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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. DIABATE (Guinea) said that his delegation would like to assure the petitioners that it was aware of the alarming situation in Aden and that the Government and people of Guinea supported the people of Aden in their just demand for the restoration of their inalienable rights.

2. Thanks to the united action of the new forces that had emerged from the shackles of colonialism, the General Assembly had, on 14 December 1960, adopted the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (resolution 1514 (XV)). That Declaration had become a basic document of the United Nations and had been a source of inspiration to the oppressed peoples in their struggle for freedom and national independence. While the delegation of Guinea was happy to note that, since the adoption of the Declaration, the struggle of the people for the liquidation of colonialism had been successful in a number of countries, it noted with regret that, in spite of the Declaration and many resolutions, the colonial Powers were stubbornly trying to maintain their hold over the countries that were still dependent and, under various pretexts, were refusing to grant them independence. It was indeed sad that in the case at present under discussion it was the United Kingdom policy which provided an example of sabotage of the implementation of the Declaration and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

3. In the opinion of the Guinean delegation, the problem of Aden and the so-called Federation of South Arabia was quite clear. On the one hand, the colonialists did not wish to relinquish their domination over that rich area, which occupied a strategic position in the aggressive plans of the imperialists against the Arab world; on the other hand, the people of the Territory, strong in their unshakable faith, were yearning for freedom and independence and struggling to obtain the recognition of their legitimate rights.

4. In proclaiming the necessity of bringing colonialism, in all its forms and manifestations, to a speedy and unconditional end, resolution 1514 (XV) not only reflected the passionate desire for freedom of all peoples who were subjected to slavery and arbitrary rule, but recognized and affirmed that the denial of freedom gave rise to conflicts which constituted a threat to international peace and security. It was for that reason that the Guinean delegation was speaking out to urge that the international community should heed the appeal that the people of Aden were making through their worthy spokesmen who had appeared before the Committee. It was for that reason, too, that it supported any action designed to bring about the strict and immediate implementation of resolution 1514 (XV) and advocated the following measures: the release of all political detainees; the dispatch of a United Nations delegation to Aden; elections based on universal adult suffrage; the dispatch of a Red Cross mission to the Territory to assist the civilian population; and the immediate removal of the United Kingdom military bases.

5. While his Government considered that the solution of the problem lay with the people of Aden, it felt that the military bases should be dismantled because they constituted a threat to the inalienable rights of the people.

6. Mr. AZIMOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his country had supported and continued to support the just demands of the people of Aden and South Arabia that they should rule their own country and should themselves decide the question of its future status and form of government on the basis of the right to self-determination established by the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. For that reason his country had supported General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), which called upon the administering Power to repeal all laws restricting public freedoms, to release political detainees, to allow the return of political exiles and to cease repressive action, in particular military expeditions and the bombing of villages. The resolution further called upon the administering Power to make

the necessary constitutional changes with a view to establishing a representative organ and setting up a provisional government for the whole Territory in accordance with the wishes of the population, following general elections held on the basis of universal adult suffrage and prior to the granting of independence, the latter to be negotiated between the provisional government and the administering Power. The resolution further stated that the maintenance of the military base in Aden was prejudicial to the security of the region and that its early removal was desirable.

7. The majority of political leaders and organizations in Aden and South Arabia had supported that resolution and the Sub-Committee on Aden had rightly considered that the measures recommended constituted the minimum demands of the people and should be implemented. At the time the resolution had been adopted, the United Kingdom had been on the eve of elections and the leaders of the Labour Party, not then in power, had pretended to sympathize with the liberation movements and had created the impression that if their party came to power they would hasten the process of decolonization in Aden. Their attitude had influenced the formulation of the General Assembly's recommendations, which had not included a categorical demand for the immediate removal of the military base, which constituted one of the greatest obstacles in the way of the people of the Territory in their fight for freedom and independence.

