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AGENDA ITEM 64

The question of Algeria

REPORT OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE (A/3044)

1. Mr. ECHEVERRI CORTES (Colombia), Rapporteur of the First Committee (*translated from Spanish*): At the 795th meeting of the First Committee, the representative of India proposed that the General Assembly should decide not to consider further the item entitled "The question of Algeria", and should therefore no longer be seized of that item on the agenda of the tenth session. There was no objection to the proposal of India, and it was adopted. The following proposal is therefore recommended for adoption by the General Assembly:

"The General Assembly

"Decides not to consider further the item entitled 'The question of Algeria' and is therefore no longer seized of this item on the agenda of its tenth session."

2. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Spanish*): In view of the decision of the First Committee, may I take it that there is no objection to this proposal and that it is therefore adopted?

It was so decided.

3. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Spanish*): Before calling upon representatives who wish to explain their position on the proposal which has just been adopted, I would point out that, given the decision which the Assembly has just taken on item 64 of its agenda, it will not be necessary to take up the proposal submitted by Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Ecuador [A/3042].

4. I shall now call on those who wish to explain their votes, but I should like to remind the representatives that this is a matter of procedure, and that they should accordingly confine their remarks to that matter alone.

5. Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia) (*translated from Spanish*): Nothing could be more pleasant for my delegation than this opportunity to say how happy it was to vote for the proposal submitted by the Indian delegation in the First Committee and now endorsed by the Assembly.

6. For my own part, I was sure we should reach agreement, for from the moment we began conversations to find a way of enabling France to return to the Assembly we found that France did not desire any

action to the detriment of the Arab countries and that those countries in their turn sincerely desired France's return.

7. The proposal which has been adopted does not mean that any of us have abandoned the ideas we put forward earlier. The Assembly recognizes the right of the Arab countries to interest themselves in the fate of kindred peoples and to bring this or any other item before the Assembly at future sessions. Conversely, other countries obviously reserve the right to oppose once again the inclusion in the agenda of items referring to problems which, while we cannot deny their existence, and while they certainly call for solution, in our opinion can and should be discussed only by those properly concerned, and not within the United Nations.

8. Hence the resolution we have adopted today does not imply any reconsideration of the problem of competence, nor does it prejudice the right of delegations to raise the matter again at future sessions. It does, however, demonstrate that whatever differences may exist between our views, the Member States of the United Nations are capable of abstaining from discussing them when the harmony which should prevail among us all is at stake or in danger.

9. The United Nations is passing through a time of crisis and danger which France must help us to traverse and which, equally, we cannot face without the help and co-operation of the Arab countries. The results of the Geneva Conference fell short of our expectations, and there is every indication that in a few days' time we shall have to resume in the First Committee the study of the problem of disarmament, on which, unfortunately, the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission has been unable to make the progress we could have desired.

10. Experience has shown that whenever negotiations were on the point of breaking down, France has always managed to reconcile divergent viewpoints on this difficult problem. We need France to avert a breakdown now.

11. Furthermore, we are on the point of solving the problem of the admission of new Members. If, as I hope, the countries which have submitted applications are admitted, there will be changes in the balance of political power in the Assembly; and countries such as ours, which owe their political structure to the principles underlying the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the establishment of the French Republic, understand that at such a time both the Latin countries and all the other countries of the Mediterranean basin need France. It is also essential to the success of this Assembly's work that we should be able to count on the disinterested and enthusiastic co-operation which the Arab countries have always shown in helping us to solve our problems.

12. That is why we welcome the vote just cast; and I think Mr. Menon, the representative of India, has earned our warmest praise and thanks for his in-

defatigable work and the successful outcome of his effort of conciliation.

13. The Spanish-speaking representatives will excuse me now if I end my statement in French, the reason being that I wish to address my remarks particularly to the representatives of France who, although they are not present here, are I am sure listening to me.

The speaker continued in French:

14. I wish to make a special appeal to the representative of the French Government. He is not among us but I am sure he is listening to me. It is true that we Latin countries have non-permanent representatives in the Security Council, but France should not forget that it is the only Latin country with a permanent seat, with all the prerogatives that carries under the United Nations Charter.

15. At this very serious time for world peace, France is the best fitted among the five permanent members of the Council to explain and defend the rights, not only of the Latin countries, but of all the countries of the Mediterranean. France has never turned a deaf ear to an appeal from those countries which have modelled themselves on its civilization. I am sure, therefore, that with the resolution which has been approved today, France will be able to close the parenthesis which opened with its decision to withdraw from the Assembly, and will, as we all hope, resume its place among us.

16. Mr. SHUKAIRY (Syria): On this question of Algeria we have, I believe, reached a stage of brevity and, I hope, of clarity. I should like to pay a special tribute to the representative of Colombia who, in explaining the position of his delegation, made it quite clear that the question of competence remained a question for each delegation to decide. We are happy to note that the motion, which can be described as a procedural motion, was formulated by the representative of India, with his usual ability and brilliance and clarity of mind, so that it leaves the matter for each delegation to decide.

17. So far as we are concerned, we are of the opinion, legally justified and internationally warranted, that the question of Algeria falls within the competence of the United Nations. We are of the opinion that it is an international problem and that it is the concern of the United Nations. To those who advocate the competence of the United Nations, the question of Algeria is a matter of war and human rights, and surely we can bring home to those who advocate the non-competence of the United Nations that the question is a matter of human rights.

18. We are glad to see that the proposal, which is of a procedural nature, takes into account the views of every party concerned in this question. I am also glad to appreciate the viewpoint of the representative of Colombia, who said it was the inherent right of every delegation to request the inclusion of an item of this character in the agenda of the General Assembly, and we stand by that position. It is the right of every Member State to submit any problem for inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly. We rightly did this with regard to the Algerian question, which was proposed for inclusion by all the members of the Asian-African group [A/2924 and Add.1]. The proposal was discussed in the General Committee, which rejected it [103rd meeting], but later it was accepted by the General Assembly [530th meeting].

19. We are glad to see that the question has been resolved in a procedural manner which, to our minds,

limits the decision not to discuss the question to this session of the General Assembly.

20. If we have stated that it is not now prudent to discuss the merits of this question and to unfold the pages of this tragic problem, it is because we believe that the time is not ripe to begin a wide deliberation on this question. After all, we know that this is a new item before the General Assembly, although the issue is 150 years old. But since this is a new item, we know from the practice of the General Assembly that no question is decided upon the first time it is included in the agenda of the General Assembly. The matter has been dealt with in various aspects, and for the moment I think that what the Assembly has done is quite sufficient.

