



Security Council

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ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST MEETINGHeld at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 21 December 1990, at 11 a.m.President: Mr. AL-ASHTAL

(Yemen)

Members: Canada
China
Colombia
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Malaysia
Romania
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland
United States of America
ZaireMr. FORTIER
Mr. LI Daoyu
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. ANET
Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
Mr. TADESSE
Mr. TÖRNUDD
Mr. ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE
Mr. RAZALI
Mr. MUNTEANU
Mr. VORONTSOV

Sir David HANNAY
Mr. PICKERING
Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA

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The meeting was called to order at 12.40 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Since the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) held its last meeting yesterday under the chairmanship of Ms. Marjatta Rasi, I should like to take this opportunity to extend my deep gratitude to Ms. Rasi for the way she conducted the business of the Committee and for the great efforts she exerted in carrying out her task. Ms. Rasi submitted two reports to me - a major achievement. I should like also to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, the representatives of Canada and Colombia.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN CYPRUS

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN CYPRUS (S/21981) and Add.1)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT REVIEW TEAM ON THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS (S/21982)

LETTER DATED 12 DECEMBER 1990 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, DENMARK, IRELAND AND SWEDEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/21996)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them the following documents: S/21981 and Add.1, report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus for the period from 1 June 1990 to 30 November 1990; S/21988/Rev.2, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's consultations; and S/21996, which contains the text of a letter dated 12 December 1990 from the Permanent Representatives of Australia, Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

(The President)

The draft resolution before the Council (S/21988/Rev.2) has been agreed upon by the members of the Council and will be submitted by the President.

I would like to point out the following oral amendments to the English text of the draft resolution: In the first line of operative paragraph 1, the phrase "the costs and problems of financing" should be replaced by "the problem of the costs and financing". In the fourth line of the same paragraph, the phrase "in all its aspects" should be inserted immediately after the document reference "(S/21982)". These amendments will naturally be reflected in all the language versions of the draft resolution.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution as orally amended. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour: Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Malaysia, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yemen, Zaire

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has therefore been adopted unanimously as resolution 682 (1990).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements on the resolution we have just adopted.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada): Canada is very pleased indeed that the Security Council has adopted the draft resolution that was before us this morning.

As a member of the Council for the past two years and as a troop contributor to the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for more than 26 years, Canada has been very concerned about the precarious state of UNFICYP's

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

financing. UNFICYP remains today the only United Nations peace-keeping operation to be financed from voluntary rather than assessed contributions. Over the years, these voluntary contributions have fallen consistently short of the amount required to reimburse troop contributors for their costs.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly expressed his concern about the unhealthy state of UNFICYP's finances and has called for the use of assessed contributions to meet the costs for which the United Nations is responsible. He has repeated that call in his latest report on the operations of UNFICYP dated 7 December 1990 (S/21981).

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

This position has been endorsed by all UNFICYP troop contributors - most recently in their letters of 12 December 1990 (S/21996) and 21 May 1990 (S/21301) - as well as by the Secretariat Review Team which examined the operations of UNFICYP and which issued its report on 7 December 1990 (S/21982).

All of these documents make it clear that the only way to resolve the financial crisis facing UNFICYP is to replace the system of voluntary contributions by the use of assessed contributions payable by all Member States.

Since joining the Security Council in January 1989 - two short years ago - Canada has worked to correct the financing difficulties facing UNFICYP. We have urged the use of assessed contributions whenever the semi-annual mandate renewal has come before the Council. We have pressed for presidential statements that included references to the financing problems of UNFICYP. In addition, we encouraged the review of UNFICYP's operations to see where costs might be cut without jeopardizing the continuation of its very important work.

We were pleased, therefore, when the Council, on 15 June 1990, issued a presidential statement (S/21361) that acknowledged the "chronic and ever-deepening financial crisis facing UNFICYP". In the six months since that statement we and our fellow-troop-contributors have made every reasonable effort to convince the members of the Security Council that the time has come to address this problem through the use of assessed contributions for the United Nations portion of the costs of UNFICYP.

Letters were sent by our Foreign Ministers to the Foreign Ministers of several States members of the Council. Diplomats presented our arguments in our capitals and in the capitals of all the States members of this Council. Bilateral discussions were held here in New York. All of these efforts culminated in the draft resolution (S/21988) that was circulated to Council members late last week.

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

That resolution would have committed this Council to replacing voluntary contributions with assessed contributions for the United Nations portion of the costs of UNFICYP, effective at the next mandate renewal in June 1991. This was the resolution that the original sponsors and all traditional troop contributors wanted this Council to approve.

