Fifteenth Session
FIRST COMMITTEE

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chairman: mr. matsch (austria)

question of algeria [59]/ (continued)

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59-61681
QUESTION OF ALGERIA (A/4140) (continued)

Sir PIERSON DIXON (United Kingdom): My purpose in intervening in the debate at this stage is to explain the United Kingdom view of how the General Assembly can best assist in promoting that fair and reasonable evolution of the situation in Algeria which, thanks to recent developments, is now nearer than any of us who were here a year ago would have dared to expect.

The complexity and importance of the problem of Algeria, it seems to us, is a reflection of the development of certain historical processes peculiar to our times. Great issues of this kind need great and imaginative acts of statesmanship for their solution if that solution is to contribute to the beneficent stream of history and relationships between peoples.

What then is the essential task of statesmanship in the present case? It is, in my belief, to develop a satisfactory and fruitful relationship between the vigorous renaissance of the Arab peoples, whose ancient culture has been the basis of North African civilization since classical times, and the particular contribution which the French genius has been able to make to the development of the area during the last century and more. Fortunately, there is reason for confidence that statesmanship equal to the task will not be lacking.

This is the fifth time that this subject has appeared on our agenda. We have, at each of the previous sessions, expressed doubts whether it was politically wise, or juridically permissible in view of the provisions of the Charter, for this question to be raised in the United Nations, let alone made the subject of a recommendation by the Assembly on the substance of the problem. We hold the same views on the present occasion, and with added conviction for reasons which I will explain.

There is on this occasion a very important change and a change very much for the better in the circumstances of the problem. Never, in all our previous debates, could it have been said that the difficulties which remain are "far from insurmountable". Yet this is what the representative of Tunisia said on 30 November in this Committee in his sober and moderately phrased approach to the question.
I would, if I may say so, have hoped that this constructive spirit might inform our debate as a whole. This question is, as we all know, very serious and it is at present at a critical point. We can only hope, here in the United Nations, to contribute to a satisfactory outcome if we ponder our words and actions with a due sense of our responsibilities, realizing that a hasty word or a proposal out of place may adversely affect the promising developments which are taking place.

I would now like to recall some of the very important points which the representative of Tunisia made in the course of his speech on 30 November. In the first place, he admirably described the position in Algeria today when he said:

"...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." (A/C.1/PV.1067, page 2)

Indeed, the statement made by the President of the French Republic on 16 September, in which he declared that the people of Algeria should freely decide their political future by exercising the right of self-determination once fighting has ended, is a memorable event which is certain of commemoration by historians of the future as a milestone in the historic evolution of relations between France and the peoples of North Africa.

It may be helpful to the Committee at this stage of our discussion if I quote briefly from a second important statement made by General de Gaulle, that of 10 November:

"The Algerians will themselves have to decide their destiny. Their choice will be entirely free. It will be so because France wants the question to be settled once and for all. The choice will be free also because I have given my word that all the Algerians will be able to participate in the referendum without the slightest constraint, and even that, whoever they are, wherever they come from, whatever their platform may be, they will take part not only in the voting, but also in the discussions that will precede it, so as to determine the voting procedures, when the time comes, and the regulations governing the campaign that will precede the vote."
That is a very important pronouncement, touching on the modalities by which progress may be made, and I have no doubt that it has been noted by the inhabitants of Algeria, as I feel sure it will have been noted by this Committee as a whole.

The representative of Tunisia has reminded us that on 28 September the leaders of the FLN announced their wish to submit to the verdict of the Algerians the decision on the political future of Algeria according to the three possibilities stated by General de Gaulle on 16 September.

Mr. Slim went on to conclude that by the two declarations of 16 and 28 September both the parties to the present fighting are agreed, not only on the right of the Algerian people freely to determine their political future, but above all to allow the Algerians to pronounce themselves in peace and security. Mr. Slim said:

"The principle of the cease-fire is admitted by both parties as a necessary condition to a real and free consultation on the future of Algeria."

These are indeed new and vital factors in a situation which we all hope to see resolved. They create a prospect for agreement where before the outlook seemed bleak. Those who are still carrying arms against each other are agreed in principle on the objective: that they should cease to fight and should give the inhabitants of Algeria the opportunity, in peace and security, to express themselves by the democratic means of the ballot box on their choice for their future.

As the representative of Tunisia suggested, so long as the fighting in Algeria continues, a reasonable solution of the problem must remain more difficult. With the prospect of agreement so tantalizingly near our responsibility to do nothing here which might delay or postpone the realization of the hopes of the Algerians is all the greater.

I recognize that many hold with sincerity a somewhat different view: cannot the United Nations do something positive to help? I know that many delegations believe that, where there is so much common ground, all that is required in order to bring about a cease-fire and to prepare the way for a final settlement is a direct encounter between those concerned, and that the United Nations can play a useful role in promoting such a meeting. But I would ask these delegations -- and I know that they are sincerely anxious to be of assistance -- to consider carefully whether in all the circumstances any substantive resolution which the General Assembly might adopt is in practice likely to make the meeting which they desire
more or less likely, to hasten it or to retard it, to increase or to decrease the chances that the outcome will be successful.

