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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)
later: Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Poland)
(Vice-Chairman)
later: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)
(Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Bahrain, Bhutan, Dominica, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Trinidad and Tobago had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3.
2. Ms. KEHRER (Austria) said that the vast differences among States in size and power as well as in political, economic and social systems could be mitigated only by strict adherence to international law and the principle of sovereign equality. Consequently, it was one of the basic tasks of the United Nations to promote the rule of law, with particular emphasis on the teaching, study and dissemination of international law. Yet small States could rely on the rule of law only if effective mechanisms for its implementation, by collective means if necessary, were in existence. Hence the importance of establishing and promoting machinery for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. There had to be a competent international body to deal with all cases in which two or more States could not agree on the application of a rule of international law. Austria had therefore always been in favour of mandatory third-party dispute settlement in general and the enhancement of the role of the International Court of Justice in particular.
3. The United Nations had recently shown its willingness to uphold the right of small States to sovereignty and independence by using collective enforcement measures. That demonstration of resolve by the international community would undoubtedly have a deterrent effect on any potential aggressor. Nevertheless, the consequences of the Iraqi aggression, which Kuwait would have to bear for a long time, clearly showed the need to create or strengthen mechanisms within the United Nations that would as far as possible prevent such aggression.
4. With regard to the preventive mechanisms already in existence, mention should be made of the means of fact-finding available to all the main organs of the United Nations. If States, and in particular small States, adopted a policy of requesting and admitting United Nations fact-finding missions, the international community would be provided in time with adequate information for appropriate action to prevent confrontations. The draft Declaration on Fact-Finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, elaborated by the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, and other means such as recourse to mediation or to the good offices of the Secretary-General were available in that context.

(Ms. Kehrler, Austria)

5. Lastly, there was the idea put forward by Sir Brian Urquhart that peace-keeping operations could, apart from their "traditional" use, be used "preventively". That idea, which would appear to be of particular interest to small States, would entail the preventive deployment of United Nations personnel as a deterrent, and perhaps even as a trip-wire to set in motion previously-planned enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter. The possible lessons to be drawn from the Gulf crisis and the United Nations response to it should be discussed in an appropriate forum, which could be either the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations or the Special Committee on the Charter.

6. Mr. KAJAIRI (Singapore) said that before proceeding further, one must define what the term "small" meant in relation to States. One key criterion for defining a small State could be a population of under 10 million. In Singapore's view, physical size was less of a factor. Some experts further distinguished between small States and micro-States, namely, those with a population of less than 1 million. It was not necessary, however, to make so fine a distinction.

7. Several major political changes had had an impact on the security of small States. The first was the end of the cold war brought about by the ideological and economic collapse of one of the sides, which had helped to lessen global tensions, thus benefiting all States. The reductions in the immense nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union could only be welcomed, although even after the latest proposed reductions, there still remained about 47,000 nuclear warheads throughout the world, enough to destroy the globe many times over.

8. Small States in particular welcomed the cooperative efforts the super-Powers were making to resolve regional conflicts, which often had forced neighbouring small States to cope with an influx of refugees and displaced persons fleeing the strife, with the attendant economic and social consequences of having to play host to masses of refugees.

9. The second major international political event had been the Gulf war, which had been perceived, perhaps too hopefully, by small States as an indication that thenceforth the United Nations would have the political will and the material means to rescue innocent small States that had been invaded and occupied by larger neighbours. Even if that was an overly optimistic perception, it was clear that would-be aggressors could not be sure that the United Nations would not intervene on behalf of the small State. Such deterrence would be enhanced if the potential victim was able to bring its case to the United Nations and have it heard expeditiously by the Security Council. The possibility of resorting to the International Court of Justice in order to settle disputes peacefully would be an even better option for all small States.

(Mr. Kajairi, Singapore)

10. The third major political change in the international community was the switch from military-ideological confrontation to a new arena dominated by economic competition, religious differences, ethnic strife and the resurgence of long-suppressed minorities seeking to exercise their right to self-determination. Such factors were felt most strongly in small States, which did not have the requisite psychological or physical space to dampen friction in communities living side by side and competing for the same scarce resources. A further complication was that small States found it difficult to be economically competitive at the international level and to enjoy the strong economic growth that was a cure for the internal tensions between different communities living within their borders, competing for jobs, public funds and a higher standard of living.

11. Although it was clear that the international climate had changed considerably, for some small States the threats still remained basically the same: they were vulnerable to invasion and occupation by relatively small groups of mercenaries, drug traffickers or organized criminals who, although small in number, could overwhelm citizens protected at best by a handful of police.

12. The first effort at protection must come from the small States themselves, which could, for instance, build up an effective defence and deterrence force by organizing a citizens' army, which not only was cost-effective but also helped build the nation and fostered a sense of loyalty. It would also be important to create a strong economy that would make for internal stability and cohesion and for a society more confident in its international dealings. Lastly, it would be important to have an active foreign policy, based on respect for all the principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law.

13. However, owing to their inherent limitations, small States could not do everything by themselves. Singapore agreed with the observation of the Secretary-General that security arrangements for small States should also involve establishing supporting arrangements at the regional and subregional levels. By being a party to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia and a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Singapore had come to appreciate the value of such arrangements for regional confidence, stability and security.

