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**Chairman: Mrs. Aase LIONAES (Norway).**

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. López (Philip-  
pines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

**AGENDA ITEM 32**

**Recommendations concerning international respect  
for the right of peoples and nations to self-deter-  
mination (A/2957, A/3515, A/3587, A/C.3/L.659)  
(continued)**

1. Mr. BRATANOV (Bulgaria) said that although the question of the right of peoples to self-determination had a humanitarian aspect with which the Third Committee was more particularly concerned, it was yet closely linked with the important problems of the day. In the modern world an evolution was taking place which would ultimately lead to the complete emancipation of all oppressed peoples. In spite of efforts to depreciate it, the question of self-determination would remain in the forefront of contemporary international affairs until it was finally solved. The changes which had occurred since the end of the Second World War, the peaceful policies of the Soviet Union and the example of the great Chinese revolution had undoubtedly made it possible to find a solution.

2. The right of peoples and nations to self-determination was the foundation of all the other rights, and if that right was not universally recognized and respected there could be no peaceful coexistence between nations. That fact was emphasized in the Charter of the United Nations and in several General Assembly documents. For the sake of peace and human progress the United Nations should help the oppressed peoples to defend their legitimate rights, their political no less than their economic, social and cultural rights.

3. The countries which had recently become independent were better qualified than others to understand and explain the interests of the peoples struggling for freedom. Consequently, the Bulgarian delegation was anxious to hear their views and would be prepared to support any proposals they made. Because time was short, he would not comment in detail on the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council. He would support the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.659), which reminded Member States in general and, more especially, States having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories, of the

need both to respect the right of peoples and nations to self-determination and to stop unnecessary bloodshed. At the thirteenth session of the General Assembly the Committee would not have to determine whether the right existed or not—the right did undoubtedly exist—but should consider, rather, how the right was given effect in practice and should take the necessary action to secure universal recognition and respect for it. The Committee would in that way enhance the prestige of the United Nations and win the gratitude of all oppressed peoples

4. Mrs. ELLIOT (United Kingdom) said that her country attached the greatest importance to the principle of self-determination, as was proved by the United Kingdom's record in its application to particular cases. She believed that there was far more fundamental agreement on the subject than would appear from discussions in the United Nations. However, the views of the United Kingdom delegation differed from those of some other delegations in regard to the proper role of the United Nations in that matter. In her delegation's view, self-determination as set forth in the Charter was not an infeasible right but a principle of the first importance. It had been suggested that the application of the principle was a problem solely for the Administering Powers. That view was plainly in contradiction with the facts and, moreover, involved the denial of the universality of the principle of self-determination and a consequent weakening of its dynamic force. The desire to choose their own government was not and could not be confined to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. It was true that the question of the political party in power in a particular country was, generally, entirely an internal matter. However, if the form of government in a country was one in which the people had no say whatever and about which they had no means of expressing their views freely, it could not be said that the situation was one in which the question of self-determination did not arise.

5. There was insufficient time for the Committee to discuss adequately the serious issues raised in the three draft resolutions which had been transmitted by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 586 D (XX)). She therefore welcomed the proposal in the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.659) that further consideration of the item should be postponed to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly. She recognized that the sponsors had made a genuine effort to submit a draft resolution likely to command a large measure of agreement. She felt obliged, however, to point out that in several respects the draft resolution was unsatisfactory. The United Kingdom delegation could not, for example, accept the second paragraph of the preamble because it had always maintained that the article on self-determination should not appear in the International 'ovenants on

Human Rights. Nor could her delegation agree without qualification to the statement contained in the fourth paragraph of the preamble, for the inadequate realization of self-determination could occur when steps towards self-determination, which took time, had been initiated but not yet completed; that need not undermine friendly relations between States, nor create conditions preventing further realization of self-determination. There was an even more serious defect in operative paragraph 1, which imposed very different obligations on States Members of the United Nations on the one hand, and on Administering Powers on the other. Such a distinction was contrary to the provisions of the Charter; it was artificial and constituted a departure from the universality of the principle of self-determination. If the principle applied to people in dependent territories, it should also apply in independent territories, not only to their relations with each other, but in respect of any internal situation in which the question of self-determination arose. The United Kingdom delegation had felt obliged in the past to vote against the earlier General Assembly resolution which made a similar distinction and it could not, therefore, support the five-Power draft resolution.

6. Mr. ROJAS (Venezuela) said that the Committee had not yet studied the three draft resolutions transmitted by the Economic and Social Council (Council resolution 586 D (XX)). Very possibly, those draft resolutions did not meet with the full approval of certain delegations. Lest the Committee might be thought to be prejudging the issue, he considered that the last paragraph of the preamble of the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.659) should be omitted.

7. Mrs. BILAI (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said the Committee was dealing with a very important agenda item. Since the Second World War, the process of the liberation of nations had steadily gained momentum. Formerly, millions of people had been excluded from the international community, deprived of the right to determine their own destinies and to enjoy the fruits of their labour and the wealth of their soil. Whole peoples had been enslaved by other peoples. In accordance with the development of the history of mankind, progress in one field had unfortunately been accompanied by regression in another.

8. The modern world was witnessing the awakening of the colonial peoples. Almost 1200 million persons had obtained their liberation in the space of a few years. It would be unrealistic not to recognize and stimulate that evolution. The right of peoples to self-determination was enshrined in several Articles of the Charter. Respect for that right was one of the essential conditions of international peace and security, whereas the control of one people by another was obviously a source of conflicts. All mankind recognized that relations between nations could no longer be governed by the obsolete principles of law; if international relations were to be in conformity with the dictates of justice and equity they had to be founded on the right of peoples to choose their own destiny.

