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SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA OF THE
NINTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
ITEM PROPOSED BY GREECEAPPLICATION, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED
NATIONS, OF THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND
SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES IN THE CASE OF
THE POPULATION OF THE ISLAND OF CYPRUSLetter dated 16 August 1954 to the Secretary-General from the
President of the Council of Ministers of Greece

On behalf of the Royal Hellenic Government and of the Greek nation as a whole I have the honour to request you, under rule 14 of the rules of procedure, to include in the agenda of the next regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations the item entitled:

"Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the island of Cyprus".

I. In view of the repeatedly and solemnly expressed will of the overwhelming majority of the people of Cyprus for union with Greece, which they regard as their mother-country, my Government, fully aware of its responsibilities to the past, present and future of the Hellenic nation and in application of Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Charter, which establishes the right of self-determination of peoples, requests that the people of the island of Cyprus be allowed to express themselves on their future in complete freedom and under the auspices of the United Nations. My Government is taking this step in the belief that it will provide a satisfactory solution to a question which is likely to impair "the friendly relations" that have so far prevailed between Greece and the United Kingdom and "the general welfare" of the international community.

Availing itself of the new order established by the Charter of the United Nations, at the price of the great sacrifices made in the course of the Second World War, the Hellenic Government bases its request to the General Assembly on the relevant provisions of the Charter, and specifically on Articles 10 and 14 and on Article 1, paragraph 2. It also reserves the right to refer to Article 35, paragraph 1, if it considers such a course to be justified by subsequent developments.

My Government's action, taken both on its own behalf and at the request of the entire Greek nation, in addressing to the United Nations an appeal for justice and freedom for the Cypriots, is proof of Greece's complete confidence in the Organization.

II. Cyprus is a Greek island which has been inhabited by Greeks for thousands of years. When the name of Cyprus appears in history for the first time, the island is mentioned as being Greek because of its gods and of its population. There has been no change since. The periods of foreign rule which have succeeded each other in the course of three thousand years of history have always represented only a passing, temporary and transitory element. Greece alone has been the lasting element, the unalterable factor, the only permanent reality in the island of Cyprus. It would not be enough to repeat that Cyprus belongs to the Greek world; Cyprus is Greece itself.

Today, according to statistical data supplied by the British colonial authorities, of a total of 511,000 inhabitants, 80.2 per cent are Greeks (this does not include approximately 120,000 Greeks who have emigrated from Cyprus to Greece, to Egypt and other parts of Africa, to the United States or to London). Of the remaining 19.8 per cent, 17.9 per cent are Turks, and 1.9 per cent are of various other nationalities.

In 1878, the British administration, under the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan, succeeded the Ottoman domination. In November 1914, Cyprus was annexed to the British Empire, and in 1925 the Government of the United Kingdom made the island a crown colony. Today, in Cyprus, one of the most ancient cradles of Western civilization, the colonial status still survives, imposed on a people whose destiny has been linked with the cause of freedom.

It is true that on 17 October 1915, following the declaration of war between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, the British Government implicitly recognized the Greek character of Cyprus by offering the island to Greece on condition that Greece entered the war on the side of the Allies. Greece fulfilled this condition two years later, but the British Government had by that time forgotten its promise. On many occasions, however, British statesmen and other eminent persons (Gladstone, Winston Churchill, David Lloyd George, Ramsay Macdonald, Ronald Burrows, W. Pember Reeves, H.G. Wells, Arnold Toynbee, etc.) have recognized the right of the people of Cyprus to seek union with Greece. But the United Kingdom authorities have invariably refused to take into consideration this unanimous wish of the great Hellenic national majority of the island's inhabitants.

On the morrow of the last world war, the people of Cyprus, having actively and effectively participated in the common struggle, and trusting in the principles of justice and freedom proclaimed in the Atlantic Charter and subsequently established by the Charter of the United Nations, reaffirmed their will to be united with Greece. A plebiscite was organized by the Greek Orthodox Church in January 1950. Ninety-five point seven per cent of the voters voted for the union of Cyprus with Greece. The results of this plebiscite were duly communicated to London. A delegation from Cyprus deposited a copy of the voting returns with the United Nations.

The British Government turned a deaf ear to these expressions of opinion and appeals. In May 1953 the Governor of Cyprus replied once again to the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus that no change in the status of the island of Cyprus was envisaged by Her Majesty's Government.

More categorical by far was the statement on Cyprus made by Mr. Hopkinson, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, in the House of Commons on 28 July 1954. Mr. Hopkinson went so far as to say:

"It has always been understood and agreed that there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent".

Under these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand why the semblance of a constitution, like that discussed at that same meeting of the House of Commons, has no chance of being accepted by the Cypriot people,

especially since the competent members of the British Government did not decline to recognize that this pseudo-constitution was far less liberal than the Constitution of 1948, which had already been rejected by the Cypriots.

Furthermore, five days had hardly elapsed since the above-mentioned meeting of the House of Commons when the British authorities enforced "anti-revolutionary" legislative measures in the island, prohibiting under penalty of excessively severe punishment every manifestation of the will of the people.

This negative policy pursued by the British authorities has brought about a situation which presages no good. Despair and exasperation are not good counsellors ...