14. Since small States constituted a significant percentage of the Member States of the United Nations, it was only fair for the United Nations to play a leading role in promoting and protecting their interests. It was at the United Nations that small States could make it known that their security and sovereignty had been threatened or violated, could rally and muster the support of the international community and bring pressure to bear on the aggressors and violators.

(Mr. Kajairi, Singapore)

15. For that reason his delegation was encouraged by the Secretary-General's suggestion that "the United Nations might take the lead in creating a much needed protective environment for small States, primarily by building upon the arrangements that already existed under the international collective security system envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations". In that connection, Singapore had a particular interest in the question of access by small States to the United Nations Security Council and the use of Article 99 of the Charter.

16. Mr. PAL (India) said that countries in the developing world were particularly vulnerable to threats from external sources, which did not only take the form of armed aggression but could also include other forms of destabilization. Small States were particularly vulnerable to activities directed against them, and it was necessary to ensure their security and protection as an integral part of preserving international stability.

17. The report of the Secretary-General incorporated the views of a large number of countries. One common thread was that the United Nations was now the organization par excellence for bringing nations together to address urgent issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security. In so doing the United Nations could also ensure that its influence was used for the protection and security of small States faced with the threat of external aggression.

18. Recent events had shown how expeditiously the Organization could deal with crisis situations once it had made up its mind to do so. The measures envisaged in the Charter were far-reaching, and when used wisely could go a long way towards safeguarding international peace and stability. Needless to say, they must always be applied with the utmost discretion and care, in compliance with the principles of universality and non-discrimination enshrined in the Charter.

19. Further, the regional arrangements set up to promote economic and technical cooperation and friendly exchanges between countries that were in geographical proximity to one another offered the prospect of ensuring that tension did not arise in a particular region. The task of the United Nations and its specialized agencies was to strengthen such regional organizations and encourage widespread exchanges between the countries of each region so as to ensure the common and accelerated development of the region in question.

20. At the same time, it must be recognized that small States were vulnerable to aggression, on a lesser scale, by bands of mercenaries and drug traffickers. India condemned such acts and stood prepared to offer all necessary assistance in dealing with threats of that kind. In that regard there was a need to share intelligence and to build up the national capacities of small States to withstand those dangers.

(Mr. Pal, India)

21. Lastly, India shared the view of many other countries that close adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and peaceful settlement of disputes, was the bedrock on which the hopes of building a world of peace and stability for future generations were based.

22. Mr. BOUTS'KO (Ukraine) said that the independence and equality of rights of small States, together with the existence of appropriate security conditions for such States, must now constitute one of the principal norms of international coexistence. The international community could not fail to be concerned by any violation of that norm. Accordingly, his delegation viewed the introduction of the question at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly as justified and opportune.

23. In a world in which the climate of ideological confrontation and enmity belonged to the past, the wish of States to establish and broaden cooperative relations on a basis of collaboration and interaction was now prevailing. The way was being paved for the establishment of a new world order.

24. Nevertheless, the world was still not immune to further outbreaks of oppression, arbitrariness and international violence. Iraq's recent aggression against Kuwait confirmed the relevance of General Assembly resolution 44/51, which noted the particular vulnerability of small States to threats and interference in their internal affairs, and stressed the significance of the obligation of all States to respect the territorial integrity of other States and the other principles of the United Nations Charter.

25. His delegation was convinced that the time had come to consider the establishment, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter, of effective machinery that would make it possible to react operationally whenever acts of aggression or instances of threats to international peace and security occurred, and that provided for the use of coercive measures and armed force. While the international community had made provision for the application of Article 99 of the Charter in appropriate instances, thus establishing powerful barriers to international adventurism and considerably strengthening the security of small States, his delegation was of the view that, in order to protect that security, United Nations peace-keeping operations should be conducted in a bolder manner. The form and nature of such operations should reflect the requirements of each specific case and should be conducted in accordance with Security Council decisions and the requests of small States in specific instances. In that connection he noted that the report of the Secretary-General contained a number of interesting conclusions and recommendations. His delegation agreed with the conclusions formulated by the Government of Finland on page 22 of the report. With regard to regional organizations, the conclusions and proposals put forward by the Bahamas on page 10 of the report merited special consideration. His delegation was among

(Mr. Bouts'ko, Ukraine)

those in favour of adopting draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3 by consensus. At the same time he was of the view that the question could more effectively be considered in the First Committee, which dealt with all other issues relating to international security.

26. Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) said that recent events had demonstrated that the stability and security of small States were closely linked to international peace and security, the maintenance of which was one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations. The ability to counter any threat to the stability and security of small States was an important element in assessing the credibility of the United Nations and its discharge of the functions conferred upon it by the Charter. The best means of guaranteeing the security and stability of small States was for all States to respect the principles of the Charter, particularly those relating to the non-use of force in international relations, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

27. Experience had shown that the fears of small States regarding their stability and security were justified. In that connection it might prove useful to benefit from Kuwait's experience during the invasion, occupation and annexation of its territory by Iraq, acts which had been committed in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Charter. Despite the positive developments which had occurred in the world, and the new world order based on the legitimacy and equality of States, those events showed that there were forces for evil which sought to translate their expansionist dreams into reality. The people of Kuwait would never forget the unyielding stance adopted by the international community, through the United Nations, in re-establishing peace and justice in Kuwait and restoring the country's legitimacy. His delegation felt duty-bound to express the gratitude of the Kuwaiti people to friendly States, and to all those who had risen up to restore justice and who had made sacrifices in defence of the principles that must govern relations between all States, large or small.

