

UNITED NATIONS



SECURITY COUNCIL OFFICIAL RECORDS

THIRTY-SECOND YEAR

1987th MEETING: 8 FEBRUARY 1977

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1987)	1
Adoption of the agenda	1
Complaint by Benin:	
(a) Letter dated 26 January 1977 from the Chargé d'affaires <i>a.i.</i> of the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12278)	
(b) Letter dated 4 February 1977 from the Chargé d'affaires <i>a.i.</i> of the Permanent Mission of Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12281)	1

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/ . . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements of the Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 8 February 1977, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. James MURRAY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Benin, Canada, China, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Libyan Arab Republic, Mauritius, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1987)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Complaint by Benin:
 - (a) Letter dated 26 January 1977 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12278)
 - (b) Letter dated 4 February 1977 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12281)

The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Benin:

- (a) Letter dated 26 January 1977 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12278)
- (b) Letter dated 4 February 1977 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/12281)

1. The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decision taken by the Council at its 1986th meeting, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Guinea, Madagascar, Rwanda and Togo to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the understanding that they will be invited to take places at the Council table whenever they wish to address the Council.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. A. Rahal (Algeria), Mr. A. Doukouré (Guinea), Mr. B. Rabetafika (Madagascar),

Mr. I. Karuhije (Rwanda) and Mr. A. A. Kodjovi (Togo) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT: In addition, I should like to inform members of the Council that letters have been received from the representatives of Cuba, Senegal and Somalia, in which they request to be invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the discussion of the question on the Council's agenda. Since there are no objections, I propose, therefore, in accordance with the usual practice, to invite these representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, under the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council and to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the understanding that they will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever they wish to address the Council.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. R. Alarcón (Cuba), Mr. M. Fall (Senegal) and Mr. A. H. Hussen (Somalia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

3. The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/12282/Rev.1, containing the revised text of the draft resolution, sponsored by Benin, the Libyan Arab Republic and Mauritius.

4. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): Before stating the position of the Soviet Union on the matter under consideration by the Security Council, I should like first to discharge the pleasant duty of congratulating you, Mr. President, the representative of a country with which the Soviet Union is successfully developing relations of mutual co-operation, on your assumption of this lofty and responsible post.

5. I should also like heartily to thank the representatives of the States members of the Council, who spoke such kind words about my country and me.

6. In the letter dated 26 January 1977 from the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, it is requested that the Council discuss the matter of the treacherous and barbaric aggression of imperialism and its mercenaries against the People's Republic of Benin. We listened very carefully to the statement made by the head of the delegation of Benin [1986th meeting] who gave a detailed account of the position of his country on this matter. From

the facts made available to the members of the Council, approximately the following picture emerges: the choice of a progressive course by one more State on the shores of the Bay of Guinea is by no means to the liking of those reactionary forces which are attempting to halt the irreversible process of the liberation of Africa. Understanding as they do that the reforms carried out by the authority of the people in Benin are well liked by the population of the country, outside forces have attempted to do away with the people's régime by force of arms. Thus, with the help of mercenaries, they organized an act of aggressive gangsterism which, thanks to the discipline and solidarity displayed by the people of Benin, was a failure.

7. The events in Benin are further evidence of the fact that peace and security on the African continent are under a constant threat from those forces that, in their efforts to prevent the full liberation of Africa, do not intend to acquiesce in the face of reality. Those events bear out the accuracy of the warning of progressive forces in Africa of the need to be vigilant with regard to imperialism and neo-colonialism. At the same time, the treacherous attack on Benin has once again demonstrated the danger to the sovereignty and independence of progressive African States that is represented by international mercenary forces.

8. The position taken by the People's Republic of Benin on this matter has won wide support among the non-aligned countries and all of progressive Africa. As the representative of Madagascar stated at yesterday's meeting of the Council:

"This position is by no means something which derives from a mere formality. It is justified by an objective analysis of what is happening and of the plotting that has been going on for several years from the Congo to Somalia, from Angola to Mozambique and Madagascar, from Guinea and Benin to Uganda, to cite but a few African countries." *Ibid, para.86.*

9. The position of the Soviet Union with regard to the processes now going on on the African continent is well known. We are firmly in favour of the complete and immediate liberation of Africa by the liquidation of all hotbeds of racism, colonialism and *apartheid*. In the resolution recently adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the sixtieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution it is stated:

"The Soviet Union and other Socialist States will give every assistance and support to the developing countries in their struggle for the fulfilment of their legitimate aspirations to rid themselves completely of imperialist exploitation and for their right to take charge of their own affairs."

10. In view of its consistent position of principle on African questions, the Soviet Union will support the draft resolution sponsored by Benin, the Libyan Arab Republic and Mauritius */S/12282/Rev.1/*. We think that it is both timely and appropriate to reaffirm that the territorial integrity and political independence of Benin must be respected. We also believe that the Security Council should support Benin's request that a special mission of the

Security Council be sent to the spot in order that it may elucidate the facts connected with this criminal act and present a report as soon as possible. We believe that such a decision would be correct and fair to the people of Benin, would represent a further contribution in the struggle for the complete and final implementation of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and contribute to the consolidation of peace and security on the African continent and throughout the world.

11. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Soviet Union for his reference to the close relations between his country and mine.

12. Mr. KIKHIA (Libyan Arab Republic): Mr. President, I should like first of all to offer you the compliments of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We are confident that you will wisely and ably guide the progress of this delicate and important debate.

13. My delegation also wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the efficient manner in which the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presided over the Council during the month of January.

14. The question with which we are concerned today involves an act of aggression against an independent and sovereign State member of the Organization of African Unity and Member of the United Nations. That act of aggression was perpetrated by a gang of international criminals at the expense of a peaceful African people committed to the raising of their standard of living and the progress of their country.

15. The criminal act unsuccessfully undertaken by the mercenaries against the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January 1977 nevertheless resulted in substantial material damage to buildings and installations at Cotonou, the economic capital of Benin. What is more important, there was a significant loss of human life among both the military and civilians, who courageously offered their lives in the defence of their country, its freedom and dignity against the ravages of this criminal gang of mercenaries.

16. This is not the first time that mercenaries have attacked peaceful African nations which refuse to submit to slavery and colonial domination. When the continent of Africa awoke in the second half of the twentieth century, it found itself enchained and deprived of freedom, with its resources being plundered and its people being exploited. When Africa began a bitter struggle to restore its freedom, its resources and its dignity, it was to be expected that those colonialist interests would not accept the termination of their domination. The imperialist forces have therefore attempted to use every possible stratagem in order to maintain their domination of the African continent and its peoples.

