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TEXT OF ARTICLE 25

The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. The present study consists of a general survey and an analytical summary of practice. During the period under review, constitutional debates arose with respect to three items concerning the scope of the obligation under Article 25. They are dealt with in the analytical summary of practice under the corresponding heading. There were also references to Article 25 in connection with various items in the decisions and deliberations of the Security Council and the General Assembly which did not give rise to a constitutional discussion. Such material is treated in the general survey, bearing in mind the distinction already made in the study of Article 25 in Supplements Nos. 3 to 5 between those instances in which the Security Council and the General Assembly, in demanding acceptance of and compliance with Security Council decisions, made explicit reference to Article 25 and those in which it did not do so, but called upon the Member States concerned to comply with previous decisions or censured non-compliance. As in previous studies, no constitutional significance should be attached to the use of the two categories.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

2. During the period under review, Article 25 was explicitly invoked in two Security Council resolutions, relating to the question of Southern Rhodesia¹ and the situation in the Middle East², respectively. In its resolution 460 (1979) of 21 December 1979, the Security Council decided, inter alia, “to call upon Member States to terminate the measures taken against Southern Rhodesia under Chapter VII of the Charter” pursuant to resolutions previously adopted by it, commending “Member States, particularly the front-line States, for their implementation of its resolutions on sanctions against Southern Rhodesia in accordance with their obligation under Article 25 of the Charter”. In its resolution 521 (1982) of 18 September 1982, the Security Council, among other things, insisted that “all concerned must permit United Nations observers and forces estab-

¹ S C resolution 460 (1979), para. 4.
² S C resolution 521 (1982), para. 6.

³ In connection with the letter dated 22 December 1979 from the representative of the United States addressed to the President of the Security Council, S C (35), Suppl. for Jan.-March 1980, S/13735, para. 4; in connection with the situation in Namibia, S C (36), Suppl. for April-June 1981, S/14459, 14th preamb. para. and para. 6; S/14460, revised as S/14460/Rev.1, para. 16; S/14461, para. 5; S/14462, para. 15; and in connection with the situation in the occupied Arab territories: S C (37), Suppl. for Jan.-March 1982, S/14832, revised as S/14832/Rev.1, para. 4.
3. A large number of decisions and several draft resolutions, which were not put to the vote or failed of adoption, contained provisions that may be considered as having a bearing on Article 25.

4. There were also numerous explicit and implicit references to Article 25 during the debates held in the Security Council, which did not give rise to a constitutional discussion, except in three cases discussed in the analytical summary of practice.

5. During the period under review, Article 25 was explicitly invoked in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in connection with the following items: activities impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia, question of Southern Rhodesia; question of Namibia; question of Palestine; situation in the occupied Arab territories, and situation in the Middle East. In connection with the activities impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia, the General Assembly condemned all violations of the mandatory sanctions imposed by the Security Council against the illegal racist minority regime in Southern Rhodesia, as well as the continued failure of certain Member States to enforce those sanctions, as being contrary to the obligations assumed by them under Article 25 of the Charter. The General Assembly also condemned in that resolution "the racist minority regime of South Africa which, in violation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and in open contravention of its specific obligations under Article 25 of the Charter, continues to collaborate with the illegal racist minority regime in Southern Rhodesia". In connection with the situation of Southern Rhodesia, the General Assembly declared that "Security Council resolution 253 (1968) of 29 May 1968, imposing mandatory sanctions against Southern Rhodesia, can be revoked only by a decision of the Council and ... any unilateral action in this regard would be in violation of the obligation assumed by Member States under Article 25 of the Charter". In connection with the situation in Namibia, the General Assembly condemned all activities regarding Namibian uranium being carried out of the Territory by State-owned or State-controlled corporations, activities which constitute a clear violation by the Governments concerned of binding resolutions of the Security Council and are thus violations of Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations. In connection with the question of Palestine, the General Assembly condemned "Israel for its non-compliance with resolutions of the Security Council, in defiance of Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations". In connection with the situation in the

