

*United Nations*  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

*Official Records\**



SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
6th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 16 October 1984  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIALLO (Guinea)

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Distr. GENERAL  
A/SPC/39/SR.6  
22 October 1984  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 73: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/39/573)

1. Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka) said that his country had consistently supported United Nations peace-keeping operations and had contributed personnel to the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon and to the United Nations Force in the Congo.

2. His country regretted the difficulties faced by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, which were not of recent origin. Since its establishment in 1965, the Special Committee, which had been entrusted by the General Assembly to undertake a comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects, seemed doomed to failure. Plagued by polemics and crippled by a lack of political will, the Special Committee, whose mandate had nevertheless been extended once again by General Assembly resolution 38/81, had not even been able to meet. The work that had been specifically entrusted to it by that resolution remained undone, and no report had been submitted. In those circumstances, it would not be easy for the members of the Committee to recommend the renewal of the Special Committee's mandate.

3. While everyone recognized the importance of peace-keeping operations, differences of opinion existed with regard to the guidelines which would govern their conduct. Those differences, exacerbated by ideological differences, prevented the Special Committee from fulfilling its mandate. It was therefore the opinion of his delegation that the time had come for the international community to give attention to the Special Committee's problems, which would not automatically disappear as a result of another extension of its mandate.

4. The United Nations had been established to maintain international peace and security through effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of breaches of the peace and acts of aggression. The Security Council was the custodian of that sacred trust. However, if its members, particularly the permanent members, were unable or unwilling to shoulder their responsibilities, the results of such inaction could be disastrous both for the victims of aggression and for the very foundation of the Organization.

5. As the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report on the work of the Organization, when a national frontier was violated and the State concerned called for United Nations action, the Security Council was to respond without delay. Under the terms of the Charter, such situations required immediate consideration and action by the Council, regardless of the political disagreements among its members. If it was unable to act, the victims would look elsewhere for protection. Experience had shown that alliances born out of such situations did not necessarily bring peace; they might rather bring instability to the country, disrupt the balance of power in the region and internationalize regional conflicts.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

6. Recent experience had also demonstrated that the increasing tendency towards unilateral and multilateral action to resolve conflicts had undesirable consequences. There was no alternative to collective security, with the full participation of the Security Council.

7. His country therefore firmly believed that Member States should review their positions in relation to the guidelines and the implementation of peace-keeping operations as well as their financing and other important areas on which a consensus was essential. The most important factor in that regard was political will, which, if missing, particularly in the Security Council, could lead to disastrous consequences.

8. Concerning the financing of peace-keeping operations, his country had paid its assigned share to the costs of the operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). If Sri Lanka, a developing country which would prefer to channel such resources towards the welfare of its own people, had shouldered its financial obligations, it was because it recognized that it was living in an interdependent world in which its responsibilities extended much farther than its own borders.

9. It was gratifying that there was agreement in the Committee on a number of issues, including the interrelationship between peace-keeping and peace-making. He agreed with the view expressed in the Committee that peace-keeping was not an end in itself and that it was necessary to identify the root causes of conflicts and take appropriate remedial action.

10. It was to be hoped that the Working Group, when preparing the draft resolution, would give consideration to the many shades of opinion expressed in the Committee and come up with a draft that would not only command a consensus but also put the Special Committee back on the track.

11. Mr. FARRELL (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the 10 member States of the European Community, said that the peace-keeping role of the United Nations, the primary responsibility for which lay with the Security Council, was of fundamental importance to the implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter. The Ten strongly supported the peace-keeping operations which had been undertaken in areas of the world afflicted by tension and crisis, within the framework of the United Nations and in conformity with the Charter. Moreover, the members of the Community participated in all but one of the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

12. The Ten reaffirmed their confidence in the manner in which the Secretary-General had conducted peace-keeping operations on behalf of the Organization. They also commended the Governments which had contributed forces and equipment and paid tribute to the soldiers of many countries who had bravely and devotedly carried out a difficult task under the United Nations flag. A special tribute was due to those who had given their lives or suffered injury on peace-keeping duty.