17. Why is it that the people of Benin should be the victims of aggression in this manner, as were the people of Guinea, the people of Zaire, the people of Nigeria, the people of Uganda and the people of Angola? Why is it that

the people of Zimbabwe and Namibia are menaced with genocide at the hands of hired mercenaries? Why is it that the People's Republic of Mozambique is faced with threats? In fact, why should the African peoples in those areas and others be confronted with aggression, murder and terrorism?

18. The answer to these questions can be found in the fact that those peoples have rejected the domination, control and exploitation imposed upon them by the colonialists who will not leave that continent and its peoples to build their own future by themselves.

19. The General Assembly at its thirty-first session discussed the question of terrorism and adopted a resolution calling on the *Ad Hoc* Committee on International Terrorism to continue its work of preparing a study with a view to finding a solution to this problem [*resolution 31/102*]. I should like, therefore, to draw attention to this kind of terrorism, perpetrated not only against individuals but also against entire nations.

20. What happened in Benin at dawn on 16 January of this year was an act of aggression not only against the people of Benin but also against the whole of Africa and the world community. One of the most basic objectives of our Organization is to ensure the safety and security of its Members, especially the small States which have recently attained independence. These States have difficulty in defending their freedom and dignity against those whose ambition it is to reimpose their domination and exploitation. The Security Council has already condemned the recruitment of mercenaries and called upon all nations to withhold assistance to such mercenaries.

21. We have heard the statement of the representative of Benin [*1986th meeting*] in which he faithfully reported to us the clear facts of the shameful aggression perpetrated by a gang of mercenaries. He also informed us of the losses and the damage that were the result of that act of aggression. At this stage we hope that the Council will decide to send a special mission to Benin in order to investigate the events of 16 January at Cotonou and report back to the Council. My delegation will express its views at a later stage after receiving a detailed account of the facts and the conclusions of the proposed fact-finding mission.

22. Finally, I should like to express the sympathy felt by my delegation and by my people and the Government of the Libyan Arab Republic for the representative of Benin, his people and Government. Our support has already been expressed in a telegram sent by Colonel Mu'ammarr Al-Qadafi, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council of the Libyan Arab Republic, to President Mathieu Kerekou, President of the People's Republic of Benin. That telegram expressed the complete support of the Libyan Arab Republic for the people and Government of Benin, and read as follows:

"We have heard the news of the imperialist aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin. We thank God for the safety of your country, your administration and your power to confront the aggression. We congratulate ourselves on your victory against the forces

of evil and aggression that threaten Africa and its devoted leadership. We assure you that we all stand as one in the confrontation against imperialism and the forces of evil and in the cause of ensuring the freedom and peace of Africa and of its revolutionary régimes. We express to you the complete commitment of the Libyan Arab Republic to stand by you with all its resources to defeat reactionary and colonialist conspiracies."

23. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, the French delegation is particularly pleased to see the representative of the United Kingdom presiding over the Council. England—and Scotland—are two great neighbours of France, both worthily represented by you. At the present time, the United Kingdom is presiding over the work of the European Community, and thus my country has many reasons for placing its trust in your wisdom, in the devotion that you have always shown to causes which are important to you and in your well-known sense of humour. We are sufficiently familiar with your outstanding qualities and your natural authority to be convinced that our work will be conducted in a very skilful manner. We should also like to convey to Ambassador Richard a friendly tribute for the tireless efforts which he has constantly made in the course of his particularly difficult mission. We hold him in very high esteem.

24. I should like to take this opportunity to convey to Mr. Troyanovsky the congratulations and thanks of the French delegation. The competent manner in which he discharged his task as President of the Council directly after assuming his post as Permanent Representative earned our admiration.

25. Let me now turn to the agenda item before us. The French delegation listened with close attention to the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Benin [*1986th meeting*]. Our colleague set forth with circumstantial detail the events which took place in his country on 16 January last. The statements which we heard yesterday brought out the strong feelings aroused by the events last month at Cotonou. My delegation would like to join with all those that have spoken in this debate in expressing our abhorrence at the intervention of which the People's Republic of Benin was the victim. I should like solemnly to stress here that France is particularly devoted to the principle of respect for the independence of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. In our view, there must be no exceptions to that principle. Its application is particularly important in the case of a continent made up of States which have committed themselves with determination to the task of development, a continent which is devoting its best efforts to that task and which has at times deliberately forsworn the use of military means which could have protected it from outside intervention.

26. We stated that position in the month of May 1976, in the presence of the States, including Benin, which participated in the Franco-African conference in Paris. Everyone at that time condemned any attempts at foreign interference in the affairs of Africa, in the interests of safeguarding peace on the continent and so that Africa could devote all its resources to its development for the benefit of man.

27. The President of the French Republic has stated on a number of occasions that: "Africa should be left to the Africans, except as regards the assistance required for its development tasks."

28. The French delegation shares the strong feelings which are aroused by the case before us today. My country enjoys relations with Benin based on mutual respect, friendship and co-operation. The representative of Benin stated yesterday that his country was devoted to the development and strengthening of its relations with France. I should like in turn to say that my country sincerely shares the same desire. We have frequently stated as much ever since Benin won its independence in an atmosphere of exemplary calm and friendliness.

29. France will long recall with gratitude the sacrifices of the soldiers of Benin who, in the course of the two world wars, shed their blood in the cause of freedom.

30. We know that the People's Republic of Benin is devoted to economic development and social progress and we welcome the efforts that are being made to that end. We hope that the international community will firmly express its opposition to any outside undertakings of whatever kind.

31. Reference was made to some munitions of French origin. So that no link may be established, even by implication, between that reference and responsibility for the intervention in question, I should like to be perfectly clear here and now: as I said at the beginning of this statement, the principle of non-interference in internal affairs is for us an absolute principle, regardless of the ideological or political choices of States Members of the Organization. For that reason, France will support the dispatch by the Council of a fact-finding mission to investigate the events which brought about this meeting.

32. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his kind words about my countries and myself. I particularly appreciated his tact in referring to my native Scotland, a country which for many years had what we called "the auld alliance" against our common enemy, England. I shall not fail to pass his message of good wishes to my colleague, Mr. Ivor Richard.

33. Mr. GHEORGHE (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I should first like to address to you, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Your well-known diplomatic talents, your experience and your profound knowledge of the problems of the United Nations convince us that you will be completely successful in your important and responsible work.

34. At the same time, I should like to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Troyanovsky of the Soviet Union, for the skill and tact with which he conducted the activities of the Security Council last month.

35. The Romanian delegation listened with close interest to the important statement made by the representative of

Benin [*1986th meeting*] regarding the action directed against his country on 16 January 1977. The facts that have been presented to the Council eloquently testify to the propriety of this complaint by Benin with regard to the mercenary forces that attacked the airport and city of Cotonou.

