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1669th MEETING: 23 OCTOBER 1972

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SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

Held in New York on Monday, 23 October 1972, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Louis de GUIRINGAUD (France).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Argentina, Belgium, China, France, Guinea, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, Somalia, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Yugoslavia.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1669)

1. Adoption of the agenda.

2. Complaint by Senegal:

Letter dated 16 October 1972 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/10807).

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Senegal:

Letter dated 16 October 1972 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/10807)

1. The President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with the decision taken by the Council at its 1667th meeting, I invite the representatives of Senegal, Mauritania, Algeria and Mali to participate, without the right to vote, in the Council's debate on the item before it. With the Council's consent, I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. C. Diouf (Senegal) took a place at the Security Council table.

2. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): Because of the limited number of places at the Council table, and in accordance with past practice, I invite the representatives of Mauritania, Algeria and Mali to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber. I shall request them to come to the Council table when it is their turn to speak.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. M. El Hassen (Mauritania), Mr. A. Rahal (Algeria) and Mr. S. Traoré (Mali) took the places reserved for them in the Council chamber.

3. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the complaint submitted by Senegal in its letter of 16 October 1972, which has been distributed as document S/10807.

4. Since our last meeting consultations have been held on the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Guinea, Somalia and the Sudan in document S/10813. As a result of those consultations, the Council now has before it a revised draft resolution, which is contained in document S/10813/Rev.1.

5. Mr. LONGERSTAEY (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, first of all I should like to tell you how happy Belgium is to see presiding over this Council the representative of a country that is linked to it by common membership in the European community. We see in your great qualities and experience acquired in the United Nations a guarantee for the success of our work during this month of October. My delegation wishes to assure you that you can count on our complete confidence and co-operation.

6. To your predecessor as President, Ambassador Huang Hua, I should like to express the high esteem in which we hold him for the distinction with which he guided the deliberations of the Council during the month of September.

7. My delegation has carefully studied the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Guinea, Somalia and the Sudan in document S/10813/Rev.1. Obviously most of the provisions of this draft resolution are taken from resolutions 294 (1971) and 302 (1971) which were adopted last year by the Council as a result of a previous complaint by Senegal against Portugal.

8. That is the case also with the condemnation that the Council is requested to repeat of the acts of violence and destruction committed since 1963 by the Portuguese armed forces against Senegal. The same holds true for the principle of self-determination and independence, which it is proposed that the Council reaffirm, calling on Portugal to respect it.

9. Thus, the draft resolution contains nothing that my delegation has not already accepted—in other circumstances, it is true. But the text submitted seems to us to be out of proportion to its object. However regrettable the incursion into Senegalese territory on 12 October by a detachment of the Portuguese army, it does not seem to us to be comparable to the acts of violence and destruction

which have been going on since 1963. Instead of the condemnation which appears in operative paragraph 1, we would have preferred the Council to deplore this incident as well as the resulting threats to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Senegal and the loss of human lives which that entailed.

10. In this connexion I should like to express to the representative of Senegal and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of that country our deep sympathy and to assure him that we mourn with his country and the family of the officer who met his death in that incident.

11. We would also have wished—and we so informed the sponsors—the draft resolution to take into account the particular circumstances of this matter. It appears from the letter circulated as document S/10810 from the representative of Portugal dated 18 October that the Portuguese authorities have expressed their apologies to the authorities of Senegal, have promised to pay compensation and are prepared to give all the necessary guarantees. In this respect, it is regrettable that the Council has missed this opportunity, however tenuous and fragile it might be, to lessen tension in that disturbed region and has not taken note of the assurances that Portugal is prepared to give and, at the same time requested it to take appropriate measures to prevent the repetition of frontier incidents with Senegal.

12. In conclusion, it is on the gaps as well as on the contents of the draft resolution that my delegation will abstain from voting. We are prepared—and we have proven this repeatedly—to condemn Portugal when its guilt is obvious from its acts of violence and destruction committed against the neighbouring States of the Territories it administers in Africa. On the other hand, in a specific case such as this one, we cannot condemn it on the basis of the background alone, without taking into account its intentions, its regrets and its promises to pay compensation.

13. It is in that spirit that our vote is to be interpreted, and not as a repudiation of the principles to which we remain dedicated, principles such as that of self-determination and independence, reaffirmed in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.

14. Mr. NAKAGAWA (Japan): Mr. President, first of all, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the high office of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October.

