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*Chairman:* Mr. K. Krishna RAO (India).

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Gobbi (Argentina), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

## AGENDA ITEM 86

Report of the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression (*continued*) (A/7185/Rev.1)

1. Mr. COOPER (United States of America) said that the question before the Sixth Committee was an important and difficult one. It was important because Members of the United Nations desired to be free from the threat or use of force or from any intervention in their internal affairs, and shared a common interest in lessening the danger of aggression. It was difficult in that, for many years, the United Nations had been able to consider only one aspect of the question, namely, the possibility of defining aggression, and had established the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression—whose report was currently under study—to deal solely with that aspect.

2. It was indeed difficult to put a workable definition of aggression into acceptable legal terms. There were, nevertheless, certain broad principles of international law on the basis of which aggression could be defined fairly readily in a particular case. Those principles were embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, to which every Member State had committed itself upon joining the United Nations. They included the principle prohibiting the threat or use of force and the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, which were basic to the peace and life of the international community.

3. Since its establishment, the United Nations, through the General Assembly and the Security Council, had on many occasions applied the Charter's fundamental principles, calling on Member States to observe them, taking steps to reduce the danger of violation, and even bringing to an end aggression which had already occurred. On some occasions the General Assembly or the Security Council had sought to interpret those principles, or had invoked them in connexion with particular resolutions. A particularly significant and recent example was General Assembly resolution 2373 (XXII) of 12 June 1968 concerning the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a question

which bore an obvious and vital relationship to the question of aggression, particularly aggression in its most catastrophic form.

4. Outside the jurisdiction of United Nations bodies, the broad principles of the Charter had played their part in the efforts to bring about a détente between the countries still referred to as the Western Allies and the Warsaw Pact nations. Naturally, those efforts were of deep interest to all peoples of the world.

5. The members of the Committee were aware that, at the instigation of the Soviet Union, which had renewed a long-standing proposal, the General Assembly at its twenty-second session had established a Special Committee, not, as the Soviet Union had requested, to draft a definition of aggression, but to consider all aspects of the question so that an adequate definition of aggression might be prepared (see Assembly resolution 2330 (XXII)). The Special Committee—one of whose members had been Czechoslovakia—had met at Geneva; it had been unable to agree on a definition of aggression, but it had considered in detail the various draft definitions it had received and had submitted a report on them to the General Assembly.

6. On the night of 21 August 1968, some six weeks after the end of the Special Committee's session, the citizens of Czechoslovakia, an independent country, had suddenly found themselves the residents of an occupied territory. What conclusions could be drawn from that unrelenting tragedy at a time when the Sixth Committee, the legal organ of the General Assembly, was concerned with the question of defining one of the central concepts of the Charter's security system? One thing was clear: the Committee could not, in good conscience, avoid searching out its implications, nor could it seriously speak of defining aggression without taking full account of such events. For there was no visible evidence that those who had decided to invade Czechoslovakia would have been restrained by some more specific formulation of aggression formally adopted by the United Nations. In fact, there was considerable evidence to the contrary. If there was to be any hope of using law to make a better world, there must be concern with law for the world as it was. In that real world, there were three inescapable cardinal facts about the occupation of Czechoslovakia and international law.

7. First, so far as relations between the USSR and Czechoslovakia were concerned, aggression had already been defined by treaty for over three decades. Secondly, the Soviet invasion and occupation were so clear a violation of the existing law of aggression, as laid down by the United Nations Charter, that the

Soviet Union itself had abandoned its earlier pretences of explaining or justifying its action in terms consistent with the Charter. Thirdly, the Soviet Union had subsequently devised and announced to the world a new doctrine, unknown in international law, which in fact constituted a rejection of the fundamental principles of the Charter and the whole system of relations among States upon which the Charter was based and which it sought to establish.

8. It was extremely important that the Committee should examine those facts closely, for they revealed much about the ominous implications which the events in question might have for the future of the rule of law in international affairs and for the progressive development of international law through the United Nations—including, of course, the definition of aggression.

9. With regard to the first of those facts, in 1933 the USSR and Czechoslovakia had adopted a definition of aggression to govern their mutual relationships and that definition expressly precluded the very action which was to be taken by one party against the other thirty-five years later. On 4 July 1933, representatives of the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia had signed a Convention for the Definition of Aggression.<sup>1/</sup> Its preamble stated that the parties had desired to consolidate the peaceful relations existing between their countries, and it provided, among other things, that the aggressor in an international conflict was the State which was the first to commit the act of invasion by its armed forces, with or without a declaration of war, of the territory of another State. It also provided that no political, military, economic or other consideration could serve as an excuse or justification for such aggression, and it listed, and expressly ruled invalid, a series of alleged justifications. The treaty branded as illicit any excuses by the aggressor based on "disturbances due", among other things, to "counter-revolutions".

