FIRST COMMITTEE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND SIXTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 30 November 1959, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MATSCH (Austria)

Question of Algeria \[59][7]

Note: The Official Record of this meeting, i.e. the summary record, will appear in mimeographed form under the symbol A/C.1/SC.1067.
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AGENDA ITEM 59

QUESTION OF ALGERIA (A/4140)

Mr. SLDM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Here we are again confronting the question of Algeria, and for the fourth time.

It is true that the Political Committee confronts it this time in conditions that differ from the ones that prevailed last year at the thirteenth session. In fact, since the inclusion of this item in the agenda of this session, new prospects have emerged for the restoration of peace in Algeria through a democratic solution that would be in harmony with the principles and spirit of the Charter.

On 16 September 1959, General de Gaulle made a solemn declaration recognizing the Algerian peoples' right freely to determine its own destiny. On 28 September 1959, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic expressed gratification at the recognition of this right, and it would therefore appear that as from that point no disagreement as to substance remains between the two parties involved, and that nothing any longer prevented the termination of hostilities and the achievement of a solution which has been so sorely awaited.

Nevertheless, the war continues with its train of misfortunes, with human losses involved, the destructions it brings, the rancours and the suspicions that it engenders.
In order to grasp fully the nature of the situation and endeavour to suggest a remedy, it is important to look for the true and profound causes of the evil which has made this stupid war continue for five years and jeopardize increasingly the confidence and friendship between two peoples called upon to co-exist in dignity and mutual respect, and to co-operate to safeguard their respective interests.

In analysing the situation, we shall endeavour to forswear all passion and to retain an unbiased attitude dictated by the importance of the question and by the sincerely friendly relations' existing between our country and France, as well as the fraternity that joins our people with the Algerian people.

We should have liked the French delegation to participate in the discussion of this question which concerns it in the first instance. That would no doubt have contributed to dispelling certain problems and clarifying certain aspects of the question being discussed by us. By so doing the French delegation would have enabled this Committee to pronounce itself in an atmosphere of complete clarity. Our hope was all the more legitimate as the offer of self-determination to the Algerian people was made at the time of the opening of the current session. One might have thought that this offer was addressed as much to the Algerian people as to our Organization and that it contributed to providing the framework and the essential object of our debate.

It might perhaps serve a useful purpose to recall briefly that more than five years of warfare have caused painful bloodshed in Algeria. For more than two years, 600,000 French soldiers, regular and irregular, have been operating in Algeria, with a great variety of conventional means of warfare, using cannons, bombs, tanks and aircraft against the Algerian National Liberation Army. Since the beginning of the war in November 1954, 1,400,000 young Frenchmen have taken turns in Algeria in waging continuous operations of war, causing losses on both sides. For months official French communiques have been furnishing figures as to the losses caused by the fighting; these losses have averaged eight hundred per week. The losses officially recognized by the French are 145,000 on the Algerian side and 12,000 on the French side.
Whatever feeling one may have as to these figures, as to their veracity or their exaggeration on one side or the other, one cannot help noting the scope of this painful war. Moreover, more than 250,000 persons, 50 per cent of them children, have taken refuge in Tunisia and Morocco owing to the various French operations carried out over a vast area of Algeria -- operations de râtiissage ou quadrillage -- and they are obliged to live from the help granted to them by the two countries that provide them with sanctuary and also by the international community through the United Nations High Commissioner and the International Red Cross.

On the other hand, in order to create a vacuum in regions declared as prohibited for military purposes, more than one million Algerian persons have been displaced from their habitual places of residence, torn from their homes, removed from their occupations and cut off from their social environment. They have been regrouped in special zones the conditions of which, deplorable from all points of view, I shall refrain from mentioning here.

The situation in Algeria has been and remains grave. In our opinion, a satisfactory solution cannot be found by war, even if the war is called one of pacification.

Five years of ghastly fighting, with all the means of warfare which I have mentioned, have not succeeded in disposing of what is called the "rebellion". This is so because one cannot by force crush the national will of a people which, having reached the point of despair as regards finding a negotiated solution that would enable it to live in dignity in its own home, has resolutely thrown itself into combat in order to recover its liberty and independence. This is a well established truth. A war such as the one waged by France in Algeria, whatever the means utilized and the military devices employed, and whatever the bravery and quality of the soldiers, cannot eliminate the effort of an entire people or break its determination.

