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THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Letter dated 25 November 1961 from the Permanent Representative
of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed
to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to request that the attached comments be circulated as an official document under agenda item 88, entitled "The situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples", which is being discussed at the present session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Adlai E. STEVENSON
Permanent Representative
of the United States of America
to the United Nations

COMMENTS BY THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION ON THE
SOVIET MEMORANDUM CIRCULATED AS DOCUMENT A/4889

The United States delegation regrets that the Soviet Union has been unable to resist utilizing the United Nations forum to attack a number of Member States in the most outrageous and misleading terms. Under the circumstances, however, the United States now has no choice but to reply, even though we had hoped to be able to continue to keep the cold war out of the "colonialism" debates during the current session.

Role of the United Nations

The United Nations was created to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. Anything which derogates from the inherent rights of mankind and of nations is a proper - and even essential - subject for study and discussion by the General Assembly. The relationship between peoples and nations which we have come to call colonialism or by its variants - neo-colonialism or imperialism - can constitute a denial of the rights of the individual, and of the principle of self-determination and as such has frequently been the subject of our deliberations.

Since the formation of our Organization, the world community has devoted much of its time, talent and energy to the search for a solution to the more pressing colonial problems in the world. The Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, the Trusteeship Council and the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories have debated and made useful recommendations on a multitude of specific and general colonial problems. Other problems have arisen and have been discussed by other Committees and United Nations organs.

Only a hostile propagandist could maintain that the United Nations has not done useful work in this field. Through careful, detailed study and sound recommendations on specific issues, the General Assembly and other United Nations organs have facilitated the movement of one people after another to full and untrammelled independence.

We have seen the evidence of this development in the most concrete and meaningful terms; in the form of our membership, which has now more than doubled in the short lifetime of our Organization.

This hopeful evolution should not be cited to disguise the fact that much remains to be done in the colonial and related human rights fields. There are some cases where repeated admonitions by the General Assembly have proved unavailing. A number of items in this general area have remained on our agenda from year to year to serve as a concrete indication of our failure to find solutions.

But we should not despair of our ability to find the answers to those problems. There are many difficult items on the agenda of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly; others will be inscribed in years to come. With patience, goodwill and skill we will be able to solve them all in good time.

United States position on colonialism

The United States is against colonialism - wherever and whenever it occurs.

As a nation, we believe that man - a physical, intellectual and spiritual being, not an economic animal - has individual rights, divinely bestowed, limited only by the obligation to avoid infringement upon the equal rights of others.

We do not claim perfection in our own society and in our own lives, only that we seek it honestly and that the direction we take is always that of greater liberty.

We believe that justice, decency and liberty, in an orderly society, are concepts which have raised man above the beasts of the field; to deny any person the opportunity to live under their shelter is a crime against all humanity.

Our Republic is the produce of the first successful revolution against colonialism in modern times. Our people, drawn from all the nations of the world, have come to these shores in the search for freedom and opportunity in a progressive society. We have never forgotten either our origins or the nature of the world we live in.

As President Kennedy said in his inaugural address:

"We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans - born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage - and unwilling to witness or permit the

slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty ..."

Soviet allegations against the United States

In its frenetic effort to cover up its own dismal record in the field of colonialism and human rights, the Soviet Union has levelled two principal charges against the United States: (1) the United States is allied with colonialists and finances colonialist wars; and (2) the United States is itself a colonial Power. The answer to both charges, for those willing to see the truth, is simple.

The United States is unalterably opposed to all wars, including of course colonialist wars. We are not now and we shall never become allied with any nation for the purpose of planning, financing or waging colonial wars. The military alliances we have formed with others serve no aggressive aims; they are defensive alliances created in fact as a shield and a deterrent to those who would not shrink from the use of force to impose their new brand of colonialist rule on other peoples and territories.

Secondly, we would hold no people against its will. We are prepared to take the necessary measures to consult any or all of the approximately 100,000 people whose destinies are still associated with ours any time they request it. The people of Puerto Rico are fully self-governing, as the General Assembly has found after careful examination, enjoy the status of American citizens, and are free to request a change of status at any time. The remaining territories for which the United States exercises sovereignty are in the process of becoming self-governing.

The United States' position is that "the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation". This is the language of Bandung; it is also the language of the General Assembly in resolution 1514 (XV)

on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. But there is a higher authority and a more definitive formulation.