It is our view that the right course for this Assembly, this year, is not to express itself through a resolution on the substance of the matter. Quite apart from juridical doubts connected with Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter, it seems to me that, in view of the promising yet delicate and sensitive point now reached, this would, on purely technical grounds, be the course of wisdom and prudence.

The President of the French Republic in his statement of 10 November declared that the French Government was ready to enter into discussions on the conditions for an end to the fighting and offered guarantees to those who would take part. Since then there have been indications that the leaders of the nationalist movement wish to respond to this proposal. I believe that the overwhelming majority of the members of this Committee have no thought other than a desire to see these discussions begin as soon as possible in the confident expectation that, once they begin, there is every reason to expect that they will prove satisfactory.

The United Kingdom delegation is very mindful of the danger that any resolution, however moderately worded, which sought to apply a formula, however reasonable it might seem in an abstract way, to the nature of these talks or to the nature of the problem as a whole, might set up new pressures which, far from promoting a satisfactory outcome, would in practice retard and complicate it.

New prospects have been opened up by the far-reaching and imaginative programme which has been put forward by France, and an offer has been made to discuss the conditions for the cease-fire which all are agreed must be the first step in this programme. These steps have been taken in the name of the French people by a man whose courage, integrity and authority are recognized equally by his adversaries and by his supporters. Even his most entrenched critics cannot reasonably call in question the good faith of the undertakings which General de Gaulle has given, or doubt that he speaks for the French people. On the other side also there are men of goodwill and statesmanship who share the desire to reach a final settlement as speedily as possible.
In present circumstances, I believe it may be relevant to recall to the Committee the experience of the debate held here last year on the Cyprus question. Our experience at that time has encouraged us in the view that, when the time comes when there is a general will between those directly concerned to solve a problem, and where a common basis for agreement has been reached, it would be unwise for the United Nations to adopt a resolution which either side to the dispute might regard as making agreement more difficult. My colleagues here will recall that this was the view taken by the Assembly last year when agreement on a political settlement for Cyprus was almost within reach. Nor need I remind the Committee of the happy outcome to the negotiations which followed the conclusion of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly on that subject.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize again our heavy responsibility to do nothing here that might postpone an end to the tragedies arising from the fighting in Algeria or imperil the opportunities for a final settlement which have been opened up.

I would leave with my colleagues the thought that our common aims may in practice best be achieved by allowing this debate to conclude with no formal resolution introducing some new element into the consideration of this immensely complex question. In my opinion, and judging from our own experience, a solution is likely to be reached more quickly and easily if the problem is left to those directly concerned.

Mr. FAZI (United Arab Republic): Will France and will the world community of nations continue to leave the noble and valiant people of Algeria with no choice but to kill or be killed in the defence of their rights, their freedom and their honour; or has the time come for a civilized and peaceful settlement of the Algerian question? I confess that I do not know the answer. But we all know that the people of Algeria and the people of France want peace; that the United Nations and all the peoples of the world want peace. We must determinedly work for it, if it is to be accomplished -- the French, the Algerians and all of us who can. We must accept the challenge of the present stirring moment.
The Assembly bears here a responsibility and faces an opportunity which belongs only to the great. Will it rise to the occasion? Let us work hard to that end and pray that it will.

Some have stated, rightly, that no action should be taken by the General Assembly which would prejudice the realization of a just and peaceful solution of the question of Algeria. While keeping this in mind, we should, for our part, maintain all the positiveness and make all the contributions required for the attainment of that solution. An attitude of passiveness on the part of the Assembly, such as seems to have been suggested by the representative of the United Kingdom this morning, is neither one to which this Assembly did or should agree, nor one which, under recent circumstances, the country which the representative represents has adopted.

The immediate objective before us is that discussions between the Algerians and the French toward a final settlement should begin. There are, of course, many obstacles in the way. Yet none of them is unsurmountable. If there is a war still to be waged in connexion with Algeria, it must be one to vanquish these obstacles. It must be a war against war and for the victory of peace.

With its ghastly face and the shame, the folly and the misery accompanying it, the alternative to peace stares at the world. Well over half a million French troops, fully equipped with modern arms and belonging, we have been told, to forces supposedly dedicated to and poised for the defence of freedom, have for years been on Algerian soil with no other mission assigned to them than to suppress freedom and do their utmost to kill the freedom-loving people of Algeria.

Until now, the victims of this raging war, proportionately to the population of Algeria, have been more than all the victims of all the wars of our lifetime. In the presence of this fathomless tragedy, together with the humiliations and the losses of homes and property, and with the disruption of trade and normal living, the depth and range of our sorrow are limitless. Even if only one single human being, Algerian or French, were killed in this quite avoidable war, we would have viewed it too with deep sorrow.
We cannot, therefore, go along with the suggestion of our British colleague to take an attitude of passiveness in the General Assembly, an attitude which, as I have submitted, his own country, in spite of certain pressures and temptations, did not adopt during the last World War.

These sufferings and sacrifices in Algeria, by the Algerians as well as by the French, must be put to an end. The best of France and of any of us can but deplore this whole episode and do everything possible to put an end to it, not by the so-called "pacification" which could only mean more massacres and an indefinite postponement of a solution, but by the realization of genuine peace. Nothing should deter us from attaining promptly this honourable goal.

