

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

Wednesday, 26 November 1958,
at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 68:	
Question of Cyprus (continued)	
General debate (continued)	259

Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

AGENDA ITEM 68

Question of Cyprus (A/3874 and Add.1, A/C.1/811,
A/C.1/L.221-223) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. GEORGES-PICOT (France) said that the French delegation sincerely regretted that the question of Cyprus was once again before the First Committee. It had hoped that the persevering efforts of three Governments, friendly and allied to France, under the guidance of a great European statesman, would be crowned with success at the conference which was to have been held in the past few weeks and that that meeting itself would have made it possible to define a basis of agreement.

2. Those hopes had unfortunately been dashed, but the French delegation preferred to regard the present set-back as temporary, for it considered that the peaceful, democratic and just solution for which the General Assembly had already called (resolution 1013 (XI)) lay in agreement between the parties. The question was, admittedly, a delicate one. It involved elements of law and fact which, as the First Committee knew only too well, had a most unfortunate effect on each other.

3. Encouraging symptoms had recently appeared. Substantial concessions had been made on both sides and the very acceptance of the principle of an *ad hoc* conference under the auspices of a regional organization represented even greater progress. The French delegation thought that that was the course which should be pursued to the fullest possible extent and that care should be taken to avoid for the present anything likely to hamper the creation of conditions conducive to a later settlement of the question. Lastly, in the common interest, it was obvious that tranquility must be restored in Cyprus, and it was to be hoped that no encouragement would be given during the current debate to violence, which in itself could solve nothing. Any proposals which might be made as a result of the present debate would be especially valuable if they were to encourage efforts looking both to the present and to the future.

4. It was up to the parties to resume their efforts to achieve a compromise at the proper time and by the methods they deemed most appropriate, and to seek

together and, if necessary, with the assistance of any countries they might designate by common agreement, the elements of a solution that would promote the interests of the population of the island, whose rulers had made considerable concessions in 1958 and whose wishes would in the final analysis be decisive.

5. Those were the considerations which would finally determine the French delegation's attitude toward the draft resolutions which had been or might be submitted and it reserved the right to speak again on the texts in due course.

6. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece), replying to the main points of the statements made the previous day by the United Kingdom representative (996th meeting) and by the Turkish representative (997th meeting), said he considered that Mr. Noble's remark that the question of Cyprus was not a colonial problem was tantamount to saying that the question of Cyprus should be settled according to the wishes of the London and Ankara Governments, since the Greek Government made no claims of its own. The United Kingdom representative had thus confirmed what he, Mr. Averoff-Tossizza, had maintained in his original statement (996th meeting), namely, that the wishes of the population of the island did not figure very prominently in the calculations of the United Kingdom Government.

7. The United Kingdom representative's interpretation of the Treaty of Lausanne^{1/} merely strengthened that conviction. The only provision which the United Kingdom Government seemed to take into account was article 20, which recognized British sovereignty over Cyprus. The United Kingdom representative had added that under that article, the United Kingdom, as a sovereign State, had the right to take such dispositions concerning the future of Cyprus as it considered desirable. He pointed out that such contempt for the fundamental rights of peoples had perhaps never been shown in the First Committee. But the era when the interests of a colonial Power were paramount over all other considerations had been finally and legally closed. Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations had settled that question by establishing that Members of the United Nations which had or assumed responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples had not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognized the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of those territories were paramount. Was it to be assumed, then, that the United Kingdom Government was prepared to abandon that principle of the Charter?

8. With reference to the efforts which his Government had made to comply with the provisions of

^{1/} Treaty of Peace signed at Lausanne on 24 July 1923. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XXVIII, 1924, No. 701.

General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI), the United Kingdom representative, while stressing that a solution of the problem required an atmosphere of peace, had refrained from mentioning the fact that the Cyprus guerrillas had three times proclaimed and maintained a long-term truce, whereas the British troops had never suspended their operations against the patriots of Cyprus.

9. General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI), which Mr. Noble had quoted, provided that the solution of the problem must be just, democratic and in accord with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Although he did not wish to constrain the United Kingdom representative to state whether the partnership plan proposed by the United Kingdom was just, democratic and in accord with the principles of the Charter, he wondered what the United Kingdom Government meant by "partnership".

10. Greece, for its part, had solemnly declared that it would never agree to participate in any enterprise which was likely to deprive the Cypriot people of the right to decide its future for itself. In so far as Turkey was concerned, according to the draft resolution which the Turkish delegation had submitted (A/C.1/L.223), it declared itself in favour of the right of the Cypriots to self-determination—in its own sense of that word—and, consequently, against "partnership" and the system of triple sovereignty.

11. If it was true that the United Kingdom Government was, as Mr. Noble had said, prepared to discuss any proposed modification of its plan, he could not understand the haste to apply the most controversial provisions of that plan.

