

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTIETH SESSION

Official Records

**FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1537th
MEETING**

Monday, 25 October 1965,
at 10.55 a.m.



NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Majid RAHNEMA (Iran).

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.4/646)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. EL KONY (United Arab Republic) said that the question before the Committee was a particularly challenging one in view of the total defiance shown by the United Kingdom towards the United Nations. As the Sub-Committee on Aden had affirmed in paragraph 73 of its latest report (A/6000/Rev.1, chap. VI, appendix II), the action called for in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII) constituted the absolute minimum that was required. Yet the United Kingdom had responded by intensifying its brutal colonial war against the people of Aden and the Protectorates. Some of the recent military operations carried out by the United Kingdom had been reported in the world Press. Reinforcement troops and warships had been sent to the Territory. Hundreds of people were being harassed, arrested and detained without trial; mosques were violated, and old women and children were among the victims of atrocities. The military operations had driven tens of thousands of refugees into Yemen. The rights of the labour movement had been flagrantly violated, ironically at a time when the Labour Party was in power in the United Kingdom and when the Conservative Party was calling for the abandonment of the Aden military base.

2. He read out a cable that had just been received from the families of some of the detainees, stating that more than a hundred people had been detained for eighteen months and subjected to brutal tortures, and requesting that representatives of the International

Red Cross should be sent to investigate the treatment of prisoners and detainees in the Territory.

3. United Kingdom spokesmen attempted to justify their country's oppressive measures by speaking of acts of "terrorism" on the part of the nationalists. Such arguments had been heard before; indeed, some of the great leaders of the world today had once been called terrorists by the United Kingdom. The fact was that the people of Aden and the Protectorates were united in their struggle to liberate their Territory, and he paid a tribute to them for the courage which they were showing. The statements which had been made in the Committee by the Adeni leaders were an indication of their people's determination.

4. The insistence of the United Kingdom on maintaining the Aden base was dictated by the strategic, military and political objectives of the United Kingdom in the region. The base was an instrument for perpetuating United Kingdom privileges in the Arabian peninsula and for deterring liberation movements both in the region and outside it; the United Nations should therefore regard the liquidation of the base as a matter of the first importance. The United Kingdom was also intent on exploiting the area's natural resources. It was the oil deposits in the Eastern Protectorate which explained the United Kingdom's efforts to isolate that part of South Arabia from the rest of the Territory. In that connexion the discrepancy between the profits which the United Kingdom had derived from the region and the Territory's lack of development was striking.

5. In pursuit of its ends, the United Kingdom had used a variety of methods: it had encouraged division, it had imposed treaties on individuals who stayed in office only at the pleasure of United Kingdom advisers and it had isolated the Territory from the outside world. The constitutional structures established were tailored to suit the needs of United Kingdom interests. The present Federation was an artificial entity, governed by provisions which enabled the United Kingdom to control its affairs through "advisers". At the 1530th meeting Sultan Al-Fadhli had explained the way in which the United Kingdom managed the affairs of the Federation and its component States. The Federal Constitution was not based on established constitutional practices but was designed to make the Federal Government an instrument of United Kingdom policy.

6. He could not accept the United Kingdom claim that it was not in its competence to allow the people in the Protectorates to enjoy universal adult suffrage. It was the administering Power which was responsible for ensuring the implementation of United Nations resolutions. The United Kingdom had stated that the Territory would be given independence by 1968; he

saw no reason why such a late date should be accepted. The Territory was ready for steps to be taken immediately for the transfer of powers. All arrangements towards that objective should, however, follow the lines laid down in the relevant United Nations resolutions. As the Sub-Committee stated in its latest report, the failure of the various attempts at consultations which the United Kingdom had undertaken could be attributed to the refusal of the United Kingdom Government to accept the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII).

7. The United Arab Republic fully supported the struggle of the people in Aden and the Protectorates for self-determination, a struggle which was bound to succeed. His delegation called on the United Kingdom Government to follow the path of reason and to cease its military operations and all repressive measures against the people of the Territory; end the state of emergency and repeal all laws restricting public freedom; release all political detainees and allow the return of those exiled because of political activities; liquidate its military bases and withdraw troops from the Territory; co-operate in carrying out the programme laid down by United Nations bodies for the transfer of power to the people; and ensure the unity of the Territory from Bad el Mandeb to Mahra, and including all the off-shore islands.

