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NOTE

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2314th MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 15 December 1981, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Olara A. OTUNNU (Uganda).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, France, German Democratic Republic, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Niger, Panama, Philippines, Spain, Tunisia, Uganda, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2314)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Complaint by Seychelles:

Letter dated 8 December 1981 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1783)

The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Seychelles:

Letter dated 8 December 1981 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/14783)

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Seychelles and Botswana in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Gonthier (Seychelles) took a place at the Council table and Mr. Legwaila (Botswana) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT: The Council is meeting in response to the letter dated 8 December from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles addressed to the President of the Council and contained in document S/14783.

3. I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/14769 and Corr.1, letter dated 26 November from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles addressed to the Secretary-General, and S/14777, letter dated 1 December from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles addressed to the Secretary-General. Members of the Council have before them document S/14793, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

4. The first speaker is the representative of Seychelles, on whom I now call.

5. Ms. GONTHIER (Seychelles): Mr. President, first of all, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Seychelles and on my own behalf, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to you and to the members of the Council for having promptly agreed to hear the request made by the Government of the Republic of Seychelles.

6. I wish to congratulate last month's President of the Council, Ambassador Slim of Tunisia, for a job well done under trying circumstances.

7. In regard to you, Mr. President, we are enormously gratified to see a fellow African so ably directing the work of the Council. As a fellow East African, I was delighted to have spent two years of my childhood among the beautiful green hills of your country, which reminded me of my main island in Seychelles. What was more confusing to me then was my having to be constantly reminded by my parents that Lake Victoria was not the Indian Ocean. I felt at home in Uganda, and having you in the presidency today makes me feel among friends.

8. As we turn to the real Indian Ocean, I should like to take this opportunity to explain to the Council recent events in the Republic of Seychelles since 25 November, events which violated our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

9. At 1430 hours Greenwich mean time on 25 November, a group of 44 foreign mercenaries landed at Seychelles International Airport on board a scheduled flight of the Royal Air Swazi airline via Comoros. Royal Air Swazi has confirmed that the mercenaries arrived at Matsapha Airport in Swaziland by coach from South

Africa, posing as members of a sports club. The mercenaries disembarked in the Republic of Seychelles posing as members of a beer-drinking convention. As they went through customs, a customs officer detected a false-bottomed bag containing a sub-machine gun. In view of the fact that all members of the group were carrying more or less similar pieces of luggage, the security forces were alerted and the buses which were supposed to take the group to their hotel were ordered not to move. Once the mercenaries realized that their plot had been foiled, they immediately unpacked their weapons and took over control of the airport, including the air traffic control tower. They also took everyone at the airport—a total of 70 people—as hostages.

10. The defence forces of Seychelles then moved into position and contained the mercenaries at the airport. The mercenaries then ordered a scheduled Air India Boeing 707 to land as if nothing were amiss. The defence forces of Seychelles tried to warn the Air India pilot by firing red pyrotechnic flares across the final approach path, but the aircraft landed upon the instructions of the mercenaries, who were controlling the tower. The mercenaries, faced with defeat, then hijacked the aircraft and ordered the pilot to take them to Durban, South Africa, with all passengers on board. In all, 43 mercenaries left on the aircraft for Durban, taking with them one dead. Two were seriously wounded. Left behind were members of the rear guard of the mercenary force, some of whom had infiltrated the country prior to the arrival of the group of 44 and who took part in the fighting and then fled in panic to the mountains. Again, all were foreigners. Six mercenaries have been captured and detained.

11. The 25 November mercenary attack resulted in loss of life, injuries, considerable hardship to the hostages held at the airport, to the passengers on board the hijacked Air India flight and to the whole population of Seychelles, who had to face the rigours of an armed invasion of our country. Extensive damage has also been caused to the airport facilities, control tower, various buildings, grounds and runway facilities, and there have been serious repercussions on the performance of our economy, estimated at around \$30 million, not taking into account, for the time being, the structural damage, owing to the unavailability of experts.

12. There is every reason to believe that South Africa may have been involved in the aggression. One element of proof is that despite the fact that the régime of South Africa is a party to both the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on 23 September 1971,¹ and the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at the Hague on 16 December 1970,² South Africa has blatantly violated the regulations established by those conventions.

