination.
2. The closure of the Mozambique border with Southern Rhodesia, and the enforcement of the mandatory economic sanctions laid down by the Security Council in resolution 388 (1976), had contributed to the growing isolation of the Smith régime and the deepening conviction that the status quo could no longer be maintained. The balance of power in southern Africa had changed dramatically, and it would no longer be possible for the Southern Rhodesian régime to maintain its rule by repression and intimidation of the African population. The illegal régime had been forced to face reality and to declare, on 24 September 1976, its acceptance of majority rule in Southern Rhodesia and of the formation of a transitional government. However it should be noted that that acceptance had been made possible mainly by the pressure exerted through the armed struggle waged by the nationalist forces and the political and diplomatic action undertaken, particularly by the front-line African States and by the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom.
3. Meanwhile, the African people of Zimbabwe had continued to endure suffering and deprivation as a result of the régime's racist and discriminatory policy, and the incursions by Southern Rhodesian armed forces into Mozambique had constituted a serious threat to peace and security in the area.
4. His delegation, bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the Portuguese Constitution concerning recognition of the right of peoples to revolt against colonialism and all forms of repression, wished to reiterate its position on Southern Rhodesia. Portugal upheld the principle of majority rule for Zimbabwe, based on the recognition that all its inhabitants, regardless of race and colour, had the same human and political rights. Majority rule before independence represented a fundamental step towards the re-establishment of constitutional rule in Southern Rhodesia, and Portugal hoped that the nationalist forces of Zimbabwe would be able to achieve a platform of unity and solidarity enabling them to deal effectively with the main tasks of the liberation struggle and to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe after the attainment of independence.
5. While supporting all realistic efforts aimed at bringing about a peaceful negotiated settlement of the problem his Government reaffirmed its support for the

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(Mr. Quartin Santos, Portugal)

struggle of the Zimbabwe people to achieve their liberation and true independence, so that they could freely and democratically choose their own future and political institutions within an independent and sovereign State.

6. Portugal would continue to comply with the mandatory sanctions against the colonialist régime and considered that it was now mainly up to the illegal authorities in the territory, if they wished to avoid an escalation of the conflict, to change their unrealistic and negative attitude and allow a peaceful and orderly transition to majority rule.

7. His Government welcomed the convening by the United Kingdom Government, whose good faith and seriousness were unmistakable, of the Geneva Conference, which afforded the best opportunity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the long-standing conflict. All the parties concerned should appreciate the unique chance to avert further bloodshed and destruction and should act accordingly.

8. Mr. AL SAID (Oman) said that his delegation remained committed to the principle of majority rule in Zimbabwe under the leadership of the African national liberation movements, and continued to advocate the tightening of sanctions against the illegal white majority régime and total compliance by Member States with those sanctions.

9. Perhaps the most important of the many developments during the past year had been the increased effectiveness and success of the recognized African liberation movements in their resistance to racism, colonialism and minority rule. The Zimbabwe national liberation movement had been inevitably compelled to resort to armed resistance in the face of the suppression, the deprivation of rights and the acts of murder, terrorism and torture perpetrated by the Smith régime.

10. The collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire, the admirable measures taken by the Government of Mozambique and the increased effectiveness of United Nations sanctions had also helped to compel the Smith régime to seek a negotiated solution. But his delegation considered that the utmost caution should be exercised to avoid further strengthening the illegal Smith régime and delaying the achievement of majority rule. Smith would no doubt exploit the situation to strengthen his power and attempt to maintain white minority rule, especially if United Nations sanctions were relaxed prematurely, since it was only under compulsion that he had agreed to the negotiations.

11. His delegation commended the efforts of the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries to bring about a peaceful and just solution to the situation in Zimbabwe. The United Kingdom must continue its efforts to grant complete and genuine power to the African majority, and the United Nations - and indeed posterity - would hold it responsible for ensuring that the transfer of power to the African majority was speedy, genuine and just. Unfortunately, in the past, the United Kingdom had not always fully met its responsibilities either in Zimbabwe or in Palestine. He was gratified, however, by the United Kingdom Government's assurances of its awareness of those responsibilities, and trusted that it would, at that late stage, devote all its efforts to bringing about a responsible and democratic solution to the question.

