



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

CONTENTS

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

EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (continued)

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

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

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a letter from the representative of Sweden (A/42/77) and a note verbale from the representative of New Zealand (A/42/637).
2. Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria) said that Nigeria's interest in peace-keeping operations stemmed from its many attempts to bring peace to its own region. In addition, it had a mandate to speak on the topic since it currently occupied the Chair of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations. Regrettably, the Special Committee would not be submitting a report to the Special Political Committee, because the Special Committee had not met since September 1983, when it had failed to reach a consensus.
3. The issue of peace-keeping was too important to be shelved. Peace-keeping operations represented the stabilization of conflict situations pending acceptable political solutions. They had proved their usefulness, as in Lebanon, the Golan Heights, Cyprus and Kashmir.
4. Nevertheless, peace-keeping operations faced seemingly insuperable difficulties, the most immediate of which was financing. Some Member States had refused to pay for peace-keeping operations because they disagreed with the uses to which the money was put. That had resulted in total arrears of some \$400 million owed by Member States. Such selective compliance with United Nations resolutions was not only contrary to Charter principles but also hampered the Organization's ability to carry out its mandate.
5. The core problem of peace-keeping was the absence of political support for the operations as a result of conflicting perspectives on disputes. Success in peace-keeping activities depended upon broad political agreement of the kind that had been demonstrated with regard to the elimination of intermediate nuclear forces. There were many conflict areas that could benefit from the presence of peace-keeping forces, such as Namibia, the Persian Gulf, Central America, Afghanistan and Kampuchea. His delegation called upon all States in the international community to support peace-keeping operations.
6. Mr. POULSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the Twelve had been strong supporters of United Nations peace-keeping operations over the years. They supported the Secretary-General's suggestion that the Security Council could make fuller use of peace-keeping forces in order to avert violence and help to resolve disputes before armed conflict occurred. They regretted that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had not called a single meeting during the last year. The representatives of the Twelve in the Committee would gladly take part in consultations on reactivating the Committee's work.

(Mr. Poulsen, Denmark)

7. Peace-keeping operations were intended to supplement rather than to replace methods for establishing peace, i.e., by establishing conditions conducive to negotiations. They must not be interpreted by parties to a conflict as a substitute for peace-making and for serious efforts to negotiate a lasting solution.

8. Peace-keeping operations could be carried out successfully only with a clearly defined mandate and the full support of Security Council members. Furthermore, the co-operation of the parties concerned was necessary because United Nations military personnel were only provided with light weaponry and could use force only in self-defence. Parties, therefore, must bear responsibility for ensuring the safety of United Nations personnel, but regrettably, those conditions were not always fulfilled. Attempts to hinder the freedom of movement of an operation and outright attacks on peace-keeping personnel occurred frequently, as in two recent incidents involving the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Twelve extended their condolences to the families of the Nepalese soldiers who had been killed.

9. The costs of peace-keeping operations should be shared by the entire membership of the Organization. Financial difficulties were most often due to the failure of certain Member States to pay their contributions, thus making it necessary for troop-contributing countries to assume an unduly large share of peace-keeping costs. The Twelve urged all countries that had either failed to pay or were currently withholding their contributions to settle all their accounts.

10. He wished to draw attention to the two largest United Nations peace-keeping operations currently deployed, UNIFIL and the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). There could be no doubt that the withdrawal of UNIFIL would have profoundly adverse effects. Israel's refusal to withdraw completely and its insistence on the "security zone" were thwarting efforts to restore international peace and security in the area. The Twelve were deeply concerned at the continuation of hostile actions against UNIFIL and deplored the casualties that had ensued. They also wished to reiterate that it was essential to keep UNFICYP in place.