10. Concerning the second fact, he recalled that during the first days of the occupation the invaders had maintained that their military forces had been invited in by the legitimate authorities of Czechoslovakia, so that the entry of those forces had taken place with the consent of the host country and had thus been fully legitimate under the United Nations Charter. In actual fact, that claim had been utterly false. For days and weeks the Soviet Union had striven vainly to produce one single Czechoslovak citizen whom it could present as speaking for the Government of Czechoslovakia and as having invited in the occupying forces. As to the claim of counter-revolution, so far as he was aware the Soviet Union had never pretended that the existence of a "counter-revolution" in an independent country constituted an exception to the Charter's prohibition of the threat or use of force, justifying an invasion and occupation from outside.

11. More recently, the Soviet Union had pretended to have seen threatening developments in the policy of the Federal Republic of Germany which allegedly had constituted good reason in law for military action against Czechoslovakia. Like all the others, that

excuse had no foundation either in fact or in the principles of the Charter.

12. If any effort by the Soviet Union to reconcile its actions with the provisions of the Charter remained, it was to be sought in the two "agreements" which it had exacted from Czechoslovakia. In those so-called agreements the Soviet Union had sought to legitimize in some way the presence of the occupying forces *ex post facto*. The first of the "agreements" was designed to state how Czechs and Slovaks must normalize their life and development if they expected the Soviet forces to cease rearranging their affairs for them and leave their territory. The second agreement was designed to justify, after the fact, the presence of the occupying troops in Czechoslovakia. Those "agreements" had so clearly been extorted from Czechoslovakia by force that neither could be said to confer any legitimacy on the occupation. In that connexion, he read out articles 48 and 49 of the draft articles on the law of treaties,<sup>2/</sup> which the Soviet Union had strongly supported:

"Article 48: The expression of a State's consent to be bound by a treaty which has been procured by the coercion of its representative through acts or threats directed against him personally shall be without any legal effect."

"Article 49: A treaty is void if its conclusion has been procured by the threat or use of force in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

13. The irreconcilability of the Soviet Union's action with the United Nations Charter must explain, in part at least, the third fact he had stated, namely that the Soviet Union had been compelled to devise a doctrine which constituted a rejection of the Charter.

14. For the international community, the role of the United Nations Charter—a great constitutional instrument—was to lay down fundamental principles for the peaceful organization of that community. In addition to the two principles he had mentioned at the outset, there were five others which should govern friendly relations and co-operation among States: those of the sovereign equality of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, the duty of States to co-operate with one another in accordance with the Charter, and the fulfilment of obligations in good faith. Every one of those seven principles had been violated and affronted in some way by the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia.

15. Of all those principles, the sovereign equality of States was certainly the fundamental one, for the United Nations Charter was an assertion of the will of mankind to organize an international community composed of sovereign and legally equal States, capable of providing for the self-determination and human rights of peoples. If the principle of sovereign equality was breached or compromised, or if any of the rights guaranteed by the Charter's fundamental principles, while available to most States Members of the Organization, were not available to all, then the fundamental rights of none were secure.

<sup>1/</sup> League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. CXLVIII (1934), No. 3414.

<sup>2/</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Supplement No. 9*, chapter II, p. 16.

16. Since 1945, the seven principles in question had played a role both inside and outside the United Nations in the development of international understanding and the prevention of global catastrophe. They had been formulated again in the enunciation of five principles (Panch Shila) by India and a number of the newly-independent countries in the middle 1950s, namely, mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.<sup>3/</sup>

17. In a speech before the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in Moscow, in 1956, Mr. Nikita Khrushchev had proclaimed that the Leninist principle of coexistence of States with different social systems had always been, and remained, the general line of USSR foreign policy. Later that year, the Soviet Union had issued a declaration making it clear that the principle of peaceful coexistence which applied to States with differing social systems applied all the more among States with similar social systems. Shortly thereafter, the Soviet Union had begun to urge the United Nations to undertake the codification of the principles of peaceful coexistence. As all were aware, the Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States had worked for some years, with the participation of the Soviet Union, and had completed tentative formulations of some of those principles.