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8 In connection with the situation in the Middle East, resolutions 444 (1979), para. 7; 449 (1979), para. (a); 450 (1979), para. 9; 456 (1979), para. (a); 459 (1979), para. 10; 467 (1980), paras. 1 and 10; 470 (1980), para. (a); 474 (1980), para. 6; 476 (1980), paras. 2, 5 and 6; 478 (1980), 5th preamb. para. and para. 1; 481 (1980), para. (a); 483 (1980), para. 7; 485 (1981), para. (a); 488 (1981), paras. 1 and 2; 490 (1981), para. 3; 493 (1981), para. (a); 506 (1982), para. (a); 508 (1982), paras. 2 and 3; 509 (1982), para. 3; 516 (1982), para. 3; President's statement dated 3 August 1982, S/15342; resolutions 517 (1982), paras. 7 and 8; 518 (1982), paras. 1 and 5; 520 (1982), paras. 2, 3 and 6; 523 (1982), para. 4; 524 (1982), paras. (a) and (c); 531 (1983), para. (a); 536 (1983), para. 2; 538 (1983), para. 2; 542 (1983), para. 6; 543 (1983), paras. (a) and (c); 549 (1984), paras. 3 and 4; 551 (1984), para. (a); 555 (1984), para. 3; and 557 (1984), paras. (a) and (c); in connection with the situation in Namibia, resolutions 445 (1979), 10th and 11th preamb. paras.; 448 (1979), 4th and 8th preamb. paras.; 532 (1983), 4th preamb. para. and paras. 2, 3 and 4; and 539 (1983), 6th preamb. para. and paras. 2 and 8; in connection with the question of South Africa, resolutions 473 (1980), paras. 1, 10 and 11; and 558 (1984), para. 3; in connection with the complaint by Angola against South Africa, resolution 475 (1980), para. 4; in connection with the situation in the occupied Arab territories, resolutions 446 (1979), para. 2; 471 (1980), para. 4; and 497 (1981), para. 4; in connection with the situation between Iran and Iraq, Statement by the President dated 15 July 1982, para. 2; S/15296; resolution 522 (1982), 3rd preamb. para., paras. 3 and 4; Statement by the President dated 21 February 1983, paras. 2 and 4; S/15616; in connection with the situation in Cyprus, resolutions 541 (1983), para. 3; and 550 (1984), paras. 1 and 5; and in connection with the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the organization, note by the President dated 12 September 1983, S/15971, para. 6; and note by the President dated 28 September 1984, S/16760, para. 9.

9 In connection with the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, S C (34), Suppl. for July-Sept. 1979, S/13514, 4th, 5th and 7th preamb. paras. and para. 1(a); in connection with the situation in the Middle East, S C (35), Suppl. for July-Sept. 1980, S/14106, 5th and 6th preamb. paras. and paras. 1, 5 and 6.

10 In connection with the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, S C (35), Suppl. for April–June 1980, S/13911, 5th and 6th preamb. paras. and para. 6; in connection with the situation in the Middle East, S C (37), Suppl. for April–June 1982, S/15185, paras. 1 and 5; S/15255, revised as S/15255/Rev.2, para. 9; and S C (37), Suppl. for July–Sept. 1982, S/15347, revised as S/15347/Rev.1, 1st preamb. para. and paras. 1 and 2; in connection with the question concerning the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), S C (37), Suppl. for April–June 1982, S/15156, revised as S/15156/Rev.2, paras. 1 and 3; and in connection with the situation in the occupied Arab territories, S C (38), Suppl. for July–Sept. 1983, S/15895, paras. 8 and 10.

11 See, for example, S C (37), 2396th mtng.: USSR, para. 48, China, para. 72; Spain, para. 115; France, para. 144; United Kingdom, para. 204.

12 G A resolution 35/227 l, para. 11.

13 G A resolution ES-7/6, para. 7.
occupied Arab territories, the General Assembly noted\(^{14}\) that "Israel has refused, in violation of Article 25, to accept and carry out the numerous relevant decisions of the Security Council, the latest being resolution 497 (1981)". Similarly, in connection with the situation in the Middle East, the General Assembly noted\(^{15}\) that "Israel has refused, in violation of Article 25 of the Charter, to accept and carry out the numerous relevant decisions of the Security Council, the latest of which was resolution 497 (1981), thus failing to carry out its obligations under the Charter".