21. When we say that we are not in favour of discussing the matter at this very moment, we certainly extend the hope—and we are entitled to hope, and I think no one would ignore our right to hope, and I believe I am voicing all your hopes that we should be hopeful—for a peaceful settlement.

22. I can only interpret the attitude of the General Assembly in adopting this resolution, which is procedural in character, as designed to afford a breathing space to the parties so that they may arrive at a peaceful settlement of this question. I understand that this resolution is only a breathing space for France, so that it can explore all possible avenues towards a peaceful settlement.

23. This appeal which we make to France is not foreign to it, because France, after all, through the French Revolution, through the free thinking of those free thinkers of France, will not fail to meet our appeal, since France has advocated liberty, fraternity and all the human rights that are embodied in the Charter. I say again that the resolution provides a breathing space, because we believe that it is in that breathing space that a cease-fire can be effected, that a new climate can be created for France and Algeria in which their disputes can be settled amicably and in a friendly fashion. I say that it provides a breathing space for France to invite the legitimate representatives of Algeria to a round-table conference to agree upon future policy.

24. I believe that I can equally appeal to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who would no doubt lend his good offices to the parties.

25. On the regional level, too, we have a contribution to make. The Arab League will be ready to offer every assistance to achieve a pacific settlement of the question in accordance with the sublime principles of the Charter.

26. It is along these lines that we appeal to France to seek a settlement of this highly tragic question. This appeal, as I said, is not foreign to France. It was France which advocated the principles of liberty, fraternity and democracy. This is a case of fraternity, democracy and liberty. It is for France, I hope and trust, to live up to the principles that have given it dignity, honour, glory and brilliance in the pages of history. It is in this spirit that we do not oppose the resolution.

27. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq): My delegation did not object to the settlement which was found in the formula presented to us today and adopted without objection. We did that because we did not anticipate, when we brought the Algerian question to the General Assembly, that the great country of France would walk out of the General Assembly. We, like many others, are most anxious that France should be back with us. We con-

sider France as a great Member of this Organization and we do not wish in any way to have France's participation in our efforts lost to us.

28. We certainly think that we brought the Algerian item before the General Assembly in a friendly spirit, having anticipated a friendly discussion. But now we feel that the situation demands that, for the time being at least, we should give France a chance to settle the matter peacefully and in a friendly way.

29. This does not mean that we question the competence of the General Assembly to deal with the problem of Algeria or any other question of this type, because we believe that the question of Algeria, like many other international problems, deserves the attention of this body, within the Organization, and of the individual Members outside the Organization.

30. Now that we are not going to take up the question of Algeria and discuss it, I sincerely hope that individual Members will not forget that they have an international responsibility to offer their good offices to bring about peace and harmony between France and Algeria. We believe that Algeria is a distinct country, with a distinct people, but unfortunately they have now fallen into trouble with France and bloodshed is involved. We sincerely hope that this bloodshed will end. We sincerely hope that a friendly settlement which recognizes human rights and the principles of the Charter will be brought about.

31. Thus we believe that our Organization, by taking this decision today, is putting its confidence, first of all, in France, so that France will do its utmost to settle this question with Algeria in its own way. We place our confidence in France. We believe that France is a nation of great ideals, a nation with a great history and a nation with a great culture. We sincerely hope that the principles of the Charter, of which France is one of the champions, will be practised, and that at least a cease-fire will be declared, that amnesty will be given to those who are in gaol, that the rightful representatives of the people will be called by France to engage in friendly and peaceful negotiations so as to arrive at a settlement which will please everyone represented in the General Assembly.

32. It is the duty of all of us here to give France this opportunity and, at the same time, to wish both Algeria and France well in their co-operation to reach a settlement. This does not mean that we are not going to bring the issue again to the United Nations if — and I hope it will never happen — France fails in its efforts. We sincerely hope that we will not reach that stage. We hope that goodwill and friendship will prevail and that a friendly settlement will be achieved. We sincerely hope that the great French people will realize that times have changed, that the new spirit of the age demands that people should be associated with each other on the basis of freedom and equality, and that is what we desire to happen between the French and the Algerians. The days are gone when one people could rule another and subjugate it by force. Those days are gone and I hope will never return.

33. We sincerely trust that France will see to it that its relations with Algeria are based on mutual freedom, mutual respect and mutual equality. It is in this spirit that my delegation did not object to the settlement proposed here today.

34. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia): My delegation did not oppose the proposal just adopted because it

recognizes and safeguards the position which the Algerian question has reached in the General Assembly. The General Assembly, at the beginning of this session, rejected the recommendation of the General Committee not to include the item of Algeria in the agenda of this session. It was significant that the Assembly decided to include the item in the agenda in spite of the General Committee's recommendation and after a lengthy debate in plenary meeting. The Assembly's decision now not to consider the item further at this session does not alter the stage which the item has reached.

35. In view of the fact that only two more weeks are left before the end of the session, the period covered by the proposal is in effect very brief. Naturally it could not be considered applicable beyond the duration of this session, as the item may be brought up, if need be, at any future session. The consideration of several other items has similarly been postponed by the General Assembly, and those items have been brought up at succeeding sessions in the ordinary course followed for the inclusion of items in the agenda. We were particularly pleased to hear all these points confirmed by the representative of Colombia in the statement which he has just made.

36. In addition to this fact, without prejudicing the rights of the Algerian people, we, together with the other delegations which had originally proposed the inclusion of this item in the agenda, were anxious to co-operate to the utmost with those delegations which favoured a postponement of any further discussion of the item at this session.

37. Furthermore, two recent events of special significance in North Africa encouraged us not to oppose this postponement of the consideration of this item at this session. Those events lead us to expect that France will adopt a more reasonable and realistic policy in Algeria. One of those events took place in Morocco, the other in Algeria.

38. In Morocco, the Berbers, who were alleged to be pro-French, against the Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef, and opposed to the French acceding to the demands of the Moroccan nationalists, suddenly joined ranks with the nationalist parties and demanded the return of the Sultan. France graciously acceded to this unified demand. The Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef returned to Morocco and it is expected that the long awaited negotiations between France and the true representatives of the Moroccan people will soon commence.