We can only reiterate our profound regret at seeing the Algerian people engaged in this terrible combat against its will. But we cannot blame it. Surely it is not forbidden to believe that the gallant French, who almost twenty years ago refused any compromise with the brutal force of the occupiers and
who, with dignity, fought for their liberty and for the liberty of all dominated people, will not blame the Algerians for their determination. They know, since they have gone through this experience, that force cannot crush a national resistance which is the expression of the revolt of an entire people and draws support and sustenance from that people.

Does this mean that the National Liberation Army of Algeria will triumph over the French troops? Quite frankly, I think it is difficult to foretell this. The war might continue, which God forbid, but neither of the two parties, we feel, would be able to dispose of the other. Though it is impossible for the French military forces to gain decisive victory over the National Liberation Army of Algeria, it is equally unlikely that our Algerian brethren can triumph over the powerful and well-trained army of France. However, the war continues and causes increasingly numerous losses. Its very prolongation renders difficult the achievement of a reasonable solution that would take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Algerian people and the legitimate interests of Frenchmen established in that country. This is what we have consistently proclaimed for four years.

My Government -- and in particular President Bourguiba -- has consistently preached the need to find a freely negotiated solution that would safeguard for the future a fruitful co-operation between France and the great Maghreb.

In his speech of 2 March 1959, at the Sixth Congress of the Neo-Destour party at Sousse, President Bourguiba precisely emphasized the terrible consequences of this war, which the longer it was prolonged jeopardized all the more the chances of an understanding between France and Algeria. He said, among other things:

"The longer the war is prolonged, the more the feeling of impotence becomes accentuated and the more the feeling of hatred invades the people's hearts. This gravely jeopardizes the possibilities of future co-operation between Algeria and France, once peace is restored. It will be increasingly difficult for Tunisians and Moroccans, in solidarity with the Algerians, to co-operate loyally with France or to maintain with France a minimum of cordiality, in the absence of mutual confidence."
President Bourguiba and his Government have continually appealed to the French Government to seek a peaceful settlement, to set aside solutions by war, to find a peaceful solution founded on the recognition of the right of the Algerian people to self-determination. For that matter, our efforts seek to encourage responsible Algerians to adopt a flexible and realistic attitude, and these efforts have been manifested in public on a number of occasions. In his speech of 22 November 1957, President Bourguiba, giving an account of the efforts he had made, together with His Majesty the King of Morocco, with a view to the achievement of friendly mediation, said:

"We have met as representatives of two countries most directly concerned in the implications of the war and the peace in Algeria. We have deemed it timely to define a middle ground position which is neither that of France, which regards Algeria as an integral part of its territory from which it would be unthinkable to become separated, nor that of the National Liberation Front, which in reality is the counterpart of the position of France. We have endeavoured to find a middle ground position but a position founded on a clear basis, that is, the necessity for Algeria to escape from colonial wardship and accede to self-government. This is what we express in affirming the right of the Algerian people to sovereignty and independence."

He went on:

"The Algerian people must necessarily enjoy this right and have a fatherland in which it may live under the government of its choice. But we do not say: no negotiation before independence. We ask the two parties to the dispute to come together, either by themselves or in our presence, to enter into negotiation on the basis of the sovereignty of the Algerian people, the end in view being independence after the termination of the colonial regime."

All our endeavours over the past four years, here in the United Nations and elsewhere, with a view to devising a peaceful and just solution, were, to our great regret, doomed to failure. This has not prevented us from hoping that some day reason will prevail and that France will become aware of the stupidity of a war which profits nobody and which is far from enhancing France's own prestige."
Tunisia has done everything humanly possible to help France and Algeria to find together a solution of their dispute, in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter, by ways and means other than war.

We have had the satisfaction of noting that over the past three years, the Algerian nationalists -- first, the National Liberation Front, and then the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic after the establishment of that Government -- rendered their positions increasingly flexible. From posing the principle of recognition of their independence prior to any agreement with France, they reached the position of negotiation with France on the basis of independence, and then the position of negotiations that would enable Algeria to recover its dignity and independence.

