



CONTENTS

Page

Agenda item 55:

Question of Cyprus (*continued*):

- (a) Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the Island of Cyprus;
- (b) Complaint by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of support from Greece for terrorism in Cyprus..... 239

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

AGENDA ITEM 55

Question of Cyprus (A/3120 and Add.1, A/3204 and Add.1, A/C.1/788, A/C.1/L.168 to A/C.1/L.170) (*continued*)

- (a) Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the Island of Cyprus;**
- (b) Complaint by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of support from Greece for terrorism in Cyprus**

1. Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom), exercising the right of reply, referred to the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece (849th meeting) that British intelligence agents had on several occasions tried to inveigle Greek nationals into committing illegal acts intended to be used later by the United Kingdom Government as evidence of Greek complicity in the supply of arms to the terrorists in Cyprus. As Mr. Noble had understood, documents containing those charges were to be circulated to the Committee,¹ and he would, therefore, have more to say on the subject later. He could, however, not help but be amazed at the charges, and expressed his surprise that, if the Greek Government had had such information, it had failed to bring the matter to the attention of the British Ambassador in Athens.

2. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece had also claimed to have a dossier at his disposal concerning alleged atrocities in Cyprus, which he was lodging confidentially with the Secretary-General, while reserving the right to publish it later. That was a most extraordinary and unprecedented procedure. The Secretary-General should not be made the unwilling recipient of confidential information damaging to one of the Member States. Such documents should either be published or withdrawn, and should not be left hanging over a Member State.

3. Mr. MACKAY (Canada) said that the problem of Cyprus was highly complex from the point of view of international law, geography and ethnic, linguistic,

religious and strategic considerations. It was a problem for which no quick or easy answer could be found. Historically, Cyprus had always been a bone of contention. Even if the Committee felt competent to deal with the question of Cyprus, it must refrain from suggesting solutions which would only add to the current strife.

4. In his opinion the interests of the people of Cyprus would be best served if they would accept constitutional development in Cyprus along the lines offered by the United Kingdom Government. The action of the Greek Government in summarily dismissing the proposals made by the eminent jurist Lord Radcliffe² would not appear to be conducive to a solution of the problem.

5. He regretted the charges levelled at the United Kingdom by the representative of Greece. Canada knew very well the history of the development of the British Empire into a Commonwealth of Nations and could not believe that any people under British rule would not be able to work out its own destiny in a gradual and peaceful manner. The Canadian delegation recognized that the Radcliffe draft constitution and previous offers did not immediately give complete self-government to Cyprus. Indeed, in the present circumstances, to do so would be highly unrealistic. But the constitution would give a very great measure of self-government to the people of Cyprus and would direct them towards a more peaceful and prosperous existence.

6. As in the past, the Canadian delegation considered that the solution to the problem of Cyprus had to be worked out by the parties directly concerned. Airing the dispute in the Committee was not likely to help, nor did his delegation feel that the continuance of terrorism in Cyprus, and its encouragement from abroad, or the stirring up of animosity and hatred on racial lines was the way to solve the problem. Rather, the problem should be settled as soon as possible, with a minimum of public argumentation. Any further deterioration in the relations between the countries concerned could only add to the unsettled conditions in the Middle East.

7. As regards charges and countercharges about terrorism in Cyprus, it was difficult to decide when such activity was criminal and when it was heroic, but no matter what it was called, the end-result was misery for the people, and under no circumstances could aid and encouragement for such activities from Greece be condoned. That, too, was a question which could and should be amicably settled by the parties concerned; his delegation did not believe that the United Nations could play a useful role with regard to that issue.

8. Mr. NINCIC (Yugoslavia) recalled that, when the question of Cyprus had first come before the United Nations General Assembly, at its ninth session, many delegations had been beginning to view with grave concern the developments on that island, situated in a particularly sensitive area of world politics. The decision

¹ Subsequently distributed as document A/C.1/789.

² Lord Radcliffe, *Constitutional Proposals for Cyprus* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), Cmd. 42.

of the Assembly at that time (resolution 814 (IX)), as well as at the tenth session (521st plenary meeting), to postpone action on the question had been made in the hope that some advance towards a settlement would be achieved and that it would be wiser for the Assembly to refrain from discussing the item.