III. As was to be expected, however, developments in the island of Cyprus and the refusal of the Government of the United Kingdom to take into consideration the will of the Cypriot population have had tremendous repercussions throughout Greece.

The Greek people, who had paid a heavy toll that freedom and respect for the will of peoples might triumph, found it hard to understand that these principles, designed to be the foundations of the new international community, should not be equally valid for all. They were disappointed to find that, in absolutely identical circumstances, foreign domination was abolished in the Dodecanese Islands, apparently on the grounds that it had been the domination of a vanquished country, while it was maintained in Cyprus, where the ruling country was among the victors.

The natural solidarity binding together a single people - the inhabitants of free Greece and of Cyprus - and the indignation caused by the unjustifiable attitude of the British Government have resulted in the creation in Greece of a violent current of opinion, the power of which it would be dangerous to underestimate and which the Greek Government was unable any longer to overlook.

Greece has always maintained bonds of traditional friendship with Great Britain. The relations between the two countries have never in the past been seriously disturbed, and during the great crises of recent history the two peoples have invariably fought side by side. During the last war, the comradeship-in-arms by which the two nations were united at the most critical moments of the struggle for the freedom and equality of peoples helped to make these bonds still stronger.

Close and friendly co-operation between Great Britain and Greece have constituted both in the past and in our own days an element of political stability in this region of the Eastern Mediterranean. And this stability was necessary and in the interests both of the international community as a whole and of the cause of peace.

The Greek Government could not, therefore, remain indifferent to the emergence of a new factor in Greek public opinion tending to jeopardize this stability and to bring about a most delicate situation in the field of Greco-British relations.

Since 1949, therefore, every Greek Government has endeavoured to approach the British Government with a view to finding a solution to the question of respect for the will of the Cypriot people.

To all these overtures, which have been made at intervals over a period of four years, the British Government has returned a refusal varying only in the degree of discourtesy of the form in which it has been presented.

By refusing to enter into any discussion or contact on so serious a problem, which could not be solved either by ignoring it or declaring it closed, the British Government lightheartedly assumed a heavy responsibility. To the Greek people's resentment at seeing the will of the people of Cyprus disregarded was added the bitterness caused by the offensive attitude adopted towards the Greek Government's overtures.

Aware of both the present and future dangers inherent in this situation, my Government has resolved to appeal to the United Nations. Nevertheless, in order to exercise to the full the goodwill and moderation by which Greek policy in this matter has been inspired, it instructed the Chairman of the Greek Delegation at the eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to make the following statement (plenary meeting of 21 September 1953):

"... The Cyprus question is not to be found among the agenda items of the present session. It is true that, on 10 August 1953, the spiritual and national chief of four-fifths of the Cypriot population addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a memorandum requesting the inclusion of that question in the agenda and the adoption of a resolution recommending that the United Kingdom should accept the right of the people

of Cyprus to self-determination, in compliance with the provisions of the General Assembly resolution 1637 (VII) of 16 December 1952.

"One may therefore ask why my Government, although under very heavy pressure from Greek public opinion, has not sponsored this request or taken a direct initiative in respect thereof ...

"To be willing to go before a judge or an arbiter is, of course, a commendable attitude of mind, especially when one despairs of achieving agreement through direct conversations or negotiations. But normally, no one appeals to a court of law or to an international forum such as this before giving a fair chance to the possibility of direct conversations.

"My Government, therefore, does not at this moment contemplate bringing this matter before this Organization, since it is convinced that the close relations that, so happily, exist between Greece and the United Kingdom make it incumbent upon us not to underestimate either the resources of diplomacy or the political foresight of our British friends. My Government definitely prefers the method of friendly bilateral discussion, since that is warranted by the very nature of our long-standing cordial relations with the United Kingdom and by the felicitous identity of purpose which has always animated the peoples of the two countries. It is our ardent hope that these views are shared by our friends in the United Kingdom and that they, also, consider the task that lies ahead as a worthy object on which to exert their statesmanship. The door will always be open for us to go before a judge, if the ordinary processes of friendly conversations prove to be of no avail ...".

Since September 1953 my Government has on many occasions asked Great Britain directly to put an end to the anomalous situation of the island of Cyprus, which was not justified by any legitimate reason. It has taken diplomatic steps both tactful and pressing; it has made approaches to the British Government in the course of private talks; it has exhausted all remedies and employed every known and practicable diplomatic method. But all this unfortunately, without achieving the least result.

The Government of the United Kingdom has met every Cypriot or Greek request with cold indifference. Moreover, statements made from time to time in the British Parliament added fuel to the fire. This has brought about a situation which, it should be stressed, is likely to "impair friendly relations" between Greece and the United Kingdom as well as "the general welfare" of the international community.

Having exhausted every means of achieving an agreement directly, and having allowed all the time-limits provided for under the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to elapse, the Greek Government feels compelled to ask the United Nations to redress this situation by securing acceptance of the solution required by justice, dignity and the sacred principles set forth in the Charter. It appeals to the General Assembly in the conviction that the Assembly will achieve a constructive solution conducive to peace and freedom.

The Greek Government reserves the right to furnish, if necessary, additional arguments and supporting documents or any other information, orally or in writing, which may enlighten the Assembly on the substance of its appeal.

(Signed) Alexander PAPAGOS

Field-Marshal of Greece
President of the Council of
Ministers