On the other hand, from the French side, we encountered only lack of understanding -- sometimes tragic for our country -- erroneous figments which were based on no amount of reality, proposals and solutions based on conceptions which had been left behind by human progress in the course of history. There was first a so-called triptych "ceasefire, elections to the French National Assembly, and then discussions with the elected Algerian representatives for reforms to be envisaged". Then there was the referendum of 1958 for the approval of the French Constitution. At this point the Committee surely will recall that the form which this referendum took in Algeria differed radically from the one that applied in the territories of the French Union. Whereas in the latter territories the meaning of the choice was for membership in the French Community, in Algeria it merely amounted to approval or disapproval of the Constitution, as was the case for any other part of metropolitan France.

All solutions, whatever their forms, whatever their guises, were presented against the background and reviewed through the prism of the principle of "Algeria as an integral part of France".

We have already had occasion to explain during the preceding debates on this question, with a sufficient number of arguments, the irreality of this fiction and the essential hurdle which it posed to a peaceful and just solution which would be in conformity with the inalienable right of the Algerian people to recover its sovereignty and determine its future and its destiny as it deemed fit.
It is certainly not my intention, in recalling these facts, to resuscitate an important dispute as to principle which was at the root of this devastating war. But this recapitulation which I have made in the first part of my statement will help us perhaps to understand regrettable hesitations which we now find, now that this dispute is on the point of being radically dealt with through agreement on principle between the two parties, agreement on the principle of the recognition of the right of the Algerian people freely to choose its own destiny.

The point is that to this denial of the rights to the Algerian people, before its entry into the struggle in 1954, were added disappointments so painfully felt over the past five years, which certainly did not contribute to facilitating the restoration of confidence and peace in Algeria. For, since the opening of the present session of the General Assembly, the study of the problem, whose data, whose fundamental points, remain unaltered, has been facilitated considerably by an element of great importance: the recognition, at last, of the right of the Algerian people to choose its own destiny for itself.
In its solemn declaration of 16 September 1959, General de Gaulle acknowledged the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and undertook, on behalf of France, to consult it freely as to its political future. This consultation, according to the declaration of 16 September 1959, will cover the three following questions: (1) independence; (2) autonomy within the association with France; (3) complete francisation.

This declaration of 16 September 1959 surely constitutes a decisive turning point in French policy concerning Algeria. The Algerian people will be put in a position freely to determine its future and its political regime, on the basis of which it proposes to build a new Algeria. This may thus open the door towards reconciliation and peace.

On 1 October 1959, President Bourguiba said, in commenting on this declaration of General de Gaulle of 16 September:

"If France recognizes the Algerian people's right to decide its own destiny, if this recognition is sincere, if no game or deception is involved, then there is no longer any problem. For I refuse to believe that the Algerian leaders can reject the arbitrament of their own people, when France consents to submit to it in determining the rights of Algeria and the form of its destiny."

Three days before President Bourguiba's statement, 28 September 1959, the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic made a solemn declaration in which it accepted the principle of self-determination for the Algerian people as a solution of the conflict which has been causing such loss of blood in Algeria. It confirmed its will to submit to the verdict of its people in determining the political future of Algeria following the three forms specified in General de Gaulle's declaration of 16 September 1959.

One cannot help pointing out that the leaders of Algerian nationalism gave once again in this declaration a measure of their moderation and eagerness for peace.

Thus, in these two fundamental declarations of 16 and 28 September 1959, the two parties involved agreed not only as to the right of the Algerian people freely to dispose of its own destiny, but in particular, enabled it to pronounce itself in conditions of restored calm and peace. The principle of the cease-fire is acknowledged by the two parties as a necessary condition of genuine free consultation as to the future of Algeria.
We can only express gratification at this agreement which lets one glimpse a peace in dignity and restored friendship. One cannot, however, help expressing regret at all the absurd intransigencies, attachments to the erroneous fictions and false reactions of prestige, which have caused so much blood to flow and caused so many victims to die. You will permit me to recall that two years ago, on 17 August 1957 to be exact, President Bourguiba, in a statement made for the American NBC radio and television network, called for the solution of the Algerian conflict, and I would like to quote President Bourguiba. He said:

"The recognition by France of Algeria's vocation to independence, or at least to self-determination, remains the only thing capable of arriving at an agreement between France and Algeria."

But at that time the French preferred to propose to Algeria the Loi-cadre, which spelled two more years of war, of pain and of rancour, which only increased distrust, which is the source of hesitation or precautions and demands for security which the Algerian nationalists require as a necessary guarantee for the Algerian people for free consultation.

