

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH MEETING*Held at Lake Success, New York, on Tuesday, 8 November 1949, at 10.45 a.m.**Chairman: Mr. Lester B. PEARSON (Canada).***Question of the disposal of the former Italian colonies (continued)**REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE 17 (A/C.1/522)
(continued)

1. Mr. KISELEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the draft resolution suggested by the Sub-Committee rejected the request of the Libyan people for immediate independence, thereby maintaining the occupation of Libya for another two years with a promise of a fictitious independence. Moreover, that two-year period was designed to allow the United Kingdom to set up puppet Governments, similar to that of Cyrenaica, all over Libya through unilateral actions. The United States and France were already following suit in Tripolitania and the Fezzan.
 2. In submitting his amendments (A/C.1/526/Rev.1), Mr. McNeil had endeavoured to represent the United Kingdom as the defender of oppressed colonial peoples. On the contrary, those amendments purported to establish a machinery whereby unity would be completely destroyed. The representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and France as well as others, had endeavoured through their speeches in the Committee, to safeguard their colonial and oppressive régimes. That fact was borne out by their refusal to support the USSR proposals for a withdrawal of all foreign troops and for liquidation of all military bases within a period of six months, as well as by Press reports to the effect that the United States and the United Kingdom were building military establishments in Tripolitania. Moreover, according to the Sub-Committee's draft resolution, those States were granted the right to participate in the government of Libya, whereas the opposition of France, the United States and the United Kingdom to the Polish amendment had excluded the Soviet Union from any such participation. Moreover, the representative of the United States, although aware of the fact that the USSR was not participating in the work of the Interim Committee, had nevertheless presented a proposal to the Sub-Committee, a proposal which had later been adopted, to the effect that the proposed commission for Eritrea report to the Interim Committee which in turn should consider that report and submit its conclusions to the fifth regular session of the General Assembly. His delegation was convinced that the USSR proposals constituted a fair and equitable solution to the problem under consideration.
 3. With respect to Somaliland, the proposals of the Sub-Committee merely reproduced the solution based on the Bevin-Sforza Agreement which had been rejected during the previous session. That proposal, as well as the present draft resolution, had caused serious disturbances in Somaliland. The representative of the United Kingdom had endeavoured to convince the First Committee that the forceful dispersion of the demonstrators and their victimization was merely a normal policy deriving from the obligation of the Administering Authority to maintain law and order in Somaliland. The delegation of the Byelorussian
- SSR considered that the only solution compatible with the interests and welfare of the Somalis was contained in the USSR proposal (A/C.1/487/Rev.1) that Somaliland be granted independence after a five-year period during which the Trusteeship Council would be responsible for the administration of the territory. On the other hand, the solution envisaged by the Sub-Committee was contrary to the interests and wishes of the indigenous inhabitants and incompatible with the stipulations of the Peace Treaty with Italy as regards international peace and security.
4. With regard to Eritrea, the Sub-Committee's recommendations also failed to meet the desires of the indigenous inhabitants by postponing the solution. The reason for postponement was not, as it was alleged, due to the lack of information, but merely to the fact that the colonial Powers had not been able to reach an agreement similar to the one reached concerning the other two territories.
 5. Mr. Kiselev reiterated his support for the USSR proposals placing Eritrea and Somaliland under United Nations trusteeship, since the Organization was more capable than any country, taken individually, to provide the necessary political, economic and cultural assistance with a view to preparing those countries for independence within five years. Such a solution would raise the prestige of the Organization and would earn it the gratitude of the colonial peoples. Finally, the proposals of the Soviet Union satisfied Ethiopia's legitimate claim for an access to the sea through the port of Assab.
 6. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia) said that, although the solution proposed was not entirely satisfactory, it constituted a major improvement on the solution proposed during the previous session because greater consideration had been given to the wishes of the inhabitants of the territories.
 7. With regard to Libya, Mr. Dejany stated that his delegation considered the draft resolution to be satisfactory in principle, since it recognized the fact of Libya's unity. Many of its details, however, were unsatisfactory. But his delegation would support it for the sake of facilitating the work of the First Committee with a view to finding the fairest possible solution to the problem as soon as possible. Accordingly, his delegation would oppose any amendment which would tend to weaken the draft resolution at the expense of the Libyan people, such as the United Kingdom amendments which were intended to obstruct the unity of Libya and to effect its partition.
 8. In introducing his amendments, the United Kingdom representative had claimed (312th meeting) that unity was being imposed on Libya and that such a course was neither just nor in accordance with the wishes of the indigenous inhabitants. But the United Kingdom representative had already recognized the fact that neither Cyrenaica, Tripolitania nor the Fezzan were economically capable of leading an independent existence. Moreover, the religious, cultural and social characteristics of those three territories militated in

