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President: Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).

AGENDA ITEM 7

**Consideration of the grave situation in Tunisia
obtaining since 19 July 1961 (*continued*)**

1. Mr. KIZIA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): May I begin by associating the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR with the congratulations extended to you on the occasion of your election to the post of President of the special session of the General Assembly.
2. This special session has been convened as a matter of urgency in order to consider the dangerous situation that has arisen as a result of French aggression against Tunisia. The Ukrainian SSR was among the States which associated themselves with the request by Asian, African and other States for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly.
3. This is not the first time that the General Assembly and the Security Council have had to examine situations arising out of acts of aggression by France: the United Nations has time and again considered the question of the predatory war waged by France in Algeria; the agenda has included the question of the aggression against Egypt committed by France with the support of other imperialist States, and now includes French aggression in Tunisia. French colonialism has committed a new crime, staining with blood the streets of the peaceful Tunisian town of Bizerta.
4. Many speakers have dwelt on the antecedents to the tragic events at Bizerta. These are quite instructive, since they show the cynicism with which the imperialists and colonialists trample on the rights of peoples who are seeking to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism in their countries.
5. The French armed aggression against Tunisia in the Bizerta area is the continuation of France's colonial policy towards Tunisia over many decades. In 1956, after long years of struggle, the Tunisian people obtained from France the formal recognition of the independence of its country. Tunisia was admitted to membership in the United Nations, but French troops remained on Tunisian soil in occupation of part of the territory and the military base of Bizerta.
6. The Tunisian Government has taken all the steps open to it in order to achieve a peaceful settlement with France over the question of the withdrawal of French

troops from Tunisian territory and the liquidation of the French military base at Bizerta, retained by the French Government, after the proclamation of the independence of the Tunisian Republic, without any legal grounds and against the clearly expressed will of the Tunisian Government and people. The French Government has, however, always refused to comply with Tunisia's just request, and is continuing in that refusal now.

7. As is known, twelve days before the bloodshed at Bizerta, President Habib Bourgiba sent a personal message to General de Gaulle again asking France to recognize officially the principle of the evacuation of the Bizerta base and to open negotiations concerning the details of this evacuation. But no reply was returned to this message.

8. The French Government not only turned a deaf ear to the Tunisian request for the liquidation of the military base at Bizerta, but also began to increase and strengthen the military potential of this base. France then committed open military aggression in the Bizerta area, inflicting upon Tunisia heavy human losses and injury—more than 800 killed and 1,500 wounded—and considerable damage. In the Bizerta area the French parachutists and the notorious units of the so-called Foreign Legion treated with brutality the wholly innocent population, against whom tanks, aircraft and napalm bombs were used. These acts of the French colonialists provoked a wave of indignation throughout the world.

9. The Security Council, summoned as a matter of urgency, discussed Tunisia's complaint concerning French aggression and adopted a decision obliging France to cease fire and to withdraw its armed forces to their original positions. The fighting stopped in the days that followed, but tension has remained. The French troops still hold the positions they seized as a result of aggression, and their acts of provocation continue.

10. As was reported in the letters dated 2, 4, 7, 9 and 13 August 1961¹ from the Tunisian representative addressed to the President of the Security Council, the French occupation forces put up a network of barbed wire entanglements in the city of Bizerta making it impossible for Tunisian citizens to circulate freely within the limits of their own territory; the French air force continues to bomb individual areas in Tunisia; and with a view to organizing a subversive campaign against Tunisia, the French forces have established a radio transmitting station at Bizerta which broadcasts in French.

11. These are but some of the numerous facts quoted in the communications referred to above, but they are

¹ *Official Records of the Security Council, Sixteenth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1961*, documents S/4915, S/4918, S/4920, S/4922 and S/4924 respectively.

enough to show that the French forces at Bizerta behave like occupiers in a conquered country.

12. Thus, the threatening nature of the situation that arose in Tunisia has not been eliminated. Moreover, next to Tunisia, the French colonial forces are waging war on the Algerian people—which further increases tension in this area.

13. The popular masses in Tunisia and other North African countries have learnt a very important lesson from the events at Bizerta: they have experienced the full extent of the deception and hypocrisy in the promises made by the colonialists. A French journalist, Madeleine Riffaud, in one of her dispatches quotes the following words said to her by a Tunisian worker:

“We had many illusions, but now we know the meaning of decolonization after the manner of de Gaulle: bombing, casualties . . . Yet the only thing we were demanding was that our rights should be respected.”

14. The events at Bizerta have once again revealed to the Tunisian people and to the whole world the true character of the NATO military bloc. They have demonstrated yet again that one of the most important aims of the aggressive NATO group, which masquerades under the banner of the “defence” of the capitalist world from the actually non-existent “communist threat”, is the utilization of the total military strength of the colonialists for the purpose of maintaining and consolidating their colonial positions in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

15. We think that here, in the General Assembly, a clear indication must be given of the position which the colonial Powers adopted in the Security Council. Both in the Security Council and outside it the NATO countries tried to impose upon Tunisia negotiations that would consolidate the presence of French armed forces in Tunisian territory. The Security Council proved unable to discharge its obligations under the United Nations Charter, since considerations deriving from NATO membership carried the day over the need to condemn French aggression in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter.

16. It is highly significant that the United States and the other colonial Powers opposed the convening of this special session at which, it had been proposed, Tunisia's complaint concerning French aggression was to be considered. Such behaviour on their part clearly shows that, although they pay lip-service to the liberation of peoples from colonial rule, in actual fact they nurture hopes of retaining their influence, bases and various other privileges in the newly liberated countries.

17. Lacking all lawful rights for continuing the occupation of the Bizerta area, the French Government has been and is striving to justify the presence of its forces in Bizerta by claiming, in particular, that the base is necessary for the security both of France and of its Western allies.

18. During the meeting between President Habib Bourguiba and General de Gaulle at Rambouillet in February 1961, the French side put forward the following somewhat odd argument in favour of retaining the Bizerta base. General de Gaulle said:

“In the prevailing international situation this problem should not be regarded solely within the framework of the Franco-Tunisian relations . . .”

In the French President's opinion, Bizerta occupies a strategic position in the Mediterranean which is of great importance for the so-called “free world”.

19. Such arguments are dangerous to the cause of peace. Aggression remains aggression, irrespective of whether it has been committed by France alone without the knowledge of the other members of NATO, or with their blessing. The colonialists' argument that they need Bizerta and that this is why they launched an armed attack on a sovereign State is reminiscent of the reasoning of the wolf who, in the well-known fable, explained to the lamb: “I want to eat, and that is enough to make you guilty”.

20. In connexion with General de Gaulle's statement to which I have just referred, may I now quote the following statement made by Mr. Habib Bourguiba, the President of Tunisia:

“In justification of the stay of the French in Bizerta, references are made to commitments into which France has entered in the international arena. But these commitments do not involve Tunisia in any way, especially since they were entered into without our consent. Today all the countries that have achieved their independence are demanding the return of bases . . .”

