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DECLARATION ON THE GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE TO
COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Submitted by Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of
Ministers of the USSR, Chairman of the USSR Delegation, on
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The States that set up the United Nations founded its Charter upon the lofty and humane ideals of equality of rights and the self-determination of nations and peoples.

Born in the period of victorious conclusion of the Second World War, the United Nations embodied hopes that the inequality and enslavement of some nations and peoples by others would disappear along with the barbarity and criminal acts of fascism and militarism. But not all the hopes of the peoples came true. Still unsolved is a vital problem of our time: the complete liberation of mankind from the shameful colonial regimes inherited from the past.

Ours is an era of swift renewal of society; an era in which more progressive and equitable ways of life are being affirmed; an era in which man is soaring upwards to unprecedented mastery over forces of nature. The time has come for the complete and final liberation of peoples languishing in colonial bondage. Therefore the States Members of the United Nations solemnly declare their convictions, intentions and demands for the grant of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

Peoples that oppress other peoples cannot be free. Every free people should help to win freedom and independence for the peoples that are still oppressed.

The great rebirth of the enslaved peoples

The swift liberation and emancipation of countries and peoples is a significant feature of our time. Even in the lifetime of the present generation, two thirds of the world's population were living under colonial conditions. At the end of the First World War the chains of the colonial oppression of nations fell away in a number of countries. The banner of national independence, raised high over the world, has become now the banner of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people on all continents of the globe. The time has come for the liberation and rebirth of nations, peoples and tribes which were but recently oppressed and downtrodden. Tens of new States have joined the family of independent countries. The democratic ideas of equality of rights and self-determination of nations are being translated into reality.

The myth of the inability of colonial peoples to govern, to create and to build has crumbled to dust.

Today no one can say that the peoples of Asia, Africa or Latin American cannot govern themselves. Gigantic forces have awakened, exulting, to build a new independent life. Indeed, the settlement of international affairs is now inconceivable without the participation of the People's Republic of China, without the participation of the liberated peoples of India, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Ghana, Guinea and other States, large and small.

Today no one can say that the liberation of nations and peoples formerly under the yoke of colonialism will bring in its train an expansion of the zone of conflicts and clashes between countries. On the contrary, national liberation has broadened the zone of peace, while colonial oppression and colonial policy have led, and still lead, to wars.

Today no one can assert that the liberation of nations will lead to depression of the economy, trade, crafts or agriculture. On the contrary, experience shows that it is the political liberation of colonial peoples and the establishment of new independent States that open the way for a genuine rise in the national economy.

Today no one will dare to assert that the liberation of peoples from the colonial yoke will lead to the decline of culture. Life shows that on the heels of liberation come the rebirth, upsurge and flowering of distinctive national

cultures, the spread of public education, the improvement of health care, the training of skilled national personnel, and increased potentialities for enriching world culture.

It is not only the peoples of the East who gain from the liberation of previously oppressed nations, but the peoples of the West as well. The cause of the freedom of peoples, of relations among them on a footing of equality, and the preservation of peace in the world are placed on a firmer foundation.

But the liquidation of the colonial regime is yet to be completed.

The States Members of the United Nations cannot remain indifferent to the fact that, in the ancient lands of Africa and Asia, on the islands of Oceania, on the islands of the Caribbean and in other places, over one hundred million people still languish in colonial subjugation. The peoples of these countries have the right to national independence; nevertheless they are still without rights, they are still kept in the stocks. In these countries, violence and lawlessness reign as before; in these countries the highest law is profit for foreigners. Their interest is all, and the inalienable rights of man and people are nothing. The sway of foreign administrators who despise and loot the local population; the persecution of tribes; the derision of national customs; inequality of status and rights for the indigenous inhabitants; shameful disregard for their vital interests; and the humiliation of national and human dignity; all these arouse profound indignation in every man of honour.

There the swish of the overseer's lash is heard; there heads fall under the executioner's axe.

The peoples of the colonies do not want to live in slavery or in conditions of servitude; they are fighting for their rights and independence, for everything that other peoples enjoy. In their path, however, stand the selfish interests of imperialist circles in the West, hindering the fulfilment of the peoples' just aspirations. Colonial wars, punitive expeditions, the open looting of peoples by the monopolies, military tribunals and secret trials, reservations, colour bars, prisons and concentration camps - these are some of the methods by which overt and covert colonialists try to strangle everything alive, independent and national in colonial countries.

The Conference of African nations in Accra justly set the brand of colonial fascism on all this.

