

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM

(Thailand)

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AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued)

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

AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/46/169 and Add.1, A/46/185, A/46/254, A/46/591; A/SPC/46/L.9)

1. Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) said that the Committee's comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects at the current session was of particular importance because of the growing role of the United Nations in that field. Owing to the developments from which a new international order was emerging, there had been an increase in the number of peace-keeping operations undertaken by the United Nations over the past two years, which was evidence of the growing credibility of the Organization. Because the responsibility for peace and security in the world was a collective one, it was incumbent on all parties to meet their obligations and to pay their assessments in full and in a timely fashion so that the United Nations could perform its peace-keeping functions in an effective manner.

2. It was a matter for universal pride that the United Nations had met the enormous challenge presented by the Iraqi regime's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and by its occupation and annexation of the country in open defiance of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles underlying international relations. The United Nations, as represented by the Security Council, had acted in a way consistent with the importance of that severe test, adopting the appropriate resolutions and taking the necessary measures to put an end to the aggression in a manner that gave substance to the concept of a new international order based on international legitimacy. Following the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty and independence, the Security Council had, under the terms of its resolution 687 (1991), established the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in order to monitor the cease-fire, ensure the inviolability of the international boundaries and safeguard peace in the region.

3. Mr. KADRAT (Iraq), speaking on a point of order, regretted that the Kuwaiti representative was taking advantage of the item under discussion to refer to the Gulf crisis. Iraq had complied fully with the resolutions adopted to deal with the crisis, yet its people continued to suffer as a result of the unauthorized sanctions imposed on the country in defiance of all humane principles and international law. The most recent report of UNIKOM had stated that, despite the presence of observers, Kuwait had committed more violations than Iraq in the demilitarized zone. All other Committee members had reasonably and objectively discussed the technical and practical aspects of the item in question.

4. Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) said that his country had endeavoured to facilitate the task of UNIKOM in appreciation of its worthy character and in full realization of the difficult conditions that the Mission faced at the outset. Kuwait would continue to cooperate to the full in order to assist the effective implementation by UNIKOM of its mandate and would endeavour to

(Mr. Al-Sabah, Kuwait)

ensure the safety of its personnel, just as it would continue to meet its obligations with respect to all peace-keeping operations in the world.

5. His delegation would like to thank all of the countries that had contributed personnel to the Mission and those that were providing it with assistance. Its gratitude also went to the individuals currently stationed in difficult conditions and advancing the cause of peace in the Iraq-Kuwait border area. Kuwait wished to place on record its appreciation for the enormous sacrifices made by United Nations peace-keeping forces in establishing and maintaining peace.

6. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that, although peace-keeping as a concept was not specifically mentioned in the Charter, the recent extraordinary improvement in the global political climate had led to a dramatic expansion in the number of United Nations peace-keeping operations. Nine such operations had been launched during the previous three years as against 13 in the preceding 43 years. The operation that was about to be launched in Cambodia might be the largest and most complex in the history of the United Nations and would add a new dimension to the peace-keeping endeavours of the Organization. In addition to the traditional peace-keeping functions, peace-keeping operations currently performed a wider range of tasks, including the supervision of elections and monitoring of the implementation of complex agreements. In view of their multi-faceted nature, it was important to study ways of combining the military, police and civilian components in order to enhance the effectiveness of peace-keeping operations.

7. The emergence of new conflicts and the recent crisis in the Gulf had underlined the importance of conflict-prevention modalities to defuse potential conflicts in their embryonic stage. In that connection, the United Nations should have a greater role in fact-finding and in gathering and analysing information about the real state of international relations. Timely, accurate and unbiased information to deal with potentially explosive situations was a vital necessity, and the Organization should make use of modern technology and advanced surveillance systems in order to monitor potential conflict situations from an impartial standpoint.

8. Difficulties in the financing of peace-keeping operations not only caused delays in the mounting of new operations but also placed an inequitable financial burden on troop-contributors, especially those from developing countries. The financing of peace-keeping operations was the collective responsibility of the entire international community, and Member States should pay their assessed contributions in full and on time in order to establish a sound and secure financial basis for such operations.

