

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**FIRST COMMITTEE 1005th  
MEETING**

Tuesday, 2 December 1958,  
at 3.5 p.m.

**NEW YORK**

**CONTENTS**

	Page
Agenda item 68:	
Question of Cyprus (continued)	
General debate (continued) . . . . .	291

**Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).**

**AGENDA ITEM 68**

**Question of Cyprus (A/3874 and Add.1, A/C.1/811, A/C.1/814, A/C.1/L.221-223, A/C.1/L.225, A/C.1/L.226/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.228 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.229) (continued)**

**GENERAL DEBATE (continued)**

1. Mr. ABDON (Iran) announced that, after an exchange of views with a number of delegations, his delegation had submitted a revised version of its draft resolution (A/C.1/L.226/Rev.1). In the new draft, it had tried to avoid taking up any question or using any expression which might prejudice the future status of the island. It had been guided by the Colombian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.225) in envisaging assistance by Governments and personalities acceptable to the Governments directly concerned with a view to facilitating the progress of negotiations towards an agreed solution of the Cyprus problem.

2. His delegation was convinced that its draft resolution went further than General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI) and that it was in many respects more complete and specific. The new draft recommended that a conference should be held between the three Governments concerned and representatives of the Cypriots; it tried to define the nature and scope of the conference by stating that there would be discussion, not only of the interim arrangements for the administration of Cyprus, but also of a final solution of the problem. The conference should also take into consideration both the principles of the Charter and the legitimate aspirations of the inhabitants of Cyprus.

3. His delegation therefore hoped that its draft resolution would be adopted by a large majority.

4. Mr. NISOT (Belgium), presenting his delegation's draft resolution (A/C.1/L.229), said that his Government still felt that a solution of the Cyprus question should not be sought through the United Nations and that direct negotiations were the only approach which could produce results. He was convinced that it was advisable to restrict the parties concerned as little as possible in their choice of methods of concerting their efforts in order to reach agreement. His delegation's draft resolution, which was confined to the essentials, was based on that belief.

5. Mr. FILALI (Morocco) noted that all the members of the Committee were in agreement on the complexity of the Cyprus problem, on the historical, political,

ethnic and human facts involved, and on the necessity of reaching a peaceful solution in accordance with the recommendations made by the General Assembly in resolution 1013 (XI). His delegation regretted that the resolution referred to had remained without effect. At the twelfth session, it had been among the delegations which had voted for the Greek draft resolution (A/C.1/L.197), which would have acknowledged the Cypriot people's right to self-determination. Unfortunately, the draft resolution adopted by the First Committee (A/C.1/804) had been rejected by the General Assembly (731st plenary meeting). At the present time, matters had reached a complete deadlock. Blood was flowing again on Cyprus, and the situation there was extremely tense.

6. His delegation felt that the Cyprus problem was primarily a colonial one. Cyprus was one of the many Non-Self-Governing Territories covered by Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, it was under the *de facto* and *de jure* sovereignty of the United Kingdom, upon which rested the obligations imposed by the Charter, including the recognition that the interests of the Territory's inhabitants were paramount and the development of the inhabitants' capacity for self-government. Judging from the United Kingdom representative's statement at the 996th meeting, the United Kingdom Government was fully aware of that.

7. At the same time, the international ramifications of the Cyprus problem could not be denied. It posed a constant threat to peace in the eastern Mediterranean, and the tension on the island was affecting relations between friendly Powers. Both Turkey and Greece were justified, on strategic and ethnic grounds, in being interested in a final solution of the distressing problem of Cyprus.

8. However, the Cypriot people was also justified in asking the right to exercise its sovereignty and in wishing to shape its own destiny. That right was inherent in the facts of the situation and was specifically embodied in the Charter. His delegation did not feel that the existence of two communities with distinct characteristics made it impossible to create a socially homogenous and politically viable nation. The world provided many examples of ethnic groups which lived side by side in mutual respect. Greeks and Turks had been living on Cyprus itself not long before in an atmosphere of trust. The present crisis was a transitory and indeed an artificial one, and with a little good will the misunderstanding would soon be cleared up. In fact, there were encouraging signs which pointed in that direction: the Greek majority was no longer demanding union with Greece; it was willing to accept a self-governing status which, at the end of an interim period, would lead to independence. At the same time, the Turkish minority must be granted a suitable status; its rights must be defined and solemnly guaranteed, and its participation in the administration of the island must be ensured.

