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Chairman: Mr. Abdulrahim Abby FARAH
(Somalia).

AGENDA ITEM 32

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/7131, A/7396)

1. Mr. LANNUNG (Denmark) said that his Government's views on United Nations peace-keeping operations were well known; Denmark's great interest in that question and its active participation in, and support of, all United Nations peace-keeping operations so far had been stressed at the previous session of the General Assembly. Those views remained unchanged. Despite the cautious optimism engendered by the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2308 (XXII), it was disappointing that the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations (A/7396) did not contain more substance; in fact, members of the Committee were being asked to be patient for another year, and seemed to have no choice but to accede to that request. It was to be hoped that a full, substantive report would be submitted in 1969.

2. However, he did not wish to imply any criticism of the Special Committee itself. His delegation was fully aware of the difficulties involved in that Committee's work, and was gratified that it had embarked on a substantive study of one of the aspects of the peace-keeping machinery and that the Working Group expected to proceed to the study of other mutually acceptable models of peace-keeping operations. The memoranda on stand-by forces established for service with the United Nations submitted by various countries, including the Nordic countries, contained a wealth of information which, together with the material available in the Secretariat, could be put to good use in such a study. In that connexion, the Danish delegation shared the hope that more countries would submit similar memoranda. Although progress might appear extremely slow, efforts to reach the ultimate goal of a stronger and more effective United Nations must be continued.

3. Mr. KA (Senegal) said that his delegation had taken note of the efforts of the Special Committee

and its Working Group. His country attached great importance to peace-keeping operations and considered that the Security Council held the primary responsibility for such activities. Member States should therefore endeavour to co-operate with the Council. His country's voluntary contributions towards peace-keeping operations, although small, testified to the importance his Government attached to that delicate question. It was to be hoped that the Special Committee would be in a position to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session.

4. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that United Nations peace-keeping operations were of particular importance, since they were a means of achieving the goal for which the Organization had been established—the maintenance of international peace and security. Provision was made in Chapter VI of the Charter for certain actions for the pacific settlement of disputes; however, when such steps were inadequate, Chapter VII provided for action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression. Chapter VII of the Charter was a key chapter, and it was there and nowhere else that the answers to the problems that arose in such situations were to be found. Attempts to interpret any other provisions of the Charter as permitting action by armed United Nations forces without reference to Chapter VII could lead—and had led—to a worsening of the situation and complications in the Organization itself.

5. The Soviet delegation's views on that question had already been set out in memoranda dated 10 July 1964^{1/} and 16 March 1967,^{2/} and it was gratifying that they were now shared by a growing number of countries. The main provision of Chapter VII was that such questions should be dealt with by the Security Council, the organ bearing the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That provision must be the starting-point for working out any measures to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations in the sphere of peace-keeping. The Special Committee had failed to make any progress because certain States had tried to ignore the existence both of Chapter VII of the Charter and of the fundamental principle that the Security Council was the sole organ authorized to take decisions on questions relating to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

6. Nevertheless, the discussions that had taken place over the years in the General Assembly and the Special

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, annex No. 21, document A/5721.

^{2/} See Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1967, document S/7841.

Committee had not been entirely fruitless; they had helped to clarify divergent points of view, and had shown quite clearly that any attempt to impose an illegal decision regarding United Nations peace-keeping operations in violation of the Charter was doomed to failure. Thus, a firm foundation for future work had been laid; it was now generally understood that an agreed decision could be reached solely on the basis of strict observance of the Charter, and that without agreement such decisions could only undermine the authority and prestige of the United Nations.

7. In 1968, the Special Committee had for the first time been able to undertake practical work on specific criteria for a model United Nations peace-keeping operation. While that was only a first step, it represented a substantial improvement over years of barren discussion. The reports before the Committee showed that points of contact between divergent views had been found and areas of agreement within which practical work could be undertaken had been defined.