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(Mr. Farrell, Ireland)

13. In the view of the Ten, certain lessons could be learned about the circumstances in which peace-keeping could make a useful contribution to the control of conflicts and about the political and practical conditions necessary for the peace-keeping operations to function effectively. First of all, the operations should assist in the control of conflict and in the search for a peaceful solution. By maintaining stability and preserving peace in areas of crisis, pending a just and lasting solution, peace-keeping operations could create an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of a peaceful solution. However, the presence of United Nations forces should not be a substitute for a settlement or aim at consolidating and perpetuating faits accomplis; efforts to resolve the causes of the conflict must continue. Moreover, peace-keeping operations must be distinguished from enforcement action; their objective was to help keep the peace, not to enforce it. Peace-keeping missions could function properly only with the co-operation of the parties involved, on the basis of a clearly defined mandate from the Security Council and with its full backing at all times. Any peace-keeping force must have freedom of movement throughout the area assigned to it and must have conditions of adequate security for its personnel. Finally, peace-keeping operations must have a strong and assured financial base.

14. The Ten agreed with the Secretary-General's recommendation, in his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, that the Member States, especially the members of the Security Council, should study urgently the means by which peace-keeping operations could be strengthened.

15. The Ten wished to pay a tribute to the members of UNIFIL for the dedication which they had shown in carrying out their duty. They noted with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL (S/16776) and the extension of the UNIFIL mandate in response to the request of the Lebanese Government and generally agreed with the observations in the report aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the role of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon. They called upon all parties concerned to give all necessary co-operation to UNIFIL so as to enable it to carry out its mandate, thus contributing to the preservation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

16. The role of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus also merited attention. As the Secretary-General stated in his report (S/16596), the continued presence of UNFICYP remained indispensable in helping to maintain calm and in creating the conditions in which the difficult search for a peaceful settlement could best be pursued. The Ten also noted the contribution made by other United Nations peace-keeping operations to the maintenance of peace.

17. Nevertheless, they were concerned at the serious difficulties experienced in financing those operations. All Member States had an obligation to contribute their assigned share to the costs of such operations as decided by the Security Council. It was regrettable that Member States which professed support for maintaining peace and security continued to fail to honour their financial obligations concerning UNIFIL, thereby placing an additional burden on the troop-contributing countries, some of which were developing countries which needed all their financial resources. That attitude could jeopardize the efficient

(Mr. Farrell, Ireland)

functioning of peace-keeping operations and hinder efforts to ensure broad geographical representation in the composition of peace-keeping forces, which might prevent the Organization from effectively carrying out its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Ten, therefore, appealed to those States to reconsider their policy and accept their fair share of the costs of those operations; they also took note of the view of the Secretary-General concerning the need for an increase in voluntary contributions to ongoing peace-keeping operations.

18. The Ten noted with satisfaction that the General Assembly, in adopting resolution 38/81 of 15 December 1983, had demonstrated its strong support for United Nations peace-keeping operations. The overwhelming support for that substantial resolution reflected the importance which Member States rightly attached to the strengthening and development of the important role of United Nations peace-keeping forces. The Ten were pleased with the consideration given in the resolution to the difficult financial situation of peace-keeping operations and with the emphasis placed on the collective responsibility of Member States to share equitably the financial burdens of such operations.

19. The Ten considered that that resolution constituted an encouraging basis for the future work of the Special Committee, whose main tasks were the elaboration of guidelines which would govern the conduct of United Nations peace-keeping operations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the consideration of practical measures to facilitate those operations. They expressed regret that deep-rooted differences of opinion continued to prevent the Special Committee from carrying out its task and urged the Special Committee to increase its efforts to overcome those difficulties.

20. Mr. SINGH (Nepal) said that, because conflicts were no longer limited to a single zone or a specific region, a collective and concerted effort on the part of all nations was required in order to resolve them: it was the task of the United Nations, therefore, to maintain international peace and security.

21. From the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO), established in 1949, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) up to 1982, the United Nations had undertaken several peace-keeping operations. Through their courage and discipline, the contingents and the personnel of those operations had shown themselves to be worthy of their role and their responsibilities.

22. Nepal was deeply committed to the principles of the Charter; for that reason, it had supported the creation of UNEF in 1956 and had participated in numerous peace-keeping activities, inter alia, by providing contingents for UNEF and UNIFIL peace-keeping operations in the Sinai and in southern Lebanon. It had also contributed five observers to the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon and five officers to the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. It would continue to help maintain peace wherever necessary.