9. His delegation was convinced that negotiations which took into account the wishes of the majority of the population, while respecting the legitimate rights of the Turkish minority, could restore peace in the area. The United Nations should therefore encourage the resumption of talks.
10. His delegation would be guided by those considerations when it took a position on the various draft resolutions before the Committee.
11. Mr. SHAHA (Nepal) said that his delegation had always advocated a solution which would take fully into account the genuine interests of the Cypriots of both Greek and Turkish origin. It was convinced that extraneous influences and interests had complicated the situation on Cyprus. The latter, despite various changes of sovereignty, constituted a cultural and geographical entity, and his delegation had been happy to hear the United Kingdom representative express his Government's intention to help preserve the united personality of Cyprus (996th meeting). Partition, which had not always produced the desired results in other cases, was certainly not the desirable solution to the Cyprus problem.
12. The Greek Government had renounced all territorial claims to Cyprus and was urging only that the island should be granted political independence and the Cypriots permitted to decide their own future. That demand was reasonable and moderate, and it merited due consideration—particularly since, at the twelfth session, a majority of the members of the First Committee had acknowledged the Cypriots' right to self-determination.
13. At the same time, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs had rightly stated that, if communal harmony was to be restored on the island, the Cypriots of both Greek and Turkish origin should be urged to exercise patience and restraint, and positive steps should be taken to encourage the growth of trust and understanding between the two communities.
14. Those ideas represented the positive features of the present debate, despite the apparently conflicting points of view reflected in the draft resolutions which had been submitted by the three parties primarily concerned.
15. His delegation felt that the ultimate solution would be to grant political independence to Cyprus after a period of training in self-government, during which adequate guarantees would be provided—by the United Nations if need be—for the protection of the rights of the Turkish minority. Nevertheless, the interests of a minority obviously could not be permitted to block forever the progress of the majority towards independence.
16. Actually, the differences which separated the United Kingdom and Greece were limited to the question of whether the goal of political independence should be proclaimed forthwith. His delegation shared the opinion of the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs that the immediate proclamation of that ultimate objective would strengthen the Cypriots' faith in their political destiny and, consequently, might cause them to abandon the path of struggle and violence which they were forced to pursue under the present circumstances.
17. On the other hand, the United Kingdom representative, conscious of the deep anxiety of the Turkish people and Government about the future of the Turkish Cypriots and of the inflamed state of Turkish public opinion on the question, felt that it would be inadvisable to proclaim the ultimate objective too soon and that a premature gesture of that nature might even defeat its own purpose.
18. The General Assembly could not be content with repeating that negotiations should be resumed. It was time that it gave the parties concerned at least some indication of the nature and ultimate purpose of such negotiations, which should be conducted patiently and quietly.
19. His delegation was a sponsor of the nine-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.228), which, in its opinion, could facilitate a settlement of the Cyprus question by making it possible to reach agreement on both an interim and a long-term solution.
20. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) briefly outlined the history of the Cyprus question. Until the rise of the nationalist movement on the island, the United Kingdom Government had favoured the union of Cyprus with Greece. The policy pursued by the nationalist movement had served only to postpone the day of Cypriot liberation, for the goal to be sought was that of independence for Cyprus, which constituted a distinct entity. In that connexion, he noted that Turkey, which had ruled Cyprus for 300 years, had not found it advisable during that time to divide the island in order to protect the Turkish minority against the Greek majority. Moreover, the United Kingdom had been called in to occupy Cyprus for the express purpose of protecting the latter's integrity, and it had regarded Cyprus not as two colonies, but as one.
21. Indeed, Cyprus had constituted a single entity throughout its history, and there had never been any question of dividing it. Furthermore, the Greek and Turkish population did not live in separate parts of the island. It should be borne in mind that the conflict between them was of recent origin and that there were, for example, trade unions and co-operatives composed of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In addition, there was a great deal of evidence indicating that the Cypriot people possessed characteristics of their own and constituted a distinct nation. In that connexion, the fact that an island was situated not far from the coast of a given country and that some of the latter's inhabitants were settled on it did not justify the country concerned in making a territorial claim. Otherwise there was nothing to prevent, say, the United Arab Republic in its turn from laying claim to Cyprus. In such matters, the well-being and interests of the people of Cyprus should be the primary consideration.
22. He considered that the claim that no economic, social or other progress had been made in Cyprus was false. Indeed, there had been economic progress in spite of the colonial character of its economy. The Cyprus question was a colonial problem, as a territory was involved in which various parties, including Greece itself, had tried to hinder the development of nationalism. Cyprus was a United Kingdom colony and the Charter of the United Nations enjoined the Members of the United Nations to bring non-self-governing peoples to self-government or independence. But, instead of transferring its sovereignty to the Cypriot people, the United Kingdom proposed to share it with Greece and Turkey. The entry of additional Powers into the situation, he thought, would only complicate it.
23. In that connexion, he objected to the comparison made at the 996th meeting by the United Kingdom

representative between the Commonwealth and the association he proposed of Cyprus with the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey, since the British Commonwealth was an association of entirely independent nations only, which would not be the case in the situation proposed by the United Kingdom. On the other hand, he fully supported the elimination of violence which was also one of the objectives of the United Kingdom policy. The draft resolution, of which India was a sponsor (A/C.1/L.228), had been drawn up with that purpose in mind.

