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at 3 p.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MATHIAS (Portugal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 54: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued) (A/35/532)

1. Mr. ULRICHSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that by stabilizing an area of crisis, the peace-keeping force played a vital role in providing a basis for reaching a solution by peaceful means, but could not in itself replace the peace-making process. For that reason, United Nations peace-keeping operations must have the full support of all the parties concerned in a conflict. Those parties should not only pledge their support, but also fully co-operate in making the peace-keeping operations successful. The presence of United Nations troops in an area of conflict imposed a clear obligation upon the parties involved to make a full and constructive use of that presence to solve their underlying differences.

2. United Nations peace-keeping forces had made a very valuable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. It might be appropriate to consider the possibility of using such peace-keeping operations to create the necessary conditions for settling international conflicts. The Nordic countries had participated in practically all peace-keeping forces and observer missions and had organized and trained stand-by forces and observer groups. He, therefore, expressed regret at the lack of response to the appeal made in General Assembly resolution 33/114 for a strengthening of the peace-keeping capabilities of the United Nations.

3. In view of the importance of financing the peace-keeping operations, each Member State had a responsibility to assume its share of the financial burden for such operations. He expressed regret at the refusal of some countries to participate in the financing of certain peace-keeping operations since that placed unreasonable burdens on the United Nations and other Member States, especially those which contributed troops. That growing problem might impede the recruitment of contingents in the future and thereby obstruct efficient and speedy action in times of crisis.

4. It was regrettable that the Special Committee had not made any progress in the implementation of its mandate or in the work of drafting general guidelines. The Nordic countries attached great importance to practical measures designed to ensure the speedy and efficient functioning of peace-keeping operations. Furthermore, the conduct of United Nations peace-keeping operations would be greatly facilitated if the Special Committee was provided with regular up-to-date information on the personnel and logistics support that Member States could make available if requested. A larger number of Member States should be prepared to contribute contingents, observers, logistical support or other assistance. Lastly, he supported the renewal of the mandate of the Special Committee and expressed the hope that it would speedily conclude work on the agreed guidelines and accord priority to specific questions related to the practical implementation of peace-keeping operations.

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5. Mr. LAVIE (Israel) said that United Nations peace-keeping operations could be a valuable help in the task of maintaining or restoring peace in accordance with the principles and goals of the Charter. The work of drafting agreed guidelines for carrying out peace-keeping operations was not easy, and much remained to be done. His delegation hoped that the Special Committee would successfully complete its work in that area. The usefulness of guidelines drafted in general terms in order to meet all possible eventualities was likely to be very limited. Guidelines could be practical only if they were adaptable to the particular requirements of the area of operations.
6. United Nations peace-keeping operations could only be conducted with the consent of the host country and in full respect for its sovereignty. The most scrupulous observance of impartiality by all participants in peace-keeping operations was absolutely indispensable. Other relevant considerations included the composition of peace-keeping forces, the selection of a suitable commander, types of arms and equipment, methods for reporting violations and dealing with offences against civilian populations, and the role of liaison officers. Unnecessary difficulties and complications which might aggravate an already delicate situation should be avoided. Since confidence in the impartiality of peace-keeping forces was essential, only countries which maintained normal relations with all Governments in the area of operations should be invited to participate in peace-keeping forces.
7. Lastly, it should be kept in mind that peace-keeping operations could not provide the ultimate solution to conflicts and could not replace the peaceful settlement of disputes by the parties directly concerned. The Charter of the United Nations imposed the obligation to settle all disputes and conflicts by peaceful means through negotiations and compromise.
8. Mr. NISIBORI (Japan) expressed disappointment that the Special Committee had been unable to make significant progress in its task of completing agreed guidelines and considering practical measures. The success of the Committee's efforts depended to a great extent on the political will of the Member States concerned. The effort to establish agreed guidelines was tantamount to codifying a new section of the Charter and must be undertaken with great care. In view of the magnitude of that task, it was unreasonable to expect that it could be accomplished quickly. His delegation would support a draft resolution to extend the mandate of the Special Committee, since it was a unique forum on peace-keeping operations.
9. He expressed satisfaction at the work done by the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which had played a major role in the resumption of the inter-communal talks there. Until a lasting political settlement was achieved, steps should be taken to guarantee the effective management of UNFICYP, including a reduction or curtailment of activities where possible. His delegation also stressed the important roles played by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in restraining the use of force in a complex situation. His Government expressed condolences to the Governments and families of all members of those forces who had lost their lives in the performance of their duty.