favour of their unity. The Sub-Committee itself had recognized that unity by the very wording of its draft resolution, thereby recognizing that the present administrative division of the country was temporary and dictated by military expediency only.

9. Mr. Dejanya refuted the argument of the United Kingdom and other representatives that the people of Libya did not desire the unity of their territory, by stating that the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the population had expressed desire for that unity. The minority of the population, although not speaking of unity, did not oppose it, but left it to the Libyans themselves to decide on that issue. The fact that they did not come out openly in favour of unity was not due to any doubt on their part as to the wisdom and necessity of such a unity, but was solely caused by alien factors resulting from the existing administration of Libya. Moreover, even if the minority did not favour independence, it would be against democratic practice to disregard the wishes of the majority with a view to satisfying a minority.

10. The representative of India had contended (313th meeting) that there was no difference between the United Kingdom proposal and that of the Sub-Committee, since the former would create three separate units with an option for unity, while the latter envisaged the creation of one unit with the option for its three component parts to set themselves up independently. That might well be the case had it not been for the existing abnormal situation whereby interference and pressure were most likely bound to hamper the achievement of the desired unity. Moreover, one of those territories might well enter into commitments unacceptable to the others thereby constituting an obstacle to the eventual unification of Libya.

11. Mr. Dejanya recalled that his delegation had expressed the fear (283rd meeting) that if the unity of the country were compromised, the consequences of such a solution might not be less unfortunate than if no solution at all were found at the current session.

12. It was not the intention of the Saudi Arabian delegation to impose any form of government on the Libyan people against its wishes. Moreover, the draft resolution proposed by the Sub-Committee could lead either to the unity or to the partition of Libya. Furthermore, the co-operation and good-will of the Administering Powers constituted a very effective element in attaining or undermining that unity. Accordingly, his delegation would oppose the United Kingdom amendment and would support the draft resolution submitted by the Sub-Committee.

13. With regard to Somaliland, his delegation could not support the draft resolution suggested by the Sub-Committee, despite the fact that it contained an annex to be included in the Trusteeship Agreement with a view to safeguarding the constitutional and human rights of the inhabitants. Since no ideal solution was likely to secure the necessary two-thirds majority for its adoption, his delegation hoped that further amendments to the present draft would be introduced so as to alleviate the apprehensions of many of the Somalis as well as of certain delegations.

14. As to Eritrea, his delegation had favoured the independence of that territory. Although it deplored the necessity of delay, it had, however, no alternative but to accept the establishment of a commission and would therefore support the proposed draft resolution in that connexion also.

15. Mr. MARTÍNEZ MORENO (El Salvador) said that the position of his delegation was exclusively based on the principle of self-determination of peoples, as set forth in the Charter, as well as on the recognition of the achievements of Italy in its former colonies. Accordingly, his delegation had immediately favoured the independence of Libya and Eritrea and Italian trusteeship over Somaliland, with a view to preparing that territory for independence. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee had therefore justified the position of his delegation.

16. Mr. Martínez Moreno said that, despite the uniformity and the indivisibility of the problem under consideration, some delegations had attempted to arrive at separate solutions for each of the three territories. Nevertheless, his delegation favoured the solution proposed by the Sub-Committee regarding Somaliland, due to the fact that many historical, political and moral reasons militated in favour of Italy as the Administering Authority.

17. Besides, no weighty argument had been levelled against that solution, and nobody had denied that the strongest parties in Somaliland favoured Italian trusteeship.

18. The representative of Ethiopia had expressed his apprehension regarding eventual threats of aggression (313th meeting). Such fears should not be entertained at the present time, in view of the existing democratic régime in Italy.

