



Thursday, 5 November 1953,
 at 10.30 a.m.

New York

CONTENTS

Complaint by the Union of Burma regarding aggression against it by the Government of the Republic of China: report of the Government of the Union of Burma (continued)	165
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Chairman: Mr. F. VAN LANGENHOVE (Belgium).

Complaint by the Union of Burma regarding aggression against it by the Government of the Republic of China: report of the Government of the Union of Burma (A/2423, A/2468, A/C.1/L.69, A/C.1/L.70, A/C.1/L.71, A/C.1/L.73) (continued)

[Item 25]*

1. Mr. MENON (India) expressed sympathy for the people and Government of Burma, who for the last few years had been harassed by a modernly equipped army living off their land and by plunder. It must be a matter for regret that the question should continue to be before the General Assembly in the form of a complaint by the Government of Burma. It might have been expected, in view of the unanimity of support for the resolution adopted on the question by the General Assembly at its seventh session (707 (VII)), that the item would not have come again before the Assembly in that form and that the occasion should be one for congratulation. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

2. There were two main elements in the problem as it faced the Committee. One was the statement of Mr. George K. C. Yeh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Formosa Government. The other was the statement and document submitted by the delegation of Burma (A/C.1/L.69), which had not received the emphasis it deserved during the debate. Mr. Menon, dealing with the first of these statements, paid tribute to the United States ambassadors in three capitals concerned for their efforts to set in motion negotiations for implementing the General Assembly resolution and to bring about some result. He noted that the statement of Mr. Yeh made it clear that, despite the position which the Formosa Government had taken in the General Assembly at the seventh session, it accepted a degree of responsibility for the foreign forces in Burma and acknowledged possession of a measure of persuasive influence over them. The part of that statement that caused concern was that which stated that the Burmese Government was virtually asking for the impossible. The Burmese Government was not asking for anything that the General Assembly had not asked in a resolution

adopted by 59 votes. It really amounted to Mr. Yeh's saying that the General Assembly was asking for the impossible or that his Government did not agree with the Assembly's resolution. There was the crux of the situation.

3. The last part of that statement declared in effect that once the evacuation of the 2,000 men had been successfully carried out, the Formosa Government would have no desire to maintain relations with the remainder of the troops and would furnish them no material support. It would be of interest to know exactly what material support had so far been furnished to the forces concerned; indeed Mr. Yeh's statement constituted an acknowledgment of responsibility for aid given in the aggression against Burma. Mr. Menon then called the Committee's attention to the exhibits No. 1 and 2 of the document submitted by the delegation of Burma (A/C.1/L.70). Exhibit No. 2 was a letter from the leader of a unit of 3,000 men stationed near Bhamo indicating that his unit was ready to obey evacuation orders. The author of exhibit No. 1 stated that the foreign forces were willing to accept the United Nations resolution and to obey orders. It appeared from the exhibits, first, that the strength of the foreign troops was well over 2,000 men, and secondly, that the troops were weary of war and had stayed in the area on orders of a higher authority. It was thus clear that a larger evacuation would depend on insistence by the Formosa Government and on the provision of facilities which would enable the forces to leave.

4. In that context, it was naive to expect the Assembly to suggest to the Burmese that they should agree to a procedure which, under the guise of evacuation, would permit the regrouping and consolidation of the foreign forces on their soil. Mr. Yeh's declaration that those remaining would be disavowed was, on the face of it, to be welcomed. If it meant, however, the abdication of responsibility by the Formosa Government then it could only be regarded as a move designed for the benefit of the General Assembly. The documents submitted indicated that there were close links between the foreign forces and the authorities in Formosa. He noted that Mr. Tsiang had referred (653rd meeting) to a visit made to the area by the personal representative of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. That representative had clearly encountered no difficulty in finding and reaching the guerillas and it seemed improbable that his visit could or would have taken place if the guerillas did not subscribe to the authority of the Formosa Government. Mr. Tsiang had also endeavoured to represent the foreign forces as a self-sufficient army which did not depend on assistance from Formosa. The aircraft maintaining communications between Formosa and the area involved, however, must necessarily be large and powerful in order to cover the distances between the two areas. Such aircraft could use airport facilities only in Formosa, and could not operate from secret strips.

