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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
5th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 8 October 1985  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KORHONEN (Finland)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 77: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING  
OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

1. Mr. ONONAIYE (Nigeria), speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, said that because of the differences of opinion among the super-Powers and the members of the Committee the latter had been able to hold only one meeting since the thirty-ninth session of the Assembly. In view of the paramount importance of the question for the international community, the members had agreed to recognize that their mandate remained in force and that it was more important than ever on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations to reach agreement on guidelines for the conduct of peace-keeping operations. The majority of delegations to the current session had reaffirmed in the Assembly their adherence to the principles of the Charter and the purposes of the United Nations, which was perhaps the last hope of mankind.

2. The question of peace-keeping operations offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Organization in the face of the current problems of international security. The summit meeting that was soon to take place would perhaps give evidence of a political will that would enable the Committee to overcome its difficulties and make progress in its work. He therefore appealed to the Special Political Committee to renew its mandate.

3. Mr. KEISALO (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, said that peace-keeping operations, which were an indispensable instrument for containing conflicts and maintaining international peace and security, were an integral part of the history of the Organization. Although they were not an end in themselves and must not be seen as a substitute for just and lasting settlements, they contributed to an atmosphere conducive to negotiations between the parties concerned for the settlement of conflicts. In that sense they were of an interim nature and the parties concerned must seek to arrive at a political solution.

4. The Nordic countries had from the outset supported unreservedly the efforts of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security and had participated in practically all its peace-keeping operations. Of the roughly 10,000 soldiers and observers engaged in the five ongoing peace-keeping operations almost one third came from the Nordic countries, and those countries were in principle prepared to contribute also to future operations. Since 1964 the Nordic countries had maintained stand-by forces earmarked for possible United Nations service. Their common experience was summarized in a booklet circulated as an official document (A/SPC/33/3) during the thirty-third session, in 1978. The Nordic countries recalled in that connection that in their joint report (A/38/271) setting forth the views of the five Governments on the strengthening of the United Nations they had suggested that other countries should be encouraged to set up a system of stand-by forces. While the Nordic countries conducted continuous training programmes on a national basis for their own stand-by forces, there was close co-operation and a division of work between them with respect to the training

(Mr. Keisalo, Finland)

of certain units. Joint seminars were held for the benefit of the relevant personnel of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, and the Ministers of Defence met twice a year in order to consider questions relating to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

5. The success of peace-keeping operations depended on certain conditions. First of all, they should have a clearly defined mandate that could be implemented in practice. Secondly, they should have the continuous support of the Security Council. Thirdly, they required the full co-operation of the parties concerned. The Governments of the troop-contributing countries must ensure that those conditions were met not only before they decided to provide contingents but also throughout the operation. It had not been possible to meet all of those conditions in the case of UNIFIL. In spite of the difficult circumstances in which that Force had operated, its presence symbolized the will of the international community to restore peace and security and the authority of the Lebanese Government in the area, in accordance with the relevant resolution of the Security Council. That operation also had other positive aspects, namely its stabilizing impact on the area and the humanitarian services which it rendered. As to the peace-keeping force in Cyprus, the Nordic countries shared the Secretary-General's assessment as set forth in his report of 31 May 1985 (S/17227) that its continued presence remained indispensable in helping to maintain calm on the island and in creating the conditions in which the search for a peaceful settlement could best be pursued.

6. The Nordic countries were deeply concerned at the serious difficulties affecting the financing of peace-keeping operations, which was the collective responsibility of all Member States. Some of them were not meeting that responsibility, thus placing an additional burden on troop-contributing countries already burdened by the costs of training and equipping those troops. That might affect the willingness of Member States to contribute troops for future operations. The Nordic countries had repeatedly appealed to all Member States to increase their contributions to UNFICYP. It strongly hoped that the appeal would be heeded.

7. Peace-keeping operations were generally considered to be one of the most successful innovations of the United Nations despite the divergence of views among Member States concerning the basic principles and guidelines which it was the task of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations to elaborate. Perhaps Member States should begin to consider whether the existing mechanism was acceptable or whether a new effort should be made to improve it.

8. In conclusion he said he wished to express the Nordic countries' appreciation of the way in which the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs and the staff had managed peace-keeping operations for the past year.

