

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.109/SC.2/SR.45
2 October 1967
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUB-COMMITTEE I

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 6 September 1967, at 11 a.m.

CONTENTS

Military activities by colonial Powers in Territories under their
administration

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Miss SINEGIORGIS	Ethiopia
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. CAWEN	Finland
	Mr. EL ATTRASH	Syria
	Mr. SHAKHOV	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. FOUM	United Republic of Tanzania
	Mr. PEJIC	Yugoslavia
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. POLYAKOV	Secretary of the Sub-Committee

MILITARY ACTIVITIES BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the question being considered by the Sub-Committee was an especially important one, and he recalled that at every stage in the history of colonialism examples of military activities by the imperialist Powers might be found. As was known, the colonial Territories had originally been conquered by force, and conquest had always been followed by the establishment of military bases. That system enabled the colonial Powers to resist the national liberation movements in the conquered Territories. In 1963, the Organization of African Unity had adopted a resolution calling for the dismantling of military bases on African soil, their presence there being, moreover, contrary to the United Nations Charter. In October 1964, the OAU resolution had been endorsed by the Cairo Conference.

According to the United States Press, that country possessed 2,200 military bases in foreign Territories. Among those Territories, colonies had always been regarded as eminently suitable for the establishment of bases, and that was especially true of islands, where it was very easy for the imperialist Powers to establish large-scale facilities without having to be concerned about the small population. In that connexion, the United Kingdom Prime Minister had declared on 15 June 1966 that the United Kingdom wanted to avoid the establishment of large bases in populous regions and that it preferred for that type of installations regions such as the Indian Ocean. A study of the military occupation of colonial Territories showed that the establishment of bases was dictated by strategic motives. At the present time, the strategic interest of the colonial Territories stood out clearly, especially in the case of Guam, where there were large-scale United States bases with some 40,000 officers and men. Aircraft left Guam almost daily for bombing raids on Viet-Nam. Many other examples could be cited.

The maintenance and expansion of foreign military bases in colonial Territories was a matter of deep concern for the Soviet delegation. According to a statement made on 10 February 1965 by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for the Colonies, new bases were being set up for joint use by the United Kingdom and the United States, in violation of General Assembly resolutions and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States had concluded an agreement - not published

(Mr. Shakhov, USSR)

until 25 April 1967 - under which a certain Territory was to remain under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom but was placed for an unspecified period at the disposal of the two Governments for their defence needs. The allies of the United States were also very active in that regard, and the Marshall, Caroline and Mariana Islands were being used for experiments with nuclear vehicles. New Guinea, in turn, was being used by the Australian Government for its aggressive plans against Viet-Nam; since 1965, military expenditure in Papua and New Guinea had increased considerably. Although a military establishment already existed there, new harbour facilities were under construction, which was a clear indication that the Australian Government intended to maintain its domination. Those Territories undoubtedly needed economic assistance, but not military installations.

The United Kingdom base in Aden was used to protect foreign interests in that region and also to maintain United Kingdom control over the oil deposits of the Persian Gulf. Recently, an additional battalion had been sent to Aden by the United Kingdom Government, which had stated that it would shortly send another battalion in order to strengthen its forces there. According to U.S. News and World Report, there were more than 12,500 United Kingdom officers and men in Aden. The United Kingdom Foreign Secretary had said that his Government intended to maintain a considerable military force in Southern Arabia even after the Territory had become independent.

The situation with regard to military bases was almost the same in Latin America, the Bahamas, Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Panama. Puerto Rico, in particular, represented a key strategic position for United States defence in the Caribbean. United States naval bases occupied 73 per cent of the territory of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. In December 1965, the director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency had stated that the United States did not want to include Puerto Rico in the denuclearized zone because of the direct ties existing between Puerto Rico and the United States.

The largest base in the Bahamas was on the island of Andros, which, since April 1966, had been used for submarine weapon tests. In Grand Bahama, San Salvador was used for the launching of rockets. The geographical situation of those islands made them very important to NATO. The United States also had two bases in Bermuda, and bases on the Turks and Caicos Islands and in St. Lucia.

/...