19. Moreover, his delegation had voted against the immediate independence of Eritrea and favoured the establishment of a commission with a view to studying the wishes of the Eritreans and the claims of the Ethiopian Government. Should the commission find that Eritrea desired to join Ethiopia, his delegation would support such a solution. In the meantime, it felt that it was indispensable for the commission to study the best means for granting Ethiopia an access to the sea.

20. Mr. Martínez Moreno regretted the fact that the representative of Pakistan had opposed the proposed solution for Somaliland and that he would present new proposals. That action might create a greater cleavage between the Members of the United Nations and would make a general solution of the problem more difficult.

21. Finally, his delegation would support the draft resolution recommended by the Sub-Committee or any better resolution if such a resolution was submitted.

22. Sir Mohammad ZAFRULLA Khan (Pakistan) said that his delegation had made it quite clear that its objective was not only the independence of Libya but also its unity. Indeed, it attached such great importance to the unity of the territory, that, assuming that the choice arose between delaying that independence in order that unity might also be achieved, and the immediate establishment of an independent but disunited Libya, his delegation would not hesitate in choosing the former alternative. Besides, that unity had been requested by the overwhelming majority of the

Libyan people. Accordingly, his delegation would support the draft resolution presented by the Sub-Committee and would oppose any amendments affecting the independence and, more particularly, the unity of Libya.

23. With regard to Eritrea, his delegation had been and was still of the view that the majority of the indigenous inhabitants desired independence. His delegation had also held the view that it would be practical to set up an independent Eritrea within the period of three years. However, in view of the suggestion of the Sub-Committee whereby a commission was envisaged, his delegation would not press that proposal, it being understood that any eventual proposal granting Eritrea its independence would receive the support of the Pakistan delegation. Moreover, should the proposed investigation prove that the majority of the Eritrean people desired union with Ethiopia, his delegation would also support that solution. For the time being, he reserved the position of his delegation as to the membership of that commission.

24. With regard to Somaliland, notwithstanding the capacity of democratic Italy to discharge the obligations of a trustee for Somaliland, his delegation was quite convinced that a large majority of the people of that territory was opposed to such a trusteeship.

25. He disagreed with the contention of the representative of El Salvador that the most important political organizations in Somaliland were prepared to accept Italian trusteeship. On the contrary, the Somali Youth League, which was the only organization worthy of that qualification, had persistently been opposed to that solution. Moreover, the representative of El Salvador had also stated that the Pakistan delegation would submit alternative proposals concerning Somaliland. That was not the case, since Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan had only said that unless a compromise solution were reached, his delegation would be compelled to oppose the draft resolution submitted by the Sub-Committee, since that proposal was not in accordance with the wishes of the people of Somaliland.

26. In connexion with the question of whether there should be one single draft resolution or three, he declared that if the majority of the First Committee was of the opinion that a solution likely to secure the two-thirds majority should be found for all three territories, then one single draft resolution should be submitted to the General Assembly. On the other hand, if the majority of the Committee took the opposite view, then the wiser course would be to submit to the General Assembly separate draft resolutions dealing with each of the territories. But the representative of Pakistan nevertheless reiterated the need for separate draft resolutions to be recommended to the plenary session, and he invited the Committee to ponder over the dangerous precedent which was liable to be created and to recur at every session if it adhered to the view that no partial solution should be adopted with regard to the problem of the disposal of the former Italian colonies.

27. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq) said that his delegation, in participating in the work of Sub-Committee 17, had been guided by two principal objectives. First, it had felt that every effort

should be made to reach a settlement at the present session of the General Assembly. Failure to reach a decision would entail a great injury to the prestige of the United Nations and would leave the indigenous populations in a state of suspense. Second, it had believed that any decision must take into account the legitimate interests of the inhabitants of the territories. The settlement must be based upon the principles of the right of self-determination and of the territorial integrity of the territories. It would be far better to take no decision at all than one which contravened the principles of the Charter.