Those who stand for the preservation of the old systems of colonial rule still yearn for savage measures of retribution in the colonies. Of course, such measures are hampering liberation. But does not life take its course? Did cruel reprisals, carried out over a period of decades, stop the liberation of Indonesia? Did the massacre of tens and hundreds of thousands of people in Indo-China save colonial domination there? Can the crimes now being committed against the peoples of Africa stop the irresistible process of the liberation of African nations?

No forces of oppression and despotism will save the absolute colonial order. And of those killed on the road to freedom it cannot be said that they are dead; no, they are alive in the memory of the peoples, they will live forever as heroes of the struggle for national liberation.

Colonialism is in its death-throes. But in its last hour it can cause much suffering and take many victims, ruin many more lives in colonies and metropolitan countries, destroy much of the wealth created by the labour of many generations.

The United Nations appeals to all peoples on earth and to all Governments not to stand by as indifferent observers of the sufferings of the colonial peoples. Is it possible to remain deaf to the groans of the people of Kenya, where for eight years the colonial authorities have been exterminating the local population after driving it into reservations, prisons and concentration camps; to the sufferings of the people of Oman, against whom a war of usurpation is being waged? Who can remain calm in the face of the unending reprisals visited on the population of Nyasaland, Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, Ruanda-Urundi, South West Africa, Tanganyika, Uganda and West Irian?

It is inadmissible in this age of progress, brilliant scientific discoveries and immeasurably greater human control over the forces of nature that France should be waging a colonial war in Algeria with aircraft, artillery, tanks, napalm bombs and other means of mass destruction against the Algerians who have fought for nearly six years with selfless courage for the freedom and independence of their motherland. Hundreds of thousands of Algerians have been killed, many Algerian towns and villages burned and destroyed, a fifth of the country's population herded into concentration camps. Many sons of France are dying for this unjust cause.

Can such a situation continue to be tolerated? No, it cannot, if the interests of the great cause of peace, the interests of humanity and progress are valued.

For what purpose do those who refuse to renounce colonial rule wage murderous wars against peoples? Why are the freedom-loving aspirations of the enslaved peoples suppressed? Sometimes it is said that this is done in the interests of the "civilization" of the less developed countries to prepare them for self-government.

But this is a lie given the guise of truth.

What civilization have five centuries of colonial tyranny brought to the African countries of Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea, with an area of more than half that of Western Europe and a population of eleven million? They have brought poverty, the loss of all rights, the forcible confiscation of land watered with the sweat of many generations and the expulsion of farmers to barren and drought-ridden regions.

There, arbitrary rule, famine, ignorance and disease are rampant and virtual slavery and forced labour are still practised. There is not a single higher educational institution and practically no secondary education.

Why is Portugal allowed to practise such colonial despotism in this age? On what grounds?

In half a century of Belgian colonial domination the Congo's population declined by more than half through punitive expeditions, starvation and disease. When the independence of the Republic of the Congo was proclaimed only a few of its inhabitants could read and write.

The situation in other African colonies is no better.

Of course, in some parts of the colonies, roads, airfields, ports, mines and a few schools have been built. But all this is for the purpose of exploiting the indigenous population and plundering the natural wealth of those colonies.

The assertion that colonial rule is necessary to prevent strife, fratricidal wars between tribes and peoples in the colonies is also a deliberate lie.

Developments in the Congo show that colonialism thrives on discord and deliberately instigated quarrels between tribes and peoples. It tries to weaken their common struggle for liberation. The motto of the colonialists is still "divide and rule!"

What is inscribed on the banners of Asian and African peoples fighting for their national freedom and independence? The peace and solidarity slogans of Bandung and Accra are there inscribed.

Indifferent to the calls of justice, the colonialists try to preserve arbitrarily-drawn frontiers dividing peoples and tribes, as well as kindred economic regions of Africa and to disrupt the unity and territorial integrity of many countries.

The times demand independence for colonial countries and peoples

The United Nations appeals to peoples and Governments irrespective of where their countries may be - East or West, North or South - to ask the question posed today by events themselves: does the rotten colonial system match the ideals of nations and the potentialities of the present age?

One need only compare the development in the past century of the independent countries of Europe or North America with that of colonial countries in Africa to realize that the path of colonialism leads to the regression, atrophy, ruin and degradation of the forcibly enslaved countries.