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12. Mr. NARU (Pakistan) said that the political situation had changed considerably since the unilateral declaration of independence by Southern Rhodesia. The essential role of the people of Zimbabwe themselves in their struggle to throw off the yoke of the illegal racist minority régime, international pressure exerted at the political and economic levels, and the determination of the front-line States to rid the continent of Africa of the blight of colonialism and racism, had all played their parts in forcing the Smith régime to come to the negotiating table on the basis of acceptance of the principle of majority rule and the transfer of power within a specified period of time.

13. His delegation welcomed as a positive development the fact that the Geneva Conference was considering the structure of the interim government, after having agreed on 1 March 1978 as the latest date for independence. Nevertheless, neither the people of Zimbabwe, the front-line States nor the international community could permit any relaxation of their concerted action against the illegal minority régime.

14. Time and again, the Smith régime had demonstrated its lack of good faith by repeatedly departing from its own positions and statements, employing devious means for remaining in power and delaying the process of the transfer of power to the majority for 11 years, and it would be naive to believe that it had had a change of heart.

15. Its insistence on retaining the defence and law-enforcement portfolios in the interim government gave grounds for deep suspicion, and it was probable that Ian Smith hoped that the Geneva talks would not be successful. In the opinion of Sir Roy Walenski, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Mr. Smith's apparent acquiescence in the Geneva Conference and in the transfer of power, represented a calculated gamble and Mr. Smith expected that squabbles between nationalist factions would sink the Conference with no blame being attached to his régime. His attitude towards the Conference was demonstrated by his attack on Mr. Ivor Richards who, he said, was continuing completely to disregard the interests of white Rhodesians. He alleged that the Conference Chairman's main concern was to pander to every demand of the extreme black politicians, who represented a small fraction of Rhodesian opinion. Another indication of the true intentions of the illegal minority régime was its refusal to participate in the discussions and the fact that it likened its own position to that of a polite and interested observer.

16. Therefore, Pakistan, while holding out hopes for the outcome of the Geneva Conference, also wished to sound a note of caution. The economic pressures applied by the international community to Southern Rhodesia must continue and be intensified, and the same was true of political pressures. The forces fighting for the independence of Zimbabwe must continue to act in a concerted manner, and the front-line States must continue to protect their borders against aggression and maintain the blockade.

17. While working for peace, the international community must be prepared for the continuation of the armed struggle if a negotiated settlement failed to come about because of the unwillingness of the Smith régime to part with its illegally gained power.

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(Mr. Naru, Pakistan)

18. In conclusion, he reiterated his delegation's full support for the nationalist leaders of Zimbabwe and expressed the hope that the Smith régime would create no more obstacles to the transfer of power to the black majority. Otherwise, the people of Zimbabwe would have no choice but to intensify the armed struggle until they had achieved complete independence.

19. When the latent energy of the oppressed masses was eventually released, no power on earth would be able to suppress their will to fight and liberate themselves from the shackles of colonialism, racism and imperialism. Those were the lessons of contemporary history, and it was high time for the oppressors to take note of those realities in the interests of world peace and security.

20. Mr. BADIMA (Ethiopia), after welcoming Angola to the United Nations, said that the Committee's consideration of agenda item 86 was considerably facilitated by the report of the Special Committee of 24 and that of its Ad Hoc Group which had visited Africa earlier in the year. Those reports contained pertinent information on the activities of the liberation movements, the escalation of the brutalities that were being inflicted upon Africans by the illegal racist régime, and the various efforts made towards achieving a peaceful solution of the problem.

21. Although the question of Zimbabwe had been on the agenda of the Fourth Committee for more than a decade, the issue was now being examined in an atmosphere dominated by the intensification of the armed struggle which had compelled the illegal régime to opt for the conference table once more.

22. The basic question concerning Zimbabwe at present was not whether majority rule could be achieved or how to achieve it but how soon majority rule could come about. The choice offered to the illegal régime was clear - it had either to accept a peaceful settlement or to face forcible eviction. Both courses were now being pressed, and there could be no doubt that the process of negotiations and the exertion of armed pressure were directed towards the main objective of achieving majority rule in Zimbabwe without undue delay.