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

Those facilities could only be provided with the connivance, and indeed the active support of the military authorities on Formosa, since it was reasonable to assume that all airfields of any consequence on that island must be under military control. The question of responsibility in the past, therefore, was not one which could so easily be overlooked. A further point of evidence in that respect was that according to Mr. Tsiang various leaders of the forces had returned to Formosa, including General Li Mi, who was obviously *persona grata* on the island. Clearly, a general carrying on a private war would not be so received by the Government on Formosa. Even if General Li Mi for some reason was to be regarded as entitled to exceptional treatment, it was clear that the "jungle" generals also had travelled back and forth.

5. The attitude of the Formosa representatives in the Bangkok negotiations was also relevant. It had taken a month to undertake negotiations on such an urgent matter. After the initial phase of the negotiations, an agreement in principle had been reached, with the participation of the representatives of the Government of Burma and of the authorities on Formosa, concerning the evacuation of the armed forces. The Formosa representatives had then said that they must return for consultation with their Government, and as a result, the figure of 2,000 had been put forward.

6. Mr. Menon reiterated that what hurt Burma hurt India because of the links of friendship, geography and history between the two countries.

7. In what way was the proposition of the Formosa Government to be judged? It could be regarded as part of a gradual reduction of the forces to end the situation or as a method of consolidating and regrouping the remainder, whereby 10,000 men would remain where they were under the protection of the argument of disavowal. He noted that there was no indication in the statement by Mr. Yeh as to what was to happen to the supplies in the possession of the foreign forces. Nor did that statement contain any appeal to the forces involved to lay down their arms and agree to evacuation or internment. While he did not want to take a hard and fast position in that respect at that stage, the matter could not be left to rest as though a satisfactory conclusion had been reached. The resolution adopted on the matter by the General Assembly was a mild one in comparison to the draft resolution submitted in the First Committee at the seventh session by the Burmese delegation (A/C.1/L.42). By that resolution, the General Assembly deplored the presence of all the foreign forces in Burmese territory. It must continue to deplore the 10,000 that would remain, after the 2,000 troops proposed for evacuation had been evacuated. The actions of 10,000 men were as hostile as the actions of 12,000. The General Assembly resolution had stated that the foreign forces must be disarmed and submit to internment or leave the Union of Burma. Since there would have been no point in telling the Burmese Government that the foreign forces should be disarmed, that provision could not be regarded as having been directed to that government. He emphasized that the sovereignty of a country could be violated by other ways than by physically entering its territory. In effect, the Committee had been told that the evacuation of 2,000 of the forces solved the problem. The Committee had also been told that further negotiations would be attempted. He was not say-

ing that that was not good, but he was certain that it was not good enough.

8. In connexion with another provision of the General Assembly's resolution, namely, the one that called upon States not to assist the foreign forces, he pointed out that wolfgram was not an item of personal consumption. If the governments could put a stop to the purchase of minerals exploited in Burma by the foreign forces, they would, by doing so, put an end to the aid such purchase meant to those forces.

9. In conclusion, he noted that there had emerged an agreement to evacuate 2,000 men but that the Burmese Government was not committed to the agreement that the forces to be evacuated would number only 2,000, although it was committed not to attack those troops in the process of evacuation. Thanks to the efforts made by the Governments of the United States and Thailand, however, such an agreement had been reached. He believed that those 2,000 men were going to be evacuated and that sufficient time should be allowed for the operation to take place, he hoped, before 15 November. The other fact confronting the Committee was that 10,000 men would remain, armed with weapons not made in Burma or even in Formosa, but supplied from various parts of the world. Formosa had not been given these arms to be used against the Burmese people. No one had supplied the arms, to the country from which they had come, with a view to their being used against the Burmese people. Moreover, it was well known that there were certain insurgent forces in Burma, notably the Karens, and in some of the Shan states, and that, despite the assertions that they were only anti-communist, the foreign forces in Burma had joined hands with the enemies of the Burmese Government to foment rebellion against that Government.