From the fountain of history, we can draw innumerable examples of problems -- which seemed hopeless or difficult to the extreme -- being finally resolved. In our own days, we have seen, through difficulties, disappointments and emotions akin to despair, the definitive settlement of many such problems. The Egyptian question, the questions of the Sudan, the Suez Canal, Trieste, Cyprus and the Nile Waters between the Sudan and the United Arab Republic, are illustrations in point.

We have, furthermore, heard the Foreign Minister of France remind the General Assembly, on 29 September last, that since the middle of December 1958, twelve new Republics have been set up within the French community and that one Republic, Guinea, which voted for independence, has been recognized by the French Government and is now a sovereign State sitting in the United Nations.

History, including modern history, tells us too of the surmounting of stubborn difficulties that seemed to block the road to the solution of various problems. For brevity and relevance, I shall mention only one type of such difficulties, the one relating to representation. On many occasions we have seen leaders of nations go from their exile, their prison or their forced isolation from positions of active authority, to the table of negotiations, as honoured and fully recognized representatives of their people. Ghandi, Nehru, Gennnah, Zaghloul, Mohamed V, Nkrumah, Sekou Touré, de Gaulle and other illustrious names come readily to mind in this respect.
The Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria, on 20 November last, took the decision to entrust a delegation composed of five Algerian leaders with the mission of starting pourparlers with the French Government. This is clearly an exercise by the Provisional Government of Algeria of a prerogative which cannot be seriously disputed, as it is, undoubtedly, for the Algerians, and for them alone, to choose their own representatives and to shape their delegations, now or in the future, in the way they see fit. I do not choose to pick a quarrel by enlarging on the fact that these Algerian leaders are, in many ways, very much in the fight for the rights of their country and people, and not out of that fight, even if, being forcibly detained by the French, they are out of the shooting part of that fight, through no fault of their own and through an action by the Government of France which cannot be condoned.

We should not, therefore, allow some of the talk about representation in connexion with the question of Algeria to lead us into a blind alley and to stymie our efforts in behalf of constructiveness and of peace. In all these efforts we should be encouraged by the emergence, out of the dust of battles and the windy ways of men, of a good beginning of common ground of agreement. The right of the Algerians to self-determination and to its exercise in full freedom and with full guarantees is conceded by France. Both the French and the Algerians have announced their readiness to discuss a cease-fire and to work for a final settlement. There are, parallel to this, some closely related elements and considerations which we cannot safely or wisely overlook. I have already commented briefly on the matter of representation. I now ask leave to say a few words regarding some other relevant matters.
Despite the very fundamental restrictions included in General de Gaulle's proclamation of 16 September 1959, the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, in its declaration of 26 September last, declared itself "ready to enter into pourparlers with the French Government" to discuss the conditions and guarantees for the application of self-determination. It did so notwithstanding the impressive series of declarations and messages of responsible French personalities which General de Gaulle has not invalidated. The publications of the Algerian Government have not once raised the issue of these interpretations by official personalities, interpretations which all tend to minimize the content of self-determination and assure its eventual application by the French army and by the French administration.

Moreover, in an interview over the Moroccan National Radio on 19 October 1959, Mr. Ferhat Abbas, President of the provisional Algerian Government, noted the agreement of the two parties on the principle of self-determination, while deliberately ignoring the indiscreet comments of these French authorities. He noted with calm and deliberation:

"The conditions under which our people will be called on, in entire liberty, to make their choice, remain to be arranged."

In the same spirit he added:

"It is evident that the problems posed by five years of war, such as that posed by the organization of a referendum, cannot be regulated by public declarations. Contacts and pourparlers are, therefore, necessary."

In conclusion, he stressed that:

"One cannot be for peace and against negotiation. Neither can one call for the free play of democracy, while keeping to oneself the monopoly of establishing the rules."

Still anxious not to neglect any occasion which may improve chances for peace, the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic met on 12 November 1959 to examine the situation and appointed on 20 November a delegation entrusted with the mission of starting pourparlers with the French Government in order to discuss the conditions and guarantees for the application of self-determination.
The Algerian Government has repeatedly declared and still maintains that there can be no cease-fire without an agreement on the guarantees for a true application of the principle of self-determination. The President, and with him the Government of the Republic of France, would normally be among the first to recognize the validity of this position, and that an unconditional cease-fire or an unconditional surrender is the miserable and humiliating fate of only a defeated enemy.

We wish to be encouraged in this regard by the position taken by General de Gaulle, when he stated on 16 September last:

"We can now look forward to the day when the men and women who live in Algeria will be in a position to decide on their destiny once and for all, freely, in the full knowledge of what is at stake."

The General Assembly would, therefore, be well advised if it urges the French and the Algerians promptly to start discussions toward a definitive settlement and for a cease-fire with adequate guarantees to ensure full freedom for the Algerians in the exercise of their right to self-determination, and if it recommends that the exercise by the Algerians of this right takes place without undue delay.

The Assembly would thus be endorsing positions taken by the provisional Government of Algeria and by the Government of France, and in harmony with these positions would, furthermore, be expressing, at least to some extent, the crystallization of world public opinion in relation to the question of Algeria.

