At the 1086th meeting on 10 January 1964, the representative of Panama * stated that Panama was the victim of an unprovoked armed attack against its territory and its civilian population, committed by the armed forces of the United States garrisoned in the Panama Canal Zone, "while neither its Government, its population nor its citizens have committed any hostile act of any kind". After describing certain "provocations" which had been committed by United States citizens and students he recalled an agreement between Panama and the United States, under which the flags of both countries were to fly together at certain places in the Canal Zone. However, the "Zonians" as United States Governor in the Canal Zone decided that in no case the United States flag should be hoisted. Despite that ban, United States students attending schools in some places in the Canal Zone neither the Panamanian citizens and students decided on their own initiative to hoist their flag at those places where it legally could be hoisted. The police of the Canal Zone and the military forces garrisoned there then opened fire on the peaceful demonstrators, to the great horror of the community of Panama. Consequently on the previous day, 9 January 1964, a number of Panamanian citizens and students decided to hoist their flag at those places where it legally should be hoisted. The police of the Canal Zone and the military forces garrisoned there then opened fire with machine-guns on the peaceful demonstrators, taking a high toll in lives and injuring people. After
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giving a detailed account of the legal situation and of the claims of Panama concerning the Canal Zone, he stated that the Zone should “not continue under its present status, which is and will remain a cause of permanent discord”. In his view, it was imperative that the status of the Panama Canal be changed, either by nationalization or by internationalization. The Panamanian representative was requesting the intervention of the Security Council in the hope that peace and tranquillity would be restored in the Canal Zone, and that lasting solutions would be sought for Panama.

The representative of the United States stated that the riots and violence in Panama were of special regret to the United States Government and people since they blotted the record of the long and friendly and improving relationship between both countries. The United States Government was doing everything humanly possible to restore the situation. The United States President had telephoned the President of Panama to discuss the situation, and the two Presidents had agreed that violence in the Canal Zone had to be stopped. The United States President had also given instructions to United States authorities to do everything within their power to restore and maintain peace and order in the Canal Zone. It was to be hoped that the Panamanian authorities were being equally vigorous in their efforts to restrain lawlessness and to maintain order and prevent further incidents of violence and bloodshed.

The representative of the United States further denied the Panamanian representative’s allegations of aggression and stated that when the Canal Zone police appeared unable to restore order, United States Army forces had been requested to assume responsibility for the protection of the Zone. They had acted with the greatest restraint. There was no evidence that either the police of the Zone or the United States Army ever went outside the Zone. Their only use of firearms had been within the Zone, to protect United States citizens residing there against an onrushing crowd of several thousand and against snipers. That act of self-defence within the Canal Zone boundaries he asserted, could not be called an act of aggression.

Furthermore, the Organization of American States had moved into action with great rapidity. The Inter-American Peace Commission had met at the request of Panama and the United States to consider the situation, and had agreed to go to Panama immediately to ascertain the facts. He suggested that the Council, bearing in mind the fact that the Inter-American Peace Commission was about to leave for Panama, should agree that “the problem should continue to be pursued in the regional forum which was established precisely to deal with situations arising among States in the Western Hemisphere”. The United Nations Charter, both in Articles 33 and 52, provided for peaceful settlement of local disputes through regional agencies. In accordance with the provisions of those articles, and without derogating from the responsibilities of the Security Council, he believed that such local disputes could most effectively be dealt with through regional procedures.

The representative of Brazil suggested that the President of the Council be authorized to address an appeal to both Parties to bring to an immediate end the exchange of fire, and to request them to impose restraint over the military forces under their command and the civilian population under their control.

The Brazilian representative’s initiative was supported by the representatives of the United Kingdom, Morocco, Ivory Coast, the United States and China. The representative of Panama also stated that his reaction to the suggestion was favourable.

At the end of the discussion the President (Bolivia) noted that many of the members of the Council had supported the proposal of the representative of Brazil to the effect that the President of the Council would be authorized to address an appeal to the Governments of the United States and of Panama so that they should immediately take the most appropriate measures to bring to an end the exchange of fire and the bloodshed. There being no objection he declared the proposal as adopted. The President also stated that the question would remain on the agenda of the Council.

THE INDIA-PAKISTAN QUESTION

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT (1117TH MEETING)

By letter dated 16 January 1964, the representative of Pakistan requested the President of the Council to convene an immediate meeting of the Council to consider “the grave situation that has arisen in the State of Jammu and Kashmir” which, he contended, was “the direct consequence of the unlawful steps that the Government of India is continuing to take in order to destroy the special status of the State” in disregard of the resolutions of the Security Council and of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). References were made to two earlier letters from the President of Pakistan to the President of the Council, dated 9 October 1963 and 3 January 1964, drawing the attention of the Council to the measures contemplated by the Government of India “to consolidate India’s hold over the bulk of Jammu and Kashmir, to demoralize its people and to interpose further obstacles in the establishment of conditions for the exercise of their free choice in regard to their future”. It was further stated in the letter that as a result of those acts and the occurrence of sacrilegious acts disrespectful to the Muslim population as well as communal strife in Calcutta and other districts of West Bengal, “an extremely tense and explosive situation in Azad Kashmir and throughout Pakistan” had been created as a consequence of which “Indian-Pakistan relations had been dangerously strained”.

By letter dated 24 January 1964, the representative of India denied the allegations of the representative of Pakistan concerning “the existence of a tense situation and an atmosphere of crisis”. He asserted that the Pakistani request was “a propaganda move” intended to exploit certain recent incidents and to divert attention from the disturbances in East Pakistan affecting the minority community there. The attacks on the Hindu minorities in that area continued and, in