10. While the Committee might conclude the general debate at that point, it, nevertheless, should remain seized of the question, as envisaged in the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.73). The problem was immediate and direct, and they were bound to deal with it by virtue of the resolution of the General Assembly (707 (VII)), which stated the objective to be attained. The obligation resting on the Assembly was to see that that resolution was carried out. Mr. Menon closed by paying tribute to the Burmese people who had faced with great courage and fortitude the difficult problem that had confronted them since attainment of their independence, and who deserved the support of the United Nations.

11. U MYNT THEIN (Burma) expressed gratitude for the renewed expressions of sympathy regarding the terrible position in which the Burmese found themselves as a result of the continued presence of the Kuomintang troops in their territory. Their presence over a period of years in a part of Burma adjacent to China itself was tantamount to baiting the Chinese people on the mainland to come to grips themselves with the Kuomintang troops wherever they might be. That the People's Republic of China had shown forbearance and respect for the borders of Burma in that situation was commendable. General Li Mi's troops were incapable of such a sense of decency, but they and their leaders were regarded as heroes by Taipeh.

12. The representative of Burma had no wish to belittle the efforts made by Mr. Tsiang, who had been assigned the task of defending an indefensible position.

Criticism was inevitable in such a matter, and in Burma he, himself, was criticized by opposition elements for being mild and for failing to demand expulsion from the United Nations of the representatives of Formosa. Indeed, some of those critics would have Burma leave the United Nations over the issue. Shorn of all embellishment, however, Mr. Tsiangs' case was simple and unromantic. The forces involved had been part of a routed nationalist army which had fled into Burma. It had been the only remnant of that army near enough China to resort to nuisance tactics. Much had been made of it, and General Li Mi had been acknowledged as the absentee governor of Yunnan by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in 1950. It might be asked whether he had since been divested of the title. The authenticity of the evidence as to the direct link between Taipeh and that army, submitted by his delegation at the previous session and during the current one, had not been challenged, even if Mr. Tsiang did keep on saying that those forces were not part of the army on Taiwan. As for the argument that the Formosa Government had lost all control over the forces, which allegedly used without authority the name of President Chiang Kai-shek for their own purposes, the fact that Chiang Kai-shek did not repudiate those forces led to the inference that he could not do so because they were his own men.

13. The promise that an attempt would be made to remove 2,000 men and that the remainder would be disavowed was no consolation, or even the semblance of a solution to the victims of aggression, the Burmese people. His country could only feel pessimistic as to the outcome and he was glad to note that the representatives of the United Kingdom, Australia and India had taken pains to point out that what was offered was not a real solution, even if they hoped that it was a step towards an ultimate one. His country's pessimism was the greater, because, almost simultaneously with the announcement of the proposal, the Kuomintang had intensified its campaign. In that connexion, he gave details of reports which appeared to indicate that those troops intended to launch a post-monsoon offensive against the forces of the Government of the Union of Burma.

14. Mr. Tsiang had not elaborated at all on the statement that the figure of 2,000 had never been intended to be the limit. It was difficult to place any great reliance on that bare statement in view of Mr. Yeh's declaration (A/C.1/L.69) that after evacuation, the remainder would be disavowed. As for Mr. Tsiang's regret that the United Nations had intervened and his contention that the matter should have been solved the Chinese way, it should not be forgotten that the Burmese Government had sought to solve the problem through friendly governments as far back as early 1951. Since that time, the Government at Formosa had had every chance to solve the matter with the old Chinese placidity or in the American rush. Nothing had been done, not because of the peculiar psychology or the fanaticism of Li Mi and his generals, but because the authorities on Formosa had not wished to solve it. The only possible inference was that to them the army in Burma constituted a symbol, ineffective though it might be, of a crusade against communism to which contributions flowed readily and which permitted an organization like Western Enterprises, Inc. to enrich its directors.

