

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

Official Records



THIRD SPECIAL SESSION

**1002nd
PLENARY MEETING**

Thursday, 24 August 1961,
at 10.30 a.m.

New York

CONTENTS

Agenda item 7:	Page
Consideration of the grave situation in Tunisia obtaining since 19 July 1961 (<i>continued</i>)	73

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

AGENDA ITEM 7

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

1. Mr. MULKI (Jordan): It is my personal pleasure to commemorate my first appearance on this rostrum with a note of sincere congratulations, offered to the President on the occasion of his re-election as President of the General Assembly at its third special session. I am confident that the unanimous vote given to him in this respect is a sign of a genuine appreciation of his outstanding qualities and, above all, of firm belief in this world Organization.

2. Once more the eyes of mankind are focused as one on the vital issues of war or peace. Once again we find France, a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, with its associated responsibility to work for the preservation of world peace and stability, actively engaged in adventures that have endangered the cherished hopes of all men. Once again we find France, a founding Member of the United Nations and defying the resolutions of the Security Council. France's aggression at Bizerta was the latest of a long list of ventures carried out, in vain, to maintain a faltering influence in world affairs.

3. It is not my intention to enumerate at length the aggressive ventures committed by France against small countries who have had the misfortune to fall under French rule in the past. Nor is it my intention to delve in detail into the present crisis which confronts our Organization. Suffice it to mention the seven-year-old war in Algeria, the aggression on Suez in 1956, the bombardment of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef in 1958, the war in Indo-China—all are links in a long chain of aggressive actions that at one time or another have endangered the cause of peace and stability.

4. Little more than a month ago the world was shocked to hear of a crisis in Franco-Tunisian relations, a crisis that was suddenly turned into an inhuman war, waged against a small State and its innocent civilian population, by France with all its might. More than 1,000 were killed, 2,000 were wounded and millions of dollars' worth of property was damaged or devastated. The death toll of the Tunisians consisted primarily of civilians; old men, women and children.

5. But again, this is not the first time in which France, under the leadership of General de Gaulle, has sanctioned, in cold blood, the massacre of an Arab civilian

population. On 8 May 1945 there occurred the bombardment of Damascus and the slaughter of hundreds of innocent persons; on 29 May 1945 there occurred the massacre of 35,000 Algerians in the City of Constantine; and now we have Bizerta. This is the man in whose judgement we are told to have faith and whom we are asked to trust for his desire to reach a just and equitable solution to the question of Algeria and the problem of Bizerta.

6. Few indeed were the leaders in the world who were more willing to have faith in General de Gaulle than President Bourguiba. Ever since General de Gaulle assumed the reins of responsibility in France, President Bourguiba had been the chief advocate of moderation and patience in dealing with France.

7. President Bourguiba was thought of as a friend of France and the West. But it seems that the colonialist Powers see moderation on the part of national leaders as submission, and that, to them, friendship on the basis of mutual respect and understanding is an empty phrase.

8. What has taken place in Tunisia is a lively reminder to those countries which have recently achieved their independence from the grip of colonialism that the designs and outlook of colonial Powers do not quickly change. Their promises and commitments are implementable only subject to those designs, whims and wishes. Those small countries are called upon to be patient and to endure the humiliating presence of foreign troops on their soil against their wishes. When they seek to complete their freedom and enjoy the dignity of being masters of their own destiny they are called trouble-makers and accused of jeopardizing the security of the free world; and its cause and respect are what make a world free. A world cannot be free if it does not stand for liberty, respect and dignity. And if France would like to profess these principles, it should deny them to others. The struggle for freedom is indivisible.

9. The Tunisian Government, in the name of freedom and complete independence, in the name of what is moral and what is right, in the name of what is just and what is equitable, has brought its complaint to the attention of the United Nations. It did so after it had exhausted every possible means to achieve a settlement of the Franco-Tunisian conflict through peaceful measures.

10. That Bizerta and the nearby naval base are integral parts of Tunisian territory is indisputable. The presence of French forces on Tunisian soil without the consent of the Tunisian Government is obviously a limitation of its sovereignty. The Bizerta occupation has been a sore spot in Franco-Tunisian relations, particularly in the past three years. The Government of Tunisia has repeatedly sought to enter into negotiations with France that would ultimately lead to the complete evacuation of French forces from Tunisian soil. For three years Tunisia has been actively trying to achieve through negotiations a termination of French occupation of its soil. And for three years

France has deliberately postponed any action on the repeated requests for talks on a final settlement. President Bourguiba, a firm believer in negotiations as the means to settle international disputes, could no longer stand French continued rejection and high-handed refusal to enter into any negotiations.

11. On 6 July 1961, in a desperate attempt to open talks on Bizerta, President Bourguiba sent a special message¹ by a prominent Tunisian diplomat to General de Gaulle. Instead of replying to the request of Tunisia and expressing its willingness and readiness to enter into negotiations to liquidate the remnants of colonialism and to agree on a time-table of evacuating the Bizerta base, France ignored the Tunisian appeal and started to expand the facilities of the base physically and humanly. This was an affront to the sentiments and dignity of the Tunisian people. From patience, President Bourguiba turned to action in defence of his country's right to unblemished sovereignty.

12. Are we to stay idle when we see the colonial spirit is still lingering, and superior strength used to impose upon weaker countries, wars of reconquest waged and military occupation imposed by force of arms? Can we afford the luxury of being indifferent to the plight of a small Member State at the hands of another Member State which happens to be stronger and more powerful? Can we allow the stronger State to devour a weaker State? Is the Organization so powerless as to allow the aggressor to get away with murder?

13. The Security Council had held two groups of meetings to discuss the French aggression on Tunisia. During the first group [962nd meeting] a resolution²—was unanimously adopted calling for “an immediate cease-fire and a return of all armed forces to their original position”. Men of good will all over the world hailed this resolution as a wise and badly needed step in the right direction. Time went by, only to show that France had no intention of abiding by this resolution, nor did it show any indication of its readiness to respect this call.

14. Once more the Security Council was convened and failed to reach any concrete decision, for obvious reasons with which we have become only too familiar. The second phase of meetings of the Security Council has clearly shown that lofty principles professed and proclaimed to influence world public opinion is something that could not be spared from sacrifice on the altar of alliances, pacts and special interests.

15. This is not a case involving a mere dispute between two Member States; it is a case between the United Nations and France. We have a case in which the whole prestige of our Organization will definitely be at stake if we do not do anything. Should the United Nations be indifferent to the French defiance, it will be betraying its very principles and betraying the hopes of those peoples of the United Nations who assembled, through their representatives, in San Francisco 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.”

16. Our Organization has responsibility to those people. To them the United Nations must be faithful if it wants to serve the great purpose of the Charter. The French challenge to the United Nations authority poses a challenge to us all, and particularly to the big Powers who

are more responsible for the maintenance of international peace. Those Powers are expected to meet this challenge with courage and determination. It is incumbent upon them not to let expediency be their guide; otherwise they would be blessing aggression and encouraging the aggressor. Previous United Nations inaction encouraged air piracy, violation of sovereignty, invasion and naked aggression.

17. My delegation is firmly convinced that France has no desire to reach a final settlement of the present crisis, and has no intention of uprooting itself willingly from Tunisian soil. It has stated that it will not abide by any decision adopted by the United Nations; in fact it chose to boycott this session of the General Assembly.

18. My delegation also believes that the demand of Tunisia for complete French evacuation of its territory is a just, legal and moral demand. This country, struggling to complete its independence and to eradicate the last vestiges of colonialism, is entitled to our support.

19. My country, together with the rest of the Arab States, has pledged unlimited support to our brothers in Tunisia in their struggle against the forces of colonialism. Our masses are restless and are demanding from us practical steps to be carried out to aid the people of Tunisia.

20. Tunisia's support is not limited to the Arab States. The freedom-loving peoples of the world are getting more and more impatient with French intransigence. If we fail to adopt the necessary safeguards and measures to ensure for Tunisia its legitimate rights, and if France is allowed to violate Tunisia's independence with impunity, no one can tell the grave consequences of such a situation in the Middle East.

21. France chose not to participate in this debate. This was expected, since France has no case to argue. We cannot, in this debate, relieve the shock and horror and human suffering caused by the irresponsible behaviour of France. But the least we can do is to condemn this act, prevent its recurrence and take steps to bring about the complete withdrawal of the foreign troops now in Tunisia.

22. The draft resolution [A/L.351] on this question, tabled and sponsored by my delegation and other delegations, is the least the General Assembly can do as a first step. We hope sincerely that it will be unanimously adopted.