9. Many delegations, including the Yugoslav delegation, had at that time voted for the inclusion of the item in the agenda. They had had serious misgivings about the advisability of the United Nations relinquishing, even if temporarily, its responsibility in regard to what was rapidly becoming a major and obviously explosive international issue. Unfortunately, the expectation shared by many delegations that that act of faith on the part of the Assembly would provide an incentive to those most directly involved in the situation, and encourage them to arrive at a peaceful, equitable and mutually acceptable settlement of the Cyprus question, had remained unfulfilled. No progress, however modest, appeared to have been achieved. On the contrary, a settlement seemed further removed than ever before, and there had been a steady deterioration in the situation. Conditions had worsened in Cyprus itself. The clash between the majority of the population and the British authorities was increasing in violence. The struggle of the Greek Cypriots against the existing order was gaining, both in scope and in momentum. All sections of the Greek Cypriot population—some four-fifths of the total population—had joined the struggle.

10. In his opinion, there was in Cyprus a vast and genuine national movement, a movement witnessed in so many parts of the world during the previous decade or so. On the other hand, the measures which the British authorities had taken to cope with that movement had become increasingly severe. It was clear, however, that those measures had not only failed to achieve their avowed purpose, namely the re-establishment of order, but had had a steadily aggravating effect on the situation, while the prospect for a political settlement appeared to be receding accordingly. To that headlong clash between the authorities and the majority of the population of Cyprus, a further and ominous element had been added: the growing strife between the Greek majority and the Turkish minority. Those two communities, which had lived on the island and had worked side by side in peace and friendship for centuries, were now growing bitter against each other. There were raids and reprisal raids, with a mounting toll of innocent victims. The same grim pattern known in other parts of the world seemed to be unfolding in Cyprus as well. Those developments boded no good for the future of Cyprus. Indeed, if not halted, such events would make the Cyprus problem immeasurably more difficult to solve.

11. No less alarming, however, were the broader international implications of those developments. The persistence and aggravation of the Cyprus problem had contributed an element of further discord in an area which had already become one of the world's major danger spots. Relations among three countries, long cordial, had taken a sharp turn for the worse, and there was little prospect for an improvement as long as the Cyprus question continued to be a bone of contention. All those events had been viewed with much concern by his Government, which could not but follow with close attention developments in a region both geographically and politically adjacent to it, particularly since those developments affected the relations between countries with which Yugoslavia maintained friendly

ties and with two of which Yugoslavia was bound in alliance.

12. The Yugoslav delegation, therefore, felt that the General Assembly must take a more decisive interest in the situation in Cyprus than had been the case in the past. The first thing to be clear about was the intrinsic nature of the problem faced. In the view of his delegation, the problem boiled down to the fact that there was a powerful popular movement in Cyprus born from the striving of a large majority of the population to shape its own destiny. In other words, there could be no doubt, in his opinion, that the problem was one of applying the right of self-determination, as provided for in the United Nations Charter, to the population of Cyprus. The Yugoslav delegation considered the principle of self-determination one of the essential requirements of peace and orderly progress in the world of today. Accordingly, it felt that one of the prime duties of the United Nations was to seek conditions in which the peaceful implementation of that right would be possible.

13. His delegation did not agree with the argument that the problem of Cyprus was not one of self-determination, and that the application of that right was not possible in the present circumstances. It had been claimed that self-determination was merely a pretext, a camouflage for *enosis*, the union of Cyprus with Greece, for the territorial aggrandizement of Greece. That was being claimed despite the fact that the Greek Government itself had made it clear that what it sought was simply the establishment of conditions in which the people of Cyprus would be able freely to pronounce themselves on their future status. Whether they chose independence or union with Greece was of little relevance from the point of view of the exercise of the right of self-determination. The essential point was that the people of Cyprus ought to be able to exercise that right without any pressure.

14. The assertion that the question of Cyprus had been invented, as it were, by Greece and that the Cypriot liberation movement was not truly a liberation movement, but the result of the activities of a handful of extremists, aided and abetted from outside, was not borne out by all available evidence. The very magnitude of the movement seemed to militate against such a facile explanation. It was difficult to believe that the thousands of British troops in Cyprus would not act as an effective deterrent to the activities of a small band of terrorists or to the exhortations—which appeared, moreover, to be successfully jammed—of Athens Radio. To explain a popular movement in terms of foreign interference was, in his opinion, as dangerous as it was misleading.

15. One of the legal arguments often put forward to oppose the claim of self-determination for Cyprus was that the status of the island had been determined by the Treaty of Lausanne.³ It was difficult to understand that line of reasoning. While it was true that most territorial settlements, including those establishing a colonial status, had some contractual or legal basis, that factor certainly did not preclude the enjoyment of the right of self-determination by the peoples affected.