24. The British plan of 19 June 1958<sup>1/</sup> might lead to the division of Cyprus, although the island should on the contrary move towards integration. It might also hinder the national development of the island's inhabitants. Moreover, if the two communities were separated and each of them appealed to the country to which it felt it was intellectually closely related, a conflict might break out between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus. However, in spite of its defects, the British plan represented an effort to find a solution on the part of the United Kingdom which involved a sacrifice of authority for that country. In that sense, it was a sign of progress, which was confirmed by other developments. On the other hand, to hold a conference in which the representatives of the Cypriot population might not take part would be a step backward. No democratic solution could be achieved if it was not accepted by the people concerned. Consequently, peaceful negotiations must be undertaken with the people of Cyprus.

25. While it subscribed fully to the principles of the Charter, his delegation had always refused to support draft resolutions aiming at self-determination for Cyprus because, in its opinion, self-determination must follow self-government. In any case, it hoped that Cyprus might soon enjoy the independence which would enable it to belong to the British Commonwealth and the larger association of the United Nations. The chief difficulty—the policy of *enosis* (union with Greece)—had now given way to the development of the Cypriot national consciousness. It remained therefore to restore calm so that a peaceful solution to the question could be found.

26. His delegation would speak again if the need arose.

27. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Ethiopian delegation had joined the sponsors of the nine-Power draft resolution, as was indicated in document A/C.1/L.228/Add.1, which would shortly be distributed.

28. Mr. ZORLU (Turkey), exercising his right of reply, drew attention to some points in the statement just made by the Indian representative, which had evoked his admiration for two things: first, Mr. Krishna Menon's candour and perspicacity and then his imagination.

29. It should be recalled that during the general debate in the Assembly (774th plenary meeting), the Indian representative had stated that in his opinion the island of Cyprus should gain independence first and once that formality had been accomplished, be free to join whomever it wished. On the present occasion the Greek Parliament would certainly not criticize the Indian representative, for he had shown his approval of the tactics advocated by the Greek Government, which

would, through the stratagem of independence, lead straight to union with Greece.

30. On the other hand, if Mr. Krishna Menon had found time to read the history books he would know that in the period of three or four thousand years he had referred to, there had been a dozen different kingdoms and races on the little island of Cyprus.

31. Moreover, in speaking of a Cypriot nation, Mr. Krishna Menon seemed to forget that the Greek Parliament and the leaders of the Greek Cypriots had hitherto denied the existence of a Cypriot nationality and had stated that in Cyprus there were Greeks who wished to join Greece and Turks who stood in the way of that union and must be thrust aside.

32. The situation of Cyprus could not be compared with that of the Indian sub-continent. When Mr. Krishna Menon spoke of Cyprus, he gave the impression he was speaking of the Indian sub-continent, and when he referred to Moslem or Christian Cypriots, it was as if he were speaking of Indian Moslems or non-Moslems.

33. He did not wish to revive quarrels which had been superseded by the establishment of two States with which Turkey enjoyed friendly relations; he had merely wished to place the Cyprus question in its proper perspective. No doubt, religion, language and racial origin were not sufficient reasons for the permanent separation of communities living in the same territory. But there was one thing that counted and that Mr. Krishna Menon wished to ignore, the feelings of human beings. In Cyprus there were two national wills which were irreconcilably opposed.

34. Mr. Krishna Menon seemed ready to throw the inhabitants of the island against each other and let the stronger side win. It had been said that the two communities should be united, that they should feel they formed one nation, and examples from history had been given, but those situations had been wrought in battle, by fire and blood. That was not the way to restore peace in Cyprus. It was not the task of the General Assembly to impose a sentiment on one or the other of the two communities.

35. If the tension in Cyprus was to be reduced, each member of the Committee must cease to see the island as a reflection of his own country and to try to defend what was dear to him. Cyprus must be left as it was.

36. It was said that Greece and Turkey were neighbours which had common frontiers and were obliged to live together in harmony. But the two communities of Cyprus belonged precisely to those two neighbouring peoples and when Turkey spoke of partition it simply wanted good neighbourly conditions to continue. There was nothing novel in that and, if the two parties agreed, any solution was possible. But it was not by praising one of the two communities, which had taken up arms in revolt, that the problem could be solved. The other community could do likewise. If it had not done so as yet, that was because it still believed that human justice could be obtained without resorting to arms or taking to the mountains.

37. It was important to proceed cautiously and not to reward those who came with a bomb in one hand and the United Nations Charter in the other, for otherwise it would be impossible to make the other community listen to the counsels of reason.

<sup>1/</sup> Cyprus: Statement of Policy (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, June 1958), Cmd. 455.