21. Coming to the question of whether or not NATO is privy to the French aggression against Tunisia, may I quote statements by two Frenchmen—General J. Callies and Mr. Pergent, a military commentator—who have spoken of something concerning which NATO's principal ringleaders prefer to keep quiet, namely the fact that the French military base at Bizerta is a NATO bastion and that the French colonialists are acting in the capacity of the task force of the militarists in NATO whose nucleus, as is known, consists of colonial Powers.

22. Thus, General Callies has frankly stated in the *Revue militaire générale*, a NATO journal, that, after the loss of the positions in the Near East, NATO now disposes in the Mediterranean of “only two superbly equipped naval bases . . . Bizerta and Mers-el-Kebir . . .”. The General goes on to say that North Africa is readily accessible for the supply of equipment from the USA across the Atlantic. It has a highly developed network of railways and motor roads as well as airfields. Large stockpiles of war materials can be accumulated here in well-dispersed dumps. He stresses that the immensely rich oil deposits of the Sahara turn North Africa into a main base for the supply of fuel to NATO forces. Squadrons of aircraft and guided missile units can be serviced here. North Africa will ensure the free “export of the mineral resources of black Africa”. That is why, General Callies concludes, the withdrawal of France from North Africa would be extremely dangerous not only for Europe but also for the United States. He goes on, and here I quote: “The friends and allies of France are obliged to help it with all the forces and means at their disposal”. This is General Callies' conclusion. He proposes that all the strategic means of attack—the air force and the guided missiles—should be stationed exclusively in North Africa; he also calls for the concentration there of NATO's main reserves.

23. In point of fact, the NATO militarists have spared no resources in order to turn Bizerta and Mers-el-Kebir into bastions for an atomic war. The French military commentator Mr. Pergent wrote the following about these fortresses:

"The Bizerta naval base . . . has recently received supplementary equipment adapted to the requirements of an atomic war. The NATO Command has allocated the necessary funds. This base, which is at the north-eastern tip of the continent of Africa and projects far out into the Mediterranean in this area, makes it possible to control the Tunisian straits, used by 50 million tons of shipping each year."

24. One can well understand why France's NATO allies are trying to foist upon Tunisia protracted talks the ultimate purpose of which would be the retention of Bizerta by France, and why they stubbornly resisted a discussion of the question of French aggression against Tunisia in the General Assembly. Once again—as has happened in similar cases in the past whenever any colonial Power tried to suppress the national liberation movement, be it in Algeria, the Congo, Kuwait, Angola, or South West Africa—the other colonial Powers and fellow-members of NATO have hastened to the rescue.

25. In the light of current events, it is becoming ever clearer why the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the other colonial Powers found it impossible to approve the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, which was adopted on 14 December 1960 by an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

26. This is the Declaration [*resolution 1514 (XV)*] which proclaimed that "All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected".

27. French aggression against Tunisia has shown the danger which is inherent in the military bases set up by the imperialists in foreign territory. In the era of the disintegration of colonialism, the imperialists utilize military bases which they have set up in Asian, African and Latin American territory, as strong-points for suppressing the national liberation movement of peoples, maintaining by force their influence in these parts of the world, and exerting crude pressure on the economically under-developed independent States.

28. France, whose acts of aggression against Tunisia are the subject of discussion at this session of the General Assembly, has imposed upon a number of African States one-sided military agreements concerning bases. The role assigned to these bases by French colonialist circles can be assessed from the views of the French weekly *Aux Ecoutes*, which has stated the following:

"Our air and naval bases in Africa must be saved. For us there is but one imperative need: to retain at all costs the air and naval bases at Dakar, Diego-Suarez, Bizerta and Mers-el-Kebir—not forgetting also Djibouti—which remain the only signs of our might, the only reliable strong-points for our strategy outside the metropolitan territory."

29. United States imperialism, which has become the main bulwark of the decayed colonial system, is a most active champion of the forcible retention or creation of military bases in the colonies and the under-developed countries. The current system of United States military bases encompasses many countries and territories in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

30. To this day, a considerable number of military bases belonging to the United Kingdom remain in Asia and Africa. Forced to consent to the granting of inde-

pendence to a number of former British colonies, the United Kingdom colonialists have none the less been able to keep many military bases in their hands. The presence of United Kingdom regular forces in these bases is explained away by the need to ensure United Kingdom "military presence for maintaining stability in the politically unstable areas" or, in other words, for defending the United Kingdom positions in a number of Asian and African countries, the peoples of which are daily intensifying their struggle against the colonialists.

31. The other colonial Powers, too, seek to retain military bases in Africa and Asia. The danger to which the countries that have won their independence are exposed through the continued presence of colonialist-held military bases in their territories or in neighbouring States has been convincingly illustrated by the example of imperialist aggression in the Congo. As is known, the Belgian colonialists used, for purposes of aggression in the Republic of the Congo, the three major military bases of Kamina, Kitona and Banana. The Belgian troops stationed at these bases formed the main force in the struggle against the lawful Government of the Republic of the Congo.

32. It is common knowledge that the United States continues to retain the naval base at Guantanamo, in Cuban territory.

33. The danger presented by bases established by the imperialist Powers in the territory of other States is brought out in the series of secret CENTO documents made public by TASS on 18 August 1961. These documents contain CENTO's plans providing for atomic attacks on a number of peaceable States and the creation of atomic zones of death in the territories of the member countries themselves.

34. Since some of the States belonging to the aggressive CENTO group are situated near the frontiers of the Ukrainian SSR, our Republic, naturally, cannot remain indifferent to such plans. The Ukrainian people's mind cannot be set at rest by the unsubstantiated and wholly unconfirmed denials of the existence of these plans that have been made here by the representatives of certain CENTO members. The fact that CENTO's ringleaders, having been caught red-handed, seek to escape responsibility for the criminal plot against mankind does not, of course, alter the substance of the matter.

35. Although the published documents relate mainly to CENTO, it is known that similar aggressive plans have also been worked out by the other aggressive military blocs, including NATO.

36. The sinister network of bases in which many Asian, African and Latin American countries are enmeshed deforms their normal life, paralyses their economic development and creates a constant threat to the national independence and security of peoples throughout vast areas.

37. The peoples are demanding the dismantling of the military bases. And in fact the sooner they are dismantled, the better it will be for the cause of peace. History has already passed sentence on colonialism; and no stratagems by the neo-colonialists, no attempts at using force, for example through the military bases in the Asian, African and Latin American countries, will save the decayed colonial system from its doom.