28. With regard to Libya, the Iraqi delegation believed that independence and unity must form the basis of any settlement. There should be an immediate declaration of independence and thereafter the Administering Powers should transfer their authority to the Libyan people as quickly as possible. The Iraqi delegation favoured the plan put forward by Sub-Committee 17 but was ready to support any other proposal designed to bring about independence more speedily. As for Libyan unity, Mr. Al-Jamali whole-heartedly supported the Sub-Committee's formula and would oppose any amendment which might ultimately lead to the partition of Libya. He fully agreed with the views expressed by the Indian representative (313th meeting) in connexion with the United Kingdom's amendments to the Sub-Committee's draft resolution. Those amendments were very dangerous since they envisaged the possibility that Libya might not be unified. Mr. Al-Jamali pointed out that all the spokesmen for the various Libyan political groups had opposed partition and as a representative of a State member of the Arab League, he knew that those utterances represented the wishes of the Libyan people. He asserted that anyone who favoured partition represented neither the views nor the interests of the Libyans.

29. Certain representatives, including the representatives of the United Kingdom and New Zealand, held that the Sub-Committee's formula would impose a unitary form of Government without consulting the people. But they were in error. The unity of Libya did not necessarily entail a unitary form of government; territorial unity could be maintained under a federal system. It was incorrect of course for the General Assembly to attempt to decide the type of constitution which the Libyans should adopt, but that was not the sense of the Sub-Committee's plan. Mr. Al-Jamali therefore expressed the hope that the United Kingdom representative would reconsider the need for his amendments.

30. In the Sub-Committee, the representative of Iraq had been opposed to the establishment of a council for Libya with executive authority derived from the General Assembly. However, an Advisory Council, in the form finally adopted by the Sub-Committee, would exercise a valuable influence and would not hamper the work of the Commissioner and the administration.

31. Mr. Al-Jamali had one criticism of the Sub-Committee's plan for Libya with regard to the special treatment accorded the minorities by giving them a representative in the Advisory Council. He believed that there should be no discrimination of any sort and that the minorities should be treated as an integral part of the population. To single them out and give them separate treatment would not contribute to unity and harmony

among the population as a whole and would not be in the interests of the minorities themselves. The time was past when minority groups were utilized by foreign Powers to foment dissension in weaker countries. Nevertheless, it was not his intention to make an issue of minority representation and he stated his acceptance of the Sub-Committee's draft resolution, in so far as it referred to Libya.

32. With regard to Eritrea, he said that his delegation had worked hard in the Sub-Committee to find a just and acceptable solution but that that had proved impossible in view of considerable divergencies of opinion. The delegation of Iraq had urged at the outset that Eritrea should be given the right to self-determination after three years. Unfortunately that proposal had not been accepted nor had an alternative compromise proposal, which envisaged an immediate federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. In view of the disagreement, which extended even to the interpretation of the information available, the Iraqi delegation felt that a commission of inquiry offered the best solution. It believed, however, that the commission should include a fair proportion of representatives from Asia and Africa. With that reservation the Iraqi delegation would support the Sub-Committee's proposal for Eritrea.

33. In so far as Somaliland was concerned, his attitude toward the Sub-Committee's plan was less favourable. In the first place, the formula proposed by the Sub-Committee offered no certainty that independence would be effected after 10 years; secondly, it had been decided that Italy should be entrusted with the trusteeship administration. While he did not doubt the sincerity and good-will of the new democratic Italy, two facts remained clear: (a) that a section of the population, at least, objected to any return of Italy and (b) that Ethiopia must be given some guarantees that its territory would never again be invaded from Somaliland. It was partially to allay the fears of the Somalis that the delegation of Iraq had first proposed a joint trusteeship and later a collective trusteeship by the United Nations. Both proposals, however, had been rejected. Nevertheless, the Iraqi delegation could not vote for a trusteeship of Somaliland by Italy alone. For the sake of unity and harmony, a formula must be found to allow the Italian administration to be assisted by other States. Likewise, Ethiopia's special position must be recognized and Ethiopia should be included in any new formula intended to supplement Italy's trusteeship over Somaliland. He also suggested that, if Italy was to be made trustee, a clause should be included in the Trusteeship Agreement preventing the establishment of military bases in Somaliland. Only the police forces necessary to maintain law and order should be permitted. In Mr. Al-Jamali's opinion there should be a further attempt at seeking a compromise solution which would ensure harmony among all those concerned in Somaliland.

