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

SUB-COMMITTEE I

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 13 April 1967, at 11 a.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Miss SINEGIORGIS	Ethiopia
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. JOUEJATI	Syria
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. CAWEN	Finland
	Mr. DIAKITE	Mali
	Mr. USTINOV	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. FOUM	United Republic of Tanzania
	Mr. PEJIC	Yugoslavia
<u>Also present:</u>	Mr. SHAW	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. POLYAKOV	Secretary of the Sub-Committee

MAURITIUS, SEYCHELLES AND ST. HELENA (A/AC.109/L.374 and Corr.1) (continued)

At the Chairman's invitation, Mr. Shaw, representative of the United Kingdom, took a place at the Committee table.

Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the discussion of the situation in Mauritius, Seychelles and St. Helena by the Special Committee in 1966 had clearly shown that the administering Power had not yet implemented the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant General Assembly resolutions, that the political development of the Territories was proceeding very slowly, that the electoral arrangements devised for Mauritius had been the subject of serious controversy among various groups and political parties and that universal suffrage had still not been introduced in the Seychelles. The Special Committee had also expressed concern at the establishment of the new "British Indian Ocean Territory" and the reports that it would be used as a military base, and had called upon the administering Power to respect the territorial integrity of Mauritius and Seychelles and, in keeping with operative paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 2105 (XX), to refrain from using the three Territories for military purposes. It had also called upon the administering Power to recognize the right of the indigenous inhabitants to dispose of the natural resources, and to take measures to diversify the economy, of the Territories. Those conclusions and recommendations had been confirmed by the General Assembly at its twenty-first session. In resolution 2232 (XXI) the General Assembly had, inter alia, urged the administering Power to allow visiting missions to go to the Territories to study the situation and make appropriate recommendations, and had reiterated its earlier declaration that any attempt to disrupt the national unity and territorial integrity of colonial Territories or to establish military bases and installations in them was incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and with resolution 1514 (XV). In resolution 2189 (XXI) the General Assembly had requested the colonial Powers to dismantle their military bases in colonial Territories and to refrain from establishing new ones.

All three Territories were, however, still under United Kingdom domination and United Kingdom Governors still had wide powers: in Mauritius, the Governor still appointed the Premier and most of the Ministers, and in Seychelles and

(Mr. Ustinov, USSR)

St. Helena he presided over both the Executive Council and the Legislative Council. The people of Mauritius had long been asking for independence, but it seemed as if the administering Power still intended to delay granting it by imposing certain conditions such as that the people should first gain experience of managing their own affairs. A study of the new "Proposals for Constitutional Advance" in the Seychelles showed that they were not intended to prepare the people for independence in accordance with resolution 1514 (XV), but rather to perpetuate United Kingdom control of the Territory, and that independence was ruled out as a solution. Under the suggested "committee system of government", the Governor, in addition to his general reserved powers, would have direct responsibility for law and order, the public service and external affairs, and it appeared that he would retain the power to appoint the non-elected members of the Legislative Council and to nominate three other members. As the representative of Tanzania had indicated at the previous meeting, the proposed new arrangement would impede the full exercise of the right to self-determination and independence by the population in accordance with resolution 1514 (XV). Of the three possible courses suggested for the Territory, the one recommended was not even "nominal independence", but some form of "free association with the United Kingdom", which indicated that the administering Power did not wish to relinquish control of the Territory. That had been confirmed by the fact that the United Kingdom representative had given no positive reply at the previous meeting to the question of whether it did indeed intend to grant complete independence to the Seychelles. It was thus clear that the administering Power was impeding the political development of the three Territories.

As to the economic situation in the Territories, it was still as serious as before, if not worse. They remained a source of primary commodities and cheap labour for the metropolitan country, which prevented them from developing economic relations with other countries. According to document A/AC.109/L.374, as much as 73 per cent of Mauritius exports went to the United Kingdom, including most of the sugar produced, and, as the Premier of the Territory had said, progress in the diversification of the Territory's economy had been slow. A similar situation prevailed in the Seychelles and St. Helena. All three Territories depended on a

single crop, and that made economic progress very difficult. They also depended increasingly on external aid. After the prolonged domination of foreign capital the people of Mauritius were still without the means of production required to satisfy more than 10 per cent of their needs.

The social situation in the three Territories also continued to be distressing. There was chronic unemployment in all three and the Christian Science Monitor of 23 January 1967, described the unemployment problem in Mauritius as "hopeless". The gulf between the planters and the peasants in the Seychelles had even been admitted in the document on the proposals for constitutional advance. Furthermore, there were still no facilities for higher education in the Territories.