11. Mr. BELONOVOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the world was about to take a major step towards real nuclear disarmament. For the first time in history agreement had been reached in principle on eliminating two classes of nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States, namely medium-range and short-range missiles. Prospects had also opened up concerning a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. In making progress towards a nuclear-free world, it was necessary to maintain security at every stage of the disarmament process through machinery for ensuring peace with sharply reduced quantities of non-nuclear weapons. Effective guarantees to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict should become a basis for the entire edifice of security. The comprehensive system of international security proposed by the Soviet Union was fully in keeping with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

12. The current international situation called for further vigorous efforts by States and specific measures to make full use of the peace-making potential of the United Nations. The Organization should take the lead in establishing a comprehensive system of international peace and security on the basis of universal collective efforts. Such a system could also enhance the role of the United Nations as the principal instrument of peace and was a striking example of new political thinking oriented towards humanistic values.

13. United Nations peace-keeping operations were building blocks for erecting a future system of security. In practical terms, there was a strong need to overcome the outdated dogmas of power politics and search for new approaches and unorthodox solutions. The United Nations peace-keeping forces continued to operate in several sensitive areas, performing important functions and preventing the resumption of armed conflict. In that connection, his delegation paid tribute to the peace-keeping soldiers, who carried out their important missions under difficult and often dangerous conditions. Greater use should be made of United Nations peace-keeping operations to avert clashes between States and prevent the spread of existing conflicts. United Nations military observers and peace-keeping forces should be used more actively to disengage belligerent troops and monitor cease-fires and truce agreements. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of stationing United Nations observers or troop contingents when demilitarized zones were established between countries.

14. The Soviet Union was endeavouring to apply its conceptual approach to enhancing the role of the United Nations in keeping world peace through practical policies and concrete action. His country had spoken out in favour of ensuring safety of navigation in the Persian Gulf through collective efforts within the framework of the United Nations. It had proposed that that question should be dealt with in practical terms by representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council in the Military Staff Committee with the participation of other States concerned. Since the representatives in the Military Staff Committee were the chiefs of general staffs, the Soviet Union was willing to conduct work at that level also.

15. The United States had recently carried out a unilateral military action in the Persian Gulf, thus giving the Iran-Iraq armed conflict another dimension. The concentration of United States naval forces in the Gulf seriously increased the danger of a further escalation of military conflict in the region and might have far-reaching negative consequences. Bypassing the United Nations and ignoring paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) were counter-productive. Collective efforts must be made to find a solution on the basis of the possibilities set forth in the Charter.

16. There was need for a constructive exchange of views on ways of enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peace-keeping activities. That task, which required the collective efforts of States, could be carried out by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, whose activities should be resumed without delay. In order to streamline its work, that Committee should hold a session in

(Mr. Beloncgov, USSR)

1988 to conduct a comprehensive examination of the entire range of questions concerning the conduct of United Nations peace-keeping operations.

17. His delegation reaffirmed its readiness to work with other Member States to achieve agreement on fundamental principles governing such operations. The Soviet Union had already paid its outstanding contributions due in 1987 and was prepared to consider positively the question of its participation in eliminating the budget deficit of the United Nations peace-keeping forces. At the same time, he stressed that activities involving United Nations armed forces or military observers were closely linked to other measures aimed at settling regional conflicts. The role of the United Nations in that respect also should be enhanced. Consideration should be given to setting up machinery for the international supervision of compliance with agreements on arms limitation and monitoring the military situation in areas of conflict. It would then be possible to collect information, detect, at an early stage, preparations for combat operations and prevent armed conflict or its spread. Greater use should be made of the available means for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including good offices and mediation. Consideration could also be given to non-governmental groups in identifying the causes of crises and ways of settling them.

18. The question of security guarantees was also of great importance. The permanent members of the Security Council, who would assume the obligation not to use or threaten to use force and not to demonstrate their military presence, could become the guarantors of regional security. Such measures, together with peace-keeping operations, could be an integral part of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. His delegation was prepared to consider any proposals which, if implemented through collective efforts, would help strengthen the role of the United Nations as the principal mechanism for maintaining peace and security.

