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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.4/642 and Add.1-3; A/C.4/646)

#### GENERAL DEBATE (continued)\*

1. Mr. BROWN (United Kingdom) said that his Government had for years been working to bring together a score of protected States with the Colony of Aden to form a single viable independent State in South Arabia and its aim was to grant independence to such a unified sovereign State not later than 1968. There was no genuine doubt in South Arabia that his Government would carry that policy through and there should be no doubt among the members of the Committee. His Government had made every effort to achieve its purpose by consultation and co-operation with all concerned, but certain elements from Aden State had refused to co-operate in working out the practical steps necessary to carry it through. His Government's aim had been further jeopardized by a terrorist campaign of assassinations and attacks on civilians and by the attitude of the former Aden Ministers in not only failing to condemn that terrorism but publicly supporting the externally controlled organization of the terrorist campaign. His Government was nevertheless determined to carry out its responsibilities in the Territory. There was general agreement on the aims of the United Kingdom Government's policy. There were, of course, difficulties and differences of opinion on the methods for achieving them, but the differences and difficulties that remained were those of the last stages in the process which would undoubtedly lead to independence by 1968.

\*Resumed from the 1528th meeting.

2. Less than seven years previously, the Territory had consisted of the Colony of Aden, virtually a free port but with no other strength and little territory, and a score of protected States, separate from and often hostile to one another and with customs barriers between them. Aden had a population of about a quarter of a million and a very small area, whereas the rest of the Federation had a population of about one million and 112,000 square miles. There were further contrasts, between the political sophistication and urban modernity of Aden and the traditional way of life of the peoples of the hinterland, between the thriving commercial economy of Aden and the essentially rural economy of the surrounding area, and between the system of government in Aden, which had the status of a British colony, and that in the rest of the Federation, where the United Kingdom Government, by treaty, had only limited powers, responsibility and authority. Now, after only seven years, Aden and all except four of the other States had federated and were working towards a common economy and a single political entity, for their mutual benefit and for the viability which was a prerequisite of effective independence. Aden Colony had joined the Federation in 1962 by the free vote of its Legislative Council. The Federation had not been imposed; it had resulted from a spontaneous movement, originating with the leaders of the country but with United Kingdom help and encouragement, towards greater unity in the cause of ultimate independence. In South Arabia his Government's policy had not been to divide and rule, but to unify and emancipate, and a considerable degree of success had already been achieved. Progress from a score of small States to the emergence of a new political entity on the verge of independence in so few years surely had few parallels anywhere.

3. During the past year the United Kingdom Government, in spite of many frustrations, had kept one objective constantly in view: namely, to bring all the peoples and parties of South Arabia together in order to settle the remaining constitutional questions which must be settled, by negotiation and consultation, before independence could be achieved on a basis which commanded the widest possible support and therefore offered the best possible prospect for stability and peace in the newly independent country. A visit by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for the Colonies, resulting in apparent agreement in principle on how progress should be made, had been followed by efforts to convene a constitutional conference to work out the details and, when that could not be convened, to establish a constitutional commission on which people from outside the United Kingdom would have served. Finally, a Working Party had been convened in London in August 1965 to identify the area of agreement already

reached and to set out the problems which would have to be discussed at a subsequent constitutional conference. The starting points had been common agreement by the United Kingdom Government and all concerned in South Arabia to the generally accepted principle of self-determination and independence expressed in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII) and the United Kingdom Government's declared objective of independence by 1968. The problem had been to work out concrete constitutional measures to give effect to those principles. Most of the delegations had been prepared to co-operate in the task of setting out the points which the later conference would have to discuss, a process which would not have committed anyone to any particular answer and would not have conflicted with the United Nations resolution. Two delegations, however, that led by Mr. Mackawee, then Chief Minister of Aden State, and that led by Mr. Al-Asnag, the leader of the Aden People's Socialist Party, had repeatedly insisted on proposing items for the later conference agenda in terms which prejudiced the issues involved, and had demanded the complete and unqualified acceptance, before any other discussion could take place, of every single clause of the General Assembly's resolution.

