

decided unanimously not to put them to a vote. The question came before the Sixth Committee for the third time in 1954, and 17 more meetings were given over to discussing it. Another special committee, comprising 19 member states, was set up and requested to submit a detailed report, followed by a draft definition, to the Eleventh Session of the General Assembly. This Committee had before it some 15 draft definitions or suggestions but despite the fact that the Assembly had requested the Committee - and here I quote the Assembly resolution -- "to submit a report followed by a definition", the Committee decided not to vote on the draft definitions before it. Presumably, this decision arose because no one of the 15 suggestions set out in the annex of the Committee's report was acceptable to a majority of the Committee. At the Eleventh Session the question was postponed to the Twelfth Session. Now, for the fourth time, this Committee is discussing the question and bids fair to spend a large portion of its time on this question. The same pattern of disagreement is developing as has developed on previous occasions in this Committee and in the special committees.

Mr. Chairman, I realize that the fact of lengthy consideration -- and both the League of Nations and the United Nations have indeed given that to this question -- does not necessarily indicate that it is not possible to define aggression. The development of International Law is necessarily a slow process, but if one examines the record of disagreement on this subject, it is difficult to avoid concluding that a single definition cannot be evolved which would command a general acceptance in this Committee. I should like to interject here that undoubtedly the studies which have been carried out will be a significant contribution to international legal literature. But I wonder if we have not reached the stage at which any further studies would be purely repetitive? I do not in any sense wish to detract from the gratitude due to those who have conducted these studies, and in particular, I should like to express our special appreciation to Professor Röling, the author of the report now before us. I do think, however, as I have just suggested, that no further useful purpose can be served by pursuing this question further, at least for the time being.

Even if a definition of aggression were possible, my delegation questions the desirability of the definitions we have before us. We are fully aware that many delegations sincerely believe that a definition would assist the organs of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security. We realize that in part our doubt may stem from approaching the question from a common law point of view which often avoids defining, in the sense of codifying in advance, legal concepts. But beyond this, my delegation is still doubtful whether a definition -- even if it could command the unanimous approval of the permanent members of the Security Council and by far the greater majority of the General Assembly -- might not be more likely to interfere with than assist the organs of the United Nations in carrying out their peace maintenance functions. At San Francisco, the majority view then was apparently to leave it to the Security Council to decide what constitutes a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace, or an act of aggression. It seems to my delegation that events support the wisdom of this decision. The competent organs of the United Nations have dealt with difficult situations successfully without having at their disposal a definition of aggression. It is submitted that they have probably been able to do so with more facility than had there been a definition. A definition of aggression, at least in