38. The Ukrainian SSR, like the other socialist countries, has never ceased its unremitting struggle against colonialism and its action in support of the efforts of

the peoples that are striving to consolidate their national independence and eliminate foreign military bases. The people and Government of Soviet Ukraine support the just demands for the immediate withdrawal of French forces from Tunisia and the termination of all French activities which violate the Tunisian Republic's sovereignty and independence.

39. During the events at Bizerta, the Tunisian people displayed to the world its valour and its readiness to make sacrifices for the sake of freedom and independence. The correspondent of *Le Monde* at Bizerta, describing the French parachutists' attack supported by aircraft and tanks, wrote: "Not a single white flag appeared". The Tunisian people, like all the peoples struggling for freedom and independence, will not go down on their knees and will not put out a white flag.

40. The Tunisian people does not stand alone in its struggle against the French colonialists. It has the support of the peoples of Asia and Africa and of progressive mankind as a whole. Hard as the French imperialists and their patrons may try, the Tunisian people, with the support and assistance of the peace-loving countries, will be victorious and will rid their land of the colonialists.

41. In this connexion, may I say a few words concerning the statement made by the United States representative, Mr. Stevenson [998th meeting].

42. As everyone can clearly see, this statement merely records once more the United States position which has already been rejected in the Security Council by its members representing the Asian, African and socialist countries. This position is so frankly colonialist that the pious references to the provisions of the United Nations Charter, with which yesterday's statement by the United States representative was liberally interspersed, will naturally mislead no one.

43. The essence of this position is that Tunisia, a small African country, is to be left to face, alone, the French aggressors who are armed to the teeth, and is to be deprived of the possibility of leaning on United Nations support in the face of aggression. Such is the meaning of those plans.

44. We, naturally, can in no way agree with this. It is the duty of the General Assembly at this session to condemn the French acts of aggression against Tunisia, which constitute a crude violation of the United Nations Charter and a threat to peace in the area of North Africa and the Mediterranean. The General Assembly must request France to withdraw its troops from Tunisian territory and to cease all activities which violate the sovereignty of the Tunisian Republic.

45. In accordance with this clearly defined position of the Government of the Ukrainian SSR, our delegation will support all proposals designed to achieve the aims in question. The people and Government of the Ukrainian SSR are convinced that Tunisia's just struggle for the restoration of its rights of sovereignty over the Bizerta area will be crowned with success.

46. Mr. CROWE (United Kingdom): Like other speakers before me I must first congratulate the President on his re-election. The pleasure which my delegation takes in seeing the representative of a close friend and neighbour of the United Kingdom elected to occupy this important office is further enhanced by the consideration that on the question of his presidency, at any rate, the General Assembly finds itself entirely and undoubtedly unanimous.

47. It will be no secret to the Assembly that my delegation has approached this debate with some anxiety. There is nothing to be ashamed of in this. We have watched, with distress, the continuing estrangement of two countries who are good friends of ours. We greatly deplore the stalemate which has existed ever since the Security Council's resolution² of 22 July took only partial effect. And now, as a further proof of this most regrettable deterioration of Franco-Tunisian relations, we have this debate in special session of the General Assembly.

48. Let me say at once, in case there should be any misunderstanding, that we fully recognize and acknowledge the right of the Tunisian Government to bring this question before a special session of the General Assembly. We acknowledge, too, the moderate as well as skilful manner in which the representative of Tunisia, as one would indeed expect of such a distinguished and experienced representative of his country, has presented his case. Our anxiety about this debate was not occasioned by doubts about the propriety of the proceedings, but rather by a consideration of the probable outcome.

49. Most of us in this hall would accept, I think, the analysis of the situation made yesterday [998th meeting] by the representative of Argentina. The fact is, as he pointed out and as almost every other speaker has agreed, this question can be solved only by negotiation between the two parties. It follows, therefore, that in this Assembly we should all be extremely careful to do nothing and to say nothing which could hinder the prospect of such a negotiation.

50. To put this in positive terms, it seems to my delegation that our object in this debate should be to bring about, if we can, a climate in which negotiation can take place. If such a climate can indeed be created following this debate, then the United Nations will have made a significant and constructive contribution to the solution of this problem. We still hope that this is in fact what will be achieved.

51. Here I must make a short digression in order to explain why in our view debate on this question has dangers as well as possibilities of progress towards a solution. Unfortunately, it is only too clear that some Members of the United Nations do not sincerely wish to see a successful negotiation between the two parties. The speech of the Soviet representative on Monday [997th meeting] and now just before me that of the Ukrainian representative, constitute all too vivid an illustration of my point. They both made prolonged excursions from the subject matter of our debate in order to make accusations against NATO in general and, among others, the United Kingdom Government in particular, to which the Soviet representative referred at one point in his speech, if I understood him correctly, as an "atomic maniac". This is the kind of common abuse which we have learned to expect from Soviet representatives. It reflects more upon its user than upon the person to whom it is directed.

52. As for the accusations against CENTO, they have been effectively dealt with by the representatives of Pakistan and Iran [999th meeting] in their speeches yesterday.

53. My purpose now is to stress that that kind of talk makes no contribution whatever to a solution of the problem which is at present before us. So far from

² *Ibid.*, document S/4882

being of any help, the Soviet representative's speech must be regarded as an attempt to worsen the atmosphere in which this debate takes place.

54. To return now to the subject of our debate, my delegation earnestly hopes that our consideration of this question at this special session of the Assembly may enable the world to see more clearly the basic factors in the dispute and to get away from the less important details regarding the past, the accusations and counter-accusations about the events which led up to the fighting. Let us rather turn our minds to the present and to the future.

55. The issues are in truth very simple. Tunisia claims that France should agree to a more or less rapid timetable for the evacuation of the base at Bizerta. France for its part does not question Tunisian sovereignty over Bizerta, but says that it has never committed itself to any particular date for evacuation and does not intend to do so during the present dangerous situation. If, as we understand from this, France does not contest the principle of ultimate evacuation and if, as we also understand, both sides want to be sure that the base will never be used for purposes hostile to France or Tunisia, it would seem that an agreed solution certainly ought to be possible. We therefore consider it desirable that the two parties should appoint representatives as soon as possible to work out a solution which accords with that principle and with what we understand to be their mutual interests. It is also our view, of course, that in the interests of both France and Tunisia, talks should be started as soon as possible with a view to carrying out fully the Security Council resolution of 22 July.

56. Coming now to the draft resolution [A/L.351] before the Assembly, I must confess that its purpose appears to my delegation to be mixed. We recognize and appreciate that the sponsors have attempted to approach the substance of the problem in a moderate and constructive spirit. But, on the other hand, they have found it necessary to include phrases which, although it is claimed that they are not specifically condemnatory of France, are not, in our opinion, likely to contribute to a solution. We regret that the sponsors have apparently not found it possible to propose a draft resolution devoted solely to the principles involved and to future action required to secure those principles. I fear that this draft resolution will not do all that it might to create a suitable climate for discussion between the parties.