4. It was true in any circumstances, and particularly so in South Arabia, that constitutional change must be planned. It was impossible, on the basis of any general resolution, however well thought out, to go straight from one set of government machinery to an election on the basis of "one man, one vote," without knowing first what choices were to be put before the electorate and without any proposals for the form the new machinery of government was to take. Much less was it possible to sweep away all forms of established authority before any agreement on the new form of government had been reached. At the Working Party, the United Kingdom Government had therefore set out for discussion the practical points which it had considered should be on the agenda for settlement by the later conference, including such questions as whether the Head of State should be a monarch, a president or some collective authority, and with what powers; the method for appointing a Prime Minister and ministers responsible to the legislature; the nature of the legislature; the form elections should take and how the new electoral boundaries should be drawn; the relationship between the existing States and the new State, if the former continued to exist as subordinate entities; the question of whether there should be one citizenship for the whole country or separate regulations for each State or regional unit; the method for amending the constitution; the procedure for seeking the approval of the people of the country for the new constitution as recommended by the conference, either by consultation with representative elected bodies or by referendum or by a specially convened assembly; and the timing of the various stages.

5. All those and many other questions would have to be answered before South Arabia could move into a new Constitutional framework ready for independence by 1968, but in accordance with the principle of self-determination and the United Kingdom's traditional approach, they must be answered by the people of South Arabia themselves and not by the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom Government's efforts had thus been to find procedures which would enable the present leaders, and later the representatives of the people themselves, to work out together the pattern of their future. Yet at the Working Party two delegations had refused to agree that the questions placed before it by the United Kingdom Government should be accepted as the basic agenda for a subsequent conference and had refused even to discuss whether they were fitting subjects for such an agenda. Instead they had reverted again and again to their demand for unqualified acceptance of the United Nations resolution before any other decision could be taken or any other discussions held. Those efforts to prevent discussion of the arrangements for ensuring self-determination could only be regarded as the efforts of an unrepresentative minority to impose their will by silencing others with an equal right of participation in those decisions.

6. Two of the petitioners heard by the Committee had given misleading versions of the United Kingdom Government's position with regard to General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII). The most important paragraph of that resolution was operative paragraph 4 reaffirming the right of the people to self-determination and freedom from colonial rule, and that the United Kingdom Government accepted without any qualification at all. It also accepted the need for popular endorsement of any proposals by the leaders of the individual States for their association in an independent South Arabia, as implied by operative paragraph 6, but it was impossible to hold a referendum or plebiscite until there were proposals on which the people could vote. As for operative paragraph 8, which called for elections to a representative organ and a provisional government, the United Kingdom Government had no power outside Aden to impose the constitutional changes envisaged; any such changes must be based on agreement between the political leaders of the country subject to popular endorsement by agreed procedures—and that was what the United Kingdom Government was trying to achieve. With regard to operative paragraph 9, the United Kingdom Government would not necessarily oppose some form of international presence in due course, but the form and timing of any such presence must be decided by the South Arabian leaders as part of their decision on popular consultation. Operative paragraph 10 recommended that elections should be held before independence; his Government agreed that popular consultation was necessary, but its precise form must be decided by the South Arabian leaders. There was therefore little or no disagreement on the vital principles of those constitutional paragraphs once agreement between the leaders in South Arabia had been reached.

7. As for the paragraphs which did not directly concern the immediate constitutional issues, his Government's position on operative paragraph 5 was that the future of any defence facilities should be a matter for negotiation between the United Kingdom Government and the Government of the new State at the time of independence and 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 matter must be decided by the people of South Arabia through their representative government, which alone,

on independence, could speak for them. It could not be settled by the United Kingdom, or the United Nations, or on the basis of the demands of petitioners or the views expressed by members of the Sub-Committee on Aden 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. In the meantime it should not be allowed to impede constitutional development.

