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Chairman: Mr. Franz MATSCH (Austria).

AGENDA ITEM 59

**Question of Algeria (A/4140, A/C.1/L.246 and Add.1)
(continued)**

**GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF THE
DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.1/L.246 AND ADD.1)
(continued)**

1. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) said that his country had always been devoted to freedom, peace and all that could contribute to international order. It had thus always been able to take a balanced view which had won the respect of all States with which it maintained traditional ties of friendship. The Dominican Republic was free from prejudice and outside interference, and was striving for progress along democratic lines; it attached great importance to the achievement of independence by communities which were not yet entirely masters of their own destinies and it had always upheld the principle of self-determination proclaimed by the Charter of the United Nations. Of course, at a time when universally recognized standards existed and when law offered the means of satisfying national aspirations by negotiation, what was necessary was to exercise patience and create a favourable climate for mutual understanding.

2. As for the competence of the United Nations, Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter lent itself to only one interpretation, and the successive majorities in the General Assembly could not extend or restrict its meaning. The more one studied the problem and the new aspects arising out of the statements made by the President of France, General de Gaulle, on 16 September and 10 November 1959—which should be taken as they stood, if they were not to be distorted or rendered unacceptable—the more convinced one became that a peaceful and just settlement was possible. The Dominican Republic was anxious to make its modest contribution to the quest for peace, an attitude entirely in keeping with the domestic and foreign policy of the Republic, which had never committed aggression but had had, ever since its independence, to contend with the envious designs of those who wished to undermine its national order.

3. General de Gaulle's solemn undertaking should be accepted by all who wished for a peaceful solution of the problem. There was no question of effacing, by a

mere stroke of the pen, the consequences of the long years of Franco-Algerian relations; just as Spain had left its mark on the American continent, so would France's contribution live on in Algeria as it did in the other communities which had successively taken their places in the United Nations. Any proposal which did not take account of the realities of the Algerian problem would only aggravate the situation. The delegation of the Dominican Republic shared the view of the United Kingdom, United States and Spanish delegations that General de Gaulle's statement offered a basis for useful discussion that it could not be taken apart and that, since there were obvious prospects for peace, it was now necessary to find a means of realizing them.

4. The draft resolution before the Committee did not open the way to a satisfactory settlement of the problem. Perhaps its sponsors would reconsider their decision, thereby making a demonstration of understanding which would be in the interests of the Algerian people and the international community. In any case, in view of the points of agreement between French and Algerian thinking, and in view of General de Gaulle's historic statement, the Dominican Republic hoped that the Assembly would not take any decision that might jeopardize a solution of the problem. Its vote would be determined by those considerations.

5. In conclusion, he referred to a statement made at the 813th plenary meeting on 29 September 1959 by Mr. Herrera Baez, his country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, while expressing the sympathy of the Dominican Republic for a movement similar to that which had given rise to the Latin American Republics in the nineteenth century, had also emphasized the need for preserving a balanced and conciliatory attitude.

6. Mr. TOURE Ismaël (Guinea) said that the painful problem of Algeria had existed ever since France had conquered Algeria by force. The new element in the situation was the awareness of the problem engendered in millions of people by the liberation movement of the oppressed victims of colonialism. It was unfortunate that the draft resolution submitted at the previous session (A/C.1/L.232) had been rejected, having failed by one vote to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority. Long after the thirteenth session, the French Government had persisted in its policy of integrating Algeria within its national territory. While French promises of economic and social reforms gave the impression that Algeria was France, the condition of the Algerians, living in rags in their shanty towns, was lamentable; the peasants no longer had any land and the average income of the Moslems was no more than 20,000 francs a year. Yet the war had intensified; according to official French communiqués, the number of dead ran at an average of 800 a week. In his speech at Constantine on 3 October 1958, General de Gaulle, after having announced certain reforms, had congratulated General Salan for

his past actions and had urged him to continue his work of "pacification"; in other words, to seek at all costs to crush armed resistance or bring about its capitulation. In a communiqué issued at the same time, the Co-ordinating and Executive Committee of the National Liberation Front (FLN) had established General de Gaulle's responsibility in the matter.