While in the economically-developed countries industry, transport, agriculture, science and culture have reached a high level, vessels propelled by atomic energy have been built and artificial celestial bodies launched into space, Africa, a land of fabulous wealth, is backward and has become a continent of famine; its main agricultural implements, just as they were thousands of years ago, are the mattock, the wooden plough and the sharpened stake; its primitive system of agriculture is causing soil exhaustion and erosion.

There is now a veritable abyss between the highly-industrialized independent States and the colonial countries, whereas Asia and Africa were once the cradle of great civilizations which enriched the culture and civilization of other peoples.

The main object of the colonial regime is in fact to secure enormous profits for big foreign monopolies, which have seized the key economic positions in the colonies and to extort their wealth by every possible means. Therefore, the entire economy of a colony is one of exploitation. Having first of all been subordinated to the narrow interests and needs of the markets of the individual industrial countries, its development is slow, deformed and one-sided.

Only after Ghana had been liberated was it recognized that its future lies not in the production of cocoa alone, but in the development of modern industries with extensive utilization of its large resources of hydroelectric power and enormous deposits of bauxite and that this constitutes its greatest value in terms of world economy.

Under the colonial regime the enormous hydro-power resources of the Republic of the Congo also remained untapped, although their potential capacity is nearly equal to the present output of electric power in all the countries of Western Europe put together. The utilization of these resources alone would not only allow the full exploitation of colossal mineral wealth and raise the level of agriculture in the Republic of the Congo, but also substantially transform the entire economic pattern of the Central African countries and greatly improve the well-being of their populations.

It has been scientifically established that all the countries of the African continent, as well as those in other continents, possess vast, diverse and as yet largely unexplored natural resources. They could be made to serve the peoples of these countries and thereby serve the whole of mankind. But the colonial system deliberately and artificially perpetuates the economic backwardness of the colonies, hindering their industrialization and the rational utilization of their resources. This is coupled with an unprecedented squandering of public property, immense waste of labour and the predominance of the parasitic single-crop method of economic administration of the colonial countries adapted to the selfish interests of the metropolitan countries.

The present level of industrial and technological development and the latest achievements of science, agriculture and culture make it possible to place all this vast wealth in the service of the peoples within a comparatively short time. In order to use it, however, it is first of all necessary to secure for the peoples the right to an independent existence, to eliminate the colonial system, and to provide economic assistance in making use of this wealth. This will make it possible to improve the well-being of the local population, to expand the capacity of the internal market, and to do away with existing illiteracy, with the shortage of national cadres, and with the domination of the one-crop system in the colonial economy. The colonial system does not permit the solution of problems of this kind or the great technological achievements which are an inseparable part of modern civilization.

The benefits deriving from the exploitation of colonies do not in any sense go to the peoples but primarily to the big foreign monopolies - to billionaires. The peoples of both East and West are compelled to pay a heavy tribute to colonialism. Oil and coffee, rubber and cotton, copper and bananas, a variety of raw materials and foodstuffs brought in from the colonies are sold at prices many times higher than those for which they are purchased on the spot. The monopolies rob people twice - in the East when they buy and in the West when they sell colonial goods and raw materials.

Moreover, they compel the colonial peoples to maintain foreign troops and a foreign administration in peacetime, i.e. to pay for the chains in which they are held. At the same time, the monopolies impose higher taxes on taxpayers in the metropolitan countries for the purpose of inducting punitive expeditions and colonial wars, forcing the peoples of the metropolitan countries as well to pay for the shackles in which the monopolist-colonialists put other peoples. In fact, they are burying in fields of devastation the freedom of their own peoples together with the independence of other nations. This state of affairs is in itself a serious indictment of the colonial system.

Yet, if the States Members of the United Nations and above all, of course, those which at one time imposed the yoke of colonialism on numerous peoples showed even a minimum degree of understanding of the urgent needs of these peoples, they would find ways of meeting those needs. One of the main methods of doing this is to resolve the disarmament problem and curtail the military expenditure of States.

As is generally known, the States belonging to the military-colonialist North Atlantic bloc alone spend \$62,000 million annually on the arms race. If even half of this sum that is spent annually for unproductive purposes that are dangerous to peace were used for the development and advancement of, for example, the African countries, gigantic engineering projects could be carried out, including the Ingui, Concure, ^{Zambesi}~~Zanzibar~~ and Volta plans - plans for the construction of large hydroelectric stations, irrigation systems and industrial enterprises and for agricultural development. The liberated nations of Africa could build schools, universities, hospitals and roads everywhere and carry out other measures which would enable them to raise agriculture as well to a higher level of modern development.