28. His delegation had listened to the statement by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives with great interest, and trusted that draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3 would be adopted by consensus.

29. Mr. AL-KHATER (Qatar) drew attention to the serious events which had taken place in the world since the General Assembly had adopted resolution 44/51, events which had once more highlighted the need to protect the stability and security of small States. Kuwait had been the victim of a brutal attack aimed at destroying its identity as a sovereign State. The United Nations response to the aggression had been in keeping with its responsibilities relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. The measures taken had been effective and had brought an end to the aggression. Kuwait, a small State with limited military capacity, could not have fought off the Iraqi aggression on its own or dealt with the consequences of the invasion. His delegation therefore welcomed the report of the

(Mr. Al-Khater, Qatar)

Secretary-General contained in document A/46/339 and particularly endorsed paragraph 24 of the report.

30. Qatar wished to acknowledge the excellent conduct of the Security Council during the events in the Gulf and the positive results achieved. That that had been possible was due to the changes which had taken place in the international political arena, enabling two blocs of countries to reject confrontation and establish cooperative relations. It had also meant that the veto had not continued to be abused in the Security Council, with the result that the Council had rapidly adopted a number of resolutions on the situation engendered in Kuwait by the Iraqi invasion, thus facilitating the adoption of measures to ensure that the resolutions were duly implemented. The Gulf crisis had confirmed the effectiveness of the organs of the United Nations in resolving international conflicts, and the time had now come to consider the possibility of establishing additional means of guaranteeing the protection and security of small States.

31. His delegation welcomed the recommendations of the Workshop on the Protection and Security of Small States which had taken place in Maldives in May 1991. Among the recommendations which Qatar supported and hoped would be applied strictly in respect of all crises were: the implementation of the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter exclusively in cases of aggression and to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council; the application of all Security Council resolutions; and support for measures taken by the Secretary-General in fulfilment of his mandate to monitor international security, especially in relation to small States. Qatar particularly supported the establishment of a United Nations force which could respond rapidly to new acts of aggression endangering the peace and security of small States. Such a force could be financed from funds released as a result of a reduction in military expenditure, in view of the relaxation that was taking place in international relations.

32. Mr. WAN Jingzhang (China) said that the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq a year earlier had shown that the world was by no means free of trouble, and that the security, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of small States were still vulnerable to violations resulting from external threats and interference.

33. China had always been of the view that the world was an integral whole and that the security of all States, small States in particular, was one of the interrelated components of the overall structure of international peace and security. Since hegemonism and power politics still existed, it was fully understandable that weak and small States should be very concerned about their own security. Moreover, such States were justified in hoping to draw more attention to their security and seek better protection from the international community. Only when all States, whether large or small, rich or poor, felt a sense of security would the planet enjoy genuine peace and stability.

(Mr. Wan Jingzhang, China)

34. The international community must make earnest efforts to ensure due conduct of relations among States, in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and in conformity with the established norms governing international relations, so that a new international order would replace the old one that was based on hegemony and power politics. That was the essential way in which international peace and security could be maintained and the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of small States could be protected.

35. All States, regardless of their size, strength and wealth, were all independent and equal members of the international community and were entitled to choose which path to take, in the light of their own circumstances. No country, especially a large and powerful one, should seek to impose on others its own social system, values, ideology and mode of development. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States should be respected, and disputes between States should be settled by peaceful means through consultations and dialogue on an equal footing. Under no circumstances should a State resort to the use or threat of force, and still less should it infringe upon the sovereignty, annex the territory and interfere in the internal affairs of other States, on whatever pretext. All States, large and small alike, should treat one another as equals; they should seek common ground, while putting aside differences, and endeavour to achieve common development on such a basis. Large countries, including regional Powers, had special responsibilities and obligations in that connection. The United Nations and some regional organizations had made commendable contributions to the maintenance of regional and international security and the promotion of world peace. His delegation hoped that they would continue to do so, and was willing to join colleagues from other countries in those endeavours.

36. Mr. CAMILLERI (Malta) said that in addition to the problems of either internal or external origin faced by all States, whether large or small, small States with only limited resources for meeting such challenges faced special difficulties which arose from their size and were primarily, although not exclusively, related to security. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/339) drew attention, in paragraph 16, to the fact that small States were especially vulnerable to territorial incursions mounted not only by other States but also by mercenaries, or for that matter, by terrorists, including drug traffickers.

37. It was important not to ignore the fact that security was itself affected by other aspects of national and international life. As the Government of Maldives had indicated in paragraph 7 of its reply, as reproduced in the Secretary-General's report, while the protection of small States could be viewed from the narrow military point of view, it could also be viewed from a broader perspective that included economic and social factors. The chief means of remedying the vulnerability of small States lay in a stable and well-ordered international environment subject to the rule of law. For that reason, small States attached great importance to the role of the United Nations in maintaining peace. Moreover, they participated actively in

(Mr. Camilleri, Malta)

international deliberations on security and cooperation. Malta had played such a role in respect of a variety of issues, ranging from the law of the sea to the question of the elderly and the aged and, most recently, the question of climate change.

38. For small States, the United Nations Charter was the major, if not the only, available safeguard. In that context, his delegation attached particular importance to Article 99 of the Charter, which empowered the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion might threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

39. Furthermore, action at the regional level played an important role in the protection and security of small States. To that end, Malta had made its own contribution to confidence- and security-building in the Mediterranean, since it regarded those factors as an important component of the process of security-building at the global level.

