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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Statement made by the representative of France at the
816th meeting of the Fourth Committee on 25 November 1958

Note: In accordance with the decision taken by the Fourth Committee at its 816th meeting the text of the following statement is circulated to the members of the Committee for information.

After long debates, too often taken up with procedural matters instead of matters of substance, and frequent negotiations, characterized by much goodwill but also revealing more or less thinly-veiled ulterior motives, we are now on the point of reaching a conclusion.

On behalf of the Administering Power I should like to state our position clearly, avoiding as far as possible any points likely to arouse emotion.

Before turning to the subject proper, however, I feel I should clarify one point. I had hoped to ignore the petitioners and their fairy tales. I had intended to let them go on breaking down open doors and tilting at windmills. Indeed, what else could they do since, in so far as they are sincere they must support the programme of the Cameroonian Government? But one delegation referred to our "silence" with regard to them. It was the representative of Jordan who easily wins first prize for the most fantastic and unfortunately the most odious statement. He challenged us. We are now taking up that challenge.

Here then, at the request of the Jordanian representative, are some details on the petitioners:

First of all the students Ngunga and Ndoh Kingue. You heard these students. I listened to them prepared to make every allowance. It is perhaps

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a weakness on my part. As a former university teacher, I spontaneously sympathize with young people who are sincerely looking for the right road. What I should like to say to them is this:

"You seem proud of your culture and you have reason to be. But what we mean by culture as bequeathed to us by generations of humanists, is not merely a certain amount of knowledge or skill in the use of words. French culture is rather intellectual integrity and the courage to face facts, with due humility. In that field you still have a great deal to learn."

However, what shocked me most in those students was that they do not have that fine outspokenness of youth, that impetuosity which perhaps invites hard knocks, but at least keeps the flag flying and has the courage of its convictions. They are Communists. I do not blame them for that. They have every right to be Communists. In France - and in the Cameroons - we push liberalism to the point of allowing full freedom of thought and expression to those who would suppress that very freedom. Not all countries do as much. But I do blame them for being ashamed of their Communism; for already being petty-Moumiés, for thinking it clever to conceal what they are; for taking the members of this Committee for simpletons or idiots, since everything in the presentation of their case, the form of their argument, their organization, their associates, their duality - each watching the other - proclaims their political affiliation. They do not ring true. I know those methods well, those para-Communist organizations, party branches, organizations of young people, women, students, professions, etc., whose real nature is disguised in order to attract those without party affiliations but whose administration is effectively controlled and which insidiously, with skilfully-chosen watchwords, exploit an extreme form of nationalism and which recruit and gradually indoctrinate adherents to the cause. Care is taken not to use the word "communism", but its doctrine is inculcated. In France they call themselves the Union de la Jeunesse Républicaine de France, Union des Femmes Françaises, Union des Avocats Républicains, etc. The more Français and Républicain the better. In the Cameroons great play is made with the words national and camerounais. The Union Nationale des Etudiants Camerounais and UDEFEC - whose guiding spirit, Mrs. Cuandié happens to live in East Berlin - are merely branches of the UPC.

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It is very significant that one of those students should have spoken at length about Maître Kaldor. But there he was unlucky. I know this Maître Kaldor well. I was at high school with him. He has been a Communist for thirty years, the accredited lawyer of what was known before the War as Le Secours Rouge International and is now probably called Le Secours Populaire International, or something of the sort. If you tell me what company you keep, I can tell you what you are.

It is true that these unfortunate students have been persecuted. For instance, the Cameroonian Government awarded them a grant enabling them to come to New York. So they came to New York, and returned to France, availing themselves of that dreadful colonialist freedom which the Administering Power persists in imposing on them. But they spent a night, or very nearly, at a police station. That happens to all students in all countries of the world, except in totalitarian countries where the stays tend to be longer. On the whole, it is something students are rather proud of. It is a feather in their caps; it once happened to me. But I did not send a petition to the League of Nations.