23. Mr. DIALLO Telli (Guinea) (*translated from French*): Mr. President, had your candidature for the Presidency of the present session been put on the vote last Monday, 21 August 1961, the delegation of the Republic of Guinea would have voted for it. This is the best testimony we can give of our esteem for you, and our hope that your conduct of our debate will bring our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

24. Our first words, reflecting our continuing concern, must be for our brothers killed at Bizerta who have joined the host of thousands of other martyr-patriots—symbolized and dominated by the legendary figure of the immortal Patrice Lumumba—who have been ready to die on the field of honour in embattled Africa so that their common motherland should live and prosper free and united.

25. It was to these African heroes, to their widows and children, to the noble cause for which they fell, true to their duty to their country, and to the peoples for whom they sacrificed their passionate aspirations—all

¹ Official Records of the Security Council, Sixteenth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1961, document S/4871.

² Ibid., document S/4882.

of them part and parcel of our African heritage, an integral part of the universal heritage—that we, like the majority of the delegations here, dedicated the minute of silent prayer with which the present special session of the General Assembly opened on Monday morning.

26. As the official records of the United Nations show, the General Assembly has been convened for its third special session to consider the grave situation prevailing in Bizerta obtaining since 19 July 1961. It is certainly not by chance that the three special sessions held during the eventful history of the United Nations were called to consider grave threats to international peace and security having as their scene the continent of Africa. Can there be anyone to whom this is not tangible proof of the serious and long-pondered plot hatched by colonialism and its allies against the African peoples, scientifically organized and coldly carried out by those who cannot bring themselves to renounce the colonialist era and its historically outmoded privileges?

27. Let us briefly recall these three important dates in the history of both Africa and the United Nations.

28. October 1956: a tripartite aggression was launched against Egypt, whose only crime was that it wished to be master in its house. At the close of the debate at the emergency special session, the General Assembly, to the great credit of the United Nations, ordered a cease-fire and the immediate withdrawal of the forces of aggression. That was undoubtedly one of the most praiseworthy achievements of the United Nations. Africa, for its part, embattled and proud, on that occasion gained one of the most decisive victories in its struggle for total emancipation.

29. September 1960: The General Assembly was called into emergency special session in connexion with the serious crisis in the Congo resulting from the Belgian aggression, committed with the deliberate support of its allies in all quarters, against the young African State and consequently against all the people of Africa. Clear and precise resolutions should have emerged from those important meetings, but the colonialists and their allies, not satisfied with putting Africa to fire and the sword, succeeded in introducing colonialism and its corrupt methods into the very midst of this international Organization. Hence, these resolutions remained a dead-letter, bringing the United Nations to the verge of bankruptcy and the African people in general, and the Congolese people in particular, to their present plight.

30. August 1961: once again the General Assembly meets in emergency special session to deal with the grave situation arising from the brutal aggression committed at Bizerta by the armed forces of a great Power against a small, peace-loving African State and to find a means of putting an end to this new attack on Africa's vital interests, which carries with it a definite and serious threat to international peace and security.

31. In a few hours at Bizerta the casualty list amounted to more than 800 killed and more than 1,100 wounded, quite apart from the virtually incalculable material damage. This may have come as a surprise to some, but not to us, for Bizerta is in fact the bloody confirmation of all the fears and warnings we have expressed and the alerts we have sounded ever since the Republic of Guinea first appeared on the international scene in 1958. Let there be no mistake: Bizerta is not the result of a sudden brainstorm on the part of military leaders

thirsting for revenge or desirous to erase for a moment by a brilliant feat of arms, regardless of the cost, the long and fatal series of bloody defeats which they have suffered in all theatres of colonial wars, in Syria, Indo-China, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and elsewhere. Bizerta is the normal, logical and, I would even say, inescapable consequence of a deliberate policy which has been pursued with a remarkable consistency since 1945, despite the many changes of government and régime in France. This is the same policy which Jean Schneider, a Councillor of the French Union, defined with singular clarity and some indiscretion in an article entitled "A long-range Eur-African defence policy", published in 1958 in issue No. 95 of the magazine *Union française et parlement* (French Union and Parliament). Here is what he said:

"NATO, which is linked to the defence of the Middle East through Turkey's membership in the Baghdad pact, can no longer be dissociated from our European and African defence system, the industrial development and strategic bases of which determine power relationship in western Europe...

"[We must affirm] our inflexible determination to defend our African positions by all means, including atomic weapons, if the process of revolution now beginning in Africa... were to bring about the direct or indirect intervention of 'volunteers' and foreign armaments... in the African territories bordering on our land and sea frontiers.

"This absolute imperative governs our diplomacy in regard to Tunisia, whose airports must in no case be used as air bases by our enemies without becoming a *casus belli*. For reasons even more obvious than the retention... of Gibraltar under British control, our defence requires the maintenance of our air and naval base at Bizerta and its scrupulous protection against any threat to its security. We do not here have to follow the turns and twists of the Tunisian Government's policy but must affirm our own unequivocally..."

Is this not a clear and patent explanation of the drama which occupies and preoccupies us today?

32. But there is even better to come, for, making his thought even clearer, Mr. Schneider goes on to say:

"We will necessarily first have to establish our sovereignty firmly in Algeria over the areas covered by the joint organization of the Saharan legions, then strengthen our freedom of diplomacy action by a long-term military policy based on nuclear weapons, and lastly ensure the accession of our territories in Black Africa to political status—international sovereignty will be determined later—... in order to establish a Franco-African community with a policy firmly directed... towards safeguarding our interests."

33. That statement by a French politician, which has everywhere and on every occasion been borne out by events even in the United Nations, needs no comment. Suffice it so say that the imperialistic policy enunciated by Mr. Schneider is only a revelation of the French part of a global strategy which all the colonial Powers and their allies are practising with only the slight differences due to their levels of intelligence or their national temperaments. Accordingly, by this flawless logic, Bizerta becomes one link in the chain comprising Mers-el-Kebir, Dakar, Brazzaville, Diego Suarez, Nairobi, Salisbury, Johannesburg, Leopoldville, Luanda, Bissau, Entebbe, Elisabethville and the countless other

links scattered throughout Africa like so many outposts designed to ensure the perpetuation of the colonial order. There is an obvious community of thought, tactics and action on the part of all the sworn enemies of the independence, unity and prosperity of Africa. The sooner the few African leaders who are today gulled or corrupted—in any case traitors to their countries—understand that fact, the sooner Africa will be saved by itself, for itself and for all the peoples of the world.

34. The people of Guinea, and their Government, while not surprised, have nevertheless learned with rightful indignation of the barbarous acts of aggression committed against the people of Tunisia, a small, weak and peaceful country whose only fault in the eyes of the colonial hydra is its desire to exercise effective, full and complete sovereignty over the whole of its national territory.

35. After the events at Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef, the blood of the Tunisians has again flowed at Bizerta because of the actions of the same army, the same armaments and the same policy with the aid of the same accomplices.

36. The basic problem which the Assembly has in reality been called upon to consider and solve is, over and above the intolerable presence of foreign aggressive forces on Tunisian soil, the need to reaffirm and respect the principles of justice and State sovereignty which lie at the very basis of the United Nations. Thus, the present meetings constitute a severe test for the Organization even more than for Tunisia and Africa on the one hand and France and the colonial Powers on the other. We earnestly hope that the United Nations will, as in 1956, live up to the trust reposed in it by the peoples and will be equal to the historical responsibilities it has assumed on behalf of all the peoples of the world.

37. The masterly statement by the Tunisian representative at the opening of this session [996th meeting], which was as clear and specific as it was detailed and considered, makes it unnecessary for me to dwell on the established and regrettable facts which no one has disputed or even seriously tried to dispute.

38. Today these facts are known. In June 1961 the situation, which had already been degenerating through three years of equivocation, evasion and delaying tactics, suddenly deteriorated when the Tunisian Government and people realized that the military command of the Bizerta base, disregarding their wishes and the friendly negotiations actually being carried on, began to throw up outworks to strengthen its military occupation of the base. The pretext was that the airstrip at the Sidi Ahmed airport needed enlarging for more effective air safety, but the real purpose was, in accordance with a prearranged plan, to speed up the process of disembarking troops, munitions and other war *matériel* during operations intended to muzzle the African States and possibly also the States of the Middle East and elsewhere.

39. Moreover, the task of enlarging the air strip was made easier by the conditions which the army of occupation imposed round the Bizerta base, to which the Tunisians were denied entry, although they were considered a friendly people and a firm ally and were held up as an example of the possibility of fruitful co-operation between the former colonizer and the former colony.

40. This intolerable situation, which removed Bizerta from Tunisian sovereignty, enabled the military com-

mand of the base calmly to start in May 1961 to consolidate and enlarge the base. Having successfully taken the first step, the military command began to change the position of the barbed wire entanglements in order, as it were, to extend the area of this enclave subject to an alien sovereignty within Tunisian territory.

41. It was precisely because the Tunisian Government and people opposed this new dismemberment of their territory that the Bizerta crisis, which had been latent since 1956, suddenly flared up, bringing with it the serious consequences of which we are all aware.