36. The account given by the representative of Benin as well as the statements made by previous speakers show that the Council has before it a case of flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of an independent State, Member of the Organization, and of brutal interference in its internal affairs which may endanger peace and security throughout the African continent and the entire world.

37. The Romanian delegation believes that the disquiet and concern displayed by members of the Council are particularly justified, since those attacks were directed against Benin, a country that is peace-loving and that has undertaken a broad effort to do away with the vestiges of its colonial heritage in order to develop its economy and strengthen its economic and political independence.

38. In accordance with the principles of its foreign policy, Romania is firmly in favour of respect for the independence and sovereignty of all States, and of guaranteeing the right of each people to determine its own future and organize its life in accordance with its own wishes without any foreign interference. This being so, our delegation understands and supports the request made by Benin, a country with which Romania is developing links of close friendship and fruitful co-operation, relations based on mutual respect and esteem, which are in accordance with the national interests of the Romanian and Beninese peoples and which serve the cause of peace and international co-operation.

39. The links of solidarity existing between the Romanian people and the people of Benin were also mentioned in the joint communiqué recently signed at Bucharest by President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania and President Mathieu Kerekou of Benin, in which both countries

"condemn outright any manifestations of neo-colonialist policy and any pressure or interference in the affairs of the African peoples, practices that are designed to hinder independent economic and social development in young African States which have set out on the road to progress and prosperity".

40. In view of what I have said, the Romanian delegation will support the draft resolution that is being sponsored by three African countries [*S/12282/Rev.1*] and in which the Council states that the territorial integrity and political independence of Benin must be respected. Likewise, we believe that it is the duty of the Council to respond positively to Benin's request, reflected in the draft resolution, for a special mission to be sent to Benin in order to investigate and report to the Security Council so as to enable that body to carry out a thorough examination of the matter and take appropriate action.

41. The Romanian delegation reserves its right to speak again in the debate whenever it sees fit.

42. Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan): Mr. President, I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express to you the warm felicitations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month. We are confident that with your deep understanding of the issues before the Council and your very evident skill in the correct and expeditious handling of the Council's proceedings, our task will be accomplished with dispatch and to the satisfaction of all. I am not sure what I can say on this occasion about Pakistan and Scotland except that we have taken to the bagpipes with great enthusiasm and, I believe, also export them to your country.

43. Permit me also to convey the sincere admiration of my delegation to our new Soviet colleague, Ambassador Troyanovsky, for the manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the Council during the month of January. As the representative of a great country which is a neighbour of Pakistan, we were happy to see him in the Chair discharging his responsibilities, in his very first month amongst us, with such skill and success.

44. At our meeting yesterday [*1986th meeting*], the representative of Benin, a country with which Pakistan maintains close and friendly relations, informed us in detail of the violence perpetrated on 16 January last at Cotonou, the economic capital of his country, by unidentified intruders from abroad. The armed attack was organized with military skill and executed with ruthlessness, resulting in considerable material damage and the loss of precious human life in Benin.

45. We join the previous speakers in paying a tribute to the People's Armed Forces of Benin for their valiant and successful defence of their homeland, and for routing the intruders.

46. The nature of the incident appears to be beyond any doubt: it was a clear act of armed intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign, independent State. What precise and ulterior purpose it was intended to serve cannot, we feel, be a matter of indifference to the Council.

47. The attack on Cotonou, indeed, raises basic questions. The international community of States is composed of a large number of countries of small and medium size. Those situated in the third world are engaged in the all-important task of economic development, relying mainly on their own efforts, utilizing their own limited natural resources and following the system which they consider best suited to their conditions. They are peace-loving States and have no political designs and neither the need nor the means to maintain military forces of any size. Indeed, most of the countries of the third world are not in a position to defend each and every inch of their territories at all times against any well-organized military attacks that might be mounted from outside, but must rely for their security on the maintenance of orderly relations among States and on respect for international law.

48. They quite rightly look to the United Nations in general, and to the Security Council in particular, for the maintenance of international order, in accordance with Article 1 of the Charter, which stipulates that one of the

main purposes of the United Nations is to maintain internal peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

49. The attack on Cotonou which took place on 16 January seems to have been executed by soldiers of fortune or mercenaries. It constitutes a breach of the peace and a threat to the stability and well-being of a Member of the United Nations, and a member of the Council.

50. By virtue of Article 24 of the Charter, the Members of the United Nations have conferred on the Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council, in discharging that responsibility, acts on behalf of all the Members of our Organization. It is the view of the delegation of Pakistan that, in considering and dealing with the complaint of Benin, the Council is discharging one of its very basic responsibilities.

51. The representative of Benin, in his statement, demanded that light be shed on the aggression of which his country was the victim and asked the Security Council to dispatch a special mission to Cotonou in order to ascertain the facts in a clear and objective manner, to determine responsibility and to assess the damage caused. We consider the request of Benin a reasonable one, and one which is fully in accord with the provisions of the Charter and with a number of past precedents. The delegation of Pakistan will, accordingly, support the draft resolution submitted by Benin, the Libyan Arab Republic and Mauritius [*S/12282/Rev.1*], by which the Council would affirm the territorial integrity and political independence of the People's Republic of Benin and decide to send a special mission of the Council to Benin in order to investigate and report back later this month.

52. We hope that the special mission can proceed to Benin as quickly as possible and bring back information on the basis of which the Council may resume its consideration of the item. The responsibility of the Council in this matter, we feel, is twofold: first, to take such action as would ensure against the recurrence of acts of violence and intervention against Benin and other small countries, and, secondly, to take measures to enable Benin to repair the loss and damage it has suffered as a result of that attack. Further action to be taken by the Council on receipt of the report of the special mission will have to be determined, bearing in mind this basic consideration.

53. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words about me and about the cultural contribution which my country of Scotland has been able to make to his.

54. I should like to inform members of the Council that a letter has just been received from the representative of Mali in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the question on the agenda. I propose, in accordance with the usual practice and since there are no objections, to invite the representative of Mali to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, under

the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure. I therefore invite him to take the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber, on the understanding that he will be invited to take a place at the Council table when it is his turn to address the Council.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. M. B. Kanté (Mali) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber.