In Southern Rhodesia, too, large-scale military bases had been established in order to crush the national liberation movements. In the Territories administered by one of the partners of Southern Rhodesia and of the Republic of South Africa, namely, Portugal, events had shown that certain NATO Powers had induced that colonial Power to use its military bases not only for crushing the national liberation movements but also for committing acts of provocation against independent African States. Portugal's plans were carefully co-ordinated with those of South Africa, as was apparent from the recent establishment by the latter country of an airbase in South West Africa, not far from the Zambian frontier, at a cost of £8 million sterling. The United Kingdom was continuing its collaboration with the Republic of South Africa in the joint use of the naval base at Simonstown. On 1 March 1966, a foreign affairs official of the Republic of South Africa had stated that the strategic situation of South Africa was such that its ports could be used for military purposes, and in particular by the United States fleet for the provisioning of ships going to or coming from Viet-Nam.

The influence of the Federal Republic of Germany was also being increasingly felt in Africa. Under an agreement it had concluded with South Africa, Germany had built scientific and military installations in South West Africa.

Gibraltar, with its large naval and air installations and its garrison, was also a threat to Africa. The United Kingdom and NATO had recently started to build new strategic bases there, and the United States was thinking of establishing a base there for submarines armed with Polaris-type nuclear weapons.

The colonial Powers had refused to give information to the Sub-Committee on the pretext that their military activities were absolutely no impediment to decolonization. The opposite, however, was true. Not only could military installations, like those in Angola and Mozambique, be used as bases for reprisals against peoples struggling for independence, but they were also a threat to the security of the new States and a means of interfering in their domestic affairs. Examples that could be mentioned were the Guantanamo base in Cuba, the United States bases in Libya and the military installations that the United Kingdom was retaining in Cyprus under an agreement it had signed in 1959. President Makarios himself had admitted that those bases restricted Cyprus's independence and should be dismantled. The military installations also had a harmful economic effect on the Territories. Fertile land was expropriated and used for the construction of

(Mr. Shakhov, USSR)

airfields and other installations. In the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under United States administration, nearly 50 per cent of the land had been expropriated for military purposes, and in the Marshall Islands, the inhabitants did not now own more than 20 per cent of the land. The situation was much the same in the West Indies. In 1967, an Act had been promulgated in the Bahamas which facilitated the acquisition of land by the United Kingdom and the United States for the construction of launching pads for long-range missiles. In addition, many of the inhabitants who might be playing a productive role in the economy of the Territories had to work in the military bases; that was so in Guam and also in Gibraltar. By depriving the Territories of their future key personnel, the presence of military installations was threatening their economic future and delaying their independence.

Some of the bases, moreover, were a direct threat to the independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The United States, the United Kingdom and Australia not only disregarded the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly asking them to dismantle their military bases in colonial Territories and not to build new ones, but they were enlarging their existing military installations and actually building new ones. The Soviet delegation therefore proposed that the Sub-Committee should:

- (1) condemn the use by the United States of the military bases on Guam, which it was using to fight the national liberation movement in South Viet-Nam and to attack the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, and the use of other bases in colonial Territories for action against the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America who were struggling for their independence; (2) condemn the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia for refusing to carry out the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly resolutions 2105 (XX) and 2189 (XX), and demand that they fully implement those resolutions, which would be an important step forward towards the decolonization of the Territories in question; (3) condemn the steps taken by the United Kingdom to dismember the Territory of Mauritius and the plans of the United Kingdom and the United States to build military bases in Territories administered by the United Kingdom, and particularly on United Kingdom territory in the Indian Ocean, in violation of General Assembly resolutions 2066 (XX) and 2232 (XXI); and (4) request the colonial Powers to cease

expropriating land for military purposes, and thus stop wasting the Territories' resources and impeding their economic development.

The Soviet delegation urged the Sub-Committee to give those proposals careful study when considering its report to the Special Committee.

Mr. FOUM (United Republic of Tanzania) asked what kind of report the Sub-Committee would submit to the Special Committee. He recalled in that connexion the proposal made by him at the previous meeting that, owing to the refusal of the colonial Powers to co-operate and to the paucity of data available to the Sub-Committee, detailed consideration of that question should be deferred, although any members who so wished should be given an opportunity to speak at any time on the question which was one of the items on the Sub-Committee's agenda. It might therefore be advisable for the Sub-Committee, in its report to the Special Committee, simply to say that it had begun its consideration of military activities by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration but that, because of the scarcity of information and lack of time, it had been unable to go into the matter thoroughly and would continue its consideration of it at the next session.

The CHAIRMAN endorsed the Tanzanian representative's proposal and said that, if there were no objections, she would take it that the Sub-Committee accepted his proposal regarding the Sub-Committee's report to the Special Committee.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.