9. Mr. MIKUS (Hungary) expressed regret that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had not been able to carry out the tasks assigned to it. Peace-keeping was a complex and sensitive activity, and the current international situation characterized as it was by confrontation, was not conducive to the elaboration of the guidelines to which such operations should be subject. Only in

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(Mr. Mikus, Hungary)

an atmosphere of co-operation would it be possible to make progress in such a delicate matter. Attempts by certain States to gain unilateral advantages could not lead to meaningful accords.

10. Hungary was vitally interested in the restoration of a climate of détente and co-operation. It was essential that a dialogue between countries should be maintained and if possible intensified. The talks to be held in the near future by the leaders of the great Powers might contribute to the easing of tensions. Any positive result emerging from those encounters would have a beneficial effect on a large number of controversial issues, and the task of the Special Committee might thereby be facilitated.

11. In Hungary's view, the completion of agreed guidelines would be an important step towards the solution of the main question of peace-keeping operations. It was important first to concentrate on the formulation of the guidelines, without which practical issues could not have any real significance. His delegation was ready to support any effort to that end based on objective criteria in accordance with the United Nations Charter. It wished to recall, in that connection, the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in which the Special Committee had been urged to make renewed efforts towards the completion of agreed guidelines to serve as a basis for peace-keeping operations.

12. His Government held the view that peace-keeping operations must be carried out strictly in accordance with the Charter, which authorized the Security Council, and the Council alone, to take action involving the use of armed force in maintaining international peace and security. Consequently, it was for the Council alone to decide on launching, directing and financing peace-keeping operations.

13. Chapter VII of the Charter provided a sufficiently broad basis for the elaboration of agreed guidelines. Hungary was not averse to discussing practical matters; but although important, they were not priority matters. His delegation supported the renewal of the mandate of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations so that it might resume work after the fortieth session of the General Assembly.

14. Mr. CANALES MARQUEZ (Chile) said that his country had repeatedly stressed the importance of having appropriate mechanisms to ensure respect for the principle of the prohibition of the threat or use of force, which was the central element of the United Nations Charter.

15. There was a lack of legal instruments requiring the parties to a conflict to settle their differences by peaceful means, and the United Nations lacked effective mechanisms to enable it to play an active role in that process. While bodies had indeed been established to prevent armed conflicts, they could act only if they were assured of the political will of nations, in accordance with the legal obligations laid down in the international instruments. It was therefore essential to enhance in the near future the capability of the United Nations with regard to the preservation of global peace and stability.

(Mr. Canales Marquez, Chile)

16. Chile, for its part, had always complied scrupulously with international law and had made the prohibition of the threat or use of force an absolute rule of conduct, as demonstrated by the recent signature of a treaty of peace and friendship with Argentina.
17. On the basis of those principles, his delegation resolutely supported the work of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and its Working Group. The documents elaborated by the Working Group should certainly not be confined to recommending the adoption of agreed guidelines, but should also set forth practical measures. Unless the Secretary-General was given a leading role in the settlement of global conflicts, the chances of such guidelines being implemented would be minimal. Thus solutions were subject to the good will of the parties, which meant that the law had not evolved as it should have in that highly critical area of international relations. The adoption of practical measures was compatible with the primary responsibility which the Security Council should have in respect of peace-keeping.
18. In accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter, the Secretary-General should play a leading role and have, as appropriate, the necessary financial resources to carry out his functions and maintain peace; it was unacceptable that, because of the Security Council's failure to take appropriate action, he should remain passive in the face of earth-shaking crises. The fate of thousands of human beings should not be contingent on the decisions of members of the Council or on a paralysing veto. Because of its composition, the Council had a form of suffrage based on means, with the result that the weakest parties were very often unprotected.
19. Chile felt solidarity with the aspirations of the developing world, which could be realized only on the basis of peace, security and development. It was therefore imperative to equip the United Nations with instruments for the effective and expeditious prevention of conflicts. Inasmuch as peace was indivisible, it should not be allowed to remain conditional on the good will of the parties to a conflict, even a regional conflict. A breach of the peace, wherever it occurred, had adverse effects on the rest of the world and created tension that led to further conflict elsewhere. On a number of occasions, the close interdependence of States had become apparent in that way. Every day there were new situations affecting the moral and legal imperative of peace. Clearly the existing instruments had to be reformed, with a view to giving the United Nations the means to prevent conflicts and create equitable living conditions for all the peoples of the world, particularly the most vulnerable.
20. Although it was Chile's principled policy not to send troops abroad, it had made an exception by seconding eight officers from various national-defence bodies to serve as observers with United Nations peace-keeping forces.
21. The United Nations could not remain passive in the face of a series of crises in flagrant violation of the provisions of the Charter. The Organization and, in particular, the Secretary-General must be put in a position to take practical preventive action to preserve peace and security.