40. As the Secretary-General himself had concluded, the international community had a vested interest in safeguarding the security of small States, since the international order could be undermined by their instability or loss of security. Draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3 responded to those considerations.

41. Mr. GUBB (New Zealand) said that the principles of collective security and the primacy of law in the conduct of international relations were fundamental to the security of small States. That was why New Zealand had sponsored a resolution on the matter when it had first been included on the Committee's agenda in 1989.

42. The equality of Member States, regardless of their respective size, wealth or military power, was a basic premise of the United Nations, as laid down in Article 2 of the Charter. His delegation therefore viewed with concern any suggestion which might alter that principle.

43. His country acknowledged that security was a multifaceted concept. In addition to the threat of military attack, there were other kinds of dangers such as the activities of drug traffickers or environmentally unsafe practices. That view was gaining wider acceptance and had prompted suggestions as to what sort of tasks could be entrusted to the Security Council. Perhaps the major factor in the vulnerability of small States was their own lack of economic development, which precluded economic diversification and long-term self-sufficiency. Those difficulties in turn affected their socio-economic well-being and political stability. The international community should therefore pay special attention to the needs of the small States and adopt more flexible criteria in the provision of assistance to them.

(Mr. Gubb, New Zealand)

44. Regional cooperation was an important factor in safeguarding the security of small States. The South Pacific Forum and associated organizations had played a valuable role in that respect for over 20 years. The members of those organizations had exchanged views on a variety of issues and concluded numerous treaties aimed at safeguarding the region.

45. Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland) took the Chair.

46. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Nepal) said that the United Nations was the sum of its parts and that there was an organic relationship between the parts and the whole, with each and every nation, whether large or small, having an equal role to play in evolving its principles, roles and procedures.

47. The usurpation or negation of the rights of small States had been the fundamental reason for chaos, disorder and war. In order to avoid the recurrence of such disasters, the United Nations, as a collective security system, had embodied the basic principles of international relations. Unfortunately, it had not been so successful in implementing those principles universally.

48. Because of the vulnerability of small States, the international community should accord special consideration to their needs, aspirations and concerns. The protection and security of small States was a very complex matter, involving a combination of politics, economics, military strength and, above all, political wisdom and good will.

49. The strengthening of democratic culture was a prerequisite for the orderly evolution of States. However, security could not be achieved without a minimum standard of living for mankind in general, since a low level of economic development could contribute to destabilization. In that connection, he drew attention to the situation in Haiti and to paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/46/L.8.

50. In an increasingly interdependent and indivisible world, the interests of small States should not be overlooked. With that in view, the international community must adhere fully to the United Nations Charter, implement consistently United Nations resolutions and extend the role of the United Nations Secretary-General within the framework of Article 99 of the Charter.

51. Back in 1960, his country's Prime Minister, when addressing the General Assembly, had indicated that the United Nations was composed of many small nations which could play a very positive role in the world, a message as relevant now as it had been then.

52. Mr. WAN JUNAJDI (Malaysia) said that unconditional respect by all States for the principles of the United Nations Charter was a guarantee of international security. The international community and the United Nations

(Mr. Wan Junaidi, Malaysia)

must remind States which failed to observe those principles that aggressive actions were unacceptable, as the international community had shown during the Gulf War.

53. However, small States could not rely solely on the observance of those principles and on the good faith of other States. For its part, the international community should not wait for aggression to occur before it moved to rectify the situation. It was imperative that the Secretary-General and the United Nations should give top priority to the establishment of a preventive diplomacy mechanism, as part of which the Secretary-General must enjoy the confidence and support of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

54. Regional organizations could play an important role in resolving conflicts. The Association of South East Asian Nations had been established in 1967 and had contributed to the stability and security of its member States and the region as a whole. All its members were parties to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia, to which Viet Nam had recently acceded, an example he hoped other countries in the region would follow.

55. Small States could play a very important role in ensuring their own security. The question of national security was a responsibility of the nation State itself and it was vital for small States to develop internal resilience in order to foster economic and social progress. International assistance would also enable them to develop their economies, which would in turn enhance their security.

56. Malaysia was a sponsor of the draft resolution on the protection and security of small States and, in particular, supported the proposal that the Secretary-General should continue to explore ways and means, within the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter, of preserving the security of such States. It also endorsed the call for international and regional organizations to provide assistance to small States for the strengthening of their security when so requested.

57. Mr. KHANI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country attached great importance to the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/339), in which his country's position on the application of the principles of the United Nations Charter was set out. He called on the United Nations to adopt effective measures to avert all threats to peace and security through the peaceful settlement of disputes, the fostering of friendly relations between countries, the promotion of measures to prevent external interference in the internal affairs of other countries and, in cases of aggression, the application of the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. To guarantee the security of small States and to ensure international peace and security, respect for and strict compliance with the Charter was necessary. Effective measures were also needed to end aggression and the occupation of territories by force, practices which violated the principles of the Charter and the rules of international law, the foundations on which the United Nations was built.

58. Mr. BUGOTU (Solomon Islands) said that his delegation firmly supported draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3, since the Solomon Islanders knew and accepted that theirs was a small and vulnerable island State with a limited capacity to meet its own security needs. That was why Solomon Islands had no army but had deliberately chosen instead to establish a police force as a more effective instrument for maintaining and preserving the peace in a small country.