34. Mr. MARTIN (Canada) stressed the special responsibility which devolved upon the General Assembly in connexion with the present question as a result of the fact that its decision had already been accepted in advance by the four great Powers under the terms of the Italian Peace Treaty and would therefore constitute a final and binding decision and not a mere recommendation.

35. Mr. Martin then explained the basic principles which, he considered, should govern any decision. In the first place, he believed that the major consideration must be the interest of the inhabitants. Secondly, attention should be given to the necessity of reducing to the minimum the conflicts and dislocations which frequently characterized the transition of dependent peoples towards self-government. He recalled that the leader of his delegation, in his initial statement before the General Assembly,¹ had referred to the great change that was taking place in relationships between the peoples of the western world and the former dependent territories. That change presented complicated problems of adjustment and called for a statesmanlike approach by all. Mr. Martin said that the era of imperialism was rapidly passing and, while no one would regret the change, it must be recognized that special provision must be made during the transition period to lay the firm foundation for the independence of the former colonial peoples. The duration of the interim period would naturally vary with the capacity and willingness of the peoples concerned and their readiness to assume the full responsibility of self-government. Consequently, the chief concern of the Canadian Government in the present question was that any settlement must be in the interests of the inhabitants and hence contribute to the long-term requirements of peace and security. Instability in the Central Mediterranean would constitute a menace both to European and world security. Therefore, the Canadian delegation believed that the new political units must be large enough to constitute economically viable States. For that reason, the Canadian delegation was not inclined to support local separatist movements resulting from local prejudices or conflicting foreign interests. Its policy was to do everything possible to encourage the creation of viable political units which could be prepared for statehood in accordance with the spirit and letter of Articles 11 and 12 of the Charter. In the light of those broad principles, Mr. Martin examined the proposals of Sub-Committee 17.

36. In so far as Libya was concerned, the Canadian delegation supported the Sub-Committee's proposal. It was needless to repeat the many arguments which had been adduced in favour of Libyan independence. Mr. Martin believed that the short interim period recommended by the Sub-Committee was realistic and necessary. He also considered that the General Assembly should abstain from any action which might be interpreted as restricting the full freedom of choice by the people of Libya as to the form of their future Government and constitution. They alone should decide whether to establish a unitary or a federal State. Accordingly, the Canadian delegation welcomed the United Kingdom amendments (A/C.1/526/Rev.1) and would support the Sub-Committee's plan for Libya thus amended.

37. With regard to Italian Somaliland, the Canadian delegation believed that the information gathered by the Four-Power Commission of Investigation had made it clear that the territory was not yet ready for complete independence. The question arose, therefore, as to the best method of preparing the inhabitants for self-government. Due regard must be paid to the

¹ See *Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly, 228th plenary meeting.*

historical background of the region and to the contribution of the Italian people to its development. It must also be recognized that, in most cases, a single trusteeship had proved more beneficial to the administered people than joint trusteeship. For that reason, the Canadian delegation supported the Sub-Committee's recommendations that Somaliland should be placed under temporary trusteeship administration by Italy. It likewise supported the proposal that a Trusteeship Agreement should be negotiated between Italy and the Trusteeship Council for approval by the General Assembly and that the Agreement should include an annex containing a declaration of constitutional principles guaranteeing the rights of the inhabitants. In that connexion, Mr. Martin commented favourably upon the proposals submitted by the Indian delegation.

38. As to Eritrea, the Canadian delegation regretted the necessity of postponing the final settlement but believed that in view of conflicting evidence it was the wisest course to take. The Canadian delegation would support the proposal for a commission of inquiry.

39. In conclusion, Mr. Martin stressed that the Sub-Committee's proposals were essentially a compromise solution, and it was in that spirit that the Canadian delegation supported them.

40. Mr. LÓPEZ (Philippines) believed that the Sub-Committee's draft resolution constituted a decided improvement upon the recommendation which the First Committee had submitted to the General Assembly at the previous session. The Philippines delegation supported the Sub-Committee's plan for Libya. On the other hand, the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom delegation seemed to add nothing significant and did not appear to be relevant to the question of unity since it was generally agreed that Libya must remain a unified and single State, regardless of the form of constitution finally adopted. Mr. López did not think that the United Kingdom amendments envisaged the possibility of three separate independent States. Therefore, the freedom of action which they sought to guarantee was quite unnecessary. The freedom for the Libyan people to determine for themselves the form of government they wished to have was adequately guaranteed in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution of the Sub-Committee.