(Mr. Canales Marquez, Chile)

22. If all the various challenges of the future were to be met, it was imperative that stability and some degree of understanding should reign. Chile was unreservedly prepared to work towards that end.

23. Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said it was regrettable that the difficulties confronting the Special Committee since its inception had again prevented it from submitting a report. The fact that the United Nations had been established and the fact that all Member States had subscribed to the purposes of its Charter, foremost among which was the maintenance of international peace and security, referred to in Article 1, paragraph 1, were proof that the international community was committed to peace and peace-keeping. In that connection, it was important to stress the important role of the General Assembly as a principal organ and as the sole forum where all Member States were represented on an equal footing and where it was therefore possible to reach agreement on peace-keeping operations, with respect for the interests of all. The Secretary-General, within the framework of the functions entrusted to him by the Security Council, must have all the necessary means to conduct peace-keeping operations effectively and constructively. Such an enhancement of the roles of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General would in no way diminish the role of the Security Council or limit the functions assigned to it under the Charter with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed their respective efforts were mutually complementary. It had to be recognized that that was especially the case when the Security Council had difficulty in reconciling divergent views and in fully assuming its role as the sole organ authorized to take the necessary measures to preserve international peace and security. The Security Council's difficulties had been used by some as a pretext for ignoring both the Council and the General Assembly, thereby deviating from the provisions of the Charter.

24. His delegation believed that it was essential to respect the authority of the United Nations and condemn any attempt to obstruct it. Events had shown that measures taken outside the framework of the United Nations were ineffective and only aggravated tension without making any contribution to the establishment of peace, security and stability. In order to enhance respect for the authority of the United Nations and its Charter, there was a need to grapple with the real causes of the lack of confidence and consensus within the Security Council. The simple use of veto power was merely a negative act which prevented the adoption of a given resolution without in any way offering an alternative solution. The role of the Security Council was thereby affected, and at a time when there were more and more areas of tension throughout the world.

25. The obstacles which the Committee of 33 had faced since its establishment were not merely an extension of the difficulties facing the Security Council. However, his delegation was in favour of renewing its mandate for a year in view of the importance of its work and the results which it had achieved, namely the drafting of the title, the introduction and a preliminary version of the first four articles of the guidelines that would govern peace-keeping operations. Those operations were essential in order to achieve the purposes and objectives of the Charter. It could only be hoped that the international community would be able to adopt guidelines meeting the following criteria: (1) the Charter of the United Nations

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

must constitute the fundamental basis for peace-keeping operations, which must be organized according to mandates clearly defined by the Security Council with respect to the manner of conducting the operations and the method of carrying out missions entrusted to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, the first of which was to facilitate the diplomatic efforts of the Organization; (2) peace-keeping operations must be temporary in nature and must not be tantamount to approving or consolidating an act of aggression or allowing the aggressor to benefit from his action and impose a *fait accompli*; (3) the presence of United Nations peace-keeping forces must not be a substitute for the search for a solution to the conflict which had necessitated the intervention of those forces; (4) the authority of the United Nations must be respected, and any action that interfered with the performance of its functions, such as the attack on members of the Organization and their kidnapping in southern Lebanon by the militia of the collaborator, Antoine Lahad with the support of the Zionist entity, must be denounced. All means at the disposal of the Organization under the Charter must be used to ensure that its resolutions were respected; (5) United Nations forces must adopt a position of impartiality and neutrality with regard to the parties to a conflict in order to maintain the trust of all and thus ensure the possibility of negotiations; (6) the principle of geographic distribution in the composition of peace-keeping forces must be applied with sufficient flexibility to satisfy the criteria of impartiality, neutrality and effectiveness and the independence of those forces; (7) in order to be able to accomplish their mission as effectively as possible, the peace-keeping forces must be granted special privileges and immunities, must be thoroughly trained, and must be equipped with modern weapons and matériel; they must also be deployed in positions sufficiently defensible to enable them to keep their losses to a minimum; (8) the principle of equivalence of aggressor and victim and thus of their respective responsibilities with regard to financial contributions must be rejected - the aggressor must bear the consequences of his act, since exonerating him would be tantamount to rewarding his aggression and allowing him to reap its benefits; (9) the peace-keeping forces must not be used for purposes contrary to the principles and interests of States, a criterion which presupposed strict respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Those forces must be placed under the strict control of the Secretary-General and the constant supervision of the Security Council and the troop-contributing States.