8. Thus, agreement had been reached on a model for the study called for in General Assembly resolution 2308 (XXII). The type of operation chosen was in full conformity with the Charter, but experience had shown that serious problems sometimes arose in connexion with the organization and operations of United Nations military observers established or authorized by the Security Council for observation purposes pursuant to Security Council resolutions, and the study to be undertaken by the Special Committee could be of considerable value for future operations.

9. In addition, the Special Committee, assisted by the Working Group and the Secretariat, had almost completed the selection of factual material relating to the study, and would soon be able to agree on specific parameters for the first model, which would include the factors listed in paragraph 1 of the Special Committee's report (A/7396). All that work, which was being undertaken for the first time in the Organization's history, would require strenuous efforts. The Special Committee also expected to proceed, when it deemed it appropriate, to the study of other mutually acceptable models of peace-keeping operations. All those studies could, of course, be regarded as auxiliary work for the Security Council, which alone could take decisions on particular operations.

10. Those who regarded the results of the Special Committee's work as limited were displaying unwarranted impatience. That work was difficult and complex, and was being carried out in a sphere in which disagreement, mistrust, lack of goodwill, self-interest on the part of some and caution in others had been evident for many years. States could best contribute to the success of the Special Committee's work by strengthening the results achieved so far, supporting a more constructive atmosphere for discussion, and carefully evaluating past achievements and future possibilities. Despite the difficulties ahead, it was to be hoped that positive advances could be achieved. As in the past, the Soviet Union was ready to co-operate in every possible way in order to further progress on the basis of strict observation of the Charter, and hoped that the General Assembly would extend the Special Committee's mandate for a further year.

11. Mr. DESCHAMPS (France) recalled that the Special Committee had acknowledged, in the report it had submitted to the twenty-second session of the General Assembly,^{3/} that it had not been able to complete the task entrusted to it. Fortunately, the reports now before the Committee were more positive. The Special Committee had been able to meet several times and to reach agreement on the most appropriate procedure for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 2308 (XXII). He recalled that the most important provision of that resolution, which had been adopted by a large majority, stressed the advisability of preparing "a study on matters related to facilities, services and personnel which Member States might provide, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, for United Nations peace-keeping operations". The Special Committee had assigned a Working Group to prepare the documents necessary for such a study; the Working Group had decided to concentrate its investigation on the United Nations military observers established or authorized by the Security Council for observation purposes pursuant to Security Council resolutions. At its request, the Secretariat had prepared copious documentation on the subject, which the Working Group was studying in detail.

12. That was an extremely promising development. As that work had begun in earnest, it might be expected that considerable progress would be made. Some might feel that what had been agreed on was indeed limited in scope and might wonder at the slow pace of the Special Committee's work, but his delegation did not share such a sceptical attitude. Having participated in the work of the Special Committee and the Working Group, he knew how difficult it was, starting with opinions which were often very different, to reach a common point of view in regard to a matter which concerned the very basis of the Charter. It still remembered certain peace-keeping operations in the past which had served, unfortunately, not to bring peace, but to maintain or revive a state of crisis, with tragic results.

13. While there was an evident need for a certain degree of flexibility, his delegation was convinced that only a patient and objective approach could result in the formulation of general principles of action which were at once realistic, legally incontrovertible and acceptable to all Member States, for improvisation or failure in the field of peace-keeping operations would be disastrous not only for the United Nations, but also, and in particular, for small States in need of its protection. Indeed, experience had shown that peace-keeping operations were generally carried out on the territory of such States. It was impossible to over-emphasize the importance to those States of ensuring that such operations would not be undertaken as a result of hasty initiatives or excessive extrapolation.

14. Obviously, it was equally important for the great Powers, and the permanent members of the Security Council in particular, to remain aware of their great responsibilities under the Charter. The need for prudence of which he had spoken should not be interpreted as lack of interest or opposition to peace-keeping operations on the part of his delegation. From

^{3/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Annexes, agenda item 37, document A/6815.

the very beginning, his country had participated in the work of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine and had made a considerable number of observers available to that body after the military operations of June 1967. General de Gaulle, at his press conference on 27 November 1967, had spoken of the role which could be played by United Nations forces in an eventual solution of the Middle East conflict; on 9 February 1968, he had stated that France was prepared to participate in the implementation of such a solution.