55. Mr. LAI Ya-li (China) (*translation from Chinese*): The incident that took place on 16 January 1977 at Cotonou constituted an encroachment by imperialism and its mercenaries on the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the People's Republic of Benin. The Chinese Government and people extend congratulations to the Government and people of Benin, which, under the leadership of His Excellency President Kerekou of Benin, victoriously repulsed the invasion and defended their national independence and sovereignty, and we express profound sympathy at the losses suffered by the people of Benin. The Chinese Government is convinced that the Government and people of Benin will heighten their vigilance, strengthen their unity and continue to safeguard their national independence and State sovereignty. The Chinese delegation supports the draft resolution sponsored by Benin, the Libyan Arab Republic and Mauritius [*S/12282/Rev.1*] concerning the dispatch by the Security Council of a special mission to Benin to investigate the facts about the incident, and will vote in favour of the draft.

56. Mr. JAIPAL (India): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the office of President of the Security Council during this month, extend to you our best wishes for your success and offer you our co-operation. There is, of course, no doubt that you will conduct the business of this Council briskly and efficiently, as you have done so far. If I may say so, there is in your personality the right proportion of conservatism and progressivism, or progressiveness, which makes me feel that the Council is in very good hands.

57. May I associate my delegation with the well-deserved tribute paid by you to your distinguished predecessor, the representative of the Soviet Union, who carried out his burdensome responsibilities last month with great charm and considerable competence.

58. As to the complaint before the Council, we listened with anxious attention to the statement made yesterday by the representative of Benin, and we also listened carefully to the statements made by the representatives of Algeria, Rwanda, Guinea and Madagascar [*1986th meeting*].

59. The facts presented by the representative of Benin have not been controverted. They have, in fact, been confirmed by press reports. According to these, there was a blatant attempt by unidentified persons from outside Benin to overthrow the Government of Benin by the use of armed force. We accept the facts presented by the representative of Benin. They do not need verification.

60. Ordinarily we would not consider it necessary for the Security Council itself to carry out an on-the-spot investi-

gation, but in this case, because the Government of Benin has specially asked the Council to send a fact-finding mission, we are disposed to support Benin's request.

61. It is fortunate indeed that Benin was able to repel the attackers who thereupon seem to have disappeared into thin air. The question that troubles us is this: supposing the mercenaries had succeeded in their objective, their identity would have been known by now, but would their success have made them acceptable? Questions of principle are involved, as well as questions of responsibility. This is a clear case of the use of force from outside against the territorial integrity of the State of Benin. It is an infringement of that country's sovereignty and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. What is not clear, however, is the identity of the persons who perpetrated that act of aggression. Their mere description as imperialist mercenaries is simply not good enough. We hope that efforts to identify them will be successful.

62. It is of course possible for those unknown persons to operate without even the knowledge, much less the assistance, of other Governments. Such clandestine operations are becoming a new and disturbing phenomenon of international life and seem to be part of a general design to topple régimes that are not acceptable in certain quarters. Such under-cover activities constitute a dangerous aspect of external interference in the internal affairs of States. The Colombo Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries condemned such acts as being incompatible with the Charter.

63. We cannot fail to be impressed by the statements made by representatives of several African States who referred to the vulnerability of small States to externally based attacks on their stability and security. We have heard that mercenaries are being recruited and trained abroad for such purposes. Clearly, foreign agencies are involved, even though the Governments may be unaware of the activities of these mercenaries. Nevertheless, this does raise important questions of international responsibility for such situations. Where do these mercenaries come from, and where do they go? What are their motivations? Is it simply the profit motive, or is it the political motive that underlies their operations?

64. The Security Council clearly has the responsibility to see that the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter are observed. What can the Council do to deter and prevent such attacks in the future? Specifically, what should Member States of the United Nations do in order to ensure that the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 4, will be scrupulously observed? Answers to these questions have to be found, because the United Nations is today largely an organization of small States which became Members mainly for the protection of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

65. We hope that the debate on the complaint of Benin will initiate steps which will lead to the evolution of international law providing for adequate measures to check and remove the threat posed by mercenaries who engage in conspiracies to overthrow established régimes.

66. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his kind words about me. I assure him that I shall do my best to mix conservatism and progressiveness in the correct proportions.

67. The next speaker is the representative of Togo, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make a statement.

68. Mr. KODJOVI (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I should first like to thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of my country in the present discussions. I should like to associate myself with those who have congratulated you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am certain that, prompted by the traditions of freedom and democracy of your own country, as well as by your devotion to those traditions and your competence, you have assumed your position with that desire for justice and objectivity which alone can ensure that the Council will effectively play the essential role incumbent on it in promoting progress for all the peoples of our planet, in freedom, dignity and tranquillity.

69. May I, from the very outset, state that in this matter which we are now discussing, the position of my country is clear. The Central Committee of the People's Assembly of Togo met on 21 January of this year

"...vigorously to condemn and denounce the use of mercenaries in Africa, and particularly in the People's Republic of Benin, since they flout the most elementary principles of the sovereignty of the people of Benin. The Central Committee of the Togolese People's Assembly fully supports the fraternal people of Benin in its just struggle to preserve its independence, its unity and its national sovereignty."

In other words, the reality of the cowardly aggression perpetrated against the fraternal people of Benin is for us not a matter for doubt, and we are relying on the impartiality of the fact-finding mission, which it has been requested should be sent to Benin, to determine, in all objectivity and with complete accuracy, what occurred, and at the same time to ascertain who was responsible.

70. This position is based on the constant desire of the leader of our authentic, peaceful and humanistic revolution, and of the nation-wide movement of popular consensus which he directs and leads, to struggle, with determination and perseverance, against all those evils which stand in the way of the full development of each and every human being. Those evils are: foreign domination of the colonial type, neo-colonial and racist domination, imperialism from whatever source, violence in all its forms, and the odious crimes perpetrated by the moneyed Powers, or any act of oppression against peoples throughout the world and against the honest leaders who refuse to betray their peoples for their own ends. Togo has not forgotten Sarakawa; it is very difficult to forget it.

71. My country scrupulously respects the choice by every State of its own socio-economic system. Every people has freedom of choice in the achievement of its objectives, its

liberation and its progress. It is for us an honour that in the world we form part of an ever-tightening network of friendships, and we are ready for co-operation, providing that it is based on a spirit of justice, mutual respect, dignity and solidarity. But by reason of those very friendships and the fact that we are so ready to co-operate, we cannot acquiesce in the use by hidden forces of means condemned by international morality and by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to mould the third world according to the criteria of their own selfish and material interests. For this reason, we condemn all acts of provocation, aggression and humiliation perpetrated against the independent and sovereign States of Africa and elsewhere.

72. The African peoples have struggled, are still struggling, and will continue to struggle, as long as they have to, whatever the price to be paid and the sacrifices to be made, in order to free themselves and become masters of their own destiny, to ensure their progress and their development, not only in their own interests, but also in order to contribute to the collective realization of the full potential of mankind as a whole.