Indeed, the worst I wish these bogus martyrs is that they should return to France as soon as possible and finish their examinations - they must be behindhand with their studies - instead of being used as tools by those organizations, and then go back to the Cameroons, which they are and always have been perfectly free to do, to place their knowledge at the disposal of their country. I am certain that, on regaining contact with reality and returning to their country, like so many young Africans, they will soon recover from that sterile elation and extremist eloquence sometimes induced by the Paris atmosphere.

I now come to the exile from Cairo, Mr. Moumié. I shall not say anything about Mr. N'tumazah who comes from the British Cameroons and seems to me to be in a different category. He is not of the same mould and has not the same manner or political opinions. Mr. Moumié is an old acquaintance. Last year he was all violence and aggressiveness. This year he began fortissimo but ended up on a more subdued note - with a touch of blackmail added. For this gentleman condescendingly dictates his conditions, his preliminaries as he

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calls them. At the same time he makes himself agreeable, not without some skill: a pretty phrase about French culture and the Cameroons' possible association with France, a word about the cause of the British Cameroons, about British culture and possible association with the Commonwealth. Thus he tries to please everyone and, at the same time, probably hopes to stir up some sort of Franco-British rivalry.

But I am very sorry for Mr. Moumié. He has missed the way and now does not know what to do. There was nothing to prevent him from taking advantage of the amnesty. As Mr. Ahidjo, the President of the Cameroonian Government, has said, there are no political conditions attached to the amnesty law. And then he could have returned to the Cameroons. But it is painful to have to admit one's mistakes. And then, to return home as an ordinary citizen and seek democratic election by legal means when the time comes, is not what he had hoped for - that method is too uncertain and too slow. For independence must mean Moumié in power, otherwise it is not independence. This is no exaggeration. you have heard him yourselves. He now speaks about independence being "done to a turn"; for him Cameroonian independence means the UPC in power, and, like all totalitarian parties, the UPC's first action would be to stifle all opposition, stamp out freedom and bring down the dark curtain of oppression on another part of the globe. They have rejected the national flag of independence, chosen by the elected Assembly of the Cameroons; they want a red flag with the black crab of the UPC, with its aura of hatred and terrorism, and to that end they continue to foment violence. But they are no longer succeeding, The Bassas were deceived for a long time but are now coming to their senses. Tranquillity is returning to Senagha, the only area where for tribal reasons, they were able to exploit primitive racialism in the most odious manner. Now they are trying to turn the session of the General Assembly to account. Money is being lavishly spent to increase the flow of telegrams bringing pseudo-petitions. Every effort is made to provoke incidents. Disturbances, which happily are over and done with, are represented as current events. The numerical strength of military forces now stationed there is multiplied by sixty. Above all, as murders have been committed and the criminals are being brought to justice, there are cries of "repression". The unfortunate N'Tumazah was considered

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good enough for the job, since there was a risk of the true facts being discovered. Certainly the murderers of Deputy Manko, a young engineer and a fine Cameroonian, have been arrested, together with the leader of their gang, Simo Pierre. Contrary to the lies circulated here they have not been executed. According to the latest reports, they were in prison at N'Kongsamba and Dschang and awaiting trial by the Dschang criminal court. I remind you that they have been charged with murder. Fotso Joseph, Kanto Donat, Kamden Justice and Fongam Mathias are at liberty and no charge has been maintained against them.

That is another myth exploded. But that is not the essential feature of the tactics employed by M'oumié and his associates. They are utterly contemptuous of their victims, those murdered on their orders and their own henchmen alike. Their aim is to return as victors; in other words to impose their conditions, what they call their prerequisites, and for that they have this fine Organization of the United Nations and, above all, this excellent Fourth Committee, always ready to show ardent sympathy for the cause of petitioners, always ingenuously ready to suspect the Administering Powers and to believe everything it is told about wicked colonialism. But they have to be smart: with M'oumié and Marthe Ouandié, in other words, Cairo and East Berlin it was a little too obvious, particularly as this year members of the legitimate Opposition, Assale and Soppo Praso, hold office or have a majority. So two young militant disciples were brought from Paris. Students elicit so much sympathy.