The explanation for London's constitutional manoeuvres and the delay in granting independence appeared to be that the administering Power intended to turn the Territories into military bases. In spite of the United Kingdom representative's assurances during the twenty-first session of the General Assembly that the "British Indian Ocean Territory" would not be used for military purposes, there was continuing evidence that the United Kingdom and the United States did not wish to abstain from using the new colony as an important link in their "East of Suez" policy, a policy aimed at preserving the position of the British and other foreign monopolies which exploited the natural wealth of the Middle East, southern Africa and other regions. The military installations which the United Kingdom was planning to construct in the "British Indian Ocean Territory" would be a direct threat to the countries of Asia and Africa, as the Cairo Conference of Non-Aligned States had pointed out. The Economist of 14 January 1967 had reported that the immediate aim was to station a mobile striking force in the new Territory. The United States still maintained military personnel to man rocket-tracking stations on Mahé, in the Seychelles, and on Ascension Island, which had gained lamentable notoriety as a base for United States and Belgian intervention in the Congo in 1964. There was also evidence that the United States intended to establish a communications relay station on the island of Diego Garcia.

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The United States was therefore acting as an accomplice of the United Kingdom in violating the General Assembly resolutions relating to the Territories. The Sub-Committee must condemn the militarist activity of the imperialist Powers, which was delaying independence, and which was clearly the reason for the United Kingdom's refusal to allow a visiting mission to go to the Territories.

He strongly supported the proposals made by the representatives of Syria and Tanzania at the previous meeting. Since the administering Power had failed to respond to the repeated appeals of the General Assembly and the Special Committee to grant immediate independence to Mauritius, the Sub-Committee should ask the Special Committee to recommend the General Assembly to set a time-limit for the granting of independence without any conditions or reservations. In view of the continuing use of Mauritius and Seychelles for military purposes and the creation of the "British Indian Ocean Territory" in violation of General Assembly resolutions 2105 (XX), 2189 (XXI) and 2232 (XXI), the Sub-Committee should recommend that a visiting mission be sent to the Territories to study the situation and make recommendations to the General Assembly at its twenty-second session. Lastly, the administering Power should be asked to inform the Special Committee before the opening of the twenty-second session on how the recommendations of the General Assembly and the Special Committee were being implemented, especially those concerning the immediate exercise of the right to self-determination by the population, the prompt holding of elections on the basis of universal suffrage in order to create representative organs in Seychelles and St. Helena, and the safeguarding of the people's right to dispose of their own resources and create a diversified economy. Such action would help the people of the Territories towards self-determination and independence and would show them that they had the moral support of the United Nations.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia) said that, once again, the Sub-Committee must take note of the fact that the administering Power had done very little in the direction of allowing the peoples of the three Territories to decide their future status and form of government freely and democratically. The administering Power had shown that it was still not prepared to implement the provisions of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and of General Assembly resolutions 2066 (XX), 2069 (XX) and 2232 (XXI).

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agreed to the transfer of the islands concerned to the new Territory was without substance because Mauritius and Seychelles were still not independent. The fact that the United Kingdom had been in a hurry to detach the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius prior to the proclamation of independence spoke for itself.

With regard to recent constitutional developments in Mauritius and Seychelles, he could not accept the United Kingdom's contention that measures leading to the transfer of powers to democratically elected representatives of the people were being taken. In Mauritius, elections had once again been postponed. The statement published by the Commonwealth Office on 21 December 1966 was clearly intended to give the impression that responsibility for the delay did not rest with the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, it was his view that the administering Power alone was responsible for delaying the process of self-determination and independence.

In Seychelles, the situation was even more disturbing. There, the administering Power was insisting on a longer constitutional process on the pretext that the inhabitants lacked political experience. Sir Colville Deverell's proposals for constitutional advance, contained in the document which had been made available to members by the United Kingdom representative, were inconsistent with the provisions of relevant United Nations resolutions. Sir Colville Deverell complained that the political parties were primarily preoccupied with the question of the ultimate status of Seychelles rather than with constitutional evolution, but that was quite understandable. Sir Colville also stated that the question of the Territory's status could not be an immediate issue. Why not? Sir Colville went on to suggest three kinds of ultimate status which he said were the only possible kinds for a small, isolated island such as Seychelles. All three proposals involved some form of association or integration with the United Kingdom. In his delegation's view, the advancing of such suggestions was inadmissible in that it prejudged the people's decisions.

The United Kingdom apparently wished it to be believed that the measures proposed would significantly improve the constitutional situation. He could not agree with such a contention. It seemed that, under the new system, the ratio of elected to appointed members of the Executive and Legislative Councils would be 8:7. That means little, however, in view of the influence exercised by the Governor in the Councils. The administering Power was clearly delaying the transfer of power to the democratically elected representatives of the people.