39. The second significant event took place when the traditional pro-French Algerians took a similar step to the one taken by the pro-French Berbers in Morocco. On 26 September 1955, the overwhelming majority of the pro-French Moslem members of the Algerian Assembly signed a historic document, along with ten out of fifteen Moslem deputies in the French National Assembly and five out of a total of seven Moslem members of the French Senate. Great significance is attached to this action, because these Algerians were regarded as representing the "last line of defence for France in Algeria". In that document, the signatories:

"... insist in the first place on denouncing and formally condemning the blind repression which at present strikes a considerable number of innocents, applying the principles of collective responsibility to a defenceless population, and demand an immediate

halt to this repression and a return to a more healthy and normal concept of the rules of justice.

"After analysing the deeper reasons for the present troubles, they solemnly affirm that these are essentially political in character. They are thus led to the conclusion that the so-called policy of integration which has never been honestly applied... has now been outstripped by events. The immense majority of the population has at the present time been won over to the idea of an Algerian nationality. As faithful interpreters of these desires, the undersigned representatives consider it their duty to direct their action towards the realization of these aspirations."¹

Thus spoke the influential and educated Algerian Moslems who for so long were pro-French and devoted to carrying out French Government policies in Algeria. The signatories decided to create a permanent committee to defend this policy at all parliamentary and government levels, and to co-ordinate the action of their elected representatives at all levels; this committee will have the task of following the evolution of the political situation.

40. We therefore hope that the same France that graciously bowed to the unified wishes of the Moroccan people, thus creating a fair beginning and a commendably favourable atmosphere for negotiations between itself and the Moroccan people, will reconsider its present policy in Algeria, and that it will react as favourably and as precisely in response to the wishes of its Algerian Moslem friends as it has done in the case of Morocco. In both cases, the front upon which France leaned to justify its former rigid policy in both countries is there no more. In both cases, recognition by France of the people's national aspirations will be to the common advantage of those North African countries as well as of France.

41. It is for these reasons, and in these expectations, that my delegation did not oppose this proposal.

42. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Spanish*): I regret that the representative did not comply with my request that speakers should deal solely with the question of procedure.

43. Mr. LODGE (United States of America): The United States supported the motion of the representative of India in the First Committee because we believed that in the circumstances it was wise and constructive. Our reasons for opposing the inclusion of the item in the agenda were stated both in the General Committee [103rd meeting] and in the General Assembly [530th meeting], and are in the record.

44. For the future, the United States hopes that all of us will bear in mind the grave implications for this Organization of taking up questions where the action sought would conflict with the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. This action today is another example of the spirit of accommodation and compromise — perhaps comity is a good word — which is essential to the proper functioning of the United Nations and to the achievement of its fundamental purposes.

45. We cannot, of course, close our eyes to the realities of certain situations and the differences of opinion as to what should be done about them. But this must not make us forget that the United Nations was conceived in the first place as a centre for harmonizing the actions of its Members. The particular action we have just

taken was made possible by wise statesmanship. Having restored the conditions necessary for full French participation in our work, we may now look forward to a continuation of such statesmanship, for which the presence and the wise counsel of France are indispensable.

46. The motion we have just approved has let us out of a most difficult situation fraught with danger for the United Nations. The United States was therefore glad to join in its approval.

47. Mr. HANIFAH (Indonesia): The General Assembly has just now adopted a resolution on the question of Algeria, which is considered by the Assembly as a whole as the best way to deal with this matter at the present moment.

48. I know that this question in its substance has stirred strong feelings and the determination of those concerned to achieve their ideals. The struggle for freedom of the people of Algeria is still going on. My Government and people have — and will continue to have — the greatest interest and concern in the successful conclusion of this struggle; we sincerely hope that the question will be settled peacefully.

49. In the controversies of today, there are moments when decisions have to be made which are not quite satisfactory to everyone, but which nonetheless can serve a purpose within the framework of the principles and aims of our Charter. I know that some sacrifices, although not necessarily on matters of principle, have been made in many quarters to reach the decision adopted today. These sacrifices should be appreciated. We trust that they will not have been made in vain.

50. The struggle for freedom and justice will, of course, continue and will always warrant the attention and the interest of the United Nations. With this in mind, my delegation has offered no objection to the adoption of the resolution on the Algerian question. It is our earnest hope that the adoption of this resolution will pave the way towards greater action in the future to promote peace and freedom, and also to ensure co-operation among nations in upholding the principles of the United Nations, which are so dear to all of us.

51. Mr. DE FREITAS VALLE (Brazil) (*translated from French*): I should like to express Brazil's satisfaction at the resolution the General Assembly has just adopted. The return of France to our midst was as desirable to us as its departure appeared regrettable. France, the spiritual mother of almost all our countries, with its clarity of view and sincerity of co-operation, is to be with us again. Let us welcome its reappearance.

52. Mr. SAID (Egypt) (*translated from French*): As you know, fourteen Member States of the United Nations, including Egypt, requested [A/2924 and Add.1] the inclusion of the Algerian question in the agenda of the present session. Clearly their decision to do so was not taken without due reflection and a careful weighing of their motives.

53. The Algerian people's struggle for freedom and independence had become more intense and the French authorities had reacted sharply. The members of the African-Asian group, their emotions stirred by the sufferings of the Algerian people, were afraid that the continuance of that state of affairs might seriously endanger peace and security in that part of the world, and, aware of the responsibilities devolving upon them

¹ The full text of this document was published in *Le Monde* on 28 September 1955.

as Members of the United Nations, felt in duty bound to place the Algerian question on the Assembly's agenda.

54. In the explanatory memorandum accompanying their request for the inclusion of the item in the agenda, the members of the group stressed the gravity of the situation and the reprisals carried out by the French armed forces; they asked the United Nations to take the necessary steps to put an end to the cruel ordeal through which Algeria was passing.

55. We were and still are convinced that the question, in the form in which it was submitted, is fully within the Assembly's jurisdiction and that the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter are not applicable in this instance. I do not intend to labour this point, which was debated at length both in the General Committee and in the Assembly, where my delegation had the opportunity of defining its position.

56. I should like to emphasize that, in supporting this argument, my delegation was inspired by the highest motives. It was our sincerest wish to show that we were equal to the responsibilities incumbent upon us as Members of the United Nations, especially as we could not remain indifferent to so much sorrow and suffering.

57. After it had been agreed that the question should be included in the Assembly's agenda, France, for reasons of its own, saw fit to withdraw from the Assembly and all its deliberations, by way of protest. It is not our place to pass judgement upon the expedience of that withdrawal, the consequences of which we regretted and still regret. Nonetheless, we had placed the debate on a higher level by basing our action on the principles of the Charter and of the resolutions unanimously adopted at the Bandung Conference, where twenty-nine States were represented.