13. Furthermore, at the time the hijacked Air India aircraft arrived in South Africa, the South African

régime informed the world that the hijackers of the aircraft, which was brought to South Africa on 26 November, had been taken into custody in South Africa and would be dealt with according to South African legislation—its own stringent anti-hijacking laws—and according to the conventions which I have just mentioned. Yet, only five of the mercenaries were charged with kidnapping and released on trivial bail, while 39 others were set free without being charged, despite the request by the Government of the Republic of Seychelles for the mercenaries to be returned to Seychelles to stand trial by an international tribunal appointed by the United Nations.

14. This in brief is an outline of the situation as we know it as of now.

15. My Government has requested the urgent convening of the Council to request it to establish an international commission of inquiry, to be composed of three members of the Council, the terms of reference of which will be to investigate the origin, background and financing of the 25 November mercenary invasion of the Republic of Seychelles, as well as to assess and evaluate economic damage and report to the Council with appropriate recommendations not later than 31 January 1982. We are convinced that the commission will be able to gather incontrovertible evidence that will enable it to indict all those involved in this criminal act.

16. The South African régime's own actions to date show that it may have had a hand in the organization of the invasion. In this regard, the absence of a categorical condemnation of the Pretoria régime by the Council in no way exonerates that régime of any responsibility for contravening the norms of international law.

17. Mr. President, on behalf of the peace-loving people and Government of the Republic of Seychelles I should like to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to you and to all members of the Council and to the Secretariat for the manifestation of solidarity and kind assistance rendered to us during Seychelles' most critical moment in its history since the attainment of independence.

18. After the facts have been ascertained, we are convinced that the Council will pass the necessary judgement and condemnation and initiate the necessary action. We do, however, reserve the right to bring the matter again before the Council should the situation warrant it.

19. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Botswana who wishes to make a statement in his capacity as the Chairman of the African Group of States at the United Nations for the month of December. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

20. Mr. LEGWAILA (Botswana): On 3 December, the African Group issued a statement deprecating the recent invasion of the Republic of Seychelles by a group of mercenaries who originated in South Africa. Indeed, there were 23 South Africans in the group.

21. It is an established fact that, their attempt to overthrow the legitimate Government of Seychelles having been thwarted by the vigilant armed forces of that African republic, the mercenaries hijacked an Air India civilian plane back to South Africa—the place of their origin. Although it cannot be said that the 44 so-called dogs of fortune or misfortune were received with a great deal of fanfare in Durban, the fact remains that as we meet here today they are as free as they have ever been. Even the five of them who are said to have been released on bail left the court in style, on their release—by a helicopter, it is reported, which flew them to a wealthy friend's residence in the suburbs of Johannesburg, for a celebration, I suppose.

22. It is not our intention to prejudge the issue. It is not our wish simply to rest content with empty bluster and emotion-laden rhetoric. Indeed, it is not our intention to turn this meeting into an anti-South Africa festival. But we have every reason to wonder very seriously indeed whether South Africa did not have a role in the planning of the mercenary invasion of the Republic of Seychelles on 25 November. We possess no concrete evidence at this juncture to suggest that the mercenaries were sent to Seychelles by the Government of South Africa. But we have many questions to ask South Africa, and we hope that South Africa will answer them.

23. First, why were the mercenaries released so quickly despite the fact that they had arrived back in South Africa on a plane they had forced to fly to South Africa?

24. Secondly, why were South Africa's stringent so-called anti-terrorist laws not invoked against the mercenaries, at least to punish them for the act of hijacking evidenced by the presence of an Air India plane in Durban of all places?

25. Thirdly, did South Africa really think that the pilot of the Air India plane simply decided to fly to Durban for fun?

26. Fourthly, was the presence on the aircraft of armed men not enough evidence to suggest that the pilot could not have flown his plane to South Africa of his own volition?

27. Fifthly, was the pilot ever asked to tell his story and to explain, in particular, why he had armed men on his plane?

28. Sixthly, and most importantly, we have every reason to want to know why the mercenaries were so elated to be back in South Africa, where they knew

only too well that they could easily be sent to 30 years' imprisonment for their damnable act of terrorism.

29. Surely South Africa cannot escape the fact that by its extremely irregular behaviour on this matter it has invited even its friends to cast serious doubts and suspicion on its protestations of innocence. South Africa knows only too well that Air India could not have simply decided to fly to South Africa for nothing. It had to be hijacked there—and hijacking is a very grave crime in South Africa. Yet, we are told that in one court appearance 39 mercenaries had to be released unconditionally because there was no evidence of wrongdoing against them. Even the five who are said to have been released on bail may never be tried, or, if they are tried, the verdict can almost be predicted.