8. Lastly, the United Kingdom Government had made it clear at the Working Party that it could not put the recommendations on the emergency measures and military operations in operative paragraph 7 into effect as long as there was a campaign of terrorism and violence in Aden and the rest of the Federation. The United Kingdom and Federal Governments would be ready to end the emergency as soon as the campaign of violence was called off. The representatives of the Aden Ministers at the Working Party had made it clear that they could communicate with those responsible for the violence and secure their agreement to stopping it, but until they did so the United Kingdom and Federal Governments were responsible together for defence and for the preservation of law and order in the country. Military action by the Federal forces, sometimes with United Kingdom support, had always been in defence of the Federation against attack from outside or in defence of legal authority against violence and subversion, also instigated from outside. The campaign of violence carried out by the so-called National Liberation Front had nothing to do with liberation, independence or self-determination, but was expressly designed to obstruct self-determination by destroying the conditions in which the Federation could move peacefully forward to independence. In a pamphlet issued in Cairo in May 1965, that organization had declared that the self-determination called for in resolution 1949 (XVIII) was unnecessary since the revolution in progress throughout South Arabia spoke for itself and since the National Front was the sole representative of the peoples of South Arabia. That was the language of terrorism and dictatorship.

9. In its attitude at the Working Party and to the United Nations resolution, the United Kingdom Government had been guided throughout by practical considerations on how constitutional advance could be achieved. There had been a large measure of agreement in principle on most of the purely constitutional issues, but the United Kingdom's efforts had been frustrated by two delegations partially representing the people of only one State among seventeen members of the Federation, who had insisted that their view alone should prevail and that two largely non-constitutional matters—the military base and the state of emergency—must be dealt with first.

10. On 25 September the provisions of the Aden State Constitution affecting the legislature and the Aden Council of Ministers had been temporarily suspended and the High Commissioner had assumed direct control over Aden State. That measure in no way affected the Federal Constitution or any part of South Arabia outside Aden State, nor did it affect other provisions of the Aden Constitution such as those protecting basic human rights. It must be seen against

the serious deterioration of the internal security situation. The so-called National Liberation Front, which was responsible for the campaign of mounting terrorism, was not a spontaneous movement supported by the people of the Territory. It was not a national liberation movement; it was stimulated, organized and financed from outside. Its foreign sponsors had embarked on a policy of subversion and intervention in South Arabia designed to obstruct constitutional progress and to encourage enmity and violence in order to impose a course of events which they thought would promote their own policies. Some of the evidence for this had been quoted elsewhere by his delegation and was to be found in paragraphs 213–225 of the Special Committee's latest report (A/6000/Rev.1, chap. VI). That campaign was the antithesis of what his Government had been trying to achieve and the antithesis of self-determination. Yet Mr. Mackawee, then Chief Minister of Aden State, had actually called for recognition of the terrorist National Liberation Front as a political party and had refused to co-operate in carrying out the security measures made necessary by its campaign of terrorism. That attitude on the part of the Aden Ministers and their refusal to co-operate in finding means of constitutional progress had compelled the United Kingdom Government to suspend them. In doing so, his Government had had one objective—that of re-establishing conditions in which progress towards independence could be continued, to restore confidence and to renew the search for a political solution.

11. During the past few days the Committee had heard petitioners who had sought to show that they represented not only Aden State but also the people of the whole country, including the off-shore islands. Their evidence on that point scarcely bore out their claims; they had contradicted each other and even themselves. He proposed to refer to some of their allegations and to show what a misleading picture in every important respect the Committee was likely to get if it accepted uncritically their version of United Kingdom policies and of events in the Territory.

