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TWENTIETH SESSION

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**FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1529th  
MEETING**

Friday, 15 October 1965,  
at 3.25 p.m.

**NEW YORK**

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*Chairman:* Mr. Majid RAHNEMA (Iran).

### Requests for hearings (continued)

#### REQUESTS CONCERNING ADEN (AGENDA ITEM 23) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that a further request for a hearing concerning Aden had been received. He suggested that, in keeping with the usual practice, the request should be circulated as a Committee document and considered at a later meeting.

*It was so decided.*<sup>1/</sup>

#### AGENDA ITEM 23

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: reports of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: Aden (continued) (A/5800/Rev.1, chap. VI; A/6000/Rev.1, chap. VI; A/C.4/642 and Add.1 and 2; A/C.4/646)

#### HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)

*At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Abdul Gawee Mackawee and Mr. Khalifa A. Khalifa; Mr. Qahtan Muhammad Shaabi and Mr. Saif Dhalee, representatives of the National Front for the Liberation of the Occupied South of Yemen (NLF); and Mr. Shaikhan Abdullah Alhabshi and Mr. Mohamed Ali Algifri, representatives of the South Arabian League (SAL), took places at the Committee table.*

2. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that the petitioners had come to New York in the hope of persuading the United Nations to come speedily to

the aid of the South Arabian people and ensure not only the security of that people but the peace and security of the whole world. He expressed gratitude for the resolutions already adopted by United Nations bodies, which had been a unifying element for the various South Arabian nationalist groups.

3. He endorsed fully everything that had been said by Mr. Mackawee at the previous meeting. There had been practically no change in the situation since he had last spoken to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.<sup>2/</sup> In defiance of the United Nations, the United Kingdom continued to deny the people democratic rights and freedoms, refused to establish an independent judiciary, had placed the country under martial law and was carrying out raids all over the Territory and retaliatory measures against the population. The country was still divided into three distinct districts: the Crown Colony, the Federation, and the three Sultanates of the Eastern Protectorate. Each division of the country had its own forces, a fact which would hamper the emergence of a united nation. The deterioration of the situation had led to increased nationalist resistance, in accordance with the natural right to self-defence. Although the United Kingdom was still far superior to the nationalists in armed strength, the power of the latter was growing and an arms race in the area seemed inevitable. Weapons were entering the Territory from all directions.

4. The nationalist struggle was partly a struggle for national unity. At the present stage in the country's evolution, the existence of distinct areas under different régimes was an encouragement to separatist tendencies, and there was a danger that when independence was achieved it would be in the form of three or more separate sovereign States. There were three distinct military commands in the three areas; thus, even though all were controlled by the United Kingdom, the seeds of conflict between the areas were there. There was no national police force, and in the feudal areas the lords held all judicial power in their own hands.

5. In July 1964, the United Kingdom had tried to organize a constitutional conference in London, but it had failed partly owing to the withdrawal from it of Sultan Ahmad Al-Fadhli, who had become convinced that the United Kingdom was not sincere in its professed desire to give the Territory independence. Thus Sultan Ahmad had joined the nationalists, as many other sultans had done.

<sup>1/</sup> The request was subsequently circulated as document A/C.4/642/Add.3.

<sup>2/</sup> See A/5800/Rev.1, chap. VI, paras. 54-60.

6. The nationalists had accepted an invitation to participate in new talks in London in August 1965 in order to help to create a sound foundation for the country's peaceful emergence to independence and on the understanding that the provisions of the United Nations resolutions would be seriously considered. Unfortunately, no progress had been achieved in those talks. The United Kingdom had been unwilling to accept the United Nations resolutions and to pledge that it would preserve the unity of the Territory; it had insisted on continuing its existing policies and refused to release detainees and allow exiled political leaders to return to their country. The United Kingdom had shown that its policy was still to preserve the powers of the sultans favourable to it. Another cause contributing to the failure of the talks had been the existence of such a large number of governments and parties supposedly representing the Territory. Even so, the majority of the Territory's representatives had been in agreement regarding the need for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions. According to General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), conversations concerning independence were to be held with the provisional Government for the whole of the Territory to be constituted following general elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The nationalists had been willing to attend the August talks only because they had been limited to the question of an agenda for such a conference.

7. The absence of a central government and administrative organ, and of centralized military and police forces, had led to a military vacuum in the Territory, which was extremely dangerous for peace. He therefore felt that the matter should be brought to the attention of the Security Council as likely to endanger international peace and security.

