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FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 9 September 1970, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Davidson S. H. W. NICOL
(Sierra Leone).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Burundi, China, Colombia, Finland, France, Nepal, Nicaragua, Poland, Sierra Leone, Spain, Syria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zambia.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1552/Rev.1)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. The situation created by increasing incidents involving the hijacking of commercial aircraft:
 - (a) Letter dated 9 September 1970 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/9931);
 - (b) Letter dated 9 September 1970 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/9932).

Statement by the President

1. The PRESIDENT: Before we proceed to the adoption of the agenda, I should like to take this opportunity of apologizing to members for the lateness of the starting of this meeting. Members are all aware of the extensive consultations which have been going on in order to ensure that the wishes of all parties concerned are met. Members are also aware of the enormous gravity of the situation with which we are faced, and I hope they will be indulgent enough to forgive us for beginning the meeting so much later than scheduled.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation created by increasing incidents involving the hijacking of commercial aircraft:

- (a) Letter dated 9 September 1970 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/9931);

- (b) Letter dated 9 September 1970 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/9932)

2. Mr. JAKOBSON (Finland): In view of the urgency of the situation with which we are dealing, and considering that we have had lengthy consultations in which, as I understand it, a consensus has been reached, I should like to put to the Security Council a formal motion that we now decide to adopt that consensus immediately and then adjourn without any debate.

3. The PRESIDENT: The representative of Finland has put to the Council a motion that the consensus that has been agreed upon after extensive consultations should be adopted and that after that the meeting should be adjourned. I think that this is a step which calls for an expression of the wishes of members of the Council. If I do not hear any objection to that motion, I shall take it that it is approved.

It was so decided.

4. The Council is meeting today at the request of the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom. I received this morning their written communications requesting an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation created by increasing incidents involving the hijacking of commercial aircraft engaged in international commerce and the threat to the lives of innocent travellers. Those communications are before the members of the Council in documents S/9931 and S/9932.

5. On the basis of those communications, I immediately started consulting the members of the Council and all of them agreed that the Council should meet as soon as possible in view of the extreme urgency of the matter.

6. The matter is one which is of the utmost gravity and which is of concern to all humanity. I am certain that when the lives of so many are at stake and when the reputations of so many important countries and well-known movements are concerned, the members of the Security Council have clearly in mind that humanitarian considerations should be foremost.

7. I know that important principles are involved which cannot be solved in a day's debate, but I also know that I speak for many when I appeal to those

concerned to spare the lives of innocent men, women and children who are not involved in a state of war and who are travelling in the peaceful pursuit of their private lives and existence.

8. We do not intend to solve the problems of this area, the Middle East, this afternoon. We recognize that there have been many past wrongs in that area. We are all anxious that they should be corrected. We should like to appeal, more immediately today, that those passengers and crews—and when I say “passengers”, I mean all passengers aboard aircraft who have purchased tickets and are in the aircraft, who are being held as a result of hijackings or interference during international travel—should be released and allowed to go free and unharmed.

9. The climate of international opinion has never been more favourable for a just solution to the problems of the Middle East. It should be our business to see that everything should be done to enhance it.

10. Members of the Council have before them, in the document already circulated [S/9933/Rev.1 and Corr.1], a text which has been arrived at after extensive consultations. In its fairness and humanity it appears to me to be one which, if acted upon today, will bring great credit to all concerned, in the Middle East and in fact throughout the world. The text reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

“Gravely concerned at the threat to innocent civilian lives from the hijacking of aircraft and any other interference in international travel,

“1. Appeals to all parties concerned for the immediate release of all passengers and crews without exception, held as a result of hijackings and other interference in international travel;

“2. Calls on States to take all possible legal steps to prevent further hijackings or any other interference with international civil air travel.”

11. After extensive consultations, a consensus has been arrived at on the text which I have just read out. It is our earnest hope that it will be adopted without voting.

12. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the draft resolution is adopted.

The draft resolution was adopted.¹

13. In conformity with the agreement that was reached earlier, before I began this statement, I declare the meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

¹ See resolution 286 (1970).

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