As you know, Mr. President, we had intended that this draft should be voted upon last week, prior to the renewal of the UNFICYP mandate for a further six months. However, at the request of some Council members - in particular, one of the sponsors of the draft - we agreed to delay consideration of that draft to allow for further negotiations.

Since then we have continued our efforts to convince certain permanent members of this Council - members that have a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security - that the time has come to solve the financial crisis of UNFICYP. We attempted to convince these members that they, as well as other States Members of the United Nations which, for one reason or another, do not contribute troops to peace-keeping operations, were duty-bound to shoulder their fair share of the financing burden.

Regrettably, we were not successful, and the spectre of a veto was hanging over the Council Chamber. In the circumstances, and with a view to advancing the interests of all peace-keeping States, we amended our draft resolution still further (S/21988/Rev.1) so that the Security Council would undertake to examine alternative means of financing UNFICYP in the next six months, but with the understanding that if no alternatives to assessed contributions could be found in that time the Council would agree to finance UNFICYP using assessed contributions from 15 June 1991.

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

We should like to thank all members of the Security Council that supported our revised draft resolution. We are pleased that so many Council members saw the logic of our case earlier this week and were prepared to relieve some of the heavy burden that has been borne by UNFICYP troop contributors for more than a quarter of a century.

Unfortunately, some permanent Council members still were not prepared to commit themselves to sharing in the cost of that force, even though they have voted 62 times now - 62 times - to renew the mandate of UNFICYP, believing, as we do, that it continues to play a vital role in keeping the peace in Cyprus and helping to create conditions that will allow the Secretary-General to continue his mission of good offices.

In the negotiations that followed, we made every reasonable effort to meet these concerns, without losing sight of the objective of the resolution - to resolve UNFICYP's financial crisis. The result is the resolution that this Council adopted unanimously this morning.

We regret that this resolution does not in itself solve the problem. It does, however, commit this Council to examining the problem and to reporting on the results of its examination by 1 June 1991, with a view to enacting alternative financing arrangements, which could include the use of assessed contributions, to place the Force on a sound and secure financial basis simultaneously with the next UNFICYP mandate renewal on or before 15 June 1991.

Although Canada's current term on the Security Council expires in 10 days' time, we will continue to follow this matter very closely and to work with the members of this Council - this is a pledge - in the search for alternative financing arrangements for UNFICYP. We will do this not only as a committed member of the United Nations that believes in peace-keeping in general but also as a committed and dedicated member of UNFICYP.

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

In closing, let me thank all the members of the Security Council who voted in favour of this resolution today. We and our fellow-troop-contributors look forward to the day, six months hence, when UNFICYP's finances will be on the road to a more healthy state.

This may well be my last intervention as Canada's representative on the Security Council before my delegation walks away into the sunset, having completed its most recent two-year mandate. Speaking personally, as well as on behalf of each and every member of the Canadian delegation, I should like to thank all of my colleagues for their friendship and their collaboration during the last 24 months. It has been a distinct honour and a singular privilege for Canada to participate in the vital work of this re-energized body at this crucial time in its 45-year history.

(spoke in French)

I conclude by wishing you, Mr. President, the Secretary-General, all the other members of the Secretariat and all my colleagues happy holidays and the best of health and every success and happiness in 1991.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words addressed to me.

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): First of all, I should like to thank the representative of Canada for having set out very clearly the background, the history and the meaning of the resolution that has just been adopted by the Council. It is very important, in our view, that the problem with regard to the financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) be widely understood, and the Canadian statement was certainly another contribution in that direction.

(Mr. Törnudd, Finland)

Finland is one of the countries that has contributed military personnel to the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since its inception. Therefore, in Finland also there is a very strong awareness of the unsatisfactory nature of the present financing arrangement. Hence, we have consistently supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to bring about a change in the present system of financing. We have also co-operated with other troop-contributing countries in order to achieve a change from voluntary to assessed contributions.

We view the resolution just adopted as a first step in the direction of bringing UNFICYP financing into line with the principles that are applied to other peace-keeping operations. We hope that the Security Council has now started an irreversible process leading to a change in June 1991.