8. In response to the pressures of the nationalists and of the United Nations, the United Kingdom had promised that the Territory would have independence by 1968. The crucial question, however, was to whom powers would be transferred. The demand of the nationalists was that sovereignty should be transferred to the people of the area and that the unity of the Territory should be preserved; otherwise the old régime and United Kingdom control would be maintained after the granting of formal independence. There should be one State, including all the islands. Furthermore, the granting of independence should be preceded by general elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage under free conditions which could only be ensured by an effective United Nations presence. In particular, to make possible a healthy and free climate, the military base should be dismantled. The people of the Territory had no desire to see their country a spring-board for aggression against other countries; moreover, the retention of a base could render meaningless any rights formally conferred on the peoples of the Territory. The petitioners also requested that an early date should be fixed for independence.

9. To sum up, his people demanded the following: first, the provisions of the resolution adopted by the Special Committee on 9 April 1964 (A/5800/Rev.1, chap. VI, para. 166) should be implemented, i.e., all restrictive laws should be repealed, political

prisoners and detainees should be released, those people who had been exiled or forbidden to reside in the Territory should be allowed to return, and there should be a United Nations presence in the Territory; secondly, the United Nations should undertake to maintain the territorial integrity of the country; thirdly, the United Nations should set a time-limit for the holding of general elections; fourthly, the military base should be removed; and fifthly, the situation should be brought to the attention of the Security Council as a threat to international peace and security. The people of the Territory were hopeful and relied on the United Nations, but they would defend themselves by their own means, if necessary.

10. In reply to a question by Mr. Mohamed ELMI (Somalia), Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that elections had been held only in Aden and that none had ever been held in any other part of the Territory. Only 8,000 of the 300,000 inhabitants of Aden had the right to vote. No time-limit had been set for the next elections in Aden. He stressed that any elections held in Aden must be based on universal adult suffrage.

11. Mr. KEDADI (Tunisia) remarked that it was natural, in view of all the means used by the colonial Power to preserve its position in the Territory, that the people should act in self-defence. He asked the petitioner whether he could inform the Committee of the extent of public reaction to the presence of troops in the Territory and whether the members of the nationalist movement had a common approach to the goal of representative government.

12. Mr. MACKAWEE said that his people continued to be the victims of oppression and barbarous acts on the part of United Kingdom troops in the Territory: women and children had been killed, hundreds of homes had been destroyed, crops had been burned and the people were living in a constant state of terror.

13. All the nationalists were in favour of elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Since the United Kingdom had shown complete disregard for the views and aspirations of the inhabitants of the Territory, the people believed that the United Kingdom Government was interested only in strengthening its own position.

14. Mr. KEDADI (Tunisia) noted that the United Kingdom had promised to grant the Territory independence in 1968, and that the liberation movement was also requesting independence. He wondered whether there was a difference between the two concepts of independence.

15. Mr. MACKAWEE said that if the United Kingdom sincerely wanted to give the Territory independence, it should begin by restoring a free and democratic climate throughout the area. The United Kingdom's aim was clearly to weaken the progressive elements and strengthen the reactionary forces in the Territory. The United Kingdom should declare unequivocally that it would honour any resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its present session.

16. Mr. KEDADI (Tunisia) said that Mr. Mackawee had mentioned the faith of his people in the United

Nations. He wondered what the leaders would do if the United Nations proved unable to ensure the implementation of its resolutions.

17. Mr. MACKAWEE said that if the United Kingdom did not abide by United Nations resolutions, the least that the people of Aden would expect would be that the United Nations should publicly condemn the United Kingdom's attitude. He appealed to members to take into account the gravity of the situation which would arise if the resolutions were not implemented.

18. In reply to a further question from Mr. Mohamed ELMI (Somalia), Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that the nationalist movement was not confined to Aden Colony, but covered the whole of the Territory. Some of the sultans had joined the movement, and some were waiting for a more appropriate atmosphere.

19. Mr. DIABATE (Guinea) asked for information regarding the threat represented by the United Kingdom military base.

20. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that the base was a constant threat to the Arab peoples and the east coast of Africa and created an explosive situation. He recalled that the base had been used in the past for attacks against neighbouring countries and pointed out that the United Kingdom was contemplating the installation of similar bases on the off-shore islands. Those islands should be included in any resolution on Aden that the General Assembly might adopt.