15. Turning to the statements made by the representative of the United States, he said that his delegation was gratified to know that the President of that country had taken a personal interest in the matter. However, the view expressed in those statements that the evacuation of 2,000 men would be a substantial implementation of the Assembly's resolution, that the degree of influence exercised by the Chinese Government over the large majority of the forces was small and that it was not in the power of other governments to secure complete evacuation of those forces by peaceful means it might at a later stage be used by the authorities in Formosa as an endorsement by the United States of their stand that no more than 2,000 men could be evacuated. While it might be the first step of a long journey, by itself that project was no substantial implementation of the resolution even if it were carried out. Other governments might not be able to secure a complete evacuation, but they might well be able to make the Chinese Nationalist forces in Burma ineffective or liquidate them entirely. One way would be to ensure that the aid given away by a charitable people was not misused to harass a friendly country. Organizations maintaining the guerrillas could be liquidated or at least investigated. General Chiang Kai-shek could be persuaded to follow the suggestions of the representatives of New Zealand (654th meeting) and France (653rd meeting) and repudiate, at the presidential level, the troops involved.

16. His delegation disagreed with the view that Li Mi exercised little influence. The degree of that influence was obviously high in respect of the 2,000 men scheduled to return to Taiwan. But there were another 3,000 men willing to be evacuated and to obey Li Mi's orders to that effect, as was clear from the evidence submitted by his delegation (A/C.1/L.70). While he would be the last to say that Li Mi had influence over all supposed to be in the Yunnan anti-communist National Salvation Army, estimated by Li Mi himself at 30,000, it was a fact that Li Mi did command influence over the majority of them, including the 3,000 in respect of whom the Burmese had not been asked to make any evacuation plans. The proposal and the announcement that 2,000 men would be evacuated was no cause for over-rejoicing, for it was merely the shadow of a solution.

17. He expressed deep appreciation for the words of kindness showered on him by the Committee. One way of killing a cat was by smothering it with cream. He hoped that he and the Burmese item would be spared that fate.

18. Mr. TSIANG (China) observed that he wished to use his right of reply not to engage in fresh controversy but to clarify his Government's position. His Government, basing itself on the promise of the leaders of the guerrilla forces, had undertaken to evacuate 2,000 troops, with their dependents. The Chinese Government had not wished to proceed in that fashion, but would have preferred to start evacuation in August without having to define the number to be evacuated. It had hoped that once evacuation started, the early evacuees would help to promote further evacuation. His Government placed no limitation on the number to be evacuated and was ready to receive any others the United Nations or the Burmese Government could persuade or coerce to leave.

19. Although during the debate several representatives had given a sinister meaning to the word "disavow", Mr. Tsiang stated that neither the Joint Military Committee nor his Government believed there was anything sinister in it. His Government's disavowal of the forces remaining in Burma meant that those irregulars would be told that they did not have the sympathy, far less the support or approval, of the Chinese Government. Such disavowal would also discourage overseas Chinese from supplying resources to the irregulars.

20. Mr. Tsiang observed that the representative of Burma had suggested that the President of the Chinese Government should repudiate General Li Mi. Although the latter could be removed, Mr. Tsiang said, others would succeed him. His Government had not repudiated General Li Mi, but had persuaded him to use his influence to induce 2,000 to leave and hoped he would openly proclaim the dissolution of the whole force. When General Li Mi's influence had been exhausted, the question of repudiation might arise. Before that stage was reached, repudiation would not be helpful; it would complicate the task.

21. The fact that his Government had undertaken not to supply the irregulars had been misinterpreted. What it had undertaken to do, and would take stronger and firmer steps to do, was to prevent further supplies from being smuggled out of Formosa.

22. Difficulties still existed, which could be overcome with the assistance of all the Member States, including that of the Governments of China and Burma. Mr. Tsiang then indicated that one way in which the Burmese Government could be helpful was in implementing the assurances it had given with regard to abstention from military action against people assembled for evacuation.

23. The Chinese Government had complained not about general military activities of the Burmese army, but against those activities which threatened either the evacuees or the safety zones designed as assembling points. If the evacuees were to suffer heavy casualties, the Chinese Government could not fulfil its undertakings to the leaders of the irregular forces and the evacuation plans might be upset.