18. It was against that historical background that official Soviet declarations endeavouring to justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia must be understood. The Soviet Union had now put forward a new doctrine which breached the principle of sovereign equality of States by denying the fundamental protections of the Charter to a whole undetermined class of States denominated, in the words of Mr. Gromyko, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as the "socialist commonwealth".

19. The core of the Soviet argument could perhaps be seen in an article printed in Pravda on 25 September 1968, entitled "The sovereignty and international duties of socialist countries". The article had undertaken to refute the assertions, made in some places, that the action of the five socialist countries had run counter to the Marxist-Leninist principles of sovereignty and the right of nations to self-determination, and had added that the groundlessness of such reasoning was to be seen primarily in the fact that it was based on an abstract, non-class approach to the question of sovereignty and the rights of nations to self-determination. The article had explained that no "abstract" notion of national sovereignty must be allowed to prevail if it came into conflict with the general communist interest and that the socialist States respected the democratic norms of international law, although the norm of law, including the norms of neutral relations among the socialist States, could not be interpreted narrowly, formally and in isolation from the general context of the class struggle in the modern world.

20. The small States which were Members of the United Nations and would not wish to be accused of what the Pravda article had called small-State narrow-mindedness would doubtless be interested to learn wherein their sovereignty consisted if, in fact, the sovereignty of States could be subordinated to the general communist interest. The Pravda article shed some light on that question by explaining that the real sovereignty of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic consisted in the help given to the working people of Czechoslovakia by other socialist countries which had prevented the export of counter-revolution from abroad. That being so, he wondered what meaning the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples stated in the Charter could have for the peoples of Czechoslovakia and other countries. The answer in the Pravda article was that the soldiers of the allied socialist countries now in Czechoslovakia were fighting for the principle of self-determination of the people of Czechoslovakia, not in words but in deeds. The article summed up the Soviet position by stating that laws and legal norms were subjected to the laws of the class struggle and the laws of social development which were clearly formulated in Marxist-Leninist teaching.

21. That statement of Soviet doctrine was sufficient in itself to show it to be a rejection of the fundamental principles of international law stated in the United Nations Charter and a disavowal of the whole order of relationships among States upon which the Charter rested. It openly asserted that the sovereign equality of States and the other principles of the Charter and international law could be discarded when they ran counter to the objectives of that old imperialism with the new name, the "socialist commonwealth".

22. In short, the Soviet Union now claimed the right to intervene by military force against independent countries whenever it deemed the interests of the "class struggle" so to require; in the history of the progressive development of international law under the Charter, that new doctrine was a monstrous regression.

23. Since the idea of defining aggression had been presented as a move towards the progressive development of the law of the Charter, and since its prime sponsor had been the Soviet Union, one was entitled to expect three things from that country: first, to be shown some good reason for believing that a United Nations definition of aggression would produce something more than words on the part of the Soviet Union, some perceptible Soviet commitment to the spirit and purpose of the law of aggression laid down by the Charter; secondly, a reaffirmation of Soviet adherence to the fundamental principles of the Charter, including, in particular, the principle of sovereign equality of States; thirdly, an indication of when the Soviet Union would bring itself into conformity with the Charter by making good its promise to remove its occupying forces from Czechoslovakia.

24. At the Twentieth Soviet Communist Party Congress in 1956, Mr. Khrushchev had complained of allegations that the Soviet Union advanced the principle of peaceful coexistence merely for considerations of expediency and had said that peaceful coexistence was not a tactical move but a fundamental principle of Soviet foreign policy.

<sup>3/</sup> These principles were incorporated in the preamble to the Agreement between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China on trade and intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 299 (1958), No. 4307).

25. If such allegations of expediency were again heard during the current session, they would perhaps be found less perplexing in the light of events in Czechoslovakia. They arose out of a concern which would bear directly on future debates.

26. In conclusion, he said that if the Committee's work was to have any meaning, the Special Committee's report and the usefulness of continuing efforts to define aggression must be pondered in the light of the events in Czechoslovakia and their doctrinal by-product.

27. Mr. MYSLIL (Czechoslovakia), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said his Government was of the opinion that the United States representative's reference to the events which had taken place in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 could only complicate the fulfilment of the task before the Committee. The position of his Government concerning those events had been explained in the General Assembly on 4 October 1968 by the Czechoslovak Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pleskot (1682nd plenary meeting). He expressed the hope that that position would be fully respected in the Committee and that the Committee would consider the question on its agenda in a constructive manner and thus create the necessary conditions for the adoption of a definition of aggression in the immediate future.