58. In a spirit of conciliation, consistent with our general attitude, we had no desire to oppose the draft resolution presented by the representative of India in the First Committee, and adopted now by the General Assembly. The aim of this resolution is to postpone debate on the Algerian question until after the present session, as stated in the first part. Consequently, the Assembly is no longer seized of the question at the present session, as is explained in the second part of the resolution, which is simply a statement of fact. Thus, in adopting the resolution, the Assembly has merely decided to defer the consideration of the Algerian question until a later session.

59. In adopting this conciliatory attitude, my delegation sincerely hopes — and there can be no doubt that our hope is shared by all the members of the Assembly — that France, lending an ear to the appeal of this great Assembly and to the legitimate claims of the Algerian people, will hasten to find a means of solving the Algerian dispute in conformity with the principles of the Charter, including, first and foremost, the Algerian people's right to self-determination.

60. I cannot conclude my remarks without turning my gaze towards the Algerian people, whose long and painful martyrdom has aroused the conscience of the world. They cannot be abandoned to the pangs of doubt and given over to despair. The civilized world can in no wise remain indifferent to the fate of a heroic people, a nation whose soul has emerged doubly tempered from the ordeals it has undergone.

61. It is the moral obligation of the members of the international community to see that justice is done to

the Algerian people, whose claims must be satisfied because they are the claims of justice, of a justice which for many long years has cried aloud for recognition. We are firmly convinced that this appeal to the solidarity of mankind will not fall on deaf ears.

62. Mr. KHOURI (Lebanon): My delegation is indeed gratified that common sense has finally prevailed in these precincts and that, thanks to the untiring efforts of some delegations anxious about the very life of our Organization, political wisdom has taken the place of what impartial observers considered to be a reckless and dangerous move. I am of course referring to that ill-advised plan to invoke rule 22 of the Assembly's rules of procedure in an attempt to delete the Algerian question from the agenda of the General Assembly's tenth session.

63. I should like to mention in passing some of the reasons which have prompted certain delegations to seek a solution to the problems connected with the Algerian question.

64. One of these is the desirability, and perhaps the necessity, of the resumption by France of its role in the deliberations of the world Organization, particularly now that the General Assembly is about to consider such important items as disarmament and the admission of new Members. My country and my Government, which harbour the friendliest feelings for France and entertain the most cordial relations with its Government and people, would be happy to see France return to the fold.

65. We are also most eager to see the United Nations open its doors to those nations whose presence among us has been delayed for too long. Any solution which does not put in question the rights of the Algerian people, and which does not bar the Organization from adapting itself to the exigencies of a rapidly changing world, where vested interests and acquired rights must yield to overriding considerations of human dignity, of individual liberty, and of the right of peoples to lead their own lives, to develop their own resources and to be masters of their own destinies, would be acceptable to my delegation.

66. For the aforesaid reasons, my delegation was most gratified to learn that the supporters of deletion had abandoned their plan in favour of a formula which would not tamper with a solemn decision taken by the General Assembly, a solution which would not in any way cast doubt on the unquestionable right of the General Assembly to consider the Algerian question, a solution which would at the same time facilitate the return of France and pave the way for the entry into the United Nations of such new Members as have applied to join the Organization.

67. In co-sponsoring the request for the inclusion of the Algerian question in the agenda of the tenth session, my delegation, it goes without saying, is most anxious to see the General Assembly give full consideration to that question and assume its full responsibility by taking such action as the gravity of the situation in Algeria warranted. Inasmuch as the proposal put forward by Mr. Menon does not meet these objectives, my delegation does not feel very happy about it. However, due to the overriding considerations of political expediency which I have mentioned, namely, the return of France and the admission of new Members to the United Nations, my delegation did not oppose the Indian proposal.

68. In arriving at this decision, my delegation was particularly aware of, and took into consideration, the improved atmosphere between France and Arab Algeria's sister Morocco, and the impending negotiations between the French Government and the representatives of the Moroccan people aimed at Moroccan independence. We did not wish to mar that friendly atmosphere or adversely affect in any way the favourable course of these negotiations, and we have therefore agreed not to press for a further discussion of the Algerian question at this session.

69. This does not mean that we have changed our views about the Algerian question, nor should it in any way be construed as an abandonment of our position on Algeria. My delegation is convinced that the Algerian question is of direct concern to the international community; it is a United Nations problem, which was recognized as such by the action of the General Assembly in deciding to place it on its agenda; it is a problem to which the United Nations not only has the right but also the duty to apply itself in an effort to help the two parties — the French and the Algerian Arabs — find a solution to the problem.

70. This being our stand, my delegation did not oppose the Indian proposal because we see in it a way out of the political impasse which does not in any way affect or contradict our basic stand on the Algerian question.

71. The following are the reasons which prompted my delegation not to oppose the resolution. First, this resolution does not in any way tamper with the status of the Algerian question on the agenda of the General Assembly; in other words, the Algerian question, which was legally included in our agenda, remains so included. Secondly, the resolution states in unambiguous terms that the Algerian question has been properly considered by the General Assembly; however, for reasons which are not specified in the resolution, the General Assembly decides not to discuss the question any further at this session. Thirdly, the General Assembly, in view of its inclination not to proceed any further with the discussion of the Algerian question has, according to our understanding of the resolution, decided to consider that it is no longer seized — that is to say, actively seized — of the Algerian question.

72. This being our understanding of the resolution, and considering that we see in it nothing which in any way affects our basic stand on the Algerian question, my delegation, as I said before, did not oppose it.

73. Before I conclude, I should like to express my delegation's thanks to Mr. Menon and the great country which he represents for their untiring efforts and for the significant role that they have played in finding a way out of the political dead-lock which, if allowed to continue much longer, would have shaken the very foundations of our Organization.

74. I should also like to thank the Chairman of the Mexican delegation, Mr. de la Colina, for the untiring efforts which he has exerted to find a solution to the problem which would safeguard the position of the Arab delegations on Algeria.

75. Finally, I should like to express to the President my delegation's gratitude for the patient efforts and the personal impartiality and tact which he has shown throughout the negotiations leading to the present solution.

76. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) (*translated from Spanish*): This morning in the First Committee, and

a few moments ago in the Assembly, we approved unanimously and in silence a resolution of the greatest significance. For me this silence had a religious, a solemn quality. Great things are done in silence; in silence the acts are performed which seal the harmony of the human family. I feel, therefore, that my words can add nothing to the profound meaning of this silent unanimity. I wish to point out, however, the consequences of this step for the life of the Assembly.