At the same time, if the bonds of colonialism were removed from the African and other colonies, that would facilitate the utilization of their natural resources, increase the demand in those countries for European and American machinery and other industrial products, expand exports of raw materials for the industry of Europe and the United States, increase employment and the utilization of productive capacity, and raise the living standards of the peoples of the industrially-developed countries.

Every honest person and every Government that really stands for the equality of peoples, for the realization of the great purposes and principles proclaimed in the United Nations Charter, cannot but see that colonialism is an obsolete and shameful phenomenon in modern life. The complete and final elimination of colonialism would be the prelude not only to social progress but also to swift technical strides in industry and agriculture, just as the end of the slave trade lent a powerful impetus to the development of the productive forces of society.

The elimination of colonialism would be a key measure in reducing international tension. It was precisely the desire to prevent the liberation and the national development of the young States of Asia, Africa and Latin America that led to such armed conflicts and wars in the post-war period as those in Indonesia, Indo-China and Algeria, the aggression against Egypt, the foreign intervention in Lebanon and Jordan, the conspiracies against Syria and Iraq, and so forth. Indeed, throughout the last century most wars and armed conflicts were in one way or another connected with colonialism, with the struggle of the major Powers for the division and redistribution of colonies.

The peoples have on more than one occasion been subjected to the terrible danger that colonial wars would develop into a new world war. And now the intervention against the Republic of the Congo has led to aggravation of the international situation and has jeopardized the cause of peace in Africa and, indeed, not only in Africa. Can one forget that under present-day conditions, with nuclear and rocket weapons in existence, the flames of war, once kindled on one continent, can engulf in an instant the entire globe.

Many of the most important foci of the present international tension - in the Middle and the Far East, in Africa and in Latin America - are to a considerable degree the outgrowth of colonialist policy. Colonies and other

so-called "non-self-governing territories" are often used as military bases of foreign Powers, as proving grounds for atomic tests. Can such a situation make people feel secure, relieve them of the fear of war, show them how to extricate themselves from the poverty, hunger and disease which are still the lot of the peoples of the countries which remain colonies and Trust Territories?

In addition to large colonies and Trust Territories, some Powers also retain strong points in different areas of the world, such as West Irian, Okinawa, Goa and Puerto Rico, not to mention Taiwan, against which the United States has committed aggression by occupying this territory of the People's Republic of China. Why do the highly-developed industrial Powers need such bases and "possessions" on the territory of other countries? Is this not a direct survival of the former era of colonial domination? What would the Europeans or Americans say if some Asian or African countries demanded bases for themselves in the countries of Western Europe or North America?

There cannot be two opinions on this score: these bases are retained in order to threaten the national independence and security of the neighbouring peoples. Just as the trading stations in the early days of colonialism served as a base for the extension of the system of colonial oppression in Africa, Asia and America, so today, when colonialism is disintegrating, the imperialists are trying to use the remaining bases and colonies to exert brutal pressure on the independent States of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The shameful colonial regime should be buried

The States Members of the United Nations submitting this Declaration are of the opinion that every Government which is for peace and progress in deeds, and not in words should respect the lawful rights of all nations without exception in their demands for equality, justice and independence. Either these demands will be recognized by all States or the oppressed peoples, with the support of their numerous friends throughout the world, will take their destiny in their own hands and will win liberty and independence, breaking down all the artificial barriers erected in their way by the colonialists. The primary duty of all nations is to extend a helping hand in the sacred struggle for independence and against colonialist domination.

Together with the infamous system of colonialism, the variant of the colonial regime known as the trusteeship system has also outlived itself. Being a vestigial remnant of the mandates system of the League of Nations, the present trusteeship system in accordance with the United Nations Charter should have promoted the development of the Trust Territories towards self-government and independence. Fifteen years have elapsed, however, since the Charter was adopted, but only four out of eleven Trust Territories have attained independence.

So far no exact dates have been fixed for granting independence to Trust Territories, including the largest of them - Tanganyika, Ruanda-Urundi and New Guinea.

The Powers responsible for "trusteeship", disregarding the principles of the United Nations, are in fact preserving colonial regimes, mercilessly exploiting the population and plundering natural resources, repressing those who submitted petitions to the United Nations, hampering the economic and political development of the Trust Territories.

The trusteeship system has not justified itself anywhere and should be buried together with the entire colonial system, which is an anachronism.

