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Chairman: Mr. Victor A. BELAUNDE (Peru).

AGENDA ITEM 62

**Question of Algeria (A/3197, A/C.1/L.165)
(continued)**

1. The CHAIRMAN announced the list of speakers and declared that the list was closed.
2. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia) recalled that the people and the Government of his country had been following the events of Algeria with the greatest anxiety and apprehension since the beginning of the struggle of the Algerian people for freedom and independence. Thus, his delegation had brought the situation in Algeria to the attention of the Security Council on 5 January 1955 (S/3341). At that time, the conflict in Algeria had been referred to even by the French as a little war. Since then, the situation had deteriorated greatly. The small war had become a full-scale gruesome war involving close to 600,000 French soldiers and police. Instead of 4,000 Algerian patriots, there would now seem to be an endless number of those dauntless warriors. The world was confronted with a ghastly colonial war that was costing the French Government over \$3 million a day, an appalling loss of life and massive destruction of property. It had now become evident that the seriousness of the situation could no longer be overlooked.
3. The request of the fifteen African-Asian States for the inclusion of the question of Algeria in the agenda of the eleventh session (A/3197) had been made after several successive attempts had been made to afford France an opportunity to settle the problem peacefully. The question had first been discussed on an international level at the African-Asian Conference, held at Bandung in 1955, at which more than half the peoples of the world had been represented. The declaration made by the Bandung Conference upholding the right of the Algerians to self-determination and independence had been the first positive international action to cast a heavy shadow on France's fictitious claim that Algeria was part and parcel of France. The second positive international recognition of the existence of the situation in Algeria had been the reversal by the General Assembly at its tenth session (530th plenary meeting) of the General Committee's recommendation not to include the question of Algeria in its agenda (A/2980, para. 5).
4. Turning to the historical background of the Algerian problem, he stated that Algeria was an Arab country and its people were predominantly Moslem. It had been conquered by the French, who had established an administration to serve essentially the needs of the

colonists. The Algerian people had never given up the fight against the French. Throughout the previous 125 years, periodic uprisings had taken place in Algeria. The French, for their part, true to their colonizing mission, had stamped out one uprising after another.

5. As an accompaniment of the military régime and the policy of perpetuating the subservience of the Algerian people, the French had introduced into Algeria the policy of assimilation, which aimed at the gradual, but complete and subtle, obliteration of the national, cultural and religious characteristics of Algeria. That device, together with others, had been put into effect in order to undermine the bases and national characteristics of the Algerian society. It had been the expectation of the French that, having stripped the Algerian people of their cultural and religious heritage, it would become possible to remould them into a new and different people. That policy, however, had turned out to be a dismal failure.

6. At the end of the Second World War, the Algerian people had placed their hopes in the Atlantic Charter and in what was being said about the aims and principles of the United Nations. The rising tides of nationalism and the emancipation movements in Africa and Asia, particularly in Algeria's sister States in North Africa, must have had their effect on the Algerian people. Many Frenchmen had recognized the danger of ignoring the new trends, but the power of the colonists had seemed to neutralize every effort to make any decisive move. By 1 November 1954 it had become evident to the French authorities that the Algerians had lost patience and had given up all hope. That was the time when the Algerian people had struck simultaneously in the three Algerian provinces against the military and police posts and against various centres of government installations.

7. The nationalist uprising had rapidly developed momentum, primarily because of the ruthless measures with which the French Government sought to bring the Algerian patriots to terms through the so-called policy of "pacification". In the implementation of that policy, hundreds of villages had been destroyed by the air force and thousands of innocent people had been murdered. The futility of the policy of pacification as a prerequisite to reconciliation had been recognized by the former French Prime Minister, Mr. Mendès-France, in *L'Express* of 9 November 1956.

