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2091st MEETING

Held in New York on Monday, 23 October 1978, at 5 p.m.

President: Mr. Jacques LEPRETTE (France).

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

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2091)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in the Middle East:
Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Emergency Force (S/12897)

The meeting was called to order at 5.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East:

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Emergency Force (S/12897)

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the question inscribed on its agenda which refers to the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) dated 17 October 1978 and contained in document S/12897. I should like to direct the attention of the members of the Council to the draft resolution contained in document S/12899.

2. During the consultations prior to this meeting, agreement was reached among the members of the Council on the procedure to be followed, namely that representatives wishing to speak would do so after the vote on the draft resolution.

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

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Bolivia, Canada, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Kuwait, Mauritius, Nigeria, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Czechoslovakia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The draft resolution was adopted by 12 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.¹

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

4. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): In connexion with the resolution just adopted by the Security Council concerning the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Emergency Force for a period of nine months, the delegation of the USSR wishes to state the following.

5. The question of the presence of armed forces of the United Nations in the Middle East cannot be considered separately from the over-all context of the situation in the region or divorced from the character of the events which are taking place there and affect it.

6. As is known, UNEF was established in 1973 in order to separate the troops of Egypt and Israel, pursuant to Security Council resolution 338 (1973), which opened the way to the convening of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East and called for negotiations to be started between the parties concerned for the purpose of establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East. Therefore, the establishment of the Force should have contributed to the achievement of precisely that kind of comprehensive settlement. Any attempt to entrust to it any other kind of role and to adapt it for the implementation of certain separate deals would be contrary to the decision of the Security Council on this question.

7. We have recently witnessed the activation of attempts to replace the comprehensive Middle East settlement by separate deals at the expense of the vital interests of the Arab peoples. Efforts are being made to conclude a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The participants in the tripartite talks in Washington do not conceal their intention of dragging UNEF further into the implementation of those separate negotiations.

8. The Soviet delegation has displayed its readiness not to object to the extension of the mandate of the Force on the clear understanding that this mandate would not be altered and that therefore the Force would not be drawn into the implementation of the possible separate agreement that is being elaborated now in Washington. In order to confirm

¹ See resolution 438 (1978).

this understanding, the Soviet delegation would have preferred the draft resolution to contain provisions to the effect that any changes in the mandate, functions and deployment of UNEF could only be made pursuant to a decision of the Security Council. Taking into account, however, the general understanding of members of the Council and of the Secretary-General to the effect that the maintenance of this arrangement is beyond any doubt, the Soviet delegation has not insisted on the inclusion of such additional wording in the draft resolution. We likewise confirm the position of the Soviet Union to the effect that, as in the past, it will not participate in any additional expenditures for UNEF occasioned by the Agreement between Egypt and Israel on the Sinai of 4 September 1975.

9. The situation in the Middle East remains complex and potentially dangerous both for the countries of the region and for the international situation as a whole. Such an appraisal is also provided in the report of the Secretary-General which has been submitted to the Council in connexion with the question under consideration. It is clear that in the Middle East it is not possible to achieve a lasting peace until such time as the causes which brought about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the consequences of Israeli aggression have been eliminated. In order to establish a lasting peace in the Middle East, it is necessary to effect a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. Such a settlement must mean that Israel will leave all the Arab territories occupied by it in 1967, that the Arab people of Palestine will be able to establish its own national homeland, its own State, and that the strictest of international guarantees will be given for the security of all States of this region without exception.

10. The consideration of the situation in the Middle East which has taken place in the United Nations in recent years, including at the present session of the General Assembly, and the decisions adopted on the question clearly show that the overwhelming majority of Member States are adhering to this kind of approach to the task of the elimination of the hotbed of tension in the Middle East.

11. The Soviet Union has, on a number of occasions, drawn attention to the fact that separate negotiations and concessions to the aggressor not only do not bring peace any closer but, on the contrary, exacerbate the situation in the Middle East even further. The talks now taking place concerning a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel are a contradiction of the task of the establishment of a lasting peace in this region and of the genuine interests of the Arab peoples. They are in fact aimed at undermining a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East and replacing it by partial deals which would make it possible for Israel to retain the Arab territories it has taken over and prevent the exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

12. The Soviet Union is carrying out a systematic policy aimed at the relaxation of tensions and the application of that process to all regions of the world and the liquidation of all hotbeds of tension and military threat. As was recently stated by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev:

"We shall continue to conduct a consistent policy for the elimination of the dangerous threat of war in the Middle East, especially since that region is in the direct vicinity of our country and also of other Warsaw Pact countries."

