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2101st MEETING

Held in New York on Thursday, 30 November 1978, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Léon N'DONG (Gabon).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Bolivia, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Kuwait, Mauritius, Nigeria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2101)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in the Middle East:
Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/12934)

The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East:

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/12934)

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) contained in document S/12934, covering the period 18 May to 24 November 1978, and a draft resolution contained in document S/12941.

2. I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The draft resolution was adopted by 14 votes to none.¹

One member (China) did not participate in the voting.

3. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): In connexion with the adoption of the resolution on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, I have been authorized to make the following complementary statement on behalf of the Security Council regarding the resolution just adopted:

"As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

¹ See resolution 441 (1978).

[S/12934] states in paragraph 32 that 'despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached'. This statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council."

Further, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I wish to state that, as it has not participated in the vote on this resolution, it takes the same position with regard to the statement which I have just read out on behalf of the members of the Council.

4. Mr. BISHARA (Kuwait): Mr. President, today is 30 November, the last day of your presidency, and in this connexion I should like to thank you on behalf of my delegation and to express to you our full satisfaction at the manner in which you have so ably conducted the business of the Council for this month.

5. My delegation would like to pay sincere tribute to the Secretary-General and to the staff of UNDOF, including the officers and soldiers who have been risking their lives and, indeed, abdicating all the comforts of life for the cause of peace.

6. Last May, Kuwait voted in favour of resolution 429 (1978) primarily because the Government of Syria had agreed to the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF. We did the same today and for the same reason, since the Government of Syria accepted the renewal of the mandate for another period of six months.

7. The comprehensive report of the Secretary-General states in paragraph 32 that

"the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached".

As you indicated earlier, Sir, this paragraph expresses the views of all the members of the Council. In the view of my delegation, the quiet that prevails in the Israeli-occupied Syrian territories could be the quiet that precedes the storm. We should not be lulled into a false sense of complacency by this calm, under which lie all the elements of an explosion.

8. My Government is in favour of peace-keeping operations so long as they remain provisional and are not a

substitute for a just and durable peace. Indeed, we oppose the automatic renewal of the mandate of UNDOF on the grounds that such automatic renewal generates a self-perpetuating process. While the Security Council is called upon to renew the mandate of the Force every six months, Israel is busy colonizing Syrian territory by establishing Jewish settlements and importing Jewish adventurers to live on Syrian soil. Israel indeed makes no bones about its intention of retaining the Syrian territory indefinitely. Israeli leaders vie with each other in stating that the evacuation of the Syrian Golan Heights by Israeli troops is non-negotiable.

9. The conclusion we draw from such a defiant posture is that UNDOF is providing Israel with a sense of security which enables it to continue establishing Jewish settlements, unmolested and unopposed by the legitimate owners of the territory. That is actually what is happening in Israeli-occupied Syrian territory. Syrian soil, on which Syrian shepherds lived and grazed their herds and which Syrian farmers tilled for centuries, is being devoured and its demographic character changed beyond recognition. That is being done in defiance of United Nations resolutions and in breach of the Charter.

10. My delegation is unhappy about this semblance of quiet, which dulls the senses but is being used for expansionist designs. To bring to an end this twice-a-year ritual of renewal of the mandate, a comprehensive settlement must be reached, ensuring the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories and guaranteeing the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians in their original homeland. Short of that fundamental condition, the present arrangement on Syrian territory will either become a self-perpetuating routine or give rise to dissatisfaction, leading to the outbreak of war. My Government hopes that reason will prevail and that a just and honourable peace will eventually emerge.

11. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): In connexion with the adoption by the Security Council of the decision to renew the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Israel-Syria sector, the Soviet delegation would like to make the following statement.