30. It is important that the real truth of what happened in the Republic of Seychelles on 25 November be known in all its dimensions. A thorough investigation should be instituted as soon as possible with a view to digging out the facts on the basis of which the consequences of the invasion of Seychelles by those mercenaries could be understood and dealt with. The participants in that damnable act are known; South Africa has the list of their names and addresses of their homes, which are in South Africa. What remains to be ascertained are the authors of the act, the evil sponsors of the diabolic attempt to overthrow the legitimate Government of the Republic of Seychelles.

31. We are, in other words, imploring this Council to set up a commission of inquiry to visit the Republic of Seychelles and wherever the information may be found as soon as possible to find out what happened on 25 November. The commission should, *inter alia*, assess the economic damages wrought by the invasion and make the necessary recommendations for their alleviation. There should be no cover-up. Seychelles' victory in repulsing this criminal mercenary invasion is an encouragement for all of Africa and all others that are threatened by the scourge of mercenaries.

32. I should like to end by performing a pleasant duty, that of extending to you, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of December. Your capabilities are of course beyond reproach and there is no need for me to say more. The same sentiments go to your predecessor, Ambassador Slim of Tunisia, who also acquitted himself admirably as President of the Council for November.

33. The PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution which is before it [S/14793]. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously (resolution 496 (1981)).

34. The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

35. Mr. NISIBORI (Japan): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has formally spoken in a meeting of the Council this month, allow me at the outset to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency for December. We have already had occasion to witness the great diplomatic skill, wisdom and insight you bring to your office. My delegation particularly appreciates your tireless efforts which succeeded in breaking the deadlock so that a Secretary-General could be elected in a fair manner and in a very short period of time after you had assumed your high office. My delegation trusts that under your presidency we shall be able to dispose of the diverse questions still before us with equal success and efficiency. My delegation, for its part, will continue to render its full co-operation in your efforts during this particularly busy month.

36. I should like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's deep appreciation to Mr. Slim for the excellent manner in which he conducted the business of the Council during the difficult month of November.

37. According to reports and the detailed statement we have just heard from the representative of the Republic of Seychelles, on 25 November a group of 44 mercenaries arrived at the international airport of Seychelles and, in a violent but unsuccessful attempt to topple the Government, caused material damage and human injury and then fled the country.

38. My delegation regards this as an extremely regrettable incident. We condemn this act of terrorism, which appears to involve a clear violation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Seychelles and a threat to its political independence.

39. It is also reported that before they fled the terrorists took a number of civilian hostages. This too should be condemned by the international community, which in recent years has been making great efforts, particularly through the United Nations, for the prevention and control of acts of hostage-taking.

40. The terrorists furthermore forcibly seized and took control of a civilian aircraft, in which they fled to South Africa. As a party to the Tokyo,¹ the Hague and the Montreal Conventions relating to acts of terrorism on board or against aircrafts, my Government is seriously concerned by this latest unlawful seizure of an aircraft.

41. Those are my delegation's preliminary comments on the events of 25 November. It appears, however, that there are a number of factual uncertainties surrounding the incident, and before the Council can determine which measures would be most appropriate it is essential that all relevant facts be presented to its members. Thus my delegation whole-heartedly

supports the idea of setting up a commission of inquiry to investigate the facts and has just voted in favour of the draft resolution to that effect.

42. My Government has in various forums of the United Nations repeatedly stressed that the fact-finding capacity of some of its organs, including the Security Council, should be strengthened in order to enhance the effective performance of their functions in the maintenance of international peace and security as well as in the peaceful settlement of disputes. A recent example of such an appeal was the statement made by Mr. Sonoda, then Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly.⁴ At the 1980 session of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, my delegation submitted a working paper⁵ on this question which set out certain specific measures to put these ideas into practice.

43. Before concluding, let me express my sincere hope that the Commission of inquiry just established will perform its duties successfully and in an expeditious manner and that in so doing it will have the full co-operation of all concerned.

44. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): Mr. President, first of all I should like to say a few words to you. You do not need any compliments because you have already won yourself great authority and the admiration of all at the way in which you have performed the functions of representative of Uganda and now those of President of the Council. Under your assured and skilful leadership the Council has already performed the most important task of electing a Secretary-General of the Organization. The Soviet delegation wishes you many new successes in your post as President.

45. We should also like to mention the great qualities displayed by your predecessor in that post, the representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Slim.

46. The delegation of the Soviet Union voted in favour of the draft resolution just adopted by the Council, which vigorously condemns the recent act of aggression committed by mercenaries against the Republic of Seychelles. We were guided in this by the facts that were so convincingly set forth by the representative of Seychelles at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 4 December⁶ and here today in the Council.