Before closing, I would like to reserve the right of my delegation to take the floor again, if necessary, during this debate. At the same time, I reaffirm in the name of my Government that the United Arab Republic stands, and will always stand, as solidly as ever by the Algerians in their struggle to regain their freedom and redeem their rights.

Mr. de LEQUERICA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): A long road has already been traversed in the discussion of the Question of Algeria. Those of us who have for years constantly participated in the debates on this matter have watched with a certain satisfaction, within the painful area created by this topic, the extraordinary clarification that has been given us. The
United Nations has also played its part in this excellent result. I know that when such extraordinary steps are taken as those lately taken by the French Government, when the undercurrents have been dominated, and even when personal concern has been controlled until the present offers were arrived at which were made by France to the Algerian peoples, it is difficult to gauge the efforts of others, and there is a natural tendency to set that aside, and at times even consider it almost an obstacle. I say this sincerely, because this may well be the way the work of the United Nations has been considered, even on the part of the best-intentioned Frenchmen.

However, here, too, we have worked usefully. We have done so because we have known how to limit ourselves, and in the course of our tremendous discussions have reserved for the United Nations its important role of counselling and advising, without going beyond the limits of its power.

My delegation has always contended, and to this matter I direct my remarks, that the juridical situation in Algeria, an integral part of the French Republic when the French Republic became a Member of the United Nations, could not be the subject of vote or discussion on the part of our Organization. We have previously said, and I now repeat, that Article II, paragraph 7, makes it absolutely impossible for us to interfere in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States, and does not allow us to force Members of the United Nations to submit such matters for discussion and action, in accordance with the Charter. We have been very correct in not overstepping the final limitations of this Article.

There are positive and powerful reasons for the existence of the United Nations, and daily the impartial mind can see, in our great Organization, solid support and the clearest light to lead the world toward a better understanding between peoples. There are true and good reasons for maintaining the existence of the United Nations, widening its functions and its fundamental purposes, enriched by the successes achieved over a number of years, and enabling us to regard the past history of the United Nations as experience.
But there are certain negative aspects in our constitution. Nevertheless, our Organization is able to act without committing the dangerous error of going beyond our limitations and usurping functions, thus reducing the Organization to an example of discord between peoples. Among these negative reasons, which have been stated earlier, none has been set forth more clearly than the one in Article 2 (7), which prevents our interfering in the domestic affairs of States. These precepts, representing a strong orthopedic apparatus are designed to limit our excessive desires and our human impatience because; if we were to give into them, we should damage ourselves and our Organization. These impediments place the functions of our Organization in their proper perspective and framework. If, in the case of Algeria, we had violated this rule, we should have been involved, not in shooting or attacking, but in a conflict of another sort. From such a possibility, however, we have emerged with a solid respect for our Organization because we have been able to stand aside.

The position of Spain on this matter has not changed through the years. But have we really stepped aside from this question? Yes, if we consider that we have not gone beyond the exact words of the Charter, that we have not gone beyond our strict submission to the law. But who has not felt the pain of evolution in our concern for human difficulties and tried to give advice on behalf of justice and of noble interests?

Let us recognize the fine example of France which, in safeguarding its rights, has placed no obstacle in the way of our discussions, as many countries would have done in similar circumstances. France, unfortunately, is not sitting with us here; its voice is silent. Nevertheless, we recognize the work done by France. We know that the sensitivity of France will oblige it to listen to our suggestions in the matter of finding a solution for the acute problem of Algeria. This movement in Algeria is a real one; it is a constantly tragic translation of the formidable desires of the masses of North Africa to find a new political organization. France itself has recognized this. In the middle of a difficult fight, France has known how to find the precise political measure to take care of the problem and, even without its participation in our discussions, I am convinced that the ears of France are not closed to the generous principles which have been expressed in this debate.
If we are to bring out something that is alive and not merely hollow and angry phrases, we must bow to the reality of the various elements of the Algerian problem. I do not think that it is useless to examine this problem. Each year that we discuss it we must recognize that France has done excellent work in North Africa. Since 1830, through wars and violence, in which were displayed many heroic gestures on both sides, France has transformed Algeria. Statistics, the impressions of travellers, photographs simple and lacking in intentional artifice, indicate the results achieved in the Arab world, which itself has acknowledged the value of the transformation. At a moment when the conflict is most bitter, we must make concessions. We who are non-belligerents can see the efforts which have been made by this great empire, the efforts to raise the living standards of the peoples, to open the future before them — all this because of the hundreds of years of labour on the part of France.

Europeans of French origin have established cities in that country, cities created on the basis of the native elements of Algeria. Now the Algerians stand out as real Algerians, resuscitated from the past, perhaps without details of the purely political limitations. We can understand this; but there is a French-Algerian reality which no one can minimize without a generalization of hostile purposes; there is an Arab movement and a movement for Algerian independence. A genetic declaration will not erase the work of history, nor would it be licit to support such abstractions if it is merely to wipe out another powerful reality which is the creation of wealth, culture, spiritual development, as carried out by France in Algeria. Nor do these great continental definitions suffice. Perhaps the world tends in this direction too much at present. We cannot merely say that Algeria is Africa and, therefore, not a part of France. Let us think of the tremendous affinities between the countries of North Africa and the countries of the south of Europe. This relationship with Africa is something which we Spanish feel deeply and of which we are proud.

