

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

Official Records



AD HOC POLITICAL COMMITTEE 32nd  
MEETING

Friday, 25 January 1952, at 3 p.m.

Palais de Chaillot, Paris

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Chairman : Mr. Selim SARPER (Turkey).

**Libya : (a) Annual report of the United Nations Commissioner in Libya (A/1949, A/1949/Add.1) ; (b) Annual reports of the administering Powers in Libya (A/1970, A/1970/Add.1, A/2024, A/2024/Add.1) (A/AC.53/L.39, A/AC.53/L.40, A/AC.53/L.41, A/AC.53/L.42, A/AC.53/L.43) (continued)**

[Item 20]\*

1. Mr. EBAN (Israel) welcomed the appearance of a Libyan delegation in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee as a notable event in the annals of the United Nations and the life of the Mediterranean world.

2. Owing to the tense relations between the great Powers, the United Nations had exercised less influence than its founders had anticipated and there had been a tendency to estimate its whole career in terms of disillusionment and failure. Such judgments, however, underestimated its successful achievements in other domains of international life. The United Nations had proved a potent influence in the liberation of peoples.

3. The establishment of an eighth Arab State evoked special interest among all Mediterranean countries, each of which would regard it from the point of view of its own interests and ideals. There had been circumstances in the growth of Libya which illustrated Israel's policy in the field of regional relations. When, in 1949, the administering Powers had proposed a ten years' trusteeship, many had been confident that Israel would support that proposal. Israel, however, had decided otherwise and it so happened that the proposal had been rejected for the lack of one vote. By the 1950 session all Member States had been in favour of rapid independence for Libya.

4. Mr. Eban's purpose in recalling those events was to illustrate Israel's basic approach in the matter. The conflicts which divided the Near East were acute

but transient and should not, therefore, be made a basis for international planning. The truth of regional co-operation would finally prevail. Israel, which had joined in the earlier efforts of the Assembly to expedite the independence of Libya, would support the twelve-Power draft resolution (A/AC.53/L.39) which marked the climax of that process. The independence of Libya was another milestone in the political evolution of the Arab world. Within thirty years eight sovereign States had come into being, covering an area of more than a million and a half square miles. Rarely had any people inherited a richer patrimony or attained so great a measure of its aspirations in so short a time.

5. The Israel delegation would approach the question of Libya's admission to membership of the United Nations in accordance with its views on the universality of the Organization. An application for membership must be interpreted as a desire on the part of the applicant State to establish friendly relations with all other Member States. The delegation of Israel took a special interest in the provisions to be made for the protection of minorities in Libya, and assumed that the United Nations Commissioner had been satisfied on the point before laying aside his mandate. The recent arrival in Israel of some 15,000 former residents of Libya emphasized Israel's interest in the fate of those who had remained behind. He might wish to comment further on that question during the consideration of the joint draft resolution.

6. In connexion with the swift progress of national liberation on the shores of the Mediterranean, Mr. Eban observed that newly-established States tended to believe that they had reached the end of their struggle, whereas in truth they were only at the beginning. Political freedom was not an end in itself. The Near East had been the scene of rapid political progress but of apathy and inertia in the matter of social and economic advancement. Behind the impressive façade

\* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

30. With regard to the provisional financial agreements, the representative of France stressed the fact that immediate financial assistance was absolutely necessary to the new State of Libya if it was not to be faced with insurmountable difficulties. The country had made great progress, and the contribution made by the hard-working Italian settlers should not be forgotten, but the ravages of war had reduced the country to a state in which outside aid had become essential. The Powers which, earlier, had had special responsibilities in respect of Libya were surely better equipped than others to furnish that assistance.

31. He did not wish to dwell on other criticisms which had been made in the Committee, because he felt that, since Libyan independence had been achieved, the main purpose of the United Nations action in the matter had been attained. He wished, however, to explain the vote which his delegation would cast on the draft resolutions before the Committee.

32. With regard to the USSR draft resolution, his delegation could not vote for it because it was based on entirely wrong premises. It would, however, support the twelve-Power draft resolution which made ample allowance for the facts of the situation as described by his delegation.