57. Let us not forget the moving appeal by the representative of Senegal, speaking on Monday [997th meeting] on behalf of the Brazzaville States. We should do well to weigh carefully the wise remarks of this distinguished friend and, as he put it, godchild of both parties.

58. Mr. KURKA (Czechoslovakia) (*translated from Russian*): Permit me first of all, Mr. President, to associate myself with the previous speakers in congratulating you, on behalf of the Czechoslovak delegation, on your unanimous election as President of the special session of the General Assembly.

59. As you know, the Czechoslovak delegation, on instructions from its Government, supported the proposal [A/4831] made by the overwhelming majority of the independent African and Asian States for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the complaint of Tunisia against the aggressive actions of France.

60. We did this because the fact that the Security Council took no action on the French aggression in the Bizerta area made it imperative for the General Assembly itself to deal with the matter, to take a stand against the aggressor with all the weight of its authority and to uphold the just demands of Tunisia, which is defending its independence and its sovereignty.

61. Our starting-point is the fact that, under the Charter, the United Nations has the duty not only of proclaiming in words its faith in the equal rights of large and small nations and of fostering mutual respect between them, but also, where necessary, of taking effective action against those who arbitrarily engage in aggressive acts against other independent States and forcibly impose their will on them.

62. We supported the convening of this special session also because the aggressive acts committed by France against the territorial integrity of Tunisia, and French disregard of the Security Council's decisions, have sown the seeds of a new international conflict in North Africa which can rapidly spread beyond that area.

63. I should also like to stress that, in the Czechoslovak delegation's view, the very fact that this General Assembly session has been convened constitutes a great victory for the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist forces, all the more so because, as we know, both the old and the new colonialists have done their utmost to prevent the discussion of French aggression in this forum.

64. It is no secret that the Western Powers, particularly the United States, did everything in their power to prevent the calling of this special session. The reason is quite obvious: as the popular saying goes, "A crow will not peck out another crow's eyes". Why should the imperialist Powers support the discussion of French aggression against Tunisia, when they each have their own Bizertas which can be numbered in hundreds and are to be found in all continents? It is not surprising that they are concerned lest armed provocation by France at Bizerta should become the signal for decisive measures designed to eliminate the remaining military bases on foreign territories; that, of course, would contribute towards making a further breach in the political and military strategy of those Powers, which, as we know, assigns an important role to military bases in preparations for war against the socialist countries as well as against the national liberation and democratic movement.

65. It must be said that theirs is a well-founded anxiety, because the aggressive acts of France against Tunisia have again placed upon the agenda, in all its urgency, the need for the immediate elimination of military bases in foreign territories.

66. I do not of course wish to do anything that would militate against the "suitable climate" which the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom so ardently desires. If I find it necessary to mention military bases on foreign territories, I am not thereby digressing from the main question which is before the General Assembly; on the contrary, the events in Tunisia are inextricably linked with the general question of the existence of bases on foreign territories and with the danger arising from that state of things.

67. We know that the imperialist Powers—which, particularly since the Second World War, have made military bases on foreign territories the corner-stone of their harmful policy of world domination—have for many years been endeavouring to reassure world opinion

by fairy tales to the effect that those bases were set up solely as a result of the so-called "communist threat", and solely for defensive purposes. But the experience of the last few years has completely demolished that fabrication.

68. We naturally have no illusions about the fact that the military bases of the imperialist Powers which encircle our countries are primarily intended as instruments of military aggression against the socialist countries. Those bases have not yet been and could not yet be fully used for that purpose, not because the imperialists are peace-loving or have good intentions, but simply because they must, with reason, fear crushing reprisals. It must however, in the interests of accuracy, be pointed out that the bases are being used for warlike provocations, for aerial espionage and for other measures which, of course, have no bearing on defence and are flagrantly aggressive in character.

69. But that is only one aspect of the question. There is another aspect, of no less importance for the Western Powers. It is this—and my delegation, together with others, has frequently brought it to the attention of representatives here in the United Nations: the imperialists, who are at the same time colonialists, have been and still are setting up a chain of military bases for the additional purpose of using them against the newly independent countries or against the national liberation and democratic movement which threatens the age-old edifice of colonial domination in various parts of the world. This is not propaganda; this is a fact, to which recent events have testified.

70. It is not difficult to find an adequate amount of example and evidence to show that it was primarily the countries which, recently freed from colonial domination, did not have a socialist way of life or a socialist structure that were the first victims of the direct and large-scale acts of aggression carried out from those very bases. Many representatives here will remember the attack against Egypt in 1956, which was undertaken primarily from the military bases of the imperialist Powers in the Mediterranean region. Several delegations have mentioned here the United States and United Kingdom aggression of 1958 in the Near and Middle East. We may also recall the part played by the United States naval base at Guantanamo in the hostile acts of provocation perpetrated against the Government of Cuba; and, above all, the latest military aggression committed by France at Bizerta and "successfully" carried out with the help of other French military bases in the Mediterranean area. In all these colonialist enterprises, reminiscent of the nineteenth century, the military bases of the NATO countries have played a decisive role.

71. The Western Powers, proceeding carefully on the assumption that the newly independent States still lack sufficient means for their own defence and cannot reply with military force, have always without the slightest hesitation used these bases, when they needed them, primarily against those countries and against the national liberation movement as a whole. It is therefore perfectly clear that the fairy-tales about the defensive importance of their military bases on foreign territories can mislead only small children, and that no person of intelligence can believe them.

72. The Czechoslovak delegation would further like to point out that the serious danger which these foreign bases constitute for the independence and sovereignty of individual countries in Asia, Africa and Latin

America is made even graver by the fact that those bases were set up and their activity is maintained as a result of various one-sided agreements imposed by the former colonialist Powers on the Governments of those countries. It is of course no accident that many new States are rejecting the idea of having foreign military bases on their territories; and even where, in the initial stage of their struggle for independence, they were forced to agree to the establishment of such bases, they now demand their complete liquidation. Recent developments have included many examples of all-national movements against the creation and existence of foreign military bases in individual countries. The latest such example, which has resulted in open military aggression by the French colonialists against the freedom-loving people of Tunisia, is that of Bizerta.

73. The one-sided agreements for the location of military bases on foreign territories have been concluded, and are operating, under conditions which are at complete variance with the generally recognized principles of international law and with obligations assumed by States Members of the United Nations on the basis of the Organization's Charter. These agreements also directly conflict with such important United Nations documents as the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, which was adopted at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly. Such agreements, involving an unequal burden of obligations, enjoy no international protection and are, on the basis of generally recognized principles of international law, invalid. The parties whose lawful interests suffer from these one-sided agreements have every right to cancel them and to refuse to fulfil the obligations arising out of them.