59. The United Nations should facilitate the implementation of the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter concerning action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression. The Secretary-General should play a more active role in the spirit of Article 99 of the Charter, so as to respond positively to requests from small States that felt threatened by other States, by sending missions to assess situations and prevent them from worsening.

60. In that connection, he recalled that the Workshop on Protection and Security of Small States, held in Maldives in May 1991, had recommended that consideration should be given to the establishment of either a permanent or an ad hoc force that could be activated under Chapter VII of the Charter. The possibility had also been suggested that a rapid response force might be established under the direct control of the Secretary-General to be used to meet the security threats of small States at their request. The activation of such a force could be at the initiative of the Secretary-General in consultation with the Security Council.

61. Solomon Islands, which supported the proposal of the United States President, Mr. Bush, regarding the strengthening of the ability of the United Nations to provide electoral assistance to Member States upon request, wished to see a similar commitment given by the United Nations on the issue of the protection and security of small States, since it was likely that more countries would be seeking assistance for protection and security than for elections.

62. Finally, Solomon Islands hoped that bureaucratic procedures would not delay the adoption and implementation of the resolution.

63. Mr. ZVONKO (Belarus) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/339) reflected a widely held view on the subject, namely, that consideration of the question of the vulnerability of small States to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs was timely and fitting. The aggression against Kuwait had underscored the need for solidarity among Member States in adopting more effective measures to curb aggressors and prevent similar acts in the future in order to protect States against violations of the norms and principles of international law.

64. In its international activities and in its relations with its neighbours, Belarus complied with the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States

(Mr. Zvonko, Belarus)

in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and promoted its implementation at the international level.

65. Belarus was at a stage of formation and development as a State. On 25 August 1991, by decision of the supreme legislative body of the Republic, a resolution had been adopted on the Declaration on State Sovereignty, which had acquired constitutional authority. The Supreme Soviet had further declared political and economic independence and, on 19 September, it had decided to change the name of the country to the Republic of Belarus. On 7 October, the Supreme Soviet had adopted the Declaration on Principles of Foreign Policy, in which it reaffirmed its adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and to other international legal instruments. Belarus trusted that it would receive international support at the present stage of its formation to enable it to promote mutual cooperation in all fields with interested States.

66. Belarus believed that the protection and security of small States was an important part of the issue of the maintenance of international peace and security. In order to strengthen measures in that area, the principles of the Charter should be strictly observed and a global approach should be adopted in establishing a practical system of collective security. Recent world events had opened up the possibility of a new role for the United Nations and of laying the foundations for a system of international security which would protect the rights and interests of all members of the world community.

67. In order to prevent any kind of aggression against small States, the role of the United Nations should be strengthened in key areas of security through the implementation of new measures adapted to the contemporary situation. Belarus believed that it would be useful to expand the scope of the Security Council's activities and to strengthen the coordinating role of the Secretary-General, as well as to intensify mediation activities and preventive diplomacy. The United Nations should be able to obtain and analyse information about dangerous situations and exchange such information with appropriate international bodies. Other measures could include the dispatch of observer missions or personal representatives of the Secretary-General to areas of tension, and the use of the Secretary-General's good offices at the request of States. The implementation of such measures, together with bilateral, regional and global cooperation, would ensure peaceful and stable relations between States and thereby guarantee the protection and security of small States.

68. Finally, Belarus hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, since it reflected its own point of view.

69. Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that small States found it impossible to defend themselves alone when confronted by bigger and stronger States or by mercenaries, terrorists or drug traffickers. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was only the most recent example of the plight of a small State whose sovereignty and territorial integrity were violated. Small States struggling

(Mr. Kalpagé, Sri Lanka)

to develop economically were unable to build and maintain armed forces to defend themselves against external aggression. In Sri Lanka, for example, the armed forces had until recently played only a ceremonial role. The civil strife in the country had changed that situation; the Government had been constrained to mobilize the armed forces to meet the assault by terrorists, which threatened to destroy the country's society and reduce economic growth in the country. The security forces had succeeded in restoring law and order in many parts of the country and he was confident that law and order would soon be restored in the remaining areas. The mobilization of the armed forces had compelled the Government to increase funding for defence which, in 1992, would amount to SL Rs 15.3 billion - almost 9.8 per cent of the country's total budget of SL Rs 156.6 billion. That represented an increase of 31 per cent over the 1991 expenditure on defence. In the event of foreign aggression, however, no amount of spending would provide Sri Lanka with the military capacity to ward off the aggression. The country's security therefore depended on the adherence by all Member States to the principles of the Charter.

70. In the final analysis, small States needed the United Nations, since it was in that forum that international opinion could be mobilized when a bigger and more powerful State interfered in the domestic affairs of a small State.

71. There was still no clear-cut definition of the concept of "a small State". If a population of under 2 million were used as the criterion, some 50 States Members of the United Nations could be classified as small States; if the population criterion were raised to 5 million, the number of such States would be larger. Apart from considerations of population and size, however, it might also be argued that small States were those which had a small defence capacity and which were unable to mobilize adequate resources to meet acts of aggression or threats to their security and were therefore dependent for their security on appropriate external arrangements.