13. The Soviet Union considers that objectively the door to a just settlement of the Middle East problem—that is, by way of the Geneva Conference which was created especially for the solution of the cardinal problems of a comprehensive peaceful settlement in the Middle East—remains open. In order to achieve such a settlement, we are ready to co-operate with the other parties to the Geneva Conference, including, of course, the Palestine Liberation Organization. If the present course of events is not proceeding in the direction of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, the responsibility rests with those who are striving to replace a radical solution of the Middle East problem by partial steps and separate deals.

14. Mr. CARPIO CASTILLO (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): By our favourable vote we have reiterated once more the position of the Government of Venezuela on the valuable role played by the United Nations Emergency Force in the maintenance of peace in the Middle East. In the specific case of the Force in the Egypt-Israel sector, the Secretary-General informs us that:

"the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be unstable and potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached" [S/12897, para. 36].

15. In this connexion, my delegation hopes that the extension which the Council has just agreed to, enabling the Force to remain in the area for a further period of nine months, will prove to be a positive factor in the search for a durable peace in the region and the achievement of a global solution to the Middle East problem.

16. We shall continue talking in a vacuum unless a determination is shown to comply with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council which indicate the course to be followed towards the solution of the complex problem of the Middle East. We therefore address an appeal to the parties involved to comply with the relevant resolutions, thus allowing for a broad settlement which would promote stability and tranquillity in the region.

17. I should like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the clear and precise report he has submitted to us on the activities of the Force, as well as to those countries which have contributed contingents and to the troops and the officers who are directing the activities of the Force in the area.

18. We should like to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to convey to you our appreciation of the efficient and lucid manner in which you have conducted our debates. It does

honour to the prestige enjoyed by French diplomacy and to you personally as its distinguished representative in the Organization. Although October has not yet ended, you have had occasion to give proof of your qualities of diplomatic skill and tact, thanks to which the Council has reached favourable conclusions in difficult circumstances.

19. We also wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Hulinský of Czechoslovakia and express our admiration and appreciation of his activities last month when he exercised the functions of President with discretion, intelligence and total dedication to the cause of peace.

20. Mr. CHOU Nan (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): In his speech in the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly on 28 September,² Mr. Huang Hua, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and Chairman of the Chinese delegation, expounded in a comprehensive way the Chinese Government's position on the question of the Middle East, and we are not going to repeat it here. With regard to the United Nations Force, we have always held a different position in principle. Consequently, the Chinese delegation did not participate in the voting on the draft resolution contained in document S/12899.

21. Mr. HULINSKÝ (Czechoslovakia) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Czechoslovak delegation did not object to the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Emergency Force and its presence in the Egypt-Israel sector. We have taken into account the conclusions of the Secretary-General, to the effect that:

"Despite the present quiet in the Egypt-Israel sector, the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be unstable and potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached." [S/12897, para. 36.]

That evaluation coincides with the view of my Government, which has frequently been stated here in the Security Council and in other organs of the United Nations.

22. In this connexion, I should like to point out that the ongoing tripartite separate peace talks have certainly not brought any nearer the prospect of a comprehensive solution to all the key problems of the conflict and thereby genuine peace in the Middle East region. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has always condemned all attempts to achieve a separate settlement at the expense of the legitimate interests of the Arab peoples. We have always emphasized the need for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem, which can be achieved only with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

23. The diplomatic initiatives I have just mentioned may, be means of a separate series of deals, lead to a change in the existing situation in the Egypt-Israel sector—in other words, in the sector where, on the basis of its initial

mandate in 1973, the United Nations Emergency Force has been deployed and is carrying out its functions. In an atmosphere in which certain countries are in fact substantially altering their positions compared to those they held in 1973 when, pursuant to resolution 338 (1973), the Force was established, and are undertaking actions that have a direct bearing upon the conditions under which the Force is carrying out its mandate and performing its functions, we think the Security Council should not resort, as in the recent past, to an automatic extension of the mandate for one year. In the course of the informal consultations among members of the Council, the Czechoslovak delegation accordingly supported a proposal which would reflect the present specific situation and the new conditions, namely, that the Council, on this occasion, should revert to the practice of renewing the mandate of the Force for a shorter period.