77. We have solved in this way, through a sort of unanimous impulse, one of the most serious crises through which the United Nations has passed: we have opened the way for the return to our midst of the great French nation, which may have been physically absent, but whose spiritual presence we shall always feel in important questions.

78. We have also paved the way to agreement and effective co-operation between France and the Arab countries, countries bound to us by so many ties of ancient tradition, as also by the love of freedom. I should like to think that this co-operation means that the Mediterranean, in the past the scene of conflict between the Latin countries and the peoples of Islam, is today to be the theatre of fruitful human co-operation.

79. I do not wish to leave this rostrum without doing an act of justice. I know just how much effort it has taken to achieve this solution. I wish to do justice to the efforts and the spirit of conciliation which have been our President's contribution; to the brilliant initiative of Mr. Menon's ever-resourceful mind; and to the constant efforts of the Latin American representatives — I refer in particular to the representatives of Colombia and Mexico.

80. I regard the solution of this problem as an augury for the solution of others which, as you well know, are close to my heart and to the hearts of all members of this Assembly.

81. Mr. ANDERSEN (Denmark): The Danish delegation voted against the inclusion of this item in the agenda because we held that the General Assembly could not legitimately deal with this question. As a consequence of this attitude, we today voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted in the First Committee by India, whose representative, together with others, contributed so much to the solution of a most unfortunate situation.

82. I want to add that the Danish delegation has felt the absence of France from our deliberations as a great loss. We are now looking forward to its renewed co-operation with the other Member States in this General Assembly and in its Committees.

83. Sir Pierson DIXON (United Kingdom): I should like to explain briefly why the United Kingdom delegation supported the motion proposed by the representative of India in the First Committee, which this morning was adopted unanimously in that Committee and which has just been endorsed unanimously by the General Assembly.

84. We have watched with admiration the patient and strenuous efforts at conciliation of the representative of India, which have today been crowned with success. The situation with which he was faced can, I think, be described thus. On the one hand, the French Government held — and my Government agrees with it on this — that the United Nations is debarred by the Charter from discussing the question. The French Government held its views so strongly that the French

delegation at this session of the Assembly was withdrawn. On the other hand, there were a number of delegations which held that the Assembly could, and indeed should, discuss this question. To find a practical solution which was acceptable to both these points of view would have been impossible without goodwill and a desire for understanding on both sides.

85. Congratulations are therefore due not only to the representative of India, but to France and the Arab countries, and indeed to all concerned. In this connexion, I think that it would only be right to pay a tribute to the active interest taken by the Latin American delegations in the matter, and to their ardent desire to secure an early return of France to our deliberations.

86. Each delegation here must interpret for itself the motion which has just been passed. I should like to make it clear that, in approving this motion, I did not in any way prejudice the view of my Government that the Assembly has no competence to discuss or deal with this matter. Secondly, I should say that, in my view, the motion that has just been passed effectively removes the Algerian item from the agenda of this session.

87. The empty seat of France has been a daily and visible reminder of an absence which we can ill afford in our deliberations. It is the hope of my delegation that the result achieved today will strike a responsive echo in the minds and hearts of the great French people.

88. Mr. DE LA COLINA (Mexico) (*translated from Spanish*): In order to explain adequately my delegation's position on the resolution which has just been adopted, let me refer briefly to what took place when the question of including the controversial subject of Algeria in the agenda was first raised. In accordance with Articles 1, 10 and 35 of the United Nations Charter and rule 41 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the representative of Mexico explained in the General Committee [103rd meeting] his reasons for recommending the inclusion of that item.

89. My delegation has always stood for the unrestricted application of the principle embodied in Article 35, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which provides that any Member of the United Nations may bring any dispute, or any situation of the nature referred to in Article 34, to the attention of the General Assembly.

90. For nations which do not possess great economic or military resources the firm observance of this principle is of truly paramount importance. Requests which are *prima facie* inadmissible should, of course, be rejected outright, at the initial stage of our proceedings; but before a request can be so classified it is necessary, in the vast majority of cases, to form an opinion which, if it is not to be superficial or purely subjective, must be based on considerations going to the very root of the matter proposed for inclusion.

91. On the basis of the foregoing considerations, my delegation voted against the General Committee's recommendation, and, when the item had been included in the Assembly's agenda by decision of a majority of the members present and voting, it also voted for the reference of the item to the First Committee. Mr. Joubanc Rivas explained, when the matter was being discussed by the General Committee, that our vote was of a purely procedural nature and in no way affected the substance of the question.

92. On the basis of rule 22 of the rules of procedure, it was subsequently proposed that an item on which the First Committee had not submitted the report

referred to in rules 67 and 68 should be struck off the agenda of the tenth session of the General Assembly. Had that proposal been adopted, everything that the Assembly had decided at a previous meeting would have been swept away by majority vote, without any new facts to justify such a step. Furthermore, we should have set a precedent with incalculable consequences.

93. Fortunately a spirit of constructive conciliation prevailed: a spirit which my delegation had fostered most assiduously from the beginning, which the President ceaselessly encouraged, and which the representative of India succeeded in expressing in a universally acceptable proposal. My delegation was therefore able to vote without reservation in favour of a draft resolution with which it concurred.

94. Mexico entertains feelings of cordial and lasting friendship towards the admirable people of France, whose efforts and genius have contributed so much to the progress of civilization. My delegation is accordingly gratified that a satisfactory solution has been found to this problem, and hopes that the distinguished delegation of France will return as soon as possible to participate in the work of the General Assembly. At the same time, it expresses the fervent hope that a final and amicable settlement will be found for the differences which, alas, have stained the soil of Algeria with blood.

95. Mr. OLIVIERI (Argentina) (*translated from Spanish*): When the inclusion of the question of Algeria in the agenda of the tenth session was debated and voted on in this General Assembly, my delegation, as the representative of my Government and people, found itself in one of those dilemmas which frequently confront us in international relations. My people and my Government are deeply attached to France, but we are also deeply attached to justice and right; and unfortunately this is not one of those happy cases where feelings coincide with the dictates of reason, which is essentially the element that must pervade the resolutions of this Assembly, whose imperative duty it is to carry out, and to see that others carry out, the preamble and purposes of its constitution — the Charter.

96. Very frankly, we should have preferred not to have to pass judgement on the case of Algeria; once it was presented, however, we could not waver in our support of the position we have always maintained in defence of the principle of self-determination. That principle is the basis of the Argentine position on the interpretation of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter, and is too well known for me to need to analyse it here.