Then there was that godsend Togoland. It was cited as a "precedent", and the following syllogism became a current slogan, straightaway echoed by several friendly delegates:

"Olympio was a petitioner,
Olympio has become Prime Minister,
therefore all petitioners must become Prime Ministers."

A first-year student in any of the world's universities, or even a high school pupil, would certainly repudiate that type of syllogism as one of the worst forms of fallacious reasoning, but for the Fourth Committee and for those people all methods are permissible.

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Furthermore, systematic efforts are made to discredit the legitimate Cameroonian Government and cast doubt on the Assembly recently elected by universal suffrage. And they hope to return to the Cameroons in triumph having dictated their conditions and proclaiming everywhere that they have United Nations support. Such is their design, their plan to confiscate Cameroonian independence for their own ends and set up there a fine totalitarian regime with the kind of freedom you are familiar with.

There is only one obstacle to the realization of this over-simple plan, as Mr. Labanov would say, and that is the clear-sighted and liberal policy of the Cameroonian Government, the unambiguous schedule fixed by France for Cameroonian independence and the national self-realization of Cameroonian public opinion.

Mr. Moumié has demonstrably been overtaken by events. He considers himself a revolutionary. In fact he is a reactionary, or, one might say, simply behind the times. So let him get up to date with the Cameroons which he left three years ago. Let him listen to his former friends who are tired of excesses. And if he has energy to spare let him, if he can, devote it to the service of his country.

But let us leave the petitioners, their statements and those who echo them, and turn to more serious matters. It would perhaps be appropriate to recall that we are discussing the report of the Trusteeship Council. The Trusteeship Council has made a prolonged and careful study of the general situation in the Territory. It has scrutinized the functioning of political institutions and of central, regional and local administration and appraised economic, social and cultural development. It has examined all the reports, all the files and even all the petitions. I do not intend, at this juncture, to recapitulate all its conclusions and recommendations. I am merely surprised that there are some who persistently refuse to take them into account and seem, at times, even to ignore them completely. I need only recall its general conclusion:

"The Council commends the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government for the development of political, economic and social institutions and for the progress achieved in all fields during the year under review".

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I can find no trace of this finding in the resolution submitted to us.

There can therefore be no doubt about the subject of the Trusteeship Council's report, namely the situation in all fields of activity in the Cameroons. Its conclusions are explicit. To determine whether or not progress has continued since the twenty-first session of the Trusteeship Council, that is, since last February, we shall have to await the report of the Visiting Mission now in the Cameroons and its examination by the Trusteeship Council at its next session. The next General Assembly will take cognizance of it in accordance with the customary procedure.

It is quite obvious, however, that the debate on the Cameroons would not have lasted so long or stirred up so much emotion if it had been no more than a discussion on the Trusteeship report. In fact, a new element has supervened: the French Government's announcement, in full agreement with the Cameroonian Government, and in accordance with the wishes of the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly, of 1 January 1960 as the date for Cameroonian independence and the simultaneous termination of Trusteeship.

I should like to make a few observations on that subject:

1. We take note of the fact that no one has so far disputed or called in question 1 January 1960 as the date for Cameroonian independence.

Our position in this respect is perfectly clear: on 1 January 1960, the Cameroons will become independent, and I do not need to repeat here, as I did in the case of Togoland, that independent means independent. We are therefore opposed, in accordance with the Cameroonian Assembly's own wish to any attempts whatsoever to delay the attainment of full sovereignty by the Cameroonian people.

2. On the same date, the Trusteeship Agreement will lapse for the obvious reason, as pointed out by the Tunisian delegate, that the termination of trusteeship is inherent in independence. If the trusteeship continued, there would be no independence.