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(Mr. Singh, Nepal)

23. Referring to the positive aspects of peace-keeping operations, he noted that those operations had helped to ease tension in trouble spots, prevent hostilities from escalating into global conflicts, create a favourable atmosphere for the peaceful settlement of disputes and provide valuable humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, he expressed regret at the difficulties confronting peace-keeping operations. The Working Group had not been able to put forward an agreed recommendation. Member States should see to it that the Security Council fully utilized its power to carry out one of the most fundamental tasks assigned to it under Article 42 of the Charter. Peace-keeping operations should not be hindered by political or ideological discussions.

24. One year before the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the world situation was deteriorating rapidly. In view of the crises, conflicts and tensions besetting mankind, the only hope of avoiding the scourge of war lay in strengthening United Nations peace-keeping operations and in stepping up the Organization's efforts in that regard.

25. The maintenance of peace and security was of vital importance to all countries, large and small, and the consideration of the whole question of peace-keeping operations must continue until agreement was reached on guidelines.

26. The United Nations should consider the question of setting up a permanent peace-keeping force and appropriate follow-up measures, such as training for the force and its personnel. The creation of a stand-by force would be a step in that direction.

27. The problem of financing peace-keeping operations had not been solved. Member States must provide equitable financing in order to ensure the effectiveness of those operations.

28. Reaffirming his country's total commitment to United Nations peace-keeping operations, he expressed his country's strong belief in the importance of the role of the Organization in the maintenance of world peace and stability. His delegation would be open to any constructive suggestion for strengthening the Organization's peace-keeping activities.

29. Mr. ACOUCHAER (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Committee was once more considering the question of peace-keeping operations, except that at the current session it did not have before it a report from the Special Committee. While it was unfortunate that the Committee had been unable to perform its task, it should nevertheless pursue its efforts and continue an exchange of views. The difficulties involved should not cause it to abandon its efforts to achieve the purpose for which it had been established. His delegation therefore supported the extension of the Committee's mandate so as to give it another chance to agree on guidelines which should govern the conduct of peace-keeping operations.

30. Having set forth its position on the question in detail at previous sessions, as reflected in document A/SPC/38/SR.5, his delegation would confine itself to

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(Mr. Acouchaer, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

reviewing very briefly its broad outlines. Considering the fact that under the Charter, the duty and primary task of the United Nations was to act in a positive and effective manner to maintain international peace and security, his delegation deemed it necessary to establish a well-defined system to guarantee that the Organization effectively accomplished that task. It therefore attached great importance to the formulation of guidelines. In the absence of those principles, the United Nations was nevertheless carrying out its responsibilities by conducting various peace-keeping operations in different parts of the world. Its work in that field, which had unanimous support, was tangible proof that the international community wanted to see peace and security preserved. That work should therefore be strengthened and made more effective, in accordance with the Charter.

31. The persistence of conflicts, despite the presence of peace-keeping forces, showed that the international community, represented at the United Nations, was incapable of compelling aggressive and expansionist régimes to respect the provisions of the Charter and the rules of international law. It was particularly necessary that the permanent members of the Security Council, whose task it was to protect States against aggression, should adopt a more responsible attitude towards situations which threatened international peace and security.

32. While peace-keeping operations were as varied as the political situations which warranted them, as the nature of the aggression or as the mandate given them, there were common elements on which to base the formulation of general principles and guidelines relating to the composition of the forces, their powers, the definition of their mandate, their length and possible extension, etc. Those elements were, first of all, the provisional nature of the operations, their essential goal being to restore and maintain stability in the region pending a settlement of the political crisis. Secondly, the need to guarantee that the peace-keeping operations did not become a pretext to delay the settlement of a political problem or to perpetuate aggression or occupation, or to give the aggressor a chance to profit from the consequences of his aggression. Thirdly, the presence of forces must not be a substitute for efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts which had caused their intervention, in accordance with the Charter and with the relevant United Nations resolutions. Nor should the international community's attention focus exclusively on the protection of contingents, while remaining oblivious of the central problem and of the rights of the victims. Fourthly, the principle that the aggressor must bear all the consequences of its aggression and the entire financial burden of peace-keeping operations should be reaffirmed: it was unthinkable that the States which were the victims of aggression should be asked to participate in any way in the expenses those operations involved. Fifthly, the provisions of resolution 1874 (S-IV) which set forth the general principles to serve as guidelines for the sharing of the costs of peace-keeping operations, and the resolutions guaranteeing implementation of the principle that the aggressor and victim must not be placed on an equal footing. Finally, it should be stressed that it was the obligation of all parties to co-operate wholeheartedly with United Nations forces so that they could perform their task. It was also important to see to it that those operations were