33. Mr. de Beaumont then went on to consider the amendment to the twelve-Power draft resolution submitted by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. He saw no objection to paragraph 1 of that amendment, even though it seemed to betray a certain—and surely quite unwarranted—suspiciousness, but thought that paragraphs 2 and 3 were much too restrictive. They seemed to impose methods other than those favoured by the Libyan Government itself and referred to with approval in the Commissioner's report. He pointed out that the amendments would have the effect of excluding assistance from governments which were not Members of the United Nations; moreover, nothing in the statutes of the agencies set up by the Libyan Government for financing the country's economic and social development programmes prevented the participation by any governments which desired it. In short, the most serious objection to the proposals was that, if adopted, they would amount to intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign State.

34. With regard to the Egyptian draft resolution, it was open to the same objections as the USSR draft resolution, since the only difference between the two was in the periods of time specified for the withdrawal of foreign troops. His delegation would therefore vote against both the draft amendment and the Egyptian draft resolution.

35. Mr. LLOYD (United Kingdom) said that he did not intend to reply in detail to all the charges brought by the representative of Egypt. He felt that the facts in the case had already been clearly stated by many speakers. He deplored, however, the description of the United Kingdom administration by the Egyptian representative in terms of terror and oppression. Such allegations could do no good to Libya itself. It appeared that the United Nations Commissioner would later

be given an opportunity to answer the questions raised by the Egyptian representative, and he would therefore confine himself to stating that the United Kingdom authorities had granted to the people of Libya the same degree of freedom of expression as existed in the United Kingdom itself.

36. The Egyptian representative had suggested that the unity of Libya in the form intended by the General Assembly had not been achieved, and that unwanted institutions had been forcibly imposed on the Libyan people who had been denied the right to express their views through the elections. He thought that most members of the Committee would realize that such suggestions were entirely without foundation, and recalled that the General Assembly had specifically stated that the word "unity" which appeared in its resolution 289 (IV) adopted in 1949 was not intended to suggest any particular form of union.

37. One of the basic principles of that resolution had been the determination by the Libyan people themselves of the form and structure of their future government, and that principle had been faithfully honoured by the administering Powers. The Libyans themselves had decided through their National Assembly to adopt a federal structure for their country. The National Assembly itself had been established by a Preparatory Committee of Twenty-One, selected and not elected, in deference to the views of a majority of the members of the Council for Libya, including the Egyptian member. The President of the National Congress Party, who had figured so largely in the Egyptian representative's denunciations, had been strongly opposed to making the Committee of Twenty-One an elected body. Opposition to the holding of elections had not come from the administering Power.

38. The Constitution of Libya provided sufficient answer to any accusations that the Kingdom was not united. A strong central government exercised a wide range of powers in the country, and the organic laws which remained to be framed for the provinces would be in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

39. With regard to charges that the United Kingdom was continuing to exercise an unnecessary and preponderant influence in Libya, he stressed the fact that his Government had relinquished all its authority as administering Power and had been scrupulously careful not to infringe upon the independence of the Libyan people in its dealings either with the provisional, or with the present independent Government of the country. The United Kingdom delegation fully shared the view of the Indian representative (51st meeting) that Libya would be unwise if it bartered its freedom for financial aid, and it wished to assure the Committee that the temporary financial agreement concluded between Libya and the United Kingdom in no way limited the independence of the Libyan Government or people. The Libyan economy was in a state of chronic deficit, and it was to remedy that situation that the United Kingdom had put forward its monetary plan. Under that plan the amount required to balance the economy would be contributed, and the United Kingdom merely

asked to be consulted as to that amount. Egypt's suggestion that Libyan economy might be balanced by belt-tightening would result in intolerable hardships for the Libyan people. The agreement with the United Kingdom was an agreement between sovereign States entered into on a basis of equality, but under the Egyptian amendment he felt that Libya would suffer an obvious and certain encroachment upon its sovereignty.