8. What was most discouraging in that respect, however, was the change which had developed in the attitude of some of the French leaders after they had assumed office. The present French Prime Minister, Mr. Guy Mollet, had written in *L'Espoir du Pas de Calais* late in December 1955 that the insane and blind repression must be stopped. Within two months of the publication of those words of advice, however, Mr. Mollet had embarked on a policy which did offence to them. That contradiction between his words and acts seemed to explain better than anything else why the Algerians

had lost faith in France and could trust it no more. The policy of pacification had made the Algerian people more determined than ever to put an end to the seemingly perpetual age of oppression and of terror and had contributed to the superior courage and fighting power of the Algerian patriots. That policy also required that the United Nations discuss the situation in Algeria with a view to putting an end to the war and its threat to international peace and security.

9. No one could pretend at present that a state of war did not exist in Algeria. The number of French troops involved, the daily cost of the operations, the destruction and casualties caused, all testified to the existence of a catastrophic war. The decision of the French military authorities to stop disclosing daily figures of the insurgents killed in Algeria, which had been reported in *The New York Times* of 5 August 1956, suggested the existence of an extermination campaign against the Algerian people. While official French figures of the number of rebels killed since the beginning of the war in Algeria until the end of 1956 were contradictory and confusing, the Algerians estimated the number of their casualties at over 50,000. That figure could not be far from correct, since the French officials themselves admitted that 18,000 Algerians had been killed in 1956 alone.

10. A large number of Algerians were being kept in gaol. On the basis of a statement by Mr. Robert Lacoste, Minister residing in Algeria, it would appear that some 10,000 Algerians, against none of whom any criminal charges existed, were in prison.

11. Another figure which reflected the extensiveness of the Algerian campaign was its cost in money. From a report in the *New York Herald Tribune* of 26 July 1956 about the vote of confidence won by the government of Mr. Guy Mollet, it followed that \$4 million a day were being spent on the military operations in Algeria.

12. He asked whether it was realistic to contend that the United Nations was not competent to deal with racist wars of annihilation and devastation; whether it was realistic to tell France to carry on; whether it was realistic to overlook the fact that the situation had grown in intensity and gravity and had become a genuine threat to international peace and security.

13. Referring to the contentions of the parties, he stated that the position of the Algerians might be summed up very simply. The Algerians maintained that the French had invaded their country and had been exploiting it and its people for 127 years. At the end of that period, the Algerian people had found themselves in an intolerable position. Having sought in vain, by all peaceful means, the rectification of their grievances against France, they had finally rebelled. The Algerian people now insisted that France should recognize their right to self-determination, a right recognized in the United Nations Charter. The right to self-determination naturally embodied the right to independence. The Algerian people were prepared and anxious to negotiate a settlement with France on that basis.

14. France, on the other hand, insisted that the legal situation admitted of no equivocation and that, in the words of the French Prime Minister in a statement of 9 January 1957, the drama which was tearing Algeria apart was a French drama. France thus wanted the Algerian people to be regarded as Frenchmen, in order to dispose of the cause of the trouble in France's own way.

15. He rejected the charge that those who upheld the views of the Algerian people in fact upheld the views of the extremists. On 26 September 1955, the overwhelming majority of the Algerian Assembly had signed a historic document which negated the theory that Algeria was an integral part of France, that Algerians were Frenchmen and that the boundaries of Algeria were the boundaries of France, although the members of that Assembly were the French authorities' hand-picked representatives of the Algerian people.

16. Even French official thinking was progressing in the direction of recognizing the individuality of Algeria.

17. With regard to the problem of ensuring the coexistence of Algeria's two communities without either one being able to oppress the other, the experience of Tunisia and Morocco were indicative of the fact that Algeria too would practise tolerance and administer justice. The representatives of Algeria had repeatedly stated their readiness and determination to grant absolute equality to all the French and European residents of Algeria who opted for Algerian citizenship. They had likewise declared their readiness to work out ways and means to protect the legitimate rights and interests of all those who preferred to retain their French or other European nationality. Surely, no one could advocate greater rights for the European minority in Algeria than would accrue to them on the basis of absolute equality with the rest of the Algerian people, or greater privileges than were conferred on minorities in the most liberal of countries.