8. The administering Power, however, had not put a single one of the General Assembly's recommendations concerning Aden into effect; rather had it used force against the people in order to maintain and strengthen its colonial domination over the Territory, to crush the will of the people and to deprive the national liberation movement of leadership. It had imposed a state of emergency, allegedly to maintain law and order; arrested and detained thousands of patriots without trial; and intensified its punitive expeditions against the people. Realizing that violent measures alone were not enough, the administering Power had adopted various political measures designed to mislead the people of Aden and world public opinion. In 1964, for example, it had introduced a new Constitution which, instead of granting more rights to the people, had deprived the vast majority of the population of the right to vote. Even the Conservative Press in the United Kingdom had described the subsequent elections as a "farce". The United Kingdom had then proposed the convening of a constitutional conference and, later, the establishment of a Royal commission to work out a new constitution for a so-called unitary State. As the reports (A/5800/Rev.1, chap. VI; A/6000/Rev.1, chap. VI) 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 and its Sub-Committee on Aden had shown, all such constitutional measures had been proposed with the aim of imposing on the people of the Territory a régime favourable to the United Kingdom's own interests. When its efforts to introduce such constitutional measures had failed, the United Kingdom had ceased to play at democracy; it had suspended the Constitution, removed the Chief Minister of Aden and his Cabinet, dismissed the Aden Legislative

Council and handed all power to the United Kingdom High Commissioner.

9. The United Kingdom representative to the Special Committee had claimed that the aims of his Government were identical with those of the Special Committee in the matter of granting independence to Aden on the basis of self-determination; but at its last meeting with the representatives of the different political parties in South Arabia, at the Working Party convened in London to draw up an agenda for a constitutional conference, the United Kingdom Government's actions had proved quite the contrary. The United Kingdom had openly stated that it could not agree to the implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), on the pretext that the people of the Territory were backward and not ready for democracy. The United Kingdom had now appointed a new commission, consisting of its own constitutional experts, to draw up a new constitution for the Territory. If there had still been any doubts about the genuine intentions of the administering Power, recent events would have demonstrated that all the constitutional manoeuvres of the United Kingdom Government had only been a pretext to conceal its imperialist infringement of the national sovereignty of the Arab peoples. For many decades the imperialists had pursued a policy of "divide and rule" and "gunboat diplomacy" in the Middle East and they had shown that they had no intention of abandoning those methods.

10. In the eyes of the whole world, the Labour Government had used the same methods to suppress the will of the people as had the Conservative Government before it. The United Kingdom Prime Minister's statement to the effect that the decision to suspend the Aden Constitution had been forced upon him and that it had nothing to do with his Government's decision to grant independence by 1968 was unconvincing. Independence granted on the United Kingdom's terms would be rejected by all the people of South Arabia and by freedom-loving people throughout the world. The people of South Arabia demanded genuine independence; they demanded that power should be handed over, not to puppets, but to the people and their lawful representatives elected in accordance with the United Nations resolution. Yet the United Kingdom Secretary of State for the Colonies had stated that his Government did not intend to comply with the United Nations resolution on Aden.

11. It was not difficult to see the reasons for the United Kingdom Government's position. The policies of the Labour Government and those of the Conservatives were determined by the same factors: the interests of United Kingdom monopolies and the military and strategic significance of the region for United Kingdom imperialism. Oil was one of the basic forces underlying the United Kingdom policies in the Middle East. There was no greedier or more criminal form of imperialism than that of the gigantic petroleum monopolies with their aggressive search for new resources, their desire to secure exclusive transport, export and refining rights, and their close ties with Governments. Oil concessions in the countries of the Persian Gulf alone constituted a veritable gold mine for the petroleum business. At the end of 1960

capital investment in petroleum extraction in the whole of the Middle East had amounted to a total of \$1,800 million. In the ten years from 1951 to 1960 the monopolists had received profits amounting to \$8,700 million from petroleum extraction in that region. That was four and a half times more than all the capital invested in the petroleum extraction industry of the Middle East. To maintain and increase those profits was the sole objective of everything that the United Kingdom and its allies were doing in that part of the world. It was one of the main reasons for the stubborn refusal of the United Kingdom to relinquish its possessions in South Arabia.

