



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 60th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOBINA SEKYYI (Ghana)

later: Miss MUCK (Austria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 100: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIIUM 1978-1979 (continued)

Administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions A/C.1/33/L.19, L.32 and L.35 (item 47) (A/C.5/33/80)

1. Mr. HEILLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had discussed at some length the question of the cost of servicing meetings of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1979 with the representatives of the Secretary-General and had noted the information and observations contained in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of document A/C.5/33/80. In that document, the Secretary-General made no specific requests regarding the costs of servicing the meetings of the Commission and the Committee of the Whole, but merely submitted four alternative estimates of financial implications, as could be seen in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/33/80. The Advisory Committee had not considered it advisable to make a recommendation which would in any way call into question the action of the First Committee in endorsing the report and recommendations of the Disarmament Commission. However, it had felt quite competent to make a recommendation with regard to the costs of servicing meetings of the Commission. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee had decided to recommend that, if draft resolution A/C.1/33/L.19 was adopted, the conference servicing costs should not exceed \$760,000, as stated in annex I of document A/C.5/33/80. That amount would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference servicing requirements for 1979 to be submitted later in the session.

2. The administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/33/L.32, concerning the proposed study on nuclear weapons to be carried out by the Secretary-General with the assistance of qualified experts, were set out in paragraphs 8-10 of document A/C.5/33/80. In annex V of that document, the Secretary-General stated that the travel and subsistence costs for the 15 experts that would be required would amount to \$50,200 and that the over-all cost of conference services would be \$101,800. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General's request regarding the travel and subsistence costs of experts should be accepted, but that the over-all cost of conference services should not exceed \$100,000.

3. The administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/33/L.35 were dealt with in paragraphs 11-13 and annex VI of document A/C.5/33/80. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Committee should accept the Secretary-General's estimate of \$38,500 for travel and subsistence costs of 10 experts and two substantive staff members, but felt that the cost of conference services should not exceed \$40,000, rather than the \$59,900 requested by the Secretary-General. Consequently, the Advisory Committee recommended that, if the three draft resolutions (A/C.1/33/L.19, L.32 and L.35) were adopted, the total cost of conference services involved should not exceed \$900,000.

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4. Mr. IYER (India) said that his delegation had always attached the utmost importance to the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and had participated actively in that work. In its view, priority should be given to the work of the Disarmament Commission in 1979 and every effort should be made to ensure that the Secretariat was able to provide all the facilities needed by the Commission in order to carry out its mandate. It was essential that the Disarmament Commission should be able to hold two simultaneous meetings, even if that made it necessary to reschedule meetings of other bodies. When the calendar of conferences for 1979 had originally been adopted, it had been on the understanding that arrangements would be made to accommodate any changes necessitated by decisions made by the General Assembly at the thirty-third session.

5. Accordingly, his delegation would accept the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the understanding that the Committee on Conferences would look into the question as a matter of priority, in order to ensure that the Disarmament Commission had all the facilities it required in 1979.

6. Mr. BUJ FLORES (Mexico) said that his Government assigned the highest priority to the work of the Disarmament Commission and therefore supported its recommendation, which had been endorsed by the First Committee, that provisions should be made for verbatim records and for four meetings a day. That recommendation implied the overlapping of meetings of the Disarmament Commission with other meetings already scheduled by the Committee on Conferences. Without underestimating the importance of those other meetings, his delegation felt that the Disarmament Commission should be given precedence, and it would therefore submit, together with the delegations of India and Argentina, a draft decision requesting the Committee on Conferences to re-arrange the calendar of conferences so as to accommodate the needs of the Disarmament Commission. His delegation also supported the recommendations in paragraphs 7 and 14 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/33/80) on the financial requirements of the Commission and the recommendations of the ACABQ with respect to annex I of that document.

7. Mr. EL-AYADHI (Tunisia) said that he shared the concern expressed earlier by the representative of Iran with respect to oral reports by the Chairman of ACABQ. In view of the difficulties inherent in ACABQ recommendations, oral reports were not a satisfactory basis for the Committee's decisions, and he hoped they could be avoided in future.

8. Tunisia attached great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission and therefore supported the recommendations of ACABQ with respect to the Commission's financial requirements. He would welcome further details as to the financial implications of meetings of a committee of the whole. The device of establishing a committee of the whole was well-established in United Nations practice and was employed primarily to facilitate the work of major bodies.