42. Last July, the Tunisian people of all classes, through their political, trade-union, youth and women's organizations, formally demanded the withdrawal of French troops from the Bizerta base. The Tunisian Government, complying with the people's wishes, convened the National Assembly in special session on 17 July; the Assembly unreservedly supported the Government's policy and solemnly expressed the Tunisian people's determination to die if necessary for the liberation of the whole of their national territory. That unanimous determination of the Tunisian people, at one with their Government, should have given the colonialists pause and should have induced them to agree to co-operate with the Tunisian leaders in their sincere desire to reach the peaceful settlement envisaged by President Bourguiba and the members of his Government. This, unfortunately, was not to be; for, as early as 19 July, the Minister of Information in the French Government, after a meeting of the Council of Ministers, stated: "All I have to say is that I confirm that paratroop units have been or will be sent to reinforce the units at Bizerta".

43. This aggressive statement necessarily led the Tunisian Government to take additional legitimate precautions to ensure its own security. It was precisely the Tunisian Government's prohibition of overflights in its air space without prior authorization and the road blocks erected spontaneously to cope with any contingency which the French Government has described as aggression, as if the Tunisian troops and the civilian volunteers had not been fully entitled to take the necessary precautions in their own air space and on their own soil against the threat of an attack by a foreign Power on the integrity of their country.

44. Since the plan of aggression against Tunisia had already been drawn up, it was immediately put into execution; a few hours later, military aircraft, violating Tunisian air space, began to fly over the Bizerta area. Troops were dropped under covering fire from aircraft and naval units. The neighbouring Tunisian barracks were subjected to continuous machine-gun fire. After these unjustifiable operations, the acts of aggression were intensified on 20 July. The French Government soon demanded the evacuation of the civilian sector of Bizerta to station the paratroop reinforcements it had dropped the day before. The Tunisian Government's reply was quite naturally a categorical "no", which was the only possible attitude it could take consistent with Tunisian sovereignty and dignity. The French Air Force then entered into action, as if intending to give the people of Bizerta an unforgettable lesson in political realism by reminding them that the confidence they had in good faith placed in the colonialists was scorned by the latter, whose behaviour at all events should remind Africans who are not yet awake to the facts of life of the eternal truth that the lamb is tragically mistaken if it plays with the wolf.

45. Such is, in brief, the grim history of the gallant feats of arms performed by the colonial *élite* troops, who, after the massacres at Damascus in 1943, at Setif and Thiaroye in 1945, at Haiphong in 1946 and in Madagascar in 1947, have once again brought off this dubious type of exploit characteristic of the behaviour of colonial soldiery in all countries and at all times.

46. International public opinion cannot remain indifferent to the horrors of the colonial war of reconquest being waged against Tunisia. On all continents, Governments have been appalled, and, expressing their people's feelings of horror, have declared their solidarity with the Tunisian people and Government.

47. The Republic of Guinea, for its part, has, through its highest official channels, expressed its support and its unconditional solidarity with martyred Tunisia. First, President Sékou Touré sent the following message to President Bourguiba:

"The Guinean people and their Government, deeply concerned at the test of strength initiated by the forces of colonialism, which is now causing the blood of Tunisian patriots to be shed at Bizerta, assure you of their entire solidarity and their unstinting support. The Tunisian people, victim of this unspeakable act of aggression, can rely on the Casablanca group to act to safeguard our African heritage."

48. Later, in reply to the appeal of the President and the National Assembly of Tunisia, and in order to repel the aggression and to display the Guinean people's solidarity with the Tunisian nation which is fighting to secure respect for its sovereignty and to preserve peace, the President of our Parliament stated:

"On behalf of the Guinean Parliament, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of 26 July 1961 concerning the aggression against Bizerta. The policy of excessive tolerance which has marked Tunisia's relations with the colonial Powers has fatally led them dangerously to underestimate your country's genuine desire for decolonization and has sown doubt and confusion in the minds of the African States and national leaders who are firmly anticolonialist and anti-imperialist. The barbarous act perpetrated at Bizerta by the French soldiery has cast a glaring light on this situation, which Tunisia, in its real interests, can no longer tolerate. All nationally-conscious Africa feels itself threatened by this aggression, and, in this time of trial, the National Assembly of the Republic of Guinea, faithfully expressing the unanimous feelings of its people, assures you of its most active sympathy and its entire and unconditional support."

49. The African and Asian group of States were obliged to act immediately in the United Nations. Accordingly, on 25 July 1961, more than forty delegations addressed a letter³ to the President of the Security Council, in which they expressed their deep concern and their full support for ensuring respect for the effective exercise of Tunisian sovereignty over the whole of its national territory and for the inalienable right of that State to demand the withdrawal from its soil of the foreign forces stationed there against its will.

50. The vicissitudes of the debates in the Security Council are well known. We shall therefore confine ourselves to bringing out a single fact. With regard to the execution of the Security Council's interim reso-

lution of 22 July 1961⁴ the Tunisian Government immediately ordered its armed forces to cease fire and to return to their original positions, even though provocations and acts of aggression continued. It was not until much later that the hideous chatter of machine-guns and automatic weapons frenziedly wielded by the blood-intoxicated paratroopers was stilled.

51. The cease-fire, however, had neither the sense, the meaning nor the scope implied by the Security Council's interim resolution, because the aggressive forces, believing that they had by 22 July attained their objective—the occupation of the whole Bizerta region—had felt that they could cease-fire, since they could at the same time refuse to surrender an inch of the positions they had gained. They therefore refused to implement the second major provision of the Security Council resolution which called for the withdrawal of all armed forces to their original positions and necessarily implied not only the return of the French soldiers stationed at Bizerta before 19 July to their barracks, but also the withdrawal from Tunisia of all the troops brought into that country after that date.

52. In this situation, fraught with the danger of an explosion, it is sad to see the number of tardy or bewildered States which have not yet understood, or do not wish to understand, that profound changes have occurred on the African continent, bringing with them the final collapse of the colonial system. Those States, which have even sometimes succeeded in stifling the judgement and the moral sense of their own peoples, will have a terrible awakening.

53. In any case, their criminal behaviour every day makes more acute the inescapable need for an immediate reform of the structure of the United Nations, so that through its organs, the representatives of two-thirds of mankind, excluded from the international scene until the end of the Second World War, will finally have the legal, political and diplomatic means to bring their full weight to bear on the solution of world problems and the preservation of international peace and security.

54. It is that main concern which led the preliminary meeting of the representatives of twenty-two uncommitted countries⁵ to place on the agenda of that historic gathering the reorganization of the United Nations structure and the effective execution of its resolutions in the interests of all peoples.

55. Although it is well established that there is no negotiated agreement justifying the presence of French troops at Bizerta, representatives of responsible States, who declare that they are zealous for the respect for international law, have come before this meeting to defend, directly or indirectly, the aggressor, if not the aggression, whereas we are still impatiently awaiting for them to protest against the contemptuous and gratuitous taunts repeatedly spread concerning the United Nations, and, even more, against the humiliating treatment inflicted on the United Nations at Bizerta in the person of the Secretary-General. This may be logical according to their policies, but on behalf of the African peoples we say quite plainly that we have had enough of this ambiguous conduct, the high cost of which has ultimately always been paid by our peoples.

56. Whether it is the Berlin crisis or some other horsetrading practically invisible to the naked eye that

³ *Ibid.*, document S/4896.

⁴ *Ibid.*, document S/4882.

⁵ Meeting held at Cairo from 5 to 12 June 1961.

lies behind this contradictory policy which is wholly unintelligible to us, we must tell those who are so wantonly trampling principles under foot: "Take care: the greatest danger may not be where you think."

57. The greatest threat to international peace and security lies in the systematic injustice, oppression and exploitation to which the colonial Powers are still subjecting so many peoples and countries. That is the direction from which the danger will come.

58. Some of the policy statements made here cannot fail to strike the attention, especially of the oppressed peoples of Africa and of the African States, mindful of their special responsibilities and, banded together under the Charter of Casablanca, have resolutely determined to reject any compromise with colonialism and its lackeys, to demand the restoration of African dignity which has been flouted for centuries, to enforce the total decolonization of African political, economic and cultural institutions at all times and places, relentlessly to denounce the African puppets manipulated from Lisbon, Paris, Brussels, London and elsewhere, and lastly to oppose all anti-African crusades, regardless of their origin, even if certain Africans lend themselves to such ventures.