The Committee surely has in mind the different formulas of solution proposed by France which we discussed here at preceding sessions. All were to arrive at the same political end; that is, Algerians integration with France after a cease-fire. Now agreement on principle has been achieved between the two parties as to the exercise by the Algerian people of its right to self-determination and the necessity of a prior cease-fire, it is not difficult to understand that the safeguards and guarantees which the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic deems it necessary to require originate from mistrust, which in turn springs from past experience. They surely are not designed in particular to express mistrust as to the prestigious French Chief of Staff who has recognized the Algerian people's right freely to dispose of its own destiny. My delegation considers that Algeria as well as France now has the opportunity of seeing peace and concord restored on a serious, honest and decent basis. It will be criminal to risk losing this opportunity by refusing to calm legitimate apprehensions or finding guarantees of success.
Without passion, I wish to analyse, however, the elements of misunderstanding which still remain between the French Government, on the one side, and the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic on the other, after agreement in principle on self-determination recognized as the right of the Algerian people, and the need for a cease-fire prior to the free expression of the will of the Algerian people. The Algerian people, by means of a referendum, must be allowed to choose between three solutions which were published in the declaration of 16 September; that is to say, independence, autonomy within the association with France, or the complete francisation. These are the terms of the declaration itself of 16 September. It is perfectly natural that France expects the result of this public consultation to come out in favour of a complete francisation, or at least autonomy within the association with France. But it is no less normal that the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic aspires at the results being favourable to independence. Both of the two parties will doubtless endeavour to see that the consultations bring about the result according to its own aspirations. It is currently recognized that in a referendum of this nature, consultation will benefit if it is prepared, organized and carried out by a neutral authority. In certain cases it is even suggested that it be placed under the direct control of an international authority.

But in the present case, the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic has not even formulated demands seeking an international authority to control the referendum we are referring to. This, we believe, is perfectly understandable and can be explained, because the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic is not carrying out systematic defiance of the person at present directing and guiding the fate of France. It is merely seeking for a discussion of the guarantees and assurances which would permit a true freedom of choice between the three solutions proposed in the declaration of 16 September 1959.
This concern for the guarantees is all the more legitimate since the problem interests Algeria where the French administration has not thus far given proof of complete impartiality, especially in electoral matters. Indeed, quite to the contrary.

I do not wish to go back to the past. We have discussed these matters at great length at previous sessions in this same Committee. But, unfortunately, the past does not lead to absolute confidence in the way in which the French administration in Algeria organizes and carries out popular consultations.

I would not like to appear to confuse a situation which seems simple. But my delegation must note that, after the two basic declarations of 16 and 28 September, certain statements made by responsible French officials seemed to reinforce the mistrust shown by the Algerian people. Certain official statements which were intended to make more precise the offers made to the Algerian people have, on the contrary, completely distorted the principle of self-determination. Thus, Le Monde of 7 November 1959 published an article stating that, according to Mr. Delouvrier, general delegate of the French Government in Algeria, the questions to be asked would be the following:

"First question: Do you wish Algeria to fulfil its destiny with France or without France?"

"Second question: Since you have chosen to be with France, would you wish to be administered in the same way as the departments of the mother country, or would you like to follow a different precise statute which would be established from here under the control of the Government?"

Under these conditions, it certainly is no exaggeration to seek guarantees on the preparation and the carrying out of the consultation to be held with the Algerian people regarding their future. It is perfectly reasonable that these be sought, so that the consultation may be honest and sincere and so that these political or other guarantees may be discussed directly between the parties concerned.

The Tunisian delegation does not feel that the best way of arriving at understanding is to have the two parties, equally convinced of the need for an agreement, communicate at a distance through newspaper and radio declarations.
On the contrary, we believe in the virtues of direct human contact. How many problems that appeared at a distance to be insoluble have been settled easily, or have at least been put on the road to a solution, because of the warmth of human contact and the advantages of a frank and open discussion. We have seen this demonstrated more than once in the United Nations. However, for such a discussion to have every chance of success, whether it is a matter of pourparlers or negotiations, the general framework must be accepted without any ambiguities. Naturally, it is not a question of defining all the points on which an agreement has to be reached, but it is perfectly natural that an outline should be drawn up, covering the political conditions, the modalities of honest consultation of the Algerian people regarding its future, and also the material conditions for a cease-fire which will be prejudicial to no one.

