

REPORT FROM THE SECURITY COUNCIL



New Secretary-General

■ On 21 November, the Security Council voted to elect Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali as Secretary-General. He officially replaced Javier Perez de Cuellar on 1 January. Boutros-Ghali, who received eleven yes votes and four abstentions in a secret ballot, won out over Zimbabwe's Finance Minister, Bernard Chidzero. His election was portrayed as a victory for African countries who had insisted the next leader of the world body be someone from their continent.

Summit Of The 15

■ On 31 January, with the publicly declared aim of reinforcing the new Secretary-General and the world body as a whole, British Prime Minister John Major organized and presided over a special summit session of the Security Council. Major, who is expected to call an election this year, and whose profile was generally expected to be enhanced by the summit, succeeded in drawing the heads of government of thirteen out of fifteen Council members to the event, with the foreign ministers of Hungary and Zimbabwe filling in for their heads of government.

During their meeting, the leaders adopted a joint declaration calling for, among other things: the Secretary-General to submit to the Council by July 1992 recommendations for "strengthening and making more efficient ... the capacity of the UN for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping," and further suggesting that the analysis cover the role of the UN in "identifying potential crises and areas of instability"; a worldwide ban on chemical weap-

ons; and greater efforts to restrict the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Mission to Cambodia

■ In a possible prelude to an equal, if not larger, peacekeeping operation, the Council voted unanimously 8 January to dispatch 1,124 UN personnel to Cambodia. The task of this mission, was to begin clearing mines, and to train local personnel in mine clearance. The force would join the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) which is already there. The action was prompted by a desire to facilitate the later deployment of the much larger United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

Condemning Israeli Deportations

■ On 6 January, the Council voted unanimously to adopt a resolution that "strongly condemns" Israel's decision to deport twelve Palestinian civilians from the Occupied Territories. It was the strongest language ever backed by the US against Israel in the UN. The vote came as the Jordanian, Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian negotiators postponed their departures for peace talks in Washington in protest of Israel's plan. After the vote, the delegations announced they would travel to Washington to resume negotiations.

Yugoslavia's Fragile Cease-fire

■ On 27 November, the Council voted unanimously to "strongly" urge the parties in the Yugoslav conflict to comply with a cease-fire agreement signed four days earlier in Geneva, Switzerland. However, fighting continued and on 15 December, the Council voted unanimously that "conditions for establishing a peacekeeping operation in Yugoslavia still do not exist." At the same time it endorsed an offer by the Secretary-General to send a small group of military and civilian personnel to prepare for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation. The group was to be attached to the

mission of his personal envoy to Yugoslavia, former US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance.

On 8 January, the Council voted unanimously to send fifty military liaison officers to Yugoslavia as a cease-fire entered its fifth day (adopted 3 January). It was the fifteenth cease-fire adopted by the warring parties. The liaison officers were posted in the military headquarters of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav National Army and the Croatian People's Guard. Among other things, the role of the officers was to facilitate communication between the two sides and help them resolve difficulties. Council members hoped that the dispatch of the liaison officers would be a prelude to a much larger operation possibly involving up to 10,000 UN troops.

Embargo Against Somalia

■ On 23 January, the Council voted unanimously to impose an arms embargo against Somalia and to call for a cease-fire in the ongoing conflict. Prompted by humanitarian concerns, the action was viewed as further proof of the Council's willingness to intervene in domestic conflicts. The UN arms embargo is the fourth currently in effect. Apart from Somalia, they have been imposed against Yugoslavia, Iraq and South Africa.

Peace in El Salvador

■ On 14 January, the Security Council voted unanimously to enlarge the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to include verification and monitoring of peace agreements. The move came on the same day that Salvadoran rebel and government leaders reached a final peace accord here during UN-sponsored negotiations. Apart from monitoring the separation of the two warring sides, the 1,098 UN personnel will ensure the maintenance of public order while a new national civilian police is created. The peace accord was viewed as another in a long string

of diplomatic victories for the UN in the wake of the Cold War and the efforts by the superpowers to resolve regional disputes.

UNFICYP's Overdraft

■ On 12 December, the council unanimously extended the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for another six months. During a speech, deputy Canadian Ambassador Philippe Kirsch warned that UNFICYP's financial problems had reached crisis proportions. Over the years, Canada along with Britain and Austria, have sought to have UNFICYP funded through assessed contributions rather than voluntary ones, but a majority of permanent members are not in favour. The result, said Kirsch, is that accumulated arrears in UNFICYP's account stood at US\$186.1 million and continue to grow.

Kirsch also said Canada was disturbed by the lack of a negotiated settlement. He warned, as Ottawa has many times in the past, that if a settlement continued to elude the UN, it would be necessary for the Council to undertake a thorough review of the long-term future of the force. The Secretary-General noted in a report to the Council that UNFICYP's financial crisis "imposes a most unfair burden on the troop-contributing countries."

Other Council Business

■ On 23 January, the Council unanimously recommended to the General Assembly that the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan be granted UN membership. This was the first non-Baltic republic to be admitted. The Council was weighing the application of four others – Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

■ On 29 November, the Council renewed the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) which has been supervising the cease-fire between Israel and Syria since 1974. □

– TREVOR ROWE