19. Mr. JUDE (Uruguay) stressed the main responsibility of the super-Powers in maintaining international peace and security and their corresponding obligation to promote new, creative efforts to achieve that objective. The greatest possible effort must be made to establish a system of collective security, which would constitute significant progress towards preventing conflict and eliminating international hotbeds of tension. The negotiations on disarmament and arms control must be kept viable and the possibilities for the peaceful settlement of disputes set forth in the Charter must be further developed. In that regard, the Security Council must overcome its decision-making paralysis by achieving a minimal consensus which would enable it, particularly through its permanent members, to carry out the shared responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

20. The Security Council should explore the diplomatic possibilities open to it under Chapter VI of the Charter. Consensus must be reached on specific rules of conduct so that minimal measures could be adopted to anticipate crises and limit as far as possible the impact of conflicts.

(Mr. Jude, Uruguay)

21. The effectiveness of peace-keeping operations, which constituted an important part of the system of collective security, largely depended on the measures taken by the Security Council in accordance with the Charter. The efforts of the United Nations to ensure collective security must be based on a co-ordinated and far-reaching programme of measures to enable the Organization to make progress in such areas as negotiations on disarmament and arms control, machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the neutralization of conflicts by the Security Council and peace-keeping operations themselves.

22. The experience of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations was to a large extent the direct result of a lack of political will, particularly on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council, to reach the minimal consensus to which his delegation had referred. The lack of progress in the Special Committee was closely linked to the systematic failure of the Security Council to take the preventive measures set forth in Chapter VI of the Charter. The guidelines for peace-keeping operations should ensure that they were carried out in accordance with the Charter, had the prior approval of the country concerned, were governed by a precise mandate defined in advance, were aimed at stabilizing the area of the conflict, were temporary in nature and promoted negotiations to solve the underlying problems.

23. Mr. IRTEMCELİK (Turkey) said that without the mutual consent of the interested parties peace-keeping operations could not succeed. Care must be taken in defining the terms of reference for such operations, in order to ensure that they were fully compatible with the realities of particular conflict situations and that the necessary adjustments were made in time.

24. Peace-keeping operations, to be successful, must be carried out with impartiality. Peace-keeping forces and the countries that contributed troops to them must act with discretion with regard to the conflicts at issue and the parties involved.

25. Peace-keeping efforts were not an end in themselves and must be coupled with vigorous peace-making efforts. It was hardly possible to expect peace-keeping operations alone to redress the kinds of situations that prompted United Nations action. Peace-keeping forces had a role to play in preventing the situation from further deteriorating; however, a genuine and lasting peace was possible only through realistic peace-making efforts.

26. That the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had been unable to work out comprehensive guidelines indicated that the issue was indeed complex and controversial. He hoped, none the less, that the Special Committee would in time be able to accomplish that task.

27. Mr. OKELY (Australia) said that peace-keeping was fundamental to the concept of the United Nations and had evolved as one of the Organization's most important and valuable tasks. His country was proud that it had played its part in United Nations peace-keeping operations and that its current contribution was a significant one. Its commitment to United Nations peace-keeping efforts remained firm.

28. Regrettably, however, not all countries had shown a similar level of commitment; some contributors to the United Nations peace-keeping forces were owed very large sums, and some Member States had been lamentably slow in paying their share. Over the years, a disproportionately large share of the peace-keeping burden had been borne by only a few countries. His delegation believed that the burden should be shared more widely and more equitably in the future, firstly by a greater resort to rotation of forces. Many countries - including Australia - would prefer to serve in peace-keeping operations for terms of fixed duration rather than, as at present, on an open-ended basis. It was on the former basis that Australia would consider participation in future peace-keeping forces, including the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). Secondly, greater equity in sharing the costs of peace-keeping would be brought about by the prompt payment in full of all assessed contributions so that payment could be made to troop-contributing nations. It would be a positive step in that direction if countries were to increase their voluntary contributions or to make new contributions towards the cost of maintaining UNFICYP.

29. It was regrettable that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had little to show for its 22 years of existence. His country would in the future do whatever it could to help the Special Committee to carry out the tasks assigned to it.