12. On the purely constitutional issue, according to the petitioners, the United Kingdom Government was planning to impose a false and diluted independence: in fact, his Government was seeking to grant independence founded on the widest possible measure of agreement through consultation and conference with all sections of the population. The petitioners claimed that the United Kingdom Government was seeking to perpetuate the division of the Territory: in fact, the United Kingdom Government had repeatedly declared its hope and aim of bringing all parts of Aden and the Protectorate together as a unified independent State. According to the petitioners, the Federation was a United Kingdom device for securing continued United Kingdom influence and control: in fact, the United Kingdom Government was not committed to any particular constitution for South Arabia and was seeking to find the solution commanding the greatest measure of support among the South Arabian peoples themselves. The petitioners had held the United Kingdom Government responsible for violence and terrorism: in fact, the United Kingdom Government had been working persistently to achieve a peaceful transfer of sovereignty to the South Arabian people by

consultation and discussion, as it had so often done elsewhere throughout the world. The petitioners had represented military operations as being directed indiscriminately against the people of South Arabia; in fact, the military operations which had taken place had been in response to armed rebellion which could not be countered by other than military means, in South Arabia or anywhere else. There had been no indiscriminate bombing of villages, no firing on unarmed civilians, and the inevitable disruption and hardship to the civilian population had been kept to the barest minimum. The petitioners had made allegations about brutality and torture but had produced no evidence in support of those allegations, which his delegation categorically denied. It had been claimed that thousands of people had been arrested and held without trial; the total number of detainees held under the emergency regulations on the day of the suspension of the Aden Constitution in the entire Territory had amounted to fifty-two, and on 18 October it had been eighty-nine. Not one of them was held just because of his political views; they were detained solely on the strongest evidence of complicity in actual acts of violence. They were questioned in accordance with the international rules for interrogation; their cases were reviewed regularly and releases made whenever possible.

13. There had been much wild talk about the United Kingdom military presence in South Arabia. It had been said that there were some 50,000 United Kingdom troops there; in fact, the total number of United Kingdom forces throughout the Federation amounted to about 13,000. There were no military bases on the islands and none were being built there. The only so-called base in the Federation outside Aden was a small air staging post at Riyan in the Eastern Protectorate.

14. With regard to the allegation that the United Kingdom had failed to finance development and social progress in the Protectorate, he pointed out that the United Kingdom contribution for that purpose amounted to about \$30 million a year. The Territory had a first-class central hospital with rural dispensaries and sub-hospitals, primary, intermediate and secondary schools, a network of airports, fishery, agricultural and irrigation schemes and radio and television services. The Abyan cotton scheme and others like it had brought widespread increased prosperity.

15. With regard to the position of the Federal Government, members would recall the message addressed to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Federation (A/C.4/646) in which the latter had expressed the Federal Government's determination to place before all the States of South Arabia its proposals for an improved liberal constitution based upon the principles of democracy and designed to guarantee full representation of the people's interest, human freedoms and justice for everyone, in a manner fully consistent with United Nations principles. Furthermore, on 26 September 1965 the Federal Government had issued a statement in which it had said, *inter alia*, that its aim was to shake off colonialism and achieve independence by 1968, and that it was determined to ensure that the voice of the people should be heard in its

councils. It intended to place before all the States of South Arabia proposals for a new and liberal constitution, based on democratic principles, which would guarantee fair representation to the people. It had said that to assist it in that task it had obtained the services of expert constitutional advisers, who had already begun to consider what proposals to lay before the Federal Government and the State authorities; and that in considering the proposals of those experts, the Federal Government would of course bear in mind, as far as was suitable to conditions in South Arabia, the recommendations of the United Nations a great institution which it fully supported. The statement went on to say that the Federal Government was already taking steps to build closer links with every Arab country and that ministerial visits would be made to Arab capitals in the near future. It had extended its sympathy to the people of Aden in their present difficulties and pledged itself to ensure that the future of that city would be one of freedom, prosperity and happiness, and that life there would return to normal as quickly as possible. It had said that it intended to make every effort to ensure that the sons of the South received the training they needed to assume posts of the highest responsibility. Lastly, it had said that it would not be diverted from its holy duty to lead the people of South Arabia to their destiny as a free and prosperous people.