59. The Bizerta crisis will have proved once more that, beyond the arbitrary distinctions and superficial labels by which the Brazzaville group of States were classified as models of moderation and reflection in contrast to the Casablanca Charter group, with their alleged intransigence and excessive anti-colonialism, to the men, peoples and States can be accurately and correctly assessed only when tested to the utmost. On this basis, it must be admitted, Bizerta has effectively revealed the true face of modern Africa. On the one side, failing friendships, fading solidarity and vanishing fidelity between sister States which only yesterday were members of what seemed to be a solid front and, on the other hand, States that yesterday were held at arm's length and often subjected to unfair and gratuitous taunts, which have, nevertheless, spontaneously and unanimously responded to the first call for help from their brothers, the Tunisian people.

60. Any serious division in Africa is reflected most accurately in this difference of behaviour. For the only real divergence that discloses the policies of the African States lies in their differing degree of fidelity and their actual stand with regard to the overriding interests of Africa, its peoples and their future.

61. In the present circumstances, we can only repeat our invitation to our brothers of the Brazzaville group to assist us in finally expelling all the colonizers from our countries. What a glorious future would be open to us, for we could then devote our whole energy to the stirring tasks of national reconstruction. What an irresistible force for progress and peace we would then be. When conscious of our common past of suffering and humiliation, united by our common desire for the total restoration of our rights and guided by the profound aspirations of our peace-loving and industrious peoples, we should work shoulder to shoulder under the Charter of Casablanca improved by our united action and extended to embrace our whole continent.

62. No African, no observer familiar with the problems of decolonization, can isolate Bizerta from the series of convulsions which for several years has been shaking the African continent from north to south and from east to west. In fact, Bizerta is only one of the links in the chain of horrors which still stifles Africa

in the deadly strait-jacket of oppression restored by foreign troops in our newly-founded States. A thousand strings pulled in Paris, London, Brussels, Lisbon, The Hague and Madrid unite Bizerta, Diego-Suarez, Dakar, Bouaké, Atar, Niamey, Cotonou, Brazzaville, Bengui, Fort-Lamy, Libreville, Nairobi, Elisabethville, Luanda and all the other key positions of colonialism, scattered throughout Africa.

63. Mindful as it is of that profound truth, the Republic of Guinea, having cleared its soil of all foreign troops, has continued to warn its brother States of Africa against the mortal danger to them, their peoples and their neighbours inherent in direct and indirect military assistance in its many forms, assistance of which their peoples will one day pay the cost, like the innocent victims of Bizerta today. For the same reason the representatives of Guinea have constantly stressed that the elimination of the military "agreements" extorted from the former colonies by the metropolitan countries, is one of the prerequisites for the exercise of both international and of national sovereignty; without such sovereignty, there could only be the deception of renewed servitude in the form of forcibly imposed communities: communities of the rider and the horse, of the master and the slave, of the robber and the robbed, which are still being imposed on so many countries of Africa subjected to a humiliating system of strictly supervised freedom.

64. Anyone with an inkling of law knows that any agreement concluded between a guardian and an infant ward is void. But this sort of thing is common enough in Africa. By imposing on their colonies, often as the price of an illusory freedom, agreements which sequester, sometimes in the most brutal form, their independence, while at the same time making false promises of international sovereignty, the colonial Powers are engaging in gross fraud.

65. In the specific case of the aggression against Bizerta, the General Assembly must at this session establish clearly the responsibilities incurred. We are convinced that the French Government bears that responsibility. Will the General Assembly succeed, as it did in 1956, in repelling injustice and force? That is the disturbing question which the African peoples, whose attention is fixed on our meetings, are asking. African opinion is wholeheartedly on the side of martyred Tunisia. We must demand here of all Member States, and particularly of those who enjoy a privileged position in the Security Council under the Charter, compliance with the decisions which have been or may be taken by the United Nations and, specifically, respect for the provisional Security Council resolution of 22 July 1961. We must specifically demand the return of the troops stationed at Tunis before 19 July 1961 to the base from which they came and the evacuation from Tunisia of troops which have been transported there since that date.

66. In order to bring about this first objective and then to find a final solution of the Bizerta crisis, many delegations, including my own, have sponsored the draft resolution [A/L.351], submitted to the Assembly for approval.

67. While it has subscribed to this draft resolution in a spirit of African-Asian solidarity, the delegation of the Republic of Guinea nevertheless feels compelled to state plainly that, in its view, the draft resolution is too timid, too weak, and hence inadequate. His delegation considers, in particular, that operative para-

graph 2 proclaims an obvious platitude. Although my delegation has deferred only for reasons of solidarity, to the tactical concerns which governed the drafting of this document it regrets most sincerely that the sponsors have not simply taken as a model paragraph 1 of the Security Council resolution of 22 July 1960 concerning the situation in the Republic of the Congo⁶ and paragraph 2 of the Security Council resolution of 9 August 1960 on the same subject.⁷ Paragraph 1 of the resolution of 22 July reads as follows:

"1. *Calls upon* the Government of Belgium to implement speedily the Security Council resolution of 14 July 1960 on the withdrawal of its troops..."

Paragraph 2 of the resolution of 9 August 1960 states:

"2. *Calls upon* the Government of Belgium to withdraw immediately its troops from the province of Katanga... and to assist in every possible way the implementation of the Council's resolutions".

68. Remember that Tunisia was one of the drafters and sponsors of those resolutions, and that France did not oppose them at that time! It would be simple justice if today France were paid back in the same coin, not only by all the small States Members but also by the great Powers which agreed in 1960 to condemn Belgian aggression in the Congo and to demand that the necessary steps should be taken to protect the Congolese people. For all these reasons, we will vote without enthusiasm for the draft resolution in document A/L.351.

69. While it is natural for all to give serious thought to the bitter lesson of Bizerta, it is vital for the African representatives. We shall do so with the calm and the coolness which precede the firm and resolute decisions of responsible men, strong in the justice of their cause, in legitimate and lofty aims.

70. The first lesson we have drawn from the Bizerta aggression is unquestionably an intense awareness of how harmful are colonial military bases planted on the African continent. These bases are guns aimed at States and clearly designed to maintain us as the tools of a policy conceived abroad by men not elected by us and for purposes which are not ours. We have said this before many times, and we will not cease to repeat it.

71. We are convinced that the presence of foreign troops of the colonial Powers on the soil of former colonies is a gross violation of the sovereignty of those States. It is true, as the representative of Mali stated, that any African State has the right to conclude such agreements as it wishes with parties of its choosing, but obviously, only if the parties concerned are entirely free. Hence we must denounce the bogus agreements imposed by the metropolitan countries officially or unofficially on their colonies, even though the latter may be temporarily granted national flags and anthems solely for the purpose of Machiavellian propaganda. The presence of foreign troops is more than an insult to our dignity as Africans; it is a permanent threat to our recently gained sovereignty, a sword of Damocles suspended over our heads and capable of destroying the internal and external security of our States at any moment.

72. In view of these basic considerations, we demand that the colonial Powers and all the supporters of neo-colonialism renounce the military bases they have forced

upon Africa while there is still time, and that they effect the peaceful withdrawal of their troops before the African peoples take a hand in the matter.

73. The exceptional importance of the problem of foreign military bases for Africa and Asia led the preliminary meeting of the representatives of twenty-two uncommitted countries to consider this question one of the most objective criteria of non-alignment.

74. The Bizerta crisis offers us another occasion, and an exceptional one, to speak our mind aloud to our African brothers, in terms dictated both by the friendship and common aspirations of our peoples and by the common destiny of our various countries. In this connexion, it may be useful to recall what the Tunisian representative, quoting the words of President Bourguiba, said here on Monday morning: "Bizerta is an running sore in Tunisia's side: it adds nothing to the security of France, while it threatens to restrict the freedom and independence of Tunisia" [996th meeting, para. 40].

75. There is no responsible and informed African who will not support this statement. We will simply add that what is true of Bizerta and Tunisia is true of all foreign military bases in Africa and of the countries in which they are located. It is because serious thought must be given to the grave dangers which the colonial military bases in Africa create for the countries which have been saddled with them as well as for their neighbours that we have deplored all the African attempts to mediate between any colonial Power whatever, and one of our brother African States under attack, just as we deplored in December 1960 the attempts to mediate between the French Government and embattled Algeria. For the same reason we condemned this perversion of the sense of solidarity which led African statesmen to join the torturers of Africa, yesterday in Algeria and the Congo and today in Tunisia, in seeking to deny their brothers, friends and sponsors within the United Nations the legitimate aid they requested from the United Nations in order to terminate serious threats to their national existence. It is, therefore, easy to understand the legitimate disappointment and great bitterness of Mr. Masmoudi, the Tunisian Minister for Information and African statesman, who stated recently at Dakar: "Some African countries are paying too dearly today for the assistance they have received."

76. We were, nevertheless, pleased to note that the spokesman of the Brazzaville Conference⁸ countries acknowledged here last Monday that the objective of the negotiations between Tunisia and France he thought desirable would definitely be the evacuation of Bizerta in accordance with the will of the Tunisian people.