8. The United Nations must take a firm stand and see that its resolutions were respected.

9. Mr. KULAGA (Poland) said that the statements and suggestions of the petitioners who had appeared before the Committee (1528th-1531st meetings), together with the 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 (A/5800/Rev.1, chap. VI; A/6000/Rev.1, chap. VI), constituted a useful background for the Committee's consideration of the problems of Aden and South Arabia. The situation which had been described was one in which all the features of colonialism were present: an oppressed people, driven to resort to extreme methods in their struggle for independence; the colonial Power, using every means at its disposal to maintain its position; an underlying cause, in the present case the United Kingdom's interest in the oil resources in the area, combined with the requirements of United Kingdom military strategy; finally, a state of increasing tension, presenting a growing threat to the peace and security of the whole region.

10. His delegation fully supported the unanimous desire of the people of South Arabia for full, genuine and immediate independence. The United Kingdom design was apparently to bring into being a government in South Arabia responsive to United Kingdom pressures. The creation of the so-called Federation, the denial of the validity of any United Nations recommendations and the denial of the representative nature of any South Arabian leader whose position did not conform to that of the United Kingdom suggested that the United Kingdom intended to grant independence to the Territory through a South Arabian indaba (conference of chiefs). It was the strategy which led to the arrests, deportations, emergency measures and military operations against the people.

11. The question of the presence of the United Kingdom military bases in the Territory had become a focal point in the debate. In his delegation's view, the existence of military bases of administering Powers in dependent territories could not be reconciled with the aim of the unhindered attainment of independence. Such bases constituted a permanent instrument of intervention in the internal affairs of dependent peoples, and created an unsound economic structure distorting the economic life of the country. They could be used for military intervention in the Territory and in other States and thus constituted a threat to the peace and security of the region. His delegation fully agreed with the statement of the Cairo Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries that foreign military bases were a means of exerting pressure on nations and retarding their development. He therefore strongly supported the demand of the petitioners that the bases in the Territory should be removed immediately. The General Assembly should ask for the immediate removal of military bases and installations and the withdrawal of all military personnel from Aden and from the off-shore islands.

12. Responsibility for the continual deterioration in the situation in Aden and South Arabia lay with the United Kingdom. The present debate must lead to the adoption of measures ensuring a just solution of the problem. The appropriate measures had been enumerated in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII) and important additional proposals had been made during the debate. His delegation would fully support all steps, including recourse to the Security Council, aimed at enabling the people of Aden and South Arabia to exercise the right of self-determination.

13. Mr. DIAZ GONZALEZ (Venezuela) said that Venezuela, a member of the Special Committee and of its Sub-Committee on Aden, associated itself with the conclusions and recommendations in the reports of those bodies. Since the adoption of those reports the situation in Aden and the Aden Protectorates had worsened. The colonial Powers were apparently still trying to cling to certain colonies and occupied territories which had symbolized their power during the heyday of colonialism. Aden and Perim were links in the chain of fortresses which had once protected the British Empire.

14. In rejecting the United Nations resolutions on Aden and the Aden Protectorates, the United Kingdom based itself on the argument that it alone was responsible for leading the colony to independence, a thesis which was naturally rejected by the General Assembly. The policies being followed by the administering Power were very different from those recommended in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII). The United Kingdom's policies had been consistent since 1937, when the system of indirect administration through so-called advisory treaties had been introduced. More recently, in 1956, the United Kingdom had issued a statement stressing the need for the States of the Aden Protectorate, since they were too small to attain full economic and political development individually, to seek a form of close association among themselves. That policy seemed similar to the course recommended in General

Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), but in fact the two approaches were different. The General Assembly resolutions envisaged consultation with the people of the Territory, whereas the policy of the administering Power was to consult the sultans, who were tied to the United Kingdom under "advisory treaties" which made them mere spokesmen for United Kingdom advisers. At the 1532nd meeting the United Kingdom representative had spoken of "consultation and co-operation with all concerned", yet the representatives of the political organizations of the Territory were apparently excluded from the category of "all concerned".