(Mr. El-Ayadhi, Tunisia)

However, his delegation believed that the practice might need to be discouraged if it involved additional financial implications. The Secretary-General had reported on the financial implications of a Disarmament Commission session with summary or verbatim records and of a session functioning with a committee of the whole, but not on the specific cost of the meetings of a possible committee of the whole. He requested that the Chairman of the ACABQ should supply the figure. Pending receipt of that information, his delegation reserved its position with respect to the second alternative presented in the annexes to the Secretary-General's statement.

9. Mr. BIERING (Denmark) said that his Government attached the greatest importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission and to the Commission being given all necessary assistance. His delegation therefore fully supported the recommendation made by the representative of Mexico.

10. Mr. RANZY (Egypt) said that the statement of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/80) did not specify which languages would be used by the Disarmament Commission. He pointed out in that connexion that the First Committee, on the recommendation of his delegation, had decided to include Arabic among the working languages of the Disarmament Commission. He requested the Secretariat to indicate for which languages provision was made in the Secretary-General's recommendations.

11. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that his country's interest and participation in disarmament proceedings in the United Nations was well known, as was its interest in the economic use of the Organization's resources. He therefore felt it necessary to call attention to the difference in cost between verbatim and summary records and to request further information from the Advisory Committee and from the Secretariat on that subject. Paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's statement indicated that the use of verbatim records would cost the Organization approximately \$250,000 more than the use of summary records; he wondered whether that difference in expenditure had been specifically brought to the attention of the First Committee, especially in the light of the suggestion in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/33/80 that the General Assembly "might therefore wish to reconsider this question with a view to recommending the provision of summary records for the Commission rather than verbatim records".

12. He was puzzled by the figures given in annexes III and IV for the costs of verbatim and summary records respectively, as they showed a much smaller difference. He would welcome clarification of the method of calculation used to arrive at those figures.

13. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his country's interest in the question of disarmament was well known. The Soviet Union had made important proposals, had supported draft resolution A/C.1/33/L.19 and had abstained in the voting on draft resolutions A/C.1/33/L.32 and L.35. However, he had great doubts about the justification for the appropriations being requested. In particular, his delegation found it difficult to understand the great difference between two of the estimates - of \$496,600 and \$1,043,800 respectively - given in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/33/80. It also found it difficult to understand the rationale of ACABQ's justification of the amount it recommended. Since most of the appropriations requested pertained to conference servicing, for which there were existing appropriations amounting to more than \$150 million, his delegation felt that the amounts requested could be wholly absorbed within the approved budget for conference servicing and could not agree to the appropriation of an additional \$900,000. With regard to the appropriations requested for experts and travel, he noted that approximately \$48 million was provided under section 2 of the budget for such purposes and that it should not be too difficult for the Secretary-General to absorb the relevant costs within existing appropriations. His delegation could therefore not agree, on first reading, to the appropriations requested.

14. Mr. GOSS (Australia) said that there was reason to ask whether verbatim records were necessary for the First Committee, the only Main Committee which used them. The amount of substantive discussion which had so far taken place in meetings of the Disarmament Commission likewise did not seem to warrant verbatim records. The production of documents was expensive and an effort should be made to moderate expenditure.

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he had been careful to explain to the Committee that the ACABQ had not delved into the question of policy with respect to the use of summary or verbatim records. The Disarmament Commission had decided to recommend that verbatim records should continue to be issued for its meetings in 1979, the First Committee had endorsed that recommendation, and the ACABQ had not deemed it advisable to question the conclusion. The Secretary-General had not submitted a specific recommendation with respect to conference servicing costs, but only alternatives. The ACABQ had decided to recommend to the Fifth Committee that the related costs should not exceed \$760,000.

16. In reply to the question asked by the representative of the United States as to whether the First Committee had been aware of the alternatives, he said that he had been informed that the First Committee had been apprised of the situation but had decided not to take a decision in that respect.

17. He earnestly recommended that the Fifth Committee should avoid a discussion of policy, which was a matter for the First Committee to deal with. It would be

(Mr. Mselle)

better to discuss the level of appropriations necessary if the First Committee's proposal was adopted.

18. With regard to the question asked by the representative of Tunisia, he could only say that the Disarmament Commission had stated that it might become necessary at its forthcoming session to set up a committee of the whole. That statement contained an element of doubt. He could not say whether a committee of the whole would in fact be established. Consequently, the question of specific costs remained undecided.

