

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

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## AD HOC POLITICAL COMMITTEE 2nd

MEETING

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Chairman: Mr. Selim SÄRPER (Turkey).

#### Threats to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece : (a) report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (A/1857, A/AC.53/L.2, A/AC.53/L.3) (continued)

[Item 19]\*

1. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) felt that in taking a decision at the previous meeting on the USSR draft resolution (A/AC.53/L.1)<sup>1</sup> concerning the remission of the death sentences passed by military courts in Athens against Greek patriots, the Chairman had not respected the rules of procedure. By its very nature, the question could not be settled by a ruling from the Chair. Such a ruling could only be given on the interpretation of a rule of procedure, or on the question of which rule should apply in a particular case. A question of substance or of competence could not be settled by the Chair.

2. Moreover, the Chairman had not allowed the representative of the Polish delegation to speak before the vote was taken. The comments which that delegation had wished to make concerned the vote itself, and were therefore on a point of order and had priority over all other matters. He regretted that from the very first meeting the Chairman had paid no regard to the rules of procedure, particularly rules 112 and 127, even in connexion with a question of basic importance which affected the fate and indeed the lives of human beings. The Polish delegation felt obliged to protest against the attitude of the Chair and wished to have its protest entered in the summary record of the meeting.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that the Polish representative's remarks would be included in the summary record. He wished to recall that according to rule 97 of the rules of procedure, "Items relating to the same

category of subjects shall be referred to the committee or committees dealing with that category of subjects. Committees shall not introduce new items on their own initiative". Such were the express provisions of the rule on which the Chair had based its attitude.

4. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) said that rule 97 did not apply to the USSR draft resolution. The question of the death sentences passed by the military courts in Athens on Greek patriots was not in any way new since it had already been examined on a number of occasions. Resolutions had even been adopted on it and the President of the 1948 session of the Assembly, Mr. Evatt, had been successful in obtaining the remission of certain death sentences. Moreover, the United Nations Commission on the Balkans had been in touch with the Greek patriots under arrest.

5. The CHAIRMAN gave the floor to the Greek representative.

6. Mr. POLITIS (Greece) recalled that as early as 1946 the Greek Government had noted that the guerrilla bands which, in increasing numbers, were committing acts of terrorism on Greek territory, were not scattered groups left over from the communist revolt suppressed in January 1945; their activities were in fact part of a vast subversive campaign planned and supported from abroad. As a sincere and loyal Member of the United Nations, Greece had thought it its duty to bring the matter before the Security Council. The Council had sent a commission of investigation to Greece and, on the basis of that commission's conclusions, the General Assembly, by its resolution 109 (II), had set up the Special Committee on the Balkans which for four years had worked with exemplary diligence, authority, objectivity and impartiality. Mr. Politis recalled the devotion to duty of the teams of observers, three of whom had been wounded by shots fired from neighbouring territory and he wished to express his Government's gratitude to them.

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

<sup>1</sup> The text of this draft resolution is reproduced in the summary record of the 1st meeting.

7. The Special Committee had been unable to carry out certain of its terms of reference because the neighbouring countries had refused that frank and whole-hearted co-operation which was expected of them, showing regrettable lack of respect to the Committee and thus to the United Nations as a whole. Nevertheless, the Special Committee's perseverance had not been in vain. It had served to bring out the true intentions of the various parties and show clearly where the responsibility lay. It was impossible, therefore, to lay too much stress on the importance of the service rendered by the Special Committee to the cause of peace. The high aim which it had set itself and the efforts it had made to achieve that aim as objectively and conscientiously as possible were evidence of the moral principles on which the entire United Nations was founded.

8. In its determination to get to the bottom of the question, the Special Committee had succeeded in dispelling the obscurity and confusion which were the chief weapons of the subversive elements. It had destroyed a myth built up of lies and slander, and by doing justice to the victim it had wrought justice upon the aggressors. The moral aid bestowed upon Greece had been valuable in itself and had achieved most important practical results. By being on the spot, the Special Committee had been able to thwart fraud and intrigue promptly and to deal more effectively with subversive activities.

9. As the Special Committee's report showed, the danger persisted but the power of the Greek people to resist had developed considerably and it seemed every day more unlikely that there could be any resurgence of subversive activity. It would seem therefore that to maintain a United Nations Special Committee in Greece was a precaution out of proportion to the possible danger and placed too heavy a burden on the Organization. The Greek delegation had therefore submitted a draft resolution (A/AC.52/L.2) which congratulated the Special Committee on the way in which it had carried out its duties and provided that it should be discontinued within sixty days of the adoption of the resolution. In addition, in accordance with the opinion of the Special Committee on the Balkans that "the General Assembly consider the advisability of maintaining United Nations vigilance over the Balkans, in the light of the present nature of the threat to peace in that area", the Greek delegation had joined with the delegations of France, the United States, Mexico and the United Kingdom in submitting a further draft resolution (A/AC.53/L.3).

