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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM

(Thailand)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 76: QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE RELEVANT ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/46/437)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that since there were no speakers on the list for agenda item 76, he would suggest that the Committee defer consideration of the item until the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.
2. Mr. SHIGEIE (Japan), speaking on behalf of the Asian Group, supported the proposal to defer consideration of the item.
3. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to recommend that the item be included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session.
4. It was so agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 69: PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF SMALL STATES (A/46/339; A/SPC/46/L.3)

5. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to an error in paragraph 2 of the English text of the draft resolution (A/SPC/46/L.3): the last two words should read "internal affairs" instead of "external affairs".
6. Mr. ZAKI (Maldives) recalled that the item under consideration had been included for the first time in the Assembly agenda in 1988 at the request of his country. Its initiative was motivated by the attempt of a band of mercenaries on 3 November 1988 to overthrow the legitimate and democratically elected government. Apart from causing psychological trauma, the incident had resulted in the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of public and private property, with serious consequences for the country's future. Luckily, the positive international response and timely assistance from a friendly country helped to thwart the evil designs of the mercenaries.
7. The Secretary-General, in the report he submitted in compliance with the relevant Assembly resolution (A/46/339), emphasized the interest of the international community in safeguarding the security of small States because the international order could be undermined by their instability. The vulnerability of small States was no more clearly demonstrated than in the case of the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. If an economically rich country with powerful friends could be virtually wiped off the political map, where did the security of much smaller States with fewer economic resources lay? The quick response of the Security Council and the international community to the threat was a clear manifestation of the validity of the collective security system envisaged in the Charter; no one today questioned the capability of the United Nations to offer protection and security to its Members in accordance with the provisions of the Charter if the Member States, and particularly the permanent

(Mr. Zaki, Maldives)

members of the Security Council, demonstrated the political will to implement those provisions on a consistent and universal basis.

8. Although the easing of tensions in international relations was a matter of satisfaction, there was increasing alarm about the danger from mercenaries and terrorists, with their powerful international network and financial resources far beyond the means of small States. While no country, big or small, could command absolute security, small States were much more vulnerable to attacks from those adventurers and, without international assistance and cooperation, could become their victims. Therefore ratification of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries by all States Members of the United Nations would be an important step in countering that menace. Furthermore, the recommendations of the workshop on the protection and security of small States held in Maldives in April 1991 merited consideration by the international community.

9. On behalf of all the co-sponsors, his delegation was proud to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Protection and security of small States" (A/SPC/46/L.3), elaborated after consultation with a number of delegations and taking into account the views of various countries and regional groups. He hoped that in the new international climate of confidence, the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

10. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) pointed out that the question of the security of small States was quite complex and should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Threats to the security of small States were not limited to acts of overt aggression by larger States with expansionist designs but also took the form of economic coercion, political pressure, threats or use of force and acts of subversion, including through the use of mercenaries.

11. Strict compliance with established international norms in the conduct of relations between States was fundamental in any approach to the problem, since violations of those norms posed a direct threat to international and regional peace and security. Moreover, recent trends in international relations provided an environment for States conducive to resolving their disputes peacefully in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

12. Pakistan believed that the most appropriate mechanism for guaranteeing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States was the collective security system of the United Nations. The framework for action to counter threats to the peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression was provided in Chapter VII of the Charter, which vested the Security Council with the authority effectively to respond in such situations. Consequently, his delegation emphasized that collective action taken by the United Nations should clearly reflect the will of the international community.

13. His delegation favoured a more active role for the Secretary-General in dealing with potential threats to international peace and security.

(Mr. Mahmood, Pakistan)

Article 99 of the Charter envisaged such a role and it could effectively be played by giving preventive diplomacy a sharper edge. In that connection, the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization (A/46/1) concerning the need to strengthen the conflict-prevention capability of the United Nations should be given serious consideration.

14. Regional arrangements or agencies must contribute to efforts to maintain international peace. Chapter VIII of the Charter indicated how they should contribute. He emphasized, however, that regional efforts must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter so that they complemented the measures taken by the Organization.

15. Lastly, Pakistan was confident that the draft resolution submitted by Maldives would be endorsed by the General Assembly.