26. If the Special Committee was to be able to carry out its task, it would not be enough simply to renew its mandate. The Member States must provide it with the means to do its work. The five permanent members of the Security Council in particular had a responsibility to assume in that respect. In entrusting the Security Council under the Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the international community expected the Council to show a certain degree of flexibility in carrying out its functions, to ensure co-operation and co-ordination with the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, and to give the Secretary-General sufficient powers to enable him to direct peace-keeping operations effectively.

27. His delegation highly appreciated the efforts made by the Secretary-General and his staff in maintaining international peace and security and the courage and

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

spirit of self-sacrifice of the members of the United Nations peace-keeping forces who had given their lives so that that lofty goal of the Organization might be attained.

28. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that his country was celebrating in 1985 the twenty-fifth anniversary of its participation in United Nations peace-keeping operations. It was therefore logical that the Austrian Federal Chancellor should have stressed, in a joint appeal made on 26 June 1985 with eight other Heads of State and Government from different parts of the world, the importance of those operations and should have urged Member States to make greater use of that instrument. Austria, having given considerable thought to ways of strengthening peace-keeping operations, favoured the revitalization of the Special Committee. The decision of the Bureau to conduct exchanges of views was a first step and might lead the following year to the drafting of the programme of work which was to have been submitted in the fall of 1985.

29. The success of peace-keeping operations depended on three conditions: a clearly defined mandate which could be carried out in the field, the continuous support of the Security Council and the full co-operation of all parties concerned. It was not enough, however, merely to "freeze" a conflict; on the contrary, efforts should be made to integrate peace-keeping operations to a greater extent into the political efforts to resolve conflicts. Peace-keeping operations must above all aim at preventing the outbreak of hostilities and serve as an instrument of preventive diplomacy. In order to carry out that role, peace-keeping forces must have reliable information, great flexibility and the capacity to react speedily to emergency situations. Ideally the training and equipment of peace-keeping forces should be standardized to the greatest possible extent. Those conditions obviously required the strengthening of peace-keeping forces in terms of men and matériel and, for political reasons as well, the expansion of participation in peace-keeping operations, which to date had been carried out primarily by countries with well-developed military forces. Accordingly, countries with experience in peace-keeping operations should make available suitable equipment and logistical supplies to the United Nations on a stand-by basis; other countries with smaller military capabilities could contribute troop contingents which would be armed and equipped by the Organization. The first group of countries could also provide small teams to train the other contingents in the use and maintenance of the equipment. Preliminary informal contacts with the United Nations Secretariat had shown that there was interest in that idea. Austria therefore intended to pursue it further.

30. The financing of peace-keeping operations was another area of concern. Peace-keeping operations must be financed on a sound long-term basis in order to ensure their viability. With regard to the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus, the gap between the level of voluntary contributions and real costs continued to grow. That placed an ever greater burden on the troop-contributing countries. In conjunction with the other troop contributing countries, Austria had supported the appeals made by the Secretary-General by urging Member States to make voluntary contributions for the financing of UNFICYP or to increase those which they had already made.



31. Mr. ABOUL GHEIT (Egypt) noted that the important contribution of the United Nations peace-keeping forces to the maintenance of international peace and security had been recognized in the final communiqué of the historic meeting of the Security Council held at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 26 September 1985. Egypt, which had always recognized the importance of peace-keeping operations, participated actively in the work of the Special Committee. Those operations were an essential element in the activities of the Organization in maintaining peace and resolving conflicts, and the Secretary-General had stressed their importance in his report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization in 1982 by emphasizing that the failure of a peace-keeping operation would have unfortunate consequences for the Organization.

32. Egypt therefore favoured the continuation of the work of the Special Committee and the renewal of its mandate. It was hoped that with the co-operation of all Member States the Special Committee would be able to make progress in the coming year.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

33. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid and the Secretariat had informed him that Bishop Desmond Tutu would address the General Assembly on Monday, 28 October, at noon and that the General Assembly would then begin consideration of agenda item 35: "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa". Therefore, the Committee might wish to hear the petitioners on Friday, 25 October, rather than during the consideration of that item by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.