15. May I also convey my congratulations to your predecessor, Ambassador Huang Hua of China, for the brilliant and efficient manner in which he discharged his task as President of the Council during the month of September.

16. Turning to the question now on our agenda, my delegation wishes to state at the outset that Japan, as a matter of basic principle, is strongly opposed to recourse to the threat or use of force by any State against the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of any other State.

17. We greatly regret, therefore, that the Council has had to deal with the incident which recently occurred on the

border between Senegal and Guinea (Bissau), on the basis of the letter dated 16 October 1972 from the representative of Senegal addressed to the President of the Security Council. It is indeed our sincere hope that such an incident will never occur again.

18. My delegation has listened very carefully to the statements made by the Foreign Minister of Senegal and other previous speakers at the two preceding meetings, as well as this afternoon. We have noted with deep regret and sympathy the numerous incidents which have occurred on the border between Senegal and Guinea (Bissau) over a considerable period of time and which have resulted in a substantial loss of Senegalese lives and damage to Senegalese property. My delegation fully sympathizes with the Senegalese people who have been suffering over the years from similar incidents.

19. My delegation considers it very pertinent to remark that one basic, underlying cause of the recurrence of those incidents is the attitude of the Government of Portugal, which has continued to maintain its colonial domination over Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) in past years. We sincerely hope that the Government of Portugal will realize the necessity and the wisdom of acknowledging the right to freedom and self-determination of the peoples in those Territories and will adopt the steps necessary to lead them to independence, and will thereby solve at the earliest possible date the fundamental problem underlying the recurrence of these incidents. My delegation has also noted with no small interest the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Portugal on 2 October in the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly that "... Portugal does not reject the principles of self-determination".¹ We hope that the Government of Portugal will proceed a step further and will start dialogues on the basis of this principle with all parties concerned.

20. On the other hand, my delegation considers it both proper and necessary to pay due attention to the new elements involved in the incident now under consideration in the Council. The Portuguese authorities, virtually for the first time, presented their apologies and offered compensation as well as necessary guarantees, as contained in the letter dated 18 October 1972 from the representative of Portugal. It is indeed our belief that these new elements should be also duly taken note of in any decision by the Council. In that sense, my delegation welcomes the revision to the draft resolution contained in document S/10813, and will therefore vote in favour of the revised text circulated as document S/10813/Rev.1.

21. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The list of speakers in the general debate has been exhausted, and I shall now speak as the representative of France.

22. First of all, I should like again to express my gratitude to Ambassador Huang Hua for the way in which he conducted the proceedings of the Council during the month of September.

23. I should also like to thank those speakers who were kind enough to congratulate me upon my assumption to

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Session, Plenary Meetings, 2048th meeting, para. 42.

the presidency of the Security Council. I assure them that I very much appreciated their complimentary remarks. I know that those kind words, beyond being addressed to me, were addressed to my country, and I took particular note of the references made by many speakers to the special relations which their Governments maintain with the French Government, particularly those that participate with us in the European Community.

24. I should like now to speak as the representative of FRANCE and explain the views of my country on the subject before us.

25. It is unfortunately not the first time that the Security Council has had to deal with a complaint by Senegal following the occurrence of an incident on its territory at the frontier with Guinea (Bissau), but it is the first time that the facts have been so clear and have stood so starkly revealed. No one denies them. On 12 October several armoured vehicles of the Portuguese army penetrated Senegalese territory to a depth of several kilometres. A Senegalese officer was killed, one of his men was wounded, and a peasant was mortally wounded. There is no doubt about the actual violation of the frontier itself, or about the circumstances of time and place, or about the equipment used, or, unfortunately, about the loss of human life.

26. An incident of limited scope? Let us take a closer look at it. This is an affair which has come after so many others, the last of which was reported to the Council barely five months ago. Furthermore, human life is not to be measured in figures, as if it were the level of income. This time we are faced with the fact of deliberate incursion, in the open, in broad daylight, committed by a regular unit under the orders of an officer. In other times and other places an incident even more minor than this would have been enough to constitute a *casus belli*.

27. It is not necessary to remind the Government of a country with such a glorious past, to which the rest of the world, including Africa, owes so much in the field of knowledge and culture, that in former times an incident of this kind might have ignited a powder keg.

28. The Portuguese Government understands that perfectly well, because its representative in Bissau has, as we have seen, "lamented deeply this occurrence" since criminal proceedings have been instituted against the culprits, and the Senegalese Government was immediately informed of Lisbon's intention "to pay compensation and to give all the necessary guarantees."

