United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIFTEENTH SESSION
Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE, 1151st MEETING

Monday, 17 April 1961, at 3.35 p.m.

New York

CONTENTS

Chairman: Mr. Karel KURKA (Czechoslovakia).

Organization of the Committee's work

1. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) pointed out that, since the General Assembly was sitting at the same time as the First Committee, it was very difficult for some delegations to be represented at both meetings simultaneously. He wondered whether it would not be possible, for instance, to postpone the plenary meeting until 8.30 p.m.

2. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Committee itself had decided, at its previous meeting, to meet at 3 p.m. The President of the General Assembly had been informed of that fact, but had deemed it impossible to postpone the plenary meeting.

3. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) proposed that in those circumstances the meeting of the Committee should be postponed until 8.30 p.m.

4. The CHAIRMAN put the motion for adjournment to the vote.

The motion was rejected by 14 votes to 10, with 39 abstentions.

5. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia), pointing out that his delegation was not represented at the plenary meeting, protested against such an arrangement, which complicated the task of small delegations.

AGENDA ITEM 90

Complaint by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba regarding the various plans of aggression and acts of intervention being executed by the Government of the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba, constituting a manifest violation of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and a clear threat to international peace and security (A/4537, A/4543, A/4581, A/4701, A/4708, A/4710, A/4716, A/4725) (*continued*)

6. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru), replying to a statement made by the representative of Cuba at the previous meeting, said that Peru, in breaking off diplomatic relations with Cuba, had been accepting orders from no one: it had taken its decision in full exercise of its sovereignty, because of the foreign policy of the Cuban Government, whose Embassy had been interfering in the domestic affairs of Peru, engaging in revolutionary and communist propaganda, subsidizing *agents provocateurs* and inciting the population to overthrow the authority of the public powers, the Church and the armed forces. In other words, the Government of Peru had been obliged to break off diplomatic relations with Cuba for reasons which were entirely its own.

7. Mr. SANTISO GALVEZ (Guatemala) said that he felt compelled to reply to the assertions made at the previous meeting by the representative of Cuba, who had claimed that his Government did not wish to interfere in the domestic affairs of other Latin American countries. In fact Cuba had been committing, since 1959, acts of flagrant intervention in various countries, and that was why Guatemala had been forced to break off diplomatic relations with the Revolutionary Government of Cuba.

8. The diplomatic agents of that Government, abusing their privileges, had openly supported the political opponents of the Government of Guatemala and had supplied them with arms; at the time of the strike of the Social Security Institute, they had exacerbated to the highest degree a labour conflict of no particular gravity. Moreover, the Cuban Government had financed the organization of subversive movements and had supported, militarily and financially, the revolutionary action of certain Guatemalan refugees living in Cuba.

9. Despite repeated protests from the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cuba had done nothing to remedy that state of things. The Government of Guatemala, on the other hand, had done everything possible to see that the activity of Cuban exiles who had taken refuge in its territory should not impair relations between the two countries. It had submitted to the Organization of American States (OAS) the disputes arising out of the hostile acts of the Cuban Government, and had broken off diplomatic relations only in order to defend the integrity and sovereignty of the State.

10. Guatemala itself had always sought the way of conciliation, and hoped that the people of Cuba would be able to overcome its difficulties while respecting other nations. But the declarations and acts of the leaders of Cuban policy indicated a clear intention to intervene in the domestic affairs of other countries. His Government protested against the acts of the Cuban Government designed to make trouble between Guatemala and the United States, as well as against the campaign of calumny to which it had been subjected. It certainly harboured no animosity against the brave people of Cuba, and admitted freedom-loving Cubans to its territory. It was preparing no aggression against Cuba, and was ready to submit to the OAS any disputes which might arise between the two countries; it would allow the Inter-American Peace Committee to make an in-

spection of its territory, provided that Cuba did the same.