12. Another reason underlying the United Kingdom policy in South Arabia was the military and strategic position of Aden. In that connexion, the statement made by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on 16 December 1964 was very revealing: he had said that he wished to make it clear that the United Kingdom could not abandon its role in connexion with that part of the world sometimes called "East of Suez" and that in order to fulfil that role it needed most, if not all, of the bases it now possessed.

13. After the departure of the last United Kingdom soldier from the Suez Canal and the bases in Kenya, Aden had become the most important link in the chain of United Kingdom bases, a stronghold of United Kingdom colonialists in the struggle against the national liberation movement in the Middle East. Moreover, the Aden military base was used not only in the struggle against the peoples of South Arabia but also for aggression against independent neighbouring States, in particular the Yemen Arab Republic.

14. The Soviet Union delegation considered that the essence of the problem was sufficiently clear to everyone. The Committee was dealing with a question that involved a typically colonial policy. In his statement to the Committee at the previous meeting, the United Kingdom representative had once again confirmed the accurate and irrefutable nature of that conclusion. The United Kingdom policy was resolutely condemned by world opinion, which was reflected in the well-known Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The right of the people of Aden and South Arabia to self-determination and freedom from colonial rule was also confirmed in operative paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII).

15. In view of the time that had elapsed since the adoption of that resolution and the fact that the people of Aden and South Arabia had not advanced along the path towards independence, it was essential that the Committee should recommend the General Assembly to adopt a stronger resolution that would be in keeping with the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territory. His delegation considered that the United Nations should declare clearly that it recognized the legality and justice of the struggle of the people of that region for freedom and independence and called on all States to give them moral and other support in their struggle; that it condemned the policy of oppression and terrorism pursued by the colonial Power against the people of the Territory and demanded an immediate end to that policy; that it demanded the withdrawal from Aden and other parts of South

Arabia of United Kingdom troops and arms and the immediate and complete liquidation of the military bases in Aden and the off-shore islands; and that the United Kingdom Government should implement the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and other United Nations decisions on the question of Aden unconditionally and without delay.

16. The Soviet Union delegation considered that the Committee should request the Security Council to consider the question of Aden with a view to taking the necessary action provided for in the United Nations Charter in order to secure the implementation of the United Nations decisions on Aden.

17. Mr. MARRACHE (Syria) said that it was clear from the description of the situation in South Arabia given by the petitioners representing the various patriotic liberation movements that the United Kingdom Government remained deaf to the people's demands and was resorting to increasingly cruel measures of repression. The statement of the United Kingdom representative at the previous meeting had confirmed his delegation in the view that the United Kingdom was not interested in granting real independence to South Arabia and was determined to preserve its rule in the region in one form or another. The accession of a colony or protectorate to independence could only mean the transfer of sovereignty to the people of the country. The United Kingdom Government had refused to give any undertaking to carry out such a transfer of powers.

18. The United Kingdom representative had devoted much attention to formal and constitutional questions which had nothing to do with the genuine transfer of sovereignty to a people. For example, by what miracle could agents of the colonial authority, as most of the sultans and sheikhs were, suddenly become representatives of the popular will and valid negotiators on behalf of the people? Again, if the United Kingdom Government eliminated all popular elements with which it found itself in conflict, to whom was sovereignty to be transferred when the time came for independence? Thirdly, if the United Kingdom Government insisted on eliminating such popular elements, did not that mean that the United Kingdom Government wished to grant South Arabia only the appearance of independence? Finally, did the existence of a military base and at least 15,000 armed soldiers create a favourable atmosphere for the free expression of the popular will? The United Kingdom Government had refused to give any undertaking to evacuate the base. In those circumstances, the United Kingdom Government's professed concern to find adequate forms for the expression of the popular will was revealed as pure hypocrisy.