7. Then, at his Press conference on 23 October 1958, General de Gaulle had offered a "brave men's peace"—which actually meant the capitulation of the Algerians. The latter, through their Provisional Government, had rejected those claims and reaffirmed the purpose of their fight, namely Algerian independence. The deadlock was thus complete. Meanwhile, the French Army had continued its work of destruction with increased forces and equipment. But those efforts had been vain, for no one could dismiss the fact of Algerian nationalism.

8. General de Gaulle had realized that, and on 16 September 1959 had recognized the need to proclaim the right of the Algerian people freely to determine their future and proposed three alternatives for settling the conflict, namely, Francization, federation or secession.

9. Francization meant integrating the Algerian people and converting Algeria into a French province and Algerians into fully-fledged French citizens. Those policies, for all their egalitarian and even liberal appearance, were in reality a trap. The Algerians wanted to be fully-fledged Algerians, not Frenchmen. If there was to be an association between France and Algeria, it would have to be one based on free consent and free discussion between free and equal parties. The road to friendship between France and Algeria inevitably passed through the stages of prior recognition of the right of the Algerian people to independence, recognition of the FLN and negotiations with the Provisional Government.

10. The federation proposed by General de Gaulle was internal federation; in other words, the system established under the "loi-cadre" (basic law) of 1957. It was not a federation in which the relationship between Algeria and France would be clearly defined, but on the contrary one in which Algeria would be dismembered into opposing sectors, thus reducing to nil any prospect of independence or even genuine self-government. Algeria would disappear from the map of the world. In Africa, south of the Sahara, the "loi-cadre" had rapidly proved a failure, and the French Government had been faced with new political demands from the African peoples. The referendum of 28 September 1958 had been organized to meet those demands; but unfortunately that, too, had failed to resolve the problem, in the face of the vast liberation movement which had come into being all over Africa.

11. For the first time, General de Gaulle had spoken the word "independence"; but did he really mean independence? Self-determination, as he had defined it, ruled out independence for a unitary Algerian nation; at the most, it allowed for the secession of a number of territories among the twelve Algerian departments. The territories in which the majority had rejected independence could then be integrated with France. Thus, the intention was to partition Algeria and to integrate with France the areas having a large European population. General de Gaulle's refusal to recognize the national unity of Algeria and the sociological unity of the Algerian people enabled

him to envisage the possible regrouping of racial or religious communities, if the majority of Algerians should opt for independence. General de Gaulle had decided to keep the valuable part of Algeria; he was not interested in the Algeria of the hills or the high plateaus, and he was prepared to abandon it to its fate. But Algeria was a nation in which men were bound together by common aspirations and justifiably wanted their country to stop being held to ransom and looted by a handful of colonial profiteers and exploiters. It would be futile to deny the fact of Algerian nationality, a nationality which was developing and becoming stronger.

12. The fact that General de Gaulle should dwell fondly on the horrible consequences of secession would not surprise the peoples which were struggling for liberation. They had already been told of those consequences before the 1958 referendum. The people of Guinea, for one, had replied to those words of intimidation and blackmail, words which falsified the choice offered, that it preferred poverty in freedom to wealth in slavery.

13. Despite attempts at economic blockade, slander and diversionary tactics on the part of its enemies, Guinea had rapidly consolidated the bases of its sovereignty, and thanks to the voluntary labour movement had substantially improved living conditions. Its achievements, after one year of independence, were impressive. Thus, as a result of the courage and the co-operation of all its people, and of the disinterested help of various friendly countries, Guinea was now experiencing the beginnings of co-ordinated economic development and increased political stability, and could look forward to a happy future for its people. General de Gaulle's unjustified charge that they would fall under "the warlike dictatorship of the communists" no longer frightened the peoples which were fighting for their complete emancipation from colonial oppression.