18. His delegation hoped, as it had during the consideration of the Tunisian and Moroccan questions, that discussion of the Algerian question in the General Assembly would influence the thinking of the French Government and people. What had taken place in Tunisia and Morocco since the first attempt had been made to bring those two items before the United Nations had demonstrated in the most convincing manner that the French policy of resisting discussion was completely unjustified. No one could claim with any justification that the improvement which had been brought about in Tunisia and Morocco had not been due, in major part, to the concern shown by the United Nations about the situations in those areas. The concern of the United Nations had strengthened the hand of those in France who had seen that it was not in the interest of France in the long run to continue its policy of oppression against the native people while upholding the selfish interests of the French colonists. In the case of Algeria, there was greater justification and urgency for United Nations consideration of the problem because of the devastating war which was tearing the country asunder. It was that aspect of the problem which had seemed to his delegation to be the overriding consideration in favour of the General Assembly's discussion of the Algerian question as a matter of extreme urgency.

19. Referring to the French allegations that the Algerians were receiving military aid, he stated that they were sheer fabrications. On the other hand, France was using tremendous quantities of the weapons held by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and intended for the defence of the cause of freedom and democracy in Western Europe to crush the cause of freedom and liberty in Algeria. In that connexion, it was important to note that the presence of other NATO forces in Western Europe had provided direct relief to France in its dual task of defence at home and war in Algeria. No one could dismiss lightly that international involvement in the Algerian war.

20. The French attitude with regard to the representatives of the Algerian people was discouraging and disquieting. France was using the same argument it had used in the cases of Tunisia and Morocco, namely, that the country was divided and its factions were many. No reasonable person would believe that the 10 million Algerians could maintain their solidarity under the crushing burdens of the war if they had not been inspired by the loftiness of their battle for liberation and if they had not had absolute faith and confidence in their leaders. It would be most unfortunate if France resorted again to the policy of ignoring the genuine nationalist leaders in favour of the hirelings, under the pretence of the existence of numerous factions.

21. Algeria's two neighbour countries, Tunisia and Morocco, had only recently shown that they had recognized the leaders of the Algerian nationalist movement. With the encouragement of the French Government, the Sultan of Morocco had invited five of the leaders to a conference with a view to working out an acceptable solution for Algeria. There could be no doubt that if the French had not been absolutely sure that those five Algerian leaders had represented the mass of the nationalist movement in war as well as in peace, they would not have gone to the extent of committing such an outrageous international blunder as the abduction of the guests of the Sultan.

22. Furthermore, there was no reason why France should all of a sudden now insist on a perfectionist state of affairs with respect to representation when it had not permitted even a shade of representation during its previous 125 years of administration in Algeria. An inequality of representation of the so-called two communities had been imposed and maintained by the French Government in Algeria for decades. Surely, it could tolerate an Algerian representation now which was not 100 per cent perfect for the purpose of negotiating a peaceful settlement. Normally, there could be no better representation than one resulting from truly free and correct elections. Unfortunately, that was not possible under the present circumstances in Algeria. Furthermore, it was inconceivable that the situation could be "normalized" without greatly prejudicing the position of the Algerian nationalists. The insistence on such a procedure would only confirm that the French Government was using it as a pretext and that it had no desire to negotiate on the basis of equality.

23. Nor could anyone normally disagree with the principle that a cease-fire should precede a negotiated settlement. However, under the present circumstances, if the cease-fire were to come first, then elections, and finally negotiations, he asked what the position of the Algerians would be if the French Government should balk at the negotiations and refuse to grant any of the demands of the nationalists and what recourse the latter would have, for their fighting set-up would have been liquidated. One could not in all fairness call on the nationalists to lay down their arms when their opponents maintained in the country an armed force of some 600,000 men.

