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FIRST COMMITTEE, 556th

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Chairman: Mr. João Carlos MUNIZ (Brazil).

Question of an appeal to the Powers signatories to the Moscow Declaration of 1 November 1943, for the early fulfilment of their pledges toward Austria (A/2160, A/2166 and Add. 1, and A/C.1/L.16) (*concluded*)

[Item 63]*

1. Mr. FRANCO Y FRANCO (Dominican Republic) joined in the expressions of friendship towards Austria and its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

2. The delegation of the Dominican Republic unreservedly supported the joint draft resolution submitted by Brazil, Lebanon, Mexico and the Netherlands (A/C.1/L.16), just as it had supported the invitation (553rd meeting) to the representative of Austria (A/C.1/L.15). As the Brazilian representative had pointed out in his comprehensive statement (553rd meeting), the purpose of the proposal was both reasonable and just. On the other hand, the arguments based on Article 107 of the Charter which had been put forward, for example by the delegation of the Soviet Union (553rd meeting), in effect confused the victim with the executioner by treating Austria as an ex-enemy. The draft resolution did not, moreover, deal with the substance of the problem and was not intended to dictate any particular policy to the great Powers. It merely proposed addressing an appeal to them to make a renewed effort to reach agreement on a treaty that would permit the termination of the occupation of Austria and enable that country to resume the exercise of its sovereignty.

3. The General Assembly's competence to take the limited action proposed was unquestionable in view of the threat to the peace inherent in the present situation. The Soviet Union's decision not to take part in the debate was regrettable but it was difficult to believe that it reflected a determined desire to prevent the conclusion of a treaty. Such an attitude would be a violation not only of Austria's sovereignty and right of self-determination, but also of the Moscow Declaration,

which had been reaffirmed by resolution 190 (III) of the General Assembly.

4. The initiative taken by the four sponsors of the joint draft resolution, which sought to put an end to the trying situation of the Austrian people and which the General Assembly could not fail to adopt, would, he hoped, be favourably received by the great Powers and especially by the Soviet Union, which would thus have an opportunity of demonstrating a spirit of true conciliation.

5. Ato ZAÚDE (Ethiopia) expressed the hope that the presence of an Austrian representative in the First Committee was a foretoken of Austria's full participation in the work of the United Nations.

6. Austria, which had been invaded and annexed by nazi Germany, was not an ex-enemy State. The question of competence and the historical background of the question had been fully covered by the arguments of previous speakers. It was incomprehensible that, seven years after its liberation from nazi tyranny, Austria should still, in violation of the Moscow Declaration, be under military occupation. That disappointing situation had been very costly to Austria in all respects. Any country that had undergone foreign occupation could well understand the threat to the unity of Austria created by its occupation by four Powers with different administrative systems.

7. The delegation of Ethiopia therefore supported the joint draft resolution, which, without blaming anyone, appealed to the four Powers to fulfil their international pledges.

8. Mr. LEA PLAZA (Chile) expressed regret that the delegation of the Soviet Union had not participated in a debate which so directly concerned it.

9. As a result of the delay in concluding a treaty, Austria was being made to suffer the consequences of the rivalry between the great Powers. One of the purposes of the United Nations was "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples".

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The United Nations must therefore safeguard its prestige by reminding the signatories of the Moscow Declaration of the terms of that Declaration. The three Western Powers had made the mistake of participating in the preparation of a draft treaty which would have made Austria suffer from the consequences of the differences between the great Powers. Fortunately the draft had come to nothing. It was not a matter of distributing spoils, but of restoring sovereignty to a nation whose existence was in no way dependent upon the Moscow Declaration. The silence of the Soviet Union was unfortunate because it might be interpreted by public opinion as an indication that that country's approach to certain problems was governed not by its political and economic principles, but only by its desire to achieve world hegemony, as had been the case when Poland had been partitioned.

10. The General Assembly must remind the great Powers that they were not absolved from complying with the letter and spirit of the Charter; it must do so in order to show the Austrians that the United Nations was aware of their critical situation and would at the next session of the General Assembly consider the progress of the negotiations.

11. The delegation of Chile accordingly supported the joint draft resolution.

12. Mr. NUNEZ PORTUONDO (Cuba) said that the present situation of Austria was worse than it had been under the yoke of the Hapsburgs. Austria had surely suffered enough from its annexation by Nazi Germany in violation of The Hague Convention of 29 July 1899 for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, the Treaty of Versailles, the Briand-Kellogg Pact, Hitler's declaration of 21 May 1935 on behalf of the Government of the German Reich and the German-Austrian Agreement of 1936. Austria had been given hope of its independence by statements made by Mr. Churchill on 9 November 1940 and 18 February 1942, and by Mr. Roosevelt on 9 December 1941. On 27 June 1942 Mr. Cordell Hull had stated that the United States had never recognized the annexation of Austria, and on 10 September 1942 Mr. Eden had promised Austria that it would be liberated. Finally, Marshall Tolbukhin had said in March 1945 that the Soviet troops had come not to violate Austria's rights, but to end the fascist domination. Today, however, Austria was still occupied and its people had been unable to regain control of their destiny despite the Moscow Declaration and the principles of international law.