24. In circumstances where the possible role of United Nations troops is being discussed in connexion with separate settlement deals, we think it is equally justified to stress the requirement that all members of the Council understand that any changes in the mandate, the functions or the deployment of the United Nations Emergency Force can be effected only by a decision of the Council.

25. From the very establishment of the Force, we understood its purpose to be to contribute to the creation of favourable conditions for the achievement of an over-all comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict on the basis of existing Security Council resolutions. That is why any attempt to give the Force any other functions puts us on the alert.

26. My delegation considers it necessary once again to state that Czechoslovakia will be unable, for reasons of principle, to participate in the financing of any additional expenses for the United Nations Emergency Force arising from the separate Agreement concluded between Egypt and Israel on 4 September 1975.

27. Mr. JAIPAL (India): The United Nations Emergency Force came into being as a result of a general cease-fire in the Middle East in 1973 and the need for a comprehensive peace settlement through the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in all its parts. It is in that context that we voted for the extension of the mandate of UNEF for another nine months. In doing so we support the Secretary-General's view, expressed in his report, that the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be unstable and potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached.

28. We are aware that the present negotiating situation is fluid, in the sense that new developments are reported to be taking place. It would be premature in the circumstances for us to pronounce any judgement. However, we should like to reiterate that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine, constitute a basis of principle for a comprehensive and lasting peace settlement.

² Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Plenary Meetings, 13th meeting.

29. We should like to reaffirm certain principles which are fundamental for the establishment of enduring peace in the Middle East. They are those concerning the non-acquisition of territory by force and the vacating of Arab territories occupied since 1967, the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to a nation-State of its own, and finally the right of all States in the Middle East to exist in security and peace within internationally recognized boundaries.

30. Mr. BISHARA (Kuwait): Mr. President, the delegation of Kuwait would like to pay a sincere tribute to you personally for your efforts, especially throughout this week-end, to bring about a draft resolution acceptable to the Council.

31. My delegation would also like to pay another well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, to his assistants, and to the officers and soldiers of the United Nations Emergency Force for their conscientious performance in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities. All of us are indebted to these soldiers and officers who sacrifice their lives and forgo comfort for the sake of obtaining peace.

32. The delegation of Kuwait did not oppose the extension of the mandate of UNEF in Sinai primarily because this extension is another continuation of the same mandate, involving the same duties and in the same area as was defined in Security Council resolution 340 (1973) and as set out in the Secretary-General's report of 27 October 1973 on the implementation of that resolution [S/11052/Rev.1]. My Government does not object to this extension of the mandate of UNEF as long as the mandate remains as previously defined.

33. We note with satisfaction the confirmation by the Secretary-General that any change in the situation which may affect the functioning, the duties or the area of deployment of UNEF will be reported to the Council. The extension of the mandate of UNEF for nine months is acceptable and is supported by my Government, as this extension provides a compromise between various views that were expressed in the earlier stage of the Council's consultations.

34. We believe, as many other delegations in fact believe, that the peace-keeping operation of UNEF should not contribute to the perpetuation of occupation and that that operation should not assist the aggressor in exacting a reward for its aggression.

35. Finally, my delegation expects that the Secretary-General will report to the Council on any development that drastically changes the situation and that the Council will be able to take the appropriate action accordingly, without being placed in a position in which its authority may be undermined.

36. Mr. N'DONG (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): St. Thomas Aquinas defined peace as tranquillity of order. In that sense, peace still seems to be far away in the case of the Middle East. This means, therefore, that in spite of the relative calm which prevails in the Egypt-Israel sector, the

Middle East is still a powder keg which is always ready to explode at the slightest spark, so long as an over-all settlement has not been achieved.

37. Everyone knows that it is easier to light a fire than to put it out. That is why the pursuit of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East is a long-term problem because the situation in the field remains highly complex. The presence of an emergency force acting as a buffer and committed to the resolution of the numerous problems in the field is, therefore, essential. Accordingly, my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution which we have just adopted, extending the mandate of the Force for a period of nine months. However, I should like to emphasize that under no circumstances should UNEF be used as a permanent peace-keeping force.