10. Sir Gladwyn JEBB (United Kingdom) warmly supported the Greek draft resolution. It was proposed that the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans should be discontinued, not because it had been unable to do the work assigned to it, but because its success had rendered its further existence unnecessary.

11. In 1946, the Greek Government had been harassed by the guerrillas, with the support of the countries on the other side of the frontier. The Greek army by its

courageous efforts had soon brought about an improvement in the situation. In 1949, that army had put an end to all large-scale guerrilla activities and since then the small and scattered bands of guerrillas left in the country had been continually harried. The United Nations Special Committee and its observers, who were deployed along the northern frontiers of Greece, had been a great help to the Greek Government. The Committee, by means of the observation machinery which it had set up, had been able to keep the world informed on the situation in the northern frontier and on the foreign help given to the Greek guerrillas. The activities of the subversive elements had thus been exposed by what was obviously an impartial body.

12. The situation in which the Special Committee on the Balkans had been set up had ceased to exist; the Greek Government was now master in its own house and no longer wished to be the object of special United Nations concern. It had therefore proposed the termination of the Special Committee. The United Kingdom delegation supported that proposal and hoped that the General Assembly would pay a handsome tribute to the Special Committee and to its gallant observers, some of whom had actually lost their lives in the cause of peace. It was thanks to their sacrifices that the work of the Special Committee had been one of the major successes of the United Nations.

13. Although the further existence of the Special Committee appeared to be unnecessary, it would be wise to continue to bear in mind the general situation in the area. Even if the United Nations no longer had direct representatives in the Balkans, they might set up a special Balkan sub-commission, to sit in New York, which would be in a position to send observers to any Balkan country provided that that country wished it to do so. That was the sense of the joint draft resolution (A/AC.53/L.3) which was being submitted to the Committee.

14. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) felt that the United Nations could take pride in the work it had done to preserve the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece. Its efforts had not been in vain; there had been a marked improvement since 1949. Although incidents continued to occur, they were significantly reduced in scope and importance. The people and the army of Greece had borne the major burden in freeing Greece from the externally-supported guerrilla warfare. The Special Committee on the Balkans, by its vigilance along the Greek frontier, had deterred would-be aggressors against Greece. The improvement in the situation, and especially the improvement in Greek-Yugoslav relations, had permitted Greece to devote more of its energy to the work of national recovery.

15. The nature of the threat to Greece had changed, as was brought out in the Special Committee's report. It was now part of the general tension of the Balkan area, due chiefly to the subversive activities of the Cominform and its use of economic and political pressure.

16. The United States had always been deeply interested in the welfare and the freedom of the Greek people and had helped them to maintain that freedom. The Special Committee, by its watchfulness, had helped materially to reduce the likelihood of any renewal of externally supported guerrilla warfare. It has set before the world a true picture of the relations between Greece and its northern neighbours, including the States of central and eastern Europe, and had convincingly disproved the charges that Greece was preparing some form of aggression against them. The Special Committee had thus made a significant contribution to world peace and security.

17. Thus the United States delegation agreed with the Greek delegation that it would now be an appropriate time to bring the work of the Special Committee to a close.

18. At the same time it would be rash, in the light of the present tension in the Balkans for the United Nations, to relax all watchfulness over that area. That point was brought out in the report of the Special Committee to the General Assembly dated 15 August 1951. Hence, in the opinion of the United States delegation, the United Nations would be well advised to set up a sub-commission, under the terms of resolution 377 B (V) entitled "Uniting for Peace" of the previous year, which would be authorized to send United Nations observers to areas of tension in the Balkans at the request of one or more Balkan countries without any further decision by the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Interim Committee. The sub-commission could sit at United Nations Headquarters and should be authorized to consider the data submitted to it, and to make such reports to the Peace Observation Commission and to the Secretary General for the information of Members as it deemed necessary.

19. While wishing to believe that none of the Balkan countries would have to apply for the services of the proposed new body, Mr. Cohen urged the members of the Committee to support the joint draft resolution setting up the sub-commission so that the United Nations would be able to provide observation, if needed, in the Balkans without delay.

20. Mr. SALAZAR (Dominican Republic) said that the Government and people of the Dominican Republic were deeply concerned at the situation created in the Balkans by the constant attacks made there against the principles of international order and the right of peoples to self-determination. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the Greek delegation and the joint draft resolution submitted by France, Greece, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States.