72. The specific manner in which the United Nations should respond to the need for special measures for the protection and security of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small States deserved careful consideration. In that regard, his delegation invited the Secretary-General to explore further ways and means of preserving the security of small States and suggested that consultations with the members of the Security Council and other interested Governments should be continued.

73. Unconditional respect for the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and strict adherence to international law were essential. An environment of support and protection for small States should be created and appropriate mechanisms should be devised. That should be easier to achieve in view of the improved climate in international relations and the emerging spirit of cooperation.

(Mr. Kalpagé, Sri Lanka)

74. In conclusion, Sri Lanka wholeheartedly supported draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3, of which it was a sponsor.

75. Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand) resumed the Chair.

76. Mr. PATOKALLIO (Finland) said that Finland's views on the question before the Committee were explained in greater detail in the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/339). All States were entitled to their security and only a few of them were in a position to provide it unilaterally. Small States, in particular, needed collective arrangements to safeguard their position in the international community. In a sense, international law per se was such a collective arrangement. Indeed, the best way of guaranteeing the security of all States was by strict adherence to the rules and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. However, no State could afford to rely solely on the observance of international law by all States, but must provide for its own defence, unilaterally or multilaterally.

77. International measures were also needed for cases of non-observance of international law. Such measures must correspond to the rules of international law relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations imposed an obligation on Member States not only to maintain peace but also to enforce it. It was therefore important to implement a broad spectrum of peace-keeping activities, from preventive diplomacy to peace enforcement.

78. The response of the Security Council to the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq had demonstrated the Council's determination to take action, under Chapter VII of the Charter, to protect the security - indeed the very existence - of a small State.

79. The United Nations must be in a position to provide Member States with effective means of settling their disputes peacefully and to respond effectively to acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace. The security of small States would be the first to benefit therefrom.

80. Mr. PAULSEN (Chile) said that the protection and security of small States was not an abstract issue but one which arose from the experience of Member States, among them the Republic of Maldives, which had been the victim of an armed assault launched by mercenaries in an attempt to overthrow its democratically elected Government. It was the first time that a Member State had brought a case of that nature before the United Nations and the support of the 37 sponsors of the draft resolution testified to the importance of the issue, which had brought to the fore, first, its direct relationship to the concept of international peace and security, a principle which was established in the Charter of the United Nations and was fundamental to the survival and independence of small States; second, the recognition of the vulnerability of small States; and, third, the lack of adequate international machinery to protect the States involved.

(Mr. Paulsen, Chile)

81. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/339), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/51, his delegation deemed appropriate the procedures which had been followed in dealing with the issue; moreover, it felt that the consultations with Member States had been very valuable and that criteria and trends relevant to the situation in question could be identified from the replies. While conceptually clear, the matter was difficult to define; it would not be easy to establish universally acceptable ways and means of providing effective protection for the security of small States or to determine which States fell within that category.

82. His delegation viewed with particular interest the measures discussed in the Secretary-General's report with regard to the strengthening of the preventive capabilities of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole so that those capabilities could be used for preventive diplomacy. Also valuable were the comments of the Secretary-General regarding the role which could be played by regional organizations in setting up a reliable system of conflict prevention around small States. In that regard, such organizations could benefit from the experience and support of the United Nations and its machinery for maintaining and establishing peace.

83. Among the replies from Governments reproduced in the Secretary-General's report, his delegation agreed with the Soviet Union's proposal regarding the setting up within the Security Council of a group of experts on steps to be taken in emergency situations, such as the mass taking of hostages, terrorism and actions by mercenaries. It had also found the approach involving the development of a stable model for the security of small States interesting, specifically the recommendation that that model should take into account such aspects as the just settlement of economic and ecological questions, ensuring the safety of individuals and observance of human rights.

84. His Government had taken note of the draft resolution introduced by the Republic of Maldives and sponsored by a large number of countries and his delegation would gladly join in a consensus on that text.

85. Mr. YOSSIFOV (Bulgaria) said that, at a time when new avenues of cooperation were opening up, new security concerns had emerged which underlined the vulnerability of small States. Having left behind the old concepts of security based on a balance between the military alliances of the past, the contemporary world was discovering a renewed faith in a collective multilateral approach to the problems of peace and security. In such circumstances, it was logical and justifiable that small States should seek greater stability in international affairs through the efforts of the international community, so that they could keep their modest resources for their own development. The United Nations was destined to play a key role in that regard.

(Mr. Yossifov, Bulgaria)

86. His country had welcomed the adoption without a vote of General Assembly resolution 44/51. It greatly appreciated the work carried out by the Secretary-General pursuant to articles 5 and 6 of that resolution and welcomed his report on the issue. His delegation believed that the establishment and maintenance of a stable international climate of support and protection was essential for the safeguarding of the security of small States. In that connection, strong hopes had been placed in the creation of a new democratic world order, based on freedom of choice, respect for national sovereignty and the rule of law. The unconditional observance by all States of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations would undoubtedly provide the core of a modern system of global security.

87. The Gulf crisis had demonstrated the potential of the collective security provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VII. The effective implementation of those provisions had turned out to be vital not only to safeguard the security of the States Members of the Organization but also to protect their very existence, in particular that of the small States. While the activation of that potential in the current highly interdependent world was welcomed by his delegation, it raised certain new issues which must be duly addressed by the international community if the collective security mechanism established under the Charter was to function in an appropriate and effective manner.