16. Mr. HIENSCH (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the European Community and its twelve member States had considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/339) and taken note of the draft resolution sponsored by the Republic of Maldives (A/SPC/46/L.3). They recognized the fact that small States might feel vulnerable as far as their security was concerned. As they had said in their first statement on the subject at the forty-fourth General Assembly, the member States of the European Community adhered strictly to the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, irrespective of their size, and were firmly convinced that, having regard to the Charter, no distinction should or could be made between States so far as their security was concerned. It should be noted that the Preamble of the Charter rightly affirmed the principle of the equal rights of nations, large and small.

17. That principle of sovereign equality before international law enabled every State to appeal to the competent organs of the United Nations when it felt that its security, sovereignty or territorial integrity was under threat or had been violated. The Gulf crisis had demonstrated that the United Nations was capable of responding effectively in such cases. In that connection, the European Community and its twelve member States stressed the need for full implementation of all Security Council resolutions.

18. The European Community and its member States noted that the draft resolution did not provide any special status for small States; to have done so would have raised difficult problems of definition. They were also pleased to note that the draft resolution would not involve any additional financial charges for the United Nations.

19. While certain elements of the draft resolution might deviate from what the Twelve believed to be the essence of the resolution, namely, the universal principle of the right of all States to security and peace, irrespective of size, they recognized that certain small States might be more vulnerable to

(Mr. Hiensch, Netherlands)

external threats or foreign interference in their internal affairs. For those reasons, they would join the consensus on the draft resolution.

20. Mr. POSSO (Ecuador) said that the protection and security of small States merited a special guarantee which, it was generally believed, should be fully applied indiscriminately and unconditionally by all States in accordance with the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. While the peaceful settlement of disputes between States had developed to a certain extent, its application had not been universal, particularly as far as small States were concerned, and the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq had been a clear demonstration of the use of force in an attempt to resolve a conflict between two States. Until recently, in the context of the so-called Cold War, it had been extremely difficult to use any of the measures provided for within the system of collective security. Once the Cold War was over, the Gulf crisis had provided a clear opportunity to use force, with the approval of the United Nations, in order to liberate Kuwait. Once Kuwait had been liberated, the international community, in accordance with a universal concept of security, had decided to extend its protection to the whole region.

21. Such unprecedented actions had been taken by a group of States, representing the international community, carrying out a task which, in the opinion of the more orthodox, should have been carried out only by the organized international community. That meant that, in addition to the peaceful settlement of disputes and systems of collective defence, could now be added recourse to the powerful potential which the United Nations had begun to assert in the context of the so-called "new world order". That concept had been merely asserted but not defined. The rules which would govern the "new world order" were not known, especially those concerning the exercise of the new responsibilities and their limits and the controls which should be implemented in order to prevent the representatives of the international community from exceeding the powers granted to them or attempting to go beyond the objectives initially set. Neither was it yet clear whether measures involving the use of force would be carried out by a group of States representing the international community or whether they would be implemented directly by, and under the strict control of, the Security Council. Nor was it known whether the fundamental principle whereby it was for the State which considered itself to be threatened specifically to request the intervention of the United Nations system, would still be respected.

22. Ignorance of the exact rules of the game for the "new world order" had aroused considerable concern and expectation; although, on the one hand, it could be considered that the exercise of new responsibilities was the special guarantee of security that small States needed, yet, on the other hand, increased intervention could mean added vulnerability for those States. The strict, indiscriminate and unconditional implementation of the principles of international law by all States was therefore essential, and it was also vital that the rules of procedures and the standards which would govern the "new world order" should be defined so that all countries could apply them

(Mr. Posso, Ecuador)

unconditionally and correctly. A beginning should be made by defining the very concept of "small" and the comparative differences that would define medium and large States. It was also important to define those situations in which the responsibility of the international community should be invoked: in the case of military aggression; the threat of the use of force; economic aggression; and certain circumstances of social instability.

23. If the essential condition of a specific request from a State which considered itself to be threatened was abandoned and the request was regarded as implicit in the gravity of the circumstances requiring intervention, the action of the international community would no longer be a guarantee of security but become one more threat for small States. For that reason, his delegation considered regional and subregional collective security systems, created within the framework of universal security, to be very important, since they constituted an additional guarantee of security for small States.