From the geographical as well as the historical point of view, we can find no justification for the elimination or suppression of historical facts, such as the French projects in Algeria. It is wrong for humanity to allow itself to be swept by pseudo continental whims without taking into consideration the law
of centuries of a common culture. In this respect France is entitled to defend its work and to guarantee its own creations in what is still the territory of Algeria.

At the same time, how can we deny the fact that France also saw the powerful, heroic and violent reaction of great elements in Algeria desirous of establishing new political constitutions and strengthening it in North Africa through the formation of a group, the creation of which would be premature? This group aspires to a new position in the distribution of the countries of the Mediterranean and its fruitfulness and greatness would contribute to the general civilization which, historically, has represented the best of North Africa. To deny it would lead nowhere, and France, within the conflict, has recognized this reality and has offered peace to the valiant.

Naturally, we are pleased about this and, I repeat, the word "pleased" is not the most adequate. How can we not be happy when we see France, impressed by the heroism of so many Algerians, opening the door to concord, of which we have clear proof in the words of the eminent head of the French State, and later approved by Parliament. It is not useless to recall these words now and to bear them in mind constantly, for they must have some bearing on our resolutions. We all go back to the same words, but I think that therein lies the crux of the problem.

On 18 September of this year, in a solemn declaration, General de Gaulle proclaimed the right of the Algerians to self-determination. May I say here that this word "self-determination" is full of interpretative complications. If we abstract its true meaning and do not limit it to the countries already set up and Members of our Organization, we shall see the truth of this. It may be an agent of disorder if we enter into the arbitration of the indefinite. Yet, it may be determined in a way that will avoid long conflicts and will settle the invincible currents and determine the problems that face new countries.
We believe that this is one of the moments when the zones and limitations of self-determination have been clearly drawn. This may be a new political step given by France, and a very good and obvious one. Having joined together these two circumstances, the French Government thought of the self-determination of Algeria. Starting from a moment when we can consider tranquility, the French Government, in a policy which was approved by the French Parliament, set a time-limit of four years for the Algerians to choose, by means of a referendum, between secession, complete integration with France or autonomy in a union with France. No one will be excluded from the political debate that will precede the vote or from the vote itself. All opinions will be given freely and the referendum will be watched by any who wish to do so.

In the conference of 10 November, General de Gaulle summed up the policy which he intends to follow in these words:

"The Algerians will decide on their own fate and the elections will be entirely free. This will be so because France wishes this question to be settled once and for all. The elections will be free because I have promised that all the Algerians will be able to participate in this referendum without any pressure, and they will be able to participate, no matter from where they come and no matter what their programmes and platforms are. They will be able to participate not only in the vote but also in the deliberations which will precede them in order to settle the modalities of the elections and in order to take part in the campaigns which will precede the vote. A cease-fire will be required precisely before this resolution."

There is another aspect of this declaration, and you know full well the words spoken by the President of the French Republic, which reassures those who are at present fighting against France. This assures them the proper conditions for their return and offers them the peace of the valiant. The President of the French Republic also said on 10 November that if the heads of the independence movement wished to discuss with the French authorities the conditions for putting an end to the combat, they could do so. The conditions would be honourable conditions which would respect the liberty and dignity of both sides and take full account of the valour shown under arms. Can we say, therefore, that the fate of
Algeria is in the hands of the Algerians? In an understandable historical move, with powerful precedents that make it easier to understand, France, following the example of other great nations, is offering Algeria, which we must recognize, is giving tremendous manifestations of disquiet and resistance, the road to an unlimited and friendly reconciliation, a road that will lead to a separation for the Algerians if, by free elections, they show a desire to set up an independent nation and to live their life apart in history.

The President of the United States, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, and the Observatore Romano, the newspaper of the Holy See -- and I mention three very different expressions of everyday life -- have greatly praised the declarations of General de Gaulle which I have mentioned.

Yesterday I heard a most eloquent statement, and today I heard another eloquent statement which displayed the zeal shown by those who naturally are concerned over these tragedies, yet they represent only one aspect in our debate. The speakers do not seem to see the tremendous complexities from which we have to extract the true story. I refer to my neighbour on my left who yesterday referred in terms of censure to the French declarations. He felt that France was not impartial when the President of the French Republic announced the systems for the future which he approved. But how can we stop France, with its position in Algeria today, from also expressing its views and its opinions? After all, it is the only way that France can make known its views. It can only stress what is most convenient and appropriate for the future.