24. Mr. Tsiang recalled that the Burmese Government had recognized in 1950 the communist régime in Peiping and that his Government had protested such recognition as being premature and, therefore, an intervention in the Chinese civil war. That recognition was obnoxious to many Chinese. Burma had announced to the world that its position in the present world crisis was that of a neutral. Other countries were also practising neutralism. Burma's neutralism, however, was peculiar in the sense that Burmese public leaders and Press had gone out of their way to praise the Chinese Communists and to criticize the Republic of China concerning questions unrelated to Burma.

25. The hotheads among the Chinese people tried to make their compatriots believe that the Government at Rangoon was a puppet of Peiping. Although the more reasonable elements knew that this was not true, Mr. Tsiang suggested that the Burmese Government might find a way to help the reasonable Chinese people prove the incorrectness of that thesis.

26. The representative of Burma had stated that the presence of the irregular troops served as bait to the Chinese Communists, and he had gone to the extent

of thanking the latter for not pursuing the irregulars on to Burmese soil. The Chinese Government was aware of the difficulties facing the Burmese Government. Mr. Tsiang was not suggesting that Burma should change its policy, but he suggested that the Burmese leaders forego the temptation to deride the Government of the Republic of China.

27. The representative of China thought that the far-sighted people of Burma and the far-sighted people of China could arrange a "conspiracy", the object of which would be to solve the present question in the interest of their long-term relations. In conclusion, he stated that he and many of his friends in China felt that the present unhappy situation was a transient phase and that good-neighbourliness would again come to exist between the two countries.

28. U MYINT THEIN (Burma) replied that he had not expected that the Committee would be given a lecture on neutralism, particularly Burmese neutralism, and in order to avoid acrimony in the debate, that he would not reply in the same tone. He regretted that Mr. Tsiang's intervention had lowered the high level of the debate. He stated that the representative of China was wrong in thinking that the Burmese attitude toward communist China, which was one of neighbourly conduct, amounted to fondling communism.

29. He said that the Burmese Government had carried out its undertaking and had stopped bombing Monghsat as of 1 October. He hoped that the people of Formosa would not invent bombings in order to avoid evacuating even 2,000 men.

30. The CHAIRMAN declared that the general debate was closed and that the Committee would discuss the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.73), which had been circulated during the meeting.

31. Mr. KYROU (Greece), intervening on a point of order asked whether the aims of the sponsors of the draft resolution would not be equally well fulfilled if the Chairman were to request the President of the General Assembly not to have the question examined in a plenary meeting before 23 November, the date mentioned in the draft resolution, and to agree that rule 67 should not be applied.

32. Mr. COTE (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the delegations of Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Mexico, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The operative part provided that "the First Committee decides under rule 115 of the rules of procedure to adjourn further consideration of this question by this Committee at the present session to a date not earlier than 23 November".

33. He stated that his delegation had no doubts about the concrete steps being taken to implement the General Assembly resolution and accepted without reservation the statement made at the 653rd meeting by the representative of the United States.

34. The evacuation of Chinese troops from Burma was under way. Although his delegation had felt that 16 November would be an appropriate date for the resumption of the consideration of the question, it felt that it would undoubtedly be possible to announce the completion of the initial stage of evacuation by 23 November.

35. Mr. Côté recalled that many representatives had indicated they were not completely satisfied with the

evacuation plans. Some felt the proportion was too small, and some indicated that greater safeguards regarding the withholding of supplies to unevacuated troops were needed.

36. Although the Canadian delegation had no desire unnecessarily to postpone the debate, Mr. Côté said his delegation was convinced that an adjournment of further consideration was essential and would make prolonged debate in the plenary meeting unnecessary.

37. Mr. MANU AMATAYAKUL (Thailand) thanked the delegations who had expressed appreciation for the services his country had rendered. However, after the unremitting efforts his people had made to help free Burmese territory of foreign elements entrenched there, some questionable references to his country's role in the whole matter were made by a few delegations. Those references, made by delegations from which little else could be expected either in the present or in any other debate, did not surprise him, but he was rather saddened by the fact that such references also found their way into the speeches of delegations from which better things might have been expected. Such insinuations tempted his delegation to say that such references indeed represented in the words of Shakespeare, "the most unkindest cut of all".