74. The position is completely intolerable when foreign military bases are set up and operate, by means of threats and violence, against the will of the lawful Governments of the countries on whose territories they are situated. The French aggression against Tunisia has, in dramatic circumstances, once again forced all peoples, and particularly those of Africa and Asia, to recognize the danger presented to them by the existence of foreign military bases, which are becoming one of the main manifestations of the new colonialism designed to maintain the remnants of shattered colonial domination and to restrict the independence and sovereignty of those countries.

75. It is not surprising, therefore, that in connexion with the defence of French colonial interests in Tunisia and elsewhere we note a touching unity between all the imperialist Powers, who are endeavouring, through a united front, to hold back the expanding national liberation movement of the African, Asian and Latin American peoples. The apostles of neo-colonialism, who have spoken here at these meetings in the same terms as those used a few weeks ago in the Security Council, have dispelled all possible doubt that the States belonging to the NATO military bloc are prepared at any time and under any circumstances to discard all the principles of the United Nations Charter, not to speak of their pretended friendship for the small countries, when it is a question of saving their own political, economic or military positions. Here is further confirmation that the unity of interest and purpose of the NATO military bloc is, for these Powers, far more important than all the principles of the United Nations Charter.

76. In the question of the liquidation of the French military base at Bizerta, NATO's complicity has been

particularly clearly revealed. It is no accident that one of the arguments adduced against complying with the just demands of the Tunisian Government was that Bizerta was a regular NATO base, the maintenance of which was a French obligation deriving from France's membership of NATO. We know that one of the uses of this base is as an auxiliary port for the fleet of another prominent member of NATO, the United States of America, whose navy acts as a policeman in the Mediterranean area. Lastly, the name of Bizerta is connected with the piratical violation of the freedom of navigation, and the arbitrary confiscation of the cargoes of vessels on the high seas.

77. No one should have been surprised, therefore, that France's allies in this military pact—namely the United States of America and the United Kingdom, who are at the same time permanent members of the Security Council—did everything they could, in the Security Council, to prevent the adoption of decisions which would have effectively assisted towards a final settlement of the position at Bizerta in accordance with the interests of the Tunisian people and of international peace and security.

78. The wealth of factual material submitted by the Tunisian Government to the Security Council and now to the General Assembly provides solid enough justification for the General Assembly's condemning France categorically as an aggressor. The ruthless and blood-thirsty butchery, by the French parachutists, of the population of Tunis, Bizerta and other localities—those parachutists whose "enlightening" and "civilizing" role is well known throughout North Africa—was identical with that attending the predatory colonial wars and so-called "pacifying expeditions" of the last century. The only difference is that this aggression was committed with the aid of the modern resources of war—napalm, aircraft and tanks, which in many cases, of course, bore the stamp "made in USA", having been supplied to France within the framework of the NATO colonialist pact.

79. The General Assembly therefore has before it not simply a "regrettable dispute"—the proportion to which the Western delegations in the Security Council, for example, wished to reduce the French aggression—but an open attack by an imperialist Power against a small African nation which only recently won its independence.

80. The large numbers of killed and wounded, as well as the vast amount of material damage reported to us by the distinguished Tunisian representative, constitute direct and tragic proof of that aggression.

81. The General Assembly should thus take a decisive stand against arbitrary imperialistic acts, armed violence and unpunished aggression replacing the principle of equal rights in international relations.

82. A number of previous speakers have rightly stated that there can be no compromise with regard to the principles deriving from the Charter of the United Nations, no compromise on the question of acknowledging the sovereign rights of independent States.

83. The dangerous situation in the Bizerta area will continue, and tension will increase, as long as foreign troops remain on Tunisian territory. There can be no real solution of the problem, there can be no serious negotiations for the "honourable settlement of this dispute" to which the United States representative so eloquently referred, there can be no return to a normal situation, so long as France remains able to use its

armed forces on Tunisian territory for the purpose of exerting pressure and threatening force. The Tunisian Government's demand for an expedited evacuation of all French troops is therefore fully justified.

84. The distinguished representative of the United States, Mr. Stevenson, said many fine things yesterday about independence, the recognition of Tunisia's sovereign rights, the lawful rights of the Tunisian Government and people at Bizerta, and so forth. But all that was, so to speak, on the theoretical plane. When it came to a practical approach, which would seem to us to be more important for the Tunisian people in its struggle against the French colonialists, Mr. Stevenson suddenly became more reserved and merely recommended that the General Assembly should confine itself to platonic appeals for bilateral negotiations between France and Tunisia. Yet as to what should be the subject of those negotiations Mr. Stevenson was silent, although everyone knows that this is in fact the crux of the matter. As for the over-all significance of these general appeals which the United States representative recommended to us here, France assesses them at their true value, as can be seen from the continuing tragedy of the Algerian people.

85. But the United States representative went even further in developing his practical approach, and actually expressed doubts as to the utility of adopting any resolution—any resolution, naturally, in which the General Assembly would adopt a clear and unambiguous position with regard to the French aggression and which would provide for specific measures designed to sustain Tunisia's sovereignty over all its territory and put an end to the dangerous situation prevailing in the Bizerta area.

86. In other words, the United States representative seems to think that the best solution lies in inaction by the General Assembly—that same inaction which, thanks to the Western Powers, has always paralysed the Security Council whenever the Council ought to have taken decisive measures against arbitrary action by the colonialists.

87. Who, I would simply like to ask, will benefit from this practical approach of the United States delegation? The aggressor or his victim? I think you all know the answer to that question.

88. It is quite clear that we are here faced by an attempt to prevent both effective discussion of this question and the adoption of concrete decisions in the interest of peace and security.

89. The Czechoslovak delegation considers it essential not only that the General Assembly should take effective steps to implement the Security Council's resolution of 22 July, but that it should, at the same time, support the Tunisian Government in the matter of the expedited evacuation of French armed forces from all Tunisian territory. The taking of such effective steps is all the more urgent in that France has refused to take part in the discussion of this question, thus giving evidence of its unwillingness to respect its obligations under the United Nations Charter.

90. The General Assembly should make France clearly understand that disregard of the General Assembly is no way out of the situation, but is simply further proof of aggressive intentions which are completely out of line with the United Nations Charter.

91. The General Assembly must, in our opinion, take decisive measures to prevent the repetition of such

colonial adventures not only at Bizerta but also in other parts of the world. The United Nations, in the spirit of its Charter, must categorically demand the liquidation of the whole system of military bases which threaten the independence of sovereign States and are a source of international tension.

92. In the concluding stage of our debate, the Czechoslovak delegation will support any proposals which will be in keeping with the principles I have mentioned.

93. At the same time, we shall undoubtedly vote against any proposals which, under the cover of legal or political arguments, are directed towards leading the General Assembly down the dangerous road of sustaining and defending an aggressor.