29. Those guarantees should, I believe, have been better defined. Have measures actually been taken to prevent, once and for all, a recurrence of incursions into Senegal from Guinea (Bissau)? Is it the intention of Lisbon, as my delegation has recommended more than once in this Council, to follow the example set by certain Powers which formerly exercised overseas responsibilities, Powers which were able to prevent rash and hasty actions on the part of their troops by eliminating the very cause of their presence? Is it the intention of Lisbon to recognize the right of the people of Guinea (Bissau) to self-determination and, by that gesture, to substitute lasting ties of friendship for the

more precarious ties of constraint? My delegation would certainly have hoped so.

30. Regrets, sincere regrets—well, we have no doubt about that, and we have no doubt that Lisbon's compensation will be full, but these things do not wipe out certain facts and do not bring the dead back to life. They testify to good will, and we should like to pay a tribute to that, but we would have preferred to have it more explicitly spelled out in the draft resolution proposed.

31. We believe also that the wording of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution would have benefited from being more clearly focused on the problem which is actually before the Council, that of Guinea (Bissau), without having necessarily to refer to a resolution which certain delegations, including the French delegation, were unable to vote for.

32. Instead of choosing the path of retaliation—which, in their zeal, these young troops, the heirs of those fine Senegalese warriors who gave their lives so nobly for the cause of liberty elsewhere, would no doubt have been willing to follow—the Dakar Government turned to the international community and asked for the moral support which it might legitimately expect of it. Once again it renounced the use of force in order to preserve the chances of peace, a peace which President Senghor has already outlined for us. We should not disappoint him.

33. The Council should assure him that the peasants of Casamance will be able to return to their fields, that his officials will be able to return to their offices and continue their work of progress and development and that his hardworking, industrious people will be able in future to regard the frontier without anxiety.

34. It is with that hope, and with the reservations I have mentioned, that the French delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Guinea, Somalia and the Sudan.

35. In my capacity now as PRESIDENT, I would say that if no representative wishes to speak at this stage, I propose that the Council proceed to vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/10813/Rev.1.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Argentina, China, France, Guinea, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, Somalia, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Belgium, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The draft resolution was adopted by 12 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.²

36. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call in turn on those representatives who have indicated their wish to explain their votes after the vote.

² See resolution 321 (1972).