16. The right of the people of Cyprus to self-determination no longer appeared to be denied in principle. It had been acknowledged in a statement on Cyprus issued by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies

³ Treaty of Peace between the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Roumania and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State, and Turkey, signed at Lausanne on 24 July 1923, League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XXVIII, 1924, pp. 11 ff.

in the House of Commons on 19 December 1956. Its application, however, was made dependent upon a number of circumstances which were not considered to obtain at present.

17. Neither the Cypriots nor the Greek Government had demanded immediate implementation of the right of self-determination. What they had asked for, and rightly so, that that right should be given recognition and that some progress should be made towards the establishment of conditions in which it could become a reality. Some of the conditions mentioned, especially the strategic considerations, would, however, be of a nature as to preclude any real advance towards self-determination in the foreseeable future.

18. As for the strategic considerations, his delegation was not inclined to accept the thesis that reasons of a military or a strategic nature could outweigh the application of the principle of self-determination recognized in the Charter. In the present case, recent events in the Middle East and the role that Cyprus had been called to play in those events would seem to deprive the strategic argument of any validity it might previously have had. The essential point was that some evidence of progress towards conditions in which the people of Cyprus would be able freely to determine their own future should be given. Such evidence had so far been lacking; that was the basic reason why the situation had deteriorated. Instead of adopting a realistic political approach to the problem, there had been a tendency to rely primarily on military and police measures. The political proposals thus far made had been either subordinated to the military necessities or clearly inadequate to meet the needs of the situation. A settlement could be reached only with the full consent of the people of Cyprus. Therefore, negotiations should be entered into with representatives enjoying the support and the confidence of the people. Such negotiations appeared to have been initiated in 1956, but had unfortunately been interrupted by the deportation of Archbishop Makarios. In that connexion, Mr. Nincic noted that the Cypriot side had so far displayed a considerably greater degree of readiness to seek a compromise than the British.

19. In the second place, the majority of the Cypriot population would not rest content with the maintenance of their colonial status, even if it were an improved and more enlightened colonial status. One could only wish, therefore, that the United Kingdom would, in the case of Cyprus, display the same realistic responsiveness to the realities of the time that it had shown in other areas of the world and with regard to other, no less complex, problems.

20. One of the major stumbling blocks in the way of a settlement and one of the main impediments to the application of self-determination in Cyprus was considered to be the question of the Turkish minority in the island. In the opinion of the Yugoslav Government, that minority was entitled to full and clearly defined guarantees as to its future status. The need for such guarantees was recognized by all, not least by the Greek Government. In view of the good relations that had existed between the Greeks and the Turks in Cyprus in the past, once the existing abnormal conditions had been eliminated, it should not prove too difficult to devise a system whereby the minority could be assured of its rights without the majority being deprived of its rights.

21. The principle of self-determination was explicitly provided for in the Charter. As to the methods of

applying the principle, they equally could only be those recognized by the Charter and, in the first place, those of negotiation.

22. In the light of the foregoing considerations, the Yugoslav delegation had examined the draft resolutions that had been placed before the Committee. The first draft resolution proposed by the delegation of Greece (A/C.1/L.168) did no more than cover the facts of the situation and requested that the situation should be dealt with in accordance with the Principles, purposes and explicit provisions of the United Nations Charter. The draft resolution provided a generally satisfactory answer to the question posed in sub-item (a) of the item under consideration. It was the intention of the Yugoslav delegation to support that draft resolution.

23. With regard to sub-item (b), there were two draft resolutions before the Committee. One had been submitted by the United Kingdom delegation (A/C.1/L.169). Its adoption would imply a condemnation of Greece for intervention in Cypriot affairs on the basis of evidence produced by one side only, evidence which had been strongly disputed by the other side. Yugoslavia had never been inclined to endorse condemnations which were not based on an impartial investigation of a complaint. Therefore, it was not able to vote in favour of the United Kingdom draft resolution. The second draft resolution presented by Greece (A/C.1/L.170) seemed to provide a satisfactory procedure for investigating the serious charges that had been raised by the United Kingdom, and the Yugoslav delegation was sure that the United Kingdom would be the first to welcome that procedure. The Yugoslav delegation would therefore support that draft.

24. Mr. SERRANO (Philippines) said that the full restoration of peace and order, and with it the re-establishment of mutual faith and confidence, was clearly the end towards which the initial efforts of the Committee should be directed. Since April 1955, intense and violent strife had characterized the daily life on the embattled island of Cyprus.