I know that there are difficulties, the difficulties of a cease-fire or the difficulties of an armistice which is complicated further by the organization of a national referendum in order to find out the true will of an entire people, and a people that to a large extent has struggled with weapons and which have been offered this referendum. We cannot be surprised at the difficulties in all this. It is precisely because we know that goodwill must be shown by neighbouring States, just as we need the goodwill of France that ways and means must be found, and not in discord because, after all, all this is procedural, to overcome the difficulties and find an instrumental solution towards peace and the integration of the great peoples of the Mediterranean.
My delegation enthusiastically supports these purposes. Specifically, we are one with them because we are a Mediterranean Power and we anxiously await peace in that portion of the Mediterranean basin, and we wish to support any attempts for the achievement of that peace. As Spaniards, we represent an essential factor in the future life of what has to be a great understanding of great peoples, together represented by Morocco, Tunisia, Spain, France and Italy. There you have, even within the great western unit, a full field of action for political activities. The Algerian people, once they have freely accepted their constitution, can, as a peaceful country, make a considerable contribution to this camp of goodwill and political action. Let us also not forget the fact that I have often repeated in these debates that, as General Franco has said, North Africa is the backbone of Europe. We rest most of our continent on African shoulders, and today we are peace-loving and, therefore, we will find support not only because of physical geography but also because of African human geography for the peoples of that great African continent which is linked to us by a common desire for peace. These countries have already established their concord and understanding. It rests not on a discordant voice but in a common and united voice linked with the other peace-loving nations.

We want to defend the freedom of peace-loving nations, but with all just precautions so that none of us will be surprised by aggression. That is one of the concerns of the Spanish Government, which leads us so warmly to want a settlement of the Algerian question. I have said before in this Committee, and I repeat it today, that Spain is also concerned because of the human element to contribute in a decisive manner to the Algerian creation, a creation carried out by France in union with the indigenous inhabitants after the conquest of 1830. How many first and second generation Spaniards are still in Algeria? What tremendous masses of peoples coming from the Iberian peninsula have contributed by their work to the creation of Algeria? This is not a question which can be set aside. The worthy Ambassador of Tunisia has stated that in a debate in the French Parliament it was pointed out that 44 per cent of the Europeans were Spanish. Certainly the Spanish immigration was a most important factor in the setting up of Algeria. Our emigrants are not great landowners. There are some middle-sized landowners and a considerable number of tradesmen and manufacturers, but there are also tremendous masses of workers in the fields and the towns working under the conditions of
Spanish labour which are well known all over the world. These workers surely cannot be accused of colonialism. They are people of a civilization which can be fused with the North African spirit because of the material and spiritual links that they have. I will leave aside the spiritual interpretation of what we understand by a Spanish background. It is also found in many European colonies that are at present excellent French patriots. There are among the million Europeans at least 100,000 Spanish citizens, and obviously we must watch them. We do not wish to haggle with France over this point, but we must safeguard for Spain its contribution to the future of Algeria, a future of a great people voluntarily integrated, associated or separated by virtue of a political decision. This is not a problem to which we can be indifferent. The thousands of Spaniards have to go along with Algeria when Algeria makes up its mind. We therefore want peace, understanding, concord, cease-fire, measures of integration, contact and sympathy and achievement once again of a united community which will continue the great history of Algeria, and we are obviously most concerned.
We are also very much interested in a peaceful future for Algeria, because an Africa disorganized and threatened with communism would be one of the greatest calamities that could befall the world. God forbid that we should brand as communist all national movements, movements filled with a stirring ideology based on love of country but which at times, in their search for auxiliary elements, have not hesitated -- something which has occurred in other struggles for independence -- to seek the aid and sympathy of those who join them only for their own purposes of universal subversion. Let us not confuse one problem with another; let us not brand as communism that which is well known and explainable as patriotic nationalism. We must not abandon these re-emerging peoples, inflamed as they are with pure love of country -- perhaps at times impatient and extreme in action, but noble and generous. The support of the peoples of the West is the best guarantee that they will steer clear of the tempting peril.

We, perhaps because of our close ties with North Africa, have always been able to separate what in our neighbours is patriotism and fervour -- neighbours who for so many reasons are our brothers in the African continent -- from the malice and provocations of those who would like to fish in muddy waters to carry out their business of world revolution. And we have not stinted our sympathy for other movements in the struggle for African freedom, and some of them, properly represented in this body, cannot complain that we did not help them along their road to freedom. We were moved to do so, among other reasons, by the hope, precisely, that we could thus prevent them from falling into subversive temptation, endowed as they are with the greatest virtues of anti-communism. Let us, therefore, preserve in North Africa an exact balance between vigilance against subversion, and recognition of justice. In Algeria a satisfactory solution will contribute to these peaceful purposes. This is perfectly obvious. All the more reason to seek for such a solution.

Let us not allow the considerable number of details involved in carrying it out, prevent us from considering such peaceful proposals. They are difficult; they will require careful execution, and friction and difficulties are bound to occur. They are not, however, impossible. Good-will must govern the acts of both parties as they go forward in their task of seeking in peace and harmony the satisfaction of the will of the people of Algeria and the desired agreements.
For those who are the chief actors in the Algerian drama, caution, a level head and patience are the proper attributes. But what about us, who are anxious and worried witnesses of this great drama and who, if we were to commit an indiscretion or to depart from our wisely limited field of action as United Nations, might incur the responsibility of prolonging and embittering a quarrel which is on the way to solution?