73. Those cynical enterprises and undertakings which tend to compromise the achievements of this noble design are therefore viewed by us as committing an odious crime against humanity, and the entire international community should rise up, as a man, against those who are endeavouring to turn the African continent into one enormous swamp, where those adventurers who have not been able to gain acceptance within their own societies may wallow at ease and against those who think they they can perform deeds of heroism by stabbing us in the back, sowing terror in our countries and massacring our peaceful populations in order to earn money.

74. Unfortunately, mercenaries have operated in most parts of Africa: in Zaire, in Guinea, in Nigeria and elsewhere. Today it is the People's Republic of Benin which has been the victim of their attacks. Which people and which country will be their next target? Who is arming them? And on whose behalf are they carrying out their frightful missions? Those are the questions which we agonize over in connexion with the use of mercenaries, a practice which is developing and which has become a universal calamity, a terrifying sword of Damocles permanently suspended over the heads of all peoples.

75. It is high time that our international community heeded the repeated appeals of the heads of African States. It is high time that they realized the universal dimension of this problem and took account of the pertinent resolutions in which, for many years now, the Organization of African Unity has been calling upon all States to cease tolerating the recruitment, training and equipment of mercenaries in their territories, and to forbid their nationals from serving in their ranks.

76. This matter must be considered with due care. Merely to condemn the use of mercenaries is not enough. The machinery of that practice has to be dismantled, and it is important that specific steps be taken in order to eradicate it utterly, together with all the forms and sources of

violence, if we want peoples to live in peace and tranquillity and achieve complete fulfilment in a world of brotherly solidarity. In this connexion, the active co-operation of my delegation and of my country is something of which our Organization can be assured.

77. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Cuba, whom I now invite to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

78. Mr. ALARCON (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all I should like to thank you and the other members of the Security Council for allowing my delegation to participate in this debate. I should also like to join those representatives who have congratulated you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council, and I am sure that, thanks to your recognized experience, your ability and your tact, you will fully discharge the important responsibilities you have assumed for this month.

79. The Revolutionary Government and the people of Cuba learned with great indignation of the criminal aggression against Benin on 16 January last. The events which occurred at Cotonou that day and were described yesterday by Ambassador Boya [*1986th meeting*] cannot fail to cause alarm and result in protestation throughout the entire world. The clarification of those events and the condemnation of those responsible, as well as the adoption of effective action to prevent a recurrence of such events, are duties which the Council cannot shirk.

80. It is clear that, on 16 January, a cowardly and ignoble attack took place against Benin. It was treacherously planned, perpetrated in the shadows and carried out by pirates and international mercenaries. Its organizers and perpetrators in one fell swoop violated the principles of international law. It was a serious act of aggression, using armed force against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Benin. An attempt was made to set at naught the inalienable right of the people of that country to choose the political, economic and social régime most suitable for it. The aggressors used sophisticated military *matériel*, which could only have come from some subversive agency of imperialism. In the commission of that act of aggression the most elementary principles governing international conduct were ignored, including those relating to war. An apparently non-military aircraft was used, the air space of Benin was violated, and, in an act of treachery, the aircraft landed at a civilian airport, where a surprise attack was indiscriminately carried out. The aircraft of the aggressor did not have any identification and the attackers did not carry any flag or wear the uniform of the Power which had sent them into combat. In sum, the criminals were mercenary troops made up of foreign whites and Africans and perhaps also certain traitorous citizens of Benin, all well armed and trained. The victim was a country which was not in conflict with any other, which had not committed any aggression against anyone and against which war had not been declared.

81. At Cotonou, near the coasts which in colonial times were notorious for the slave trade that flourished there, the imperialists of today, who are attempting to recolonize

Africa, with the aid of modern technology, are emulating the feats of the pirates of the past. Once again an African country has had to deal with the dastardly and barbaric activities of imperialism; once again it has had to confront a gang of mercenaries and repulse an attack by a group of hired killers, criminals without a country, who are moved only by a desire for profit, inspired by the spoils of war and organized by racism.

82. Just as in Guinea in 1970 and in Angola more recently, imperialism and its mercenaries found in Benin a courageous people guided by an experienced vanguard which was able to repulse the aggressors only three hours after the attack was begun. The people of Benin and the People's Armed Forces of Benin won a significant victory, which we joyfully proclaim. Those responsible for the aggression of 16 January wished to put an end to the revolution in Benin; they wished to reinstall colonialism and racism and they attempted to eliminate the revolutionary example so worthily set by Benin today. But the enemies of Africa once again met with failure. This victory will consolidate the revolution and strengthen the will of the entire people which is backing the People's Revolutionary Party and President Mathieu Kerekou.

83. However, the fact that the aggressors were defeated does not relieve the international community or, specifically, the Security Council of the duty of clarifying the facts and adopting whatever action is needed to put an end to the use of mercenaries; it is time to call on certain Western Powers to put an end to their support or tolerance of the activities of killers who know no national boundaries. The recent Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity spoke to the world of the importance of creating the necessary machinery to prosecute and punish the crime of employing mercenaries. The fifth summit Conference of the non-aligned countries and the General Assembly at its latest session have echoed that concern.

84. We often hear concern expressed by the spokesmen of certain Western Powers when the security or tranquillity of certain individuals happen to be affected by manifestations of violence which at times arise as a result of oppression and injustice for which those same Powers are responsible. If they do not want their words to be termed hypocritical, they must here and now demonstrate the same firmness and concern when the victims are Africans, when criminal terror is indiscriminately used against the people of the third world, and when the pain and suffering are inflicted on humble workers who do not travel in luxurious aircraft or read the major newspapers of the West and who could not use the powerful means of imperialist propaganda in their defence.

85. Benin has won a place in history by reason of a culture and an artistic development which surprised Europeans. It was the expression of the vitality of a free people, which colonialism could not find bonds strong enough to enslave. The heroic resistance which Behanzin, Bio Guera, Kaba and other leaders waged against the colonialists is proof of that. Today Benin, inspired by the immortal ideals of socialism and defended enthusiastically by its workers, peasants and students, will not return to a state of colonial serfdom.

86. Those responsible for the brutal act of aggression of 16 January represent a past marked by oppression and poverty which will never return. To ensure that, there is the heightened awareness and firm revolutionary will of an Africa determined to be the sole master of its own destiny, an awareness and a will that were clearly expressed in a message sent to all Africans by the President of Guinea, Ahmed Sékou Touré, in connexion with these events.

87. In their struggle to put an end to colonial oppression and racism, the African peoples have and will have in the People's Republic of Benin an impregnable bastion. We reiterate today the complete solidarity of the people and the Revolutionary Government of Cuba with Benin, with its courageous and valiant people and with its Party and its Government.

88. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Somalia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

89. Mr. HUSSEN (Somalia): Mr. President, my delegation extends to you its felicitations on your accession to the office of President of the Security Council for the month of February. We are sure that under your guidance the Council's consideration of the matters before it will be wisely directed.

90. We also wish to express our appreciation of the excellent manner in which your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union, conducted the affairs of the Council in the month of January, when the Council was seized—as it is again at the present time—of a question of unprovoked aggression, at that time against Botswana, another African State.

91. May I also take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Council for allowing us to participate in the debate on this serious matter which compelled the Government of Benin to request the intervention of the Council.

92. My delegation considers it an important duty to participate in this debate because we believe that the issue is one of aggression against a peace-loving, sovereign State. The gravity of the issue is compounded by the fact that the aggression against the People's Republic of Benin was carried out by mercenaries. The use of those predators by some countries or groups to attack other States is a dangerous disease that has become endemic in the African continent. My delegation believes that this matter cannot be ignored or taken lightly by the Security Council, which is responsible for preserving international peace and security.

93. My delegation also maintains that the activities of mercenaries are no less violent and destructive than is terrorism and the taking of hostages, matters which have gained the attention and the condemnation of the international community. My delegation, therefore, believes that, independently of the question at hand, the mercenary problem is serious enough to make it necessary for an international convention to be established against the hiring of such criminals, whose aim is to engage in subversive

activities against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of peace-loving States. Such evil methods revive in our minds shameful memories of how foreign domination penetrated Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century, an activity better known as the "scramble for Africa".

94. As we have heard from the representative of the People's Republic of Benin [*1986th meeting*], the attack on the city of Cotonou had as its chief aim the occupation of the Presidential Palace, with the objective of bringing down the legitimate Government of that country. Since the aggression was launched from an aircraft which came from outside the country, flying at a low altitude from the coast in order to evade the radar screen, it is clear that this was an external attack on the State of Benin. Fortunately, the military forces of Benin were able to foil this attempt at armed aggression against their country. However, it is a grim commentary that this kind of aggression has always resulted in great suffering both in the loss of human lives and in the destruction of property.

95. In the case at hand, we have regretfully learned that, apart from considerable material damage, at least five military men and two civilians were murdered by the mercenaries. To demonstrate the indignation of the Government and people of the Somali Democratic Republic at this disdainful attack, I should like with your permission, Mr. President, to quote from a message of support and solidarity to the Government and people of the People's Republic of Benin which my President, Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, sent to the President of the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January. In his message my President stated, *inter alia*:

"I am deeply shocked to learn of the cowardly mercenary invasion of your country. At the same time I am heartened to hear that the heroic defence forces, the valiant patriots and militia of revolutionary Benin, under your wise and courageous guidance and leadership, have succeeded in routing the aggressors and sending them into flight... The Government of the Somali Democratic Republic expresses its condemnation, in the strongest terms, against this inhuman and barbaric naked imperialist aggression against the brotherly people of Benin launched through the intermediary of mercenaries. The party, Government and entire people of Somalia salute their heroic bretheren of Benin and their democratic revolution for dealing a resounding blow to the aggressor forces and restoring a great victory not only for their own country and people, but also for the entire peace-loving peoples of the world... Allow me once more to assure you of our total and unreserved support, both moral and material, in the face of this threat, as we stand side by side with you in militant solidarity. I have every confidence that imperialist aggressions of this type, which are only indicative of the perpetrators' total lack of morality and utter disregard for the basic principles of human conduct, will always, as on past occasions, result in total failure, and will only help to reinforce our collective resolve to safeguard our hard-won independence and struggle more vigorously for consolidating our gains and forging ahead with added determination to achieve a better life for our peoples in freedom, dignity and honour."

96. This is not the first case of its kind to come before the Security Council. It will be recalled that in the past the Council has been called on to take action because of armed attack by mercenaries or because of other kinds of armed intervention in the internal affairs of other African States. It will constitute a grave threat to peace and stability on the African continent if outside forces can threaten with impunity the hard-won independence of African States. It is not a question only of peace and stability. What is at stake is also the very honour and dignity of Africa.

97. At this stage, the least that the Government of the People's Republic of Benin can ask for, and the Council support, is the dispatch of a fact-finding mission to ascertain the origin of that brutal aggression. Such a mission would bear in mind the importance of exposing the evil of mercenary activities and the necessity of eliminating that scourge from the face of the earth if we are to ensure that the aims and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are to be preserved.

98. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Mali. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

99. Mr. KANTE (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, with your permission, I wish to discharge a pleasant duty and congratulate you most amicably on behalf of my delegation, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Who better than you, Sir, old African hand that you are, can comprehend the problems of our continent? You lived there in a stormy region when you were representing your country, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in Rwanda. You referred to this with some degree of emotion at yesterday afternoon's meeting. We believe, Mr. President, that you are fully qualified to conduct our debates successfully.

100. Secondly, Mr. President, I wish to express to you and, through you, to the other members of the Security Council my delegation's appreciation for permission to participate in the Council's debate on the complaint of the People's Republic of Benin.

101. I wish also to take this opportunity to bid welcome to the distinguished citizens of Benin who have been sent by the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin to attend the debate of the Council on this disturbing affair.

102. Africa and the peoples of the world which cherish peace and justice have followed with dismay and indignation the clear-cut act of aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin on 16 January last, at daybreak, by a gang of hired killers directed by unknown evil forces. The representative of Benin, our brother Mr. Boya, gave us a detailed account [*1986th meeting*] in his important and moving statement yesterday afternoon of the tragic events that took place at Cotonou. The treachery of that mad undertaking was matched only by its cynicism.

103. Although the People's Armed Forces and the militant people of Benin were swift in their response, there was a

heavy toll: seven patriots were killed and a number of public buildings were damaged. My delegation wishes to pay here a heartfelt tribute to the ardent militants of Benin, soldiers of peace and freedom, who gave their lives in the line of duty. We bow respectfully to their memory and we say that their sacrifice will not have been in vain. They have joined in history our immortals: Kings Behanzin, Samory Touré, El Hadji Oumar and other distinguished sons of our continent who symbolize for ever Africa's resistance to foreign occupation. All honour and glory go to the militant people of the People's Republic of Benin who rallied spontaneously behind their party in the vanguard, the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin, and their distinguished leader, President Mathieu Kerekou, and put down that armed conspiracy by mercenaries against the independence and sovereignty of their country.