94. The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, expressing the will of its entire people, unreservedly supports Tunisia, the victim of imperialist aggression, and upholds its sovereign rights. We are openly on the side of Tunisia, because its struggle against foreign occupation is an inseparable part of the general struggle of all the African peoples for complete liberation of the African continent. We stand by the Tunisian people, with whom we are linked by ties of true, not feigned, friendship and solidarity in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism.

Mr. Fekini (Libya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

95. Mr. CHERMONT (Brazil): May I be allowed to add the congratulations of the Brazilian delegation on the unanimous election of Mr. Boland to the presidency of this Assembly? The many reasons for this election have been put forth by former speakers with great eloquence. I merely wish to express our pleasure in having him preside over this session which is the best augury for its success.

96. Upon signing the request [A/4831] for the convening of the third special General Assembly of the United Nations, the Government of Brazil did not take a stand on the substance of the matter. Its decision sprang from the general principles of Brazil's new foreign policy and from its fidelity to the Charter of the United Nations.

97. From the outset, and before going into the heart of the matter, allow me to stress two points: Brazil has been linked to France from the earliest days of its existence by historical and sentimental ties which are unbreakable. French ideals constituted the source of inspiration of the forefathers and of the founders of Brazilian independence. French culture and French technology have substantially contributed to Brazilian social, spiritual and material development.

98. On the other side, Brazil is linked to Tunisia—as to all African countries—by a very strong community of ideals and aspirations and by cultural and racial affinities. The similarity of social and economic problems between vast regions of my country and most of the African States deeply strengthens our friendship towards them.

99. The Brazilian delegation will endeavour to examine the question of Bizerta with the greatest objectivity. In the opinion of the Brazilian Government the situation created in Bizerta is extremely serious and justifies the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

100. On the one side, we see a newly independent State—at grips with the problems of its economic and social development—being hampered in its efforts by the violation of its sovereignty, by the presence of

foreign troops on its soil and by the maintenance of a foreign military base on its territory, against the will of its Government and its people. All these factors lead to an explosive situation. The United Nations has been—and this is its greatest task and its glory—the instrument of the anti-colonialist revolution which is one of the most striking events of modern times. Thus, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to help safeguard the sovereignty of the peoples to whose liberation from colonial ties it has contributed.

101. On the other side, a great Power—a permanent member of the Security Council and so a country entrusted with a paramount responsibility for maintaining peace and security—is in open conflict with a small and fragile country, formerly its protectorate. In the opinion of the Brazilian Government, the non-compliance by a great Power with a resolution of the Security Council in its entirety is extremely serious, as this fact not only weakens the decisions of the Security Council, but menaces the Organization itself. If the United Nations—as a consequence of such acts on the part of the great Powers—were to lose its instrument for the effective guarantee of peace and security, the world would witness in international relations the return of the law of the strongest. The small Powers—the vast majority of United Nations Members—will again be at the mercy of political and ideological imperialisms.

102. Let me turn now to the question of Bizerta itself. The protocol of agreement between France and Tunisia signed on 20 March 1956 granted the latter full sovereignty. The exchange of notes dated 17 June 1958³ did not determine the future of Bizerta and established that the question should be settled in the future through negotiation. I have to emphasize here that there was, on both sides, a clear intention to transfer the base, which fact does honour not only to France, the colonial Power, but also to Tunisia, the newly independent country. This intention is clearly visible in all the documents, the main feature of which, it may be noted, is negotiation. The future of Bizerta should, therefore, likewise be settled through negotiation. Thus the Brazilian delegation is not satisfied with the alleged procrastinations on the part of the French Government or with the alleged precipitation on the part of the Tunisian Government. Both Governments must understand that in the light of their commitments there is only one road to take: negotiation.

103. On examining the situation in Bizerta, we cannot help touching upon the question of foreign military bases, the existence of which results from the political tension brought about by the cold war. Any sovereign State may agree to have on its territory a military base belonging to one of the two rival blocs into which, unhappily, the world is split today. It is its privilege, its right, to consider the setting up of such a base as an imperative of its individual or collective security. However, only the express agreement of the Government of that country will make the establishment of the base morally legitimate. If two countries—as in the case of France and Tunisia—are bound in this matter by legal obligations, it is incumbent on both, in the event of a dispute, to employ all peaceful means provided for in the Charter, with a view to reaching, in this case, an agreement on the future of Bizerta.

104. I have only a few words more. The Brazilian Government does not believe in half-sovereignty. One nation—a nation in the cultural and sociological con-

³ *Ibid.*, document S/4869.

ception of the word—either becomes independent in its entirety or mutilates itself, thus creating, for its future life, a permanent source of trouble and frustration.

105. The Brazilian Government firmly believes that France and Tunisia will, in dealing with the question of Bizerta, demonstrate good sense, political wisdom and fidelity to the principles of the Charter.

106. Mr. ELMI (Somalia): I should like to join with other delegations in expressing to the President our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of this special session.

107. We have convened in this special session in order to resolve a dispute which exists between two Member States of the United Nations, Tunisia and France. We are all aware of the great moral and legal responsibility of this Organization to preserve international peace and security. The Somali delegation firmly believes that the United Nations was designed as a union of large and small nations, a body in which, since its creation, there has rested the hope of all nations that, through its mechanisms and its organs, disputes between nations could be solved by peaceful means. Somalia, as one of the newly independent nations of Africa, is especially devoted to the principles and to the doctrines of the Charter, which my Government and people support both in theory and in practice.

108. The issue with which we are here concerned is very clear to all of us. On many occasions since Tunisia became an independent and sovereign State, the Tunisian Government rightly called upon France to withdraw its armed forces from the Bizerta base and to agree upon a time-table for the total withdrawal of French forces from Tunisian territory. But, despite the legitimate demands of Tunisia for France's complete withdrawal from Bizerta, the French Government has never given any satisfactory reply to the Government of Tunisia.

109. If we were to examine the basis of France's use of Bizerta, we would find that there is no agreement whatsoever, except the exchange of letters⁴ dated 17 June 1958. These letters indicate that the parties were to negotiate an agreement, both provisional and definitive, with regard to the use of Bizerta. These negotiations were, unfortunately, fruitless because of France's negative attitude to the recognition of the legitimate sovereign rights of Tunisia. In the absence of any agreement and in the light of the long period of time that has already elapsed since June 1958—which should have been sufficient time for an agreement to be reached—in view, also, of the fact that the French Government does not appear to be willing to enter into negotiations leading to the total evacuation of all its armed forces from Tunisian territory, the maintenance of French armed forces in Tunisia has no legal basis.

110. When it became apparent to the Government of Tunisia that the intention of France was to remain in control of Bizerta against Tunisia's will and in denial of its sovereign rights, President Bourguiba, who is known to all of us not only as a moderate in political affairs but also as a man of principle, sent a personal appeal⁵ to President de Gaulle, requesting recognition by France of the principle of evacuation of its armed forces from Tunisian territory. France's reply, however, was the well-known aggression of 19 July 1961 against the peace-loving Tunisians, killing over 600 and wounding over 1,100.