But here, apparently, another problem arises: Is the discussion between the two parties to deal with the cease-fire and then, once the agreement on a cease-fire has been arrived at, with the guarantees for a consultation, or is the matter to be handled in the reverse way? My delegation feels that this is a false problem. However, the problem will remain until direct contact is established. We are convinced that in the present circumstances the military problem cannot be discussed without agreeing on the modalities and guarantees of a healthy and objective consultation of the Algerian people.

The Tunisian delegation believes that there is an indissoluble set of political and military conditions which have to be defined by means of a discussion between the French Government and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. They have to come to an agreement on the true conditions for a final cease-fire, without setting up distinctions as to the nature of these conditions which, as we said before, form an indissoluble whole.

We do not believe that there are especially difficult exigencies here. As I said in the first part of my statement, there must be no military defeat of either of the parties. What matters is merely a realization of the best possible conditions for coming to an agreement and re-establishing peace.

How can one succeed in establishing confidence on the part of the Algerian people? You have to implant the conviction that hopes will not be shattered and that the Algerian people themselves will be able to decide on their own future.
without any constraint. Naturally, these are negotiations that will have
to be undertaken immediately between the two parties, and to define the political
regime of Algeria for the future. The two parties have accepted the principle
of self-determination for the people of Algeria. The definition of this
future will rest in the hands of those voting in the consultation which is to
be carried out. The Algerian people has solemnly stated that it will definitely
abide by the verdict. But this verdict must be arrived at in all freedom.

Thus, the difficulties that still have to be eliminated are far from being
insurmountable if you really wish to take into account the situation in which
we found ourselves last year. Today, agreement has been achieved between the
two parties on the principle of the self-determination of the people of
Algeria and the absolute need for a cease-fire prior to any popular or
nationwide consultation. It is now up to the two parties to undertake negotiations
so as to define by common agreement the general conditions and the necessary
guarantees for a cease-fire to be followed by a clear referendum on the terms
proposed by General de Gaulle in his statement of 16 September 1959.

In the course of the press conference which he held on 10 November 1959,
General de Gaulle, speaking of the perspectives of a future cease-fire, said:
"If the heads of the insurrection wish to discuss with the
authorities the conditions for ending the conflict, they can do so."
Later, he added:
"And if the representatives of the outer organization of the
rebellion decide to come to France to discuss the matter, it is up
to them to do so, no matter when, be it in secret or be it in public,
according to what they decide or choose."

My delegation was very happy to hear this declaration, because we believe
it contributed greatly to bringing the points of view closer together. It
appears clear that the heads of the insurrection or the outside chiefs of the
rebellion, as it was said, are indisputably what has been called the National
Liberation Front, the official or de facto spokesman of which is the
Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. We were happy to note that the
latter took advantage of the opportunity. According to the declaration made public
on 20 November 1959, it delegated five chiefs of the Algerian insurrection to
undertake pourparlers with the French Government in order to define the conditions for the application of the principle of self-determination and end the conflict. The nomination by the Provisional Algerian Government of its delegation to undertake these talks with the French Government gave indisputable proof of its goodwill, a proof which constitutes a serious step toward the achievement of the end desired. May I be permitted to doubt that this is an effort on the part of the Algerian Government to avoid discussion. Quite on the contrary, it is a serious and courageous act which obviously obligates them. This is also proved in the communique of 20 November 1959, in which the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic states quite clearly.
"If the French Government wishes to maintain the principle of this understanding, the Algerian Government would send immediate instructions to its delegates to fulfil their mission."

This, in juridical language, means that any commitment accepted by the five delegates nominated would bind the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic and the National Liberation Front. Surely, this is the normal mandate given delegates going to a negotiation or discussion.

The very quality and qualifications of the five delegates prove the serious character of the mandate given to them, and I am referring to Messrs. Hussein Ait Ahmed, Ahmed Ben Bella, Ahmed Bitat, Mohamed Boudiaf and Mohamed Khider; all these persons are well known and respected for their deep feelings and sincerity as well as being assured of a hearing from the Algerian people.

I am sure that the First Committee still remembers the way in which the aeroplane carrying four of the members of the delegation nominated by the Provisional Government of the Algerian public was re-routed from its destination, Tunis. These four leaders were kidnapped on 22 October 1956 while they were returning to Tunis from Rabat to be present at the consultations between His Majesty Mohamed V and President Habib Bourguiba on the situation in Algeria. The aeroplane they were travelling in was a Moroccan plane, and their case gave rise to tension between two Member States of the United Nations. Their importance, already great, therefore became much greater because of the nationalist movement in revolt in Algeria and their prestige is indisputable. Therefore, why is it surprising that they were named as members of the delegation which was to undertake the pourparlers with the Government of France? Therefore, certain surprise was manifested later that the Algerian revolution had named persons that were living under surveillance.