47. Those facts are as follows: an incursion by a group of mercenaries into the territory of a sovereign State Member of the United Nations, armed actions by that group on the territory of that State, actions that took human life and cause serious material damage, and the seizure by the mercenaries of a civilian aircraft belonging to another State and their hijacking it to South Africa.

48. The Soviet Union supports the decision to send a commission of inquiry of the Council having the task of determining the origin, background and financing of the act of aggression committed by the mercenaries on 25 November and of assessing and evaluating the economic damage caused.

49. The naked act of provocation committed against Seychelles is a violation of the universally recognized norms and principles of international law and a further manifestation of the policy of international terrorism pursued by imperialist circles against young independent States that have embarked on a course of independent national development. This dangerous military adventure not only is a violation of the sovereignty of Seychelles but also represents a serious threat to international peace and security.

50. The delegation of the Soviet Union cannot fail to note that the gangster raid was carried out at a time when the General Assembly was considering the question of working out an international convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries. It was precisely at the time that the United Nations was undertaking measures to rid the developing countries of the scourge of mercenaries that yet another African country found itself having to fight mercenaries in order to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and its chosen policy of political, economic and social development.

51. Speaking in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the representative of Seychelles stressed with every justification:

"Certain people continue to harbour evil designs on the Seychelles—to seize this independent African country physically and transform it into a client State in order to use it as a base for subversion and aggression against free Africa, encircle the front-line States and tighten the stranglehold of the forces of imperialism over the Indian Ocean."

52. The Soviet Union declares its solidarity with, and support for, the people of Seychelles, who displayed valour and coolness. The People's Defence Forces of Seychelles displayed a high degree of vigilance and swiftly routed the gangs of armed mercenaries, thus defending the sovereignty and the security of their State.

53. From the bottom of our hearts we wish the friendly Republic of Seychelles success in its chosen course of constructing a new society in conditions of peace and tranquillity.

54. The delegation of the Soviet Union expresses its conviction that the Security Council will, upon receiving the report of the commission of inquiry, take the necessary measures not only to defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Seychelles but also to prevent any acts of international terrorism carried out

by means of mercenaries against the independence of developing States Members of the United Nations.

55. Mr. LING Qing (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): On 25 November, a group of mercenaries from South Africa arrived by foreign commercial flight at the island of Mahé, the main island of Seychelles, in an attempt to take over the international airport of Seychelles and stage a military coup to subvert the Government. After intensive fighting, the armed forces of Seychelles crushed the invasion plot of the mercenaries, some of whom fled in panic to South Africa in a hijacked aircraft. Disregarding the request made by the Republic of Seychelles to have the mercenaries handed over for trial and breaching the law concerning the prevention of air hijacking, the South African authorities set all the mercenaries free.

56. The invasion of Seychelles by mercenaries is a serious incident which violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and poses a grave threat to the sovereignty and security of an independent State. The Chinese Government and people have always firmly supported the just struggles waged by African countries and peoples in defence of national independence, State sovereignty and territorial integrity. On 1 December, Zhao Ziyang, Prime Minister of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, sent a message to President France Albert René of the Republic of Seychelles expressing congratulations on and support for the victory of the Government and people of Seychelles in crushing the invasion by the mercenaries from South Africa. The message pointed out that "All criminal acts of invasion of independent African States through foreign mercenaries are doomed to failure."

57. The Chinese Government is convinced that, with the support of all justice-upholding countries and peoples of the world, the people of Seychelles will certainly achieve new success in their struggle against aggression and subversion from outside and for the safeguarding of national independence and security.

58. In conclusion, the Chinese delegation is of the view that the Council should strongly condemn the invasion of Seychelles by armed mercenaries from South Africa. We cast an affirmative vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/14793.

59. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for December. We have had occasion to familiarize ourselves with your rich diplomatic experience, your capacities and your energy. They will all promote the completion by the Security Council of the important work before it. I am happy to greet in you, Mr. President, the representative of an African State with which the German Democratic Republic maintains friendly relations.

60. Permit me also to express my gratitude to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Slim, for the hard work that he did as President of the Council in November.

61. In the letter of the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles of 8 December 1981, the Council was informed that on 25 November there had been an armed attack on Seychelles. In her statement, the representative of Seychelles has provided detailed information about that act of aggression. We learned from this information that on 25 November a serious act of military aggression had been committed against the Republic of Seychelles, in the course of which a large group of heavily armed mercenaries invaded the international airport of that country but was repelled by the defence forces of Seychelles.

