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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
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at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st MEETING

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Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 136: ISRAEL'S DECISION TO BUILD A CANAL LINKING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA TO THE DEAD SEA (continued) (A/36/243, A/36/575 and Add.1; A/SPC/36/L.32/Rev.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.32/Rev.1, which had just been circulated in document A/SPC/36/L.34.

2. Mr. AL-KHASAWNEH (Jordan), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.32/Rev.1 on behalf of the sponsors, explained that draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.32 had been revised in order to make a number of corrections and to enhance the possibility of the draft resolution's adoption by consensus.

3. The CHAIRMAN announced that a vote had been requested on draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.32/Rev.1, which he would therefore put to the vote.

4. The draft resolution was adopted by 114 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions.

5. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, observed that the resolution just adopted bore virtually no relation to reality. It spoke of a course of action as if irreparable damage had already been done or was about to be done, when the Israeli canal project was in fact in the very earliest stages of planning. It was wholly inappropriate to call on the Security Council to consider an issue that presented no threat to international peace and security.

6. The Committee's consideration of item 136 could have been a perfect opportunity for reasonable consultations among reasonable people and countries and for calling on the parties directly concerned to meet, consult and reconcile their differences. It was totally inappropriate for the General Assembly or any other United Nations body to enter into the issue.

7. Mr. RANGER (Canada) said that his delegation supported the general thrust of the resolution, which sought to make Israel desist from proceeding unilaterally with its projected canal. The canal project would impinge on interests in non-Israeli territories and, whatever its merits, must be undertaken only with the mutual consent of all the parties concerned, in accordance with traditional practice and international law.

8. The 1972 Stockholm principles on the protection of the human environment provided that States had a responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control did not damage the environment of other States or areas beyond the limits of their national jurisdiction and to consult and co-operate in the use of waters which they shared with other States. The Israeli canal project would affect Jordan and would therefore require Jordan's consent. Furthermore, according to current plans, the western intake terminus of the projected canal would consist of a tunnel under the Gaza Strip. Such a tunnel could pre-judge the ultimate status of Gaza and thereby have a detrimental effect on the search for a settlement of the Middle East problem.

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(Mr. Ranger, Canada)

9. The Canadian Government had therefore decided that neither it nor any of its agencies would involve themselves in any way in the Israeli project or encourage or assist Canadian individuals or corporations, or make their services available to such individuals and corporations, in matters concerning that project as long as the Government was concerned about the plan.

10. Mr. SCHIBORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had voted for the draft resolution, but it believed, with regard to the financial implications set out in document A/SPC/36/L.34, that the Secretariat had the necessary qualified staff to carry out the study called for by the General Assembly and need not incur the costs mentioned in paragraph 3 of the statement of financial implications.

11. Mr. ABU-KUASH (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) expressed his gratitude to all those delegations that had voted for the draft resolution. In his earlier statement on the item, he had mentioned that, at the recent United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, held at Nairobi, a number of delegations had abstained in the vote on a resolution condemning the Israeli project on the grounds that the question should be dealt with by the General Assembly. He was grateful to the delegations concerned, who had now fulfilled their promise to pursue the matter and voted for the resolution in the Committee.

12. At Nairobi, the United States delegation had abstained in the vote condemning the Israeli project. The PLO was not surprised at the United States' inconsistency with regard to the application and implications of international law, however. It was quite to be expected that that country, which had contributed to the formulation of many of the provisions of international law, should violate such provisions, showing that it tolerated occupation. The Israeli canal would do irreparable damage to the occupied Palestinian territories and Palestinian rights, as well as to the people and land of Jordan. No smokescreen could cover up the collaboration between the Israeli and United States Governments in that context.

13. Mr. NEVREKAR (India) said that his delegation had been absent during the vote on the draft resolution but that, had it been present, it would have voted for it.

14. The CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 136.

AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/SPC/36/L.14, L.31, L.33)

15. The CHAIRMAN announced that the representative of Kuwait had informed him that the Arab Group wished to request that neither draft resolution A/SPC/36/L.14 nor the United States amendment to it contained in document A/SPC/36/L.33 should be voted on in the Committee and that the Rapporteur should so indicate in his report and include the request that the proposals contained therein be referred to the General Assembly. The sponsors of the draft resolution which included

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(The Chairman)

States that were not members of the Arab Group, had also requested that there should be no vote on the draft resolution and the amendment in the Committee and that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that the thirty-sixth session be kept open until the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA submitted proposals, at the end of January 1982, on ways of meeting UNRWA's deficit for 1982.

16. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided not to vote on the draft resolution and the amendment and to recommend to the General Assembly that the thirty-sixth session should remain open until the Working Group on the Financing UNRWA submitted proposals at the end of January 1982 on ways of meeting UNRWA's deficit for 1982.

17. It was so decided.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that the Rapporteur would report to the General Assembly accordingly, and declared that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 60.

19. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had completed its work for the thirty-sixth session.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.