15. His delegation considered that resolution 1949 (XVIII) indicated the appropriate methods for implementing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in respect of Aden and the Protectorates and for the accession of South Arabia to independence by peaceful means. The protests of the people of the Territory had been answered by measures of repression, which in turn had engendered further violence. It was the duty of the United Nations to prevent such violence from growing and developing into something more serious. His delegation therefore hoped that when the United Kingdom representative spoke of "consultation and co-operation with all concerned", he included the United Nations among those concerned. Only through co-operation between the administering Power and the United Nations could a way be found to a just solution in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

16. Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus) said that the immediate and unconditional elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism was one of the problems confronting the world and that its solution was an essential prerequisite for the stabilization of international relations and the maintenance of peace and security. The decolonization process should be based on the principle of self-determination, a principle which was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and formed the corner-stone of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The rights and interests of the people of the territory concerned should always be observed, in accordance with the tenets of democracy and majority rule. Indeed, so long as justice was violated and the will of the people in any part of the world was thwarted, there could be no world peace, for freedom was one and indivisible.

17. The people of Aden and the Protectorates had long been striving to achieve the right to determine their own future and to enact the laws by which they wished to be governed. They had sacrificed a great deal to free themselves from the shackles of colonialism and their struggle for independence had won the admiration and sympathy of the entire world. The people of Cyprus, which had but recently emerged from colonialism, stood in brotherly solidarity with the Arab world on the side of the people of South Arabia in their struggle for national unity. His country deplored the colonialist policy of creating dissension among the people, partitioning the Territory into sheikhdoms and sultanates and establishing artificial barriers intended to separate the people of South

Arabia. There was no doubt that the people would achieve freedom and the right to determine their own future, but what lay in the balance was the future relationship of a free South Arabia with the United Kingdom and the rest of the world.

18. Although the United Kingdom had stated that it was determined to follow a course acceptable to the largest possible number of inhabitants, the fact that it took steps to suppress what it called "subversion", but what was in reality patriotic activity proved that its policies were not popular with the great majority of the people of the Territory.

19. The administering Power had not taken into account or given full effect to the relevant United Nations resolution and it had refused the request of a United Nations Sub-Committee to visit the area. There was increasing violence and political restlessness in the Territory and the situation had become critical. An urgent and just solution must be found in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and with General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), which not only set forth the principle of self-determination but outlined the methods whereby it was to be achieved.

20. His delegation considered that the administering Power should restore all political and public freedoms and release all political prisoners and detainees. Those measures would go a long way towards reducing tension in the area and paving the way for the accession of the Territory to independence. He supported the request made at the 1528th meeting by Mr. Mackawee, that a delegation from the United Nations and the League of Arab States should be sent to the Territory to ensure the establishment of a favourable climate for elections based on universal adult suffrage to be held throughout the region under its direct supervision, in order to ensure the emergence of a representative government. It was for the people of the Territory to choose their own constitutional system and form of government. His delegation fully supported their demand for immediate freedom.

21. Sir Senerat GUNWARDENE (Ceylon) said that his Government's approach to the problem of Aden had been amply illustrated by the questions he had put to Mr. Mackawee at the 1530th meeting. He appealed to the parties to regard the problem, not as one of prestige, but as one involving the suffering of 1.5 million people.

22. There were some who held that the United Nations was a world government and that all nations were bound to obey its wishes. The fact was, however, that the United Nations was not yet a world government in that sense and that its only way of securing compliance with its resolutions was through moral pressure. It was therefore essential that all its resolutions should be constructive and realistic. There was no place in the United Nations for language advocating revenge or the use of force.

23. Ceylon afforded a shining example of a country that had been able to attain self-government by treading the constitutional path. Not one person had been shot or imprisoned in his country in connexion with the struggle for freedom. The United Kingdom was a civilized nation; its people were responsive

to world opinion and were able to adopt a realistic approach to the problems of others. He stressed that the United Kingdom had already granted independence to almost all the countries that had been under its rule in Asia and that the United Nations had not had a very important role to play in that process.

24. Both parties were in agreement regarding the main objectives. The United Kingdom Government had accepted the view that the people of the Territory were ready for self-government and had publicly declared its intention of granting independence by 1968. The people of Aden wanted independence to be granted before 1968. The only essential difference between the two parties was the way in which independence was to be granted and it should be possible to resolve that difference without undue difficulty. It was unfortunate that the United Kingdom Government had suspended the Constitution and that there had been outbreaks of violence in the Territory. General elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage should be held as soon as possible to enable the people of the Territory to express their wishes. Illiteracy should not be a bar to the exercise of the right to vote. The United Kingdom Government should agree to the formation of a provisional government, after which a constitutional conference should be convened at which the parties would draw up a constitution that reflected the will of the people. Conversations should then be initiated between the United Kingdom Government and the people of the Territory for the purpose of fixing the date for the attainment of independence.