14. Moreover, whatever choice was made by the Algerian people, General de Gaulle considered that the Sahara was in point of fact no longer Algerian. But France could claim no right of ownership over the Sahara, which was African territory and the common heritage of the Africans. All Africans considered that the Joint Sahara Development Scheme ("Organisation commune des régions sahariennes") was merely a project, and that their future was closely linked to the heroic struggle of Algeria. The day would come when the Africans alone would be responsible for the future of the Sahara.

15. Citing the speech made by President Sekou Touré before General de Gaulle at Conakry on 25 August 1958, he pointed out that at the most decisive moments, enlightened African political leaders showed how the real content of even the most attractive proposals, such as the recognition of the right to self-determination, was to be analysed objectively. That was also the approach of the leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), who, while they had repeatedly asserted their desire to negotiate, had carefully refrained from committing the Algerians to a doubtful course of action which offered no real chance of resolving the Algerian problem. They had stated, for example, that there could be no cease-fire unless there was agreement on guarantees for the sound application of the principle of self-determination.

16. It was an indisputable fact that the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic was the only spokesman of the Algerian people. The Provisional Government had replied to the outrageous condition laid down by General de Gaulle—that the free choice of the Algerian people would have to be confirmed by the French people—that that would be the very negation of self-determination.

17. Even more serious was the fact that General de Gaulle sought to ignore the FLN and continued to describe the conflict as an effort of "pacification". But the French workers would certainly not deny the reality of the war, a very costly one for the tax-ridden French people.

18. It also had to be borne in mind that the referendum of 28 September 1958 attributed varying meanings to the vote according to the geographical situation of the voters. For example, even if the Algerian people had voted "no" like the overwhelming majority of the people of Guinea, it would not have gained its independence. The example of Guinea could not therefore be cited as a precedent for the exercise of the right of self-determination, the recognition of which alone was supposed to disarm the Algerian fighters. Guinea owed its independence only to the suspicion and doubt which had led it to vote against a Constitution represented as the basis of a fraternal, equal and permanent association, whereas what was important was the conditions in which self-determination was to be exercised. The people of Guinea had voted "no" because it failed to understand why it was being treated differently from the Algerian people, which had suffered under the same colonialism. The fact that its dramatic leap into the unknown had rescued Guinea from colonialism should be viewed as a striking victory for scepticism guided by objective and dispassionate analysis of reality. At the present time, those territories which had been unable to make the same choice on 28 September 1958 because they had not been organized to defeat propaganda and intimidation had realized that the Community was a gross myth, and were now themselves demanding independence. Thus, the right of self-determination was not a solution but a means of settling the Algerian question, and one might well wonder why it had taken France five years to recognize that right.

19. In any event, to recognize the right of Algeria to self-determination was to acknowledge the failure of pacification and the reality of the Algerian revolution.

20. With regard to the proposed popular consultation in Algeria, there were good grounds, after the referendum of 28 September 1958, for doubting the sincerity of the present proposal. On 28 September, it had been the army which, after organizing the elections, had "protected" the voting, stuffed the ballot boxes and proclaimed the results.

21. The Algerian people could not exercise a free choice under the pressure of an occupation army of more than a half-million soldiers and nearly as many auxiliaries, and under the pressure of an administrative apparatus whose record of electoral fraud was proverbial. Such a free choice could not be fully exercised while one-quarter of the population was being held in prisons and camps or forced into exile. The Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had expressed its readiness to enter into "pourparlers" with the French Government to discuss the conditions

and guarantees for the application of the right of self-determination. The subject it was suggesting for the preliminary talks was not the political future of Algeria—which could only be decided by a free consultation of the Algerian people itself—but assurances that the consultation would be free, genuine and not open to challenge.