62. It is not the first time that that kind of attack by mercenaries has been carried out against an independent sovereign State. I recall, for example, the aggression against Benin in 1977, a question with which the Council dealt.

63. The motive behind these acts by mercenary gangs certainly was not a thirst for adventure. Behind these acts lie the interests of influential political and financial circles. These gangs are financed, supported and maintained by forces with an interest in destabilizing régimes which are exercising their independence and which have decided to pursue an independent course of development. The mercenaries who committed the attack against Seychelles came from South Africa, where they fled, after the failure of their invasion, by hijacking an aircraft with passengers on board. It is typical that the South African régime set them free.

64. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic vigorously condemns the treacherous attack on the Republic of Seychelles. The Council should duly respond to the serious threat to international peace and security and condemn the act of aggression. The invasion of Seychelles by the mercenaries once again stresses the need for the urgent adoption by the United Nations of a convention against the recruitment of mercenaries.

65. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic supports the proposal contained in the statement of the representative of Seychelles for the sending to that country of a commission of inquiry which would submit to the Council a report on the aggression and its consequences. For this reason, we voted in favour of the resolution just adopted.

66. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government and people of Seychelles on their successful repulsion of the aggression and to assure them of the solidarity of the German Democratic Republic.

67. Mr. LOUET (France) (*interpretation from French*): Sir, I should like to express my sincerest thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Slim, who presided over our work last month with wisdom and competence. May I also tell you how pleased my delegation is to see you assuming the presidency of the Council at the end of this year. Your knowledge of the facts before us and your skill are recognized by all, and we know that you will continue successfully to guide our work.

68. The French delegation listened most attentively to the statement of the representative of Seychelles. France is particularly devoted to respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of States, regardless of their size or geographical situation, as well as to non-interference in their internal affairs. Those principles, which are among the main pillars of our foreign policy, must suffer no exception. Moreover, France has condemned any form of mercenary activity—anywhere, any time and under any circumstances.

69. That is why France unreservedly condemns the armed attack committed by mercenaries on 25 November 1981 against the Republic of Seychelles and why it wishes to assure the Government and people of the Republic of Seychelles, with which it maintains close relations of friendship and co-operation, of its wholehearted sympathy and support.

70. My delegation is wholly in favour of sending to Seychelles a commission of inquiry composed of members of the Security Council to prepare a report on the events and make recommendations to the Council. That is why we voted in favour of the draft resolution just adopted by the Council.

71. Mr. MUÑOZ LEDO (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Sir, at this first public meeting for the month of December, I could not fail to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We are all gratified to have your firm and brilliant guidance both in the difficult political circumstances that, thanks to you, we have been able to overcome, and in the situation that is before us at the present time. We should also like to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Slim of Tunisia for his very persevering and excellent work during the month of November.

72. All members of the Council have been concerned over the complaint put before us by the Government of the Republic of Seychelles concerning an attack by mercenaries from abroad affecting the territorial integrity of that country and threatening its political independence.

73. The Mexican delegation has thoroughly studied this issue and agrees with other delegations that it deserves an immediate response on our part. We should lose the trust of the international community were we

not to react speedily and firmly to acts of aggression of this type.

74. The Republic of Seychelles, like many other States Members of the Organization, is a vulnerable country whose best defence is found in the Charter and in the machinery provided by it to give due protection to States which, as in the case now before us, suffer interference in their internal affairs.

75. In accordance with the initial evidence submitted, the aggression that we are now considering is part of a framework of a long chain of attacks from South Africa which have affected neighbouring countries. Now it seems to be extending to archipelagos through the use of mercenaries in what may constitute a geographical expansion of what the Pretoria régime considers, against all principles, as its national security zone.

76. That is why the Council has clearly pronounced itself and why it must take appropriate action to clarify the facts so that once those responsible are identified, needed decisions can be applied in keeping with the gravity of the events that have occurred and the threat they may represent to international peace and security.

77. I wonder whether we are not facing a dangerous modality of international terrorism, a long-distance one, which if tolerated may put at risk the integrity of many States.

78. The resolution that we have just unanimously adopted reflects a growing awareness on the part of the Council of the dangers posed by the impunity with which some constantly violate international legality. In that sense, our resolution bears witness to a positive evolution in the Council that should be strengthened so as to make us really ready to resolve, thoroughly and at its origin, the problem of southern Africa.