41. The Philippines delegation likewise supported in principle the settlement proposed for Somaliland. However, Mr. López did not approve the final phrase of section B, paragraph 2, which provided that, after the ten-year time-limit had elapsed, the General Assembly could decide that independence should not be granted. That phrase, he believed, constituted an escape clause which destroyed the value of the grant of independence. It had been said that the door should be left open for a continuation of trusteeship beyond the ten-year period if it was found that the territory was not yet ready for self-government. But if the General Assembly estimated that ten years were adequate it should stand by its decision and rely on the good faith of the Administering Authority and the collaboration of the Somali people. Mr. López cited the struggle of his own country to obtain independence as evidence of the danger inherent in any conditional clause which would make it possible for the General Assembly to undergo a change of heart. In effect, if the

Committee adopted the formula proposed by the Sub-Committee it would be giving Somaliland a post-dated check, while at the same time retaining the right to stop payment when the check became due. He urged that the clause to which he had referred be omitted from the resolution.

42. In Section B, paragraph 3, the Sub-Committee had recommended that Somaliland be placed under Italian trusteeship. The Philippine delegation was satisfied with the guarantees provided in paragraphs 5 and 6 and with the annexure proposed by the Indian delegation. Mr. López felt that with such guarantees trusteeship over Somaliland could very well be awarded to any State willing and able to undertake it. As regards the Indian proposal, however, he wondered whether the constitutional guarantees would not be given greater force and validity if they were included as an integral part of the resolution.

43. Nevertheless, he entertained certain doubts as to the desirability of granting trusteeship to Italy alone. He recalled that representatives of one of the political parties in Somaliland had threatened armed resistance to any return of Italian rule (270th meeting). The question therefore arose as to what the General Assembly and the present Administering Authority would do if armed opposition arose. Should not the General Assembly anticipate such a possibility and make some provisions? Perhaps the danger could be mitigated by considering either a joint trusteeship with Italy as one of the trustees or a single trusteeship by Italy, but assisted and advised by a council directly responsible to the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly. A similar question arose concerning Ethiopia's natural fear of Italy's return. The Philippine delegation, after a similar experience of conquest by Japan, could very well understand Ethiopia's fear and therefore believed that the maximum guarantees should be given to Ethiopia. No military fortifications should be permitted in Somaliland and Italian garrisons should be limited to the minimum required to maintain peace and order. Ethiopia should be a member of the Advisory Council and should also be admitted to the Trusteeship Council as soon as the Trusteeship Agreement had entered into force.

44. With regard to Eritrea, the Philippine delegation had been prepared to support the just claims of Ethiopia to the Eastern Provinces. However, since the Sub-Committee had recommended a further investigation, he was ready to approve the establishment of a commission of inquiry provided that Egypt and Ethiopia were represented thereon. He believed that their participation would be of great value to the other members of the commission and he expressed doubt as to whether any State could be regarded as truly neutral in the question.

45. In conclusion, Mr. López referred to the appeal by the Peruvian representative to the Committee not to fail to reach a final decision at the present session (314th meeting). While a decision was important to maintain the prestige of the General Assembly, it was no less important for the same reason, that the final settlement should be both just and practical and in the interests of all the peoples concerned.

46. Mr. ABOU-TALEB (Yemen) expressed wholehearted support for the independence and unity

of Libya. His delegation also favoured the political aspirations of Somaliland. However, if for any reason, it should prove impossible to realize those aspirations the delegation of Yemen would urge a joint trusteeship. Mr. Abou-Taleb added that his delegation could not accept the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom delegation and would vote against their adoption.