13. It might well be asked how that situation was to be explained. Denazification was in fact only a pretext. Austria was being plundered by the Soviet Union, which had seized four oil fields, twenty-six oil concessions comprising more than 700,000 hectares and five refineries producing 420,000 tons of oil annually. In the Vienna area alone, the Soviet Union had seized forty-six factories and thirty-six ships, and despite all humanitarian declarations and the legal pretexts invoked, Soviet troops would never leave Austria so long as they could extract anything from it.

14. It was the duty of the General Assembly to mobilize international opinion against that situation which was not consonant with twentieth century ideals and was worse than anything which the former enemies of the United Nations had suffered. It was in that

spirit that the Cuban delegation supported the joint draft resolution.

15. Mr. GRUBER (Austria) said that the sympathetic attitude of the General Assembly would encourage the Austrian people to hope for a speedy resumption of negotiations and the early termination of the occupation. The solution of the Austrian problem might contribute to the improvement of international relations, which could be achieved only through the settlement of practical problems, one by one.

16. In that hope, the Austrian Government expressed its gratitude to Brazil, Lebanon, Mexico and the Netherlands for submitting the joint draft resolution, to the Mexican delegation for its proposal that an Austrian representative should be invited to take part in the work of the Committee, and to all the delegations that had expressed their sympathy towards Austria.

17. Mr. Zafrulla KHAN (Pakistan) associated himself with those who had supported the joint draft resolution. Austria had undergone a long period of suffering since the first World War. It was time that it stood on its own so that it might be in a position once more to make the contribution towards civilization and culture which it had made in the past.

18. Nevertheless the final paragraph of the joint draft resolution, regarding the full exercise by Austria of the powers inherent in its sovereignty, inevitably brought to mind all that had been said concerning sovereignty and the right of self-determination during the debates on the Tunisian and Moroccan questions. Although the resolution on Morocco had been very moderate and had been adopted by the First Committee by a two-thirds majority, there appeared to be a possibility that the same majority would not be obtained when the question was put to the vote in the plenary Assembly. Pakistan's position on the Austrian question was the same as its position on the Moroccan question, and it would continue to be so even if the States now voting for the joint draft resolution should later reverse the position on the Moroccan question they had taken in the First Committee. Pakistan could not associate itself with delegations which meant one thing by particular expressions on one occasion and something different on another, depending on the question at issue. The delegation of Pakistan would accordingly abstain from voting on the joint draft resolution.

19. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) said that some countries, such as Austria, Poland and Greece, were destined to become crucial problems the solution of which would in large measure determine the fate of mankind.

20. After the Second World War the conclusion of peace treaties had undoubtedly been deliberately delayed so as to avoid a repetition of the mistakes that had been made after the first World War, when the Versailles and Trianon Treaties had been negotiated while passions still ran high. Action had been taken quickly on only one point: in order to take advantage of the favourable atmosphere existing at the end of the war, no time had been lost in establishing the United Nations.

21. Nevertheless, in the absence of detailed agreement the Moscow Declaration had solemnly promised Aus-

tria that its sovereignty would be restored, but the application of that declaration now seemed to be more remote than ever. It was therefore the duty of the United Nations, if not to hasten the settlement of the problem, at least to draw the attention of world opinion to the situation in Austria and to remind the four Powers of their special responsibility.

22. Only one of those Powers in fact had an interest in the continuation of unrest and disorder and was consequently opposed to any action taken by the three other Powers. Thanks to the proposal of the Mexican delegation, the First Committee had been able to hear the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs describe the tragic situation which almost every country in the world deeply regretted.

23. The delegation of Ecuador would vote in favour of the joint draft resolution.

24. Mr. PRATT DE MARIA (Uruguay) said that his delegation associated itself with the views already expressed and which could be summarized as follows: (a) Article 107 of the Charter did not apply to Austria; (b) international morality required the fulfilment of the pledge given to the Austrian people; (c) no small country could remain indifferent to the sufferings of Austria which was a victim of the differences between the great Powers; (d) the United Nations could not overlook Austria's contribution to Western civilization.

25. For those reasons, the delegation of Uruguay would vote for the joint draft resolution.

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY BRAZIL, LEBANON, MEXICO AND THE NETHERLANDS (A/C.1/L.16)

26. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the joint draft resolution for which a roll-call vote had been requested.

Luxembourg, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay,

Peru, Philippines, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Liberia.

Abstaining: Pakistan, Afghanistan.

Not taking part in the voting: Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The draft resolution was adopted by 48 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

27. Mr. PEREZ PEROZO (Venezuela) expressed the satisfaction with which his delegation had supported the joint draft resolution which had just been adopted. He welcomed the Committee's action which would perhaps enable Austria to become free and independent again. The Venezuelan delegation hoped that Austria would soon be able to become a Member of the United Nations.

28. Mr. PALAR (Indonesia) said that one of the most important aspects of his Government's foreign policy was support for any effort by dependent peoples to achieve their independence. As the joint draft resolution just adopted by the Committee was an appeal to the great Powers to advance the realization of Austrian independence, it came within the framework of that policy. The Indonesian Government wished to make clear that in its opinion the draft resolution for which it had just voted did not accuse any of the great Powers of having hindered or frustrated previous efforts to help Austria. Indonesia, which had had to fight ten years for its own independence, was most sympathetic towards Austria and its claims.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.