The Charter declares in effect that on every nation in possession of foreign territories, there rests the responsibility to assist the peoples of these areas "in the progressive development of their free political institutions" so that ultimately they can validly choose for themselves their permanent political status.

We have and we will continue to abide by the Charter.

The Soviet record of imperialism

But the question remains why the Soviet Union decided to launch such a reckless attack on those countries which oppose its drive for world conquest at this time. Every outstanding colonial question of real substance is to be found on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly. There are two major items on the agenda of the plenary alone which will make it possible to discuss all aspects of the general problem.

Why has the Soviet Union twice in the last two years attempted to seize the initiative on the colonial issue from the new States of Africa and Asia? Why has the Soviet Union attempted to inject East-West differences into the complicated and difficult North-South problems, thereby making it less likely that we will be able to find realistic and meaningful solutions? Why has the Soviet Union sought to distract the General Assembly from the tried and true procedures it has followed for fifteen years with such marked success, substituting a war of words for detailed discussion and specific recommendations of individual territories and problems?

There are at least two answers.

First, the Soviet Union does not wish the United Nations to operate successfully in this or any other field. The Soviet Union is fearful that the solution of outstanding colonial problems involving the West will impel the United Nations to focus attention on the situation in the vast Soviet empire.

Moreover, in the past fifteen years, as the process of self-determination in the ex-colonial areas of Asia and Africa was rapidly expanding the world community of free and independent nations, the contrary process was taking place

within the periphery of the Soviet Union. Wherever the influence of the Soviet armed forces could be brought to bear, independent countries, many of which had just been liberated from Hitler's terror, were absorbed and their national aspirations savagely repressed by a State bent on the eradication of the national identity of all peoples within the Soviet domain.

This indicates the second "well spring" of Soviet interest in the colonial question in the United Nations. The Soviet memorandum and initiative is a diversionary move; an attempt to prevent the world Organization from focusing on the serious deprivations of human rights in the Soviet world.

Many criteria have been developed over the years to determine whether or not a particular situation falls into the "colonial category". Surely the key, however, is the absence of self-determination for the dependent peoples concerned.

Because the world cannot long remain half-slave and half-free, the United States expects that the United Nations will focus its attention as carefully on the "colonialism" of the Soviet Union as it does on that of Portugal or any other nation. For if the Soviet Union comes to believe it can enforce a double standard in the world with complete impunity, no country in the world will be safe.

The record speaks for itself.

Self-determination in the Soviet empire

We are told that the peoples of the Soviet Union enjoy the right of self-determination. Indeed, the Soviet régime at its inception issued a Declaration of Rights which proclaimed "the right of the nations of Russia to free self-determination, including the right to secede and form independent States".

How did this "right" work in practice? An independent Ukrainian Republic was recognized by the Bolsheviks in 1917, but in 1917 they established a rival Republic in Kharkov. In July 1923, with the help of the Red Army, a Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was established and incorporated into the USSR. In 1920, the independent Republic of Azerbaïdzhan was invaded by the Red Army and a Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed. In the same year, the Khanate of Khiva was invaded by the Red Army and a puppet Soviet People's Republic of Khorezm was established. With the conquest of Khiva, the approaches to its neighbour, the Emirate of Bokhara, were opened to the Soviet forces which invaded it in

September 1920. In 1918, Armenia declared its independence from Russia and a mandate offered to the United States Government was refused by President Wilson. In 1920, the Soviet army invaded, and Armenian independence, so long awaited, was snuffed out. In 1921, the Red Army came to the aid of Communists rebelling against the independent state of Georgia and installed a Soviet régime.

This process inexorably continued. Characteristically, the Soviets took advantage of the turmoil and upheaval of the Second World War to continue the process of colonial subjugation at the expense of its neighbours. The Soviets' territorial aggrandizement included the Karelian province and other parts of Finland and the Eastern provinces of Poland, the Romanian provinces of Bessarabia and Bukovina, the independent states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Koenigsberg area, slices of Czechoslovakia, South Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands, and Tanna Tuva.

These are outright annexations of territories whose peoples are as enamoured of freedom and as fully entitled to their rights as are the people of Africa, Asia and the Americas. But there is another category of Soviet colonial territory, where neo-colonialism in a form never dreamed of in other parts of the world is practised.