38. Thailand's record was clear. The representatives of Thailand had worked without stint on the Joint Military Committee, and outside of it, to ensure the implementation of the General Assembly's resolution; they had been mainly responsible for framing the various evacuation plans considered in the Committee; they had offered to spend about \$160,000 to effect the evacuation; they were making available transportation, food, lodging and medical care for the thousands of evacuees who would cross Thai territory; and they were making available security troops to oversee the whole process. Those endeavours were made without ulterior motive. In fact, if it were true that illicit traffic took place in some of the more inaccessible parts of Thailand, his Government was never a party to it and regarded it as illegal and strove to stop it. Mr. Amatayakul said that it was to Thailand's interest above all to help extinguish the fires of political unrest raging all around his country and hence to achieve the optimum solution of this problem. He added that his delegation's efforts had been directed to the evacuation of the foreign troops in Burma, and not to the ephemeral political advantage that some may wish to gain by recording an empty condemnatory gesture which would leave Burma in the grip of their present problem, and trusted that in time those efforts would be appreciated in all quarters. He said that, in view of the unfounded charges his Government might be compelled to conclude that it would be improper for it to assume any longer the responsibility for the ungrateful task and to allow its territory to be used for evacuation purposes.

39. In conclusion, the representative of Thailand said his delegation would vote in favour of the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.73).

40. Sir Percy SPENDER (Australia) said that the purpose of the sponsors of the draft resolution was to enable the Committee to see the situation at the expiry of the date when it was hoped the evacuation of the first 2,000 men would be complete.

41. The Australian representative said the Committee had an indivisible interest in the question. It was not

sufficient to be told that those primarily interested were the Governments of Burma and the Republic of China. The representatives had learned that events which commenced thousands of miles away from their shores could project critical situations which might involve their respective countries in hostilities. Because of that fact, the Australian delegation had always asserted its right to express its views and desired to look at the question at the conclusion of the date mentioned in the draft resolution.

42. Sir Percy suggested that the work of the Committee would not be assisted by recourse to rule 67, as suggested by the representative of Greece, and that the better way would be to support the draft resolution. It might well be that the representatives would be so satisfied with the progress that had taken place that no resolution would be necessary except a formal seeking continuance of the efforts which had been made by the various countries concerned.

43. In conclusion, Sir Percy said that his delegation hoped that the Government of Thailand, which had given so much assistance, would continue its good offices.

44. Mr. TSIANG (China) stated he was opposed to the draft resolution because it would bring about another round of debates, which would not be helpful to the future development of the question. He observed that the representative of Burma had admitted that it was not easy to make statements in the Committee, and said that both he and the representative of Burma had to consider public opinion in their countries.

45. The most fruitful course would be to allow the United States and Thailand to continue their good offices to see that the evacuation plan was carried out and to determine what else could be accomplished.

46. Mr. Tsiang said he had no wish to imply and indeed had not implied that any representative had less right to participate in the debate than the two parties directly concerned.

47. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.73)

The Draft resolution was adopted by 50 votes to 3, with 6 abstentions

48. Mr. CAREY (United States), in explanation of his vote said that in view of the role his Government had played in the past and the possibility that the parties concerned might wish the United States to continue to exercise its good offices, his delegation had abstained.

49. Mr. MENON (India) said the only reason that the Indian delegation had co-sponsored and voted in favour of the draft resolution was his delegation's wish to make possible, at an appropriate time, an opportunity for the consideration of the next step to be taken.

50. Mr. HOPPENOT (France) moved that the Committee adjourn until 10.30 a.m., 6 November 1953. The adjournment of debate on the Burmese question had come unexpectedly and Mr. Jules Moch, who would represent the French delegation in the discussion of the next item, had not arrived from Paris.

51. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the French motion for adjournment.

The motion was adopted by 37 votes to 2, with 15 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.