We should proceed with the greatest caution in matters which fall within the national sovereignty of Member States, above all in a case such as this movement for independence -- the authenticity of which we have never denied, but which has been stirred up from outside; for in cases such as these, if this improper extension of United Nations authority is permitted, it will have the effect of taking out of national sovereignty matters which are within its specific competence.

Let us keep in mind those who are the daily victims of this bloody drama. Let us think of all the bitterness that will be removed if, as we hope, a solution to the problem is found. Let us help in this matter if it is prudent to help; let us help, above all, with our words of encouragement and with our services when they are required and are properly requested; let us, especially, avoid any interference which would cause us to meddle improperly and stir up flames which were nearly extinguished; let us not multiply difficulties of procedure for those who, left to themselves, could solve the difficulties. The precedent of Cyprus which has here been properly called to mind does not cease to attract our attention and to provide for us, perhaps, a precedent. Let us avoid becoming too involved, though guilty of doing so involuntarily, in a problem which we wish to see solved. Let the expression of our wishes, if we pass any resolutions, even when they are reduced to mere exhortation to peace along lines already drawn, be filled with the spirit of concord, free from any emotional motivation which would be unworthy of the United Nations.
Mr. FLIMSMOLL (Australia): The debate in this Committee so far has already shown that there is a considerable measure of agreement among us on what really lies at the root of the problem of Algeria; that is to say that there is general recognition of the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and general recognition that they should be given a proper opportunity to exercise that right. The Australian Government has welcomed the opportunities and possibilities that have been opened out in the past year by the statement of General de Gaulle. General de Gaulle's statement, which was a very courageous and imaginative statement, gives a new chance of settling the long-standing strife that has existed in Algeria, of settling it on terms that I think would be generally acceptable to everybody in this Assembly.

The question that is really before this Committee today is the question of what useful role the First Committee of the United Nations can play in this situation at this moment: what, specifically, can this Committee do about it? I should like to welcome the very good setting that was given us by the moderate statement which was made by our colleague from Tunisia when he opened this debate. There will be disagreements in this Committee, but it is most important that in these disagreements, when discussing the issues involved we should discuss them with a constructive attitude and in a way which will not create new and unnecessary barriers. Most of those who have spoken so far in this debate have borne in mind the very explosive possibilities, have borne in mind what could go wrong if we in this Committee conduct ourselves in an unhealthful or provocative manner.

It seemed to my delegation that now that this item is on the agenda, the most useful role that this Committee could play is two-fold: to afford an exposition of the issues and interests involved in this question, and to allow questions to be brought out which will at some stage require elucidation. Some of these questions have already been put before us. We have heard this morning, for example, in the very interesting speech by the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Republic, how he told us of certain very important questions that still remain to be answered; and some of the others who have spoken in this debate have also brought forward questions that will need answers. It is quite clear that a start has been made, that further movement has yet to take place,
that there are many points yet to be worked out. That is quite clear, and that, I think, would be generally accepted. The question is where and how these next stages will be taken.

We can all express views here, and it is useful to have these views expressed. But should we try to crystallize them here in the form of resolutions? Should we try to crystallize the answers in the form of resolutions? Is this the place to formulate the answers to the questions?
When we ask ourselves these things, we immediately come face to face with some of the dangers that could result if this Committee were to rush into something heedlessly or unnecessarily. There are dangers in trying to be too precise. Very often, when you are trying to bring parties together, you can bring them to a very wide measure of agreement if you do not too soon try to tie them down to a form of words. We have seen that very often, not only in international negotiations but in private negotiations between people or between firms. These, I say, are the dangers of trying to be too precise too soon.

Thus, when we try to draft a resolution, we come up against the question of the preamble. Are we to have a long preamble? Are we to set out some of the considerations that have led up to the matter's coming before the General Assembly at this stage? As soon as we try to do something like that, we find that one party or the other, one interested group or the other, feels that its particular point of view is being prejudiced or is not being stated properly. And yet, everyone concerned may be quite content to have the matter reach the stage it has reached, provided that we do not explain how it has reached that stage or what the conditions are for the next step forward. Therefore, we have to be very careful at this stage to avoid saying anything which is not only not going to be helpful but which may actually prove an impediment to a settlement of this problem.

This leads us to the real crux of the situation we are in at the moment: the need for this Committee, this Assembly, to take a practical and helpful approach and not to endanger the prospects of a settlement of the Algerian question. I think that at this stage it is useful to think back to the situation that prevailed only a few months ago, before General de Gaulle made his announcement. The situation has changed enormously. I doubt whether many of us thought, when we assembled in September of this year, that the practical prospects that are open before us at the moment would really be in existence in this month of December. It is a tremendous step forward. General de Gaulle has shown imagination and courage and generosity. It is up to us in this Assembly to match that imagination with imagination, and courage with courage, and generosity with generosity -- because this is a time, I think, when a certain amount of generosity is needed.
It is a big step that France has taken, and there are big steps that are still needed. We can make those steps easier -- or we can even make them impossible. That is the sort of practical environment in which we have to work at this particular moment.