24. His delegation would be interested to know whether, if elections took place after three months as promised by France, France would then be prepared to honour the result if the majority of the representatives were to vote for the independence of Algeria and for establishing a relationship with France similar to that existing between Tunisia and France. On the other hand, France might limit the choice of those elected representatives merely to proposals advanced

by France itself. An answer to those questions was very important because, recently, a great deal had been said about French intentions to introduce reforms in Algeria. If one were to consider those proposed reforms in the light of some official and unofficial French statements, one would find it unnecessary to put much reliance upon them. For example, on 9 November 1956, Mr. Mendès-France, the former French Prime Minister, had described a declaration by the present Prime Minister on the question of reforms in Algeria as deceptive. He had added that the time for empty words had passed and that, without some concrete action, the confidence of the Algerians would not be regained. Similarly, Mr. Soustelle, the former Governor-General of Algeria, had said, on 10 January 1957, that Algeria was no longer content with mere declarations and moreover was well aware that the instability of the French political system had made those declarations meaningless. Then, according to *The New York Times* of 12 December 1956, the mayors of eighty-two cities in Algeria had revolted against a decision of the French Government to dissolve the city councils because they were under European control. The mayors had also sent a delegation to France, which was told by the French Prime Minister that the Government had to do something constructive for display at the United Nations in order to win favourable votes and the abstention of the United States. Under those circumstances, it was not surprising if the Algerian leaders had lost faith in French promises of reforms. For 125 years, they had been forced to accept that line; after every uprising, they were promised certain reforms, but those promises had never been fulfilled.

25. In his statement to the delegation of the mayors from Algeria, the French Prime Minister had, however, admitted the significant role that the United Nations could play in the solution of the Algerian question. The statement showed that the United Nations' concern was being used by the French Government as an argument to dislodge the colonists from the rigid position from which the Government had failed to move them in the past. If France was sincerely desirous of seeking a peaceful settlement in Algeria, it should not object to the role being played by the United Nations in bringing about such a settlement. By accepting the concern of the United Nations and by using it as an argument for introducing reforms in Algeria, France had thereby refuted its own charge that the General Assembly was not competent to deal with the Algerian question.

26. In questioning the competence of the General Assembly, France had maintained that Algeria, since 1834, had formed an integral part of metropolitan France, and that discussion on Algeria would amount to intervention in France's domestic affairs. That argument had been refuted over and over again. During the tenth session of the General Assembly, and in the course of the present debate, facts and figures had been submitted to refute that argument. The French claim, which was sheer fiction, was being used as a shield behind which France desired to reserve for itself complete freedom of action in Algeria and to ward off United Nations intervention.

27. France had dissolved all the representative institutions in Algeria on the ground that the representation in them had been farcical. However, there was more confusion in France at present than at any other time as to how far the French people were prepared to remove the barriers which had made Algeria both constitutionally and administratively so unlike any other

part of France. Moreover, the French Government itself was very vague in respect of its proposals to remove those barriers and about their effectiveness if carried out. Under those circumstances, nobody could be convinced by the claim that Algeria was "an integral part" of France. On the contrary, all the facts tended to show that Algeria was in fact a non-self-governing territory within the meaning of Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations.

28. At the tenth session of the General Assembly, his delegation had pointed out (525th plenary meeting) how France itself had classified Algeria as a non-self-governing territory. That was evident from the classification of the African territories in the *Statistical Yearbook* issued by the United Nations. Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter did not apply to those territories.