77. It is because the Republic of Guinea is convinced that nothing will prevent all the sons of Africa from coming together again and from working shoulder to shoulder to serve solely the glory and prosperity of their common fatherland that, in speaking to our brothers, we have deliberately refrained from using honeyed words, concealing the truth and the facts of our common situation. Lastly, for the same reason, we venture here to tell our African brothers:

"Take care! You must act at once. Do not wait for more Bizertas to learn where our common interest lies and what our common destiny demands."

⁶ Security Council, Official Records, Fifteenth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1960, document S/4405.

⁷ *Ibid.*, document S/4426.

⁸ Conference of French-speaking African and Malagasy States.

78. The third lesson that we wish to stress as learned from the Bizerta crisis relates to the effect of the aggression against Bizerta on the development of Africa. True, we must first express our sorrow that Africa has had to pay so high a price at Bizerta. We can affirm, however, that at least our Tunisian brothers and sisters have not died in vain, for Bizerta will undeniably advance the African cause.

79. First, Bizerta has made it possible to tear away one more strip from that dangerous humbug—the backcloth for the policy of the colonial Powers. We are more than ever justified in stating that no sincere and genuine co-operation is possible between a colonial Power and a former colony unless the latter has wholly decolonized its political, economic and cultural institutions.

80. But we believe just as firmly that, once this decolonization has been achieved, productive co-operation is possible between former colonies and former colonizers on the basis of strict respect for their sovereignties and their mutual interests.

81. Precisely because it has wholly decolonized the men, institutions and all the structures of the former French Guinea, the Government of the new Guinea is able today to extend its hand sincerely to France and, on the basis of strict equality, can offer France real friendship founded on profitable co-operation. Owing to this well-considered desire for a new, clear policy, the people and Government of the Republic of Guinea gave to the representatives of the people and the Government of France, a few days ago at Conakry, a token of the fine future that would be open to the colonial Powers in a wholly decolonized Africa. In any event, we must say it plainly: there is no other path for Africa to take consistent with its dignity.

82. Moreover, we cannot but rejoice at the fact that, since the earliest days of the aggression, Bizerta has served to renew and consolidate African solidarity and unity and at the same time has broadened our own community, which takes precedence over any other communities that may exist. The fraternal and hence spontaneous reconciliation between the Tunisian Government and the Government of the United Arab Republic will make it possible for the enormous resources of these two countries to be placed entirely at the service of progressive Africa and its profound aspirations. Undoubtedly it will be trump card in our struggle for complete decolonization which we have decided to carry through the finish.

83. Lastly, we and all our friends are delighted to hear that President Bourguiba, who is fighting for Africa, will appear in person at Belgrade, along with all the other Heads of State or Heads of Governments of the non-aligned countries of Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, to express the feelings, the attitude and the demands of the Tunisian people regarding the inauguration of an era of genuine peace and security for all.

84. In these circumstances, we are convinced that Bizerta has reinforced to an unusual degree the fighting strength of Africa and the field of freedom. Consequently, with the strength of our solidarity, the support of all honourable men and of all advocates of a peace based on justice, we are convinced that no force in the world can prevent the total restoration of Bizerta to its legitimate and sole sovereign, the Tunisian people.

85. In conclusion, the Guinean delegation is not too unhappy at the absence of the French delegation from this room where discussion is in good faith and opposing views are honestly expressed. Indeed, we have been used for years to seeing the colonial Powers evade debates as soon as, lacking arguments, they realize that they are condemned in advance by international opinion.

86. We regret only that the tried and true allies of these colonial Powers, those who give them unconditional support in all circumstances and take their place at the most difficult moments, as they have done today, have not shown themselves such faithful servitors as to absent themselves as well.

87. For who does not recall that France in respect of Algeria, the nuclear tests in the Sahara and now Bizerta, Portugal in respect of Angola, Belgium in respect of the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi and South Africa in respect of its intolerable policy of racial discrimination have often evaded debate; that they have stood aloof from the United Nations and have at times ostentatiously quitted the conference room to avoid being compelled to reply to the pertinent accusations of their victims.

88. To these colonial Power we say: every time you left the room, refusing to take part in debates in which we were seeking reasonable ways of setting at rest the anxieties of the people, you used the wrong exit. It is not the United Nations you must leave, for that will satisfy neither your interests nor those of your victims. It is Africa and Asia that you must quit as colonial Powers, and promptly, by the front door—and with no hope of return.

89. Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) (*translated from French*): The delegation of Morocco is extremely happy, Mr. President, to associate itself with the cordial congratulations addressed to you on the occasion of your election as President of this special session.

90. The nature of the problem before us and the sweeping implications of the present debate call for qualities of mind and for experience. The unanimous choice of this Assembly is indeed a signal tribute to your possession of these characteristics.

91. My delegation is somewhat concerned at the danger that the habit; of calling special sessions too frequently may tend to distort the work of this Organization or at least one of its essential activities.

92. During the last ten meetings, the General Assembly has been considering questions related to matters in which the French Government has been involved. Its delegation was absent from most of those meetings, and we note, to our profound regret, that it is again absent today. Yet in this dispute between Tunisia and France none of the pretexts habitually invoked to deny the jurisdiction of the United Nations or to release France from the obligation to answer or explain is relevant.

93. Whether victim of aggression or aggressor, France owes us the courtesy of its presence, under the Charter and our rules of procedure, and should spare us the embarrassment of proceeding *in absentia* against a defendant with a weak case.

94. That absence can have no effect on our conclusions, but it does—and profoundly—detract from the collective dignity of this Organization and from the individual dignity of each Member. It sullies the prestige of France itself, for it is inconsistent with those international virtues which France has always vaunted.

95. I fully realize that France is the sole guardian of its own prestige, and that it has views of its own about this Organization. This does not, however, mean that its conduct, especially in the present circumstances, does not give some grounds for scepticism about the contribution to the maintenance of peace, which France, one of the founding Members of the United Nations, one of the original signatories of the Charter, and a country whose representative here is now serving as President of the Security Council.

96. To set against this regrettable finding, I think I should also emphasize another no less significant circumstance—the fact that more than half of the Members of this Assembly have requested a special session in view of the aggression and the intensifying crisis. Most of them are commonly termed small countries; and we must note once again that it is these small countries which espouse the cause of justice and conscientiously support the principles of the Charter.

97. Public opinion in our countries might be excused if it gained the impression that all the advocacy of justice and peace are to be found within definite geographical degrees of latitude and longitude.

98. Profoundly attached as it is to the United Nations and wholly in unison with Tunisia, my country desires to express its gratitude to all the Member States that have rendered this debate possible. That is not merely an expression of sympathy for Tunisia, the victim of aggression, but also—and not least—a strengthening of the confidence of our peoples in the United Nations.

99. My good friend the distinguished representative of Tunisia has explained on several occasions before the Security Council, and last Monday before this Assembly as well [996th meeting], all aspects of the conflict between his country and France. He has done so with all his distinctive lucidity of expression and nobility of thought, and with a calm and serenity to which we could not remain insensible.

100. It was my painful privilege to travel to Tunisia during the first days of the aggression against Bizerta, as the bearer of a message of fraternal solidarity from Morocco and its Sovereign to the President of the Republic of Tunisia and its people. I was present at the burial of the dead, and at the death-bed of some of the wounded. I could discern on the faces of the mourners all the bitterness of their travail, but I assure you, in all the depth of that anguish there was no trace of hate, hardly a trace even of resentment; it seemed as though human agency had had nothing to do with the tragedy, and that the people, so often similarly distressed, had again undergone a natural calamity which left it appalled, yet unbowed. The determination of the Tunisian Government and people must be taken very seriously, if further events are not to come as a surprise. Mr. Mongi Slim has well expressed that dignity, that determination.

101. It is almost incredible that, more than five years after the recognition of its independence and sovereignty, a country which is a Member of the United Nations may yet be subjected to such aggression, merely because it had demanded respect for its territorial integrity by other countries, in accordance with the essential attributes of sovereignty. Yet this has been the second time in three years that the newly-formed Republic of Tunisia has brought suit against the French Government of violating the integrity of its territory and committing armed aggression against its people.

102. All of us remember the discussion in the Security Council that followed the bombardment of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef in February 1958. In spite of the embarrassed explanations put forward by France, the deep underlying causes and the true nature of the conflict were exposed to all the world. The Anglo-American mission of good offices had been successful, its achievements undoubtedly marked by the spirit and the will to conciliation, but they had drawn a veil over the real problem, the presence of French troops in Tunisia. Learning from this deplorable experience, the Tunisian Government made strong representations, which led, on 17 June 1958, to the exchange of letters⁹ mentioned by several representatives in their statements here. The letter from the French Government stated, in substance, that it intended to maintain on Tunisian territory only such armed forces as might be there under agreements negotiated between the two States. This document established, first of all, a principle subject to no reservation and open to no misunderstanding: it made the presence of French troops on Tunisian soil, irrespective of their number and where they might be stationed, subject to the consent of the Tunisian Government. If that consent were refused, France could not rely on any legal argument—and no such argument exists in any case—nor any political consideration whatever, for Tunisia was at liberty to ignore any such considerations.