104. The aggression carried out against the African country of Benin is certainly not an isolated act. It is most assuredly part of a vast undertaking of colonial reconquest organized by those who yearn for a return to the past. We recall that the use of European mercenaries first occurred on the African continent in the early 1960s and that mercenaries have been involved in all the upheavals that have shaken Africa since that time. From Katanga to Benin, via Bukavu in Zaire, in November 1967, Biafra in 1968, the Republic of Guinea on 22 November 1970, Angola in 1975 and Southern Rhodesia and many other places, the Bob Denards, the Steiners, the Schramms and their soldiers of fortune achieved notoriety through their odious crimes committed in cold blood against peace-loving African peoples.

105. But the case of the People's Republic of Benin is particularly surprising in that that country is not at war with any other country nor is there any internal strife within that country. Mobilized behind its vanguard party, the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin, and its distinguished leader, President Mathieu Kerekou, the militant people of Benin have been working since 30 November 1972 to build a democratic society that cherishes peace and justice and one that maintains friendly relations with all countries that respect its sovereignty and independence.

106. Where, today, are those who pleaded in this Council in November 1967 to reduce the charges against the mercenaries who were surrounded at Bukavu in Zaire? Where, today, are those who so conveniently referred to a humanitarian spirit in their appeal for clemency from Africa and, in particular, from the Presidents of Zaire and of Rwanda, which were the countries primarily involved?

107. Everyone is quite familiar with the subsequent course of events. The mercenaries were freed and repatriated by the International Red Cross to Europe from which they immediately departed before the very eyes of the authorities of their countries of origin and went to Nigeria, to support efforts at secession by the rebel province of Biafra. Nothing was done to stop them. Just as in the case of the act of aggression against the People's Republic of Benin, no voice was raised to condemn them, or even to sympathize with the African peoples that were victims of their crimes, whereas, in the case of individual acts such as the taking of hostages or the hijacking of aircraft, which we of course

condemn, whole foreign ministries swing into action, public opinion is alerted and even wooed at considerable expense by the self-same Governments.

108. Africans, however, are no fools. We do not wish to say that there is a certain brand of racism behind all this, nor do we wish to interpret this lack of response as a kind of conspiracy of silence. But we wish to proclaim clearly that acts of aggression against independent peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin, must move us all much more than individual common-law crimes. As was declared in the General Assembly on a number of occasions by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of my country, Colonel Charles Samba Cissokho, the détente advocated for Europe will not be true détente unless its supporters feel that it must spread to all continents. Because of the law of interdependence which governs our world, peace can be neither local nor regional: it must be widespread—international—or it does not exist.

109. Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, Oceania—the whole world—must condemn the act of aggression committed on 16 January last against the courageous people of Benin, just as they should have condemned the criminal raid in July 1976 against the independence and sovereignty of Uganda.

110. Those tragic events provoked, in fact, untimely mirth in neo-colonialist circles. We regret in that regard the foot-dragging and the attempts that were made to deter the Revolutionary Military Government of Benin from making its complaint.

111. The armed aggression perpetrated against the People's Republic of Benin by a gang of mercenaries is not merely the concern of Africa, even less merely that of Benin. It concerns the entire international community, for this is a case of a serious violation of international peace and security, of which the members of the Council are guarantors. And as has so often been said, only facts count.

112. That is why my delegation urges the Council to respond to the request of the Revolutionary Military Government of Benin and send a special mission to Cotonou to establish the facts on the spot and inquire into all aspects of the aggression, in order to guide the important decisions which the Council will be taking at a subsequent meeting on the substance of the question—namely, on the phenomenon of those gangsters employed against the third world. I am referring, of course, to the use of mercenaries. There is nothing new in the dispatch of such a mission; it is common practice in the Council. It guarantees its impartiality and objectivity in studying the serious questions which are of concern to us today.

113. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Sir, your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February is sincerely welcomed by the delegation of Panama. Your splendid contribution to the work of the United Nations is well known and justly valued. In addition to your gentlemanly courtesy and your style, we admire your political rectitude, and after what happened yesterday we could add an additional virtue: your just sense of time and place, as

shown by the punctual convening of the meeting of the Security Council under your presidency. My country has the best of relations with the United Kingdom, and we wish on this occasion not only to recall the bonds of friendship between our two peoples, but to welcome them and to pledge the full co-operation of Panama in making your tenure of office as successful as possible.

114. We also wish to join the tribute which you, Mr. President, and other representatives have paid to Ambassador Trojanovsky of the Soviet Union on the splendid job he did as President of the Council for the month of January. We repeat once again our conviction that his presence in the United Nations will be a great contribution to peace and international détente.

115. Referring specifically to the agenda item, the delegation of Panama wishes to say that it considers the complaint of the People's Republic of Benin a very serious matter indeed. We listened to the statement of Ambassador Boya [*1986th meeting*] in which he gave a very vivid account of how his country fell victim to a carefully prepared and perpetrated act of aggression on 16 January 1977 against the city of Cotonou. The individuals involved were carefully trained and had ultra-modern military *matériel* at their disposal.

116. Certain features of the act have not been clearly defined, but it is a matter of the utmost gravity, because this represents one new way to undermine the peace and security of States, such as Benin, which are involved in building their own future in harmony with their neighbours and with all other countries of the world.

117. The overriding importance of the event was brought out in the debate by Ambassador Ramphul [*ibid.*], speaking both in his capacity as representative of Mauritius and in that of spokesman of the Organization of African Unity. He stated yesterday that the attack against the integrity of Benin was an attack on Africa as a whole. There is no doubt about that, and I should like to say that not only was it an attack on Africa as a whole, but it could be viewed as directed against all the countries of the third world—against not only the States of Africa, but also of Asia and Latin America. That act was entirely unlawful, immoral and completely unjustified, which is why this matter falls within the competence of the Security Council.

118. In addition to the letters which were received by the Council on 26 January from the delegation of Benin [*S/12278*] and on 4 February from the delegation of Guinea [*S/12281*], I wish to refer in particular to document S/12283, which contains a letter dated 7 February addressed to the President of the Security Council by Ambassador Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe, the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, President of the General Assembly and Chairman of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries.

119. Mr. Amerasinghe, on behalf of the Co-ordinating Bureau, referred to the complaint made to the Security Council by the People's Republic of Benin regarding the act of aggression committed by a commando unit of mercenaries which landed at Cotonou airport on 16 January. That communication is unquestionably of great impor-

tance. It contains a communiqué from the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries in which, after referring to those reprehensible acts, the Co-ordinating Bureau expresses its pleasure at the success of the People's Armed Forces of Benin and the Government of Benin in repulsing the attack and expresses sympathy to the Government of Benin on the loss of life and the damage caused by the commando attack. Those sentiments are shared by my delegation, which wishes to express to the delegation of Benin our heartfelt condolences at the losses suffered. The Co-ordinating Bureau also expresses to the Council its serious concern over the events which took place on Sunday, 16 January. It seems they were part of a plan aimed at undermining the stability of régimes whose policies are viewed with displeasure in certain circles. I believe that is truly the heart of the matter.

