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AGENDA ITEM 93

Question of Cyprus (A/C.1/L.336/Rev.1, L.341 and Add.1 and 2, L.342/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2):

(a) Letter dated 13 July 1965 from the representative of Cyprus (A/5934 and Add.1);

(b) Letter dated 21 July 1965 from the representative of Turkey (A/5938 and Add.1)

GENERAL DEBATE

1. Mr. KYPRIANOU (Cyprus) said that his people had been anxiously and patiently awaiting the General Assembly's debate on the question of Cyprus, which, it was generally agreed, would contribute decisively to a final solution to the problem based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. Some, perhaps, might regard the question of Cyprus as another problem which would conveniently be settled by bargaining and compromise. But the Cypriot people could not enter into any compromise affecting its basic right to complete freedom and had decided to place its trust in the United Nations, whose Charter was primarily designed to protect the rights and interests of small States.

2. Though efforts had been made to represent the question of Cyprus as a complicated issue, objective analysis would show that it was a very simple one. It was regrettable and totally unacceptable that a State Member of the United Nations should be placed in a position which in effect implied the virtual denial of its basic sovereign rights; and the question of Cyprus was simply the question whether a State admitted as a Member of the United Nations without any conditions or reservations should or should not be allowed to enjoy the same rights and privileges as other Member States. That was the sole issue before the Committee; but as subsequent speakers would in all probability refer to the developments which had led to the present crisis, he wished himself briefly to describe how the problem of Cyprus had been created and how—in spite of its simplicity—it had been made to appear complicated.

3. Cyprus had through the ages been occupied by many foreign Powers; and the present situation in the country was the aftermath of Turkish and United Kingdom occupation. In 1878 the Ottoman Empire, which had occupied Cyprus since 1571, had handed it over to Great Britain under an arrangement concluded in complete disregard of the wishes and interests of the Cypriot people. On the outbreak of the First World War, Cyprus had been annexed to the British Empire, and in 1925 it had formally been declared a British Crown Colony. By that time, Turkey had, under the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923,^{1/} solemnly relinquished its rights to the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, including Cyprus. When Cyprus was declared a British Crown Colony, the Turkish population of the island—descendants of members of the Turkish occupation force and expatriates from Turkey—had been invited to choose between repatriation to Turkey or permanent settlement in Cyprus, and a number of them had elected to remain in Cyprus. At that time, it had never been intended or expected that the Turkish minority would become the arbiters of the country's destiny; and for some years the Turks in Cyprus had intermingled with the Cypriot people and lived in peace and harmony with them.

4. Responsibility for upsetting that harmony and fomenting friction between the Turkish minority and the people of Cyprus lay with the United Kingdom Government. In 1955, after a long and unsuccessful attempt to attain their freedom by peaceful methods, the people of Cyprus had taken up arms against the colonial Power; and the United Kingdom Government, in its effort to thwart the Cypriot people's aspirations for self-determination, had resorted to the familiar colonial practice of "divide and rule". It had exploited the presence in Cyprus of the Turkish minority, and had sought assistance from Turkey itself in obstructing the natural trend of events in Cyprus. After some hesitation, the Turkish Government had accepted the invitation to intervene in Cyprus, in defiance of its solemn undertakings under the Treaty of Lausanne; and a certain section of the Turkish minority in Cyprus had become the instrument both of United Kingdom colonialism and of a new expansionist tendency in Turkey. The United Kingdom Government, which in 1954 had declared that Cyprus would never attain independence, had then felt able to modify its position, and had threatened that if self-determination were ever to be applied in Cyprus the result would be the partition of the island, since the Turkish minority would be offered the right of self-determination separately. That threat might have been intended to discourage the Cypriot people's struggle for freedom; but its

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

consequences had been quite different. Instead, the partition of Cyprus had become an objective of Turkish foreign policy, and a number of Turkish Cypriots had taken up arms against the Cypriot freedom fighters, while the so-called Turkish leadership had advocated either partition or the continuation of United Kingdom colonial rule.