103. How, it may be asked, did those troops happen to be on Tunisian territory at all? In fact, they arrived in 1881 to occupy Tunisia; and there they still are.

104. The long struggle waged by the Tunisian people, under the leadership of its President, did indeed put an end to the Protectorate and all the resulting extra-territorial privileges. The French army, regarded as the essential tool of the Protectorate, was to leave as soon as Tunisian sovereignty had been recognized. But the new legal status was not strictly implemented. Extremely great difficulties arose during the negotiations, and these difficulties led the Tunisians, owing to the fact that they lacked bargaining power to consent to the postponement of the withdrawal of the French troops. But it was quite expressly specified that the troops thus maintained provisionally were there on no legal basis and that the Tunisian army was the only force and the only authority invested with military responsibilities in Tunisia.

105. In the atmosphere of mutual understanding that was to mark the new relations between the two countries, France took advantage of the confidence accorded it by the other party, whose good faith was based on clearly-expressed law and a sense of honour; it wished to establish the basis for a future marked by loyal co-operation and mutual respect. There could thus be no room for misunderstanding; between France, which for over 30 years had been fully aware of the course followed by President Bourguiba, and the Tunisian people, which had also been fully aware, for over 30 years, of the philosophy of its leader and the mode of life and thought which had led him towards his ultimate destiny. That same people, which on 15 December 1951 had rejected the notorious note on shared sovereignty at the cost of bloodshed, imprisonment and exile, could not, without being untrue to itself, accept in one way or another, so

⁹ Official Records of the Security Council, Sixteenth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1961, document S/4869.

large a derogation from its sovereignty and alienation of its territorial integrity.

106. The same problem arose in Morocco at the other end of the Maghreb. We had gone forward in the spirit of confidence, goodwill and determination. We had long been familiar with the same frustrations and the same equivocations. We had been confronted by the same arguments that sought indefinite postponement of the settlement. We are glad today that we were able last summer to reach an agreement under which, on 31 October next, the last French troops will leave the whole of the Moroccan territory which is at present under our sovereignty.

107. But why, in that case, does an entirely different pattern of conduct still persist with respect to Tunisia? Peace in the Maghreb is indivisible, and attempts to divide it cannot possibly lead to the peace we desire. At the very moment when we were awaiting the end of the war in Algeria, France gives us war at Bizerta. Legitimate defence, it is claimed. The shot fired at the French helicopter is not the cause of the conflict, and can even less serve as the pretext; it was at most one incident in a complex situation, and no rhetoric could build it up into a primary or decisive event. It was not at the moment when the Tunisian army lawfully opened fire on this aircraft that the battle of Bizerta began, and it was not by a shot that the claim was asserted.

108. Ever since Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef the Tunisian Government has been raising this problem in terms. Many approaches were made to the French embassy at Tunis and to the French Government in Paris, requesting the opening of negotiations for an agreement. All were in vain, and Franco-Tunisian relations seriously deteriorated on each occasion. There came a time when only the esteem of the two Heads of State still preserved these relations from a violent breach. But President Bourguiba's responsibility to his people could not continue indefinitely to find, in this single link, any satisfactory response to its national aspirations. We even saw President Bourguiba halt the popular manifestation for the liberation of Bizerta, when General de Gaulle and his Government were having serious difficulties in Algeria with their own army. After the declaration of war in 1939, the Moroccan nationalist movement officially advised the French Government that it would suspend action so long as France was confronted with this agonizing test. But the first acts of the Free French Government at Algiers were the massacre of January 1944 and the imprisonment or exile of 16,000 nationalists. Is the reply to President Bourguiba's loyalty the slaughter at Bizerta? We refuse to believe it.

109. Last March, General de Gaulle greeted President Bourguiba with tokens of sincere friendship and genuine esteem. The conversations between these two statesmen covered all aspects of the Franco-Tunisian controversy, including Bizerta. On his return, the President of the Republic of Tunisia had real cause for satisfaction, and believed that a new era in Franco-Maghreb relations had dawned. Who was it that recklessly squandered all that capital of confidence and dissipated all that hope? Was it the Head of State of France or the Head of State of Tunisia? A brief review of a few facts will give the correct answer.

110. A scant two months after that meeting in Paris, the French authorities, without a knowledge of the Tunisian Government, began to expand and strengthen positions at the Bizerta base, and, in particular, lengthened

the airfield runways. That action implies that France is not preparing to evacuate the base in the near future. The construction of the new runways is likewise not an indication that France is preparing to convert military into economic potential—a solution that the Tunisian Government would consider desirable and of use to the development of Tunisia as part of co-operation between the two Governments.

111. Disturbed by these preparations, and drawing the inescapable conclusions, President Bourguiba delivered to General de Gaulle through one of his close colleagues a message expressing in urgent terms that he was well aware how serious the situation was and its possible results. No reply was received. Instead, one morning the French military authorities at Bizerta attempted to shift the barbed wire fence that marked the boundary of the base. The Tunisian army legitimately opposed this and the French *chargé d'affaires*, who had come to support this attempt, advised the Tunisian Secretary of State for Defence that Admiral Amman would not consent to interrupt this work for more than 48 hours. This was a regular ultimatum in every detail, including even the customary time-limit communicated by an admiral to a government which was bound to ignore it.

112. Did they really expect Tunisia to yield? Eighty years of struggle had elapsed since the Bardo Treaty, which seems to have been the most recent historical event that Admiral Amman could recall.

113. The premeditation in Paris was just as obvious. On the morning of 19 July, the Council of Ministers met. The Government spokesman, who does not usually take liberties with General de Gaulle's thinking or anticipate his decisions, thereupon announced the dispatch of large-scale reinforcements to Bizerta. The pretext advanced for the Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef action could not be invoked in this case. No Algerian army of liberation was encamped at Bizerta, and General de Gaulle was not forced with any move by the army or the Algiers delegation.

114. This was the news that prompted the Tunisian Government's decision to prohibit overflights above its territory. That was a perfectly legitimate decision for a sovereign State; and nothing is more legitimate than action against any aircraft violating such a decision.

115. But no action has been taken to comply with the interim resolution of the Security Council.¹⁰ A whole month has passed since its adoption—a month that has served only to expand the French zone of occupation and to place Bizerta under an armistice régime. The French Government defies this resolution, adopted by an organ of which France is a permanent member, and should therefore be even more morally and politically bound by it.

116. All manifestations of good will by Tunisia, whether before or after the crisis, have been met by the haughty indifference of the French Government. To the legitimate appeal to this international Organization, and to the very decisions of that Organization, it opposes a conception of prestige, the very futility of which should dictate its abandonment. France rejects the sincere and continuous efforts by friends of both countries with formulas combining literary with military style in order to hoodwink the victim a second time.

117. What hope is there still open of escape from the continuing impasse? Our aim is clear. It is to recover justice to Tunisia, and, for Tunisia, justice is the return of the French troops to France.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, document S/4882.

118. No legal situation has ever been so utterly clear, no denial of justice so flagrant. If the Organization washes its hands of the affair before it today, or if it should prove unable to settle it, there will be unforeseeable consequences, not only because the victim will despair but also because the criminal will be encouraged to commit further crimes.

119. Other bases still exist in certain other African countries, which cannot indefinitely regard them as compatible with their higher interests. If, in the name of that same freedom that might have led it today to enter into an agreement, one of those countries should tomorrow denounce that agreement, what assurance would it have that it could enforce its right to do so and be sure that paratroopers would not descend on it? If that happened, the United Nations, if it survived, would have to devote almost all its attention to one such crisis after another.

120. While my delegation is glad to pay a deserved tribute to the governments that have never been sparing of their efforts to assuage tensions and avert this tragic collision between two friendly countries, I must express our astonishment at certain attitudes dictated by the virtues of friendship but reproved by the dictates of conscience.

121. Within the ranks of those who profess the cult of freedom, to which the peoples are whole-heartedly attached, it should be possible to avoid the invariable sacrifice of freedom to friendship. It should be possible as well to convince those who, in the name of friendship, die for a freedom they have not yet experienced.

122. Within the ranks of those who, in their inmost hearts, are convinced of the truth, but remain torn between the ties of fraternity and ties as such some voice should be raised in support of Tunisia. It would enhance the dignity of the weak and likewise justice itself.

123. Mr. GARCIA INCHASTEGUI (Cuba) (*translated from Spanish*): In the name of the delegation of Cuba, I desire to express to you, Mr. President, our congratulations on your re-election at this special session.