The regime of colonial oppression has left to mankind a burdensome legacy in the form of numerous complicated problems. The tragic events taking place in the Congo as well as in other parts of the world where peoples are waging a just struggle for their rights, demand a reasonable solution of the problem of relations between the indigenous population and the settlers who came from other continents.

Racial discrimination in all its odious forms, i.e., division of peoples and nations into the privileged and the "inferior" is nothing but racism, an attempt to justify the crime of genocide, an adding of new atrocities to those already committed, of new crimes to old, a fomenting of mutual hatred and endless bloody conflicts between countries and peoples.

Different peoples have skins of a different colour, but the colour of their blood is the same. And not a single people can lay a claim to domination over other peoples.

The ties and relations between the peoples created at the time of colonialism must be replaced by new relations based on the principles of equality, friendship and mutual respect, regardless of the social and political systems

of States, the ideology and political views of people or the colour of their skin. The peoples in colonies should be given real independence, not a fictitious one under which they would, in fact, be kept under a modified colonial regime. They are now demanding not only greater freedom within the colonial rule but the final elimination of this system, freedom for progress, the right to be their own masters, to use their own wealth and the fruits of their labour. Every form of enslavement, every manifestation of "trusteeship" or "charity" towards peoples is a serious insult to their dignity.

Present realities make it imperative to choose between stagnation and progress, between slavery and freedom, between division of the peoples and their unity, between war and peace.

The United Nations considers it its duty to urge the Powers that have colonial possessions to enter into negotiations on an equal footing with representatives of the peoples of the colonies and reach agreement on the granting of freedom and independence to the colonial countries.

Definite and early dates for negotiations should be fixed and any possibility of coercion or aggression on the part of the colonial Powers should be eliminated. But should those Powers turn a deaf ear to such an appeal, should they delay the liberation of the colonies and suppress the liberation movement of the colonial peoples, the peace-loving nations should render every assistance, moral and material, to the peoples fighting for their independence.

The States Members of the United Nations proceed from the premise that every country, every nation has a full and inalienable right to independent existence. They feel confident that the elimination of the colonial regime will not mean the alienation of the countries of Africa and Europe from one another. On the contrary, it will promote still greater co-operation among them. Such unity and co-operation, however, should be reciprocal and freely granted.

The more consistently and directly the great principles of international co-operation are realized - the principles of equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each others internal affairs, mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence and economic co-operation - the greater will be the mutual understanding and agreement among free and equal States of the world.

Only thus will the countries of the West and the East, the North and the South make progress towards genuine peaceful collaboration among nations,

utilizing the great achievements of modern science and culture. Only thus can the high principles of the right of nations and peoples to self-determination enunciated in the United Nations Charter be translated into reality.

Moved by a fervent desire for the earliest establishment of mutual goodwill and agreement among States and peoples as well as between the indigenous population of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and those who have settled in such territories and wish to live there enjoying the same rights as those of the nationals of such countries, the States Members of the United Nations which have affixed their signatures to this Declaration appeal to all people, irrespective of language and race, religion and political views:

Let all the people of the globe hear us!

We all inhabit the same planet. On this planet we are born, we work, raise our children and pass on to them all we have achieved in life. And although there exist different States in the world, all men are born equal in dignity.

The very course of historic development now poses the question of complete and final elimination of the colonial regime in all its forms and manifestations, not some time in the distant future, but immediately and unconditionally!

Accordingly, the States Members of the United Nations solemnly proclaim the following demands:

1. All colonial countries and Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories must be granted forthwith complete independence and freedom to build their own national States in accordance with the freely-expressed will and desire of their peoples. The colonial system and colonial administration in all these forms must be completely abolished in order to afford the peoples of the territories concerned an opportunity to determine their own destiny and form of government.

2. Similarly, all strongholds of colonialism in the form of possessions and leased areas in the territory of other States must be eliminated.

3. The Governments of all countries are urged to observe strictly and steadfastly the provisions of the United Nations Charter and of this Declaration concerning the equality and respect for the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all States without exception, allowing no manifestations of colonialism or any special rights or advantages for some States to the detriment of other States.

In keeping with the lofty principles of the Charter, the States Members of the United Nations cannot but regard the elimination of colonial rule as a most important stage in international life. This act in itself will provide a solid foundation for the development of friendly relations among all States and among all peoples and thereby for the realization of the great objective of securing a strong and lasting peace on earth.

It is the sacred duty of each State and each Government to promote an early and full implementation of this Declaration.