23. The willingness of the leaders of the liberation movements to participate in negotiations should not be considered a sign of weakness but rather a demonstration of the fact that they had no particular inclination towards violence and armed struggle for their own sake. If the administering Power wished to render the use of force unnecessary, it would have to do much more than convene and chair negotiations, declare political willingness or pass laws. It would have to take effective control and lead the territory speedily to majority rule.

24. His delegation welcomed the announcement of the measures taken so far by the United Kingdom Government, which had set 1 March 1978 as the latest date by which Rhodesia would become independent. But unless the United Kingdom Government was prepared to secure a speedy formation of the transitional government acceptable to the vast majority of the people of Zimbabwe, that announcement was bound to remain a dead letter. As his country's Foreign Minister had pointed out in the general debate, no arrangement designed to protect entrenched colonial interests, masquerading as minority rights, could be acceptable. Moreover, any arrangement that provided for the retention of certain key positions by the white minority

(Mr. Badima, Ethiopia)

régime could scarcely contribute to harmony and the smooth functioning of the transitional government.

25. The history of peaceful negotiations with the rebel régime concerning Zimbabwe had been one of disillusionment and frustration, because the rebel régime had systematically sabotaged the implementation of any agreement or understanding between it and the liberation movements. Once again, it was resorting to delaying tactics by making unacceptable demands and creating obstacles to the progress of the negotiations. It was also casting grave doubts on the genuineness of its desire to negotiate by escalating its brutality against Africans in Zimbabwe and by committing aggressive acts against Mozambique.

26. The Smith régime must be made to understand that time was running out fast. Africans had fought hard and had waited for a long time, but the opportunity to negotiate could not be made available indefinitely.

27. In addition, the countries which had sustained the illegal régime through financial and trade collaboration must now take the necessary steps to erode that power base if the efforts directed towards a peaceful settlement were to succeed. The United Kingdom, as the administering Power, could clearly do more to ensure full implementation of the mandatory sanctions imposed on Southern Rhodesia by the Security Council through direct and effective negotiation with those countries which continued to ignore them.

28. Moreover, the United Nations should make a concerted effort to secure full respect for the mandatory sanctions and, above all, make a maximum effort to live up to its commitments and reinforce the struggle for the purpose of expediting the decolonization process in Zimbabwe. Otherwise, Zimbabwe would remain a monument to the complete failure of the will and abdication of responsibility of the United Nations.

29. The present attempt at a peaceful solution should not be used as a pretext to delay effective international action, and the time had come to intensify pressure on the illegal régime on all fronts. Should the negotiations fail, the people of Zimbabwe would have no alternative but to escalate the armed struggle.

30. Mr. FERNANDO (Sri Lanka) said that the question of Zimbabwe has assumed a new urgency. Over the past two years, there had been an intensification of efforts, both on the diplomatic front and in the liberation struggle, to achieve majority rule. However, the efforts of the front-line States, like other similar efforts, had failed as a result of the completely predictable intransigence of the Smith régime. At the same time, the world had been concerned and surprised at the inability of the administering Power to do anything about the situation. In such circumstances it was no wonder that the liberation struggle had intensified.

31. The Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo, had reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Zimbabwe to self-determination and independence and also the principle of no independence

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(Mr. Fernando, Sri Lanka)

before majority rule. It had also supported the legitimacy of the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe through all means at their disposal. As the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka had stated in the General Assembly on 30 September 1976, what the Colombo documents sought to convey was that the river of history could not flow backwards and that the longer the racist régimes took to realize that, the more serious would be the consequences for peace in Africa and elsewhere.

32. Sri Lanka had always supported the attainment of majority rule in Zimbabwe and the free and unfettered expression of the will of all the people.

33. He took note of the assurances given to the Committee by the representative of the administering Power that the United Kingdom took its constitutional responsibility seriously and that it would not assist or defend a white minority régime in Zimbabwe.