124. For one appearing for the first time before this Assembly, it is a high honour to do so for the purpose of raising his voice against colonialist aggression. The question of Tunisia has many aspects which lead to the conclusion that it does not involve Tunisia alone, but all countries which have to endure imperialist aggression, which have been, and still are, compelled to suffer the presence of alien military forces against the will of their people, which are constrained to tolerate threats to their sources of energy and their natural resources.

125. The question of Tunisia is the question of Cuba as well; but even if there were no such striking resemblances between the two cases, the voice and the vote of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba would still be given to the people and the Government of Tunisia, for on its side are reason, justice and the hearts of all the peoples of all the peoples of the world.

126. We wish to stress some statements by President Bourguiba. On 17 June 1959, he said:

"Where principles are concerned we cannot compromise, especially on the principle that the territory of an independent and sovereign State has no room for two armies, one national and the other foreign".

And on 25 January 1961, he said:

"But our country is not for sale. We shall not yield a single inch of our territory, whatever the bargaining conditions and however acute our needs. We did think

that Bizerta was of less strategic importance in the age of the atomic bomb, of guided missiles, of inter-planetary voyages. Bizerta, in very truth, is an open sore in the Tunisian body; it is a weak point. It contributes nothing to the security of France, whilst it involves the risk of impairing the prestige of Tunisia and to threaten its freedom and independence. Military bases in foreign countries prolong an age that is past."

127. Our heart thrills with emotion when we read these words, and the alien French military base at Bizerta reminds us of the alien United States military base at Guantánamo. The imperialist aggression by France against the people and Government of Tunisia recalls to us the imperialist aggression by the Government of the United States against the people and the Revolutionary Government of Cuba; and the heroism of the Tunisians recalls the heroism of the Cubans. It therefore seems natural to us that the colonialist Governments of France and the United States should be united by military pacts; and it is therefore that we understand with the utmost scorn that bombs from the United States should fall on Tunisia, even as they are falling on Angola, as they are falling on Algeria, as they have fallen on Cuba. And it is therefore that these correct arguments by President Bourguiba are as much ours as they are Tunisians, because they are the views of the peoples fighting for liberation. This, therefore, is the reasons for our Government's solidarity with the Government and people of Tunisia.

128. The Revolutionary Government of Cuba immediately expressed its solidarity with the Government and people of Tunisia in the cable dispatched by our Minister of Foreign Relations to the Minister of Foreign Relations of Tunisia, which has been distributed to delegations as a Security Council document.¹¹

129. Our delegation, together with thirty-seven other countries, signed the petition for the calling of this special session of the General Assembly [A/4831].

130. Some representatives have spoken here of the need to refrain from further exacerbation of the dispute between France and Tunisia. For our part, we think that there can never be any dispute whatever between peoples, neither on this subject nor on any other. The dispute here is between a colonialist government and the government and people of an independent State that has suffered aggression; between an aggressor government and a people resisting aggression. And we can have no doubts about raising our voice and offering our vote to the country fighting against the powerful aggressor, for its independence, for its sovereignty, for its territorial integrity. There is no cause for concern in the deepening of differences with the aggressors, for the deeper the differences between the United Nations and the aggressors, the firmer must its stand be against aggression. What must be done here is to check aggression, restrain the genocide, that in but a few days has spelled death to over 800 Tunisians and wounds to more than a thousand, besides the property damage wreaked on a Member State of our Organization.

131. We have heard speeches about friendship with France and friendship with Tunisia. It is not a matter of friendship. It is a matter of principle, and if a government behaves as France has done, as an aggressor, it must be called by its proper name, and the aggression must be stopped. Those dead and wounded Tunisian

¹¹ *Ibid.*, document S/4915.

civilians ask it of our Organization, and jeopardize its prestige in the eyes of the peoples. Upon our firmness in condemning this aggression depend the events of tomorrow. It depends on us to avert further deaths, further wounds, further damage. We should be more than friendly to the colonialist aggressor government if we failed to pronounce a judgement on this matter; but it seems to us that this would be in no way friendly to the victim of aggression or beneficial to the principles of the United Nations.

132. We have already stated that there were various aspects of the Tunisian question. One is the colonialist and imperialist aggression by the Government of France against the independent and sovereign State of Tunisia; another the problem of the military bases maintained against the will of their people by the great imperialist and colonialist Powers as enclaves in the territory of States; a third, the requirement that the imperialist and colonialist Powers respect the principles of international law and the decisions of international bodies.

133. We say that there is imperialist aggression in Tunisia, because French aircraft, violating the air space of an independent State, initiated the aggression by bombing the civilian population of Tunisia. The French military authorities had undertaken to leave not a single French soldier in Tunisia without the consent of the Tunisian Government, and that Government, on 18 June 1961, had declared that "henceforth French troops are at Bizerta and the adjacent area without the consent of the Tunisian Government".

134. We ourselves have felt acts of provocation and aggression by the imperialists; but I believe that nobody has the slightest doubt that the battle has taken place on a territory that is not French, and that the civilian population affected is the Tunisian civilian population and not the French. That is why we say that there is aggression by the Government of France.

135. And by what right do the colonialists maintain military bases on foreign soil? Is it compatible with the principle of the equality of States before the law and with the idea of independence itself that some States may maintain military installations and armies within the territory of others, even against the opposition of the States in which these installations form enclaves? What self-respecting country, what self-respecting people could willingly accept the presence of foreign armed forces within its territory, in derogation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity? Although this does not apply to Bizerta, neither can treaties be invoked to justify the presence of foreign military bases. For neither by international law nor by international morality can signatures to documents in derogation of sovereignty be deemed valid or effective. To assume international obligations a State must be sovereign; any State compelled to admit foreign military forces within its territory cannot, in good law, be sovereign.

136. Moreover, the origin of all foreign military bases has been illegitimate, derived from colonialist aggression and arbitrary occupation. It is based on nothing but naked force. And what is the function of military bases on foreign soil? It cannot be asserted, in the age of guided missiles, that they are bases to defend the metropolitan countries. Military bases are used today by the colonial Powers against the countries into which they are thrust as enclaves. The French military base of Bizerta does not exist to defend the territory of France. It exists to attempt to maintain the colonial power of France against Tunisia and against Algeria,

just as the military base of Guantánamo does no exist to protect the territory of the United States, but is directed against Cuba and against the struggle of the Latin American peoples for their liberation.

137. There is the associated free state of Puerto Rico, which is neither a state, nor free, nor associated. How can a colony be called a state, or free, if, like Puerto Rico, it harbours more than ten known United States military bases? At this very hour, mercenaries are being concentrated in Puerto Rico and Guantánamo to be hurled against a small independent country.

138. Another aspect of the question before us is the failure of the Government of France to respect the principles of international law and the Security Council resolution of 22 July 1961¹² feeble though it is. In refusing to negotiate with Tunisia and to settle peacefully its disputes with that country, France has violated international law, as it has violated the United Nations Charter by refusing to comply with a decision of the Security Council. This is yet another proof that the French Government is the aggressor, just as its absence from this room is a proof and a challenge.

139. From our own experience we know how difficult it is to have a colonialist Power branded as an aggressor. We know with what cynicism the representatives of imperialism deny their participation in aggressive acts. Unless imperialist aggression is checked by strong resolutions and sanctions by the organs of the United Nations, the United Nations will have lost its whole purpose.

140. For all these reasons, Cuba announces its most emphatic support for the draft resolution submitted by thirty-one African and Asian countries and Yugoslavia [A/L.351]. Cuba announces this support as the very least it can do to betoken its solidarity with a Member State that has been attacked, the very least under the principles proclaimed by the Charter and, in the name of these principles, we ask the countries that compose the United Nations to lend their support to this proposal. By adopting it, we shall spare the people of Tunisia days of mourning and bloodshed, moments of tension and danger—yes, and spare the people of France, and the world, as well. And by proceeding thus, we shall strengthen the United Nations.

141. The main feature of the international scene of today is the fact that the problem of any country, however small, whether its name is Tunisia, Cuba, Algeria, Angola, South Africa or the Congo, transcend its frontiers and become international problems. In Tunisia there is French aggression and a threat to world peace, both for the peoples of Tunisia and France and for all the peoples of the world; it must be checked.

142. In maintaining the position we have just explained, Cuba honours one of the first Latin American traditions; the anti-colonialist tradition. No Latin American country has ever held colonies anywhere in the world. And yet imperialist flags still fly today in territories forcibly detached from the sovereignty of Latin American countries. Latin America not only struck out to win its independence from the colonialists, but, once independence had been attained, it had frequently to strike out again to enforce respect for that independence. Latin American can never be allied with colonialism, for Toussaint L'Ouverture, Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, Hidalgo, Benito Juárez and José Martí stand forever in the way.

¹² *Ibid.*, document S/4882.