97. Today we still hear, like some belated echo from the past, the clamours of peoples justly demanding the right to control their own destinies and to take their places as independent entities in the concert of the world's sovereign nations. Hence we could not but support, as we have always done, the right of such peoples to expound their aspirations before this Organization.

98. Algeria is perhaps the most tragic and serious case of its kind that the United Nations has ever had to face. It is the most tragic, because one of the parties concerned is France, whose creative genius and contribution to the noblest undertakings of culture and civilization mark it as one of the brightest beacons that have lighted the path of freedom and the rights of man, which today are part and parcel of the larger sphere of the rights of peoples. It is the most serious, because France bases itself on Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter to support its theory that the Assembly has no

competence in a problem which, it claims, concerns its domestic jurisdiction — a position which we, in conformity with our unvarying course of conduct, could not accept.

99. As I said before, for France my country has a feeling of veneration and respect that goes back to the infancy of our own civilization.

100. Even before our Declaration of Independence, at the beginning of our struggle for liberty, the minds of the most eminent leaders of the emancipation movement in our country were enlightened and nurtured by the ideas of the philosophers and economists that led up to the French Revolution, and by the events of those epic times. Later, when our nation was established, and when we created our laws and institutions, the republican concepts, the ideas of equality and liberty, the basic principles which make possible the exercise of human rights, were essentially inspired by the illustrious thinkers of France.

101. How then could we have failed to be deeply moved at having to differ from France, in order to defend those very principles it had so unselfishly taught us.

102. That does not mean that we are judging the cause of the people whose aspirations were communicated to this Assembly. I said, and I repeat, that we are not here today to sit in judgement. We merely acknowledged the call of a people knocking at the door of the United Nations and invoking the Charter in order to secure a hearing of its case by all the nations. And the United Nations, in a dramatic decision, resolved to hear the people of Algeria. That is the point we have reached in the history of this international episode, which I have described as tragic and serious.

103. It is at this point that we turn our eyes to France. We have confidence in France. We have confidence in its sense of justice, in its generosity towards other peoples and in its ability to solve its problems without injury to its ideals. We have confidence in its intelligence and in its sense of international responsibility.

104. Therefore, and in view of the effort it is making to reach a worthy and humane solution, we repose our trust whole-heartedly in France by a vote that is also an appeal to the noble people of Algeria, as well as to the understanding and goodwill of all nations. We are confident that the progress already made by the peoples will show the way to those who have the responsibility, some of seeking and others of granting, the foundations for coexistence in dignity and freedom.

105. That is why, in the light of the moral and legal considerations I have described, and without in any way abandoning the generous and liberal position that leads us to maintain that such problems are within the competence of the United Nations, my delegation voted in favour of suspending further consideration of this item at the tenth session of the General Assembly, a happy solution which is due to the efforts and goodwill of all, and particularly to the untiring endeavours and intelligence of the representative of India.

106. Mr. VAN LANGENHOVE (Belgium) (*translated from French*): The attitude of Belgium was clearly defined by Mr. Spaak at the time the question of Algeria was placed on the agenda [530th meeting]. There is no need for me to restate it. The Charter does not allow the United Nations to interfere in matters of this kind. It would be harmful to our Organization if we nevertheless insisted upon debating them. It is for

this reason that we have given our approval to the resolution deciding not to consider the item further.

107. Mr. RAHIM (Yemen): I do not intend at this late hour to speak at length on the proposal which this Assembly has already adopted. I simply wish very briefly to explain our position.

108. We did not oppose the proposal, because we believe that it amounts to a proposal not to discuss the Algerian question during the remaining days of this session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, we believe that the adoption of the proposal does not in any way prejudice our position on this Organization's competence to deal with the Algerian question. We have also taken into account the spirit of harmony prevailing at this stage. We feel that the question of Algeria was amply discussed on the occasions of the presentation of the item to this session and the inclusion of the item in the agenda. During those discussions, the point of view of the Algerian people was fully explained and emphasized.

109. There is another important consideration which affects our position on this problem. We believe that there has been a marked change in the international atmosphere, particularly as regards the North African question. Of course, we should have preferred it if the item had been discussed at length and an appropriate resolution had been adopted. The problem of Algeria concerns 11 million people who are clamouring for their human rights. The problem certainly should be of vital concern to this Organization.

110. A vital change has taken place in the public opinion of France and the world, a change which is in favour of the Algerian people and that people's attainment of its God-given rights. Another encouraging sign is the return of the Sultan of Morocco, showing clearly that France, fortunately, is following the right path and taking into consideration the opinion of the Moroccan people. We sincerely hope that the favourable attitude which France has displayed in Morocco will also be displayed in Algeria.

111. Those hopeful signs have been the paramount considerations in our decision not to oppose the present proposal. We are confident that France will do its utmost in the coming year to solve this problem to the satisfaction of the Algerian people and thus, in accordance with justice, human rights and the United Nations Charter, put an end to the war and strife prevailing in Algeria.

112. One of the important reasons which has led us to agree not to oppose the proposal is our belief that the proposal does not in any way prejudice our position on this Assembly's competence to deal with the Algerian problem. I should like to emphasize our confidence that, in the light of the Assembly's decision not to discuss this item during the remaining part of this session, France will take the necessary measures to satisfy the just aspirations of the Algerian people, so that it will not be necessary to raise the question again at the next session of the Assembly.

113. We sincerely hope that the adoption of the present proposal will pave the way for a just solution of the Algerian problem. I can assure the Assembly that the Arab countries and the Arab League stand ready to help in achieving a just and honourable solution.

114. Mr. SCHURMANN (Netherlands): When the General Assembly was discussing the inclusion of this item in the agenda, my delegation stated [525th

meeting] that it considered that a discussion of the Algerian question would be neither within the General Assembly's competence nor in the interests of peaceful developments in Algeria itself. It was therefore with great satisfaction that we welcomed the proposal introduced this morning in the First Committee by the representative of India; we wish to pay a tribute to that representative for his successful efforts — without, of course, forgetting other representatives who have helped to pave the way for this solution and to whom our thanks are also due.

115. The wording of the proposal which the Assembly has adopted gives latitude for various interpretations. In our view, it settles this matter in a completely satisfactory way. It is our hope that the decision which the Assembly has just taken will enable the Government of France to give us soon again the benefit — the inestimable benefit — of the presence of the French delegation in our midst.

116. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) (*translated from Spanish*): It is scarcely necessary to inform the President that the delegations of Colombia, Chile, Cuba and Ecuador request the withdrawal of the letter we addressed to him on 23 November [A/3042] and with which all representatives are familiar.

117. I believe that, with the formula that the First Committee approved this morning and for which we are indebted to the inexhaustible ingenuity of Mr. Menon, the representative of India, a satisfactory and honourable solution has been found to the problem which has caused us so much concern recently and was threatening to develop into a crisis of the most serious kind for the United Nations.

118. I would not have enlarged on our reasons for voting in favour of that proposal had it not been for the references in the statements of the representatives of Lebanon and Mexico to the application of rule 22 of the rules of procedure, which our four delegations, in the exercise of our right, wished to invoke in this case as a last resort, in order to avoid this crisis and to bring the exacerbated debate on the problem to an end.

119. The representative of Mexico said that the application of rule 22 would have entailed incalculable consequences for the United Nations. For my part, I, as the representative of Ecuador, together with the representatives who joined me in signing the letter addressed to the President, am of the opposite opinion. It is precisely for such cases as this that rule 22 exists, and we have studied it carefully and thoroughly. We believe that just as the General Committee has the right to accept or reject an item for inclusion in the agenda and to make a corresponding recommendation to the General Assembly, and just as the Assembly has the right to accept or reject the recommendation, so the Assembly has, by the same token, the right to delete or amend an item in special circumstances. Moreover, there is the concept, universally recognized in law, that every rule must be interpreted as having a practical effect, and not as having no effect or as having been written merely for the sake of being recorded on paper.

120. No one has been more consistent than the representatives of Ecuador in defending the colonial peoples who do not yet exercise the right of self-determination. But this case is entirely different and presents a legal problem of such far-reaching importance that on those grounds alone the delegation of Ecuador did not

think that the problem of Algeria should be dealt with in the United Nations. It therefore voted against the inclusion of the item in the agenda.

121. Now that this most serious matter has been concluded, for this year at least, the position — worthy, of course, of all respect — of every delegation is safeguarded and every delegation retains the right in the future to reaffirm the position it has held heretofore.

122. It now remains for me to thank the representative of India warmly for presenting the formula that saved us from this crisis and to appeal sincerely and urgently to France to lend us once again its brilliant co-operation in bringing our task to a successful conclusion and in settling the serious problems that confront the United Nations today. The crisis we are facing in the problem of disarmament and the crisis that may arise in the matter of the admission of new Members will perhaps be allayed by the presence of France. I hope that the Government of France will heed this request, made to it by one of the most unassuming peoples on earth, to honour us once again with its presence and thus to resolve — at least for the present — this major problem. We believe France will solve it, loyal as it is to the spirit of the law and the spirit of freedom which have always animated the people and the Government of France.

123. Mr. ARENALES CATALAN (Guatemala) (*translated from Spanish*): The Guatemalan delegation did not vote against the proposal submitted by the First Committee, although it voted in favour of the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the present session of the General Assembly. The only reason why we refrained from explaining our vote at that time was that we were aware of the serious dissension which was arising in the United Nations family.

124. Guatemala's position with regard to the Algerian question has always been based on principle. We are sure that the attitude of all the delegations here present, like that of the Guatemalan delegation, is determined by the strictest observance of principles. The Guatemalan delegation believes that, in not opposing the adoption of the proposal of the First Committee today, it is not betraying the principles on which its vote for the inclusion of the item in the agenda was based. Rather do we consider that the Assembly, in the exercise of its supreme power and in view of certain special considerations, has taken the proper position with reference to the problem.

125. My delegation wishes to repeat that neither on any former occasion nor on this occasion has its attitude been motivated by any prejudgement of the issue of sovereignty over Algeria, a subject on which it expresses no opinion.

126. The Guatemalan delegation is gratified that, in the proposal of the First Committee which the Assembly has approved today, we have been able to find a conciliatory formula which, without entailing the renunciation of any principle or political position on the part of any Member of the United Nations, permits a solution of the serious problem resulting indirectly from the dissension within the Organization.

127. We owe a sincere tribute to the diplomats whose efforts, prompted by the general concern aroused by certain aspects of the conflict which had arisen, have resulted in the acceptance of the conciliatory resolution which has been adopted today. To France, a country with which the people of Guatemala is so closely linked

by ties of affection, we extend our ardent wishes for its early return to all the organs of the United Nations.

128. Mr. ORTEGA (Chile) (*translated from Spanish*): This morning's experience has shown the political maturity of the United Nations. We profess different religions, speak different languages, uphold political ideals which are frequently antagonistic and yet, when the prestige and integrity of the United Nations are at stake, there is an impressive unanimity in the Assembly. My country could not ignore the tacit appeal of the conscience of the world, which desires the United Nations to succeed in its task of ensuring peace and, through peace, the welfare and prosperity of the peoples.

129. On the express instructions of our Government, we voted for the proposal submitted by India in the First Committee, and, in stating the attitude thus adopted by our delegation, we also wish to convey our warmest appreciation of the action taken by the Indian representative. Working night and day to reconcile our differences, Mr. Menon supported, with his customary ability, the timely intervention of Mr. Maza, the President of the Assembly; he realized the need to overcome the difficulties which had arisen in the work of this tenth session of the Assembly; he joined his efforts with those of the Latin American delegations, and took advantage of the spirit of understanding displayed by the Arab delegations. The result of this generous course, adopted in a spirit of co-operation, is the situation we are now hailing from this rostrum.

130. It is our hope that this spirit will always preside over the work of the United Nations. Only thus shall we be worthy of the confidence of the peoples and only thus, when this tenth session comes to an end, shall we be able to return to our countries with a deep feeling of satisfaction.

131. Mr. MENON (India): My delegation and I are extremely grateful for — if somewhat embarrassed at — the not altogether deserved references made to us. Of course, the picture presented does not really correspond to the historical facts of the situation.

132. I want to take this opportunity of expressing my profound appreciation and gratitude to those who have made the present development possible. I should like to pay a tribute to the assistance, encouragement, initiative and patience of the President of the General Assembly, who at no time departed from the role of strict impartiality. With regard to his views on this question, I am revealing no secrets when I say that even now I do not know what he thinks of the Algerian question. There were occasions when the present development seemed impossible, and it was due to the encouragement of the President that fresh efforts were rendered possible.

