

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Chairman: Mr. Rodolfo MUNOZ (Argentina).

## Question of the renewal of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/2219 and Corr.1, A/C.4/212, A/C.4/L.223/Rev.1, A/C.4/L.225) (*continued*)

[Item 34]\*

1. Mr. KHALIDY (Iraq) informed the Committee that the group of delegations which had been trying to reach a compromise between the twenty-one-Power amendment (A/C.4/212) and the amendment proposed by the United States and Venezuela (A/C.4/L.223) unfortunately had not been successful and the two amendments therefore remained before the Committee.

2. Mr. RIVAS (Venezuela) said that his delegation would support any wording that would ensure the continuation of the Committee on Information. Some progress had been made, and the United States delegation had agreed to revise the joint amendment. The United States-Venezuelan proposal now (A/C.4/L.223/Rev.1) was that the phrase "for a further three-year period, and at the end of that period, unless otherwise decided by the General Assembly, to continue the Committee automatically thereafter for additional three-year periods" should be inserted before the words "for as long as there exist territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government" instead of being substituted for them, thus combining the texts of the two amendments.

3. Mr. KHATTAK (Pakistan) said that his delegation was in favour of the amendment sponsored by Guatemala and twenty other Powers proposing that the Committee on Information should be renewed on a permanent basis. The Committee had done work of the utmost value ever since its establishment. It would be impossible for the Fourth Committee to make a detailed examination of all the reports on conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories received from the administering Members and, at the same session, submit a report to the General Assembly.

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

4. The Belgian representative had said that the Committee's work was useless because its members were not experts on technical problems. However, such technical problems were already dealt with by the different organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations. A general review of the over-all situation could be performed only by a body such as the Committee on Information. Other administering Powers had objected to the Committee on legal grounds. The Pakistani delegation was convinced that it would have to remain in existence as long as there were Non-Self-Governing Territories, since some machinery was needed to help the General Assembly to discharge its obligations towards those territories. The Committee had also been criticized as unrealistic. However, it did not expect the administering Powers to achieve the impossible but simply to discharge their obligations towards the Non-Self-Governing Territories to the best of their ability. To disband the Committee would lead the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to believe that the United Nations had no longer the same interests in their affairs as in the past and the psychological effect would be most unfortunate. The Committee did not seek to put the administering Powers in a defensive position. It merely wanted to help both the administering Powers and the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories by offering constructive suggestions. The point of view of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories might differ from that of the administering Powers and that view could be represented by certain Member States who had been themselves non-self-governing until quite recently.

5. The Pakistani delegation agreed with the Netherlands delegation that there should be continuity in the membership of the Committee on Information. Constant changes in its composition did to some extent affect the Committee's efficiency, although the inclusion of new members brought it freshness of outlook and new vitality. The Pakistani delegation regretted, however, that it could not agree that Western Europe was not properly represented on the Committee. Apart from those Western European countries which were not members of the United Nations, nearly all Western

European countries were members of the Committee on Information as administering Powers.

6. Mr. NAJAR (Israel) considered that the work of the Committee on Information was important not only for technical reasons; the Committee had not been conceived as a kind of secretariat where the representatives of certain Powers could meet and prepare a synthesis of the information submitted in order to facilitate the work of the Fourth Committee. Its importance lay chiefly in the co-operation that existed between the administering and the non-administering Powers and the opportunity it provided for those two groups to air their views before questions came before the Fourth Committee. As the Indian representative had pointed out, there was a constant evolution in the interpretation of Chapter XI in the direction of a more liberal interpretation of the United Nations' tasks in connexion with Non-Self-Governing Territories. The administering Powers had participated in that evolution and had co-operated in the work of the Committee on Information. An evolution that had taken place only in the minds of the non-administering Powers would not have been very fruitful.

7. The twenty-one-Power amendment endangered the continuation of that co-operation between the administering and the non-administering Powers. The United States-Venezuelan amendment, on the other hand, was apparently acceptable to the administering Powers and would ensure the continuation of their useful work in the Committee. Both for realistic and idealistic reasons the delegation of Israel would support that amendment, which it considered to be a step forward from the 1949 resolution (332 (IV)) and to be commendable from the point of view of principle.

8. There appeared to be some misunderstanding in the Committee on the question of competence. Under Article 22 of the Charter the General Assembly was empowered to establish subsidiary organs, but a line would be drawn between subsidiary organs established by the General Assembly and those set up by the Charter, which were statutory. The Fourth Committee could not establish a statutory standing committee merely by passing a resolution. The twenty-one-Power amendment, therefore, in fact went no further than the United States-Venezuelan amendment; it would merely create friction between the administering Powers and the non-administering Powers.