19. Mr. DIAMOND (Budget Division), in reply to the question asked by the representative of Egypt, said that the Disarmament Commission would be provided with language services in six languages. In reply to the question asked by the representative of the United States, he said that the cost of interpretation in six languages for four weeks of meetings was \$125,000. The respective costs of summary records and verbatim records for the same period would be approximately \$235,000 and \$435,000. The difference in cost between summary and verbatim records was therefore \$200,000.

20. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that paragraph 15 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/80) indicated that a consolidated statement of conference servicing requirements would be submitted towards the close of the session. He asked whether all of the financial implications discussed during the session would be contained in that document.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that he understood that all Committees would have to complete their work before the consolidated statement could be prepared. He had been informed that the statement might be available to ACABQ by 19 December.

22. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) pointed out that the figure given in the statement of financial implications (A/C.5/33/80) for the cost of the Disarmament Commission session with a committee of the whole did not cover all the costs involved. Paragraph 5 stated that, if simultaneous meetings were held, it might prove necessary to reschedule other meetings, a procedure which would give rise to additional financial implications.

23. As to whether or not to substitute summary for verbatim records, he pointed out that in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/33/80, the Secretary-General stated that the General Assembly might wish to reconsider the question, with a view to recommending the provision of summary rather than verbatim records. He wondered how the General Assembly could be said to be considering that question if the First Committee had taken no position on it.

24. The issue was complicated by the fact that the General Assembly was apparently pursuing mutually contradictory policies on the matter. The Fifth Committee, acting at the urging of the Committee on Conferences, had called upon all bodies to

(Mr. Cunningham, United States)

reduce their conference servicing requirements as much as possible. There was also a General Assembly resolution stating that the specific approval of the General Assembly was required, and that summary records should be substituted for verbatim records wherever possible. On the other hand, the Committee was being asked to approve a very substantial appropriation for new conference servicing requirements for the Disarmament Commission. That state of affairs made demands upon delegations which all found discouraging and called for clarification.

25. Mr. MSELLE, (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, according to information provided to him, document A/C.1/33/L.51 had apprised the First Committee of the situation with respect to both summary versus verbatim records and the possibility of simultaneous meetings. The First Committee had decided not to take up the matter and had endorsed the recommendations of the Disarmament Commission.

26. Mr. MILLS (Budget Division) said that any statement of financial implications submitted to a Main Committee was based on a set of assumptions. Document A/C.1/33/L.51 had been based on the assumptions that the meetings of the Disarmament Commission would be conducted in six languages, that verbatim records would be provided, and that there would be two meetings per day. It was on the same assumptions that document A/C.5/33/80 gave the estimate of \$759,500, and the other estimates corresponded to different sets of assumptions having different financial implications.

27. Mr. BUJ FLORES (Mexico) introduced, on behalf of his own delegation and the delegations of Argentina and India, the following draft decision for consideration by the Committee:

"The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly that it request the Committee on Conferences to study, on a priority basis, the possibility of rearranging the calendar of conferences in such a way as to enable the Disarmament Commission and its committee of the whole to meet simultaneously and to be provided with verbatim records".

28. Of course, the Disarmament Commission might decide not to hold simultaneous meetings, but the possibility of its doing so if it deemed that necessary, should be left open.

29. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the draft decision read out by the representative of Mexico essentially called upon the Committee on Conferences to review the situation with a view to enabling the Disarmament Commission to hold such meetings as it might deem necessary. The draft decision, therefore, did not affect the aggregate estimate of \$900,000 for the measures recommended under draft resolutions A/C.3/L.19, L.32 and L.35, and he accordingly saw no reason to change the recommendation of the ACABQ.

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30. Mr. MILLS (Budget Division) said that, as stated in paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/33/60, the cost of four meetings daily with verbatim records would be \$1,143,300; that represented maximum expenditure, on the assumption that both the Disarmament Commission and its committee of the whole would each hold two meetings daily throughout the four-week session.

31. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Department of Conference Services) said that there was a conflict between the requirements of the bodies that were scheduled to meet during the period in question. The Disarmament Commission and the First Committee had been informed that services during that period would be available for only one meeting at a time of the Disarmament Commission. The Commission, however, had decided to establish a committee of the whole, to meet simultaneously with the plenary. The Department of Conference Services had suggested that if a decision was taken to hold meetings simultaneously of the plenary of the Disarmament Commission and the committee of the whole, the General Assembly would then have to reconsider the calendar of conferences recently approved by the Fifth Committee, which was due to be approved by the General Assembly later in the day. Neither the Committee on Conferences nor the Secretariat was empowered to reconsider the calendar of conferences.