30. Mr. WANG Xuexian (China) said that, while the value of peace-keeping operations had been universally recognized, there were still a number of problems to be resolved if such operations were to play a more effective role.

31. Firstly, his delegation had long believed that peace-keeping operations were a temporary measure to prevent the exacerbation of conflicts and to create the necessary atmosphere for negotiations. The present situation of long-running political conflicts and extended peace-keeping operations did not seem to have been anticipated. He called upon all parties concerned to redouble their efforts to restore peace in the regions concerned.

32. Secondly, the Security Council should make more efforts to prevent conflicts by dispatching fact-finding missions, mediation missions, observers or other representatives with United Nations authority to regions with potential conflicts.

33. Thirdly, as the international situation evolved, there was a tendency to expand the function of peace-keeping operations. His delegation believed that it was necessary to make studies and plans in advance.

(Mr. Wang Xuexian, China)

34. Fourthly, when undertaking a peace-keeping operation, the Security Council should try to ensure that appropriate financial arrangements had been made, since many developing countries could not afford the costs involved.

35. He further called upon the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations to resume its work.

36. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that his country firmly believed that peace-keeping operations were one of the most outstanding achievements of the United Nations. It therefore regretted that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations remained inactive.

37. His delegation believed that three aspects of peace-keeping operations deserved particular attention: their general purpose, the future use of the instrument in the context of conflict-resolution, and the financial aspects involved. Peace-keeping operations could not be an end in themselves. However, the record showed that a number of those operations had become almost permanent institutions and that the presence of United Nations contingents was being taken for granted by the parties to various conflicts. It was obvious that the need for those operations could not be seriously questioned. His delegation appealed to all those concerned to use the time provided through peace-keeping operations as opportunities for peace-making.

38. There was a continuing need in many regional conflicts for impartial international involvement, control and supervision. His delegation welcomed and fully supported the suggestions made in that regard by the Secretary-General in his latest annual report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization (A/42/1). However, when considering the potential of the United Nations for contributing to the solution of ongoing conflicts, it should be kept in mind that an enhanced United Nations role would not only require the necessary political agreement among the members of the Security Council and the parties concerned but also solid practical preparations and a sound financial basis. In that connection, his delegation hoped that the Secretary-General's proposal for a partial change in the system of financing of UNFICYP from voluntary to assessed contributions would be taken up and supported by the Security Council in the near future. Pending a positive decision by the Security Council, his delegation urged all Member States to make or to increase their voluntary contributions to the financing of UNFICYP. His country had recently decided to respond positively to a request by the Secretary-General to increase its UNFICYP contingent by yet another 100 soldiers as from October 1987. That decision was only the latest manifestation of Austria's long-standing commitment to United Nations peace-keeping operations. It hoped that the international community as a whole would respond positively to the appeal of the troop-contributors for a more equal and fairer sharing of the burden.

39. Mr. FERM (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that those countries attached great importance to United Nations peace-keeping operations, which had proved to be one of the Organization's most successful innovations and today constituted an indispensable part of its activities for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Nordic countries had participated in all 13 peace-keeping operations, and were providing one third of the personnel in the five operations still in progress. Since 1964 they had maintained ground and naval stand-by forces in response to the Secretary-General's appeal, and they co-operated closely in the necessary special training of those forces and observers.

40. Hardly anyone in the Committee would deny that whenever the Security Council decided on a peace-keeping operation it must provide it with a clear, explicit and implementable mandate. It must continuously support the operation. Moreover, the Council's careful and continuing evaluation of ongoing operations was of the utmost importance. To be successful, a peace-keeping operation must also have the support and full co-operation of all parties involved in the conflict.

41. In view of that broad consensus, it was surprising that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations which had been established to recommend general guidelines for peace-keeping operations had not reported to the General Assembly for the past four years. The Nordic countries appealed to the Special Committee to make renewed efforts to fulfil its tasks.