11. The Government of Guatemala regretted that it had been obliged to intervene in the debate, but the United Nations had to be informed that the Cuban Government's assertions were designed solely to conceal acts against peace of which it had itself been guilty.

12. Mr. CAMARA Maurice (Guinea) said that, in taking part in the discussion, his delegation was faithfully pursuing the ideals of his country, which had entered the fight for the liberation of humanity from the forces of evil and was following a policy of positive neutrality.

13. The people and Government of Guinea had watched with deep concern the deterioration in relations between the United States and the Republic of Cuba, all the more since Guinea itself was at grips with those who could not reconcile themselves to the loss of the jewel which Guinea had constituted in their colonial empire.

14. The people of Guinea had learnt with stupefaction of the cowardly attack launched against the Cuban people. It was an act of banditry directed against a Member of the United Nations, and the United States should have been able to prevent the execution of such a heinous crime. His delegation thought that all the American States should immediately take concerted action to unmask the criminals and make it impossible for them to do further harm. The United Nations, however, could not remain indifferent to an attack which profoundly shocked the conscience of small countries. All peace-loving nations should therefore make all the necessary representations to the Governments of Cuba and the United States to induce them to settle their dispute by peaceful means.

15. There were many examples of colonialist Governments taking orders from their nationals who had settled abroad, and engaging, despite the disapproval of their peoples, in hopeless adventures: it sufficed to mention the instances of Algeria, Rhodesia, Angola and the Congo. In the case of a popular revolution, when all institutions had to be changed in the interests of the people, the measures which the Government might be called upon to take were scarcely ever understood by the propertied minorities. All countries which liberated themselves had to grapple with that property-owning mentality: the Republic of Guinea, on the departure of the colonial Power, had experienced trials and a threat of economic strangulation and military aggression. Moreover, such countries discovered that their economy was unsuited to the needs of national life, as a result of previous foreign exploitation. Hence they had to embark on bold reforms, in order to promote balanced development. Where the economy was in the hands of foreigners, poverty was the lot of the indigenous inhabitants, whose every effort had to be bent to the production of the raw materials required for the expansion of trusts. In order to remedy the irrational use of land, and to end social injustice and poverty, the Governments of the liberated States were always compelled to take decisions which often accounted for the bad reputation fastened upon them. The people of Guinea was therefore quite able to understand the fear which the ill-temper of a powerful neighbour could inspire in a small country.

16. Guinea maintained most cordial relations both with the United States and with Cuba, and therefore wished to see some reconciliation between them which would ensure peace and security in the Western hemisphere. In that connexion the President of the Republic of Guinea had stated in 1958 that the best support which the United States could give to Guinea was that afforded by its understanding and its influence in the international arena. What was true for Guinea was also true for the whole of Africa. With such considerations in mind, he thought that the two parties to the dispute should hold talks at the invitation of the United Nations, whose authority was not questioned by either. No suggestion could lead to the desired improvement in relations if one of the parties mistrusted the United Nations. The delegation of Guinea was therefore prepared, if necessary, to take an initiative designed to settle the dispute by the means indicated in the Charter of the United Nations. It also contemplated inviting all the States of Latin America to aid it in that task.

17. Mr. BRUCAN (Romania) said that, despite repeated categorical denials by the United States representative, the whole world could today see that the United States had not only trained, organized and financed rebel forces for action against Cuba, but had also directed the mercenaries to invade Cuba in order to restore the domination of the United States imperialists and reinstitute the process of merciless exploitation by the United States monopolies.

18. The United States legend concerning the savage bombing of Cuba was rather clumsy. He could not but regret that Mr. Stevenson, who had been one of the critics of the blunders committed by the former Government of the United States, should now find himself in a similar position. Mr. Stevenson had not repeated his statements of the 1149th meeting at the 1150th meeting, and had chosen to ignore the Cuban Government's challenge that the United States should bring to the United Nations the pilots described as deserters from the Cuban Air Force.