120. The Security Council has before it a revised draft resolution [S/12282/Rev.1]. That draft affirms that the territorial integrity and political independence of the People's Republic of Benin must be respected. By its adoption, the Security Council would decide that a special mission should be sent to Benin to investigate the events of 16 January at Cotonou, and that it should report not later than the end of February. The delegation of Panama will vote in favour of the draft, which is entirely justified. We shall do so on the understanding that the draft is based on the complaint by the People's Republic of Benin, that the international community believes that actions by mercenaries are unlawful, contrary to international law and immoral and that they represent methods which should not be used, and that world public opinion should be aware that the Security Council will take vigorous action to see to it that those acts, which are a threat to all developing countries, particularly those of the third world, are eradicated.

121. All members of the Council are aware that an operation of the magnitude of that which took place in Benin requires either the active or passive complicity of the intelligence, police, customs or immigration services, or the armies of constituted States. This matter should be investigated thoroughly so that those who continue to believe that through the use of mercenaries they can do away with self-determination of peoples, will understand that they have no future.

122. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Panama for his reference to the cordial relations between his country and my own. I thank him also for the very kind words he addressed to me.

123. There are no further names on the list of speakers. As no other representative wishes to speak at this stage, the Council will now proceed to consideration of the draft resolution submitted by Benin, the Libyan Arab Republic and Mauritius [S/12282/Rev.1]. As a result of informal consultations, it is my understanding that members of the Council are agreed that the draft resolution may be adopted by consensus, without being put to the vote. Accordingly, if I hear no objection, I shall declare the draft resolution adopted.

The draft resolution was adopted.¹

¹ See resolution 404 (1977).

124. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): On behalf of my African brothers members of the Security Council and sponsors of the draft resolution, I had the honour of introducing yesterday, I wish to thank all members of our Council for their co-operation and understanding in adopting by consensus the draft as revised by the sponsors. In doing so, the Security Council has, first, served the cause of international peace and security and, secondly, taken a decisive step towards the unmasking and condemnation of international mercenaries. Not only was Benin fully justified in alerting the Council and in securing a preliminary decision—namely, the dispatch of a special mission to Cotonou—but it also deserves our appreciation for highlighting the new curse of international mercenaries.

125. As President of the Security Council, Sir, you have played a very important role, with your recognized skill, diplomatic talents and experience. You have shown great patience, commendable courtesy and integrity, and we thank you very much indeed.

126. During the debate several speakers referred to what appeared to them to be an unwillingness on the part of some unidentified members of the Security Council to meet Benin's request, members who seemingly held the view that the matter would better be dealt with by the Organization of African Unity. In this connexion, I wish at this stage to inform the Council that I communicated with the current President of the Organization of African Unity, the Rt. Hon. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who informed me that "no harm could ensue if debate were initiated in the Security Council". We have now dealt with the first phase of the matter. We anxiously await the report of the Special Mission.

127. Mr. President, at the beginning of this debate I intentionally refrained from expressing the traditional compliments to the presidency. That was not out of a lack of courtesy or of respect, but rather out of a fear that any compliments from one member of the Commonwealth to another, especially to the United Kingdom, might give rise to some suspicion of collusion should things not go well for the regional group to which I belong. Nor did I want any compliments from me to you, Sir, to be interpreted by you as a form of bribery or corruption to serve the cause of Africa, though of course I am not suggesting that you are open to bribery and corruption. However, now that you have discharged with flying colours your difficult and delicate duties so far as the first phase of action following Benin's complaint is concerned, I wish to state that it has given me great pleasure to work under your presidency.

128. I say, this, Sir, because since 1810, with the exception of a few years, and until its independence in 1968, the British Crown Colony of Mauritius was governed by British Governors of Scottish birth, a fact which led me to believe that the best exports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were definitely the scotch and the Scot. The Scots are certainly great soldiers, administrators and diplomats. I am happy, however, that they have ceased to govern me and that I participated in the work of this Council as the representative of an independent and sovereign country ruled by a democratically-elected Government with a socialist vocation. Who knows,

perhaps the brave Scots, too, will one day free themselves. If such is your wish, Sir, I wish you the best of British luck.

129. Mr. President, I join you and your delegation in rejoicing in the celebration of the jubilee of the reign of our most gracious Queen, Elizabeth II, even if Mauritius seems to be on the eve of becoming a republic.

130. The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mauritius for his good wishes to my country on the occasion of the Queen's anniversary, and I note with satisfaction that he has gone on record as saying that I am not open to bribery.

131. I have noted that, in accordance with paragraph 3 of the resolution we have just adopted, the Security Council

"Decides that the members of the Special Mission will be appointed after consultations between the President and the members of the Security Council".

I shall begin consultations with the members of the Council on this forthwith and shall keep members informed of progress.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

كيفية الحصول على منشورات الأمم المتحدة

يمكن الحصول على منشورات الأمم المتحدة من المكتبات ودور التوزيع في جميع أنحاء العالم. استعلم عنها من المكتبة التي تتعامل معها أو اكتب إلى : الأمم المتحدة، قسم البيع في نيويورك أو في جنيف.

如何购取联合国出版物

联合国出版物在全世界各地的书店和经售处均有发售。请向书店询问或写信到纽约或日内瓦的联合国销售组。

HOW TO OBTAIN UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS

United Nations publications may be obtained from bookstores and distributors throughout the world. Consult your bookstore or write to: United Nations, Sales Section, New York or Geneva.

COMMENT SE PROCURER LES PUBLICATIONS DES NATIONS UNIES

Les publications des Nations Unies sont en vente dans les librairies et les agences dépositaires du monde entier. Informez-vous auprès de votre libraire ou adressez-vous à : Nations Unies, Section des ventes, New York ou Genève.

КАК ПОЛУЧИТЬ ИЗДАНИЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ

Издания Организации Объединенных Наций можно купить в книжных магазинах и агентствах во всех районах мира. Наводите справки об изданиях в вашем книжном магазине или пишите по адресу: Организация Объединенных Наций, Секция по продаже изданий, Нью-Йорк или Женева.

COMO CONSEGUIR PUBLICACIONES DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

Las publicaciones de las Naciones Unidas están en venta en librerías y casas distribuidoras en todas partes del mundo. Consulte a su librero o diríjase a: Naciones Unidas, Sección de Ventas, Nueva York o Ginebra.