42. The Nordic countries did not concur in the criticism of United Nations peace-keeping operations because of their alleged lack of results. Peace-keeping per se was only an instrument to support peace-making; the two were closely interrelated, but peace-keeping could not replace peace-making. Where the political will of the parties to the conflict was lacking, peace-keeping operations might drag on for a long time without corresponding progress towards a solution of the conflict. But those operations nevertheless produced specific daily results in the protection and help extended by the United Nations to harassed local populations.

43. While fully recognizing both the possibilities and limitations of peace-keeping operations, the Nordic countries wished to emphasize the unfair burden borne by the troop-contributing Governments with regard to the costs of the operations. They wished to reiterate their appeal to all States concerned to reconsider their present policy and to pay their contributions in full without delay. Now was the time for all Member States to demonstrate their active support of an important United Nations activity in the service of peace.

44. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that peace-keeping operations had clearly come to constitute an important and vital factor in United Nations efforts to create ways and means to preserve the spirit of the Charter and make it a tangible reality. In view of the growing number of regional and local conflicts, the importance of peace-keeping operations had increased, while the world had become less capable of solving those conflicts in accordance with international law, the Charter and United Nations resolutions. In a number of instances, the United Nations had succeeded in maintaining a partial peace. However in numerous

(Mr. Glaiel, Syrian Arab Republic)

instances peace-keeping forces had fallen victim to the arrogance of the aggressor, which wanted to exploit them in order to serve its own ends, disregarding the obligations laid down in international instruments. A perfect example was the situation of UNIFIL, which had been attacked by the Israeli forces and the so-called "South Lebanon Army" (SLA) in an attempt to cover up the facts and prevent eyewitnesses from observing their repeated raids.

45. Although the peace-keeping operation differed according to the political circumstances, the nature of the aggression, or the type of mission undertaken, his delegation believed that there were some elements common to all operations. Through them, it was possible to outline general guiding principles on how to constitute the forces and determine their functions and powers, the time frame of their missions and the renewal of their mandates.

46. In order to establish those principles it was necessary to take the following points into consideration. Firstly, there was a need to respect the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV), which stipulated that in the event of peace-keeping operations, the aggressor and the victim must not be placed on an equal footing. Secondly, the aggressor must bear all the consequences of the aggression and the full financial burden of the peace-keeping operations. Thirdly, it was necessary to reaffirm the provisional nature of such operations, which must not become a substitute for a solution to a conflict or provide the aggressor with an opportunity to impose a fait accompli or to derive benefit from the consequences of his acts. Finally, attention should be drawn to the obligation of all parties to co-operate unreservedly with the United Nations forces and to the need to condemn any attempt to prevent them from accomplishing their mission.

47. On the last of those points, the Secretary-General had noted many times in his reports on UNIFIL that, in order to enable UNIFIL to be deployed up to the international boundary, it was essential for the Israeli and SLA forces to co-operate with UNIFIL, thus enabling it to accomplish its mission of preserving international peace and security. If the United Nations permitted such attacks on its forces, it cast doubt on the future of the Organization as a whole and its capacity to maintain international peace and security. If the aggressor was left unpunished, aggressive and racist régimes would be encouraged to pursue their criminal activities.

48. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report on the work of the Organization (A/42/1), what had too often been lacking was the readiness of Member States to put aside national differences and national ambitions and work together within the United Nations in accordance with the principles of the Charter towards common goals.

49. The Syrian Arab Republic wished to pay tribute to all those throughout the world who had sacrificed themselves in the cause of peace.

EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (continued) (A/42/210; A/SPC/42/L.2 and L.4)

50. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan) requested that no final deadline should be set for the Committee's discussion of agenda item 74, "Effects of atomic radiation".

51. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said that his delegation would have no objection to that request provided that no vote was taken under the agenda item before the date indicated in the Committee's timetable.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, the Committee would proceed as the representative of Jordan had requested, while keeping in mind the comment made by the representative of Israel.

53. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.