25. In spite of the apparent dead-lock between the Greek population in Cyprus and the United Kingdom, the problem of Cyprus had one encouraging aspect: the fact that neither side was willing merely to let matters stand as they were, but was determined to try to reach mutually acceptable schemes of agreement. That was evidenced by at least three major efforts at a solution which had recently taken place: the Tripartite Conference of 1955;⁴ the conversations between Archbishop Makarios and Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, Governor of Cyprus, from 4 October 1955 to 5 March 1956; and the offer of the Radcliffe constitution in December 1956 as a basis of discussion for the future of Cyprus. It was well known that the first two attempts had ended in failure, while the third had been initially rejected both by the Government of Greece and the Greek Cypriots.

26. In the opinion of the Philippine delegation, the difficulty of a satisfactory solution stemmed from the fact that a multitude of interests regarded as vital by all parties—the Greek Cypriots, the Government of Greece, the Turkish Cypriots, the Government of Turkey and finally, the United Kingdom—were involved. A further complication was represented by the fact that three of the parties to the dispute—Greece,

⁴ Conference on Eastern Mediterranean Problems and the Cyprus Question, held at London from 29 August to 7 September 1955, between Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Turkey and the United Kingdom—were members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Continued dissension among them would materially weaken the position, not only of NATO, but also of the entire free world in a region adjacent to the explosive Middle East.

27. The Philippines, by policy and tradition, would not hesitate to support the principle of self-determination for peoples whenever there existed a clear and unequivocal demand for it and whenever a people desiring it demonstrated its capacity to discharge the responsibilities of freedom. It was, therefore, gratifying to note that, in conformity with the liberal traditions of the United Kingdom, that country, through its responsible spokesman, had more than once affirmed its recognition of the application of the principle of self-determination to the Cypriots. On the other hand, it was not unreasonable to suppose that, consistent with its right to determine its own destiny, the people of Cyprus would be willing, as it had repeatedly manifested in the recent past, to ensure the security requirements of the free world in the Mediterranean and to recognize the legitimate interests of the United Kingdom.

28. At present, it appeared that there existed one stumbling block to effective negotiations: the continued exile of the recognized leader of the Cypriots, Archbishop Makarios. It had become increasingly clear that his detention had not achieved its original purpose of curbing the unrest in Cyprus; on the contrary, it had served to stiffen popular resentment and had given rise to the form of extremism which was bitterly deplored by the United Kingdom Government. The release of Archbishop Makarios would, in the view of the Philippine delegation, constitute an essential preliminary step in any negotiations which might follow.

29. It was in the light of that situation that the Committee should view and evaluate the draft resolutions before it. The situation required that the Committee assist in creating among the parties a disposition to goodwill and understanding rather than hatred and recrimination. For that reason, the Philippine delegation suggested the adoption of a draft resolution which

would: first, call upon the parties to co-operate in the restoration of peace and order in Cyprus; secondly, call upon the parties to negotiate on a form of interim government for Cyprus which would be mutually acceptable to both parties; and thirdly, request the parties to report on the progress of negotiations to the General Assembly at its twelfth session. The terms of such a resolution would be sufficiently broad to permit ample room for negotiation, and it might lead ultimately to a satisfactory peace in which the aspirations of the people in Cyprus would achieve gradual and eventual fulfilment in a manner which would not endanger the legitimate interests of the other parties concerned and of the free world.

30. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece), exercising his right of reply, said that the remarks of the representative of the United Kingdom with reference to the 237 documents which the Greek delegation had just submitted to the Secretary-General could not affect his delegation's position in the matter. That position was not illogical. His delegation did not wish to envenom the already tense situation, but it could not conceal documents which 237 persons, risking possible dire consequences, had signed. The documents, therefore, had been placed at the disposal of the Secretariat of the United Nations, so that a neutral committee could examine them. The Greek delegation did not wish to use the documents as propaganda and, if it had reserved its right to make them public, that did not mean that, in every case, the papers would be made public. By doing so, the Greek delegation had shown a high sense of responsibility. Its attitude was in the best interest of future favourable relations between Greece and the United Kingdom, relations which, it was to be hoped, would improve.

31. After a procedural debate in which the CHAIRMAN, Sir Leslie MUNRO (New Zealand) and Mr. ZEINEDDINE (Syria) participated, it was decided to close the list of speakers at 6 p.m. on 20 February 1957.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.