88. It was important to strengthen the preventive diplomacy capabilities of the various components of the United Nations system so that situations which might jeopardize international stability could be localized and contained as they arose. In that connection, Bulgaria fully supported the idea of activating the potential of the preventive diplomatic efforts of the Secretary-General pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter. The creation and operation of an early warning system within the existing United Nations structures could be vital to the Organization's ability to monitor potential conflict situations and undertake effective preventive measures. The peacemaking and peace-keeping functions of the United Nations should be strengthened. It was encouraging that efforts in that direction were already being made by the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, the Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations and other United Nations bodies. In that connection, he wished to mention the draft Declaration on Fact-finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, the adoption of which by the General Assembly would be an important step forward in that field.

89. The protection and security of small States was closely linked to the issue of the harmonization of mechanisms at the regional and global levels, as some recent events had demonstrated. With respect to the draft resolution before the Committee, his delegation had decided to join those countries which had called for its adoption by consensus. It would be appropriate for the United Nations to consider sponsoring a study, to be conducted by a small

(Mr. Yossifov, Bulgaria)

group of experts, on the many aspects of the security of smaller States, or to consider holding an international seminar on that issue.

90. Mr. PURSOO (Grenada) said that every State, large or small, needed among other things security within its borders as a prerequisite to economic development and the betterment of the quality of life of its citizens. However, the threat of external interference was a constant reminder to small States of their fragility and vulnerability, forcing them to divert excessive funds to security measures when they were needed for more productive purposes. Those threats could be diverse and complex, and their motives multiple and unsuspected. The menace that drug traffickers presented to societies throughout the world was beyond question, but the danger to small States was a cause of particular concern and called for concerted international arrangements and mechanisms in response. The difficulty of securing the coastlines of small island States was obvious. It was almost impossible to provide effective protection for the coasts of archipelagic States such as the Bahamas in the Caribbean and Maldives in the Indian Ocean. The drug traffickers and terrorists were often better equipped and armed than the authorities. The need to fight those evils could sap the means and vitality of small States seeking to promote participatory, open and stable democratic institutions, and thereby retard political, cultural and psychological advancement in those societies.

91. The events of 2 August 1990 when Iraq had invaded and annexed Kuwait were a tragic reminder of the vulnerability of small States. The situation today in Haiti, too, was a clear example of the pain and suffering that could follow the subversion of a legitimate Government. The United Nations had the opportunity to avert the recurrence of such acts.

92. Draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3 had been introduced by the Republic of Maldives, a small State whose own territorial integrity had been threatened in 1988. It was backed by numerous States, large and small, because it was a reasonable and just draft. It recognized the need for assistance to small States, which should be provided in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The draft resolution also stressed the importance of self-help, and in that context encouraged the strengthening of regional security arrangements, increased interaction, cooperation and consultation.

93. Small States saw increased diplomacy as an effective security measure. It was in that light that his delegation had become a sponsor of the draft resolution on the protection and security of small States and urged its unanimous acceptance.

94. Mr. ABDUL LATIF (Brunei Darussalam) said that, with the changing international political climate, small States would look to the United Nations to guarantee their security. It was the responsibility of all Member States to respect unconditionally all the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Brunei Darussalam considered that all conflicts should be resolved

(Mr. Abdul Latif, Brunei Darussalam)

through diplomatic and peaceful means, and that the role of the Secretary-General as mediator in settling such conflicts was vital.

95. Despite pledges by Member States to adhere to the United Nations Charter, violations had been committed - and it was the small States that were particularly vulnerable. Member States should endeavour to implement all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations consistently and without exception. The concerns of Member States in that area deserved further consideration. His country was a sponsor of the draft resolution on the protection and security of small States and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

96. Mr. SIDOROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that at the forty-fourth session, the Soviet Union had supported the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly, at the request of Maldives, of the item entitled "Protection and security of small States". It was an important issue, as would be seen from the comments in document A/46/339, the consultations with the Secretary-General and the replies received from Member States. The report showed the vulnerability of small States, which called for special attention and the support of the international community.

97. The problem of protecting small States called for an approach which took account of its manifold aspects. The Security Council and the United Nations in general must help to avert conflicts by identifying "hot spots", establishing an early warning system and setting up a multinational centre on the dangers of war. To that end, account must be taken of the experience acquired within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It would be useful, too, to send observer missions to places of possible conflict and to use the latest technological means. That approach must also take into account the settlement of economic and ecological questions and the observance of human rights.

98. The course of events in a number of regions of the world had demonstrated the consequences of an arms trade without international control. Small States were particularly vulnerable to that situation, as also to illegal drug trafficking, kidnapping, mercenary activities and terrorism. In accordance with the provisions of the Charter, the Secretary-General had the right to promote the maintenance of international peace, which included the protection of small States.

99. The Soviet Union was ready to participate in a dialogue on those questions, and would therefore support draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3.

100. Mr. MAVROMMATIS (Cyprus) said that the vulnerability of small States had been severely tested in the recent crisis and war in the Gulf. The joint position taken by the international community and its willingness to fight for the restoration of the territorial integrity and security of a small State emphasized the need to establish machinery capable of guaranteeing the

(Mr. Mavrommatis, Cyprus)

protection and security of small States. From the outset, Cyprus had supported the initiative of Maldives, not only because of the obvious need to protect small States from aggressive and powerful neighbours, but also because it was a living proof of the urgent need to devise ways and means, in accordance with the Charter, to preserve the security of small States.