9. Training was also an important component of peace-keeping operations, and his delegation therefore welcomed the training guidelines issued by the Secretariat and hoped that they would be regularly updated. The Organization should also consider ways of formalizing training for peace-keeping within national armies. More training seminars at the regional, national and

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

international levels were also required and consideration should be given to the establishment of an international training centre under the auspices of the United Nations.

10. Bangladesh was committed to the peace-keeping role of the United Nations and had contributed military observers and police personnel to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG), UNIKOM, and most recently to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Peace-keeping operations were a dramatic way of demonstrating the international will to peace and conciliation in areas of conflict and, if backed by international consensus and sustained by genuinely international efforts, could become a reliable and important part of broader efforts to build a world at peace.

11. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand) said that the Committee's current debate was timely in that it coincided with the launching of the first phase of a peace-keeping operation in Cambodia that was expected to be one of the most comprehensive and difficult in the history of the United Nations. The importance that Member States attached to United Nations peace-keeping could be seen not only in the more clearly focused discussions but also in the willingness of States to make contributions to such arduous and dangerous operations. Collective security, however, was not only desirable but also a matter of necessity and common sense. New Zealand was proud to have served in various United Nations and other peace-keeping operations since the 1960s and to be participating in several current operations.

12. His delegation welcomed the Special Committee's practice, in the previous year, of conducting informal meetings inter-sessionally. While the Special Committee's report (A/46/254) contained useful suggestions about the training of peace-keepers and the establishment of an annual peace-keeping fellowship, some of its members had cautioned about the need for relevance as the Special Committee sought to address imaginatively and effectively the broadening demands that were being placed on United Nations peace-keeping. The enlargement of peace-keeping operations should be carried out in an orderly way, with proper preparation and with adequate funding and other resources.

13. New Zealand welcomed the broader role for United Nations peace-keeping operations, which had notched up clear successes in the area of monitoring respect for human rights and in election monitoring. Even though some of those operations did not fit the narrow definition of peace-keeping, they placed the same demands on the Secretariat. His delegation therefore welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to undertake a review of the planning and management of peace-keeping operations. Closer and more effective coordination of activities would no doubt lead to greater efficiency and to more cost-effective operations.

14. While it might be fashionable to suggest that reforms in the Secretariat were needed in order to improve the management of peace-keeping, Member States also had a binding obligation to make their payments on time and in full.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

Delays in responding to invitations to contribute to an operation could be critical, and the failure of many States to respond to the Secretary-General's questionnaire on resources which they might be able to make available hardly eased the Secretariat's burden.

15. New Zealand had long advocated the expansion of the Working Capital Fund to ensure that the Secretary-General had access to start-up funding during the critical first phase of any peace-keeping operation. Access to such funding by the Secretary-General would have greatly facilitated the early days of UNAVEM II, an operation that had been described as the toughest United Nations peace-keeping operation currently in train.

16. Finally, his delegation supported the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/46/L.9, which suggested that in the post-cold war world emphasis could be placed on the maintenance of international peace and security through prevention rather than through post-conflict monitoring of cease-fires and the control of buffer zones.

17. Mr. HOLGER (Chile) said that the expansion and evolution of peace-keeping operations reflected the changes that had occurred in international relations and the resulting needs and challenges that had arisen. Peace-keeping operations enhanced the effectiveness and prestige of the Organization while revealing its enormous potential for preventing, managing and resolving situations of conflict in the emerging world order. The draft resolution currently before the Committee accurately reflected the current situation of peace-keeping operations and their future prospects.

18. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/75, the United Nations had undertaken a number of peace-keeping operations which included: (a) the launching of three new missions along the Iran-Iraq border, in Western Sahara and in El Salvador, respectively; (b) the expansion of the mission in Angola, which would play an important role at a time when that country was preparing to hold elections; (c) the preparation of an ambitious mission in Cambodia, which could well be the largest peace-keeping operation in the history of the United Nations. Chile welcomed the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council in UNIKOM and MINURSO, and hoped that such participation would extend to future operations.