5. Those historical facts were not the main criteria on which the General Assembly should base its decision on the question of Cyprus—the essential criteria were, surely, the principles of the United Nations Charter itself—but they might help the members of the Committee to understand how the so-called Zurich and London agreements, which had been imposed on Cyprus in 1959 before its attainment of independence, had come to be concluded. It was often asserted that the Zurich and London agreements had been freely signed by the representatives of the Cypriot people; but the truth was that the Cypriot people's representatives had signed them only because the sole alternative had been the continued denial of independence and freedom, continued bloodshed and, possibly, the forced partition of Cyprus. The Constitution provided for under the agreements had divided the people into two communities on the basis of ethnic origin; and it had given the Turkish minority in Cyprus, which constituted only 18 per cent of the population, the right of veto in foreign affairs, defence, security and fiscal measures—which amounted to a denial of democratic rule. The Agreements had also provided for the stationing in Cyprus of troops from Greece and Turkey, allegedly for the defence of the island; and they had given Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom the right to intervene in the internal administration of Cyprus and in its external relations with other countries. Even the Constitution itself could not be amended by the people of Cyprus without the consent of those three foreign Powers. Finally, the United Kingdom Government had been entitled under the agreements to retain two areas of Cyprus territory under its sovereign control for use as military bases.

6. In short, the so-called Zurich and London agreements had been in direct conflict with the basic principles of international law and morality, with the principles of the United Nations Charter and with the right of every State to full sovereignty and independence; they had authorized foreign Powers to intervene to an unprecedented extent in the domestic affairs of an independent State Member of the United Nations; and they had violated the internationally accepted principles of democratic government, majority rule, and equality among citizens. Even the United Nations Mediator on Cyprus, in paragraph 163 of his report,^{2/} had described the 1960 Constitution, created by the Zurich and London agreements, as "a constitutional oddity"; and in paragraph 129 he had stated that difficulties in implementing the Treaties^{3/} signed on the basis of those agreements had begun almost immediately after independence.

^{2/} Official Records of the Security Council, Twentieth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1965, document S/6253.

^{3/} Treaty of Guarantee (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 382 (1960), No. 5475); Treaty concerning the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (*ibid.*, No. 5476); Treaty of Alliance between the Kingdom of Greece, the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus (*ibid.*, vol. 397 (1961), No. 5712).

7. Nevertheless, the people of Cyprus had done their best to ensure the smooth functioning of the new State; but their efforts had been doomed to failure. In November 1963 the President of the Republic of Cyprus, in a sincere desire to improve the situation, had suggested thirteen amendments to the Constitution, amendments not involving any of the radical changes which had been necessitated by subsequent events but designed rather to remove some of the more obvious causes of friction. Those amendments had been submitted to the leaders of the Turkish minority in Cyprus; but before the latter had had a chance to consider them, the Turkish Government—to which they had not been submitted—had dismissed them as unacceptable. In December 1963 there had been a more ominous reaction from the Turkish Government—the rebellion against the State launched by the Turkish underground organization in Cyprus, and threats of invasion and acts of aggression by Turkey itself, which had seized the President's proposals for amending the Constitution as an excuse for putting into effect its long-prepared plan for the partition of Cyprus.

8. The Vice-President and other Turkish members of the Government of Cyprus had then withdrawn from the Government to head the rebellion against the State, the Vice-President publicly declaring that the Republic of Cyprus had ceased to exist. On the false and outrageous pretext that the Government of Cyprus and its forces were about to annihilate the Turkish minority, the agents of Turkey in Cyprus, controlled by Turkish officers from Turkey, had resorted to the forcible movement of sections of the Turkish population—not for their protection, as had been hypocritically asserted at the time, but in order to bring about a geographical separation of the Turkish minority from the Cypriot people, in preparation for eventual partition. The Turkish contingent stationed in Cyprus under the so-called Treaty of Alliance had assisted the rebels by moving out of its barracks and illegally deploying north of Nicosia in hostile occupation of Cyprus territory; and it was still so deployed.