111. In the light of the French aggression and heavy losses to the Tunisians, many of whom were civilians, the Government of Tunisia had no other choice than to appeal to the Security Council. It is a fact that the Security Council, under the circumstances, saw fit to pass the resolution⁶ which called for a cease-fire and the return of all armed forces to their original positions prior to 19 July 1961. My delegation notes with satisfaction that the Government of Tunisia fully and immediately complied with the Security Council's resolution, following once again its tradition of close co-operation with the United Nations and its sense of moderation and international good will. On the other hand, my delegation, as well as the delegations of many other Member States, must note with great concern that France, which has fought so valiantly in the past for freedom and liberty, which is one of the founding Members of this Organization and a permanent member of the Security Council, can today be accused of a violation of the United Nations Charter and of refusing to comply fully with the Security Council's resolution, a decision reached in a democratic international forum.

112. My delegation wishes to stress that it is the policy of the Somali Government that, as a newly independent African State, we are against the maintenance of any foreign military base on any part of the African continent, for we believe that such maintenance will prevent a complete decolonization of Africa, may bring the cold war to our continent and could become a threat to international peace and security.

113. In the absence of any agreement concluded to date, other than the letters of 17 June 1958, which seems to be the fact according to both sides, the status of the French armed forces in Tunisia is that they are in Tunisia on the sufferance of the Government and people of Tunisia. Since Tunisia is a sovereign State, it has an inherent right to request their removal *in toto*. When France refuses to accede to Tunisia's legitimate request and uses force to maintain its position, it first of all violates Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter and, by such action, threatens to destroy the basic premises and the reasons for the very existence of the United Nations.

114. As a Member of the United Nations, we add our voice to the voices of the other Members of the United Nations which are faithful to the Charter and its principles, to uphold the sovereignty and the territorial integrity, not only of Tunisia, but of any one of us who may be similarly threatened. All of Africa has felt the heel, the brute and unrepentant force of colonialist Powers and will vote as one for the extermination of this last vestige of colonialism from the territory of our sister, Tunisia. The war in Algeria, now in its seventh bloody and unyielding year, the suppression of the nationalist movement in Angola, which grows more objectionable and ruthless every day, and now Tunisia, are a standing warning to all of us in Africa, nor should they go unnoticed by other countries.

115. Territorial integrity and sovereignty are, after all, basic to the relations between States in the family of nations. We smaller nations, upon joining this world body, have a right to expect that its power will protect the victim and not the aggressor. We are here in the General Assembly, an Assembly that does not have a restricted membership, where there is no veto and where each nation, whether large or small, has one vote, each equal to the other. In such serious times as these,

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, document S/4871.

⁶ *Ibid.*, document S/4882.

each country must vote, according to its own conscience, either for or against a principle; there can be no other way to maintain international peace and security. Each country must face its responsibility squarely and if it believes that France is, in this case, wrong, it must so vote. The world awaits the outcome, and the vote of each nation here will be carefully analysed by all, so that we shall see which are those States that are for the support of colonialism and which are the States that stand for its abolition and for the support of the sovereignty of nations and the maintenance of territorial integrity as a matter of principle.

116. The delegation of Somalia, together with many peace-loving countries, deems it a privilege to co-sponsor the draft resolution [A/L.351], which is currently before this special session.

117. The draft resolution under consideration, which is quite mild and objective both in form and in substance, reaffirms the interim resolution of the Security Council and asks the Government of France to implement it. The Somali delegation has carefully considered the effect of the continued maintenance by France of an armed force on Tunisian territory not only against the will of the people, but also without any semblance of current legitimate right. There should be no doubt on the part of any Member nation that the presence of French armed forces in Tunisia, against the will and without the consent of the Tunisian Government, is a source of international friction and endangers international peace and security.

118. In recognizing Tunisia's sovereign right to call for the withdrawal of all French forces from its territory, we are merely acknowledging one of the most basic and time-honoured rights and attributes of sovereignty, to which each nation is entitled. Each Member State should refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity of any State, in accordance with its obligations under Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations.

119. This draft resolution, which calls upon the parties concerned to enter into immediate negotiations leading to the complete withdrawal of French forces from Tunisian territory, will, we hope, help to solve this crisis.

120. The Somali delegation believes that this problem can and should be solved peacefully. We hope that once France witnesses the sentiments and deep-rooted feelings of the majority of States for full compliance by France, that it will take the initiative and make arrangements for such compliance with the draft resolution now before the Assembly.

121. The Somali delegation hopes that all Member nations will support and vote for this draft resolution, which calls for a speedy and peaceful settlement of the Bizerta crisis. We are sure that those who consistently believe in upholding the freedom of all peoples will be found within the ranks and on the side of the supporters of this draft resolution.

122. Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon): On behalf of the delegation of Lebanon, I wish to join in the general acclaim tendered to the President, on his unanimous election to the presidency of the third special session of the General Assembly. This election is further evidence of the great esteem with which he is regarded by all delegations after his brilliant record as President of the fifteenth regular session of the Assembly. I would like to offer him my warmest congratulations and best wishes for success in the accomplishment of his new responsibilities.

123. The Government and people of Lebanon have, with great anxiety, followed the tragic events which have taken place in the sister Arab country, Tunisia, since 19 July 1961. They have publicly expressed the fullest support for the Government and people of Tunisia in their struggle to liberate their homeland from foreign occupation and domination.

124. With that purpose in view, Lebanon joined a large number of Member States in requesting a special session of the General Assembly to consider the grave situation prevailing in Tunisia since 19 July 1961. As a result, this third special session has been convened with the concurrence of a majority of Member States of the United Nations. After the Security Council failed to take appropriate action on its complaint, Tunisia was thus given an opportunity to present its case to the General Assembly and to appeal for United Nations help in the defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have heard the eloquent and clear statement of the representative of Tunisia, Mr. Mongi Slim, pleading for all possible assistance by the United Nations under the terms of the Charter. It is our firm conviction that it is right and proper that Tunisia's appeal should be heard and, if its case is just, that the General Assembly should act clearly and firmly to give it assistance in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

125. The facts of the case are clear and well known to the Members of this Assembly. The struggle of the Tunisian people against colonialism was crowned with success and Tunisia achieved independence and was admitted as a sovereign Member of the United Nations in 1956. However, the Tunisian Government continued to press for the complete withdrawal of French armed forces which remained on its territory as one of the vestiges of the colonial past. In an exchange of letters dated 17 June 1958,⁷ France undertook not:

“ . . . to maintain any armed forces on Tunisian territory other than those which may be stationed there by virtue of agreements negotiated between the two States.”