19. Moreover, throughout the transitional period preceding accession to so-called independence, the United Kingdom Government was insisting on maintaining constitutional arrangements which left all ultimate power in the hands of the United Kingdom High Commissioner. Under those conditions, it was hard to see how the popular will could even begin to find expression.

20. Thus it was clear that the real problem was the unwillingness of the United Kingdom Government to recognize any independent popular will in South Arabia. The United Kingdom Government was anxious to perpetuate a colonial situation in South Arabia; indeed, the Soviet Union representative had already drawn attention to the economic reasons for that policy.

21. The result of the United Kingdom's policy was an increasingly explosive situation in South Arabia. The aspirations of the people of South Arabia to freedom could not be suppressed and all the Arab countries, without exception, were united behind the struggle for the liberation of all Arab lands.

22. The General Assembly had a serious responsibility in the light of the United Nations Charter and its own earlier resolutions to intervene immediately and remedy the situation in South Arabia. Such intervention would have the aim of ensuring the requisite conditions for the free expression of the popular will and for the establishment of an independent government as soon as possible. The first step should be the abolition of emergency measures restricting public freedom. Next, all political prisoners and detainees should be freed and all measures enacted against persons by reason of their political activities, including deportation orders, should be rescinded. Armed raids and other terrorist action against the people should be halted. The Aden base should be immediately dismantled and the occupation forces withdrawn from the whole of the territory of South Arabia. The United Kingdom Government's refusal to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions and to allow the people to exercise their right to self-determination and independence should be condemned, as should also the barbaric repressive measures used against the people. The United Kingdom Government should be requested to enable the people to exercise their right of self-determination through a popular consultation on the basis of universal adult suffrage at the earliest possible date, and in circumstances allowing free political activity; such consultation should be supervised by the United Nations and the League of Arab States and be based on the unity of the territory of South Arabia. The United Kingdom Government should be requested to transfer full sovereignty to the Government issuing from such elections. All the measures to which he had referred should be put into effect in consultation with and under the supervision of the United Nations and the Arab League. An appeal should be addressed to all States Members of the United Nations to give moral and material support to the patriotic movements struggling for self-determination and independence

for the South Arabian people, and international relief organizations should be asked to assist the refugees and those wounded as a result of acts of aggression against the people of South Arabia. All Member States should be urged to refrain from recognizing any Government of South Arabia not issuing from elections based on universal suffrage throughout the country. Finally, the General Assembly should decide to keep the question of South Arabia on its agenda and provide for possible recourse to the Security Council.

23. The Syrian delegation would co-operate with other delegations in seeking means of enabling the people of South Arabia to decide their own destiny. He wished to express his gratitude to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for his statement at the previous meeting expressing full support for the cause of the people of South Arabia, and to thank all other countries for their co-operation in the effort to secure freedom and independence for the Territory.

24. Mr. CARRANCO AVILA (Mexico) said that it was a happy circumstance that, at the present day, when a people was struggling for its fundamental rights it could count on the support of a majority of the States of the world. Moreover, it could base its action on the principles of the Charter and on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and could avoid entering into arrangements which served the interests of others and not its own interests. The task of the United Nations was to find the best road to a just and peaceful solution of colonial problems. His delegation considered, furthermore, that political power should be used to ensure the well-being of the whole people and the attainment of full democracy.

25. In the case before the Committee, the United Kingdom had declared its intention of establishing a unitary State in South Arabia, not later than 1968, based on solid democratic foundations and the recognition of human rights. For his delegation, a basic principle was that the citizens of South Arabia alone had the right to decide the future of the whole Territory. Moreover, no undemocratic formula would provide a satisfactory solution. If a United Nations presence to safeguard the principles of democracy seemed desirable before and during the general elections, as requested in General Assembly resolution 1949 (XVIII), his delegation would be sympathetic towards that idea. Mexico considered also that it was for the people of Southern Arabia to decide what was most in conformity with their interests with regard to the security and defence of their country.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.