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**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 548th
MEETING**
(Closing meeting)

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Chairman: Mr. Max JAKOBSON (Finland).

AGENDA ITEM 36

Peaceful settlement of disputes (concluded) (A/5964,
A/6187, A/SPC/L.144)

1. Mr. LUKUMBUZYA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that although there was a consensus in the Committee against debating the item on peaceful settlement during the current session, previous efforts to adjourn the debate had not been successful and the Committee now had before it a draft resolution on the item (A/SPC/L.144). In the circumstances, he formally moved that the debate on the item be adjourned.

2. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that under rule 117 of the rules of procedure two representatives could speak in favour of and two against the motion before it was put to the vote.

3. Mr. PHILLIPS (Ghana), speaking in favour of the motion for adjournment, pointed out that a debate on the peaceful settlement of disputes would be futile in the short time which remained, particularly since the Charter was explicit on the subject.

4. Mr. BESY (Madagascar), also speaking in favour of the motion for adjournment, observed that while it was urgent to find solutions for the numerous potential conflicts all over the world, it was essential to ponder the particular circumstances of each case. The main sources of conflict between States were frontier disputes, economic rivalry, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and armaments. Within States, racial discrimination, apartheid and violation of human rights created explosive situations. The problems and their solution varied, depending on whether the people concerned were sovereign and independent or still subject to the rule of foreign Powers. In view of the wide variety of situations, the lack of time, the need to give careful study to many documents often submitted at the last minute, a debate on the peaceful settlement of disputes could not be fruitful. Discussion of the item should be postponed until the twenty-second session.

5. Mr. QUARLES VAN UFFORD (Netherlands), speaking against the motion for adjournment, said he had hoped that after a year of reflection representatives would be prepared to undertake the study

of peaceful settlement which they had deferred at the twentieth session. He was dismayed to find that some still had such strong misgivings on the item that they felt compelled to continue to object to its consideration. He did not disparage their motives or doubt their sincerity, but he appealed to the Committee to express itself in a manner which would permit the discussion of peaceful settlement to be continued, because it was only through an exchange of views that differences of view on the subject could be reconciled.

6. Mr. TURNER (Canada), also speaking against the motion for adjournment, emphasized that one of the main reasons for convening the General Assembly annually was to consider how the United Nations could more effectively contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The draft resolution (A/SPC/L.144) did not prejudge the debate or the decision which the Committee would ultimately adopt; by inviting Member States and the United Nations family to submit views on the item, it merely ensured a more fruitful discussion at the twenty-second session. By adjourning the debate and setting aside the draft resolution, the Committee would be doing a disservice to Member States and to the United Nations.

7. Mr. LUKUMBUZYA (United Republic of Tanzania) pointed out that the purpose of his motion for adjournment of debate on the item was to avoid unnecessary and lengthy polemics at so late a stage on a highly sensitive question. Although he valued the co-operation of the Netherlands and Canada, he could not withdraw his motion.

8. The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the motion for adjournment of the debate on the agenda item entitled "Peaceful settlement of disputes".

The motion was adopted by 50 votes to 26, with 6 abstentions.

9. Mr. NSANZE (Burundi) said he had been absent during the voting. He would have voted in favour of the motion for adjournment of the debate.

10. Mr. HAYMAN (United Kingdom) said that he had voted against adjournment of debate on the item because it was a question of the highest importance on which the Committee could well have taken a first step by adopting the very modest draft resolution submitted by Afghanistan, Argentina, Iran, Jamaica, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden (A/SPC/L.144). Adoption of that proposal would not have required the Committee to go deeply into the substance of the question and would not have committed any State with regard to any dispute beyond the requirements to which it was already committed under the Charter. He hoped that in the interval before the twenty-second session many Member States, on their own initiative, would

give further thought to the problem of strengthening the means available to the international community for the peaceful settlement of disputes and that national groups of lawyers would follow the example of a group of jurists in the United Kingdom by subjecting the problem to a preliminary examination. His delegation considered that even the modest exchange of views held at the previous meeting had been worth while and would study the opinions expressed. It appreciated the efforts of the sponsors of the draft resolution to ensure that the debate would not be entirely fruitless. It looked forward to discussion of the item at the twenty-second session.