25. It was essential that the United Kingdom Government should repeal all repressive legislation and release all political prisoners and detainees. With regard to the military base in Aden, the United Kingdom had acknowledged that no base was militarily or morally defensible unless it had the support of the people of the Territory in which it was situated. The question of the base was a matter to be settled by negotiation once independence had been granted. What must be done now was to find ways of restoring peace in the area. A committee of good offices should be appointed to bring the two parties together with a view to deciding on the machinery for the holding of elections.

26. Mr. EL HADI (Sudan) said that his delegation looked forward to a continuation of the friendly relations which had been established between his people and the people of South Arabia and pledged every possible support for the latter in their struggle for liberation. Like many countries represented in the Committee, the Sudan knew from experience what it was to struggle for freedom and independence.

27. The petitioners had rightly accepted the solution set out in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), and their requests for an independent South Arabia, to include the off-shore islands, and for the immediate removal of the United Kingdom military base were justified. The military presence of the United Kingdom in the Territory could not fail to be a threat to the whole area.

28. His delegation fully supported resolution 1949 (XVIII) and the changes to it suggested by the petitioners as constituting the expression of the will of the

people to independence and freedom. He was confident that the people of South Arabia would succeed in their struggle for liberation and, once independent, would maintain good relations with all peoples. He called upon the United Kingdom to comply with resolution 1949 (XVIII), which could form the basis for a solution to be worked out in co-operation with the Arab League.

29. Mr. A. B. PANT (India) recalled that his delegation had co-sponsored all the United Nations resolutions concerning Aden. He hoped that the United Kingdom Government would decide to comply with General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII) and, following the example of New Zealand in connexion with the elections in the Cook Islands, would invite the United Nations to supervise elections in the Territory.

30. There were two conflicting currents in history: the dynamic, progressive and creative current of change, and the disruptive current of reaction, racism and sectarianism. It was in that context that his delegation had welcomed the statements made on behalf of the people of South Arabia, with their categorical rejection of feudalism, partition and the disruption of democracy and their urgent appeal for freedom and unity.

31. His delegation understood very well the opposition to the United Kingdom military base in Aden. It had always maintained that foreign military bases and pacts led, not to stability, but to conflict. He understood that many in the United Kingdom itself doubted the wisdom of that country's policy of maintaining bases in Africa and Asia.

32. The basis for a solution of the problem was clearly resolution 1949 (XVIII). It was essential that fear, hatred and violence should cease, that all detainees and prisoners should be released immediately and that the state of emergency should be lifted. Previous commitments or assurances need not stand in the way of a solution, as was clear from the example of India, where the United Kingdom, having always protected the position of the princes, had finally, under pressure of the popular movement for freedom under Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, asked them to come to terms with the popular forces. In that connexion, he quoted an article from the London newspaper *The Observer* of 17 October, which stated that the High Commissioner relied heavily on the advice of a handful of men in key posts, who were patriotically determined to strengthen the ties of the United Kingdom with the sultans and the sheikhs, whom they saw as the bulwark of South Arabia; their policy was to build up the South Arabian Federal Government as far and as fast as possible, so that by the following year it would be able to ride roughshod over the objections of Adeni nationalists.

33. His delegation would like to suggest, first, that the United Kingdom should accept without reservations resolution 1949 (XVIII); secondly, that the Sub-Committee on Aden should be reactivated and should visit Aden and give advice on the following: the release of all detainees and prisoners and the return of all refugees to South Arabia; the establishment of a fully responsible and representative caretaker Government with the specific task of holding elections on the

basis of universal adult franchise; and the formation of a sovereign constituent assembly to which the United Kingdom would transfer full powers. Those suggestions were made in the light of experience, since some of the steps proposed had been taken by the United Kingdom in its transfer of power to India.

34. No outside interests or feudal elements could stop the march of the forces of freedom in South Arabia. India offered the people of South Arabia its best wishes for peace and prosperity.