22. Various French leaders had sown confusion by their comments on General de Gaulle's proclamation: the Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in Algeria, General Challe, had stated that the war should be intensified until complete pacification had been achieved. The French Prime Minister, Mr. Debré, had declared that there would be no slow-down in the efforts at pacification and the Government would prosecute the war until the rebels had laid down their arms. The "brave men's peace" would therefore be nothing more than an unconditional surrender. At his Press conference of 10 November 1959, General de Gaulle had said that he still ruled out any negotiations on the procedures for implementing self-determination. He had promised that all Algerians would take part not only in the vote but also in the preliminary discussions on voting procedures; however, he had said that they would do so only when the proper time had arrived and that that time had already been determined and consequently could not be a matter for discussion.

23. Nevertheless, in order to hasten a solution of the Algerian problem, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had decided to entrust Mr. Ahmed Ben Bella and his companions with the task of opening discussions with the French Government on the conditions and guarantees necessary to give effect to the principle of self-determination. The five men in question were the indisputable and undisputed leaders of the insurrection. Already in 1956 several of them had been given the assignment of establishing contact with the official representatives of the French Government. Four of them had been kidnapped in October 1956 while on their way to Tunis to take part in a conference of the States of the Maghreb for the purpose of working out a plan for a peaceful settlement of the Algerian question. On 20 November 1959, at Colmar, General de Gaulle had declined the Algerian Provisional Government's offer.

24. The United Nations must take action in the Algerian conflict, which was a genuine threat to international peace and security. Its task was now made easier by the fact that recognition of the Algerian people's right to choose its own destiny had at last been solemnly proclaimed by General de Gaulle. All that remained was to request the two parties to open negotiations without further delay with a view to ending hostilities and preparing a genuinely popular referendum which would enable the Algerian people to decide in full freedom on its future. The international community could fulfil its duty, not by remaining silent, but by taking the initiative on behalf of peace by negotiation and by doing so with the sense of moderation and responsibility conferred by its moral authority, which was the hope of all peoples that believed in justice.

25. His delegation appealed to all nations, particularly those which bore the greatest burden of responsibility in world affairs, to shatter the old myths, break with the traditions of selfishness and privilege, and display an awareness of the common interests of

mankind by helping to liberate from colonialism, poverty and indignity the continent of Africa, which asked only for the good will, understanding, faith and co-operation of other peoples in order to safeguard and develop its civilization. It appealed in particular to the United States Government in the hope that its attitude, which would unquestionably be the decisive factor in the present debate, would reflect the friendship and understanding expressed in the message which it had addressed to the peoples of Africa at the time of the Conference of Independent African States, held at Monrovia in 1959.

26. He concluded by quoting the passage dealing with Algeria in President Sekou Touré's statement of 5 November 1959 (837th plenary meeting) before the General Assembly and expressed the conviction that President Touré's appeal would be heeded by the Committee.

27. Mr. SOSA RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela) said that much progress had been made towards a solution of the problem since the previous session: the Algerian people's right to self-determination had been recognized by General de Gaulle, and the leaders of the FLN had agreed that the people should choose, by means of a vote, among the three alternative solutions proposed by France. The only matter causing difficulty was the practical implementation of those principles. The two parties recognized the need to bring hostilities to an end, but the French Government considered the representatives of the FLN competent to negotiate only on the conditions for a cease-fire, whereas the leaders of the nationalist movement insisted on discussing how self-determination was to be brought about.

28. In the view of the French Government, the Algerian nationalist leaders represented only a small minority. Surely, however, they must have had the support of the majority in order to wage war for more than five years against infinitely more numerous and better equipped armed forces. It was natural that, before laying down their arms, the rebels should wish to reach agreement on the implementation of the right of self-determination. In that connexion, a distinction should be made between the future political status of Algeria and the conditions for exercising the right of self-determination. The country's future political status could be defined only by a vote of the entire Algerian population. There was, however, the question of who was to decide the details of the voting procedure, the election campaign, the balloting, and the guarantees of an impartial vote—matters which were as important as the substantive question itself. The French Government declared that those matters would be decided by the legitimate representatives of the Algerian people. That left the question of how those representatives were to be chosen. There were three possible approaches to the problem: France could organize the referendum alone, it could work out the necessary procedures with representatives of the Algerian people elected for that purpose, and it could discuss them with the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. The first alternative was unacceptable to the leaders of the liberation movement, since they were not accepting General de Gaulle's offer as the leaders of a defeated army and since they bore the responsibility on the Algerian side for fighting the war. If the second alternative