34. The current Geneva conference had been brought about by the liberation struggle and the efforts of the front-line States, the administering Power and the United States. His delegation welcomed that conference as possibly the final effort to achieve a peaceful transfer of power in Zimbabwe. Failure to do so would have cataclysmic results. Nevertheless, the people of Zimbabwe would win their rights regardless of such an outcome.

35. His delegation was concerned over reports that the same attitudes and postures of intransigence that had bedevilled earlier conferences had begun to appear once again at the conference in Geneva. It was his delegation's understanding that the assurances given by the administering Power would apply not only to the working out of the modalities for the establishment of majority rule in Zimbabwe, but also to the day-to-day situations that arose in the running of that conference, over which the administering Power presided.

36. Mr. WILLIAMS (Sierra Leone) said that his Government had let pass no opportunity to make its views known on the question of Southern Rhodesia. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone had stated during the general debate, the illegal Smith régime had suddenly realized that time was not on its side and that majority rule in Zimbabwe was inevitable. Although the entire structure of the interim government proposed by Mr. Smith, which included a Council of State with equal numbers of blacks and whites and with a white chairman, was unacceptable to the Government of Sierra Leone, his delegation was satisfied that the major factor in convincing Mr. Smith of the inevitability of majority rule had been, and would continue to be, the continuation of and increase in guerrilla activity in Zimbabwe.

37. His delegation welcomed the convening of the Conference on Zimbabwe in Geneva and commended the Government of the United Kingdom for responding to the call of the Presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola. He hailed the heroes of Zimbabwe, whose untiring efforts had compelled Mr. Smith to go to the conference table once more, and expressed satisfaction at the personal efforts of Mr. Ivor Richard to ensure the success of the Conference. As one of the United Kingdom's closest friends in Africa, Sierra Leone had often been

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(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

disappointed and embarrassed by the failure of the Government of the United Kingdom to shoulder its responsibilities as the administering Power in Southern Rhodesia. He noted the declared position of the Government of the United Kingdom that it stood ready to assume any role and responsibility necessary to achieve majority rule and independence. His delegation expressed the hope that the United Kingdom would act not merely as a mediator or peacemaker in Geneva, but as the administering Power. The United Kingdom had full authority in Southern Rhodesia, and primary responsibility for terminating the critical situation in that territory. It must use that authority to bring about a transfer of power to the black majority. A definite date must be set for independence, and the interim government must reflect a definite transfer of power in all its aspects. The United Kingdom must not make it possible for Smith to negotiate power in Geneva, but must compel him to relinquish it completely. His army must be removed. During the difficult interim period it would be necessary for the United Kingdom to play a direct role. His delegation hoped that the Geneva Conference would yield positive results for the majority, namely the Zimbabwe nationalists.

38. In spite of the new circumstances, the Smith régime continued to survive through suppression of the black majority. Even while accepting majority rule, it had started recruiting mercenaries to intensify its repression of Rhodesian blacks. Under the continued state of emergency, the illegal régime had recently decided to appoint "informers" - a decision resulting in the indiscriminate imprisonment, detention, torture, and death of many innocent people. Racist legislation and practices leading to the establishment of "protected areas" continued to abound. Consequently, his delegation, while welcoming the Geneva Conference, urged not only strict adherence to United Nations sanctions, but a broadening of those sanctions to cover travel, communications, sports and all other economic, political, social and cultural activities. As with South Africa, the effects of isolation could only be salutary.

39. In the past, sanctions had not been whole-heartedly complied with, particularly by those whose compliance was likely to have the greatest effect on the Rhodesian economy. Since the Vorster régime had declared that it would neither prevent the transport of Rhodesian goods by road or rail, nor declare a trade boycott against Rhodesia, it was of paramount importance that mandatory sanctions should be imposed on South Africa itself. Unless each Member of the United Nations faithfully supported the call for sanctions, a solution by force of arms, with all its horrors and inevitable high cost of human life - the only alternative - would be the responsibility of each Member State. If the Smith régime continued its delaying tactics, the Geneva Conference could break down. Economic pressures on that régime should therefore be tightened further. Consequently, the Government of Sierra Leone pledged its unqualified support for the decisions in chapter VIII of the Special Committee's report (A/31/23/Add.2) concerning the effective application of sanctions against the illegal Smith régime.