11. Mr. FINGER (United States of America) said he had voted against adjournment of the debate because there was nothing in the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.144) to justify the objection that it would give rise to a protracted and bitter debate. Surely there could be no harm in asking Governments to express their views concerning means for encouraging more frequent resort to the use of peaceful means in the settlement of international disputes. The draft resolution could have been adopted with a minimum of discussion so that when the Assembly came to consider the item at its twenty-second session, it would have the benefit of the considered views of Member States. For those reasons, the United States delegation accepted the decision to adjourn debate on the item with great regret.

12. Mr. GHAS (Afghanistan) said he had voted against adjournment of the debate because his delegation had co-sponsored the procedural draft resolution before the Committee in the hope that it would raise no objections. As a matter of principle, Afghanistan welcomed all measures for strengthening the machinery for peaceful settlement. Moreover, in the light of its long record in the United Nations, Afghanistan could not be accused of failing to support acceleration of the process of decolonization, an accusation implicitly directed at the previous meeting against those favouring debate on peaceful settlement.

13. Mr. KUTAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, though the subject before the Committee was a matter of the greatest topical interest to all peoples, the item proposed by the United Kingdom was artificial and unrealistic. Means and procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes were not an innovation in international practice. The obligations placed on States in that regard by Chapter VI of the Charter, for example, were known to all.

14. The tension prevailing in the world and the persistent attempts by some States to interfere in the domestic affairs of others were not the result of any deficiency of international law. International conflicts continued to plague the world because the Western Powers refused to abandon the policy of imposing their will on others by the threat or use of force and their attempts to crush national liberation movements. If those Powers ceased their violations of the Charter and their attempts to carry on the cold war, more favourable conditions would be created for co-operation among States. The United States, the United Kingdom and others supporting inclusion of the item had called for the study of certain measures in an effort to divert world opinion

from the true causes of conflict threatening international peace and security. It was to be hoped that those efforts would not be successful. The bombing of cities in North Viet-Nam by United States forces, the crushing of the free expression of popular will and the repressive measures used by the South African racists were not the result of any failure to study measures.

15. Mr. FINGER (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that the Soviet representative's remarks were irrelevant to an explanation of vote on the procedural motion.

16. Mr. KUTAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it was not a lack of peace-keeping machinery in the Charter which had caused the United States Marines to land in the Dominican Republic.

17. Mr. FINGER (United States of America) asked the Chairman to rule on the relevance of the Soviet statement.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that as several speakers had gone into the substance of the question in explaining their votes, it would be in order for the Soviet representative to complete his statement.

19. Mr. KUTAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that United Kingdom imperialism in the Middle East, Africa, Oman and elsewhere and the policies of Western Powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom were the true source of international conflict and the primary cause of world tension. Those Powers had appealed for the use of peaceful measures in the case of Southern Rhodesia. The colonialists' method was to occupy a territory by force and set up bases, and when the people launched a liberation movement, to call for a study of new methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Such appeals were an attempt to camouflage efforts to flout the Charter and to prevent a just settlement of conflicts for which the Powers concerned were responsible. His delegation obviously could not support such a manoeuvre to divert the General Assembly's attention from colonialism, aggression and interference in the domestic affairs of other States, and it had therefore supported the motion for adjournment.

20. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) said that, for the second time, the United Kingdom had sought to hold up to the international community as its own a principle which was diametrically opposed to its policy of imperialism. The Charter dealt explicitly with the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes in Article 33, paragraph 1. That was one of the Organization's most important functions, and it had succeeded in averting armed conflict between Member States in numerous instances over the past five years. The paradox was that it was always the same great Powers, vested with the main responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, which created tension and conflict in the world. As the United Kingdom had always used force and repression for the settlement of its colonial problems, its action in proposing the inclusion of the item on peaceful settlement on the agenda was clearly hypocritical. The underlying motive might well be that the United Kingdom Government wished to avoid using force

in Southern Rhodesia, in order to safeguard the interests of the white minority there. The United Kingdom hoped by such diversionary tactics to stem the violent reactions of the African peoples, who were determined to put an end to the police régime in Southern Rhodesia, which had become a natural ally of the South African racists. The southern part of the African continent continued to suffer from British, Portuguese and South African colonialism. Surely the United Kingdom would not contend that so-called Portuguese Guinea, Angola and Mozambique could attain independence by putting down their arms and negotiating with the Salazar Government.