37. Sir Colin CROWE (United Kingdom): I am happy to take this first opportunity to express the pleasure of my delegation at meeting under your presidency, Sir, and, in the same breath, to offer our gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Huang Hua, for the expert and successful manner in which he conducted the Council's affairs during the month of September.
38. My Government regrets the incident which has given rise to this meeting, just as we regret all acts of violence, particularly when they take place across established international frontiers. We express our deepest sympathy with the Senegalese Government and people in the loss of life and damage to property that they have suffered.
39. The circumstances of this case are out of the ordinary. On the one hand they might be considered particularly shocking, in that the attack was unprovoked, senseless and unauthorized. On the other hand, they differ from those of many other incidents we have considered here in that this incident has been admitted and denounced by the Government responsible, which has apologized and offered compensation and guarantees.
40. We take note of the amendments made in document S/10813/Rev.1, but we still feel that in the circumstances outright condemnation is not really appropriate. Indeed, it seems to my delegation that these special circumstances might rather provide the opportunity to explore ways and means by which the danger of such acts of violence breaking out might be averted. We therefore abstained from voting on the draft resolution.
41. Mr. PHILLIPS (United States of America): The United States retains a profound conviction that the people of Portuguese Guinea have an inalienable right to self-determination. We have repeatedly made clear to the Portuguese Government our belief in the importance of honouring this right, and we deeply deplore the loss of life that resulted from the incident that has led to this meeting of the Council. We nevertheless abstained from voting on this draft resolution because of what we believe is its one-sided nature.
42. Although the revised draft takes note of the letter of the representative of Portugal, it does not, in our opinion, reflect adequately the contents of that letter as they bear on the complaint which has been brought before this Council. It fails, for example, to reflect the fact that the Portuguese authorities in Guinea (Bissau) did officially apologize for the action on 12 October, that they are prepared to institute court martial proceedings against the responsible officer, and that they offered to indemnify and give all necessary guarantees to the Government of Senegal. This is the standard acceptable procedure in international law for rectification of international incidents.
43. We recognize that this incident is part of a total situation and that the resolution on which we have just voted does not refer to the need to get at the more basic causes of tension in the region.
44. We were gratified by the emphasis in the speech by the Foreign Minister of Senegal on the need to look for some form of peaceful settlement on the part of the parties concerned in the conflict. Regrettably, nothing in this spirit has been included in the resolution itself.
45. Last November, in a similar debate, my delegation expressed its interest in the possibility of establishing a commission "acceptable to all parties which might be in a position to investigate border incidents and to report periodically to the Security Council on such questions as progress towards self-determination in Guinea (Bissau) and other elements which could lead to a satisfactory settlement in the region" [1600th meeting, para. 50].
46. We continue to believe that this is the direction in which the Council should point its activities in dealing with this difficult problem.
47. Mr. MOJSOV (Yugoslavia): My delegation voted in favour of the revised draft resolution in document S/10813/Rev.1. But we would have preferred the initial draft, which more strongly condemned Portugal for its grave armed attack as it represents just another instance in the continuous aggression against Senegal and other independent African States, just the most recent example of a policy that Portugal will not and does not change.
48. However, in the given circumstances, we voted for the revised text because we find that, on the whole, it answers the need of the moment and that this Council was well advised to adopt it, thereby addressing itself responsibly to the situation which developed once again after a repetition of the attacks and provocations by the armed forces of Portugal against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and security of Senegal. Therefore, Portugal had to be condemned; this organ, which is responsible for the maintenance of peace and security, could not act otherwise.
49. We have already stated our reasons for finding unacceptable the new method of committing aggressive acts and then making an apology until the next time, while the essential policy and intent remain the same, while there are no assurances and no guarantees that these aggressive acts will not be repeated in the future.
50. The fact that this Council is sometimes—or even often—prevented from meeting the demands of a given situation should never prevent us from doing so whenever we can.
51. Mr. VINCI (Italy) (*interpretation from French*): The sponsors of the draft resolution which we have just adopted were good enough, in a spirit of co-operation, to take into account the suggestions made by our delegation to give the draft resolution more balance. The changes made in the initial text by the African members of the Council responded to an appreciable extent to the remarks I made during our last meeting, on 20 October. That made it possible for us to vote in favour of the final text, and on behalf of my delegation I wish to thank them.
52. We particularly appreciated the fact that the sponsors were good enough to include in the draft resolution a reference to the letter of 18 October from the representative of Portugal. In fact, the new attitude taken by

Portugal on this occasion in undertaking, among other things, to give guarantees to the Government of Senegal could be the sign of a development or an evolution which it would be a mistake to ignore and which should rather be encouraged.

53. I would conclude by expressing the hope that peace and tranquility will return to the frontier between Senegal and Guinea (Bissau), and that the questions which feed the tension in the region can be settled in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

54. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal wishes to make a statement, and I now call on him.

55. Mr. DIOUF (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I should like to thank you and, through you, all the members of the Security Council who were kind enough to lend their active moral support to the Senegalese nation, to the cause of my country. In so doing you have given further confidence to the people of Senegal and to all oppressed peoples; you have proved to the world that, contrary to what some may believe, the Security Council is not the province of a few, nor the breeding ground for a given tendency, but that it is here in the interests of truth, peace and world security—that, consequently, the Members of the United Nations as a whole are not fictitious members or second-class members, and that any State here from the

moment it becomes a State, from the moment it begins to enjoy full and complete national sovereignty, benefits from all the prerogatives which attach to the status of Member of the United Nations. You have proved this today, and I thank you very much.

56. Addressing myself now to those who abstained, those who felt they should not accord us their votes, I should like to say to them that Senegal will somehow find a way of understanding them, of understanding their attitude and their behaviour. Far from what they may have foreseen, Senegal is convinced that, despite their abstention, they somehow wanted in their way to contribute to world peace. By abstaining they persist in reposing their faith in the Portuguese Government and in believing in the political maturity of that Government. They still believe that by abstaining they can favourably influence Portugal's future actions and that Portugal will be so enlightened that it will be prompted to reconsider its general attitude. That is why, in their own way, they are contributing to the coming of world peace. I would only say to them that I hope their confidence in Portugal will not be disappointed. Let Portugal take advantage of this opportunity offered to it to reconsider its attitude. In so doing, Portugal will show itself to be magnanimous and will have deserved the confidence of those delegations which abstained today.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

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