Finally, like the preceding speaker, I may also now have made my last statement in the Council, and I should like, on behalf of all the members of my delegation and on my own behalf, to thank all the members of the Council for having had the opportunity to co-operate with them.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): I should like to begin by paying a tribute to the representative of Canada, as the original leading co-sponsor of the draft resolution, for the great efforts he made in carrying this work forward. Together with the representative of Finland, we have worked with him in the last few weeks, but without the efforts he put in we would not even have got so far as we have today. Of course, my delegation too regrets that the Council has not been able to go the whole way today, but we do believe that the resolution we have just adopted is a big step forward, and we welcome the fact that the Council has at last committed itself to finding a solution to the problem of the finances of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

As other speakers have said and underlined, UNFICYP is unique among the United Nations peace-keeping operations in depending on voluntary contributions to meet the United Nations costs of the operation. I do think it is important to remember that those United Nations costs are relatively small - less than \$30 million a year - because a high percentage of the costs of the operation are borne by the troop contributors. But even voluntary contributions have consistently failed to meet that modest sum, and the UNIFCYP account is now in arrears to the tune of \$180 million, so the troop contributors bear that burden too.

Now, the total cost of UNIFCYP since 1964 is estimated to have been, cumulatively, around \$2 billion - a very large sum indeed - and most of this has been borne by a small handful of troop contributors. That, frankly, is an entirely inequitable situation. The Secretary-General has repeatedly called for UNFICYP's finances to be put onto a sound basis, and he does so again in the report that is before the Council today. After 26 years it is high time that the Council heeded that call, and my delegation will certainly be working very hard to ensure that when we take this matter up again in the first months of next year we can crack this problem once and for all.

It is, finally, important to realize that what we are talking about here is not just a question of UNFICYP, but applies to peace-keeping in general. The Council may soon have before it a proposal for a much larger peace-keeping operation in Western Sahara. Perhaps it may have one for an even larger operation in Cambodia. It simply is not equitable or acceptable to leave undealt with the anomalous and woefully unsatisfactory arrangements for financing UNFICYP. So the time has come, in our view, to move to assessed contributions, and that is the basis on which we shall be negotiating in the review and the reconsideration that have been put in hand by the resolution we have just adopted.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese Government has consistently held that the two communities of Cyprus should seek a political solution to the Cyprus problem through negotiations and has always evaluated positively the role of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). On this occasion I wish once again to call upon the leaders of the two Cypriot communities to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General in order to solve this long-pending issue at an early date.

With regard to the financing of UNFICYP, although the Chinese delegation sympathizes with UNFICYP in its financial difficulties and with the troop-contributing countries in their plight, we cannot but point out that the decision related to the establishment, composition and financial arrangements for UNFICYP was made in special circumstances at that time, and UNFICYP therefore has its own unique features. If only the modality for the financial arrangements is to be changed, then probably, as a result, questions of reconsidering and changing other aspects of the arrangements as a whole might also be brought up. Because this is a fairly complex issue left over from history, and also because Council members hold greatly divergent views on this issue, the Chinese delegation has always held that an appropriate and comprehensive solution should be reached through full consultations.

We have noted that the amended resolution has emphasized that consultations on this issue will be carried out by members of the Security Council and that the Council will consider and make a final decision on how to introduce the changes. At present there is no need for all parties to undertake any obligations.

The resolution, in our view, reflects China's view - that is, that consultations should continue, without rushing into any decision on changing the financial arrangements. Therefore, the Chinese delegation voted in favour of the

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

resolution. However, I wish to reiterate that the Chinese position on the financial arrangements for UNFICYP has not changed and that China is not committed to any change in the financing of UNFICYP.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I have already stated the Soviet Union's position on the financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus in June of this year. In my statement to the Security Council at that time, I emphasized that the question of how to finance the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus could not be considered separately and apart from other fundamental aspects of that United Nations peace-keeping operation.

We must not lose sight of the unique nature and specific features of this United Nations operation, as reflected in Security Council resolution 186 (1964), which established the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus. In my statement in June I also recalled that the Soviet Union had supported the resolution in 1964, in the light of Cyprus's position and given the fact that the adoption of the resolution did not impose any financial obligations on Member States that did not participate in the Force.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

Of course, we understand the financial difficulties now facing the United Nations Force in Cyprus. The problem of financing peace-keeping operations in general has now become acute for the Organization as a whole. The large States, the major contributors, including the Soviet Union, pay a considerable amount for peace-making processes in various parts of the world, and soon, with the possible start of expensive operations in Western Sahara and Cambodia, those expenditures and costs will grow still higher.

Given those conditions, financing the United Nations peace-keeping operations has become an acute problem, requiring new and possibly different kinds of solutions from the usual ones. Additional possibilities for cutting the costs of such operations could include the rational use of United Nations contingents and full use of local resources.