21. Mr. DIAZ GONZALEZ (Venezuela) recalled that at the previous meeting Mr. Mackawee had said that the United Nations should take effective and more direct action with regard to the question of Aden. He asked the petitioner what he had meant by that statement.

22. Mr. MACKAWEE replied that he had meant that if at all possible the United Kingdom should be expelled from the United Nations.

23. Mr. DIAZ GONZALEZ (Venezuela), recalling Mr. Alhabshi's statement that the United Nations should undertake to maintain the territorial integrity of South Arabia, asked the petitioner whether he feared that an attempt might be made against the country's integrity.

24. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) replied in the affirmative. The United Nations should undertake to do its utmost to prevent the creation by the United Kingdom of more than one independent sovereign State in the Territory.

25. Mr. DIAZ GONZALEZ (Venezuela) asked the petitioner how he thought the United Nations could induce the United Kingdom to implement the resolution which the Special Committee had adopted on 9 April 1964.

26. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that there were a number of means at the disposal of the United Nations. For example, it could censure the United Kingdom, take sanctions against it or expel it from the Organization.

27. Mr. TOMEH (Syria) asked Mr. Alhabshi to give the Committee some details of the history and aims of his movement.

28. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that his movement had begun in 1948. In 1950 the party had been legally registered and in 1956 had issued a political manifesto for the first time in the Territory inviting all the indigenous inhabitants to unite. He had been exiled in 1956. His party appealed to the people to abide by democratic principles and supported all the United Nations resolutions on Aden. When the United Kingdom had begun using weapons, the nationalists had taken up arms in self-defence.

29. Mr. TOMEH (Syria) asked Mr. Alhabshi whether he could tell the Committee how the people felt about the High Commissioner, who was the supreme authority in the Territory and was not one of their own.

30. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that the people were bitter. They had hoped that the United Kingdom Government would grant them independence by 1968 but had found that that Government insisted on transferring all rights to a minority of sultans. The United Kingdom authorities had themselves created the sultans, who came from poor families and had enjoyed wide and dangerous powers for the past ten or fifteen years.

31. In reply to further questions from Mr. TOMEH (Syria), Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that the people had expressed themselves in favour of maintaining the country's territorial integrity and were united in their demand that the Territory should not be divided into a number of States upon the attainment of independence. In that connexion, he recalled the one-day strike that had been held throughout the Territory in support of that demand. The nationalist movement had always identified itself with the cause of Arab unity. The fewer the number of sovereign States, the better the possibility of their living together in peace.

32. Mr. CARAYANNIS (Greece) asked Mr. Alhabshi what the voting requirements were in Aden Colony, since he had said that only 8,000 people out of a population of 300,000 had the right to vote.

33. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that there was a property qualification and, in addition, only those who had been born in Aden Colony were eligible to vote. Until three or four years previously, the right to vote had not been restricted to those born in Aden Colony and there had then been 20,000 people on the voting register, but the regulations had been changed. Many people from other parts of South Arabia who had lived in Aden Colony for up to fifty years now had no political rights. In other parts of South Arabia elections were not even considered.

34. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) asked Mr. Mackawee what was the position of the Government of the Federation of South Arabia with regard to those territories of South Arabia, including the islands, which were not part of the Federation.

35. Mr. MACKAWEE replied that the States which were outside the Federation were still independent. The United Kingdom had for some reason seen fit to keep the three Sultanates which formed the Eastern

Aden Protectorate out of the Federation, and some States in the Western Aden Protectorate had resisted joining the Federation since they considered it feudal and undemocratic. The islands, which had originally been attached to Aden, had also been kept out of the Federation and were controlled either by the United Kingdom High Commissioner or by the United Kingdom adviser in the Persian Gulf. It was believed that the United Kingdom Government intended to use one of the islands as a military base if it was ever forced to abandon the base at Aden. There could be no freedom for South Arabia unless it included the islands.

36. Mr. MWASHUMBE (Kenya) asked Mr. Mackawee whether there was a cadre of trained personnel capable of running the government departments in the event of self-government.