9. Mr. MUNRO (New Zealand) observed that when, in 1949, the Committee on Information had first been established for a three-year period, the New Zealand delegation had abstained from voting because there was no provision in the Charter for such a committee. It had held then and still held the view that the authors of the Charter had not intended to set up any organs for the purpose of examining the information in the three technical fields on which the administering Members undertook to transmit information. That view was reinforced by the provision in Article 73 e that information should be transmitted "for information purposes". The New Zealand delegation felt that that phrase invalidated any suggestion that the information should be critically reviewed and become the subject of recommendations by the General Assembly or its Committees. The administering Members asked for no more than their rights under the Charter. They had faith-

fully carried out their obligations and would continue to do so.

10. The New Zealand delegation had not voted against the establishment of the Committee for three years in 1949 because it had felt that the welfare of the non-self-governing peoples might be advanced by the technical studies the Committee would undertake. The Committee had now made a full cycle of studies in the three technical fields on which information was transmitted. Its reports were balanced and useful documents, although for the most part they merely reflected the policies and practices that had long been pursued by the administering Powers. He wondered, however, whether after so short a period as three years any useful purpose would be served by the Committee's again preparing similar statements of policy and ideals in the economic, social and educational fields. Better results could perhaps be achieved if the Committee were to be re-established in another three years' time, when it would be able to assess significant developments in the dependent territories.

11. There was no doubt that the Committee's reports would gain realism if it were able to base its conclusions upon comparative data from similar geographic regions. Every delegation must judge for itself what was most conducive to the welfare and progress of the non-self-governing peoples, but there had been many occasions in the Fourth Committee when it had been evident that all criteria had been lost sight of in the endeavours of some members to discredit the efforts of the administering Powers. The opportunity for making those unconstructive attacks afforded by the re-establishment of the Committee, and the constitutional difficulties already referred to, had led the New Zealand delegation to reject the idea of a permanent committee.

12. His delegation would have preferred to see the recommendation accepted in its original form. It would, however, support the revised United States-Venezuelan amendment, though with some reluctance on account of the considerations he had mentioned. It would vote against the twenty-one-Power amendment.

13. Mr. RIFAI (Syria) said that the Committee on Information had proved itself indispensable if the Fourth Committee was conscientiously to discharge its duties under Article 73 e. It was heartening to note from the twenty-one-Power amendment that the majority of the Fourth Committee welcomed the continuation of the Committee on Information on a permanent basis. It might have been hoped that such a constructive project would have been unanimously accepted.

14. Those who were opposed to the Committee's continuation on a permanent basis had advanced no valid arguments in support of their thesis. The Fourth Committee must not be swayed by the mere statement that the Committee on Information was harmful, or unnecessary, or both. Such a statement was a distortion of the facts. The Committee's usefulness had been established beyond the shadow of a doubt and had even been admitted on earlier occasions by some of those who now wished to discontinue it. It had been argued that it would be contrary to the Charter to establish the Committee on a permanent basis. Surely such an action would be quite as much in conformity with Article 22 as the establishment of the Interim Committee of the General Assembly; it would be illogical

for members of the Committee who had voted for the one to vote against the other.

15. Mr. S. S. LIU (China) said that there could be no doubt about the advisability of renewing the Committee, which had proved itself a useful and essential organ of the General Assembly. His delegation had originally favoured the Committee's renewal on a permanent basis, but since that proposal was not acceptable to everyone, it was prepared to agree to its renewal for a fixed period, which should be as long as possible. The co-operation of the administering Powers was essential to the successful working of the Committee and every effort should be made to ensure that co-operation.

16. In principle he agreed with the twenty-one-Power amendment, but since it was not universally acceptable, a more satisfactory formula must be found and had been provided in the revised amendment submitted by the United States and Venezuela. The co-sponsors of that amendment deserved the Committee's thanks; the United States representative was especially to be congratulated on his conciliatory spirit. Mr. Liu hoped that that revised amendment would be accepted by all concerned and that the other administering Powers would see their way to follow the example of the United States and New Zealand, would refrain from insisting on their reservations and would accept the compromise solution provided in that amendment.

17. He appealed to the non-administering Powers not to insist on the twenty-one-Power amendment. Only through mutual concessions and understanding could the objectives of Chapter XI be achieved. The unanimous adoption of the revised amendment of the United States and Venezuela would be conducive to co-operation between administering and non-administering Powers and would pave the way for the successful continuation of the Committee's work. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of that amendment and would abstain on the twenty-one-Power amendment.

18. Mr. FORSYTH (Australia) fully agreed with the Belgian representative's remarks at the 264th meeting regarding the essential differences between Chapters XI and XII of the Charter and between Non-Self-Governing Territories and Trust Territories in regard to the relationship between the respective administering States and the United Nations. He further agreed that the Committee on Information had not been specifically contemplated in the Charter, which did, however, empower the General Assembly to set up such subsidiary bodies as it deemed necessary and to discuss any matters within the scope of the Charter, except in so far as the Charter itself restricted the discussion of certain subjects and subject to the fundamental restriction contained in Article 2, paragraph 7.