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(Mr. Acouchaer, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

conducted under the auspices of the United Nations and on the authority of the Security Council, and to condemn any attempt to prevent them from carrying out their mandate. Nor would it be enough to condemn violations of those principles; every remedy stipulated in the Charter must be used to guarantee that the States respected United Nations resolutions.

33. His delegation hoped that the Special Committee would be able to make progress in its work in the following year. It needed more time in order to solve the problems facing it and to agree on acceptable texts.

34. His delegation wished to conclude by praising the efforts made by the Secretary-General and his colleagues to enable the United Nations to perform its peace-keeping task and by paying tribute to all those who had been killed or wounded while unselfishly doing their duty in order to realize the noble objective of maintaining international peace and security.

35. Mr. HASLUND (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - said that those countries had emphasized time and again the importance they attached to United Nations peace-keeping operations because of the essential role they played in the implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter. They shared the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization that peace-keeping was one of the more successful innovations of the United Nations and therefore strongly supported the operations undertaken for that purpose. While those operations did not constitute an end in themselves and could never be a substitute for just and lasting solutions, they nevertheless contributed to the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to a peaceful political settlement. It was imperative, however, that the parties recognized their obligation to make full and constructive use of the time and opportunity thus provided.

36. The Nordic countries had contributed substantially to peace-keeping operations from the very beginning, not only financially and materially, but also by providing troops and observers. Nordic soldiers were part of all present peace-keeping forces and the Nordic countries had committed themselves in principle to contribute to future operations as well. They had therefore gained considerable experience, which they had taken steps to share with other countries. Since 1964, the Nordic countries had maintained standby forces in response to the often repeated appeal by the Secretary-General and they could be placed at the disposal of the United Nations on short notice. Their common programme for those forces and their experience in that field had been summarized in a booklet which had been distributed as an official document (A/SPC/33/3) to the Member States in 1978. As another concrete example of Nordic co-operation in peace-keeping, officers from present and potential troop-contributing countries had been invited to courses under the joint Nordic training programme which they had organized.

37. Basic pre-conditions for a successful peace-keeping operation included a clearly defined mandate and the continued backing of the Security Council, as well

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(Mr. Haslund, Denmark)

as the full co-operation of all the parties involved. Those conditions had not all been entirely met with respect to UNIFIL, which the Nordic countries nevertheless continued to regard as an important stabilizing and moderating element in the ongoing political process in Lebanon. The need remained, however, to bring about conditions for a more effective exercise of UNIFIL's peace-keeping activities. As for the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the Nordic countries shared the Secretary-General's assessment in his report (S/16596) that their continued presence remained indispensable in helping to maintain calm on the island and in creating the conditions in which the difficult search for a peace settlement could best be pursued. The Nordic countries also noted the contribution made by other United Nations peace-keeping operations, which performed their task on behalf of the international community.

38. The Nordic countries remained deeply concerned about the serious difficulties experienced in financing peace-keeping operations, for the costs of which all Member States shared a collective responsibility. It was therefore most regrettable that some of them failed to honour that responsibility, thereby placing an additional financial burden on the countries contributing troops and possibly jeopardizing the efficient functioning of those operations in the future. The Nordic countries therefore appealed to the States concerned to reconsider their present policy and to pay their assessments for the financing of UNIFIL and UNDOF without delay. They welcomed the Secretary-General's appeal for an increase in the level of voluntary contributions to UNFICYP (S/16654), as well as the memorandums addressed respectively to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representatives of the States which contributed troops to that force. They trusted that that appeal would open the eyes of the entire international community to the serious financial situation confronting UNFICYP and hoped that Governments which had not contributed in the past would make contributions and that contributing Governments would do so on a regular basis and with increased contributions.