12. The question of the presence of United Nations armed forces in the Middle East is indissolubly linked to the problem of a Middle East settlement and cannot be viewed in isolation from the events which have affected the region. We cannot but note with concern that the situation in the Middle East continues to be complicated and potentially dangerous both for the countries of the region itself and for the international situation as a whole. The reasons for that are well known to all. They are, primarily, that after many years following the Israeli aggression the consequences of that aggression have still not been eliminated. Israel still holds sway in the Arab territories it has seized and is pursuing there a course leading to the annexation of a considerable portion of those territories and obstructing the exercise by the Arab people of Palestine of their inalienable right to create their own State.

13. The Soviet Union has repeatedly stressed the need for the earliest possible radical and comprehensive settlement

in the Middle East. That settlement should include the total liberation of all Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and full and unambiguous respect for the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to create their own independent State, and the ensuring of properly guaranteed security for all countries in the region, including, of course, Israel.

14. The Soviet Union believes that a comprehensive and radical Middle East settlement can be achieved only by means of the collective efforts of all the parties concerned. Appropriate international machinery exists for the purpose of achieving such a settlement, namely, the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, in the work of which all parties concerned should take part on a full and equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, which has won the recognition of all Arabs as well as international recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Soviet Union is ready to co-operate with the other participants in the Geneva Peace Conference in order to achieve a just Middle East settlement. However, it opposes transforming it into a screen for hiding separate deals to the detriment of the interests of the Arabs and the cause of a just and lasting peace. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that any separate deals simply divert attention from the solution of the problem.

15. The Soviet Union takes a stand of unswerving solidarity with the Arab countries and peoples who are carrying on a just struggle to eliminate the consequences of Israeli aggression. Our country highly esteems Syria's position of principle in Middle East matters and its important positive contribution to the strengthening of those forces which reject the course of anti-Arab deals.

16. The Soviet Union did not object to the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF for a further six-month period primarily because the Government of Syria had given its consent to the renewal. The Soviet Union believes that the presence of United Nations armed forces in the Middle East is strictly temporary and should not be used for the purpose of delaying a comprehensive settlement in the area.

17. The Soviet Union would like to draw attention once again to the need for maximum economy in the use of the funds appropriated for the maintenance of the United Nations forces in the Middle East.

18. Mr. BARTON (Canada): My delegation voted in favour of the resolution which the Council has just adopted because we agree with the Secretary-General's statement in his report that the continued presence of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the area is essential. However, I must reiterate our hope and expectation that the interval between now and the time of the next mandate renewal will be used by the parties concerned to try to resolve their difficulties and overcome the obstacles which exist between them in achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

19. In this connexion I should like to quote from the Disengagement Agreement signed by the parties on 18

January 1974. The final paragraph of that Agreement reads:

"This Agreement is not regarded . . . as a final peace agreement. It constitutes a first step toward a . . . just and durable peace according to the provisions of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)" [*S/11198, annex*].

In the four and a half years that have gone by since then, no further step has been taken towards such a just and durable peace. This inactivity must not continue.

20. Canada is the only member of the Security Council which contributes troops to UNDOF and my Government has authorized me to announce that we shall continue to do so for this further mandate period. We are proud to read in the Secretary-General's report that he considers that the members of our contingent, together with those of Austria, Iran and Poland and those countries providing United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) military observers have performed with exemplary efficiency and devotion to duty the most important and difficult tasks entrusted to them by the Council.

21. Paragraph 19 of the report of the Secretary-General indicates that, despite efforts to correct the situation, there are still restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNDOF. We have stated before, and wish to reiterate once more, that freedom of movement of contingents within the Force is one of the essential principles under which peace-keeping forces operate. We consider that there should be no limitations on freedom of movement of any member of any contingent in carrying out peace-keeping on behalf of the United Nations.

22. I should like to express our condolences to the families of the four Austrian and one Polish soldiers who died during this mandate period while serving the cause of peace.

23. In conclusion, we should like to express our appreciation to the Force Commander, Major-General Hannes Philipp, and to the Secretary-General and his staff for their hard work and support which they give unstintingly in directing the operations of the Force.

24. Mr. President, I should also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation for the unstinting efforts that you have made during the month in directing the Security Council through its complicated series of meetings.