9. The United Nations should not be content with declarations concerning the principle of self-determination. If it did not provide for positive measures of implementation, its prestige would suffer. Her delegation had voted in favour of resolutions 637 A and B (VII) in the plenary General Assembly; in the

Third Committee,<sup>1/</sup> it had supported the inclusion in the draft Covenants of article 1 relating to the right of peoples to self-determination, without which the other rights could not be fully exercised; in the Commission on Human Rights,<sup>2/</sup> it had supported the two draft resolutions currently before the Third Committee (Economic and Social Council resolution 586 D (XX), operative paragraph 1). The first of those two drafts was particularly important, because it related to the right of peoples to sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources. Experience showed that a people did not become truly free until it enjoyed economic independence. The survey provided for in the draft resolution would therefore be extremely useful. The text proposed by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 586 D (XX), operative paragraph 2) conflicted with the two draft resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, with the decisions of the General Assembly and with the provisions of the Charter; it challenged the very substance of one of the essential principles of modern international law. By adopting it, the Assembly would be admitting that it did not know exactly what a nation or people was and that it did not understand the true implications of the right of peoples to self-determination.

10. She regretted that the Committee had not enough time to consider the three draft resolutions before it. She would support the text of the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.659), which recalled the need to ensure respect for the right of peoples to self-determination and to facilitate the exercise of that right and which deferred debate on the draft resolutions transmitted by the Economic and Social Council to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly.

11. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) said that at the previous meeting he had tried to show that the question of self-determination was distinct from that of a country's political system. The former related to what had been called national freedom, the latter to political freedom. The world was divided into independent States—Members of the United Nations—and dependent territories. The fact that the political system varied from one independent State to another in no way affected the right of peoples to self-determination. Besides, it could hardly be said that a Member State did not enjoy national independence. The dependent territories, on the other hand, did not qualify for membership of the United Nations. The provisions of the Charter were designed to promote their development to independence and to enable them to become Members of the Organization.

12. The United Nations might at some future date decide to study the political systems of the various countries, but such a study was not on the agenda at the moment. Moreover, General Assembly resolution 637 (VII) clearly defined the scope of the recommendations concerning the right of peoples to self-determination. To inject any other question into the debate would delay the solution of a vitally important problem.

13. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) expressed agree-

<sup>1/</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Third Committee, 676th meeting.*

<sup>2/</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 7, paras. 322-335, and annex IV, draft resolution F.*

ment with the Greek representative. There was no yardstick for measuring the extent to which the right to self-determination was respected in an independent country.

14. For the benefit of those who had doubts concerning the exact meaning of the expression "right to self-determination", he said that the meaning was largely derived from ideas put forward by Woodrow Wilson and from the considerations underlying the Treaty of Versailles. Like other terms such as "democracy", the right to self-determination could not be interpreted literally. There was no democracy in the absolute sense of the term; there were malpractices even in the countries closest to ideal democracy, as was inevitable in view of the imperfections and complexity of human nature. Such terms were therefore merely relative.

15. Yet, the true meaning of the right to self-determination could not be in doubt. For the time being, it was not the absolute and full realization of the right that was proposed, but only a move in that direction, which might vary from country to country and which implied respect for certain minimum guarantees the violation of which would mean violation of the right itself. The right to self-determination implied that it was wrong for a country, nation or people to subdue another country, nation or people. The peoples of some of the territories which had not yet attained a full measure of self-government were not complaining. Others, on the contrary, wanted to choose their own rulers and were ready to make the greatest sacrifices to realize their aspiration. Those peoples deserved the Committee's help, since experience had unfortunately shown that in most cases the political organs of the United Nations did not intervene until after irreparable harm had been done.

16. Mr. RAFIK (Afghanistan) announced that the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.659) had decided to accept the Venezuelan representative's suggestion that the last paragraph of the preamble should be omitted, on condition that its contents should be included in operative paragraph 2, which would then read:

"Decides to consider further at its thirteenth session the item 'Recommendations concerning international respect for the right of peoples and nations to self-determination', including the proposals contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 586 D (XX) of 29 July 1955."

17. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) said that all the members of the Committee should give more thought to the draft resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council (Council resolution 586 D (XX)), in preparation for the fuller debate at the thirteenth session. The United Nations should create machinery which would ensure the realization of the right to self-determination. The First Committee was not capable of taking effective action and general declarations concerning the right of peoples to self-determination produced no practical results. On the other hand, a great deal might be expected from a body, such as that proposed by the Commission on Human Rights, which would examine any situation resulting from alleged denial of the right to self-determination and would provide its good offices for the peaceful rectification of any such situation. That was a constructive proposal, calculated to serve the general interest. The proposed provisions could, of course, be amended as far as necessary.

18. The sponsors of the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.659) had submitted the only proposals which could be formulated in the prevailing circumstances. He would vote for that draft, although he would point out that it merely reaffirmed the principles enunciated in General Assembly resolution 637 (VII). More specific action would have to be taken very soon.

19. After a brief exchange of views, in which Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) and Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) took part, the CHAIRMAN decided not to close the list of speakers until the next meeting. He said that the Committee was expected to dispose of agenda item 32 in three more meetings.

The meeting rose 12.20 p.m.