101. Those States were particularly vulnerable to external threats, interference in their internal affairs and blatant aggression, as demonstrated by the case of his own country. It was vital, therefore, to protect them and preserve their security by enhancing and strengthening existing mechanisms, in the interests not only of small States, but of international peace and security.

102. In connection with the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/339), recent events had indicated clearly that there was still a long way to go before the achievement of a new world order establishing conditions of peace, security and mutual respect among States, without selective application of principles and resolutions.

103. Cyprus trusted that the Security Council and interested Governments would cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in the preparation of a report to the forty-ninth session which would help to create the conditions for establishing a real universal peace.

104. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu) said that the vulnerability of small States to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs jeopardized the rule of law. Those who tried to take advantage of that vulnerability were a danger to the maintenance of international peace and security. If smaller States could be threatened, intimidated or absorbed by larger, more powerful neighbours, the entire system of international relations would be at risk.

105. The invasion of Kuwait in 1990 had represented a threat not only to that country and to the region, but also to small countries in other regions which were even more vulnerable than Kuwait had been. The value of Kuwait's liberation as a legal and moral precedent would be determined by the future actions of the international community. If the principles and practices of the United Nations were not respected, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small States could be similarly threatened in other instances. Not all small States were able to obtain the support Kuwait had obtained, and no small State wished to be dependent on collective military action. Such a solution was very costly, both for the international community and for the small States. Accordingly, positive preventive measures to assure the security of small States were needed, rather than corrective measures applied after the event.

106. Drug traffickers and terrorists were major threats to small, developing countries. Such individuals respected no law, morality or code of conduct,

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

not even their own. International public opinion was meaningless to them, and the only language they understood was that of strong, concerted action to counter their nefarious deeds and prevent them from destroying the political and social infrastructure of small States. Regional cooperation between large and small States was essential in order to combat them.

107. Even as he spoke, thugs in uniform, unworthy even of being referred to as soldiers, were terrorizing the population of a small country in the Caribbean. The United Nations had expressed its clear and firm support for the people of Haiti, and had refused to legitimize the usurpation of their democracy. Small countries throughout the world were carefully watching events in Haiti, which would enable them to judge the firmness of the international community's commitment to assure justice and equality for all. The rule of law was a wonderful concept, in international relations in particular. Vanuatu therefore hoped that a broad international consensus would be achieved which recognized and supported the sovereign equality of all States.

108. Mrs. MAUALA (Samoa) said that neither isolation nor economic security was sufficient to protect a small State against external threats, as had been clearly demonstrated by events in Maldives in 1988 and more recently in the Gulf. The relaxation of world tensions had improved the international climate to the point that a response at the world level to the bullying of a small State by a larger neighbour had become a possibility and, as in the Gulf crisis, a reality.

109. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/339) acknowledged that the international community had an interest in safeguarding the security of small States. The response and performance of the United Nations in the Gulf crisis had shown that, given the will, the machinery for coming to the rescue of a small State could function effectively. However, in addition to the need for a system of collective security, there was also a need to exercise preventive diplomacy and to take advantage of the present international atmosphere to put in place measures enabling the United Nations to monitor potentially dangerous situations before they developed into conflagrations.

110. Of prime importance, though, was the need for unconditional respect by all nations for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. If those principles were applied, the threat to the security of small States, and all other States, would be significantly reduced.

111. Samoa fully supported the draft resolution and hoped to see its adoption by consensus.

112. Mr. HUQ (Bangladesh) said that as the turn of the century approached, profound changes had taken place in international relations. For example, the world had seen how Kuwait, a small country, had become the victim of Iraqi aggression and how the collective action of the United Nations had restored its independence and sovereignty.

113. The issue of the protection and security of small States required the collective attention of the international community. In that regard, the United Nations had a leading role to play in promoting and protecting the interests of small States, which were particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs.

114. While the international community had a major role to play in assuring the protection and security of small States, there was perhaps a need for the United Nations to take the lead in creating the protective environment which a small State needed so much, primarily by building upon the arrangement which already existed under the international collective security system envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

115. Bangladesh, one of the sponsors of resolution 44/51, was also a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3, and hoped that the Committee would adopt it unanimously.

116. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should consider draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3.

117. It was so decided.

118. Mr. WIDE (Sweden) said, in explanation of Sweden's position with regard to the draft resolution under consideration, that his country would be joining the consensus, in the firm belief that collective security in large measure depended on collective support for the role of the United Nations and the Security Council in safeguarding international peace and security.

119. In full accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, Sweden was actively involved in efforts to establish a European security order within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe which would, for the foreseeable future, have as its main function to help prevent conflicts before they reached military dimensions, and to promote consultation and cooperation.

120. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should take action on draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

121. Draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.3 was adopted by consensus.

122. Mr. ZAKI (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, thanked the Committee and its secretariat for the excellent support provided in a variety of ways. The sponsorship of the draft resolution by more than one third of the Member States was testimony to the increasing importance being attached by the international community to such a fundamental issue. The text just adopted should be viewed not as a resolution by small States for small States, but as one which addressed major questions with a direct bearing on international peace and security. Given the overwhelming support for the draft resolution shown by Member States, his delegation was confident that the resolution would be more than just a symbolic gesture, and that Member States would continue to give their serious consideration to the issue.

123. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 69. The Committee would in due course submit its report on the question to the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.