19. His delegation took note of the increasing diversification of the activities of peace-keeping missions, whose mandates covered, inter alia, different forms of participation in electoral processes, as in the cases of Namibia and Nicaragua, and recognized that some of those missions did not constitute peace-keeping operations in the strict sense of the term. Another new modality of operation was employed by the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), whose mandate covered measures aimed at preventing any act or practice directed against the life, integrity, security and freedom of individuals. His delegation hoped that the mandate of ONUSAL could, at an early date, be made to include the monitoring of the cease-fire in that

(Mr. Holger, Chile)

country, which was a key aspect of the negotiations being conducted by the personal representative of the Secretary-General with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

20. The expansion and diversification of peace-keeping operations had far-reaching consequences for both the organization and the conduct of such operations. With respect to the control and command of the operations, the Namibia model might be suggested whereby a civilian, in the capacity of special representative of the Secretary-General, would command a mission that comprised civilian, military and political elements. The new tasks which peace-keepers were required to perform, such as electoral supervision, had made it necessary to consider the possible use of civilians to do tasks currently performed by military personnel, such as vehicle and equipment maintenance, medical assistance and communications. However, the cost of peace-keeping operations involving civilians, was much higher than that of more traditional operations.

21. In view of those considerations, there was clearly a need to redefine the concept of peace-keeping operations in light of their expansion and diversification. For the moment, however, his delegation had some reservations on the establishment of general guidelines, which could deprive the United Nations of the flexibility required to meet the needs of future operations.

22. Another important aspect of the subject was preventive diplomacy, which had acquired special significance following the conflict in the Gulf and in light of the occurrences in Yugoslavia and the potential for similar conflicts in other regions. The United Nations would be judged by the manner in which it discharged its principal responsibility, which was to prevent wars, contain conflicts and promote dialogue between nations. Despite the improvement in the climate of international relations, deep-seated political, economic, social, ethnic and religious rivalries still remained in the world and were represented within the United Nations. A potentially destabilizing climate of uncertainty still prevailed; in the view of his delegation, adequately structured preventive diplomacy could contribute to the establishment of an effective system of collective security, and the Committee should therefore continue its efforts towards that end. In that regard, his delegation shared the position adopted by the European Community on the draft Declaration on Fact-finding and fully supported the proposals submitted by the Nordic Governments in the document entitled "Shaping the peace: The United Nations in the 1990s".

23. Also interesting was the Soviet proposal reproduced in annex II of the Special Committee's report which pointed out, *inter alia*, that peace-keeping operations did not amount to a substitute for the pacific settlement of disputes and were therefore of a temporary nature, and brought out the fact that peace-keeping and peacemaking missions were complementary. In some exceptional instances, of course, as in the case of the United Nations

(Mr. Holger, Chile)

Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a peace-keeping mission was forced to remain in place for an unduly long time because of an impasse in the peace negotiations.

24. His delegation also welcomed the inclusion in draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9 of a preambular paragraph recognizing peacemaking activities as an important means for maintaining international peace and security.

25. Close cooperation between the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and the corresponding Secretariat units was essential. The participation of Secretariat officials in the Special Committee's deliberations had added substance to the discussions and to its subsequent report. His delegation believed the Special Committee should meet more frequently during the year to enable it to deal with any urgent matters that might arise.

26. Chile intended to continue taking part in peace-keeping operations, as it had done or was doing in Palestine, India and Pakistan, Western Sahara, and Iraq and Kuwait.

27. Mr. KA (Senegal) observed that even in the new world order, peace-keeping missions would not become less frequent, because of various existing conflicts and the constant possibility of further conflagrations. The international community's action must now focus above all on mechanisms to prevent conflicts. The current climate that had so strengthened the capability, authority and credibility of the United Nations would also revitalize the mandates and objectives of the increasingly complex and diversified peace-keeping operations.

28. Senegal had been participating in such operations since 1960, in the Congo and later in Lebanon, Iran and Iraq, Iraq and Kuwait, and Cambodia. It was also currently involved in the regional peace-keeping operation in Liberia sponsored by the West African Economic Community.