21. His delegation had opposed discussion of that proposal in the Special Political Committee at the twentieth session and in plenary at the twenty-first session, and it was more convinced than ever that the fight for national liberation carried on by the victims of Portuguese colonialism was the most effective means for the settlement of that dispute. Similarly, his delegation, though devoted to the cause of peace, considered that the United Kingdom could solve the problem of Southern Rhodesia only by the use of force.

22. The United Kingdom would be entitled to call for a discussion of the subject only when it had invited the colonialist and imperialist Powers to observe the sacred right of peoples to self-determination in accordance with the Charter and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), when such countries as the United Kingdom, France, Portugal and Spain had liberated the peoples they were depriving of sovereignty, and when the United States aggression against the people of Viet-Nam had been stopped. The United Nations, and with it the African Member States, would then undertake to ensure that Member States strictly adhered to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes arising between sovereign and equal States. His delegation would remind the United Kingdom that its first task was to put an end to the rebellion in Southern Rhodesia, to contribute to a rapid solution of the problem of South West Africa and to help the United Nations to eradicate apartheid in South Africa. Only then would the United Nations be able to perform its peace-keeping function effectively.

23. Until such time as the task of decolonization of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America was completed, the United Nations Charter provided methods for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. In view of those considerations, his delegation believed that there was nothing to justify discussion of the United Kingdom proposal at the current session, and it had therefore supported the motion for adjournment.

24. Mr. DOSUMU-JOHNSON (Liberia), speaking on a point of order, pointed out that explanations of votes on procedural matters were not the usual practice and that some speakers were going far beyond the bounds of an explanation of vote by dealing at length with the substance of the question.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that there was no rule barring explanations of vote on procedural motions, and that members were presumably entitled to explain why they did not want the item to be considered.

26. Mr. BARROMI (Israel) said that while his delegation appreciated the serious concern which had motivated the statements by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania and others, it felt bound to support all efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, as a matter of principle. It would have agreed to postponement of debate on the question but considered it highly unsatisfactory that the Committee should take a decision on such an important matter by means of a procedural motion.

27. Mr. FERNANDEZ ARTUCIO (Uruguay) said that the peaceful settlement of disputes, the principle of which his country supported in word and deed, was one of the most vital tasks of the United Nations. He was therefore surprised that the Committee should find the discussion of that question untimely or undesirable. With all due respect for the decision of the majority, his delegation was obliged to express its disagreement as well as its concern that such circumstantial reasons as those which had been cited should have been allowed to prevail over the paramount considerations involved in the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes. It further regretted that the vote on the procedural motion had prevented consideration of such a moderate proposal as that contained in draft resolution A/SPC/L.144. In voting against the motion, his delegation had expressed its adherence to the ideal of peaceful coexistence.

28. Mr. ZOLLNER (Dahomey) said that his delegation had supported the motion for adjournment because such an important question required the fullest possible debate, which would not have been possible at the current session.

29. Mr. FINGER (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he regretted the gratuitous and unprovoked attack which the Soviet representative had seen fit to launch against the United States, bringing up irrelevant matters which had been discussed at length elsewhere. A comparison of the records of the Soviet Union and the United States with regard to respect for the Charter and aggression would hardly be to the Soviet Union's credit. Such a vicious, irrelevant and mendacious attack on the United States could only be characterized as a petty action which was hardly worthy of the representative of a great nation and was an abuse of the Committee's time.

Completion of the Committee's work

30. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared the session of the Special Political Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 7.50 p.m.