29. There were, however, other grounds which made it imperative on the United Nations to deal with the Algerian question. The situation in Algeria was such that its continuance was likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. The French Prime Minister had himself declared on 9 January 1957 that international friction between his country and a number of other States existed because of the situation in Algeria. The continuance of that friction had been further illustrated and confirmed by the French military action against Egypt in November 1956. It had been stated that one of the main reasons for the French aggression was to get even with Egypt on the question of Algeria. The French had reportedly been disturbed by the moral support given to the Algerian patriots by the Voice of the Arabs and other radio stations. In view of the admission by the French Prime Minister himself about the existence of international friction, the competence of both the Security Council and the General Assembly to deal with the Algerian question, under Article 11, paragraph 2, and Articles 34 and 35, was never in doubt.

30. The abduction of the five Algerian leaders who had been guests of the Sultan of Morocco had also impaired the relations between France and Morocco, and between France and Tunisia. That action had certainly created international friction. Morocco had already referred the case to the International Court of Justice. The reaction of the other Arab States had also been unfavourable to France. The situation in Algeria had, in fact, reached such a stage that various acts and utterances of the French Government were continually adding to that friction between France and other States.

31. Because of Algeria's geographical position, and because of its close religious and cultural ties with Morocco and Tunisia, it would be unrealistic to expect Morocco and Tunisia not to show grave concern about the situation in Algeria. That situation could no longer be localized or viewed solely as being within the domestic jurisdiction of France. The General Assembly must therefore find ways and means to bring about the realization of the national aspirations of the Algerian people in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

32. The General Assembly could also act under Articles 10 and 14 of the Charter. With regard to Article 14, situations which might lead to international friction were surely situations "likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations". Article 14 also included situations resulting from violations of the provisions of the Charter, including the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Moreover, every question to which objections had been raised, on the basis of Article 2, paragraph 7,

had been ultimately admitted on the basis of Article 10 or Article 14. It had thus been a recognized and an established practice in the United Nations that the argument of domestic jurisdiction could not prevail in cases in which international friction existed. There had been many cases in which the General Assembly had rejected the argument of domestic jurisdiction, as for example on the questions of racial treatment in the Union of South Africa. If the General Assembly was to be consistent, it must act in the same way on the question of Algeria.

33. In conclusion, he said that it was not for the General Assembly to assess the contributions made by France to Algeria or to decide how the Algerian people should react to the reforms promised by France. The Algerian people alone could decide on those matters. The task before the Assembly was to contribute to the termination of the reign of terror in Algeria and to the realization by the Algerian people of their rights of self-determination.

34. Mr. HANIFAH (Indonesia) stated that the United Nations was for the first time seriously examining the Algerian problem, which was of vital concern not only to the peoples directly concerned, but also to the peoples of the whole world, who wished to see peace and freedom restored to that area.

35. The entire background of the question and the events at present transpiring in that country had been comprehensively analysed by the representative of Syria (831st to 833rd meetings) and others. On the other hand, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France had stated (830th and 831st meetings) his Government's views on the situation in Algeria, on the question of the reforms planned by his Government, on Algeria's special status, on the French policy of pacification and on his Government's basic principles for a solution of the Algerian question. The Indonesian delegation, however, believed that it was much too late to talk about reforms now, at a time when the people were asking for self-determination. It was not only a sad confession of past neglect, but also a dangerous blindness to the spirit of freedom and liberty sweeping across Asia and Africa. It might be true that reforms were needed in Algeria, but those reforms could be undertaken by an independent Algeria with the assistance of other nations, especially that of France.

36. Referring to the statement of the representative of France that, on the economic level, Algeria could not live without France (831st meeting), he said that it was unfortunate that such a statement had been made in the United Nations, in which efforts were being made to promote economic co-operation and assistance among independent and sovereign nations.

37. The argument that the national aspirations of the Algerians could not be satisfied because Algeria's status was special and differed from the status of Morocco and Tunisia before their independence, did not hold water. Quoting from the Socialist newspaper *Franc-Tireur*, to the effect that the integration of Algeria with France was a fiction which would collapse if France did not find some alternative to it, he added that that fiction had already collapsed and must be replaced by friendly, co-operative and peaceful relations between France and Algeria, recognizing Algeria's right to independence.