25. Mr. HULINSKÝ (Czechoslovakia) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Czechoslovak delegation once again voted in favour of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Israel-Syria sector for another six-month period. We did this on the basis of the position taken by the Syrian Government, which once again gave its consent to the presence of those troops on its territory.

26. In the report of the Secretary-General it is pointed out that over the last six months no special events have occurred in the sector. But recently events have occurred

which do affect the Middle East problem as a whole, dangerously complicating an already tense situation in the area. That is the attempts which have been made to come to an agreement behind the backs of the Arab people and to supplant a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict, through the use of the existing machinery of the Geneva Peace Conference, by partial separate talks.

27. The separate Egyptian-Israeli deals which have been prepared under the aegis of the Government of the United States are not in keeping with the interests of international security, inasmuch as they are opposed to efforts to solve the problem as a whole in the interests of all peoples in the area including, of course, the people of Israel itself. They cannot fail to give rise to further instability, complications and the dangerous possibility of further explosive outbursts.

28. The Czechoslovak delegation is still firmly convinced that lasting peace in the Middle East can be ensured only on the basis of a comprehensive settlement with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Czechoslovak delegation continues to believe that the most appropriate forum for such a settlement is the Geneva Peace Conference, which remains the best chance for all parties to come to an agreement on a genuinely just solution to the problem, taking into account the vital national interests of all parties to the conflict.

29. The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has stated its support of the decisions of the Baghdad Conference of the Heads of State and Government of Arab Countries. My Government is convinced that the decisions of the Baghdad Conference will play a positive role in the struggle for an effective settlement of the Middle East problem in the interests of peace.

30. In voting in favour of the resolution just adopted by the Security Council, the Czechoslovak delegation once again has confirmed the view which it expressed on this subject in the Council on 31 May last [*2079th meeting*]. We wish to stress that the presence of these and, indeed, all other forces of the United Nations in the area of the Middle East conflict is justified only if it promotes the establishment of conditions for a genuinely just peace by means of a comprehensive solution of all the problems, in strict compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations on the Middle East question. The presence of United Nations forces in the region of the Middle East conflict should in no way be allowed to ease pressure on the aggressor or to encourage it in its continuing attempts to preserve the results of its repeated acts of aggression, to change the demographic structure of the occupied territories or to continue its defiance of the decisions of the United Nations.

31. Mr. ROBINSON (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I am particularly happy to have the opportunity on this, the last day of your presidency, to pay a tribute to you for the skill, tact and good humour with which you have handled our business in what has proved to be a particularly busy month.

32. I do not intend to comment in detail on the substance of the question on which we have just voted. There have

been many opportunities during the current session of the General Assembly for my delegation to spell out its views on the Middle East and a further opportunity will present itself next week in the debate in plenary. We agree with the Secretary-General when he says in his report that the situation continues to be potentially dangerous.

33. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force continues, by the efficient operation of its mandate, to play an important part by supervising the Disengagement Agreement and generally creating the necessary climate of confidence in the area against which the search for a solution can go on.

34. Once again, therefore, I should like to place on record our profound gratitude to the Secretary-General and his staff, to the Commander of the Force, Major-General Philipp, and to the members of the Force for the way in which they have carried out their tasks over the past few months. Our thanks also go to those countries which have continued to provide contingents of troops.

35. Mr. JELONEK (Federal Republic of Germany): In joining the consensus on the renewal of the mandate, my delegation was guided by the conviction that the continued presence of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the area is essential for the observance of the cease-fire between the parties. We have noted with satisfaction that the cease-fire has indeed been observed and that no complaints have been raised by either party. This is evidence of the outstanding performance of the Force, as well as the willingness of the parties to co-operate in order to avoid a confrontation that involves incalculable risks.

36. Notwithstanding these positive aspects, we cannot but agree with the Secretary-General, in his comprehensive and lucid report, that "despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous" [S/12934, para. 32].