12. It was true that the Turkish Government had agreed to appoint its Consul-General at Nicosia as its representative to the Governor of Cyprus, but ten days later a new Consul-General had been sent to Nicosia and his predecessor had become the Turkish High Commissioner, as his compatriots chose to call him.

13. The United Kingdom representative had stated his Government's conviction that the partition of Cyprus would bring great misery to the population of the island. That was exactly what the Greek Government had always maintained; it was therefore opposed to the United Kingdom plan, which was generally recognized as instituting a functional partition of the island and, consequently, as leading to territorial partition. If the United Kingdom Government's statements concerning partition were sincere, the logical conclusion was that the plan of 19 June^{2/} had been drawn up to meet the wishes of Ankara. In that case, by voting for the independence of Cyprus, the United Nations would solve the question in accordance with the convictions of the United Kingdom Government and, also, with the obligations arising from the Charter.

14. He wished to call attention to the truly surprising interpretation that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey had given to certain articles of the Treaty of Lausanne. In the first place, it could not be argued that article 21 of the Treaty, by establishing the right of Turkish nationals to opt between Turkish and

British nationality, had recognized Turkish interest in the future of the island. Indeed, the article provided that Turkish nationals who opted for Turkish nationality must leave Cyprus within twelve months after having so opted. The provision had therefore been expressly designed to prevent any intervention thereafter by Turkey in the political future of Cyprus. Secondly, the Turkish representative had stated that article 16 had nothing to do with the question of Cyprus. But that interpretation was contrary both to that of Professor Henri Rolin (opinion given at Brussels on 1 August 1955) and that of Professor Georges Scelle (opinion given at The Hague on 21 July 1955). Lastly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey had maintained that article 27 dealt exclusively with the Caliphate and its attributions. But nothing in the text of that article limited its application solely to questions relating to the Caliphate; on the contrary, the text was so drafted as to exclude any interference by the Turkish Government or authorities, for any reason whatsoever, in territories outside the Turkish frontiers.

15. The Turkish argument was based chiefly on the theory that the Turkish minority in Cyprus was not a minority, but a people, which had the right to self-determination on the same footing as the majority. That argument, however, had been categorically refuted by Professor Alvarez and Professor Bourquin, two eminent jurists who had been consulted on the matter. In that connexion, he cited some passages from the opinions given by those jurists, the full texts of which would be communicated to the Secretary-General for circulation as a document of the Committee.^{3/} In the opinion of the Greek delegation, those extracts clearly showed that the Greeks and Turks on the island of Cyprus did not represent two separate peoples, but were merely two component parts of the Cypriot people. In that connexion, he referred to the statement made in the general debate in the General Assembly by the representative of Ghana, who had said that the protection of minority rights should not be used as an excuse for suppressing majority rights (757th plenary meeting).

16. The Turkish representative had dwelt at length on the past and had alleged that Greece had frequently alluded to war. Yet no ultimatum could be found in the texts that he had produced, whereas several of the Turkish statements contained serious threats against Greece. It would be wrong to go back over the past and to revive old quarrels between Greece and Turkey. It was the present and the future that should be the matter of concern.

17. He was convinced that the future would unite the Greeks and the Turks. It must be admitted, however, that the present gave no grounds for optimism, and that the sole reason for that was the question of Cyprus. Contrary to the Turkish representative's allegations, the Turks in Thrace had no complaints. They united the two countries much more than they separated them. Many journalists had confirmed that fact.

18. The Greek delegation considered that the well-founded criticisms that had been expressed in Greece with regard to the question of fisheries and the at-

^{2/} Cyprus: Statement of Policy (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, June 1958) Cmnd. 455.

^{3/} Subsequently distributed as document A/C.1/814.

titude of the Turkish authorities towards the Greeks in Istanbul related to a temporary situation, itself due to temporary tensions.

19. No one could seriously allege that any expansionism existed in Greece; still less that Greece, with a population of 8 million, had any aggressive intentions against Turkey, which had a population of 26 million people. Whatever Mr. Zorlu might say, Greece was a small, peaceful country, whose greatness lay in its sense of honour, in the steadfastness with which it defended principles and in its successful efforts to reconstruct its economy after the war and to secure its intellectual development. It asked only to live in freedom and peace, in order to develop its resources and the moral and material capacities of its people.

20. Greece had appealed to the United Nations on behalf of the people of Cyprus in order to bring about the abolition of the colonial system which reigned on that island. It called for independence, with any guarantees that might be required for the security of Turkey and for the participation of the Turkish minority in the life of a self-governing Cyprus. The Greek Government had no direct interest in that solution, but all the nations of the world would benefit indirectly by its adoption.

21. Greece had no pretensions to deciding itself what guarantees should be provided. It left that matter to the United Nations, which alone could make it possible to break the deadlock by adopting a decision on the substance of the question.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.