28. Mr. OSTROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said first of all that he fully associated himself with the hope expressed by the representative of Czechoslovakia that the Committee would give serious consideration to the question before it. However, he would like to shed some light on the slanderous assertions made by the representative of the United States about the Soviet Union. The fact that they had been made by an eminent United States senator could not conceal the fact that they were obviously of a nature to revive the cold war.

29. However, before treating them as they deserved, he would like to draw attention to the way the stage had been set for the allegations. Like the Griboedov character whose motto was "Make a noise", the Government of the United States had thought that it should make a great rumpus for the sake of the cause, but the cause was merely fishing in troubled waters. Hence the use of spotlights and television cameras, which had been mobilized together with the services of the Secretariat to provide a spectacle which reminded him of a performance by an aging actor doing an old piece to death.

30. He did not think he would advance the debate by engaging in polemics on peaceful coexistence or mistaken interpretations of this or that quotation from Lenin. It was, however, his duty to point out the incongruity of an attempt by the United States representative to present his country as the defender of the principles of the sovereign equality, self-determination and independence of the socialist countries, as the defender of small States and even as the enemy of imperialism. When the enemies of socialism worried about the fate of socialist countries, when colonialists worried about oppressed peoples and racists concerned themselves with the position of the Negroes, one was justifiably reminded

of the fable of the wolf in sheep's clothing. For a proper understanding of that attitude, it should be borne in mind that the United States had always opposed attempts to define aggression. That was a well-known fact. It was now obvious that the United States remained faithful to that position. It had resorted to all kinds of subterfuges to distract attention from the essential task of seeking a definition of aggression. False pretexts were being used to poison the atmosphere and prevent the Sixth Committee from dealing with the specific items on its agenda.

31. It was obvious that the comments of the United States representative were outside the scope of the question under examination. On the previous day (1073rd meeting), two delegations had pointed out with some emphasis the need to make the best possible use of the time allotted to the Committee, in order to consider as many as possible of the items included in the agenda. Yet, after that appeal, the United States representative had not hesitated to make lengthy statements on a matter which had no relation to the problems with which the Sixth Committee was supposed to be dealing. His attitude was causing the Sixth Committee to lose precious time.

32. The United States delegation had not made the slightest suggestion concerning the various aspects of the problem under consideration. The United States representative had not said what he thought of a mixed type of definition; he had put forward no argument which the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression could take into account in pursuing its task. Clearly, that had not been his intention. The Senator now occupying the seat of the United States representative was not concerned with the defining of aggression. It was for other purposes that he had been sent into the conference room, where his presence reflected some political machinations. And the whole operation had been given a typically American production: spotlights, television cameras, press correspondents, spectators, a whole arsenal of publicity. But if the representatives of the United States had a little more respect for the members of the Sixth Committee, they would not abuse the Committee's patience so; they would not dare to misuse in such a manner the means kindly placed at their disposal—for reasons difficult to understand—by the Secretariat services concerned.

33. With respect to the actual substance of the United States representative's statement, he noted that there had been a number of references in it to the relations between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. For example, the treaties concluded between those two countries had been mentioned, and an issue had been made of the problems that were supposed to have arisen between them. In that connexion, the Soviet delegation wished to recall that the mutual relations between the socialist countries resulted from the obligations contracted by those countries under the alliances uniting them and were exclusively a question of their internal affairs. Those countries were resolved not to permit, and never would permit, any outside interference in the settlement of questions that concerned only their own interests and were strictly their own affair. Consequently, the increased interest of the United States in those relations and the

efforts it was making to interfere in them were, to say the least, out of place.

34. The United States representative had made a point of expressing some surprise regarding the events in Czechoslovakia. He had appeared to find something unexpected in them. But the United States delegation seemed to be deliberately complicating a matter that was really perfectly simple. There was nothing unexpected or surprising in the measures of self-defence taken by the countries in the socialist camp to protect themselves against imperialist plots.