was adopted, it would be necessary at least to recognize the Algerian Provisional Government's competence to negotiate on the conditions for electing the representatives of the Algerian people with whom the French Government would work out the referendum procedures. The third alternative was unacceptable to France. In any event, it would be necessary to discuss, at the same time as a cease-fire, either the referendum procedures or the conditions for electing the Algerian representatives who would subsequently negotiate on those procedures. To refuse to do so would be to disregard the underlying causes of the Algerian war and to prevent a solution of the problem.

29. The question also arose whether the United Nations should recommend such negotiations. In that connexion, his delegation was of the opinion that the Algerian war was a true war of independence which demonstrated the unshakable desire of the Algerian people to achieve its goal. Some regarded it as an unjust war, since they felt that France and Algeria constituted a single nation and that everything that made Algeria what it was had been created by France. It was true that France's accomplishments in Algeria had been tremendous; however, to maintain that Algeria had on that account lost its own identity and its legitimate desire for independence would be to show ignorance of the teachings of history and to disregard human nature. Many peoples had preferred independence to the benefits of prosperity. The Venezuelan people, which had fought for fifteen years to obtain its independence but which now looked upon Spain as its mother country, had a unique understanding of the aspirations of the non-self-governing peoples. It therefore hoped that the war would soon end and that the Algerian people would be able freely to decide its destiny. He would counsel them not to miss the opportunity afforded by the presence at the head of the French State of a noble and generous man whose career constituted a pledge of his sincerity.

30. The Algerian conflict could and must be resolved by peaceful means. His delegation therefore felt that the United Nations should recommend negotiations or, at least, preliminary talks. Such a recommendation would in no sense imply recognition of the Algerian Provisional Government as such and could not prejudice the rights of either party. On the other hand, if it declined to act in the face of so grave a human problem, the United Nations would lose not only its prestige, but also the confidence of the peoples of the world, which saw in it the sole means of peacefully resolving their problems. His delegation would therefore vote for the twenty-two-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.246 and Add.1). It earnestly hoped that the Algerian war would be ended without loss of time and that in the near future the Algerian people would be permitted, by means of a referendum, to choose whatever solution of its problem it thought best.

31. Mr. FEKINI (Libya) deplored the inhuman war which France was waging in Algeria. Nevertheless, the debate on the question of Algeria at the present session was being held in circumstances that seemed to be more favourable to the peaceful, just and democratic solution which the General Assembly had always wished for. Reviewing the history of the rebellion, he said that, after the beginning of the Algerian revolt and its success, three important events should be remembered. The first was the

formation of the Provisional Government of Algeria. The Libyan Government had recognized it, on the one hand because it represented the real will of the Algerian people in its legitimate aspirations for self-determination and independence and exercised the attributes of national sovereignty over the vast zones of Algerian territory it controlled, and on the other hand because it represented a worthy partner with which France could undertake the negotiations necessary to reach a solution in the interests of both parties. The second important event had been the profound repercussions caused in France by the continuation of the Algerian war. As a result the Fifth Republic had been set up and General de Gaulle had acceded to power. In that connexion it should be noted that whereas a peaceful and just solution had been expected as a result of the realistic and generous intervention made by the man who had helped to liberate France, the war had unfortunately only been intensified. True, his delegation had been pleased to note the recognition by France of the Algerian people's right to self-determination, but it was compelled to question the value of that recognition, which was subject to the consent of the French people. As to the three solutions suggested by General de Gaulle, the impassioned predictions with which he had embellished the mention of ultimate independence indicated how essential it was that the consultation be provided with the necessary guarantees of sincerity.