16. The United Kingdom Government was determined to use every means at its disposal to create the conditions in which it would be possible to carry out its declared policy of independence by 1968 at the latest. It was prepared to resume talks at any time in preparation for an independence conference. With regard to the question of the state of emergency, his Government had given a firm undertaking to consider any proposals consistent with the safety of the civilian and service population both Arab and British, and the security of the base. The United Kingdom Government was actively encouraging the liberalization of the various constitutions of the Territory and had pressed for a more representative franchise in Aden State itself. It had welcomed the modernization of their constitutions being undertaken by the Qu'aiti, Kathiri and Federal Governments. All those efforts were part of his Government's determination to persevere in its aim to establish, by consultation and negotiation, a sufficiently wide area of agreement among all the peoples and parties concerned on the practical steps required for putting its pledge of independence into effect on a sound basis of consent.

17. The United Kingdom Government, which had a responsibility towards all the people, intended to hold to that course and not to allow events to be guided by sectional interests, directed from outside, with no such responsibility and no concern save for their own advantage. The issue for the Committee was straightforward: it could simply condemn the colonial Power, regardless of its policies and actions, merely because it was a colonial Power; or it could uphold the principles it had so often proclaimed by condemning the obstruction of self-determination, by denouncing violence and by encouraging all concerned to come together at a representative conference to settle their differences and then go forward in unity to independence.

18. Mr. ADRA (Lebanon) said that the reports before the Committee were of great value, as was also the testimony of the petitioners. Particularly striking among recent events in South Arabia were the dismissal of the Aden Chief Minister, just because it failed to serve the colonial purposes for which it had been intended. Those acts had taken place at a time when the United Kingdom was promising to do everything to help prepare the country for full independence by 1968, at the latest. The fact was that the independence which the United Kingdom was offering the Territory had terms attached to it which were unacceptable to the people of the Territory.

19. At the 1343rd plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon had deplored the suspension of the Aden Constitution, an action which ran directly counter to the recommendations in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII) in that it abolished constitutional government and abrogated the political and legal rights of the people of Aden. He had said that the Lebanese delegation would continue to give full support 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 in its efforts to put an end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

20. Mr. MALECELA (United Republic of Tanzania), referring to the United Kingdom representative's mention of terrorism in Aden and of instigation from outside the country, recalled that in the past the United Kingdom had used the word "terrorism" to describe any attempts by colonial peoples to obtain their rights. Kenya and Cyprus had been cases in point and the United Kingdom had even accused the Africans in Southern Rhodesia of terrorism. With regard to encouragement from outside the country, it was legitimate for peoples to be assisted in the attainment of their rights to self-determination and independence.

21. The United Kingdom representative had spoken of the need for a truly representative government to be set up in Aden. Yet the suspension of the Constitution and the imprisonment of political leaders made it impossible for the wishes of the people of Aden to be expressed.

22. The United Kingdom representative had denied accusations of indiscriminate bombing by the United Kingdom Air Force. At any rate, the United Kingdom delegation could hardly deny the incident which had occurred earlier in the year—as reported in The Times of London—in which a United Kingdom soldier had shot an innocent person in the street.

23. With regard to social and economic development, he would say from Tanzania's own experience that whatever development projects might have been carried out by the colonial Power, development could be greatly speeded once a people became independent. Even if that were not the case, any colonial people would prefer to be free in poverty than to remain in slavery.

24. He was grateful for the lucid and informative statements made by the Aden leaders who had appeared as petitioners before the Committee. There were strong cultural ties between the people of

South Arabia and those of Tanzania and it was Tanzania's desire to strengthen those ties when Aden regained independence. The Committee must take action with a view to a peaceful solution in Aden, particularly in view of the confidence which the Aden leaders had expressed in the United Nations. In making its recommendations, the Committee should be guided by the information given by the petitioners.