38. Lastly, Mr. Krishna Menon's statements in connexion with the fact that the Ottoman Empire had not divided the island of Cyprus were completely baseless: the island of Cyprus had been a part of the Turkish motherland and a motherland could not be divided.

39. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece) emphasized that in proposing that Cyprus should be granted independence his Government had had no ulterior motives. The Turkish representative's doubts in that respect were completely unjustified, especially since Greece would leave it to the United Nations to determine how that suggestion should be applied and to fix the necessary safeguards.

40. If maps existed like the one produced by Mr. Zorlu at the 999th meeting, according to which Greece was shown as occupying half the Balkans, it was simply because in a democracy people had a right to voice even the most extravagant views. In any case, he had never heard of such claims.

41. The division into two communities did not correspond with reality nor with the mentality of the Cypriots. In that connexion he quoted a passage from the book *Bitter Lemons*,<sup>2/</sup> by a former official of the British Government in Cyprus, which depicted the co-operation and interdependence of the Greek and Turkish inhabitants. What Greece wanted was for the Cypriots themselves to decide their fate, it being understood that, whatever the system they chose, the participation of the Turks should be guaranteed.

42. Mr. REMON (Panama) said that the small countries were particularly sensitive to threats to freedom. That was why the Republic of Panama had always been in favour of any draft resolution which sought to safeguard the inalienable rights of the Cypriot people. In referring to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, resolution 1013 (XI) had opened the way to granting the people of Cyprus the full exercise of its right of self-determination, a right to which the General Assembly attached particular importance, as was apparent from resolutions 421 (V), section D, and 545 (VI).

43. When difficulties arose in the relations between friendly peoples, only solutions which were broadly supported by public opinion could be constructive. In the case of Cyprus, world opinion considered that the population of the island should be allowed to decide its own future.

44. In view of the proportion of Greeks and Turks in the Cypriot population, it would not be reasonable to partition the island; however, the rights of the minority should be guaranteed. Moreover, in order to ensure peace and tranquillity in the region, a solution should be adopted which would enable the population to govern itself after a certain period of time.

45. The views so far expressed in the Committee seemed to indicate that it would be difficult to obtain in the Assembly the necessary two-thirds majority for the draft resolutions tabled by the United Kingdom (A/C.1/L.221), Greece (A/C.1/L.222), Turkey (A/C.1/L.223), Colombia (A/C.1/L.225) and Iran (A/C.1/L.226/Rev.1). His delegation had therefore decided to join the sponsors of the nine-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/

L.228), which represented a step in the direction of settling the Cyprus question.

46. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) considered that the General Assembly should support the exercise by the Cypriot population of the right to decide its own future and should lead the island forward towards independence without annexation or partition. That independence should be attained in conformity with rules to be established by the United Nations with the consent of all the parties concerned, including the Cypriot people. The Greek representative had clearly indicated that independence could provide a solution to the problem, especially since Cyprus might continue to belong to the British Commonwealth. The United Kingdom representative's statements had been encouraging in many respects, even though the terms of the proposal he had laid before the Committee could not be entirely approved.

47. In short, to win adoption, a resolution on the Cyprus question should lay down the principle of self-determination, contemplate independence as a possible solution if that was the desire of the island's population, specify that that independence could not be granted on conditions unacceptable to the Cypriot people, and note that Cyprus could express the wish to remain in the British Commonwealth. His delegation would support any draft resolution which fulfilled those conditions and would help to restore calm in Cyprus.

48. Mr. OCAMPO (Bolivia) said that the movement for Cypriot independence was a part of the other national liberation movements which had arisen in various parts of the world. At a time when the peoples of the world were shaking off the colonial yoke and movements towards union and federation were showing increased strength, neither the maintenance of the colonial régime nor the partition of the island was called for. It was obvious that friendly negotiation was the way to solve the Cyprus problem, provided that the interests of the Turkish minority were taken into account, that a way was found to end the violence and that the useless partition of the island was avoided.

49. The fact that General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI) had been without effect showed that the problem was far from easy to solve. But in two years the situation had worsened both with regard to the relations between the population of the island and the British authorities and the relations between the two ethnic groups. On the other hand, it seemed that a settlement of the substantive problem was closer. The Greek proposal for the independence of the island opened new horizons.

50. The United Nations, which was endowed with great moral authority, should adopt a resolution which would define the future status of the island and facilitate the search for a formula which would reconcile the opposing forces and ensure the establishment of a permanent system in which the island's population would be able to live in peace.

51. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) noted that four draft resolutions had been submitted to the Committee in the hope of reconciling the different points of view. He suggested that their sponsors consult with each other in order to prepare a single text which would take account of all the opinions expressed.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

<sup>2/</sup> Lawrence Durrell, *Bitter Lemons* (London, Faber, 1957).