79. Mrs. KIRKPATRICK (United States of America): Mr. President, let me begin by saying very briefly, as I have told you privately, that I personally and the United States Government are grateful to you for the marvellous job that you did to expedite our selection of a Secretary-General and the skill with which you ordered and led us during that difficult period.

80. We should like also to thank the previous President of the Council, the representative of Tunisia, whose work with this Council during a difficult and stubborn phase of our activities was also, we think, marked by high competence and to whom we are also grateful.

81. Very briefly I should like to say that the United States Government has joined the consensus on this draft resolution, but, as I stated yesterday, we believe that this resolution poses questions of a more general sort, which we think the Council should in fact take cognizance of and reflect on.

82. We believe that there is a question as to whether this intervention is a purely internal affair. The answer is apparently "no". Were it a purely internal affair, presumably we would not be engaged in proposing a commission of inquiry.

83. But if it is not a purely internal affair and involves another State—and that is the assumption on which the resolution is based—are we then perhaps prejudging the very question which a commission of inquiry may be established to investigate?

84. Our third question is as follows: is it always legitimate for a Government which survives an attempted coup to seek an investigation in the United Nations, and perhaps redress? What about a Government that does not survive a coup? Could it seek an inquiry from the Security Council, and damages?

85. As I have said, we have already supported the resolution, but we do believe that the Security Council, like the General Assembly and all other bodies, should always take care to think beyond the specific case to the implications of a specific action for future activities. We therefore invite our colleagues to consider with us these questions for the future.

86. Sir Anthony PARSONS (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I had the occasion to congratulate you with great sincerity at a closed meeting last Friday and subsequently, more privately, in the darkness outside the General Assembly building. It gives me great pleasure in a public session like this to renew my congratulations on the way you have managed our affairs this month. At the same time, I should like with equal sincerity to thank my very good friend Ambassador Slim of Tunisia for the tenacity and perseverance with which he constructed the edifice of our work during the previous month.

87. Immediately after the attempted coup in Seychelles, my Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Lord Carrington, sent a message to the Government of Seychelles expressing the United Kingdom Government's concern at the recent events there and deploring the attack on Mahé airport. We condemn that violent act, and we extend to the Government of Seychelles our sympathy for the loss of life and the damage done.

88. We also condemn the mercenaries involved, both for their attack on the airport and for the manner of their escape from Seychelles.

89. My delegation supported the resolution which the Council has just adopted. We think it entirely appropriate that the Council should respond to the request of the Government of Seychelles in this way and we support the early dispatch of a commission of inquiry to investigate the events of 25 November.

90. I should also mention that my Government will make every effort to render assistance to the Govern-

ment of Seychelles in making good the damage done. My Government has undertaken to implement immediately the 1980 agreement on supplementary British aid to Seychelles to the amount of £1.5 million. My Government has also informed the Government of Seychelles that it will look sympathetically at any request for assistance in repairing the damage done to Mahé airport.

91. Our thoughts 've been with the Government and people of Seychelles at this difficult time, and we hope that the action the Council has taken today and the early dispatch of the commission of inquiry will help them fully to clear up this atrocious episode.

92. Mr. OUMAROU (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, permit me first of all to convey to you my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of December. Your distinguishing qualities have been unanimously recognized and appreciated and I am happy to have this opportunity to express the great joy I feel at seeing one more son of Africa honouring that continent with talent, honour and dignity.

93. Uganda, which you so well represent here and with which my country shares the same ideals and concerns in the Organization of African Unity, in the Islamic Conference and in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, can take pride in having given to the Organization and to the Security Council a brilliant diplomat, a man of balanced and lucid judgement. You succeed another African, our brother Ambassador Slim of Tunisia, whose wisdom and expertise did so much to help our work in November, when we were considering the delicate question of a recommendation from the Council on the election of a Secretary-General of the United Nations. I should like to convey to him the sincere appreciation of my delegation for the work he did.

94. The events in Seychelles are terrifying and inadmissible in that they are an armed attempt to overthrow an established Government, a violation of the territorial integrity of a sovereign State and an attempt to destabilize a peaceful country devoted entirely to the concerns of development. Those events were also conceived, prepared and executed thanks to mercenaries who had been recruited, financed, trained and armed abroad who, outrageously, found refuge abroad after having hijacked a civilian aircraft.

95. For all those reasons, Niger denounces them and strongly condemns that act. We consider it appropriate therefore that a commission of inquiry be sent to Seychelles to investigate the events there in order to determine rapidly what subsequent action the Council should envisage in this serious matter. It is good that the Council came to a unanimous decision along those lines in the resolution it has just adopted.