19. In setting up the Committee on Information, the General Assembly had acted on the view that the economic, social and educational advancement of the dependent peoples was within the scope of the Charter; the restriction imposed by Chapter XI was in respect of political advancement. Discussion of the economic, social and educational advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, if properly conducted, could be beneficial and in the interests of the objectives declared in Chapter XI. It was true that the phrases

"for information purposes" and "subject to such limitations as . . . constitutional considerations may require" afforded strong grounds for contesting the General Assembly's right to discuss the problems of the dependent peoples, but in practice the administering Members had acquiesced in the establishment of the Committee and co-operated in its functioning.

20. In setting up such machinery the General Assembly should confine itself to what was strictly necessary and should pay due regard to the maintenance of a good co-operative relationship. The machinery so far established and its functioning over a three-year period had been fairly satisfactory. He wished to stress four points, however, with regard to renewing the Committee on a permanent basis. First, such a step was unnecessary, the existing machinery having proved adequate. Secondly, there were advantages in the possibility of periodically reviewing the need for such machinery and the type of machinery, particularly since the Charter itself was subject to review in three years' time. Thirdly, the fundamental distinction between Non-Self-Governing Territories and Trust Territories was reflected in the fact that while the Charter had established the Trusteeship Council to supervise the administration of Trust Territories, it had omitted—and not by accident—the principle of supervision in the case of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Trust Territories were wards of the United Nations; the Non-Self-Governing Territories constituted part of the sovereignty and territory of the administering Members. Their relationship to the United Nations was fundamentally different and it would be going far beyond the spirit and letter of the Charter to establish permanent machinery. Lastly, and most important, if constructive results were to be achieved, the General Assembly must promote a good co-operative relationship with the administering Powers.

21. The United Kingdom representative had said that his Government would have to consider whether it could participate in the work of a reconstituted Committee and its difficulties would be increased if the Committee were established on a permanent basis. The French and Belgian delegations had also reserved their position regarding participation in the future work of the Committee. If the new committee were unacceptable to those delegations, its work would be of little use. The Parliament in each administering State was the permanent deliberative body responsible for implementing Chapter XI; any United Nations body which appeared to usurp that function would be unacceptable. A permanent Committee on Information would be just such a body and would therefore threaten co-operation in the United Nations. It would be wise to be content with the existing machinery and to respect the co-operative attitude so far displayed by the administering Powers in submitting information and acquiescing in the setting up of a committee not specifically provided for in the Charter. He urged the other members of the Fourth Committee to be equally co-operative and not to insist on unacceptable proposals. He regretted the fact that the attempt at compromise initiated by the Iraqi representative had proved abortive.

22. His delegation supported draft resolution C (A/2219 and Corr.1, part one, annex II), which had been adopted by a large majority of the Committee on In-

formation. There had been numerous comments on the Committee's usefulness, and the Fourth Committee might show its confidence in the Committee on Information by accepting draft resolution C. He deprecated the Fourth Committee's increasing tendency to exhibit a lack of confidence in other bodies such as the Trusteeship Council and the Committee on Information, a proportion of whose members were elected by the General Assembly; they, at least, deserved its confidence. But so did the bodies concerned, as bodies deriving from the Charter and from an act of the General Assembly itself.

23. Although his delegation preferred draft resolution C as it stood, the amendment submitted by the United States and Venezuela was not too far removed from the original recommendation and avoided the extreme position of the Soviet group and others in advocating the establishment of permanent machinery far beyond the scope of the Charter. He assumed, in the light of certain statements by the representatives of the United States and India, that the phrase "on the same basis" (A/C.4/212) meant that no change in the composition or terms of reference of the Committee was contemplated. If that assumption were correct, his delegation would not find the amendment unacceptable and would be prepared to support draft resolution C as amended thereby, but that support would be given on the clear understanding that the balanced composition and existing terms of reference of the Committee were maintained.

24. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) said that he fully sympathized with the intention of the twenty-one-Power amendment to draft resolution C under which the Committee on Information would be re-established on

a permanent basis. However, in view of the administering Powers' warning that they might well be unable to participate in a permanent committee, it was essential to bring about some compromise. The Assembly was undoubtedly entitled to set up subsidiary organs under Article 22, but a Committee on Information could perform no useful function without the co-operation of the administering Powers. In the last resort, a United Nations resolution on the rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories could, as matters stood, be implemented only with the consent of the administering Powers. He advised the Fourth Committee, therefore, not to be over-zealous. It would be better to re-establish the Committee on Information for a further three years, with the assurance that the administering Powers would continue to participate. The Liberian delegation would therefore support draft resolution C as being the most likely to be implemented.

25. With regard to the amendments to that draft resolution, his delegation wished to propose an amendment (A/C.4/L.225) to the twenty-one-Power amendment (A/C.4/212), to the effect that the words "and as long as the General Assembly deems such a committee necessary" should be inserted after the word "self-government". If the Liberian amendment were not adopted, his delegation would abstain on both the twenty-one-Power amendment and the United States-Venezuelan amendment. The United Nations Charter as a whole might be amended in 1955 and new statutory provisions adopted under which the General Assembly would not be bound to any period of time suggested in a resolution.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.