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

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 23 March 1962, at 3.30 p.m.

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Southern Rhodesia: General Assembly resolution 1745 (XVI)  
(continued)

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. COULIBALY	(Mali)
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. HOOD )	
	Mr. FORSYTHE )	Australia
	Mr. KOUN WICK	Cambodia
	Mr. WODAJO	Ethiopia
	Mr. RASGOTRA	India
	Mr. THEODOLI	Italy
	Mr. ANDRIAMAHARO	Madagascar
	Mr. TRAORE	Mali
	Mr. SOLTYSIAK	Poland
	Mr. RIFAI	Syria
	Mr. NGAIZA	Tanganyika
	Mr. Taieb SLIM	Tunisia
	Mr. OBEREMKO	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. CROWE	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. BINGHAM	United States of America
	Mr. SILVA-SUCRE	Venezuela
	Mr. KREACIC	Yugoslavia
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. CHACKO	Secretary of the Committee

SOUTHERN RHODESIA: GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1745 (XVI) (continued)

Mr. RIFAI (Syria) said that in General Assembly resolution 1745 (XVI) the Committee was called upon to consider whether the Territory of Southern Rhodesia had attained a full measure of self-government; that was in addition to the principal task for which it had been established, namely the implementation of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. Thus its duty with regard to the question under consideration was twofold: it must decide whether Southern Rhodesia was or was not self-governing and it must also examine the situation in that country with a view to making appropriate recommendations on the steps to be taken in order to lead it to independence.

The claim made by the United Kingdom representative that Southern Rhodesia enjoyed self-governing status had not stood the test of the thorough and well-documented examination given to it by the representative of India and others. The Syrian delegation had consistently rejected the position that the status of a colonial Territory could be determined unilaterally by the Administering Power. The controversy regarding that question, which had continued for a number of years, had been finally resolved by the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 742 (VIII) and 1541 (XV). In that connexion he recalled that the United Kingdom had been instrumental in the formulation of Principle VI of the set of principles annexed to the latter resolution.

Since Southern Rhodesia was federated with two Territories whose non-self-governing status was not in doubt, it could not logically be considered in isolation from the federal structure of which it was an integral part and which by no stretch of the imagination could be said to be self-governing.

Irrespective of the legal arguments involved, Southern Rhodesia presented a grave human situation, in which the overwhelming majority of the people, the indigenous inhabitants of the Territory, had no voice regarding the fate of their country. From the statement made by Mr. Nkomo and from other sources of information the members of the Committee had been able to ascertain that in spite of Southern Rhodesia's status of a so-called self-governing colony the African population was in fact deprived of the most elementary political and human rights and was economically completely dominated by the white settlers. The African

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(Mr. Rifai, Syria)

population had tried by various means to obtain from the Government such political rights as should be normally due to a nation of three million people in its own homeland. Above all they were asking for the right to vote. Apparently, however, the Government had no intention of responding to their pleas; if anything, there would appear to be a growing tendency towards the perpetuation of the status quo. In those circumstances the African leaders had appealed for protection to the United Kingdom Government, which had more than once publicly expressed sympathy with the African population. Expressions of sympathy, however, were not enough; vigorous action would be required to remedy the situation. Yet both in the Fourth Committee and in the Special Committee the United Kingdom representative had maintained that his Government had no power to intervene in the internal affairs of Southern Rhodesia, which, according to him, enjoyed full internal self-government.

The African population had now turned to the United Nations as a last resort. His delegation held that it was the sacred duty of the United Nations to respond to that appeal and to press for a solution of the problem in order to forestall the tragic consequences that would ensue unless a reasonable solution were found.

Both Mr. Nkomo and Mr. Garfield Todd had expressed the opinion that in spite of what had been said to the contrary the United Kingdom Government had the power to change matters. Both had maintained that the only way out of the impasse was such a change in the Constitution of Southern Rhodesia as would enable the population of the country to participate fully in its political life. He trusted that the United Kingdom Government would not hesitate to use its power in order to remove those elements of the present Constitution which deprived the overwhelming majority of the people of its rights.

While aware that the circumstances governing constitutional changes varied according to the powers vested in the Governor or in the legislative bodies in various Territories, his delegation could not refrain from drawing certain comparisons which appeared to it to be relevant. For instance, the Constitution granted in 1953 to British Guiana, which at that time had been considered a Territory with an advanced degree of self-government, had been revoked some six months later when the United Kingdom Government had found that the result of

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the elections held in the Territory reflected "a dangerous crisis both in public order and in economic affairs". The Colonial Office had not hesitated not only to suspend the Constitution but to send naval and military forces to Georgetown "in order to preserve peace and the safety of all classes". An even more recent example was the suspension in 1958 of the Constitution of Malta following the breakdown of talks and disagreement between the British and Maltese Governments over the amount of financial assistance to be given to Malta during the financial year 1958-1959. Thus when local circumstances had made it necessary for the United Kingdom Government to take energetic action it had not been reluctant to do so. Undoubtedly there had never been more valid reason for changes in, or the revocation of, a constitution than was presented by Southern Rhodesia.

As Mr. Garfield Todd had told the Committee, the Monckton Commission had recommended that for a constitution to be workable it must have the support of the African population. The leaders of two African parties and a former Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia had assured the Committee that the African population was resolutely opposed to the Constitution of 1961. Hence it was the Committee's duty to call for its suspension and for the preparation of a new Constitution which would take all legitimate interests into account and would above all secure the right of vote to any citizen regardless of his status, colour or creed.

The situation in Southern Rhodesia was very grave. The mood of the vast majority of the population was one of frustration and despair. Such a mood was fraught with dire consequences to peace in Africa and to the harmonious political evolution of the Territory. It was in the interests not only of the African population but of the white settlers themselves that that situation should change. The white settlers could not be impervious to the lessons of recent history. The European immigrants who had made Southern Rhodesia their home must remember that they might be tolerated as equal citizens but no longer as masters. If they were unable to rise above their narrow and selfish interests, the United Nations, in co-operation with the Administering Power, should help them to do so and thus secure a happier future for all the inhabitants of the Territory.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.