126. The two States also agreed to enter into negotiations to establish a provisional arrangement of the maintenance of French troops in the base of Bizerta.

127. For three years the Tunisian Government has been seeking negotiations with France on the basis of the principle of the total withdrawal of French forces from Tunisian territory. It has repeatedly proposed discussions with a view to fixing a time-table for such a withdrawal. The French Government has refused to enter into such negotiations and has maintained its occupation of the Bizerta base against the express will of the Tunisian Government and people.

128. On 19 July 1961, the Tunisian Government prohibited the flight over Tunisian territory of French aircraft transporting paratroops to the Bizerta base. In the exercise of Tunisia's sovereign right of defence, Tunisian troops fired at French aircraft violating Tunisian air space.

129. The reaction of the French armed forces at Bizerta was extremely violent. In the unequal battle which ensued, rockets and other superior weapons were used by French forces in attacking the town of Bizerta and other areas outside the military and naval base. The Tunisian casualties, mostly civilians, were over 800 killed and more than 1,000 wounded. The violence of

⁷ *Ibid.*, document S/4869.

the attack perpetrated by French forces was all the more surprising in view of the friendly relations which existed previously between France and Tunisia.

130. The Security Council met on 21 and 22 July to consider Tunisia's complaint against French armed aggression and violation of Tunisian territorial integrity. It adopted on 22 July an interim resolution⁸ calling for an immediate cease-fire and a return of all armed forces to their original positions. The Council, however, failed to take action on the basic issue of the dispute.

131. The Tunisian Government complied fully with the terms of the Council's interim resolution. The French Government, however, while ordering a cease-fire, failed to carry out the withdrawal of its armed forces to their original positions. The Security Council met again on 28 and 29 July, at the request of Tunisia, to consider the grave situation which resulted. Unfortunately, it failed to take further appropriate action.

132. This brief statement of the basic facts of the situation shows clearly that Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated. Without the agreement of the Tunisian Government, and contrary to its express desire, French forces continue to occupy Tunisian territory. France refuses to carry out its undertaking, contained in the exchange of letters of 17 June 1958, not to maintain French forces on Tunisian territory except in accordance with a negotiated agreement between the two States. It has steadfastly rejected requests by Tunisia for negotiations aimed at the orderly withdrawal of French forces whose presence at Bizerta against the express will of the Tunisian Government and people constitutes an infringement of Tunisian sovereignty.

133. Finally, France has occupied by force additional Tunisian territory outside the Bizerta base, in the town of Bizerta and other adjoining areas, and has failed to comply with the interim resolution of the Security Council calling for the withdrawal of French forces from such additional territory as they occupied after 19 July 1961 and their return to their original positions. In all this, France has thus failed to observe the principles of the United Nations and, in particular, the principle of sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations, contained in Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Charter, and the principle that all Members shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State contained in Article 2, paragraph 4.

134. My delegation regrets the absence of the French delegation from this special session of the General Assembly. Coming after its decision not to participate in the Security Council debates of 28 and 29 July, France's absence from this session constitutes further evidence of its disrespect for the United Nations. This disrespect was also clearly shown by the manner in which the Secretary-General was treated by French forces during his visit to Bizerta last month. France's disregard for the Organization is all the more regrettable as it comes from a great Power and a permanent member of the Security Council, whose obligation under the Charter is to co-operate with the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the preservation of international peace and security. My delegation believes that it is only by co-operation with the United Nations that France can arrive at a peaceful solution of its conflict with Tunisia.

135. In 1960, France was congratulated in the General Assembly for granting independence to its former colonies of Central and West Africa and sponsoring their membership in the United Nations. That wise and statesmanlike policy of decolonization, recognizing the inexorable march of peoples to national freedom, seems strangely absent in North Africa. In Bizerta, as in Algeria, French colonialism dies hard. France is still seeking to maintain in North Africa outdated forms of military and colonial control, and as a result is gradually losing the friendship of peoples who are closely related to it by reason of culture and geography.

136. The Tunisian complaint against France comes to us from a loyal and peace-loving Member of the United Nations. During the short period since its admission in 1956, Tunisia has been one of the most co-operative Members of our Organization. At a time when it was in need of all its armed forces for self-defence, a significant proportion of its army was serving the United Nations in the Congo. As a small nation unable alone to defend itself against the armed might of a great Power, it has appealed to the United Nations for assistance in the protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Will the United Nations act firmly and effectively in rendering such assistance to one of its weaker Members?

137. The answer to this question depends on the willingness of all Member States to carry out their obligations under the Charter and uphold the authority of the United Nations. A special responsibility lies with the great Powers in all matters relating to international peace. The basic issue confronting the world is whether the great Powers will only uphold the authority of the United Nations when their own interests are involved or whether they will do so in all cases where the Charter is applicable against friend and foe alike.

138. The small nations depend on the United Nations for help in defending their sovereignty and territorial integrity. If the United Nations is unable or unwilling to render such help to them in time of need, it will gradually lose its effectiveness and usefulness. The small nations may have to look elsewhere for protection. They may be forced to join military blocs and alliances to ensure their security. But the system of military blocs and alliances, depending on international power politics and not on the principles of the Charter, will lead inevitably to war. The hope of humanity for a world of peace and order through the United Nations will fade away. In place of this hope will loom the spectre of nuclear war.

139. We, the small nations, need the United Nations today to help us defend our independence and sovereignty. But the great Powers may also find one day that they need the United Nations to help save them and all humanity from nuclear annihilation.

140. Today it is Tunisia that comes to the United Nations appealing for help. Tomorrow other Member States, small or great, may find themselves in need of United Nations assistance.

141. The General Assembly is called upon, at this stage, to adopt a firm and clear decision in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter. My delegation has joined a group of thirty-two delegations in sponsoring a draft resolution [A/L.351] moderate in its terms but strong and clear in its principles. It reaffirms the Security Council resolution of 22 July 1961 and urges the Government of France to implement it fully by withdrawing French armed forces to their

⁸ *Ibid.*, document S/4882.

original positions. It recognizes the sovereign right of Tunisia to call for the total withdrawal of French forces present on Tunisian territory without its consent. It calls upon France and Tunisia to enter into immediate negotiations to devise measures for the withdrawal of all French forces from Tunisian territory.

142. This draft resolution is the least that the General Assembly can adopt in response to the appeal of Tunisia for United Nations help. My delegation hopes that it will receive overwhelming support.

143. This is a test case for the United Nations. The question is whether the United Nations can prevent a

great Power from substituting the law of force for international law in furthering its narrow national interests. The question is whether the Charter of the United Nations or the law of the jungle, where the strong overpower the weak, shall govern the relations between sovereign States. These questions are being asked with increasing anxiety by Tunisia and other small nations which have placed their faith in the United Nations. The Assembly is called upon to give the right answers to these questions in the interests of justice and international peace.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.