9. In January 1964, in view of the serious situation resulting from the fighting in Cyprus, the threats and acts of intervention and aggression from outside and the forcible movements of population, the United Kingdom Government had called a conference in London to seek a solution to the problem. But a few days after the conference had started it had become clear that its purpose was to persuade the Cyprus Government to agree to the dispatch to Cyprus of NATO troops for the ostensible purpose of maintaining law and order, and to the establishment of an inter-governmental committee to issue directives to the troops. Whatever might have been the motives and intentions of the various countries submitting that proposal, the representatives of Cyprus had realized that it would inevitably result in the occupation of Cyprus by foreign troops and in the replacement of the authority of the Cyprus Government by that of the so-called intergovernmental committee, which would have made it easier for Turkish agents in Cyprus to pursue their plans for the geographical separation of the Turkish minority. In fact, that was precisely what the Turkish representatives had demanded at the opening of the London conference; but the representatives of Cyprus had opposed that plan and all similar plans sub-

mitted to them, and the Cyprus Government had finally succeeded in bringing the matter before the United Nations. To do so, it had had to resist pressure brought to bear from several quarters. At one point, it had even been told that an appeal to the Security Council would be sufficient reason for Turkey to invade Cyprus; and during the entire period the threat of Turkish invasion had been constant, with Turkish military aircraft flying over Cyprus, and Turkish war material and trained officers and men landed on the island.

10. In its resolution 186 (1964) of 4 March 1964, the Security Council, while recommending that a United Nations peace-keeping force should be established in Cyprus to prevent a recurrence of fighting and contribute to a return to normal conditions, had fully affirmed the authority of the Cyprus Government and the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. But in spite of the specific reference in the resolution to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, Turkish threats and acts of aggression and intervention had continued, culminating in the bombings of Cyprus in August 1964.

11. The United Nations Peace-keeping Force had succeeded, with a few exceptions, in averting a recurrence of fighting; but it had not been able to implement fully its mandate to ensure a return to normal conditions. Normal conditions did exist in the area controlled by the Government—more than 98 per cent of the territory of the Republic—but they did not exist in the few scattered and small pockets controlled by Turkish agents, where a section of the Turkish minority was being detained by its so-called leaders by methods of intimidation and oppression. Almost daily, Turkish Cypriots were escaping from those enclaves and seeking the protection of the Government, and representatives of the United Nations in Cyprus were free and welcome to interview them. The majority of Turkish Cypriots were now living outside the Turkish-controlled enclaves; and in spite of constant provocation by Turkish agents there had been scarcely any incidents for a considerable time.

12. The terms of reference of the United Nations Mediator in Cyprus and the results of the mediation effort were both matters which should more appropriately be discussed in the Security Council; but in order to prove that Turkey was not interested in finding a lasting solution to the problem of Cyprus based on the principles of the United Nations Charter he was obliged to refer to the issue of mediation in his present statement.

13. Although it had certain reservations, the Cypriot Government regarded the report of the United Nations Mediator^{4/} as very constructive, and would continue to co-operate with him. The Mediator had reached the conclusion that the problem could not be resolved by the restoration of the situation that had existed prior to December 1963 but only by a new solution. As had been stressed in Security Council resolution 186 (1964), such a solution must be in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the well-being of the people of Cyprus as a whole. In paragraph 130 of his report, the Mediator had enumerated

the provisions of the Charter which seemed particularly relevant. In paragraph 132, he had stressed that the Republic of Cyprus was a sovereign, independent State. He had expressed the view, in paragraph 155, that the physical division of the minority from the majority in that country might be "a desperate step in the wrong direction". Such a division was implied in the "federation" advocated by the Turkish Government, which would inevitably lead to partition. But partition was the objective which Turkey had always sought; indeed, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mr. Erkin, had recommended the cession of part of Cyprus to Greece and part to Turkey. Lastly, the Mediator's recommendations on the protection of individual and minority rights had been amply met in the Cyprus Government's declaration of intention (A/6039).

14. The Turkish Government and its agents among the Turkish Cypriots had rejected the Mediator's report and had even gone so far as to state that they considered that his functions as a mediator had come to an end. The aptest comment on that action had been the Secretary-General's statement that in his view the Mediator had in no way exceeded his terms of reference and would continue in office.^{5/} The attitude of the Turkish Government had once again illustrated its unwillingness to work for a genuine United Nations solution, as distinct from spurious solutions worked out in secrecy within other bodies in which Cyprus did not participate.

15. In the variety of guarantees it afforded and the recognition it extended to minority rights, the Cyprus Government's declaration of intention constituted a most far-reaching act of goodwill, demonstrating its sincerity towards all the minorities in Cyprus, and more particularly the Turkish minority; it might well be asked whether Turkey would be prepared to offer the same rights and guarantees to the minorities living in Turkey. At a time when it was being accused of planning to exterminate its Turkish citizens, Cyprus was offering them not only full human rights and special minority rights but also a United Nations presence and United Nations guarantees.