25. As he had said in the Special Committee, the United Kingdom Government should be urged to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations without delay, particularly General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1949 (XVIII), and it was to be hoped that the United Kingdom Government could be induced to act so that the people of South Arabia would be able to enjoy the fruits of their labour and devote all their efforts to national reconstruction and progress. The United Kingdom had a good record in giving independence to colonial peoples; if it was prepared to grant independence to Aden in 1968, it might be asked why it could not grant independence at a date agreeable to the people of Aden. The petitioners had said that independence could be granted in a year's time, and that reasonable request should be carefully considered by the United Kingdom Government.

26. The Aden leaders had demanded the following measures among others; the termination of the state of emergency in Aden; the establishment of an independent judiciary; the holding of national elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage, with a United Nations presence before and during the elections; the emergence early in 1967 of a unified strong independent State of Aden, not fragmented into a number of feudal sheikhdoms; and the liquidation of the military base in Aden. In connexion with the base, the Committee should heed the declarations of the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Cairo in 1964. The military usefulness of the base had been challenged by The Times of London and it was his delegation's hope that the United Kingdom Government would review its stand on the issue.

27. The United Republic of Tanzania upheld the principle of universal adult suffrage and did not understand why what was good for the Western democracies was not considered to be good for colonial peoples. In the elections held in October 1964, only some 8,000 out of a population of a quarter of a million had been registered as voters.

28. His delegation suggested that the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Aden should co-operate with the representatives of the people in bringing about an atmosphere conducive to the holding of free national democratic elections to pave the way for independence. The Committee should also appeal to the leaders of the various political parties to unite in solidarity and counter the tactics of "divide and rule". That would help towards the establishment of a unitary form of government for the whole area, a concept with which the petitioners had expressed their agreement. His delegation was convinced that the people of the Territory would rally round strong popular political leadership and thus avoid the dangers of political fragmentation.

29. The petitioners had made a number of specific demands for action by the United Kingdom Government. In that light the general statement of the United Kingdom position just given by that country's representative had been disappointing.

30. In conclusion, his delegation urged that the United Kingdom Government should end the state of emergency in Aden as soon as possible and release all political detainees; that free and democratic national elections under adult suffrage should be held without further delay; that independence should be granted to Aden as a unified State during 1966; and that the wishes of the people expressed through their representatives in connexion with the military base in Aden should be respected by the United Kingdom Government.

31. Mr. ALAINI (Yemen) said that he would answer at a later stage certain misleading allegations made by the United Kingdom representative. The Committee should not be deceived by the efforts of the United Kingdom delegation to interpret all the facts to suit its own aims in the area.

32. Mr. BROWN (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that there were two points which he wished to make clear in connexion with the Tanzanian representative's remarks. First, to the best of his knowledge neither the United Kingdom

Government nor the United Kingdom delegation had ever accused the African population in Rhodesia of committing acts of terrorism. Secondly, it did not matter whether the violence in South Arabia was called terrorism or not; the fact remained that violence was taking place there and that it was obstructing the Territory's progress towards self-rule.

33. Mr. MALECELA (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the difficulty was one of terminology. As far as he recalled, the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations had been reported in the United Kingdom Press, upon his return from a visit to Africa, as referring to terrorism on the part of Africans in Rhodesia. It was not so long since Jomo Kenyatta had been described as a terrorist. To many people in Africa he had been a freedom-fighter, a man who stood for the independence of the people of Kenya, but he had continued to be referred to as a terrorist until the United Kingdom flag had been lowered in Kenya. It was not surprising, therefore, that some people in South Arabia were described as terrorists. The people of South Arabia wanted independence. If they could not obtain it through peaceful means, they would have to resort to other methods.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.