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MY 2IPTS; OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE

SUMMARY

1. FINAL NEGOTIATIONS LEAD TO AGREEMENT ON DRAFT RESOLUTION AND PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT. SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE AT WHICH SCR 681 IS ADOPTED.

DETAIL

2. EARLY ON 20 DECEMBER THE FINNS, AMERICANS, MALAYSIANS AND YEMENIS NEGOTIATED ON THE COMPROMISE PROPOSALS OUTLINED IN PARA 9 OF TUR. TO GET ROUND THE DIFFICULTIES OVER LINKAGE IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THE PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT, PICKERING (UNITED STATES) SUGGESTED THAT ALL REFERENCE TO IRAQ/KUWAIT BE REMOVED AND THAT THE PARAGRAPH REFORMULATED TO READ "IN THE VIEW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, THE ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICT IS IMPORTANT AND UNIQUE AND MUST BE ADDRESSED INDEPENDENTLY ON ITS OWN MERITS". AL-ASHTAL (YEMEN) SPENT SOME TIME ARGUING FOR REMOVAL OF THE WORD "UNIQUE" BUT EVENTUALLY GAVE WAY. ON THE TIMING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, IT WAS EVENTUALLY AGREED THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT SHOULD SIMPLY NOTE THAT THERE WAS NO UNANIMITY.

3. ONCE NEGOTIATIONS WERE COMPLETE, COUNCIL MEMBERS MET IN INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS TO EXCHANGE MUTUAL CONGRATULATIONS AND TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS.

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4. THE COUNCIL THEN MET IN FORMAL SESSION. THE (YEMENI) PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL READ OUT THE AGREED PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT. THE COUNCIL THEN MOVED ON TO THE VOTE. IN EXPLANATIONS OF VOTE BEFORE THE VOTE TADESSE (ETHIOPIA) DESCRIBED THE ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. THE PROTECTION OF PALESTINIANS STILL LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED; THE LOSS OF LIFE AND RECENT DEPORTATIONS ADDED TO THE CONCERN. ETHIOPIA REITERATED THE CALL FOR A MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE. LA SABLIERE (FRANCE) DESCRIBED THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT AS INTERESTING. HIS AUTHORITIES WERE FOLLOWING FAVOURABLY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S EFFORTS, INCLUDING THE SENDING OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE REGION. FRANCE CONDEMNED THE RECENT EXPULSIONS FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD CONTINUE TO ACT WITH DETERMINATION AND UNANIMITY AS IT HAD OVER SCRS 672 AND 673. THE IDEA OF A MEETING OF THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION OPENED UP INTERESTING PROSPECTS. THE PROPOSALS IN THE RESOLUTION FOR MONITORING AND REPORTING TO THE COUNCIL WOULD IMPROVE THE PROTECTION OF PALESTINIANS. DIALOGUE WAS NECESSARY TO REACH A POLITICAL SOLUTION AND AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WOULD OFFER A FRAMEWORK. FRANCE WELCOMED THE FACT THAT THE COUNCIL HAD RECOGNISED THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. LA SABLIERE REFERRED TO PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S STATEMENT EARLIER IN THE DAY.

5. THE VOTE THEN TOOK PLACE. THERE WERE 15 VOTES IN FAVOUR, NO VOTES AGAINST AND NO ABSTENTIONS. THE DRAFT RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED AS SCR 681.

6. IN EXPLANATIONS OF VOTE AFTER THE VOTE, BAGBENI NZENGEYA (ZAIRE) SAID THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD SHOW CONSTANT CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF PALESTINIANS THROUGH THE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE RESOLUTION. TORNUDD (FINLAND) SAID HIS DELEGATION HAD ENCOURAGED THE UNANIMOUS ADOPTION OF SCRS 672 AND 673 AND SUPPORTED THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT. IT WAS TIME TO IMPROVE MONITORING OF THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, ALTHOUGH THE STEPS TO PROTECT THE PALESTINIANS CONTAINED IN THE RESOLUTION WERE MODEST. A MEETING OF THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION MIGHT GIVE AN AUTHORITATIVE VIEW ON THE SCOPE OF THE CONVENTION.

7. RAZALI (MALAYSIA) SAID THE UNANIMOUS ADOPTION OF SCR 681 WAS AN IMPORTANT MOMENT FOR THE COUNCIL. THE PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING OF THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION WOULD SEND A STRONG SIGNAL TO ISRAEL. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL WOULD NOW MONITOR THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, APPOINTING EXTRA PERSONNEL IF NECESSARY. THIS WAS THE CORE OF THE RESOLUTION. THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, EVEN THOUGH EXPRESSED ONLY IN A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT, MARKED A CLEAR COMMITMENT BY THE COUNCIL. THE PROPER REFERENCE TO JERUSALEM IN THE RESOLUTION SHOWED THAT IN FUTURE THE COUNCIL WOULD OPPOSE ANY ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE STATUS OF THE CITY. THE COUNCIL HAD ALSO SET OUT CLEARLY ITS OBJECTION TO DEPORTATIONS. RAZALI CRITICISED THE PROCEDURAL DEVICES THAT HAD BEEN USED DURING THE DISCUSSION. THERE WAS A DANGER OF THE COUNCIL BEING SHANGHAIED BY POWERFUL COUNTRIES.