96. Mr. DORR (Ireland): Mr. President, it is a traditional courtesy in the Council to congratulate the

current President and to thank his predecessor. I am sure that this established courtesy is always well meant. But in the present case, I offer you my congratulations with very great sincerity. I think we owe a great deal to you for the way in which you have handled the important business of the Council to date, and I believe that this augurs well for the remaining half of the month of December, in which our business will rest in your care as President.

97. I should also like to thank very sincerely my friend and colleague Ambassador Slim of Tunisia, who handled the business with great dispatch during his term as President and, if I may say so, prepared the ground for the work which we have already accomplished in this month of December.

98. The representative of Seychelles and others have recounted before the Council the circumstances which led the Government of Seychelles to have recourse to the Council. I do not need to repeat those points here. I would simply say that we have before us a letter and a request which refer to a threat to international peace and security and an attack on a small country.

99. We see those events not simply as an attempted *coup d'état*, but specifically as an attack from outside on a State Member. The specific aspects which cause us concern are that this appears to have been an attack from outside; it involved the use of mercenaries; it involved a hijacking; and it was directed at a small State which is particularly vulnerable to such an attack. It is true that the numbers involved may appear small, but proportionately—that is to say, in proportion to the size of the country—this was a major attack.

100. We have heard the request of the Government of Seychelles and we commend the approach that that Government has taken in having recourse to the Council. It first had recourse to the Council and it then requested, in a moderate manner, that the Council establish a commission to ascertain the facts. We therefore have voted in favour of the resolution which the Council has just adopted, and we believe that the commission, the composition of which is to be decided by the President after consultations should get to work quickly and should report back to the Council carrying out the mandate accorded to it in paragraph 3 of the resolution.

101. We think, as I have said, that this is a commendable approach by the Government of Seychelles, and we think it was the duty of the Council to respond; we shall now be prepared to await the report of the commission to consider what further action might be taken.

102. Mr. de PINIÉS (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, a great deal of praise has been extended to you about the outstanding way you have guided our deliberations, and I should like to

associate myself with all of those who have preceded me in congratulating you most warmly and in recalling that we still have very delicate items before us but that with your firm hand we are certain that we will be doing successful work.

103. We should also like to commend your predecessor, my colleague, Ambassador Slim, for the skilful, brilliant and capable way in which he guided our deliberations during the month of November.

104. My delegation has listened with particular attention to the statement made by the representative of Seychelles. We should like to thank her for the clear and convincing way in which she put before us the events which occurred on 25 November and which all of us here in the Council deplore.

105. We believe that there is a need to stress that the principle of territorial integrity and the political independence of States must be upheld—in this particular case, those of Seychelles. The use of international banditry, the use of mercenaries, only endanger international peace and security, the security not only of those small countries that have no resources for their own defence but also the peace and security of the world, with all the risks that that harbours.

106. My delegation wishes to congratulate the people of Seychelles for having succeeded in this trial, and we should like to congratulate the Government and the people of Seychelles for having repelled an attempted invasion which was a threat to peace and security.

107. Mr. SLIV (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Without indulging in any sort of vanity, I do note that, owing to a certain complicity of the alphabetical order, Africa is once again presiding over the Council at a time when questions of particular importance to the United Nations itself as well as to peace and security in the world are on its agenda.

108. Mr. President, when Africa is represented by a man of your talent it can look to the future with confidence and serenity. Your personal contribution to the Council's deliberations is unanimously recognized. Your competence, your intelligence and your skill have enabled the Council to complete, within the time allotted, the consideration of delicate questions on its agenda: your dynamism, together with your sense of initiative, have set an intense pace of work for us which the present situation demands and which the Council is showing itself capable of following. I am therefore very pleased to express my warmest fraternal congratulations to you as well as those of the Tunisian delegation on the occasion of your assumption of the presidency of the Council. Through you we also wish to convey those congratulations to your country, with which Tunisia has trustful and fraternal relations.

109. May I also, Sir, thank you and the members of the Council for the kind and generous words addressed

to me and tell you and the members of the Council how grateful I am for the co-operation extended to me by all throughout the month of November. I should also like to express thanks for the kind words addressed to me before the Council by the representatives of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Seychelles and Botswana.

110. The Council has just adopted unanimously a resolution in which it condemns the act of aggression committed on 25 November against the Republic of Seychelles and decides to send a commission of inquiry in order to determine the origin, background and financing of that aggression.