47. Mr. BEBLER (Yugoslavia) recalled that he had previously stressed his Government's support for the principle of self-determination for all former colonial peoples. Both the discussions and the recommendations of Sub-Committee 17 showed that the latter had not taken sufficient account of the aspirations of the indigenous peoples and, on certain issues, had utterly disregarded the right of self-determination proclaimed by the Charter. He cited as an example the Sub-Committee's plan with regard to Libya. All the Libyan representatives who had spoken before the Committee had urged independence and said that the Libyans were ready and willing to assume the administration of their country. Nowhere in their statements or in their written documents had they evinced any desire to postpone independence for any length of time. Nevertheless, it was obvious both from the recommended delay and the way in which the interim period was to be utilized that the Sub-Committee had only taken into account the desires of the present Administering Authorities. According to the proposal the United Kingdom would have a number of safeguards which would enable it to decide the form of governmental structure of the new State. For example, the United Kingdom, together with other colonial Powers, would be a member of the Council which would help the Libyan people to draft a constitution. Mr. Bebler could see no reason for such interference when the people were willing to assume all responsibilities and no one had doubted their capacity to take the necessary measures. In Mr. Bebler's view, the amendments submitted by the United Kingdom delegation offered even more alarming evidence that an attempt was being sought to partition Libya permanently and to submit it to continuing occupation.

48. As regards Somaliland, the situation was even clearer. The Somali Youth League, which, according to the Four-Power Commission of Investigation, represented the overwhelming part of the population, had unequivocally opposed Italian trusteeship and demanded independence. Nevertheless, the Sub-Committee had decided upon Italian trusteeship for ten years with a threat that it would be perpetuated thereafter. Such a denial of the wishes of the Somali people was amazing. Mr. Bebler stated that his delegation would oppose the Sub-Committee's recommendations regarding both Libya and Somaliland and would support the corresponding part of the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/487/Rev.1).

49. As regards Eritrea, it was to be regretted that a deadlock had made any solution impossible and would make it impossible to satisfy the just claims of Ethiopia. However, in view of the fact that the only possible alternative to adoption of the Sub-Committee's proposal was the permanent separation of all Eritrea from Ethiopia, the Yugoslav delegation would not oppose the Sub-Committee's recommendation for Eritrea.

50. Mr. COUVE DE MURVILLE (France) restated the position of his delegation. It regretted that the Sub-Committee had been unable to propose any final settlement concerning Eritrea. The French delegation fully understood the bitter feelings which the Ethiopian Government was bound to entertain and it likewise appreciated the anxieties and fears expressed by the Ethiopian delegation regarding the security of its country. However, those fears could be largely overcome if satisfactory precautions were taken in connexion with Somaliland. A number of suggestions had been made by various delegation and he hoped that the Trusteeship Council would take them into account.

51. As regards Somaliland, the French delegation welcomed the proposal for a single State Trusteeship. It still believed that collective or multilateral trusteeships offered many practical difficulties. The proposal of the Sub-Committee offered the best possible solution..

52. Turning to Libya, Mr. Couve de Murville restated his delegation's acceptance of the principle of independence. As he had explained previously, the only debatable question concerned the date when that independence would become effective. Various opinions had been expressed as to the duration of the interim period. At the previous session of the General Assembly it had been proposed that Libyan independence should become effective at the end of ten years. At the present time the proposal was for independence after a two-year period. In his view the best procedure would be not to set a precise date for Libya's independence. On the other hand, he was prepared to reverse that opinion if objections were raised by many delegations. Nevertheless, he found it difficult to agree that the transitional period should be as short as two years. Hence, the French delegation would reserve its position on that point.

53. There remained the question of Libyan unity. In that connexion the French delegation maintained the same position it had defended at the previous session of the Assembly. He cited section A, paragraph 11, as evidence that there was no intention on the part of any delegation to envisage a partition of Libya into three separate States. He believed that the differences of opinion in the Committee concerned modalities rather than principle, a fact which was illustrated by the United Kingdom amendment. The French delegation considered it essential to safeguard the right of the inhabitants of the three parts of Libya to ultimately determine their own form of government. The best thing for the General Assembly to do would be to refrain from intervening in the matter. It should leave to the people, or to the authorities which they might designate, the right of determining the way in which the State of Libya should be constituted. That was why he did not agree with the serious objections which had been advanced against the United Kingdom amendments. He found nothing objectionable in those amendments, nor did he believe that they were actuated by any ulterior motive. He reserved the right to speak at greater length on the language of the United Kingdom proposals during the drafting stage when he hoped to be able to dispel the anxieties of a number of delegations regarding the intentions of the United Kingdom delegation.