6. Resolutions containing provisions which may have a bearing on Article 25 were adopted in connection with the following items: activities impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia and in all other Territories under colonial domination;\(^{16}\) universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination;\(^{17}\) situation in the Middle East;\(^{18}\) question of Namibia;\(^{19}\) policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa;\(^{20}\) implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security;\(^{21}\) strengthening of international security: common security;\(^{22}\) assistance to Zambia;\(^{23}\) activities impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Namibia and in all other Territories under colonial domination;\(^{24}\) report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories;\(^{25}\) question of Palestine;\(^{26}\) and armed aggression by Israel against the Iraqi nuclear installations.\(^{27}\)

7. During the period under review, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly,\(^{28}\) the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization examined various proposals on the question of the maintenance of international peace and security, some of which were geared towards amending the provisions of Article 25. No agreement, however, was reached in the Special Committee on those proposals.

8. In the proceedings of the General Assembly and its Committees, Article 25 was explicitly and implicitly invoked in connection with various agenda items. However, no constitutional discussion arose, except in two instances discussed in the analytical summary of practice.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{14}\) G A resolution ES-9/1, preamble para. 11.

\(^{15}\) G A resolutions 37/123 A, preamb. para. 9; 38/180 A, preamb. para. 9; and 39/146 B, preamb. para. 9.

\(^{16}\) G A resolution 34/41. For the full title of the item, see footnote 8 above.

\(^{17}\) G A resolutions 34/44, 35/35 A, 36/9, 37/43, 38/17 and 39/17. The full title of the item is: "Importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights".

\(^{18}\) G A resolutions 34/70; 36/226 A; 37/123 A, C, F; 38/180 A, C, D; and 39/146 A, B, C.

\(^{19}\) G A resolutions 34/92 B, G; ES-8/2; 36/121 A, B, 37/223 A, C; 38/36 A, B, C and 39/50 A, B, C.

\(^{20}\) G A resolutions 34/93 A; 35/206 A, H; 36/172 M; 37/69 C, F; 38/39 F and 39/72 C.

\(^{21}\) G A resolutions 34/100, 36/102, 37/118 and 39/155.

\(^{22}\) G A resolution 39/156.

\(^{23}\) G A resolutions 34/128, 35/94 and 36/214.

\(^{24}\) G A resolutions 35/28, 36/51, 37/31, 38/50 and 39/42. For the full title of the item, see footnote 8 above.

\(^{25}\) G A resolutions 35/122 E, 36/147 E, 37/88 E, 38/79 F and 39/95 F.

\(^{26}\) G A resolutions ES-7/2; 35/169 A; 41/160 D, E; ES-7/4; ES-7/5; and ES-7/9.

\(^{27}\) G A resolutions 36/27, 37/18, 38/9 and 39/14.

\(^{28}\) G A resolutions 33/94, para. 3(b); 34/147, para. 3(a); 35/164, para. 3(a); 36/122, para. 4(a); 37/114, para. 5(a); and 38/141, para. 3(a).

\(^{29}\) See paras. 9-11 and 16-17 below.

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II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

A. Question of the scope of the obligation under Article 25

1. Decision of 18 December 1979 in connection with the question of Southern Rhodesia

9. In connection with the question of Southern Rhodesia, constitutional discussions arose in both the General Assembly and the Security Council on the question whether sanctions imposed by the Security Council might only be terminated by the Security Council.

10. In the General Assembly, the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 33/44 of 13 December 1978, submitted a report.\(^{30}\)

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\(^{30}\) G A (34), Suppl. No. 23, vol. II, chap. VIII.

in which it expressed concern at the moves by some Member States to lift sanctions against Southern Rhodesia in violation of Security Council decisions, reminding the respective Governments of their obligation to comply with those decisions.\(^{31}\)

11. In the deliberations of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, it was held that only the Security Council had the power to lift the sanctions imposed on Southern Rhodesia\(^ {32} \) and that any unilateral action on the part of Member States to lift sanctions would contravene the relevant Security Council resolution\(^ {33} \) and constitute a serious violation of Charter obligations.\(^ {34} \) One representative, on
the other hand, stated\(^{35}\) that his Government would keep the question of sanctions under continuous review and would be prepared to end the sanctions regime when a British Governor assumed authority in Salisbury and the process leading to impartial elections had begun. The Fourth Committee, acting on the proposal of the Chairman, decided\(^{40}\) to recommend to the General Assembly that a decision on the question of Southern Rhodesia should be taken directly in plenary meeting as appropriate.