133. I believe the General Assembly should also know about a person whose name has not been mentioned but who has played an important part, that is, the Chairman of the First Committee. But for his willingness to be of assistance, it would not have been possible for us to come together.

134. The proposal adopted by the First Committee does not represent the initiative of my delegation or stem from our wisdom, as it has been put, but from the collective wisdom of this Assembly. I would be failing in my duty and, not only that, I should feel very frustrated if I did not say that my colleagues from the continents of Africa and Asia — more particularly the Arab nations — have shown throughout an attitude of informed concern, an attitude of firmness combined with

the desire and willingness to be tolerant and understanding. What the General Assembly now has before it, so far as we are concerned, is their collective wisdom.

135. The same applies to my colleagues of the Commonwealth who, from the very beginning, in a characteristically unassuming manner, have given us all the encouragement possible.

136. Reference has been made to that large group of delegations from Latin America. As everyone knows, without the support of Latin America, nothing is possible, either in quality or in quantity.

137. The President has quite rightly asked us not to enter into the merits of the question before us, and I do not wish to depart from this rule, but unfortunately so much has been said on this. While the debate was going on, constant inquiries were addressed to my delegation with regard to our attitude on the Algerian question, on the question of competence, on what this proposal means, and on the position with regard to the French delegation. I want to deal briefly with each of these matters.

138. First, all this proposal represents, so far as we are concerned, is this: the Charter of the United Nations, the destiny and the desires of the Algerian people, and the regard, consideration and appreciation we should give to France, are elements which are contained in the proposal. I am sure that no one will misunderstand me if I say that any delegation has not only the right but also the duty to take action, including a self-imposed absence from the Assembly, in obedience to its conscience and political decision, but I think it would be showing little respect for the integrity and for the great position that France enjoys in the world, and for its great tradition, if we were to suggest that France would take an action of a national character in order to impose its will upon this Assembly. Any suggestion of that character would not be paying sufficient honour to France. Therefore I do not regard this as a matter to be interpreted in that way.

139. Secondly, I want to deal with the question of Algeria. There can be no doubt whatsoever where my country stands in this matter. It is written into our declaration of independence. We believe in the right of freedom for our peoples, as for all peoples. We believe in their freedom of opportunity and their right to terminate foreign rule as a matter of obligation. So far as we are concerned, we stand foursquare where we stood. We stand for the freedom of all peoples under foreign rule, for their right to independence, and for their freedom of development.

140. So far as the proposal is concerned, as the President has rightly pointed out, it is a matter of procedure and a matter of political action. It was proposed out of the same considerations that impelled us to initiate and support the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly, and the very fact of initiative and support for inclusion confers upon us the right, so far as we are concerned, to do what we desire to do afterwards.

141. Over and above Algeria, over and above our delegation, over and above France, we have a great obligation to the international community and to the United Nations, and for all these reasons the delegations in this General Assembly, without distinction as to continent, culture, language or anything of that kind, during the last two or three weeks have tried, each in its own way, to produce a situation in which, without the surrender of principle and without altering any of their political

convictions or the decisions of their national Governments, they could find some way whereby progress could be made in regard to the matters we have to consider, and so that harmony in the United Nations would not be impaired. That was the purpose of our efforts during the last few weeks, an effort which culminated in the decision arrived at this morning.

142. Reference has been made to the issue of competence. I regret that it was made, since that issue does not arise. No resolution of this Assembly can alter the decision of national Governments as to what they regard as matters that may be submitted to the United Nations. Whether or not the General Assembly is competent is decided by this General Assembly, and no resolution adopted this morning can wipe out the successive decisions made by the General Assembly during the past eight or nine years. No decision made by the tenth session can bind the eleventh session. No decision made by us can bind our individual national Governments or our conception of whether or not Article 2, paragraph 7 applies. At no time could we decide that every issue should come here, any more than we could decide that an issue should never come here.

143. Therefore a discussion of the issue of competence is entirely irrelevant to our present consideration, because all that the proposal states is that we will not continue to discuss the item at this session, and that the General Assembly is therefore no longer seized of it. Some attempts have been made to explain what the proposal means. There again, each delegation is entitled to its own interpretation, but I go by the good old principle of law that we must give the words their natural meaning. If I may say so, all I have to say about the proposal is that it means what it says. The English text, so far as we are concerned, is the official text. There is no reason in the world, however, why anybody should not put a strain on the letter of the law. Civilization lives by interpreting the letter of the law. But the law, until it is interpreted in a different way, must bear its natural interpretation.

144. Once again, having explained our position, having thanked all of you and more particularly my colleagues in the other countries, and the representative of France who is not here, on whom this imposes a great deal of strain, and with our thoughts going to those people in Algeria and France whose wisdom between them, as of this Assembly today, must resolve this question, I express my appreciation and my thanks to you for your kindness and your courtesy at all times.

145. Mr. NUNEZ (Costa Rica) (*translated from Spanish*): Costa Rica voted in favour of including the Algerian item in the agenda of the present General Assembly, in deference to a principle which we have invariably observed in discussions of the agenda of each session. The principle is that the United Nations must be an open forum for all peoples and all nations, especially those which are Member States.

146. In obedience to that principle, as also for reasons of expedience and in the interests of the international harmony so essential for a constructive solution of the problems of peace, my delegation would logically have had to abstain from voting on any motion which signified, even though only implicitly, that the General Assembly was by a simple majority reversing one of its earlier decisions. This morning, however, when the representative of India in the First Committee presented a draft resolution to the effect that the General Assembly would decide not to consider further the item entitled "The question of Algeria", we raised no objection to his proposal, because it enabled the Assembly's original decision to follow its natural and normal course, terminating in a resolution which was accepted as satisfactory by the same countries which had formerly requested discussion of the item.

147. The world has been amply informed about the question of Algeria from this rostrum, and the nations have been given a great many facts on which to base their opinion of it and, above all, to judge whether this or any other future Assembly is or is not competent to deal with the subject. On this point, Costa Rica would be ready to state its views if any such question were again to appear on our agenda.

148. I hope that France will return to our midst so that we may benefit by its enlightenment, experience and proved devotion to the cause of freedom. I also hope that the peoples whose interests and welfare were involved in the item which is no longer before us may see their aspirations fulfilled in the manner which is most complete and satisfactory to themselves, to France and to the world.

149. I offer my congratulations to our President, who as a great apostle of human freedom and international harmony must have suffered great heartache at the sight of an empty seat where formerly he was accustomed to see the representative of the great French nation, the embodiment of the spirit of liberty.

The meeting rose at 2.5 p.m.