54. Finally, there remained the question raised by the Pakistan delegation as to whether the final General Assembly decision should take the form of a single inclusive resolution or three separate decisions, one relating to each territory. The French delegation had already stated that it favoured the submission of a single unified text. The future of the former Italian colonies formed a single question which had been transmitted to

the General Assembly by the signatories of the Italian Peace Treaty. Hence, it was the Assembly's duty to adopt a decision on the whole of the problem. Also, from the practical point of view a single resolution offered less difficulties. If the problem was divided, it was quite likely that effective solutions would be postponed indefinitely.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Tuesday, 8 November 1949, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Lester B. PEARSON (Canada).

Question of the disposal of the former Italian colonies (*continued*)

REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE 17 (A/C.1/522)
(*continued*)

1. Mr. VOYNA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) stated that the considerations upon which the United States, the United Kingdom and France had based their views on the question were contrary to the wishes of the peoples of the former Italian colonies and to the requirements of peace and security. That was the reason why no solution had been reached in four years.
2. The documents concerning the debates that had taken place during those four years at the Paris Conference and in the Council of Foreign Ministers and the information concerning the lobbying going on and published in the Press revealed the colonial interests that the three Powers were trying to satisfy with such selfishness and hypocrisy.
3. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR had always been guided solely by the interests of the vast majority of the populations of the former Italian colonies and by the requirements of peace and security. It had severely criticized the attitude of delegations which, in considering the problem, had not wished to take those factors into account in spite of the political, economic and social development of recent years and had adhered to their colonial doctrines.
4. As a signatory of the Peace Treaty with Italy, the Ukrainian SSR had stated in the Council of Foreign Ministers that the establishment of trusteeship based on Article 76 of the Charter would be an appropriate solution of the problem of the disposal of the former Italian colonies, which could thus progress towards independence. The Ukrainian SSR had hoped for some time that the former Italian colonies might, under the above conditions, be administered by a democratic Italy, freed from fascism, if that country did not relapse into its pre-war errors. However, the Government in power in Italy had delivered that country, tied hand and foot, into the hands of capitalism and the Ukrainian SSR had realized the impossibility of allowing Italy to administer any of its former colonies. The Italian Government was at the moment trying to protect war criminals from justice and was denying the principles that had guided the United Nations during the Second World War. It was not surprising, therefore, that Ethiopia and certain other States were feeling great anxiety and serious doubts with regard to Italy. Peoples that had not known the horrors of Italian and German domination should make the necessary effort to understand the mentality of those victims of fascism. The Ukrainian SSR had nothing but hatred for all those who, on the basis of the fascist doctrine, were enjoying the support of the United States warmongers.
5. During the third session of the General Assembly, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR had supported the USSR proposal (A/C.1/433/Rev.1) for a direct United Nations trusteeship over the former Italian colonies, with the participation of Italy and the neighbouring States; Libya and Eritrea were to become independent after five years, and Somaliland after ten years. Finally, Ethiopia was to have had an outlet to the sea. Unfortunately, the United Kingdom, the United States, France and other delegations had not supported the proposal of the Soviet Union. A proposal had been made (A/C.1/446) that Libya should only be granted independence after ten years, if the General Assembly so decided. The real purpose had been to divide the former Italian colonies between the four colonial Powers, but the failure of the imperialistic plan to partition the former Italian colonies at the third session had led to the continuation of the occupation of those territories. That system was perhaps worse than the pre-war régime.
6. At the current session, it was to be feared that once again the question might not be solved in a satisfactory manner and that world public opinion and the populations of the former Italian colonies would have every reason to be indignant at that manifestation of United Nations impotence. The responsibility for that state of affairs lay with States which, while paying lip service to the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, were really trying to perpetuate colonialism under the auspices of the United Nations. For those colonial Powers, the right of peoples to self-determination was synonymous with occupation troops, military bases and puppet Governments. It was doubtful that that had been the wish of the peoples who had struggled against fascism. The fact remained that freedom-loving peoples did not attach that meaning to the right of self-determination.
7. Certain speakers had argued that the draft submitted by Sub-Committee 17 was an improvement on the draft resolution (A/873) that had not been adopted during the second part of the third session. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR, however, wished to state after due con-