12. Speaking before and after the vote on resolution 34/192 (1979),\(^{37}\) some representatives stated\(^{38}\) that the binding sanctions could not be lifted except by decision of the Security Council and that any unilateral action in that connection constituted a violation of the obligation assumed by Member States under Article 25 of the Charter. On the other hand, one representative held\(^{39}\) that, since the rebellion in Southern Rhodesia had been brought to an end, the continuation of sanctions was no longer obligatory. Another representative asserted\(^{40}\) that, in the light of differing views concerning whether States continued to be legally bound by Security Council resolutions, it would have been prudent for the General Assembly to refrain from a decision on the matter and to request first an opinion from the competent legal authorities of the United Nations.

13. In the Security Council, the Committee established in pursuance of resolution 253 (1968), in a statement\(^{41}\) adopted on 9 November 1979, emphasized that only the Security Council, which had instituted the sanctions, had a right to lift them. All Member States should continue to respect and apply the provisions of all the relevant Council resolutions on Southern Rhodesia.

14. One representative, in a letter\(^{42}\) dated 12 December 1979 addressed to the President of the Security Council, expressed his Government’s view that the situation in Southern Rhodesia had been remedied and the purpose of the measures decided upon by the Council had been achieved. As a result, his Government was terminating the measures taken by it pursuant to the decisions adopted by the Security Council in regard to the then situation of illegality. In a letter\(^{43}\) dated 14 December 1979 addressed to the President of the Security Council, another representative stated that “resolution 253 (1968) can be revoked only by a decision of the Security Council and ... any unilateral action taken in this context is a violation of the responsibilities assumed by Member States under Article 25 of the Charter”.

15. Speaking after the vote on Security Council resolution 460 (1979),\(^{44}\) several representatives asserted\(^{45}\) that the unilateral lifting of the sanctions by a number of States was in contravention of Article 25, while one representative reiterated\(^{46}\) his Government’s position that the sanctions regime had automatically lapsed with the return to legality of the colony. Another representative noted\(^{47}\) that it was in recognition of the fact that the objective of the sanctions regime had been achieved that his Government had “made its recent announcement regarding sanctions”.

2. **Decisions of 31 December 1979 and 13 January 1980 in connection with the letter dated 22 December 1979 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America addressed to the President of the Security Council**

16. By its resolution 461 (1979) of 31 December 1979, the Security Council called upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran “to release immediately all persons of United States nationality being held as hostages in Iran, to provide them with protection and to allow them to leave the country”. The Council also decided “to meet on 7 January 1980 in order to review the situation and, in the event of non-compliance with the present resolution, to adopt effective measures under Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter of the United Nations”. Subsequently, on 13 January 1980, a draft resolution\(^{48}\) was put to the vote, by which the Council, “[a]ffecting in accordance with Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter of the United Nations”, would have imposed economic and diplomatic sanctions on the Islamic Republic “until such time as the hostages are released and have safely departed from Iran” and would have called upon all Member States “to carry out these decisions of the Security Council in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations”. The resolution failed of adoption owing to the negative vote of a permanent member.

17. Speaking after the vote, the sponsor of the draft resolution contended\(^{49}\) that, “under resolution 461 (1979), the Council undertook a binding obligation to adopt effective measures” and that “under Article 25 of the Charter, all

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\(^{35}\) Ibid., 32\(^{nd}\) mtg.: United States of America, para. 39.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 37\(^{th}\) mtg., paras. 1-2.

\(^{37}\) As mentioned in para. 5 above, the General Assembly declared in that resolution that the sanctions against Southern Rhodesia could only be revoked by a decision of the Security Council.