143. Mr. MENEMENCIOLU (Turkey): I should like to extend to the President my delegation's heartiest congratulations on his unanimous election to this high office. We are confident that by entrusting the conduct of its deliberations to his capable hands the Assembly has secured the best assurances of success in its present task.

144. The question under consideration at this special session of the Assembly is one which, to our deep regret, temporarily turned against each other two neighbours on the Mediterranean which have abundant natural reasons for being friends.

145. My country, like a number of others whose representatives have taken part in this debate, maintains excellent relations and has close ties of friendship with both parties to this dispute. Furthermore, we are well aware that the maintenance of friendly relations based on mutual respect and sovereign equality between France and Tunisia is an essential prerequisite of lasting security, stability and progress in the Mediterranean.

146. As we have stated from the outset of this disagreement, the political wisdom, the sense of responsibility to the international community, and the attachment to the principles of righteousness and equity which we know are shared by the two Governments concerned should encourage us to hope for a prompt settlement.

147. My countrymen have a great affection and admiration for the people of Tunisia as well as for the progressive and enlightened Government which has been leading that country ever since its independence. Tunisia has a brilliant record in the United Nations. Since Tunisia's admission to membership of our Organization, the Tunisian delegation has played a prominent role, second to none, in the service of justice, peace and the pacific settlement of disputes. On the other hand, France has given further proof of its attachment to the liberal tradition of its glorious history by upholding the principle of self-determination not only in words but in deeds, by leading to freedom and independence such a large number of peoples.

148. We cannot see any valid reasons for the prolongation of this unnatural dispute between these two countries, when history and geography point to the wisdom of their establishing friendly ties based on mutual respect.

149. We are particularly grieved at the prolongation of this dispute for the reasons we have given during the debate on this issue in the Security Council, as we do not see any basic difficulty or insurmountable obstacle in arriving at a pacific solution through appropriate negotiations.

150. On 21 July, during the first meeting of the Security Council [961st meeting] on this question my delegation had set forth an urgent appeal of the Turkish Government, for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a prompt restoration of the *status quo ante*. In that initial statement, we had proceeded further to state the following:

"The international atmosphere at the present time is unfortunately perturbed by a number of international disputes or potential disputes; in such an atmosphere we should be particularly happy to see a prompt and peaceful settlement of the differences which have arisen between Tunisia and France, before those differences are allowed to crystallize into yet another grave and protracted issue."

151. Today, over a month after we had expressed that fervent hope for a prompt settlement, we are sorry to see that much precious time has been lost on setting in motion the appropriate machinery for a negotiated agreement. We are under the impression that the issue has been somewhat clouded by both the parties with a few considerations which are external to the problem itself and which impede the practical approach available for a solution. We believe that the present debate in this special session of the General Assembly can only be useful to the degree that such a practical approach for initiating bilateral negotiations may be rendered more accessible to the parties concerned.

152. It was with this idea in mind that my delegation had submitted a draft resolution¹³ on this matter during the last debate of the Security Council [966th meeting] on 29 July 1961.

153. The text of that draft resolution recalled the previous decision of the Security Council calling for an immediate cease-fire and a return of all armed forces to their original position. It expressed concern that these provisions had not been carried out and called for their immediate and full implementation. Furthermore, that draft urged the early opening of negotiations for a peaceful solution of the differences between the two parties, including a definitive settlement of the question of Bizerta, having due regard for Tunisian sovereignty.

154. As is known, our draft obtained one vote less than the number of votes required for its adoption in the Security Council. My delegation continues to maintain that the non-acceptance of that draft resolution by the required majority of the Council at that date has been of no help whatever towards a possible settlement of this dispute. On the contrary, we are still of the opinion that, if that draft resolution had been adopted nearly a month ago, we would at least have all the essential elements for ascertaining now in all fairness the degree of progress which could have been accomplished if the foundations for a just solution had been laid in good faith. As a minimum, we would now be able to see more clearly if and in what direction the United Nations could be of further assistance, instead of having to excavate new ground for laying new foundations.

155. After the failure of the Security Council in its second phase of meetings to adopt any new resolution on the complaint of Tunisia against France my delegation joined thirty-six other delegations, representing countries geographically situated in the general area of Asia and Africa, in requesting [see A/4830] the convening of the present special session of the General Assembly.

156. In making this request jointly with other delegations, my delegation had a number of purposes in mind.

157. In the first place, we strongly believe, in all objectivity, that when a Member of the United Nations claims that it is the victim of an aggression and that its sovereignty and territorial integrity have been jeopardized, it should be given the possibility to present its case to the study of all the appropriate instances of the United Nations, all the other Members of the United Nations reserving to themselves the forming of an opinion and judging each issue on its merits.

158. In the second place, as far as this particular question is concerned, the fact that we ourselves have advanced certain proposals in the hope of assisting a

¹³ *Ibid.*, document S/4905.

solution is proof of our belief that the United Nations can serve a constructive role if genuine efforts are made solely for the purpose of opening the path to a just solution. Of course, we were also aware of the fact that this session of the General Assembly could serve quite the opposite purpose if it failed to strip the question under discussion to its bare and vital essentials and if, on the contrary, it complicated matters by incorporating unnecessary and extraneous issues. We have confidence in the great wisdom and the common sense of this august Assembly not to follow the second course in spite of efforts which are being made to drag it in that direction. This Assembly may be successful if efforts are confined to a solution in good faith of the Tunisian complaint which constitutes our agenda. If any Members use this occasion to advance their own propaganda and to serve their own particular interests, such a state of affairs would be extremely unfair to the people of Tunisia who would thus be made to carry the burden of a cold war which is not their own.

159. What can this Assembly do in assisting the parties to reach a peaceful settlement?

160. In the first place, every orator who spoke from this rostrum has already supported the provisions of the resolution¹⁴ of the Security Council for a cease-fire and a withdrawal of all armed forces to their original positions.

161. On this question of the implementation of the Security Council resolution my delegation had stated the following during the debate in the Council [965th meeting] from which I quote:

"Doubts have been expressed by French authorities as to what might happen after the withdrawal of their forces to their original positions. However, the idea of achieving a peaceful solution and of establishing peaceful conditions has predominated in the debates in the Council all along. In making its demand on withdrawal, it is the Security Council which has assumed responsibility for the continuance of a peaceful observation of the provisions of its resolution after that resolution has been implemented. Therefore, if both sides give a clear-cut indication of their intention fully to implement that resolution, we would not see the necessity for any further bilateral guarantees on this point."

162. My delegation is still of the opinion that such an approach can form the basis for an immediate implementation of the Security Council resolution.

163. As for the substance of the dispute, that the Assembly should urge bilateral negotiations has been generally accepted by a large majority. However, there seems to be lack of agreement on the degree in which this recommendation for negotiations should cover what may be called an *a priori* decision of the United Nations as to

its outcome. Perhaps the real difference here is a matter of form rather than of substance.

164. On this point, my delegation has been much impressed by the eloquent statement made by the distinguished representative of Argentina on 22 August, from which I wish to quote this paragraph:

"We are convinced that once representatives of France and of Tunisia sit down at a table to negotiate, more than half of the road to a peaceful solution will be covered; the rest of the road will be covered through the goodwill of the parties." [998th meeting, para. 56.]*

165. In the opinion of my delegation, the message which these words carry should be pondered by all of us who desire a prompt, peaceful and negotiated agreement based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia. Whatever care is given to formulation of that general desire to see the opening of negotiations in this matter, we should pay particular attention not to damage the element of good will which in this specific case is an important factor. As I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, in spite of the tragic events of July 1961, Tunisia and France have more reasons for basing their future relations on friendship and mutual respect than they would for cultivating the opposite trend. Let us hope that our present debate may be of assistance in bringing about a peaceful and just solution in such an atmosphere of friendly relations and mutual respect.

166. Before I conclude I regret to have to make a brief digression by using my right of reply. Some days ago, the representative of the Soviet Union came out with a fantastic story according to which the CENTO countries were planning to "deal a blow below the belt at the Soviet Union" and then using atomic bombs to blow up their own territory thus "deliberately turning the territories of these countries into zones of death". My Government, as well as the Governments of the other members of CENTO, has already officially and categorically denied these allegations when they were first published in Moscow. These allegations, besides being absurd, are also entirely contrary to the very essence of CENTO, which is a purely defensive organization. Attempts by the Soviet bloc to spread false rumours concerning the intentions of NATO, SEATO and CENTO are no novelty. Recently, paralleling the worsening of the political climate in Europe, there has been a recrudescence of such propaganda designed on the one hand to divert attention elsewhere and on the other hand to undermine defensive systems organized by free peoples for their self-preservation in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. I am sorry I had to take the time of the Assembly in exercise of my right of reply.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, document S/4882.

* Provisional English version taken from interpretation.