19. It now appeared that the soul-searching which, according to Press reports, had gone on at Washington during the previous week had been concerned, not with the issue of whether or not to carry out the invasion of Cuba, but rather with how to conceal the truth and deceive public opinion. For example, what was meant by the statement that the basic issue in Cuba was not between the United States and Cuba, but between the Cubans themselves? The asylum and protection offered to notorious Cuban war criminals in Florida, the assistance furnished by United States officials to counter-revolutionary elements in their conspiracies and invasion plans, the frequent violations of Cuban air space by aircraft proceeding from United States territory and piloted by United States nationals, the daily parachuting of United States weapons into the area of the Escambray Mountains—were those purely Cuban actions? And what about the economic strangulation to which Washington was seeking to subject Cuba? If the United States Government was convinced that the basic issue was between the Cubans themselves, it could prove that fact very easily by leaving the Cubans alone.

20. He recalled a statement concerning Guatemala which had been made in the Security Council on 20 June 1954 by Mr. Lodge, the then United States representative, to the effect that the situation there did not involve aggression but was a revolt of Guatemalans agains Guatemalans[1] and drew attention to the similarity between that statement and the one made by Mr. Stevenson with respect to Cuba.

[1] *Official Records of the Security Council, Ninth Year,* 675th meeting, para. 158.

21. The document entitled "Cuba" issued by the State Department and circulated on 6 April as a United Nations document (A/4725) demonstrated that the United States Government was disregarding the United Nations Charter and the most elementary rules of international law. Since when had the State Department been entitled to tell the Government of another country how to run its affairs, what economic policy it should adopt, with what nations it should establish diplomatic relations and trade exchanges, and so on? At the previous meeting, Mr. Stevenson had gone even further and had pleaded for the taking over of Cuba by a United States-sponsored Government.

22. It was the duty of the United Nations to remind the United States Government of the basic principles of the Charter, including the sovereign equality of all States Members of the Organization and the prohibition of intervention in matters which were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. The only practical way of maintaining peace was to respect the right of each sovereign nation to choose its institutions and way of life. In that connexion, he cited article 15 of the charter of the Organization of American States, which prohibited all forms of interference. The recent acts of official United States agencies violated those principles and international law; yet, during the debates on the situation in the Republic of the Congo, the United States representative had spoken frequently against any intervention.

23. In fact, the United States intervention in Cuba was a typical example of the export of counter-revolution and, since that form of imperialist policy was the main source of international conflict, it was the task of the United Nations to combat it. The essence of that policy was the intervention of the exploiters and colonialist oppressors against national liberation movements and socialist revolutions, camouflaged by cant about law and order, security of nations, liberty, and so forth.

24. For many years, Washington had been trying to convince the under-developed areas of the world that the United States should not be identified with the enemies of social progress. However, when it came to particular cases, it was always found on the side of the worst reactionaries—Pérez Jiménez, Nuri as-Said, Syngman Rhee, Menderes, Batista and the like. The reason was rather simple: only reactionary leaders sought foreign support and foreign money and were ready to become the tools of imperialism against their own people, who hated them.

25. The authors of the State Department document (A/4725) could not gainsay the social and economic achievements of the Cuban revolution; hence they tried to prove that there was no democracy in Cuba. The dedication of the Cuban people to its Government was proved by its determination to fight and die for that Government.

26. Many statements had recently been made to the effect that while the great Powers could defend themselves, the small Powers needed the protection of the United Nations. In the present case, a small Power had been continuously harassed, threatened and subjected to economic pressure by a great Power. Under the very eyes of the United Nations, the great Power was preparing, directing, arming and financing a brazen military intervention against Cuba. Was the United Nations going to be prevented from discharging its duty under the Charter just because that Power was the United States? The United Nations had failed in its duty in 1954, when Guatemala had made a last-minute appeal against an intervention armed, engineered and directed by the United States. Should the United Nations fail again, with respect to the Cuban complaint, the Organization itself and each Member State would bear a heavy responsibility.