\(^{38}\) G A (34), 108\(^{th}\) plenary mtg.: Madagascar, para. 16; Cuba, para. 85.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., New Zealand, para. 22.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., Argentina, para. 54.

\(^{41}\) S C (34), Suppl. for Oct.-Dec. 1979, S/13617, annex. In a previously issued report, the Security Council Committee had stated that the Security Council should remind States of their obligations to comply with decisions of the Council in accordance with Article 25. See S C (34), Suppl. for Jan.-March 1979, S/13191, annex.

\(^{42}\) S C (34), Suppl. for Oct.-Dec. 1979, S/13688.

\(^{43}\) S C (34), Suppl. for Oct.-Dec. 1979, S/13693.

\(^{44}\) See para. 2 above.

\(^{45}\) S C (34), 2181\(^{st}\) mtg.: Zambia, paras. 30-31; Nigeria, para. 51; USSR, para. 135; Botswana, para. 250.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., United Kingdom, para. 17.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., United States, para. 75.

\(^{48}\) S C (35), Suppl. for Jan.-March 1980, S/13735.

\(^{49}\) S C (35), 2191\(^{st}\) mtg.: United States, paras. 160-161.
Member States are obliged to respect the provisions of resolution 461 (1979). A veto had now attempted to block the membership from fulfilling that obligation and the question arose as to what a Member bound by resolution 461 (1979), and acting in good faith pursuant to its obligations under Article 2 (2) of the Charter, should do to implement the resolution. The representative maintained that not only did Iran remain bound to immediately release the hostages, but that, in the event of its non-compliance with the resolution, the membership of the United Nations at large remained obliged "to review the situation" and "to take effective measures consistent with the Charter to implement that resolution". Noting that his Government had already instituted measures designed to exert economic pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran, as envisaged in the draft resolution that had been vetoed, he urged all Member States "to join with us in the application of meaningful measures against the continued holding of the hostages in defiance of international law". On the other hand, the view was held that "it would be inadmissible for some Powers to try to take upon themselves the rights which come exclusively within the purview of the Council" and, "as they see fit, to decide when to end sanctions established by the Council", as had been done in the case of the sanctions imposed on the regime in Southern Rhodesia, and "when to impose sanctions which the Council has not decreed".

3. DISCUSSION OF THE BINDING NATURE OF SECURITY COUNCIL DECISIONS

18. The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, in 1982, examined a draft recommendation which contained the following paragraph: "The Special Committee draws attention to the disturbing consequences of the non-implementation of United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council decisions which are binding on all Member States in accordance with the provisions of Article 25 of the Charter." In the course of the discussion, some representatives stressed the need to make a clear distinction between General Assembly resolutions, which were recommendations, and Security Council resolutions, which were binding. It was further noted that a distinction must be drawn not only between Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, but also between Security Council decisions and Security Council recommendations. A revised text was presented which included the following paragraph: "The Special Committee draws attention to the disturbing consequences of the non-implementation of Security Council resolutions, particularly decisions which are binding on all Member States in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter. Measures set out in the Charter should be taken to ensure that the decisions of the Security Council are respected and speedily implemented." The revised draft recommendation was discussed the following year in accordance with the request of the General Assembly, but also failed to draw support. In 1984, in accordance with a mandate given to it by the General Assembly, the Special Committee began its consideration of a working paper which did not include any reference to Article 25.

**B. Question of the applicability of Article 25 to States not Members of the United Nations**

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50 Ibid., para. 162.
51 Ibid., USSR, para. 168.
52 G A (37), Suppl. No. 33, para. 188 (A/AC.182/L.29). The draft recommendation, presented by Egypt on behalf of non-aligned countries of the Special Committee, had been introduced in 1981 (G A (36), Suppl. No. 33, para. 269), but its discussion was postponed until 1982.
53 G A (37), Suppl. No. 33, paras. 210-212.
54 Ibid., para. 254 (A/AC.182/L.29/Rev.1).
55 For the discussion of the revised paragraph, see G A (38), Suppl. No. 33, paras. 75-76.
56 G A resolution 37/114, para. 5 (a).
57 G A resolution 38/141, para. 3 (a).
58 For details, see G A (39), Suppl. No. 33.