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The following conclusions could be drawn with regard to the three Territories: (1) the administering Power had failed to implement the provisions of resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant resolutions; (2) it was endeavouring to delay the transfer of power to elected representatives of the people; (3) it had created a new colony out of islands detached from Mauritius and Seychelles, thus directly violating the principle of territorial integrity; (4) it was putting into effect its plans for the establishment of military bases on the so-called British Indian Ocean Territory; (5) the economic and social situation in the Territories continued to deteriorate and concessions were being granted to foreign monopolies.

He believed that the Sub-Committee should, on the basis of those facts, recommend that concrete measures should be taken to guarantee the rights of the peoples of the Territories to self-determination and independence. The sending of a visiting mission should be recommended, particularly to Seychelles, so that the Special Committee would not be faced with the situation it had confronted in the case of the British Caribbean islands.

Mr. CAWEN (Finland) said that, in view of the striking differences between the three Territories under consideration in terms of political development, economic conditions, and the ethnic background and size of the population, it was hard to envisage any common pattern for their constitutional advancement. The largest of the Territories, Mauritius, seemed to be well on the road to full independence. Elections were to take place in the relatively near future at a date set by the Government of Mauritius, and if the newly elected Assembly decided in favour of independence, it could be attained after a six months' transitional period. After some regrettable delay, the people of Mauritius would thus be able to express their views regarding the future status of the Territory, and it seemed that, although there were some differences among the political parties, the majority favoured progress to full independence. As it neared independence, Mauritius faced certain difficult problems. Further action was needed to diversify its economy, and the problems resulting from the rapidly expanding population needed to be tackled, perhaps through an expanded family planning programme.

Political development in Seychelles seemed to be proceeding more slowly. There had been little demand for full independence and, in view of the smallness

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(Mr. Cawen, Finland)

of the Territory in size and population and of its economic situation, some special constitutional arrangement might be called for, perhaps as an interim solution. He noted with satisfaction that elections were soon to be held on the basis of universal adult suffrage and that a new constitution was being prepared. It was important, however, that plans for constitutional advance should not in any way exclude the possibility of full independence. Economic development was a problem also for Seychelles and it was obvious that the Territory needed outside help.

Whatever future course might be chosen by the three Territories, it was essential that the choice should rest with the freely elected representatives of the people. It was equally important that the people should retain the right in the future to choose an alternative political status.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom) said that the Sub-Committee had heard many familiar assertions from the representatives of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and his delegation had had to reply to them on past occasions. They ranged from the inaccurate to the fantastic. Since the general debate was not yet concluded, however, his delegation would prefer to defer its comments on the various statements which had been made to a later meeting.

Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had always given close attention to factual material supplied by the administering Power and derived from other sources. If the United Kingdom representative wished, he could produce the sources on which he had based his statement; they consisted mainly of United Kingdom newspapers, such as The Times and the Observer. The United Kingdom representative would find that the Soviet delegation's statements were confirmed by dispatches in such newspapers.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia) said that, if his assertions were "familiar", the reason was that the colonial Power had repeatedly postponed the accession of the people to self-determination and independence. As long as that remained the case, his delegation would be obliged to repeat its arguments.

Mr. Shaw (United Kingdom) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mr. FOLYAKOV (Secretary of the Sub-Committee) recalled that at the previous meeting the Secretariat had been asked when the working papers on the

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of the Sub-Committee)

activities of foreign economic and other interests as well as military activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories would be available to members. The working paper on the activities of foreign economic interests in South West Africa had just been circulated to members. Working papers on the activities of foreign economic interests in Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique would be made available in English by 17 April and in other languages in a week's time. Working papers on foreign economic activities in other selected Territories would be circulated by the end of April. It was hoped that working papers on military activities in selected Non-Self-Governing Territories would be ready by the middle of May.

Mr. FOUM (United Republic of Tanzania) wondered whether there were technical difficulties preventing the Secretariat from supplying such papers earlier. The special session of the General Assembly would be beginning soon, and it was to be hoped that the Sub-Committee would be able to complete its studies on the activities of foreign economic interests before the Special Committee's meetings in Africa.

He also noted that the paper which had been circulated did not include a list of companies indicating the amount of their investments and their countries of origin; the inclusion of such a list had been suggested by his delegation.

Mr. POLYAKOV (Secretary of the Sub-Committee) said that the Secretariat was doing its best to produce the studies as quickly as possible, but was limited by a shortage of personnel. With regard to the list of companies, he would bring that matter to the attention of the Under-Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as the papers on Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique were to be ready in about a week, the Committee should examine the activities of foreign economic interests in those Territories at that time, and thereafter deal with the subject in stages.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.