38. My delegation wishes to appeal most emphatically to all the parties concerned to rise above their resentments, so that they may succeed in the effective implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

39. In conclusion, I should like to congratulate the Secretary-General for the excellent report he has submitted to us and to pay a tribute to all the military staff of UNEF for the effectiveness and dedication they have demonstrated in the service of peace.

40. Mr. LEONARD (United States of America): First of all, Mr. President, I would offer you our compliments on your assuming the heavy responsibilities of the presidency of the Council and express to your predecessor, Ambassador Hulinský of Czechoslovakia, our appreciation of the manner in which he carried out those duties last month.

41. We have taken an important step today in renewing the mandate of an international force that has played an absolutely vital role in peace-keeping in the Middle East over the years. We should have greatly preferred a renewal for one year because of the stability which the United Nations Emergency Force provides in the area, and also because that was the wish of the parties and the recommendation of the Secretary-General. However, we have accepted a compromise of nine months.

42. I should like to take this occasion to express the appreciation and gratitude of my own Government, appreciation and gratitude which I believe is shared by other Governments around the world, for the dedicated service performed by the officers and men of the Force. Their outstanding contribution to keeping the peace has only seldom won the public attention it deserves, but nevertheless represents a very bright chapter in the over-all history of our peace-keeping forces over the past decades. My Government is confident that UNEF will continue to discharge its responsibilities with distinction.

43. The Soviet representative has just made several observations on the complex problem of the origins of the situation in the Middle East, the motives and objectives of the participants in the Camp David accords and the tripartite negotiations currently under way in Washington, and the terms of an ultimate solution to the Middle East problem. My delegation has views on these matters which

are sharply different from those either stated or implied by the representative of the Soviet Union, but I do not consider it necessary at this point to go further into these matters and would simply note that our views remain as they have been set forth repeatedly by our representatives in this chamber, as well as by President Carter, Secretary Vance and our other senior officials on many recent occasions.

44. I should like, however, to make two specific points.

45. First, the question has been raised of the relationship of our decision today in renewing the mandate of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Sinai to the Camp David framework agreements and the negotiations currently under way in Washington. Throughout these negotiations, the United States has based its efforts to seek a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). This is explicitly stated in the framework agreements. These resolutions express the Security Council's commitment to work towards a full and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. We are unswervingly dedicated to that objective.

46. Secondly, we are in full agreement with the view that the Secretary-General should keep the Council informed of significant developments concerning the Emergency Force, including major changes in its deployment. The Secretary-General, in any event, has always pursued this as a cardinal element of his administration of the Force. We cannot, however, agree with the suggestion that the Secretary-General is obliged to seek the specific approval of the Council for every deployment within the area. That would amount to amending the mandate of the Force and changing a long-standing practice that has well served the Council, has well served the Force and has well served the parties immediately involved. The Charter contemplates, and experience confirms, the need for the Secretary-General to have and to exercise reasonable latitude in using

his discretion to attain the objectives of a peace-keeping force decided upon by the Council.

47. Mr. FUENTES IBAÑEZ (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation has raised no objection to the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Kuwait, to which we express our gratitude for its initiative, as we do to you, Mr. President, for your patient efforts and skilful conduct of our work.

48. The text adopted this afternoon is a laudable attempt at a synthesis, since what we were trying to do was to make possible an extension of the mandate of the United Nations Emergency Force with maximum efficiency and economy; that is to say, to renew the mandate for a prudent period of time that would not exceed the normal limits of the budget, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his wise report, but at the same time without being too optimistic about certain developments the failure of which would make the peace achieved with such great difficulty even more precarious.

49. The resolution mentions what is strictly necessary but, in my delegation's view, this is but a reaffirmation of the fact that everything else still stands and forms a coherent unit. First, the Security Council is master of its procedures and decisions and is the only body with powers to interpret, amend or deviate from its resolutions. Secondly, with regard to the question of peace in the Middle East, the text of the new resolution is to be added to the many resolutions mentioned in the first preambular paragraph. In other words, it has the same origin and pursues the same goals as resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which my delegation regards as fundamental and essential for the comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem.

50. In conclusion, I wish to thank the United Nations Emergency Force for its efficient and devoted service.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

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