32. It was the duty of the United Nations to offer its assistance and the benefit of its experience and to take responsibility for supervising and even for conducting the consultation of the Algerians on their final choice.

33. In that connexion it should be emphasized that, while a referendum was put to each individual, its results depended upon the majority vote. Hence, France's declared intention of effecting, if necessary, a regrouping of those who would like to remain French should be the subject of discussions with the definitive Government of independent Algeria. Was the regrouping to be carried out in France or in Algeria? If the intention was actually to draw a political frontier between an independent Algeria and a French Algeria, Libya felt that such a unjustifiable objective would complicate the Algerian situation and threaten international peace, as too many partition measures had already proved. Finally the time limit fixed for the referendum would not correspond with the time of the genuine restoration of peace, that is to say, when the belligerents had reached agreement on a cease-fire and on the conditions and guarantees for the application of the principle of self-determination.

34. The third important event was the Algerian Provisional Government's reply on 28 September 1959. He recalled the terms of that reply and expressed his regret that there had been no positive reaction from the French side until 10 November. In the meantime statements made by leading French authorities had deprived the principle of self-determination of all substance and raised grave doubts as to the freedom which France meant to allow the Algerian people in making their choice.

35. On 10 November General de Gaulle had shown that he had realized very well, if not the errors, at least the indiscretions which the over-zealous French civilian and military authorities had committed in their manner of viewing and applying the principle of

self-determination. If General de Gaulle's statement was a disavowal, it might be hoped that he would try to restore matters to their previous position.

36. On 20 November the Provisional Government of Algeria had appointed five representatives. That was a constructive decision and a courageous one, especially as the offer of 16 September was fenced in with disturbing conditions. The primary demands of the Provisional Government were for guarantees that would allow a sound application of the principle of self-determination. The customary intrigues of the French administrative outfit, the presence of an omnipotent army which had demonstrated its persuasive force during the last referendum, and the experience of the methods employed in the last legislative and municipal elections were all reasons for making, after agreement between the two parties concerned, independent arrangements, which the United Nations should promote.

37. As the communiqué published that very day by the Algerian delegation indicated, the Algerian Provisional Government was not asking to negotiate, beforehand, the future status of Algeria, but only to discuss with the French Government the conditions and guarantees for the application of the principle of self-determination.

38. The fact that the five representatives designated by the Algerian Provisional Government were at present prisoners did not detract from their competence. On the contrary, it had practical advantages since the discussions could begin immediately. It was not the first time that negotiators had gone straight from gaol to the conference table. The leaders who had been kidnapped by France when they had gone to a North African conference had always been considered political prisoners, and well-informed French circles made no secret of the possibility of discussing a possible solution with them. As the French Press had indicated, despite their imprisonment they had kept in close contact with the leaders of the rebellion and consequently possessed all the necessary qualities for the positions to which they had been appointed.

39. What should be done, therefore, was to promote the holding of the proposed talks on a frank and honest basis. There, undoubtedly, the United Nations had a part to play. For more than four years the Assembly had given its attention to the Algerian question, for two reasons: because a disastrous war threatening international peace was being waged and secondly because the people concerned wanted to exercise the right to self-determination, which was one of the fundamental principles of the Charter. That was why, during the past years, the General Assembly had been anxious to make an important contribution to the solution of the problem.

40. As the Algerian question had apparently reached a decisive turning-point that year, it was becoming even more imperative for the United Nations to assist and encourage the two parties concerned to undertake negotiations, in which they might discuss the conditions necessary for the implementation of the principle of self-determination, which had been accepted as the basis of agreement, and to conclude a cease-fire agreement in preparation for the advent of peace. Indeed, it would be inconceivable for the United Nations to abdicate its responsibilities in that matter by failing to complete a debate on the most important item on the agenda for the year. In that

spirit his delegation, together with twenty-one other delegations, was submitting to the Committee a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.246 and Add.1), which had been drawn up in a constructive spirit with a view to help-

ing the two parties concerned to take the last step towards the desired solution.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.