We cannot match the approach that France has made by simply passing a resolution -- even if that resolution obtains a majority, even if it obtains a two-thirds majority. In fact, we might even ask ourselves whether a resolution is going to be helpful, whether a resolution should be passed, if it is unacceptable to one of the major interested parties in the question of Algeria -- specifically, France. It is France with which the Algerians are dealing, and our approach must be one which takes account of the feelings of France at this particular time. It seems to me that at this stage -- at this stage, with the hopes that are opening out -- we should be very chary of adopting a resolution if France cannot accept it. After all, a resolution at this stage is not going to solve the Algerian question. But a resolution could prevent the solution of the question, a resolution could stand in the way, a resolution could drive the interested parties apart instead of bringing them together. The fact is that now the scene is elsewhere: it is in North Africa, it is in Paris, it is among the various interested countries and groups, all the complicated and complex interests that are involved in the Algerian question and that are coming together. That is where we should look for a practical result at the moment. We in this Assembly, apart from hearing the various interests and issues outlined to us, apart from hearing questions set out to which answers are still needed -- questions which must be answered elsewhere and not here -- should try to preserve the atmosphere that is developing so well. We should give time, because time is necessary. You cannot force too rapid a solution. You have to give time for the interested parties to make up their minds, to persuade their own supporters, even to adapt their own ideas to what the new situation requires. We have to allow some time for that. We must do nothing to keep apart the people who should be brought together.
I have not gone much into the substance of the Algerian question. I have welcomed, as we all welcome, General de Gaulle's statement which recognized the right of self-determination for the people of Algeria and indicated that he was desirous of giving the Algerian people the opportunity to exercise that right. But neither the Australian delegation nor any other delegation in this Committee can speak for France or for anybody else in the dispute. We would not be helpful if we did go into the substance of the issues that will need settlement in the future. We do not want to express our views on, for example, the very important questions that the Foreign Minister of Egypt raised. This is not the time or the place for that. That place lies elsewhere. What we can do, as I have said, is to give time, to preserve the atmosphere, to wish well to the people who are going to be concerned in the next stages, to express the hope that developments will confront us very shortly with a lasting settlement of the Algerian question which will preserve the interests of all concerned and which will, as General de Gaulle has promised, recognize the right of self-determination of the Algerian people.
Mr. Lodge (United States of America): It is evident from what has been said in this Committee on the Algerian question that there exists a spirit of conciliation. Such a spirit is indispensable to any early solution of the problem, and the United States welcomes this spirit. We favour a just, peaceful and democratic solution. We are anxious to see an end to violence and bloodshed. We hope that effect will be given to the aspirations of the people of Algeria by peaceful means. We favour the use of every appropriate means by those principally concerned, and early steps by them to bring about a peaceful settlement. Clearly no solution is possible without good faith and restraint by all concerned.

A prospect for peace has been made evident, but to make that prospect into a reality is not easy. The bitterness of conflict, the shadow of fear and the gnawing worry of uncertainty all add to a problem which is inherently extremely complex.

On 16 September, the President of the French Republic, General Charles de Gaulle, made a far reaching and significant declaration concerning the problem of Algeria. To be sure, this statement must be read as a whole, but there are certain points which the United States believes deserves special emphasis and attention during our discussion here.

First, General de Gaulle made clear the intention of France to solve the problem of Algeria by permitting the Algerian people a free choice as to their future. The application to Algeria of the principle of self-determination was thus recognized specifically. The United States welcomed this declaration. In General de Gaulle's words, "We can now look forward to the day when the men and women of Algeria will be in a position to decide their own destiny, once and for all, freely and in the full knowledge of what is at stake."

President Eisenhower stated in his press conference on 17 September, "It is a far reaching declaration containing explicit promises of self-determination for the Algerian peoples and, as such, completely in accord with our hopes to see proclaimed a just and liberal programme for Algeria which we could support."

The United States was also encouraged by the responses which General de Gaulle's proposals evoked. They indicate awareness that a significant new commitment has been made, a commitment which furnishes a basis for concrete discussions."
It was in the light of General de Gaulle's historic declaration, furthermore, that Secretary of State Herter said on 22 September that the United States "naturally hopes that no action will be taken here which would prejudice the realization of a just and peaceful solution for Algeria, such as is promised by General de Gaulle's far reaching declaration with its provision for self-determination by the Algerian people".

To this end, the United States hopes that the members of this Committee will see the wisdom of avoiding a resolution which could prejudice a solution of the Algerian problem. The speeches made here in and of themselves will have an effect on those principally concerned. It must also be clear that recent statements by those principally concerned offer real hope that a just, peaceful and democratic solution can soon be found. And it must also be apparent that the sense of this debate is that those principally concerned should make early use of every appropriate means to achieve a solution.

We hope, therefore, that these considerations will be weighed carefully before proposals are introduced and pressed to a vote. Injudicious action here risks bringing in extraneous factors which might endanger the chances for direct negotiations. At such a moment as this, the utmost caution is not only warranted, it is essential. We can understand why some delegations seek to impart further momentum to what they already admit are favourable developments. But if such members looked at the present situation carefully, as they must, they would surely conclude that we are at the threshold of one of those historic occasions in which those principally concerned should be unhampered and allowed to seek direct solutions.

The United States continues to believe that in the interests of all concerned, moderation, restraint and patience should be the watchwords. It is in this spirit that the United States will conduct itself during the remainder of this debate.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.