35. The Soviet Union had been obliged since its founding to take measures to protect the socialist State against innumerable acts of aggression, interference and intervention. It was a fact that the Soviet people, in response to Lenin's appeal, had been obliged to take up arms to defend itself and its soil against the attacks of interventionists, who had included a number of American soldiers. That historical fact was still relevant, since the aggressive plots of United States imperialism against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries were continuing. After the Second World War, that hostility had taken the form of the cold war policy, whose principal advocate had been John Foster Dulles; the latter had not hesitated to declare that the West must bring Czechoslovakia back into the fold, together with the other countries in the Soviet orbit. And that had been no mere slogan, but an actual policy supported by the full power of the American State and all the resources of its economy. In that connexion, it should be recalled that the United States Mutual Security Act had the expressed aim of organizing and financing subversion in the socialist countries. Its authors had obviously thought they could attain their ends by spending a sufficient number of millions of dollars. They had been gravely mistaken, but it did not seem that the anti-socialist campaign was about to be given up. The facts suggested the contrary, and for confirmation he would refer only to an article in the November 1968 issue of the United States magazine Fortune by Herman Kahn, the director of the Hudson Institute, which often advised the White House. In that article, the events in Czechoslovakia were regarded as a "critical experiment" in which it would have been possible to wrest the country from the socialist camp and test the reaction of the socialist camp and the reaction of countries belonging to it, in particular the Soviet Union. He drew the United States representative's attention to the proposed policy, which included the following steps: (a) granting of commercial credits by Bonn to Czechoslovakia; (b) establishment of French and German cultural influence in Czechoslovakia; (c) abandonment of Czechoslovak democratic centralism; (d) domination of the Czechoslovak Communist Party by the Government; (e) development of an effective opposition; (f) a great fanfare about an "economic miracle"; (g) development of a social democracy with capitalist overtones. That was not all, however. The plan went further, predicting the overthrow of the democratic Government in Poland, the weakening of socialism in the German Democratic Republic, possibly in conjunction with an attempt to unify the two German States, the erosion of the Warsaw Pact, and, finally, the threat of an attack by

West Germany against the Soviet Union with the backing of the United States.

36. The article referred to needed no comment. It set forth a policy that was essentially directed against the socialist countries and had never changed, except perhaps in its methods, since the founding of the first socialist State. The aim of that policy was to overthrow the socialist régimes and to wipe out the gains of socialism. Undoubtedly, the days of armed intervention were over, but the basis of United States policy had not changed. That was the reason for the serious difficulties encountered by the policy of peaceful coexistence proposed and defined by Lenin in his day. However, the Soviet leaders remained faithful to that policy, particularly when they were taking the necessary measures to defend the socialist régimes. Herman Kahn himself admitted in the article referred to that specialists in Soviet affairs in the United States had grossly underestimated the ability of the leaders of the socialist countries to act decisively to protect the interests of socialism. He would add that such errors were typical. History provided many examples of "specialists" in Soviet affairs who had underestimated the will and determination of the Soviet people to defend the gains of socialism. He hoped that the United States specialists would not follow in the path of those who had been guilty of such miscalculations, with consequences so tragic for themselves and for others. Millions of human beings had become the victims of their illusions.

37. It should also be emphasized that the socialist countries and the Soviet Union were not the only countries that were the target of aggressive plots by the United States. It could not be denied that that policy was revealing itself in various forms in other parts of the world. A notable case was that of Vietnam, where the United States was committing a flagrant and bloody act of aggression. And everyone knew who was hiding behind those who had carried out a war of aggression in the Middle East. A number of examples could be given of acts of aggression committed by United States imperialism on the Latin American continent and in Africa, Asia and several European countries. It would be difficult to mention a single region which was safe from the aggressive designs and plots of United States imperialism. The facts therefore refuted the assertions of the United States representative, who wished to present his country as the champion of equality, independence, non-intervention and strict observance of the principles of the Charter. Those pretensions were ridiculous and could deceive no one.

38. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, adhering to the policy of coexistence started by Lenin, was aware of its responsibility to maintain and develop friendly relations and co-operation among States. But its restraint should not be interpreted as a sign of irresolution in safeguarding its interests and defending the gains of socialism. It could not forget the loss of millions of human lives which it had suffered during the Second World War and it remained vigilant in the face of the present attempt to resume the Drang nach Osten and to dispute the frontiers which had been established after the war.



39. In conclusion, he wished to emphasize that no attempt to open a breach in the socialist camp would be successful. The Secretary-General of the Soviet Communist Party had warned those who were inclined to forget the lessons of history and had reminded them that the frontiers of Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and the other countries of the Warsaw Pact were inviolable and would continue to be protected by all the might at the disposal of the socialist countries.

40. Mr. COOPER (United States of America), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, observed that the representative of the Soviet Union had not succeeded in wiping out the memory of two extremely important facts, namely, the fact of the invasion itself and the statement of principle according to which the Soviet Union arrogated to itself the extraordinary right to disregard a country's sovereignty and to prevent it from developing its own social life and giving effect to human rights in the way it saw fit. The representative of the Soviet Union had just confirmed that statement of principle and had said that the measures taken by his country should not cause any surprise. There was no doubt, however, that the international community had been surprised by those acts, which impeded its efforts to establish peace and co-operation among all countries.