16. The fact that the indigenous population of Cyprus was Greek was neither a secret nor a crime, but a historical fact. Turkey, aware of the fact that the union of Cyprus with Greece might not be considered politically desirable by certain countries, was trying to exploit that fact and use it to promote the Turkish objective of denying Cyprus full sovereignty and independence and promoting the partition of the island. Turkey had been ready to agree to the union of Cyprus with Greece, provided that it obtained some form of territorial compensation; but the people of Cyprus would not choose the kind of union with Greece and the conditions of union which Turkey and some others wanted. In 1964, Turkey had negotiated with Greece at Geneva on the basis of the Acheson Plan, which had provided for the union of Cyprus with Greece, for two Turkish cantons in Cyprus and for a Turkish military base in Cyprus. If that Turkish diplomatic manoeuvre succeeded, the United Nations

^{4/} See footnote 2.

^{5/} See Official Records of the Security Council, Twentieth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1965, document S/6267.

would be committing one of the greatest injustices in history at the expense of a small State.

17. The issue before the Committee was not whether Cyprus should or should not be united or associate with some other country but whether it was entitled to its rights under the United Nations Charter, whether interference in the internal affairs of Cyprus should be tolerated and whether Cyprus was an equal Member of the United Nations. If Cyprus was made a second-class Member, that might set a precedent for other States; the cause of Cyprus was the cause of all small States in the United Nations.

18. Mr. TOSCANO (Italy) said that his country was very much concerned with the maintenance of peace in the eastern Mediterranean area, and was prepared to co-operate in achieving a final settlement of the question of Cyprus.

19. The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) had halted overt warfare and helped to restore some measure of stability. But fighting might break out again at any moment over a minor provocation; and that dangerous situation could not be permitted to continue. Moreover, many countries were no longer prepared to sustain the financial burden of contributing to the Force.

20. It was an essential prerequisite for negotiations that there should be an improvement in the local situation and in relations between the various communities; if the negotiations for a final settlement were conducted in a troubled atmosphere they would have no real chance of success. The key to a settlement lay with the parties directly concerned.

21. The Committee's best course would be to approve a procedural resolution which would promote the necessary conditions for negotiations. In addition, the resolution should suggest some time-table for constructive negotiations and encourage efforts to find a solution acceptable to all three parties concerned. What was needed was gradual progress in the course of which a plan could be drawn up which would enable the peoples of Cyprus to shape a new future, based on acceptance of the unchangeable results of history and geography.

22. Mr. KANO (Nigeria) said that Cyprus should be unreservedly accepted as a sovereign and independent nation, with all that implied under international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It followed that the people of Cyprus should be free to determine their political future without any foreign intervention or any kind of interference in their internal affairs. It had to be recognized however, that there were serious problems in Cyprus, problems which must be solved with the least possible delay. The main problem was how to reconcile the two ethnic groups on the island so that they could live together in harmony. Nigeria believed that such a reconciliation could be achieved if each ethnic group stopped looking beyond Cyprus for a protector and accepted United Nations mediation and a United Nations presence.

23. The Nigerian delegation had deep respect for international instruments and believed in the sanctity of treaties. It did not, however, think that treaties were so sacrosanct that they could not be reviewed or renegotiated if they proved unworkable. The international instruments might have been suitable in the circumstances prevailing at the time of their signature, but they had since proved unworkable. All the parties should therefore renegotiate them in good faith on the basis of international equality and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter. It was encouraging to note that those concerned seemed to recognize the need for negotiations. The Turkish draft resolution (A/C.1/L.336/Rev.1), in operative paragraphs 1 (c) and 2, referred to the need for an agreed solution through negotiation. The Nigerian delegation was convinced that given goodwill and a spirit of accommodation an agreed solution could be found.

24. It was because of that conviction that Nigeria had joined with other countries in submitting a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.342/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2). The mediation work of the United Nations, to which the draft resolution referred, should result in an agreed negotiated settlement and a lasting solution to the problems of Cyprus. Nigeria's only interest in the matter was the future happiness and welfare of all the citizens of Cyprus, regardless of their ethnic origin.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.