39. The Nordic countries deeply regretted the fact that the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had made no progress towards the accomplishment of its main tasks and appealed to that Committee to make a renewed effort to overcome the differences of opinion which had paralysed its work.

40. The Nordic countries wished to emphasize once again their unswerving support for the United Nations in the field of peace-keeping. They strongly believed in strengthening its peace-keeping capabilities, bearing in mind, as the Secretary-General had stated in his report on the work of the Organization, that "peace-keeping is an expression of international political consensus and will". Member States had an obligation to achieve that consensus and to demonstrate that will.

41. Mr. FISHER (Austria) said that the United Nations was mainly judged by its action in the field of peace-keeping which, according to its Charter, was its first goal. Yet such action depended mainly on the political will of the Member States, in particular the members of the Security Council. The relationship between United

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(Mr. Fisher, Austria)

Nations peace-keeping operations and political consensus had again been highlighted in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. The mere stationing of United Nations contingents in an area of conflict required a disengagement of hostile forces and, as a consequence, favoured a climate that was beneficial for negotiated solutions. Austria's own overall experience in the field of peace-keeping operations was highly encouraging and Austria would continue to lend its full support to all endeavours aimed at the strengthening of the peace-keeping role of the Organization.

42. Since it was the primary responsibility of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security, that organ should be particularly aware of its responsibilities. The members of the Council might certainly encounter difficulties, both with regard to a specific peace-keeping operation and, more generally, with regard to the future development of the peace-keeping role of the United Nations, but those operations were often the only means of defusing conflict situations, and the common interest should override any other considerations.

43. No effort should be spared to identify areas in which consensus seemed possible, and efforts should be made to reactivate the Special Committee so that it could achieve its goals more effectively. A first practical step in that direction would be to take stock of the basic position of Member States and try to find areas of possible agreement on how to proceed with future work.

44. It would be useful to organize training courses and seminars to ensure maximum readiness for participants in peace-keeping operations. The Austrian delegation had for several years supported the idea of organizing regional seminars under the auspices of the United Nations, at which both military and civilian personnel could undergo appropriate training. Both the Austrian and Canadian Governments had offered to hold such seminars in Vienna and Toronto. Member States would then be in a position to share their practical peace-keeping experience with other States.

45. The serious financial situation of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus had been pointed out by the Secretary-General in his latest report on that subject: voluntary contributions had consistently fallen short of needs, and that situation had resulted in a deficit that had grown to approximately \$117.6 million by 15 June 1984. Payment of claims to troop-contributing countries had been met only up to December 1977, which placed an additional financial burden on those Member States - Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Those countries had addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council on 1 July 1984 (S/16662), appealing to Member States for increased voluntary contributions, and had reiterated that appeal in a memorandum addressed to the Secretary-General (A/39/573). Austria hoped that the appeal would meet with a positive response.

46. Mr. HAKTANIR (Turkey) said that the maintenance of peace was among the primary objectives of the United Nations, and peace-keeping operations constituted an important aspect of its functions. The item had been on the Committee's agenda for a long time and, once again, the Special Committee had been unable to complete the guidelines to govern the conduct of United Nations peace-keeping operations.

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(Mr. Haktanir, Turkey)

47. The Turkish delegation considered that the mutual consent of the parties concerned was the first prerequisite for the success of a peace-keeping operation. The second prerequisite was the careful definition of terms of reference of those operations, because if they were not fully compatible with the realities of a particular conflict situation, the peace-keeping operations would not only be ineffective but might result in further complications. Lastly, the success of peace-keeping operations had a direct correlation with the degree of impartiality with which they were carried out. It was therefore important that countries contributing troops to a particular peace-keeping force should refrain from taking sides in the conflict in question, otherwise the force might lose its credibility in the eyes of either of the parties involved and become an element responsible for exacerbating the situation rather than contributing to the relaxation of tensions and the creation of an atmosphere conducive to genuine peace.

48. It must be kept in mind that, whatever their result, peace-keeping operations did not constitute an end in themselves and could be helpful only if they were coupled with political action. Because of the very nature of situations giving rise to peace-keeping operations it was hardly possible for those operations alone to redress the situation. While they could prevent the situation from deteriorating further, they could pave the way for a genuine and lasting peace only through parallel and realistic peace-making efforts.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.