111. My delegation has given its unreserved support to that resolution. In the view of Tunisia, the aggression to which the Republic of Seychelles fell victim is extremely serious, for it calls into question the territorial integrity and political independence of a sovereign State Member of the United Nations.

112. This aggression also has specific characteristics whose consequences on the conduct of international relations, on ethics and unanimously recognized law are of a gravity which escapes no one. This was an attack committed by mercenaries recruited, financed and organized in order to destabilize régimes whose political options are not shared.

113. The Organization, which in its various bodies is concerned over the scourge that the question of mercenaries constitutes, cannot, on the occasion of this outright cowardly act of aggression, fail to reaffirm its principles and take timely and vigorous measures to put an end to a practice which is particularly dangerous for international relations. Moreover, the attack in question was followed by the hijacking of an aircraft and the taking of hostages. Unfortunately, these are issues already familiar to the Organization which we must more than ever consider with utmost seriousness and vigilance.

114. The Council has decided to establish a commission of inquiry in order to establish the facts and to find out who was behind them.

115. When we examine the geopolitical context in which this aggression took place, when we consider the point of departure and the point of return of those mercenaries, as well as what happened to those among them who escaped, we become quickly convinced and our doubts are dispelled as to the origin of the aggression. Other precedents and other similarly-inspired acts of aggression perpetuated by different methods immediately come to mind. Suffice it to mention the acts of which Mozambique, Zambia and Angola are daily victims.

116. It will of course be up to the commission of inquiry officially to establish the facts and to inform the international community of those responsible for this breach of peace and security in that particularly

sensitive region of the world. After the Council has studied the report of the commission, it will have to take the measures required by the gravity of such acts, as provided for in the Charter.

117. In the meantime, my delegation wishes to reaffirm to the Republic of Seychelles Tunisia's sympathy and active solidarity.

118. The PRESIDENT: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of UGANDA.

119. On 25 November, an act of aggression was committed against the Republic of Seychelles. This unprovoked and wanton aggression not only violated the territorial integrity of the Republic of Seychelles but also threatened the stability and well-being of that nation.

120. There are four features of this aggressive episode that are especially disturbing to the delegation of Uganda.

121. First, we cannot ignore the overwhelming *prima facie* evidence widely reported by many independent sources, that the vicious hand of South Africa was involved in this episode. This development is all the more grave given the declared design of South Africa to intimidate and destabilize any and all African countries which have chosen the path of genuine independence for themselves and solidarity with the struggling peoples of southern Africa. Clearly, by this act, the frontiers of the front-line States have been expanded to encompass not only Seychelles but all those countries which remain steadfast in their commitment to the cause of freedom and dignity in southern Africa. This is the first feature of the aggressive episode about which the Council is meeting today.

122. The second feature, which is equally disturbing, is the fact that the aggression was perpetrated through the instrumentality of a band of mercenaries. No continent has suffered and continues to suffer so grievously from the trauma of mercenaries as Africa. This latest episode is once again a painful reminder of the collective vulnerability of Africa and, by the same token, underlines the urgent need for the United Nations to take comprehensive and effective measures to put an end to the activities of mercenaries.

123. The third feature is the fact that the aggressive episode was followed by the serious crime of hijacking. My delegation is astonished to note that, contrary to the provisions of the Hague, Montreal and Tokyo

Conventions, those responsible for this serious crime were set free by the South African authorities.

124. The fourth feature is the fact that the victim of this aggression is a small, vulnerable and non-aligned African country whose hope for a peaceful and independent existence lies in the United Nations. It is in this spirit that the Government of the Republic of Seychelles acted with speed and judiciousness in bringing the present complaint before the Security Council. It is in the same spirit that the delegation of Uganda was pleased to support the resolution we have just adopted.

125. The delegation of Uganda will give its comprehensive views on the present complaint when the Council comes to consider the report of the commission of inquiry which has just been established.

126. I wish to take this opportunity to express the strong and unequivocal solidarity of the people and Government of Uganda with the people and Government of the Republic of Seychelles during this their hour of need, which is also the hour of challenge to the whole of Africa.

127. I now resume my function as PRESIDENT of the Council.

128. The representative of Seychelles has asked to speak and I now call on her.

129. Ms. GONTHIER (Seychelles): The confidence I expressed in my statement earlier this afternoon has been more than amply justified. On behalf of my delegation, I continue to rely on the Council's sense of fair play, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations. Again I thank all the members for their assistance.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.

NOTES

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 974, p. 177.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 850, p. 105.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 704, p. 219.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 8th meeting.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 33*, para. 74.

⁶ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-sixth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 85th meeting.

⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 20.