Soviet colonial practices

The Soviet system of coping with disaffected populations in Soviet colonies is simple and effective, but shocking in the twentieth century. During the war, the Soviets deported entire ethnic groups to the East, fearful that they would use the occasion to fight for their independence. These groups included the Volga Germans (405,000), the Crimean Tatars (259,000), the Kalmucks of the northwestern Caspian area (130,000), the Ingush (74,000). These deportations were admitted by Chairman Khrushchev in his secret speech before the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In 1957, the Supreme Soviet, apparently in recognition of the crime committed against humanity, belatedly decreed the rehabilitation and eventual return of the remnants of some of these ethnic groups.

Even more shocking was the series of deportations undertaken by the Soviets following their ruthless subjugation of the independent nations of Estonia,

Latvia and Lithuania. In June of 1941, more than 200,000 persons were deported from the Baltic States, and the total now approaches 700,000.

As another indication of the fate of annexed ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, the case of the Kazakhs is instructive. The Moslem Kazakhs are the largest Asian nation subject to the colonial rule of Soviet Russia. In 1920, the Soviet census listed 3,968,289 Kazakhs. In 1939, their numbers had dwindled to 3,098,164. They comprised less than 30 per cent of the population in what Mr. Khrushchev describes as their national republic. This suggests the human costs - to national groups - of the material advances which he claims.

Following the Second World War, whole nations and peoples were swallowed up behind the Iron Curtain in violation of agreements and without a free vote of the peoples concerned. These included Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and then Czechoslovakia in coups d'état. The German and Korean people, divided as the result of the war, were held from unity by the failure of the Soviet Union to live up to the agreements it had signed and to permit the self-determination of these peoples through free elections. Viet-Nam was divided as the result of later expansionism by communist subversion and military expansion.

The consequences of Soviet imperialism

The disgrace, barbarity and savagery - to cite the words used by Chairman Khrushchev - of Soviet imperialist rule is indicated by the never ending flow of refugees from the countries made colonies by the Soviet Union. More than 12 million persons have escaped since the Second World War from the Soviet Union, Communist China and the areas they control: Albania, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, North Korea, North Viet-Nam and Tibet.

The greatest sustained movement of refugees in modern history continues for the fourteenth year out of Soviet East Germany. Since the end of the Second World War, more than 3 million Germans have fled from their homes and businesses in the Soviet-controlled zone and East Berlin in order to live and work in the free world. Despite the wall erected to hold the East German people from the freedoms they earnestly desire, East Berliners risk their lives daily to reach freedom in West Berlin.

When the Soviet imperialist régime in North Korea was established north of the 38th parallel in May 1948, another mass exodus began. Within two years, 1.8 million residents of the Communist zone, out of an estimated population of 9 million, migrated southward to the Republic of Korea. Within seven months after the Communist armies of North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea, an additional 800,000 North Korean prisoners of war refused repatriation to North Korea and 25,000 Chinese soldiers also refused to go home.

Within ten months after the partition of Viet-Nam, nearly a million Vietnamese had fled the Soviet-controlled North. This displacement of persons took place despite the most strenuous efforts, in violation of the Geneva Armistice Agreement, to stem the flow.

Perhaps the most dramatic instance was the flight of nearly 200,000 Hungarians after the revolt of October 1956 was crushed by Soviet troops. Since the first Communist takeover of Hungary in 1947, an additional 200,000 persons fled their homes to live and work in the West.

We are at present living through the most recent example of this general pattern. With the Chinese Communist subjugation of Tibet, more than 20,000 refugees were forced to leave their homes behind them and flee to other countries.

The right to self-determination has never been accepted for its own dependent areas by the Soviet Government. Stalin in 1923 explained that "there are instances when the right of self-determination comes into conflict with another, higher right; the right of the working class to fortify its own power. In such cases, the right of self-determination cannot be and must not serve as an obstacle to the realization of the right of the working class to its own dictatorship. The former must give way to the latter." In short, self-determination is a right which can only be upheld when the peoples concerned have not fallen under Communist domination.

On the contrary, rather than assisting the development towards greater independence and self-determination of the nations under their domination, the announced Soviet design is to eradicate all national (including linguistic) differences that exist between these diverse nationalities and the Great Russian model. The Soviet Communist Party programme states: "the obliteration of frontiers between the classes and development of communist socialist relations

strengthens the socialist uniformity of the nations and favours the development of common communist features." The programme laments, however, that "the obliteration of national features, particularly of the language differences, is a considerably longer process than the obliteration of class differences". Khrushchev, in his 18 October 1961 speech to the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party left no question as to his design towards peoples dominated by the Soviet Union when he said; "It is essential that we stress the education of the masses in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and Soviet patriotism. Even the slightest vestiges of nationalism should be eradicated with uncompromising Bolshevik determination." This is the unique aspect of Soviet "colonialism" - an aspect that differentiates it from all other historical examples of one State's suppression of another's freedom. Through the total State controls of mass culture, propaganda, education and movement, the Soviets seek to wipe out for ever the national characteristics that differentiate the Turk from Ukrainian, the Kazakh from the Armenian, the non-Russian from the Russian. They not only seek the eradication of differences and the suppression of freedom, but the eradication of the desire for freedom.