3. The situation seemed so clear to us that the French Government proposed in the statement which I read here on 28 October, that the present Assembly should adopt the principle of consultation of the Cameroonian population under United Nations supervision and that the Trusteeship Council should be asked to determine the manner in which this principle should be applied

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in the light of the Visiting Mission's report. Our idea was that a referendum should be held which would confirm whether or not the Cameroonian people was in favour of termination of the trusteeship system by the attainment of independence on 1 January 1960.

We were then told that we must wait for the Visiting Mission's report. It was not we who proposed it. We answered, so be it! Let us not prejudge the question! Let us wait for the Visiting Mission's report. It must be admitted that we are not difficult to deal with. The memorandum of 12 November took this fairly widely expressed opinion into account.

Then some people added: there is no point in holding a referendum, since everyone agrees on independence. We readily acknowledge that the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly, elected by universal direct and secret ballot on 23 December 1956, and the Government which has its confidence, are perfectly qualified to express their views on the future of the Cameroons, as they indeed have done.

That is good enough for us. We are not more Catholic than the Pope, nor more United Nations than the United Nations itself. We do not need a referendum in order that the Cameroons may become independent on 1 January 1960.

Then some people said: "We must have elections!" Why elections? They are even less justified than a referendum to discover the opinion of the Cameroonians on independence - or on reunification, I will come to that question in a moment. But you yourselves tell us, while rejecting the idea of a referendum, that you do not doubt the wishes of the Cameroonians. Then why have elections?

Because elections were held in Togoland under French administration? To say nothing of the falseness of reasoning by analogy as I have already mentioned (and why not speak of Togoland under British administration or Somaliland in that case?), it is obvious, as my colleague from Haiti has so brilliantly demonstrated, that the situation in Togoland was completely different. There was no Assembly elected by universal suffrage; there was confusion or complexity in the aims pursued, i.e. self-government or independence. Some asked for target dates for the termination of Trusteeship, and there were various other problems. The consultation could not therefore be sufficiently simple for a referendum.

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Actually, this false precedent is only an excuse. The clever ones are seeking to cast doubts on the legality of the Cameroonian Government, and on the representative nature of the Cameroonian Assembly elected by universal direct and secret ballot. They are trying to undermine the growth of a young democratic State which has better things to do than to hold fresh elections each year on the pretext that its leaders are not under remote control from Cairo or East Berlin. It is a case of abusive interference in Cameroonian internal affairs.

Furthermore, one of the petitioners himself criticized the idea of general elections amounting to a referendum at the 808th meeting, pointing out that "the personal influence of candidates" affected such vote and caused the basic problems to be overlooked.

Lastly, I should like to say that the organization of elections comes within the exclusive competence of the Cameroonian authorities, and that we should fail in our obligations if we took back what we have given. Prime Minister Ahidjo has given you a reply in this connexion. His reply is the same as ours. We refuse to countenance this game of international demolition in which certain people would like to involve the United Nations.

4. A final observation on reunification. I said last year and I now repeat that the problem of reunification is not and cannot be a Franco-British problem. Those who imagine they can stir up in this connexion any rivalry or any conflict of influence or prestige are making a mistake. Reunification is a problem for the Cameroonians to settle themselves. You have heard Prime Minister Ahidjo. Reunification is not a question for the French Cameroonians who are ready to welcome the British Cameroonians, if the latter so desire. It is therefore a decision which concerns the British Cameroons. Certain factors in the problem are still unknown to us. If the question of the time-table is important, it is still more essential that when the time comes the Cameroonians should be able to express themselves freely and with a full knowledge of the facts. I think the United Nations and the Administering Authority can easily agree to ensure this.