32. Moreover, the Second Committee had decided to recommend that the session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development should be extended. The Trusteeship Council would also be meeting during the period in question under its own rules of procedure, and its session was not covered by the calendar of conferences. Only three conference rooms would be available at Headquarters. If, therefore, the General Assembly wished to convene additional meetings during that period, it would have to consider which body would take priority. The Committee on Conferences had had to consider similar situations in the past, and would have to take up the question if the recommendation under consideration was approved.

33. With respect to the question of verbatim or summary records, he said that his Department had understood that neither the First Committee nor the Disarmament Commission had asked for verbatim records for the committee of the whole, and that records, either summary or verbatim, were to be provided only for the plenary of the Disarmament Commission. The Committee on Conferences was not authorized to consider whether summary records or verbatim records were to be provided for organs of the United Nations; that was the prerogative of the General Assembly. That Committee had recently considered a request from the Committee established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 for summary records, and had decided that it was not a matter within its competence. A meeting had just taken place to discuss with the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Centre for Disarmament how the activities of the Disarmament Commission would be organized. It had been confirmed that there would be periods when the Disarmament Commission and its committee of the whole would meet simultaneously. Any consequent problem of adjustment in the calendar of conferences could be considered by the Committee on Conferences, but not the question of verbatim or summary records.

34. The CHAIRMAN suggested that since it appeared that further consultations were needed on the subject before the Fifth Committee could arrive at a decision, further discussion should be deferred until the following meeting.

35. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the decision taken by the First Committee at its 58th meeting, on 30 November 1979, in connexion with the report of the Secretary-General in document A/33/389 (A/C.5/33/89).

36. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the item had originated at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly (A/C.5/33/89, para. 1), when the Secretary-General had been requested to report at the thirty-third session on the feasibility of making a film portraying the vast devastation wrought by the Second World War and other later wars. The proposal had been made by the representative of Saudi Arabia. The Secretary-General had stated in document A/C.5/33/89 that he was not able to give precise estimates of the cost of making such a film, but believed that the cost would be in the neighbourhood of \$200,000;

37. The First Committee had considered the report of the Secretary-General, and had decided to recommend that such a film should be produced (A/C.1/33/PV.58, p.51). The Secretary-General had indicated that an amount of \$203,000 would be required for producing the film. It was difficult for the Advisory Committee to judge how accurate that figure was. The Secretary-General had stated in paragraph 3 of his report that he could not give any precise estimate, and his figure therefore had to be regarded as an order of magnitude. A large volume of film material on the Second World War and more recent conflicts existed, and use could be made of that material. The Advisory Committee had first thought of making a preliminary recommendation that an amount of \$100,000 should be approved, but had decided that \$165,000 would be a suitable figure to recommend to the Fifth Committee. The Advisory Committee accordingly recommended an appropriation of \$165,000 under section 21 A of the programme budget for the making of the proposed film.

38. Mr. KEHAL (Pakistan) said that he had been asked by the representative of Saudi Arabia, who had been obliged to leave the meeting, to ask the Budget Division if it would be possible, in order to ensure that the film, which would be one of historic importance, was of high quality, to absorb within the OPI budget the additional cost of \$38,000, which was the difference between the amount of \$203,000 requested by the Secretary-General and the amount of \$165,000 recommended by the Advisory Committee.

39. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that no one could object to the idea of a film providing a visual record of the devastation caused by war. However, he reminded the Committee that there was a vast amount of documentary and other film available on the subject which could be used; he referred in particular to the joint Soviet-United States television production entitled

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(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

"The Unknown War". He doubted very much whether OPI had the professional capacity to produce a film of that quality or scope. Even if OPI were capable of producing such a film, he did not believe that it was necessary to ask for additional appropriations for the purpose, since the OPI budget amounted to the very large sum of \$37.2 million. If the administration of OPI reviewed its priorities, it should be able to produce the film within the existing appropriations. His delegation therefore proposed that all the costs should be absorbed in the OPI budget.

40. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that he agreed with what the representative of the Soviet Union had said. He was also interested in learning when the film might be expected to be available.

41. Mr. EL-AYADHI (Tunisia) said that he was gratified that the proposal had been approved in the First Committee. The United Nations had been born out of the Second World War, and one of its main purposes was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Since 1945 a new generation had grown up with little idea of the effects of large-scale warfare and it would be desirable for the United Nations to produce a film not embodying any political views, an educational film, giving a clear idea of the devastating effects of war.