35. Mr. ESFANDIARY (Iran) said that his delegation would like to assure the petitioners of its sympathy and support for their just aspirations to freedom and independence. The statement by the United Kingdom representative had been, generally speaking, a re-affirmation of United Kingdom policies and objectives. He felt that if an attempt were made to identify the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two parties, it might be found that they were closer than might appear at first glance.

36. There were two courses of action open to the United Nations in its search for a solution to the problem of Aden on the basis of the inalienable rights and vital interests of the people of South Arabia. On the one hand, it could bring the pressure of world opinion to bear upon the United Kingdom in the form of a General Assembly resolution. What effect that course of action would have on United Kingdom policy would depend upon United Kingdom responsiveness to world opinion. The second, and in his opinion preferable, course would be to take advantage of the common ground that already existed between the two sides and try to expand it to provide the basis for a solution. As he had pointed out in the Special Committee (see A/6000/Rev.1, chap. VI, para. 252), the two sides were in agreement on the granting of independence, the form of government and the basis for government.

37. With regard to independence, the Adeni position was that independence should be granted immediately and that sovereignty should be transferred to a representative government. The United Kingdom policy was to grant independence not later than 1968 on a basis which commanded the widest possible support. The latter phrase could denote either the granting of independence to a democratically constituted government or the granting of independence to a government which enjoyed public support but had not been established by democratic processes. In either case, it could be seen that there was very little difference between the two sides except on the question of timing.

38. With reference to the system of government, both sides were in favour of establishing a unitary State system, and ways and means of giving effect to that principle could surely be found.

39. With regard to the basis for government, namely, a sound democratic basis and the recognition of human rights, it was difficult to understand the position of the United Kingdom, which so far had refused to ensure the enjoyment of full human rights in the Territory, although it was committed to granting independence, and no democratic government could be set up without the establishment of those rights.

40. It was thus clear that there was a large area of agreement in principle, while the area of disagreement comprised mainly questions of methods and procedures. Since the parties directly concerned were hampered by mistrust and misunderstanding of each other in their efforts to bridge the gap, it might be useful for the United Nations to help them in their negotiations.

41. The Iranian delegation therefore suggested that the General Assembly should establish a sub-committee of good offices to assist the parties to reach agreement on the ways and means of implementing paragraph 7 of resolution 1949 (XVIII), which related to the observance of human rights, and on the establishment of a representative provisional government for the whole Territory, for the purpose of drafting and negotiating constitutional changes with the administering Power.

42. Mr. HASSAN (Pakistan), referring to the statement by the Indian representative, expressed his delegation's reservations with regard to two points that representative had raised, namely, the question of freedom movements and the question whether at the time of independence the Princely States had joined India voluntarily or not.

43. Mr. BROWN (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the series of accusations made by the representative of the United Arab Republic could not be allowed to go unanswered. He wished categorically to deny, with all the strength at his command, the allegations regarding torture and ill-treatment of detainees. Those allegations were irresponsible and unfounded. An impartial and thorough investigation of similar accusations in 1963 had shown that there was no evidence of the slightest physical violence, and that position remained unchanged. The representative of the United Arab Republic had spoken of "hundreds" of detainees, whereas he himself had told the Committee at the 1532nd meeting that the figure was eighty-nine.

44. With regard to an investigation by the International Red Cross, a representative of that organization had already visited the Territory and had made no adverse report; indeed, it was his understanding that he had been completely satisfied. There could hardly be tens of thousands taking refuge in Yemen, since the total population of that country was about one million; there were, in fact, many immigrants into the Territory from Yemen, attracted by Aden's prosperity and social conditions. There was no martial law in Aden: the rule of law was still in force in Aden despite the senseless and purposeless attacks by terrorists on civilians. There were no military operations against peaceful citizens. The violence and murder in Aden were being committed by gangsters with no following among the population, not by a national liberation movement; there was no analogy with the other countries mentioned by some speakers.

45. Mr. EL KONY (United Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that adequate evidence of torture had been provided by the petitioners, reports in the international Press and the cable which he had read out to the Committee.

The petitioners had also corroborated the fact that refugees were crossing from Aden into Yemen. The United Arab Republic was proud of the support which it had given to its Arab brethren in the past,

and would continue to give such support in the future.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.