40. With regard to the various draft resolutions before the Committee, Mr. Lloyd felt that he must ask the Committee to reject the implications and purport of the USSR draft resolution. The presence of United Kingdom forces on Libyan soil had been willingly accepted by all classes of Libyans, whose formal opinion would no doubt be expressed by Parliament after the coming elections. The same objections applied to the Egyptian draft resolution.

41. The twelve-Power draft resolution reflected the opinion of countries in all parts of the world. It met the needs of the situation very well, and he saw no point in amending it. He thought that paragraph 2 of the amendment submitted by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen was unnecessary and undesirable. The Government of Libya had already legislated for institutions of its own, and had already received promises of assistance. He felt that it would be improper for the United Nations to try to impose its own plan on an independent country. Similarly, as regards paragraph 3 of the proposed amendment, since provision had already been made for the United Nations Technical Assistance Mission in Libya to make its report in the usual way to the Libyan Government and keep the Technical Assistance Board informed, it would be something of an affront to the newly-independent State to imply that it was not capable of incorporating the Mission's recommendations in an integrated development programme.

42. In conclusion, Mr. Lloyd said that his delegation fully supported the admission to the United Nations of the United Kingdom of Libya, which was certainly qualified under Article 4 of the Charter. He was gratified to note that the majority of the Committee had also expressed their support of Libya's application for membership.

43. Mr. COOPER (United States of America), stating the position of his delegation on the various draft resolutions and the amendment before the Committee, said that, with regard to paragraph 1 of the amendment submitted by the four Powers, he naturally saw no objection to inserting the words "free and democratic", but that they had not appeared strictly necessary. Paragraph 2 of the amendment appeared unduly restrictive, in that it would appear to limit assistance to that which could be furnished through United Nations channels. It tended to ignore basic decisions concerning development already taken by the Libyan Government and the machinery which it had already set up in the form of a Libyan Public Development and Stabilization Agency. All governments able to contribute financially to the Libyan Development

Agency would have a voice in its operation in proportion to the amount of their contribution, and full provision was also made for co-ordination with the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme in Libya. His delegation held the view that Libya should be considered on the same footing as a Member of the United Nations in the matter of grant assistance, but he recalled that many Members, including the United States, had informed the Assembly that they were not at the moment in a position to contribute to a fund for such assistance. At the same time the United States Government intended to do its share in helping the Libyan people to raise its standard of living.

44. With regard to paragraph 3 of the amendment contained in document A/AC.53/L.41, Mr. Cooper felt that it went to the very heart of Libya's future relations with the United Nations, and was not consonant with the sentiment, expressed by several representatives, that Libya should be treated on a basis of equality with all Members of the United Nations.

45. Referring to the draft resolutions of the USSR and Egypt, he recalled that the United States had established air bases in Libya during the Second World War, and had maintained them after the war with the full consent of the administering Power concerned. Temporary arrangements had been made with the Libyan Government for continued use of the bases. As soon as there was a freely elected Libyan Parliament able to take a decision on the matter, it was expected that a formal agreement would be concluded which would be duly registered with the United Nations. Any such agreement would be in full conformity with the Charter and would be designed to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. Mr. Cooper recalled the statement of the representative of Pakistan who had seen no indication that the Libyan people objected to the presence of foreign troops on their soil. Speaking of the Egyptian draft resolution, he said that it was inconsistent with the independence of Libya in that it raised questions which it was for the Libyans to decide by constitutional process. The Egyptian draft resolution would vitiate the very principle of self-determination which it professed to support, and the United States delegation was accordingly opposed to it.

46. Turning to the arguments put forward by the USSR representative, Mr. Cooper reminded the Committee that the reason why the United States Government was obliged to maintain military bases in various parts of the world was the imperialistic and interventionist policy pursued by the USSR since the end of the Second World War. The Soviet Union draft resolution, like others submitted by that delegation, amounted to a demand that the free countries of the world should render themselves helpless while it continued its aggressive policies. He repudiated the accusations made against his Government by the USSR representative, and urged the Committee to reject the latter's draft resolution.

47. Reverting to the twelve-Power draft resolution, the United States representative again drew attention