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ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions

In his report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations (A/C.5/44/45), the Secretary-General refers to a number of changes he has decided to effect and/or recommend; he has, as stated, reported to the Advisory Committee and requested its concurrence. The Advisory Committee has considered the requests and has replied to the Secretary-General in a letter dated 11 December 1989, copy of which is annexed to the present report.

ANNEX

Letter dated 11 December 1989 from the Chairman of the Advisory  
Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the  
Secretary-General

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered your report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, contained in document A/CN.1/R.1117. The report concerns the results of your review of the current arrangements in the Secretariat for handling peace-keeping operations. In this connection, the Committee also understands that this report does not attempt to address all problems related to peace-keeping operations and that there are many issues yet to be addressed.
2. As outlined in your report, you plan to announce shortly the establishment within the Secretariat of a Senior Planning and Monitoring Group for the purpose of planning and monitoring of all peace-keeping operations, and of that Group's sub-group on logistics planning. The Advisory Committee notes that the Senior Planning and Monitoring Group, in addition to assisting in the forward planning for peace-keeping activities and monitoring the current operations, will also keep under review the organizational structure within the Secretariat relating to peace-keeping operations and make recommendations as appropriate.
3. The Advisory Committee welcomes the establishment of the planning and monitoring group; as it noted in its report (A/44/725, para. 8), there is a "need for greater co-ordination among the various Secretariat units involved in preparing for and managing peace-keeping operations", and it therefore recommended that the feasibility of establishing a Secretariat planning and monitoring group be studied. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the establishment of this group should be seen as a step towards the resolution of the above-mentioned problem.
4. Another area of change relates to the arrangements currently in place for the provision of overload posts which supplement the provisions under the regular budget for managerial, legal, technical and administrative support and backstopping of good offices and peace-keeping operations. As stated in your report, there is a need to establish a formula that will more equitably represent and apportion the costs of overload posts among the various peace-keeping operations while also enabling a more flexible response to changing requirements. Therefore, you propose to include in all future budgets of good offices and peace-keeping operations, financed by the peace-keeping assessments formula or voluntary contributions, a financial provision calculated on the basis of a percentage rate of the costs of the civilian establishment in the mission area for salaries, common staff and travel costs. The income generated from the application of the percentage rate would be maintained in a separate account for support of peace-making and peace-keeping operations against which temporary posts would then be established. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that any unencumbered balance at the end of the financial period of such operations would remain in the account to provide assistance to offices dealing with peace-keeping matters during peak periods.

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5. The concurrence of the Advisory Committee is being sought, at this stage, in order to establish, with effect from 1 January 1990, the above-mentioned account, which would be funded by credits transferred from the various peace-keeping budgets in amounts equal to the provisions for overload posts as contained in each budget, against which overload posts would then be established. The Committee notes that you will revert to the question of the percentage rate at the forty-fifth or forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

6. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the establishment of such account is, in principle, attractive; however, the Committee believes that it might more appropriately be named Support Account for Peace-keeping Operations. The Committee has a number of problems with the proposal as formulated in your report. In this connection, the Committee recommends that you provide a clear description of existing problems related to overload posts and how the establishment of such an account would redress such problems. Moreover, the Committee is wary of agreeing to the establishment of an account for which all mechanics have yet to be developed. Although it is clear that for the present you would transfer to the account credits from existing peace-keeping operations in amounts equal to the overload post provisions for those operations, the means of future financing have yet to be worked out. The Committee also is of the view that any future submission should contain a proposal for a mechanism by which the account could be scrutinized by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. In this connection, it points out that the resources for the account would derive from assessed contributions; therefore there exists a role for intergovernmental control and scrutiny. Under the circumstances, the Committee requests that the concept be developed more fully and resubmitted at a later stage.

7. In paragraphs 11 to 14 of your report you seek the concurrence of the Advisory Committee in the establishment of a support post at the level of Assistant Secretary-General; this request relates to the strengthening of the Office for Special Political Affairs. As indicated in your report, given the scale of the increase in work-load of the Office and the likelihood that it will continue at an even higher level, you are of the view that it is appropriate to increase the level of support for the Office through the establishment of this post which you propose to charge to the new support account. In this connection, you state that because of movement of staff in the overload posts as part of the ongoing effort to staff existing and newly established missions, sufficient savings are expected to accrue in the account to cover the costs of the post for 1990, estimated at \$290,000 inclusive of common staff costs.

8. The Advisory Committee is unable, for a number of reasons, to concur in the establishment of such a post at this stage. In the first place, the Committee notes that you have recommended the establishment of the post at the Assistant Secretary-General level because "the Under-Secretary-General needs to be able to share this increased work-load with another official of sufficient seniority to be acceptable as his substitute in all the above functions"; however, no analysis of the work-load has been provided to the Committee. Moreover, if the functions of the post equate in nature to those of the Under-Secretary-General, the Committee questions whether the post, in theory, should more appropriately be charged to the regular budget. Even if it were agreed to charge the post to the support account,

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the Committee queries whether in fact this would prove possible, in view of the stated necessity for all the overload posts that have been approved in various peace-keeping operations; if the expected savings do not, therefore, materialize, the question remains how the post would be financed. Finally, the Committee notes that the abolition of senior-level posts, pursuant to the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, has yet to be implemented; the establishment of an Assistant Secretary-General post at this time would seem to be contradictory.

9. The last area of change referred to in your report relates to the budget services for good offices, peace-making and peace-keeping. As explained in your report, you are of the view that the current division of responsibility within the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance may no longer provide the most effective support and you therefore propose to adjust the lines of responsibility beginning January 1990, at which time you will inform the Committee of the details. The Committee welcomes this initiative and notes that such arrangements could facilitate better control and management. It therefore looks forward to receiving the promised information.

(Signed) C. S. M. MSELLE  
Chairman

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