The Soviet plan

In view of the Soviet Union's own dark record of imperialist oppression and exploitation, Soviet professions of devotion to the welfare of the peoples of colonial or former colonial areas outside the Soviet empire are hypocritical. But more than mere hypocrisy is involved. These professions mask a sinister design in so far as the future of the colonial and newly-independent peoples themselves are concerned.

Communist doctrine pretends to provide an all-embracing explanation of historical processes. It therefore discloses to those who study it the real intentions of Soviet policy.

It is Soviet doctrine that the political development of newly independent States is to proceed in two distinct phases. The first stage - as Academician Y.E. Zhukov puts it in Pravda of 26 August 1960 - is one in which "the majority of the new Asian and African national States are headed by bourgeois politicians under the banner of nationalism".

At the same time, however, local Communists are instructed to prepare for the future day of direct action. In this initial period, Communists are to concentrate their efforts on infiltrating and obtaining key positions in political and social groups, especially trade-union and student movements, as well as organizing and participating in Communist-front organizations of all types.

The Soviets regard the present state of political orientation within the newly-developing countries as merely a phase, one clearly undesirable and unacceptable from the long-range point of view. As Academician Zhukov phrases it: "One cannot, therefore, term socialist those general democratic measures which to some degree are implemented in India, Indonesia, the United Arab Republic, Iraq and other independent countries of Asia and Africa." The policies and politics of these countries, Zhukov states, are "of a democratic and not a socialist character". At the appropriate stage, therefore, the Communist parties must come forth frankly and openly with their bid for power.

Soviet statements on colonialism are in themselves typical of the semantic perversion in Communist philosophy, by which "freedom" becomes "slavery" and "slavery" becomes "freedom." By means of this distortion of words, the Soviet Union hopes to distract attention from the real issues. But the peoples of the world can forget four fundamental facts only at their own peril:

First, the Sino-Soviet bloc today embraces the largest colonial empire which has ever existed in all history.

Second, the Communist empire is the only imperial system which is not liquidating itself, as other empires have done, but is still trying energetically to expand in all directions. With the growth of Soviet and Chinese Communist power, these expansionist efforts have now become more blatant and are now being attempted in areas outside the periphery of the bloc.

Third, the Soviet colonial system is one of the most cruel and oppressive ever devised. By the ruthless and brutal use of techniques of police control, and by the erection of artificial barriers to communication, the régimes of the Sino-Soviet bloc have harshly suppressed all movements in the direction of freedom, have instituted programmes to eradicate all national identity in the people, and have held their peoples in virtual isolation from the outside world.

Finally, the Soviet colonial empire is the only modern empire in which no subject people has ever been offered any choice concerning their future and their destiny.

President Kennedy summarized it in the following words in his general debate statement at this session of the General Assembly:

"I do not ignore the remaining problems of traditional colonialism which still confront this body. Those problems will be solved, with patience, goodwill and determination. Within the limits of our responsibility in such matters, my country intends to be a participant, and not merely an observer, in the peaceful, expeditious movement of nations from the status of colonies to the partnership of equals. That continuing tide of self-determination, which runs so strong, has our sympathy and our support.

"But colonialism in its harshest forms is not only the exploitation of new nations by old, of dark skins by light - or the subjugation of the poor by the rich. My nation was once a colony - and we know what colonialism means; the exploitation and subjugation of the weak by the powerful, of the many by the few, of the governed who have given no consent to be governed, whatever their continent, their class or their colour.

"And that is why there is no ignoring the fact that the tide of self-determination has not yet reached the communist empire where a population far larger than that officially termed 'dependent' lives under governments installed by foreign troops instead of free institutions - under a system which knows only one party and one belief - which suppresses free debate, free elections, free newspapers, free books and free trade unions - and which builds a wall to keep truth a stranger and its own citizens prisoners. Let us debate colonialism in full - and apply the principle of free choice and the practice of free plebiscites in every corner of the globe."