37. When, in May 1978, the Security Council last renewed the Force's mandate, my Government appealed to all parties concerned to find the courage to overcome old prejudices and painful experiences of the past. Now, six months later, my delegation fervently repeats this appeal directed to all parties in the Middle East conflict. My Government shares the view of the Secretary-General that a durable peace in the region can only be reached through a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem.

38. I should like to conclude by again extending my country's appreciation and gratitude to the Commander of the Force, Major-General Philipp of Austria, to the officers and men of the Force and its civilian staff, as well as to the UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force, for their outstanding efficiency and dedication in performing an important and difficult task. Our gratitude goes also to the four countries providing contingents to the Force.

39. Finally, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, as well as the Secretary-General and his staff, on the successful efforts which have brought about the adoption of this resolution.

40. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, your term of office was indeed onerous. Many delicate questions have been discussed in the Council during the past 30 days. Let me express to you, as your presidency comes to an end, all the admiration and gratitude of the French delegation for the way in which you have conducted our deliberations.

41. The French delegation voted in favour of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for another period of six months. That decision was taken in accordance with the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report of 24 November. We should be gratified, as noted in the report, at the fact that the situation has remained quiet in the sector controlled by the Force, thus contributing to the maintenance of favourable conditions for the establishment of peace in the region. However, it should be borne in mind that such a measure ought not to delay the search for an over-all, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

42. France has on a number of occasions welcomed the recent efforts made in the region with a view to achieving that objective. But, as we emphasized recently, my Government considers that the restoration of a true climate of peace can only be assured by an over-all agreement involving all the parties concerned, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, and recognized as just by all the States concerned and by the international community as a whole.

43. In conclusion, I should like to pay tribute once again to the Secretary-General and his colleagues for the way in which they are discharging the delicate and difficult tasks entrusted to them. I would also express the appreciation of the French authorities for the exemplary contribution which the Commander and the contingents of UNDOF are continuing to make to the work of the Organization.

44. I also wish to extend our condolences to those who have lost members of their families in the service of peace.

45. Mr. PETREE (United States of America): Mr. President, as your presidency comes to an end today, I hope you will accept the commendation and expression of gratitude of my delegation for the skilful and extremely effective way in which you have managed our business during the course of this month.

46. The agreement of Syria and Israel to the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force is a tribute to the will of both parties to the conflict in that area to maintain the cease-fire and the possibility of peace which stems from it.

47. We all recognize that peace-keeping is not peace-making. It is, however, a vital element in the Middle East, which has seen four wars over the past 30 years, with untold suffering during and after each.

48. The officers and men of UNDOF have done much to preserve the peace in this area and have thereby made a

major contribution to the search for the lasting Middle East peace which we all seek. The tranquillity of the Israel-Syria sector has been preserved by UNDOF for over four years now through maintenance of the cease-fire and supervision of the Disengagement Agreement between Syria and Israel. The parties also have observed their obligations in the Disengagement Agreement. Thus, UNDOF continues to help to hold open to both the countries, and thereby to the region, the possibility of a real peace.

49. It has been argued that the peace-keeping forces lull the Security Council and the world at large into the illusion that calm is equivalent to peace. The United States has not suffered from such an illusion nor do I believe have any other members of the Council. We feel, however, that only through such calm can we continue to pursue durable, just solutions for the whole of the Middle East. We therefore strongly support the regular renewal of the UNDOF mandate.

50. We share the concern of other members of the Council about the fact that the goal of all of us must be the

attainment of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. This is precisely the objective agreed upon at the historic meeting at Camp David this September. The Camp David framework agreement states unequivocally that the goal of the negotiations is a comprehensive peace. It sets out principles that should guide the search for a comprehensive peace. It states specifically that the agreed basis for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israel and its neighbours is Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in all its parts.

51. I would emphasize the fact that the Camp David agreements did not exclude anyone. They offered to all concerned a practical and honourable way to achieve the just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict that the people of the Middle East and the people of the world have for so long aspired to. We will welcome the participation of all those who accept peace and recognition among neighbours as the declared objective of negotiations.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

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