41. The representative of the Soviet Union had maintained that the question of Czechoslovakia should not be discussed at the United Nations. He for his part wished to repeat that aggression could not be discussed as if it were a purely abstract concept. That idea had, moreover, been expressed by the representative of the Soviet Union himself in the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression. He also wished to point out that while it was true that during the debates in the Special Committee differences of opinion had arisen as to whether such factors as economic pressure or subversion should be included in the definition of aggression, all members of that Committee had nevertheless been in agreement that the invasion of the territory of a State by armed attack was the most obvious example of aggression.

42. In conclusion, he said that the events in Czechoslovakia had constituted a serious threat to international peace and security and that if the United Nations did not deal with a question of that kind which involved one of the most important fundamental principles of the Charter, its debates might prove completely useless.

43. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that the definition of aggression appeared to be a particularly difficult task. The United Nations had been studying the question for a long time. The problems which it raised were reminiscent of the obstacles encountered in the codification of international law: such efforts at codification had failed because, in view of the differences which existed between the various legal systems, it had not been possible to find a common denominator.

44. The definition of aggression raised still more serious difficulties because, regardless of all ideological considerations, it appeared that when powerful countries intervened physically in weaker countries,

they showed a special talent for justifying their actions. Thus, they frequently invoked the right of self-defence, and a multitude of other pretexts. In any event, as long as international politics was governed by concepts such as the balance of power or spheres of influence, strong States would continue to intervene in the affairs of weak States. He noted, moreover, that it was possible for strong States to commit acts of aggression through the intermediary of other States. In those circumstances, it was inevitable that the task of defining aggression should continue to present insurmountable difficulties.

45. Aggression could be defined either in general terms, or by enumeration. In the first case, there was a risk of being insufficiently precise, so that the definition would not be satisfactory except in exceptional cases; in the second case, there was a danger of producing a definition which was not exhaustive and was consequently incomplete. The difficulties of the task were still further increased by the fact that the aim was to find a definition which would be such as to prevent any aggression. Just as it was difficult in the case of public information media to say where the line should be drawn between information and propaganda, so it was very hard to indicate which act could constitute acts of aggression.

46. The atmosphere of suspicion in which the debate was proceeding was caused by the survival of the concept of the balance of power, which had originated in the nineteenth century and which the League of Nations had not managed to eliminate. The United Nations had not made much progress in that area, when one considered that the signatories of the Warsaw Pact and the members of NATO continued to spy on each other, each of the two blocs trying to discover whether the other one was leading in armaments. The Middle East was the first victim of that policy. It had in fact been as the result of aggression by proxy that the Palestinian people had been dispersed and their right to self-determination violated, a right which was proclaimed by the United Nations Charter. The United States, although full of noble ideals, had accepted that violation, which had led to an interminable conflict much more dangerous for international peace and security than the opposition between the Warsaw Pact countries and NATO. Palestine, which was a link between three continents, might become the scene of a terrible conflagration. At the present turning-point of history, when mankind had to choose between survival and destruction, it was absolutely necessary to define aggression and to ensure that it was prevented. To achieve that end, the Special Committee should be able to count on the goodwill of all countries, large and small.

47. Lastly, and even more importantly, it was essential to declare that the principles of the United Nations Charter took precedence over those of all bilateral or multilateral agreements designed to protect national interests, since that was the only way that national barriers could fall.

48. Mr. OSTROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking again in exercise of his right of reply, said that by his statement the representative of the United States had deprived the meeting of any practical

value. He did not appear to have been prepared for the task which he should have performed and had confined himself solely to spreading political slander. Apparently, he had even forgotten that the item on the agenda was not the events in Czechoslovakia but the report of the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression.

49. With regard to relations between Czechoslovakia and the USSR and other socialist countries, he said that they were the concern of those countries alone and that to mention them constituted an attempt to

interfere in the socialist countries' internal affairs, which, to say the least, was out of place. It was clear that the representative of the United States had abused the patience of the Sixth Committee by engaging in manoeuvres designed to distract the Committee's attention from its task for political reasons. He hoped that the United States delegation would have understood that it was only reasonable for the socialist countries to resort to self-defence in order to thwart the imperialists' plots.

*The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.*