38. He then referred to the confusion concerning the legality of the French occupation of Algeria. While the French Minister for Foreign Affairs had asserted (830th meeting) that France was in Algeria not by the right of conquest, the French Minister residing in

Algeria had, on the other hand, declared before the National Assembly that France would not be chased from a land where it had established itself by the right of arms. He inquired whether that was not a claim of conquest.

39. Referring to the so-called special status of Algeria, he noted that Algeria was a colony fighting for its independence, and the main reason adduced by the French for not granting independence to it was the presence of two large communities living there—the minority, of European origin and the majority, Algerians. The presence of a minority could not take away from the majority the legitimate right to be free and self-governing. The only reasonable solution to the question of the two communities living in Algeria was to be found within the framework of an independent, sovereign Algeria.

40. In that connexion, he would call the attention of the members of the First Committee to a disturbing element underlying the concept, which was being propagated, that the minority should be allowed to suppress the legitimate national aspirations of the majority. That element was the idea that the European minority would protect the rights of the Algerian majority, but that the majority, of non-European origin, was somehow incapable of protecting the rights of the minority. That idea was not only untrue, but was likely to harm the understanding between the West and the nations of Asia and Africa. What was obviously most needed in the world was to dispel the old distrust and to build a new foundation of mutual understanding and trust. Therefore, his delegation regretted that formulation of a concept of mistrust, which marked the whole attitude of France towards Algeria.

41. He noted the emphasis placed by France on the activity of the Algerian Communist Party and said that the alleged activities and growing strength of that party could only be attributed to the continual denial of the national aspirations of the Algerian people.

42. Noting that in France there was a large and very strong Communist Party, he declared that the French allegations with regard to the activities of the Communist Party in Algeria would imply that that party was dangerous in the colonies, but not dangerous in independent countries. He contended that if that thesis was accepted, the best answer would be to give Algeria its independence.

43. Turning to the French thesis of pacification in Algeria, Mr. Hanifah said that it was based on the

stationing of half a million French troops in Algeria and a daily toll of bloodshed and killings. He pointed out that many of the French troops fighting in Algeria were composed of units of the Foreign Legion and, more important, of NATO contingents. It appeared that NATO itself had become indirectly involved in the repressions in Algeria, and weapons supplied under NATO were being used to kill Algerian patriots.

44. Pacification, in his opinion, meant nothing less than all-out war against a populace demanding the right to govern itself. The so-called campaigns of pacification which had taken place in Indonesia in 1945 to 1946, and again in 1948, had really been wars against the Indonesian freedom fighters in a vain attempt to reverse the proclamation of Indonesian independence. The attempt to reverse the trend of history had failed in Indonesia, and it would also fail in Algeria.

45. His delegation regretted the reference made to his country by the representative of France and wondered what connexion there could be between Indonesia and the question of Algeria. His country, as well as other under-developed countries, had faced many problems as a result of the destructive effects of centuries of colonial subjugation. Indonesia could tackle and solve those problems because the Indonesians had won their national independence. That, he felt, would also be true in the case of Algeria. The only concern of the Indonesian delegation at present was to find the way towards constructive co-operation and a just peace in Algeria.

46. He then suggested that the first step towards a solution of the Algerian problem would be a clear and unequivocal statement by France recognizing the right of people of Algeria to self-government and freedom. Secondly, there should be negotiations between the true representatives of the Algerian people and France, on the basis of French recognition of Algeria's nationhood, and, at the same time, an agreement on a cease-fire. The cease-fire agreement should be implemented and guaranteed by a provisional Algerian Government and by France. Thirdly, the provisional Algerian Government and France should then negotiate an agreement on the future relationship between those two equal and independent States. Finally, after such an agreement had been worked out, free and democratic elections should be held to elect an Algerian national government. Such elections, however, could not be held before the other steps had been implemented.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.