29. His delegation particularly welcomed the recommendations in the Special Committee's report (A/46/254, para. 79) having to do with peace-keeping training and the designation of a focal unit for training, although they would require a good degree of coordination. Senegal also supported draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9.

30. Peace-keeping operations should be placed on a sounder financial basis and Member States should fulfil their collective responsibility to contribute, in keeping with article 17 of the Charter. Those States with the means to do so should make supplementary voluntary contributions, both financial and logistical.

31. Senegal commended the Secretary-General's efforts to involve as many States as possible in the peace-keeping operations, the Namibian experience

(Mr. Ka, Senegal)

being an excellent example. To that end, the Secretariat should try to resolve the language-related problems that limited participation for some countries. The adoption of a model agreement between the United Nations and Member States contributing personnel to peace-keeping operations would also facilitate matters.

32. The concept of conflict prevention should be part of any approach to peace-keeping operations. An early-warning system should allow the United Nations, by virtue of the mandates of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, to send preventive diplomacy missions into areas of imminent conflict. A firm stand in favour of restraint taken by the international community towards the potential antagonists would defuse tension. The Organization had not yet fully used the possibilities offered by the Charter for conflict prevention, particularly under Articles 34, 35, and 99.

33. Senegal wished to pay tribute to the memory of all the men and women who had fallen in the service of peace.

34. Mr. BOUKADOU (Algeria) observed that peace-keeping operations had expanded beyond their traditional role, reflecting the evolution of the very concept of maintaining and promoting peace. The operations launched in 1991 or about to be launched were a good illustration of that evolution. UNIKOM, for instance, did more than provide the usual buffer between forces in conflict; ONUSAL was being asked to monitor an agreement between political forces in a single State; the second United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) was monitoring elections in a Member State and ensuring the implementation of a national reconciliation accord, as was MINURSO; the striking originality of the mandate and structure of the United Nations Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH) had profound implications for the rules, principles and objectives of peace-keeping operations; and the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) was without a doubt a turning point because of its size, financial implications and political responsibilities, which amounted to nothing less than the provisional administration of a territory pending the organization of United Nations-supervised elections. Even bolder suggestions were being advanced, such as using peace-keeping operations to prevent conflicts, or using them in entirely new fields. The Charter itself made no specific reference to peace-keeping operations per se but only to threats to international peace and security. Article 1 of the Charter, however, dealt with conflict prevention, as did Articles 33 and 99. The Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations was the proper forum for arriving at a consensus on the possible extension of the concept of peace-keeping.

35. His delegation's own views on the subject were, first, that the preventive use of a peace-keeping operation in a troubled area, in the form of an early-warning or observation mission, presupposed the declaration of the area as one of potential conflict, which raised the question of who would have

(Mr. Boukadoum, Algeria)

the authority to make such a declaration. Secondly, such an operation would require the consent of the parties concerned and would have to respect their sovereignty and integrity. Thirdly, conflict prevention would require data collection and data analysis for early-warning purposes, a kind of system that the Secretariat was not yet equipped to manage and would therefore require structural changes. Fourthly, the flexibility demanded would entail reserves of manpower and equipment, and the prior consent of the Security Council, before any deployment. Algeria believed that the first step should be to strengthen the powers of the Secretary-General, making full use of the provisions of Articles 33 and 99 of the Charter.

36. Peace-keeping operations must be temporary and go hand in hand with the search for political solutions. Otherwise, they could impose an intolerable burden on contributing States and the United Nations budget and might serve to maintain an unjust and explosive status quo. The Middle East was a case in point. A decisive factor in effective peace-keeping operations was the consent of the parties concerned, but another requisite was their political will to contribute to the success of the operation and facilitate deployment.

37. In order to put the financing of peace-keeping operations on a solid financial footing, Member States should pay their assessments in full, in compliance with Article 17 of the Charter. The current method of calculating the assessments should be maintained, account being taken of the particular responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council and the developed countries' ability to pay.

38. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to an aide mémoire circulated by Canada for the information of delegations regarding its peace-keeping training.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.