37. Mr. MACKAWEE said that the civil service would be able to do everything that was required efficiently, even if independence were to be granted immediately. The United Kingdom had tried to introduce a scheme of "Arabization" of the civil service, but it had been resisted by the population since as long as the positions of Public Service Commissioner and Director of Establishment were held by expatriates, any such Arabization was merely a sham. There were 400 graduates in South Arabia, in addition to the experienced public servants, who had sufficient technical and administrative knowledge to run the government as efficiently as it was run at present. The United Kingdom Government had often denied scholarships to people from Aden, but many Arab countries and some friendly Asians and socialist countries had granted them, for which the people of Aden were very grateful.

38. Mr. ZAHRE LIAN (Burma) asked Mr. Alhabshi how many different political parties there were in the Territory and whether all were agreed as to the basis on which independence should be granted.

39. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) replied that there were many political parties in Aden Colony, some functioning and some dissolved or merged, but there were three for four main ones. Outside Aden Colony there were no democratic freedoms of any kind and hence no political parties. There was general agreement on the broad outline of the form the State should take after independence; all nationalists were in favour of a unitary State. Some were in favour of a federation, but not in its present form.

40. Mr. GBEHO (Ghana) asked Mr. Mackawee whether at any stage he and the other nationalists had ascertained the views of the people of the islands with regard to the possibility of a United Kingdom military base being established there, and on the question whether they wished to be united with the rest of South Arabia.

41. Mr. MACKAWEE said that he was sure that the people of the islands were all opposed to United Kingdom military bases. Some inhabitants of Perim Island had left for Aden Colony and other parts of South Arabia because it was hinted that the United Kingdom would use the island as a military base. There had been demonstrations in some of the islands in favour of the South Arabian nationalists. The

islands had originally been attached to the rest of the country and all the people had the same aspirations.

42. Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica) asked Mr. Mackawee for specific data on the size of the military base at Aden and on other United Kingdom military installations in South Arabia.

43. Mr. MACKAWEE replied that there were 50,000 people attached to the United Kingdom military base at Aden and statistics showed that the United Kingdom military forces occupied about 50 per cent of the utilizable land in Aden Colony. That excluded what they occupied in the Protectorates and the islands.

44. In reply to a further question from Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica), Mr. MACKAWEE said that the Pan-American Hadhramaut Oil Company was prospecting for oil in South Arabia and the British Petroleum Company had an oil refinery at Aden, with an exclusive monopoly in the Territory.

45. Mr. RAKOTONIAINA (Madagascar) asked whether either of the petitioners could explain whether terrorism had given rise to the United Kingdom military operations or whether it was the other way round. He also asked what repercussions terrorism was having on the population of the Territory.

46. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that whoever was in control of the armed forces and the police was responsible for the situation. The nationalists who were working for self-determination had every right to defend themselves, since the United Kingdom had opposed peaceful movements in South Arabia and had exiled many of their leaders. The civilian population all fully realized the reasons for the terrorism and identified themselves with the nationalist movements. They understood that the hardships involved were necessary if they were to attain freedom.

47. Mr. DIAZ GONZALEZ (Venezuela) asked Mr. Alhabshi what date his party and the other political parties in the Territory thought the United Nations should set for general elections in the Territory.

48. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that the United Kingdom had promised independence not later than 1968 and under the United Nations resolutions there could be no independence until general elections had been held. A duly elected provisional government was the proper body to conduct independence negotiations. He suggested that elections might take place in a year's time, depending on the technical problems involved. The United Kingdom should be requested to prepare the proper atmosphere for general elections by repealing all repressive measures and allowing exiles to return home.

49. In reply to a request by Mr. DIAZ GONZALEZ (Venezuela) for further information on that point, Mr. MACKAWEE said that the nationalists were in favour of the immediate implementation of the United Nations resolutions. The United Nations should send an effective mission to the Territory forthwith to prepare a free and democratic climate for elections throughout the Territory. When the United Nations representative in the Territory decided that elections could take place, they could be held immediately.

He estimated that such a procedure might take from six months to one year.

50. Mr. DE CASTRO (Philippines) asked when a new constitution would be drawn up, if elections were to be held preparatory to independence.

51. Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that general elections would be held throughout the Territory for the purpose of forming a provisional government which alone would have the power to draw up a new constitution and to negotiate the date of independence.

52. In reply to a further question from Mr. DE CASTRO (Philippines) as to who would determine the size and form of the provisional government, Mr. ALHABSHI (South Arabian League) said that that could be worked out in consultation with United Nations advisers in the Territory before general elections were held. If all agreed that the United Nations resolutions should be implemented, then it would be possible to reach agreement on such technical points also.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.