27. The Romanian people proclaimed its solidarity with the heroic Cuban people; it stood by the Revolutionary Government of Fidel Castro in the present time of trial, and was certain that the gallant Cuban people would succeed in crushing the invader.

28. Mr. ROA (Cuba), exercising his right of reply, said that he would like to lift the debate above the level of personalities. The representatives of the United States Government in the United Nations had never spoken a single word of censure against dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere; yet that Government today asserted that the Cuban revolution had been betrayed, and it made that assertion for the very reason that the leaders of the Cuban revolution had accomplished a genuine, thoroughgoing social revolution, instead of confining themselves to the re-establishment of a superficially democratic régime and maintaining the economic and social structure which had been the basis of United States domination in Cuba.

29. The United States representative had spoken of the part played by his Government in the attainment of Cuban independence. But the fact was that since 1805 the United States Government had continuously placed obstacles in the path of Cuban independence. The primary interest of the United States in those early days had been to safeguard its own frontiers and to secure bases for defence against incursions by European Powers into the Caribbean. The power struggle with Great Britain had led to the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine, whereby the United States and Great Britain had signified their lack of territorial aspirations in Latin America and their desire to maintain the *status quo* there. By adopting the Monroe Doctrine, the United States had left Cuba subject to the political, economic and cultural domination of Spain, but in the hope that in the end Cuba would come within the United States orbit by the law of political gravitation. Moreover, the United States had not been content merely to maintain that policy of watchful waiting throughout the Ten Years' War (1868-1878); it had been the main support of Spanish colonial domination in Cuba and had bitterly opposed the Cuban revolution, preventing it from receiving any assistance or supplies.

30. Under the influence of basic changes in the United States economy, economic reasons had been added to political motives. In the 1890's, when the "open door" policy had begun to emerge, José Martí had been led to anticipate the need for a second war of independence —a war of economic independence for the peoples of Latin America. The United States had always sought to prevent the Cuban people from succeeding in its struggle to obtain political and economic emancipation. Upon its landing in Cuba in 1898, the United States had signed a peace treaty with Spain without the knowledge of the Cuban people and, by the device of the Platt Amendment, had compelled that people to accept a right of United States intervention which the United States still exercised today against the Cuban people's will.

31. The Republic of Cuba, having suffered *capitis diminutio* at its birth, for a long time had been just a

protégé on the international scene and had spoken only with "its master's voice".

32. At the same time, its economy had been distorted by the colonial economic relationship established by the United States; for after becoming independent of Spain, Cuba had been commercially dependent on the United States, which had controlled all its sugar industry and the greater part of its land, mines, transportation and public service undertakings. At the time of the victory of the revolution, North American investments in Cuba had amounted to $1,000 million, and Cuba had become a single-crop and single-market economy, with few industries; illiteracy had been widespread, and health conditions had been appalling.

33. The "crime" committed by the Cuban revolution was not that it had delivered Cuba to the Soviet Union or to the People's Republic of China, but that it had wanted to give Cuba back to the Cubans, involving detriment to the structure for the domination of Cuba erected by the United States. Thus the conflict was not between Cuba and the Cubans, or between Cuba and the western hemisphere, but between the Cuban people and United States interests eager to reconquer their lost possessions. The Cuban revolutionaries, who in two years had built schools, wiped out unemployment, increased agricultural productivity, established industries and diversified Cuba's international trade, were not disturbed by being called traitors. They were accused of having defied the OAS; but they had only defied the colonialist conception of the OAS, which the United States Department of State considered just a colonial ministry. The United States regarded the OAS, and the United Nations as well, as nothing but a tool for its own use; but the small countries were on their guard.

34. Cuba was not afraid of the invaders; it had come not as a petitioner but as an accuser; and the United States had made only evasive replies to the Cuban charges.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

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