40. His delegation saluted the Governments and peoples of Zambia and Mozambique for the steps which they had taken, in line with their commitment to the struggle. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone had stated, all Members of the

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(Mr. Williams, Sierra Leone)

United Nations, singly and collectively, should give every possible assistance to the front-line States that were suffering economic hardship as a result of sanctions imposed on their racist neighbours.

41. There could be no substitute for majority rule in Zimbabwe. Consequently, in keeping with the Dar es Salaam Declaration on southern Africa, his Government welcomed all peaceful negotiations for majority rule in Zimbabwe, while at the same time pledging its unreserved support for the intensification of the armed struggle. His delegation urged Governments and non-governmental organizations to give all assistance necessary to facilitate the attainment of majority rule.

42. Mr. ANGONI (Albania) said that the problem of Southern Rhodesia was becoming a source of ever-increasing concern because the racist clique of Ian Smith was intensifying its criminal activities against the freedom-loving people of Zimbabwe, in order to defend the interests of a handful of white colonialists and of the imperialist and neo-colonialist Powers.

43. Numerous facts mentioned in the report of the Special Committee of 24, and in the statements made in the course of the debate, showed that the Smith clique and its imperialist protectors were doing everything possible to impede the process of decolonization in Southern Rhodesia and to deny the people of Zimbabwe their right to live in freedom and independence in their own country. Events in Southern Rhodesia indicated very clearly that racial segregation and apartheid were the very essence of the policy of the Smith régime.

44. Nevertheless, the white clique in Salisbury had not been able, and never would be able, to suppress the just struggle of the people of Zimbabwe who, from their own experience and that of other African peoples who had suffered under colonial rule, were convinced that it was only through a resolute and determined struggle that they would achieve freedom and independence and rid themselves of racist oppression and imperialist exploitation.

45. The success achieved by the people of Zimbabwe in their armed struggle had thrown the ranks of the white racist minority into disarray. Its imperialist patrons and the racists of South Africa were making frantic attempts to come to its aid, and were using force and demagogy to save it from total and inevitable defeat.

46. With the aid and support of the racists in Pretoria, the United States imperialists and the other capitalist Powers, the Smith clique had intensified its efforts to stifle the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe. It had committed acts of aggression and had made threats against sovereign African States in order to weaken the solidarity of the African peoples with the people of Zimbabwe and to impose its so-called political solution to the problem of Southern Rhodesia. However, the people of Zimbabwe and the other African peoples were not intimidated by the aggression and threats of the Salisbury régime and would certainly not be deceived by the manoeuvres of that régime and of the imperialist and colonialist Powers.

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(Mr. Angoni, Albania)

47. The aid and support which the imperialist Powers provided to the Smith régime, and the manoeuvres of the two imperialist super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - which were seeking to secure separate areas of influence in Africa, constituted a real danger and a serious threat to the national liberation struggle of the people of Zimbabwe. The United States imperialists found themselves in a very embarrassing situation with the intensification of that liberation struggle. That was why they were still endeavouring to save the Smith régime and, through it, to preserve their own interests and achieve their expansionist and hegemonistic goals in southern Africa. It was also for that reason that the United States imperialists had proposed their 10-point plan for a so-called settlement of the Southern Rhodesia question and were endeavouring to establish a so-called government to defend racist and imperialist interests. However, the people of Zimbabwe were becoming increasingly aware that such initiatives were simply plots against their national liberation struggle, their vital interests and their inalienable rights.

48. Nor was it possible to disregard the practices and tactics of the Soviet social imperialists in their efforts to gain a foothold in Africa, in particular southern Africa. Those tactics were in reality no different from the manoeuvres of the United States imperialists.

49. In order to succeed in their struggle against the Smith clique and other racists, the people of Zimbabwe and Africa must therefore redouble their vigilance and firmly oppose the plots, manoeuvres and intrigues of the two imperialist super-Powers.

50. The Albanian people had supported and would continue firmly to support the just struggle of the people of Zimbabwe and of other African peoples against racist régimes, imperialism, social imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. His delegation reiterated its conviction that the people of Zimbabwe would be victorious over the Salisbury racists and win freedom and independence.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.