42. Mr. WILLIAMS (Panama) said that he agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Tunisia, the Soviet Union and the Philippines. His delegation also supported the cuts proposed by the Advisory Committee in the original estimates based on the recommendation made by the First Committee (A/C.1/33/PV.58, p.51). He thought that the sum originally asked for was exaggerated; he himself could give the Budget Division the address of a film laboratory very near New York that could provide appropriate footage for a much more modest figure.

43. Mr. AKSOY (Turkey) said that his delegation supported the proposal to produce the film envisaged in the recommendation of the First Committee. Future generations should be educated on the results of war, and he believed that a film made by the United Nations could obtain wide distribution and would be welcomed by the public. The representative of the Soviet Union had referred to a film shown on television entitled "The Unknown War", and it was a striking fact that certain aspects of a war that had ended only thirty years earlier were unknown to many younger people.

44. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that he had envisaged the making of an apolitical film, one would not be imposed on all Member States but would be accessible to all. If the film was well made, everybody would want to see it, especially young people. The Advisory Committee was recommending an appropriation of \$165,000. It had been suggested that OPEC should contribute, but it would be more appropriate for it to make a contribution to a large project, and not to such

(Mr. Baroody, Saudi Arabia)

a comparatively small sum as the \$38,000 which represented the difference between the Advisory Committee's recommendation and the Secretary-General's request for \$203,000. He pointed out that during the previous six years Saudi Arabia had contributed some \$150 million in cash. In any case, the effectiveness of the film would be diminished if it was not wholly a United Nations production. The proposal had been approved in the First Committee by 96 votes to none, with 26 abstentions; that represented a substantial majority in the United Nations, and even the United States and the Soviet Union, which had had some doubts about the proposal, had not voted against it.

45. The sums involved were comparatively small for a film that was to be made in the name of humanity in order to impress on the rising generation the horrors of war and to influence those in the seats of power, whose decisions could lead to conflicts. The amounts under consideration were likewise trivial when compared with the billions of dollars being spent on the arms race. The proposed film could help to bring about disarmament by awakening political leaders and the public to the need for caution in formulating policies that might lead to war. The sum of \$203,000 originally recommended by the Secretary-General was a paltry one in the light of those considerations, and it was not worth while wasting time discussing whether or not such a comparatively modest sum as \$38,000 could be saved. OPI was an efficient department and could be trusted to make a suitable film. He hoped that the Fifth Committee would be able to agree by consensus to accept the proposal.

46. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that the Committee was not dealing with the substance of the proposal, but only with the financial implications. His delegation was not at all content with the management and cost estimating procedures of OPI, and the manner in which it made use of the funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General had stated in paragraph 3 of his report (A/C.5/33/89) that precise estimates of the cost of producing the film were not immediately available, and OPI appeared to have picked a figure at random. That was one more example of the unacceptable method of cost estimating constantly used by OPI. It was evidence of such examples that had led the United States for a number of years to oppose requests for increases in the appropriations for that department. Accordingly, his delegation had decided, on the basis of the Secretary-General's report and the report of the Advisory Committee, not to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

47. Mr. DEBATIN (Assistant Secretary-General, Controller) said that he sympathized with the comments made about cost estimating, and was aware of the problem. However, experience showed that for some projects it was impossible to make precise estimates. As to the original estimate of \$203,000, he referred

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(Mr. Debatin)

the Committee to the discussions in the First Committee at which the Under-Secretary-General, OPI, had explained that that sum was based on the expectation that a substantial amount of staff time and in-house facilities would be assigned to the project. The sum of \$203,000 was the amount outstanding after absorbing the maximum possible cost through in-house facilities.

48. The amount in question referred to public information contracts, and there could be no further absorption because the amount was already fully contracted for. While he was fully aware of the need for budgetary restraint, he considered that to cut down the funds allocated to such a project might be self-defeating, since the quality of the proposed film was vital, and more money might be wasted by making an unsatisfactory film than by spending enough to ensure high quality. An element of confidence was therefore involved. For that reason, and because he could not see how the cost of such a project could be absorbed by OPI, his view was that the Fifth Committee should approve the sum originally asked for. One other possibility would be for the Committee to consider postponing the project, so that it could be made part of the programme budget for the forthcoming biennium. If it was included in the programme budget for the current biennium, he wished to go on record as stating that the amount of \$203,000 originally sought, would be needed to produce a film of the desired quality.

49. Mr. TALIEH (Iran) said that he agreed with the representative of the United States that the question before the Committee concerned the financial implications of the production of the film and not the substance of the First Committee's decision. His delegation would support the recommendation of the ACABQ.

50. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that a further question remained: how the quality of the proposed film could be guaranteed. The Office of Public Information would first of all have to prepare a script. The First Committee would then have to ascertain whether the script met with the approval of the Member States. The representative of Turkey had said that the film should not be political but educational. It was the view of his delegation that, on the contrary, war was political in character, although it represented bad politics. The function of the United Nations was to prevent war and not to demonstrate to the world what war was like. He questioned whether there was any point in appropriating funds for the film until the script had been approved. He therefore withdrew his proposal that funds for the film should be met from within the existing appropriation for the budget of the Office of Public Information.

51. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an additional appropriation in the amount of \$165,000 under section 21 A for the biennium 1978-1979 was approved by 62 votes to 20, with 11 abstentions.

52. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should the draft decision of the First Committee be adopted, an additional appropriation in the amount of \$165,000 would be required under section 21 A of the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979.

53. It was so decided.

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Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.2 (A/C.5/33/73).

54. Mr. MSELLE, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the estimates given in the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/33/73) covered the costs of a meeting of Ministers, scheduled to be held at Monrovia during 1979. The Secretary-General had provided additional information regarding the 19 staff members who were to service that meeting.

55. The Advisory Committee recommended that the estimates of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/33/73 be accepted but that the requests should be rearranged. It believed that the sum of \$8,720 for temporary assistance specified in paragraph 3 (a) properly belonged in section 23 B of the programme budget, as it covered a conference servicing requirement. The net amount to be appropriated by the General Assembly under section 9 should therefore be \$44,280. The amount of \$8,720 for inclusion in section 23 B would be considered in the context of the consolidated paper of conference servicing costs which would be submitted towards the end of the General Assembly. The Fifth Committee might wish to inform the General Assembly of the Advisory Committee's recommendation in the event that draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.2 was adopted.

56. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it was not his intention to protest against measures envisaged in decisions of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. His delegation welcomed the Transport and Communication Decade in Africa, which would serve a valuable purpose. The whole amount requested could very well be appropriated under section 9 of the programme budget for the biennium, but he would not insist on a vote on the matter.

57. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus of the Second Committee when draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.2 had been approved. He wished, however, to draw the attention of the Committee to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV), which required the host country to defray any costs of meetings in excess of the costs which would have been incurred if the meeting had been held at the headquarters of the body concerned. He inquired whether the Secretariat had obtained the customary assurances regarding the extra costs of the meeting under consideration. The amount required could easily be absorbed in the \$23.7 millions already appropriated under section 9 of the programme budget, and his delegation could not, therefore, support the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

58. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that his delegation was prepared to vote in favour of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. The Committee should not, however, forget that it would later be required to consider a document regarding the strengthening of the regional economic commissions in the field of transport.

59. Mr. MILLS (Budget Division), replying to the representative of the United States, said that paragraph 9 (i) of resolution 2609 (XXIV) provided that regular sessions of the regional economic commissions, as well as meetings of their subsidiary bodies, might be held away from their headquarters when the commission

(Mr. Mills)

concerned decided. In the view of the Budget Division the question of defraying additional expenditure for the Monrovia meeting did not therefore arise.

60. Following a discussion in which Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) and Mr. EL-HOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) participated, Mr. MILLS (Budget Division) said that provision had been made for two working languages, namely English and French, at the Monrovia meeting in accordance with the request of the Economic Commission for Africa.

61. Mr. LUVUEZO BIKINDU BIZUELE (Zaire) said that his delegation attached great importance to the question of transport in Africa. Most African countries had serious transport difficulties owing, in part, to the fact that their existing transport systems had been designed to suit the convenience of the colonial powers; other African countries, problems arose from their land-locked position. He therefore supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

62. Miss Nuck (Austria) took the Chair.

63. Mr. KOBINA SEKYI (Ghana) said that the work of the United Nations in the area of communications in Africa was very important to his country. Such work should be part of the over-all effort of the United Nations in the continent. It was therefore with dismay that he had learned that the delegation of the United States found it difficult to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

64. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/33/L.2, an additional appropriation of \$44,300 would be required under section 9 of the programme budget for the 1978-1979 biennium, and that conference servicing costs in the amount of \$8,720 would be included in the consolidated paper of conference servicing costs which would be submitted at a later stage.

65. It was so decided.

66. Mr. CUNNINGHAM (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that if a vote had been taken on the Advisory Committee's recommendation, his delegation would have voted against it.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.