I have recalled above the essential points of our position. They can be summed up in one line: whatever happens, with or without a special Assembly, with or without a resolution, the Cameroons under French administration will

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become independent on 1 January 1960. We thought there would be general assent to this. We perceive that certain people have strange notions with regard to independence. It is instructive to see how many of those who seemed in the greatest hurry and who pressed at every opportunity for target-dates now find independence little to their taste as it approaches, and are trying to halt its progress. But we are keeping a straight course, and we shall not allow ourselves to be diverted from it either by procedural hindrances or by other obstructions. We look forward to counting the true champions of Cameroonian independence and the true friends of freedom. It is on the basis of these principles that we shall comment on the first two draft resolutions before us.

The resolutions

There is a short one and a long one; both of them have the same purpose of convening a special session of the Assembly, but the short one is designed to be a second line of defence to fall back on if the longer one does not obtain the required two-thirds majority.

But let us leave on one side the idea of a special session for the moment and deal with the long resolution read out by our colleague from India. This is the resolution on which efforts to reach agreement have failed despite indisputable goodwill. But I have heard it said that a certain delegation which has pretensions to rule the Fourth Committee has accused us of intransigence.

I must therefore explain why this resolution is unacceptable to us and why the negotiations have very unfortunately come to nothing. First of all it seems to us obvious that if nothing can be decided before the Visiting Mission's report, no aspect of the question must be prejudged and consequently the facts must be recorded accurately.

I am leaving aside the last paragraph which is in itself inadmissible, since it entrusts to the Assembly responsibilities which are not the same, and since the Administering Powers have already taken the necessary steps to fulfil the objectives of the Trusteeship System.

As a matter of fact the sponsors were ready to drop it.

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But I had asked, since it is a fact, since it is true and since it is just, that mention should be made of the statement by the Cameroonian Prime Minister and the wishes of the Cameroonian Assembly. That is indeed the essence of the matter. It is the basis of our recognition of the Cameroons' choice of independence, and I even proposed a text which was approximately as follows:

"Having taken note of the statements of the French representative and of the Cameroonian Prime Minister, as well as of the wishes expressed by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons which was elected on 23 December 1956, by universal direct and secret ballot etc. ...".

I was first told in reply that these documents were covered by the reference to the French memorandum. I answered that in that case I did not see why they should not be mentioned explicitly. There was then some hedging, and I saw that without intending it I had touched upon a sore point: the Cameroonian Prime Minister and the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly must not be mentioned. The move was clear, and I apologize to those of the co-sponsors who did not see where they were being led, and I hope they will draw the necessary conclusions: once again the aim was to discredit the Cameroonian democratic institutions. Not openly, but subtly, using the language of moderation.

What do they take us for? What do they take the members of the Fourth Committee for? For blind men or fools?

What is more, mention is made of the petitioners in the resolution submitted. The regular Government of the Cameroons does not count, the elected Assembly of the Cameroons is called in question! But those people, whom Voltaire, the man they are always quoting, would say were not even worth listening to, those are the authorities which are cited, those are the sureties which are offered.

The draft resolution as it stands is a provocation. Not only shall we vote against it and consider it in every way as null and void, but we categorically ask all our friends to reject it. We shall ask for a roll-call vote and we shall rely on that vote, for we want to be able to tell the Cameroonian people, the French people and international public opinion who are those who favoured independence and freedom in the Cameroons.

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And now a word on the second resolution, the shorter one. It does not embarrass us as far as the Cameroons is concerned. It might be pointed out, however, that it prejudges the reports of the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council which have a perfect right to consider that this session is not indispensable.

We shall not oppose it, however, since we are not in a position to pass any final judgement on the matter, and we reserve our position for the plenary Assembly.

Irrespective of the question of the Cameroons, the extraordinary convening of an extraordinary Assembly has general political implications. It departs from the normal procedures and customs of the United Nations. Hence, it is primarily a question for governments. Many delegations have not yet received instructions on the subject and are asking for time to think. In deference to their wishes, we shall temporarily refrain from comments and take up the question again in the plenary Assembly. Then everyone will be able to vote with a full knowledge of the facts.