(Mr. Misibori, Japan)

10. It was regrettable that certain countries, in particular some permanent members of the Security Council, had been allowed in many instances to ignore their financial obligations towards peace-keeping operations. In accordance with Article 17 of the Charter, the expenses of peace-keeping operations, as part of the expenses of the Organization, should be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly. His delegation expressed concern that the deficits might lead to the curtailment of various activities before the fundamental doctrinal problem had been solved. Certain administrative measures, including those which the Secretary-General was considering for UNFICYP, could be taken to alleviate such deficits. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the Special Committee, in due consultation with the Secretary-General, would devote more of its attention to the consideration of such administrative measures in 1981.

11. Mr. OVINNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his Government attached great importance to the work of the Organization in strengthening international peace and security. An agreement on guidelines for the conduct of peace-keeping operations in strict compliance with the Charter would be an important step forward in that regard. Only strict adherence to the Charter could guarantee that the peace-keeping forces were not used for purposes contrary to the principles of the Charter and the interests of States, especially small ones. He stressed that the Security Council was the only body empowered to undertake action to maintain or restore international peace.

12. The report of the Special Committee showed that there were serious differences of opinion on the fundamental issues concerning peace-keeping operations. It was regrettable that the Special Committee had been unable to make progress in drawing up guidelines for such operations. The main obstacle was the attempt of certain members of the Committee to reject previously agreed principles and insist on a one-sided approach. His delegation could not agree with the proposal that the Special Committee should concentrate its attention on the so-called practical measures for conducting peace-keeping operations. The main task of the Special Committee was to continue to draw up agreed guidelines in strict compliance with the Charter. Any attempt to distract the Committee's attention from that fundamental task and bypass the authority of the Security Council under the Charter, including that relating to practical preparation for peace-keeping operations, would aggravate the difficulties of the Committee in searching for solutions to questions pertaining to peace-keeping operations. At the same time, his delegation reaffirmed its readiness to continue its efforts to achieve agreement on guidelines in strict compliance with the Charter. The basis for future work in that direction was the agreements which had been reached on that question in the past.

13. Mr. ZSOHÁR (Hungary) said that as a member of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and its Working Group, his delegation was pleased to be associated with the Working Group's thirteenth report.

14. His country had always supported the efforts of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, as a top priority objective, and considered the peace-keeping operations an important political and practical matter.

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(Mr. Zsohár, Hungary)

15. His delegation continued to attach great importance to the formulation of guidelines on United Nations peace-keeping operations, in strict compliance with the Charter, since United Nations armed forces should not be used in any way for purposes not laid down in the Charter. Hungary supported all efforts at preparing guidelines and considered that the peace-keeping machinery established by Chapter VII of the Charter provided a broad basis for that task. The first step must be to establish a sound basis in the form of agreed guidelines: any attempt to give priority to practical measures would be unrealistic.

16. In his delegation's view the Security Council was the only body empowered to maintain peace and therefore the only body authorized to decide on the political aspects and the financing of present and future peace-keeping operations.

17. Although there were significant differences of position among Member States concerning peace-keeping operations as a whole, and much remained to be done, there was a good basis for further progress in the Working Group. The activity of the Special Committee and the Working Group gave assurance that the differences of opinion could be narrowed. His delegation considered that the Special Committee's mandate should be extended so that it could continue with the preparation of agreed guidelines.

18. Mr. KAPAPULA (Zambia) said that as a member of the Security Council, his country attached great importance to the United Nations peace-keeping operations, which had made a major contribution to peace in the present-day world. His delegation commended the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Force in Cyprus and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Middle East and also wished to express its gratitude to the soldiers of the peace-keeping forces.

19. He had noted the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations (A/35/532) and urged the Special Committee to expedite its work on the guidelines. The practical implementation of peace-keeping operations was urgent, in view of the increasing involvement of the United Nations and the growing demand for its services. The availability of adequate information was essential in view of the emergency circumstances associated with the establishment of peace-keeping operations.

20. Mr. NEVES (Portugal) said that his delegation had been disappointed to learn from the report that once again the Special Committee had made little progress in its assigned task. The completion of agreed guidelines for the conduct of peace-keeping operations and the study of specific questions concerning their practical implementation were of paramount importance to the continuity of the operations and the necessary preparedness for future operations. He therefore appealed to all members of the Special Committee to continue their efforts to strengthen the United Nations peace-keeping capability.