Accordingly, we held an exchange of views with the sponsors of the draft resolution in order to find a mutually acceptable solution to this very topical problem of the troop-contributing countries. We are grateful to the Permanent Representatives of Canada and the United Kingdom and other sponsors who responded to this search for a generally acceptable approach in a properly responsible manner.

As we understand it, the wording about a comprehensive study of the problem of the costs and financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus means that there will be a thorough study of the problem and all aspects of the functioning of the Force and the positions of the parties. We would stress that the resolution in no way prejudices matters, nor will there be automatic application of mandatory financing of the Force.

We would also emphasize that a final, generally acceptable solution to the problem can be found only as a result of the forthcoming consultations.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

We should also like to emphasize that at the forefront of the Council's attention must be the problem of a settlement in Cyprus. We think that the chronic deadlock in this process must be ended as soon as possible, and that the existing problems should be solved on the basis of well-known United Nations resolutions, taking account of the legitimate interests of the Cypriots.

We shall be following very closely the Secretary-General's good offices mission and the inter-communal dialogue held within that context. We support the tireless efforts of Mr. Perez de Cuellar, including his efforts to get that dialogue on the road to practical results.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): My Government is fully aware of the very real concerns of those countries that do so much to make the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus a continuing success story. The United States fully supports the United Nations Force in Cyprus, and considers it an integral part of the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to facilitate a lasting and just solution to the Cyprus problem.

We have fully acknowledged the problems underlined most recently in the Secretary-General's report (S/21981 and Add.1) of 7 December on the Force. We firmly believe that a solution must be found to the problem of funding shortfalls caused by the failure of more countries to make voluntary donations to the Force. We have actively supported efforts by the Secretary-General to gain increased donations. Unfortunately, his appeals have so far fallen on deaf ears.

As we address the funding problem, we must also review means to reduce operating expenses while retaining the ability of the Peace-keeping Force to perform its mission. In this light, we are studying with interest the report of the Secretariat Review Team which travelled to Cyprus in November this year.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

We welcome the call in this resolution for a study of ways to place the United Nations Force in Cyprus on a sound and secure basis. We look forward to the results of the review called for in this resolution. At the same time, it should be clear that the resolution does not stipulate one way or another how to achieve a sound financial footing for the Peace-keeping Force. We intend to look into all means of financing the Force, but since it is an issue of political delicacy for the United States we shall also need to consult closely with the United States Congress, and we intend to do just that.

The commitment of the United States to the Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus is clear. We fully support all efforts to address the clear financial burdens the troop-contributing countries face.

Mr. ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution that has become resolution 682 (1990). However, we should like to make a number of observations on the subject.

France has always lent its support to peace-keeping operations, which it believes to be an extremely valuable instrument, allowing the United Nations to carry out the duties entrusted to it under the Charter in regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Far from confining ourselves to lending support purely in terms of principle, France has committed human and financial resources to peace-keeping operations. More than 500 French officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks have been involved in this operation. Beyond that, we have always shouldered our financial responsibilities with regard to peace-keeping operations and have paid our mandatory contributions in full and on time. We are ready to lend the same

(Mr. Rochereau De La Sabliere,
France)

constructive support to similar peace-keeping operations that our Council may decide upon in the future.

As regards the specific case of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), this year we have again made a voluntary contribution to the Force's account.

The objective of peace-keeping operations is to facilitate the settlement of international disputes and conflicts. Therefore, such operations cannot be regarded as a substitute for peace or for the quest for a negotiated political settlement. Consequently, they should always be temporary. When UNFICYP was created, some 26 years ago, it was clear that its mandate was temporary. Experience has taught us, unfortunately, that the Force has been perpetuated, because of political circumstances that we can only deplore, since they have stood in the way of a negotiated settlement of the problem of Cyprus.

We reaffirm our desire to see a speedy political settlement of the problem, and fully support the Secretary-General's efforts in carrying out his good-offices mission with regard to Cyprus.

In this context, while our Council has reaffirmed - on 9 November - its encouragement of the search for a political settlement, we are concerned, as we deal with the financial difficulties facing UNFICYP, to avoid any decision that might strengthen an already too pronounced trend towards institutionalizing the Force and making it permanent. Confirming that trend would send a bad signal to the parties concerned, just when we are calling upon them to display the political will and increased determination to facilitate the search for a mutually acceptable settlement.

(Mr. Rochereau De La Sabliere,
France)

At the same time, however, we have an open mind with regard to an in-depth review of the financing for the Force. We believe that it would be useful for such a study to cover also the functioning and organizational aspects of the Force.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.