24. In that context, the Government of Ecuador had sought to develop a subregional system of security which could be promptly brought to bear in an updated and revamped regional context, through commitments made within the inter-American system. At the subregional level, the efforts made by the Andean countries in that respect were worthy of mention. Ecuador was aware that large States had a legitimate interest in safeguarding and protecting their security; that interest should, however, be subject to full respect for independence, sovereignty and a justified decision to become involved in regional and subregional security systems.

25. An idea that was apparently widely held was that the United Nations should improve its peace-keeping operations in order to extend them to include a policy of prevention. Ecuador supported the flexible and effective machinery of such operations and had indeed pledged its support to two of them currently under way in Central America. With regard to a policy of prevention, however, the subjective nature of the criteria which would determine the parameters of action could transform the guarantee of security into a threat against security and open the way to illegitimate and unnecessary intervention by the international community in the internal affairs of a State which the State could in fact control itself, either individually or in the context of its regional or subregional security system.

26. Ecuador, which had several positive advantages as far as security was concerned because of its geographical position, its national system of communications, a balanced demographic distribution and integrated peace, was also aware of the vulnerable situation of its fellow States in Latin America and other small States in the world confronted by the permanent threat of criminals and terrorists. The constant threat of drug trafficking, international organized crime and terrorism should be the primary incentive for joint action by the international community and one of the principal motives for setting in motion the powers implicit in the "new world order", in particular to guarantee the independence and sovereignty of small States.

(Mr. Posso, Ecuador)

27. His delegation considered that those modern dregs of humanity should be dealt with by concerted action in which the sovereign will of the countries directly involved and the regional and subregional bodies established through international solidarity should be taken into account first, before the possibility of universal action was considered.

28. Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia) said that developing countries like Mongolia, which were small in terms of population and territory, were usually much more vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs. That did not, however, alter their perception of common security in the modern interdependent world. The United Nations Charter served as a lasting foundation for the collective security of all States without exception. That in no way detracted from the need of small States to enter into collective arrangements, regional or subregional, to protect their security, as was clearly provided for in Chapter VIII, Article 52, of the Charter.

29. In their search for the best way to safeguard their security, small States usually turned to bilateral arrangements for protection and security; that all too often brought them under foreign domination and involved them in the hostilities of other States against their will. In looking for more secure arrangements to protect their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, it was natural that small States should see in the United Nations the only impartial guarantor of their security. For that reason his delegation saw considerable merit in the idea of activating the potential for preventive diplomacy of the Secretary-General, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter.

30. The momentous changes occurring in the world provided a historic opportunity for the fulfilment of the primary goal of the United Nations, which was the preservation of international peace and security. The Gulf crisis and the settlement of a number of regional conflicts vividly demonstrated the ability of the Organization to activate the machinery of collective security and use it effectively in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter. The prevailing atmosphere was more conducive to strengthening those mechanisms, in particular with regard to the security of small States.

31. Since it was international law which guaranteed the equality of large and small nations, his delegation firmly believed that strict adherence to the principles and norms of international law was a prerequisite for the effective functioning of the collective security system.

32. In addressing the question of the security of small States, problems relating to their economic and social development should not be overlooked, since it was precisely in that sphere that political and social evils found a breeding ground. It was clear that not only acts of violence committed by terrorists or mercenaries might endanger the security of small States. Quite

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

peaceful actions or inaction in the field of international trade and finance could have tremendous negative repercussions on the economies of small States and pose a serious threat to their stability and security.

33. The issue of the economic security of small States deserved heightened attention, especially at a time when many countries had embarked upon radical socio-economic reforms, were facing tremendous challenges in the transitional period, and were especially susceptible to various political and social events. In that context, the capability of the United Nations to monitor the economic and social problems of small States and to assist them in times of emergency should be enhanced.

34. Mongolia was of the view that the United Nations should take the lead in efforts to enhance awareness of that issue. Such efforts might include, in particular, the organization of international seminars and forums on the subject, which would deal with the various conceptual and practical issues of protecting the security of small States. It would be desirable, in that connection, to prepare a comprehensive study of the issue. His delegation welcomed the recommendations of the workshop held in Male, Maldives, and considered that they deserved very serious consideration.

35. Mongolia wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that Barbados, Indonesia and Nicaragua should be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.