21. The existing peace-keeping forces had played a significant role in preventing the recurrence of fighting, maintaining order and creating a climate for peaceful negotiation, as was shown by the recent promising developments in Cyprus. But the

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(Mr. Neves - Portugal)

proper functioning of peace-keeping operations depended on the co-operation of all concerned and the support of all Member States. He deplored the persistent refusal of some of the parties concerned to co-operate with the United Nations forces. For example, the activities of UNIFIL had been constantly opposed by conflicting groups and recent Israeli actions had exacerbated an already tense situation, making it difficult for UNIFIL to carry out its task. Some Member States persistently refused to pay their share of the costs of existing United Nations peace-keeping operations, thus separating themselves from what should be a common effort for peace and increasing the burden of the others.

22. Portugal, as a member of the Security Council, was in favour of extending the mandate of the peace-keeping forces, whose presence was essential to prevent the spread of violence and particularly to bring about negotiations between the parties involved. His country supported peace-keeping as a basic step towards peace-making and the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter.

23. His delegation appreciated the way in which the Secretary-General had been discharging his duty in a difficult area and thanked the countries which had provided troops for their outstanding contribution to the common goal.

24. He also expressed his country's profound gratitude to the soldiers who had been serving under the United Nations flag, far from their homes, some of whom had made the supreme sacrifice. The search for peace was the best homage that could be paid them. However his delegation felt that the United Nations should pay them a solemn public tribute in any form that the General Assembly considered appropriate.

25. Mr. ADHAM (Syrian Arab Republic) said his delegation noted with regret that 15 years after its establishment, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had been unable to achieve any tangible progress, through lack of a consensus on the relevant guidelines and because of continued divergences of views among Member States. The United Nations peace-keeping operations were a vital part of the maintenance of international peace and security and clearly defined guidelines were essential to the speedy and effective performance of that function.

26. Despite the absence of guidelines, the United Nations was undertaking peace-keeping activities in various parts of the world and its efforts were concrete evidence of the international community's desire to maintain international peace and security. The United Nations capability to that end must therefore be strengthened. As long as there were areas in the world where tension existed, and as long as peace-keeping operations were essential for the effective implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, his delegation believed that the Special Committee should be allowed to continue its efforts. His delegation therefore attached great importance to the task of reaching agreement on the guidelines for peace-keeping operations. Although such operations might vary according to the political conditions or the nature of the aggression which had necessitated them, he agreed with a number of delegations that there were common features which would justify a set of common guidelines concerning such aspects as

(Mr. Adhami, Syrian Arab Republic)

the formation of contingents and the mandate and duration of the peace-keeping operation. In that connexion it was essential to be guided by resolution 1374 (S-IV) adopted at the fourth special session of the General Assembly, which laid down the basic rules designed to take account of the situation of the States Members affected by aggression leading to the mounting of peace-keeping operations.

27. He emphasized that the General Assembly had not intended to place the aggressor and the victim of aggression on the same footing. His delegation could not accept the principle of equal responsibility for the financing of the peace-keeping operation: the aggressor should bear the full consequences of the aggression and the victim should not be expected to share in the cost of the peace-keeping operations. The operations should be temporary in character, and the presence of United Nations troops should not be invoked to support aggression or allow it to continue, or to give the aggressor an opportunity of benefitting from the aggression by imposing a fait accompli. The presence of United Nations troops should not be considered to be a substitute for the settlement of the conflict which had led to their intervention. Full co-operation by all parties with the United Nations peace-keeping forces was essential if the forces were to be able to carry out their task successfully.

28. The authority of the United Nations must be respected and any attempt to frustrate its activities should be condemned. But mere condemnation was not enough: all means available under the Charter must be used to ensure that States respected United Nations resolutions. In that connexion he referred to Israel's continued flouting of United Nations resolutions by its aggressive acts against UNIFIL in South Lebanon and its continued support for the forces of the agent Saad Haddad.

29. He was in favour of allowing the Special Committee more time, so that it could make progress in the coming year. He therefore associated himself with those representatives who wished to request an extension of the Special Committee's mandate to enable it to overcome its present difficulties and achieve compromise solutions acceptable to all concerned.

30. Lastly, he wished to pay a tribute to the soldiers who had given their lives or been wounded while carrying out their duties for the cause of maintaining international peace and security.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.