21. Mr. CASTRO (El Salvador) stated that his delegation would have been unable to support the Greek draft resolution without the proviso that at least one observer would be maintained on the spot, but the joint draft resolution fully satisfied it in that respect. If that draft were adopted the sub-commission to be set up would be authorized to send observers to

Greece or any neighbouring country. The joint draft resolution thus complemented the Greek proposal and the delegation of El Salvador would be able to support both draft resolutions which were before the Committee.

22. Mr. CASTRO emphasized that the special Balkan sub-commission should be able not only to send observers but itself to travel to the Balkans in the event of a serious threat to the territorial integrity or political independence of any of the countries in that region.

23. Mr. GUELL (Cuba) remarked that his country's policy was based on the observation of four great principles: the right of peoples to self-determination; non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States; respect for human rights; and respect for the contractual obligations of Member States towards the international community.

24. In the name of those principles his delegation would support the two draft resolutions before the Committee.

25. Mr. MACEDO (Uruguay) said that it was a source of satisfaction to him that a draft resolution was being submitted for the establishment of a Balkan sub-commission. The control provided for by that draft resolution would not affect Greek sovereignty in any way. His delegation would therefore support it.

26. Mr. PATIJN (Netherlands) asked whether the sub-commission which it was proposed to set up would be entitled to send observers to any part of the Balkans where serious international tension might arise without having to refer to the Peace Observation Commission. The sub-commission should be authorized to take speedy action if circumstances called for it. He asked the authors of the draft resolution for further information on the subject.

27. Mr. COHEN (United States) said that he had not had an opportunity to discuss that particular point with his colleagues. However, his delegation interpreted sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of the joint draft resolution as authorizing the sub-commission to act immediately at the request of any interested State.

28. Mr. POLITIS (Greece) agreed with the United States representative's interpretation of the joint draft resolution. In his opinion it was clearly understood that the sub-commission would have full authority to send observers to the area at the request of the countries concerned.

29. Mr. LAMALLE (Belgium) felt that the proposal before the Committee was such as to guarantee the possibility of taking whatever action might be required. His delegation would therefore support the Greek draft resolution and the joint draft resolution.

30. Mr. SEVILLASACASA (Nicaragua) paid tribute to the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans for the manner in which it had performed its task. If it were discontinued he felt that it would be essential to replace it by another organ. For that reason he warmly supported the joint draft resolution and the Greek draft resolution.

31. MOSTAFA Bey (Egypt), as representative of an Arab State, wished first to express his delegation's deep sympathy with the Greek people, who had suffered severe hardships in recent years. His delegation would support the Greek draft resolution to discontinue the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans. The Egyptian representative wished to express his admiration for the work the Special Committee had accomplished. He thought it would be useful to replace it by a Balkan sub-commission, as proposed in the joint draft resolution. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of both drafts.

32. Mr. GUACHALA (Bolivia) said that it was clear from the Special Committee's report that threats to international peace and security had not entirely ceased in the Balkans. It was therefore unwise simply to discontinue the Special Committee. However, as the joint draft resolution provided for the establishment of a Balkan sub-commission to supervise the situation in that area, the Bolivian delegation would support both that and the Greek draft resolution.

33. Mr. TAKIEDDINE (Lebanon) supported the two draft resolutions before the Committee and associated himself whole-heartedly with the Egyptian representative's expressions of sympathy for the Greek people.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that the list of speakers had been exhausted and therefore proposed to adjourn the meeting.

35. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that it would be premature to close the discussion of the report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans. He intended to make a statement on the question at the next meeting.

36. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) hoped that the discussion was not closed as the draft resolutions submitted to the Committee required careful examination. He intended to speak on them at the next

meeting or at a subsequent one. In the meantime he asked to have certain new documents distributed to members of the Committee; they included an appeal to the General Assembly and various governments by a group of Greek prisoners at present detained in Crete.

37. Mr. POLITIS (Greece) recalled the decision taken by the Chairman at the previous meeting and asked that, before distribution, the documents referred to by the Polish representative should be examined to determine whether they were really relevant to the question under consideration. If not, there was no reason for prolonging the discussion.

38. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) pointed out that the customary procedure of Committees was always to accede to a request by a delegation or group of delegations to have documents published and distributed to members of a Committee, whether relevant or not. The document which he wished to have distributed amounted to a few pages only; they would not appreciably delay the discussion and would, furthermore, throw new light upon it.

39. Mr. POLITIS (Greece) said that it was for the Chairman to judge whether the documents which the Polish representative wished to have published and circulated were relevant to the question under discussion or not. If they were, he had no objection to their distribution; the important point was not to hold up the discussion.

40. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in accordance with his decision at the previous meeting, which had been confirmed by the Committee, he would not allow a discussion to be opened which was irrelevant to the question before the Committee. The Polish delegation's proposal would be studied by the Secretariat and the Chairman and appropriate action taken.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.