Is it necessary for me to recall that the United Kingdom took Mr. Nkrumah out of prison to discuss with him and to give him the responsibility of power in Ghana? Is it also necessary for me to recall that in 1955 France called for the return of His Majesty Mohamed V from Madagascar, where he was living under surveillance, to discuss with him the agreements that would lead to the independence of Morocco and which would also lead to a healthy and fruitful co-operation between these two friendly States?
I could recall many similar cases, and I might even mention some personal experiences. But did the United Kingdom and France, in these negotiations which finally led to the end of bitter and bloody conflicts, have cause to regret having discussed or negotiated with persons that to a certain extent were either being detained or living under surveillance? Have not all of us participated in such discussions for the promotion of peace, understanding and true co-operation between States, based on dignity and mutual respect? The prestige of States that have undertaken pourparlers under such conditions and with such partners was surely not diminished in any way; to the contrary, such prestige was greatly increased in the opinion of those within those States, as well as in the eyes of international public opinion.

There was nothing said, moreover, to the effect that the composition of the Algerian delegation was a definitive or final one. The communiqué of 20 November itself does not prohibit in any way the possibility of adding one or more members. It is surely only up to the French Government to have its say.

We believe that it is enough for the French Government to express its agreement with the communiqué of 20 November and its acceptance in principle of the delegation designated in order for the first direct contact to be established effectively in the most appropriate way under the circumstances, and in view of the importance of the discussions which are to take place.

The problem of the composition of the delegation named by the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic to undertake these pourparlers with the French Government is truly, we believe, a minor problem which can in no way be an obstacle to the achievement of the much greater goal which both sides seem determined to achieve.

We cannot forget that while we dilly-dally on the composition of this delegation, the war continues in Algeria with all its ravages, its victims and its sufferings.

This unfortunate and bloody war has created a dangerous situation which has caused many misunderstandings in North Africa.

We welcomed with satisfaction the statement of General de Gaulle of 16 September, in which he recognized the right of the Algerian people to decide freely its own destiny. We also noted, with no less satisfaction, the statement
of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic of 28 September, accepting that recognition. These two basic statements set forth the agreement in principle which has now been achieved between the two parties concerned on the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and the need to discuss the cease-fire in order to allow the people to express themselves freely on their political future.

We feel that it is perfectly normal that the Algerian nationalist leaders should wish to discuss the conditions and guarantees for the implementation of self-determination at the same time as they discuss the cease-fire. My delegation feels that such a request is legitimate and shows the sincerity and serious nature of the Algerian partner.

It seems to us, in view of the importance of the goal sought, that the difficulty resulting from this request is not really insurmountable.

The debate that we have just begun now will contribute, I am convinced, to settling this difficulty.

During the course of the Conference held in Monrovia, a Conference that was called specifically to study the situation in Algeria, the Governments of nine independent States in Africa proclaimed their serious concern at the prolongation of the war in Algeria, a war between a people which is ardently struggling to recover its natural right to freedom and independence, and France, liberal by nature, whose colonialists have involved it in an inextricable situation that is so prejudicial to peace, understanding and security, which Africa so badly needs at present.

All people who love liberty, justice and who have respect for the rights of the individual and national collectivities, regardless of their origin or geographical situation, have welcomed with satisfaction the news of the agreement in principle on the right of the Algerian people to self-determination. We too were happy that the road to peace in dignity was being cleared.

I am convinced that our debate will help to dissipate the misunderstandings and will remove the difficulties which still remain on the road to direct pourparlers between the two parties concerned and that it will help to put an end to the fighting and bring about the free exercise of self-determination of the Algerian people.
My delegation will submit, together with other delegations, a draft resolution which takes into account all the elements before us at present and which, reflecting the views of our Committee, will help in the final solution of this painful question. Having done this, my delegation feels that we will have made a sincere contribution to peace and good harmony among nations as well as to true friendship between peoples on the basis of dignity and mutual respect.

In one word, we shall have assumed the role that was assigned to us when we ratified the Charter of our Organization.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.