15. In the view of his delegation, the conduct of peace-keeping operations could be considered only within the framework defined by the Charter. It would be a delusion to confine oneself to considering the "practical aspects" of such operations, while ignoring the basic institutional problems. In that connexion, the Charter offered a solution; it contained principles acceptable to all which were sufficiently general and reasonable to serve as a basis for action.

16. The Charter struck a realistic balance between the different bodies of the United Nations. Under Article 11 (2), any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security on which action was necessary should be referred to the Security Council by the General Assembly either before or after discussion. In his delegation's view, such action was not limited to the coercive measures envisaged in Chapter VII, Articles 41 and 42; on the contrary, the Security Council had exclusive competence with respect to any operation involving the creation of a military force acting in organized units, even if those units acted with the consent of the State concerned and if arms were used only in exceptional cases such as self-defence. Subject to the reservations in Article 12, paragraph 1, Article 11 authorized the General Assembly to discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it and to make recommendations in that regard. His delegation felt that the competence of the General Assembly could be extended to any operation which did not involve an "action" in the sense defined; such operations would include observation, supervision or investigation, when they did not involve the creation of organized units placed under military command and responsible for their own security. He stressed that such operations comprised a wide range of measures of no small practical importance which could be carried out more easily than the dangerous and costly deployment of a large military force.

17. It was obvious that the constitutional and financial aspects of peace-keeping operations were closely interdependent. It followed that, for reasons of principle as well as for practical considerations, it was for the Security Council alone to determine the means of financing operations authorized by it. Various other formulae had been proposed; however, any solution which gave the General Assembly the power to determine the financing of peace-keeping operations would, in the end, result in a decision on the means of financing by a majority of Member States which might bear less than 5 per cent of the cost of such operations,

or even none of it, if that majority were to decide to exempt its members from any contribution.

18. The Committee appeared to be aware of that fact. However, his delegation understood the legitimate concern of all Member States that might be forced to bear costs which they had no opportunity to discuss. In that connexion, his delegation had proposed the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee under Article 29 of the Charter. Such a body, which could include, in addition to the members of the Security Council, the parties concerned and a sufficient number of Member States to ensure equitable geographical distribution, would make suggestions to the Security Council which would be likely to carry considerable weight. In reply to the concerns of the developing countries, his delegation had supported the idea that the Security Council should consider a recommendation to be submitted by the General Assembly that the portion of the cost of any given peace-keeping operation to be borne by the developing countries should not exceed 5 per cent; if the usual scale was applied, it would be in excess of 13 per cent.

19. If the institutional provisions of the Charter were basic to any consideration of the financial aspects of peace-keeping operations, they were equally important in connexion with the military aspects of such operations. That was why his delegation had expressed some apprehension in supporting the resolution adopted the preceding year. It considered that a study of the facilities, services and personnel that might be provided to the United Nations was quite "appropriate", in the words of General Assembly resolution 2308 (XXII) in view of the very interesting exchanges of views which had arisen in the Working Group in connexion with the question of military observers. But such a study would be justified only in so far as the operations it set out to analyse were actually "in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations". The Charter clearly defined the manner in which the United Nations could make use of military forces. The exclusive competence in such matters of the Security Council, assisted by its Military Staff Committee, was made equally clear.

20. His delegation had serious reservations with regard to proposals which, under the pretext of making the United Nations better able to take rapid military action, might lead to dangerous practices. It was easy to see the dangers inherent in any military action concerning which there were differences of opinion among Member States, and particularly among permanent members of the Security Council, especially where such basic matters as authorization and control were concerned.

21. The work of the Special Committee had helped to make clear the views of different delegations. Acting on the basis of consensus, with the experience it had already acquired, the Special Committee could make a valuable contribution towards agreement. His delegation placed great confidence in it and hoped its mandate would be renewed.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.