Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

AGENDA ITEM 68


GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) agreed with the United Kingdom representative that the question of Cyprus was not simply a colonial problem, since the island was inhabited by two ethnically different communities which had different languages and religions and constituted two separate social groups. He was certain that the United Kingdom would grant independence to Cyprus, as it had done in many other cases, if it were possible to do so without violence. However, violence had already broken out between the island's two communities despite the presence of the British Army, and one might well ask what would happen if the United Kingdom troops were withdrawn. It was therefore understandable that the United Kingdom felt morally obligated to protect the peoples of the island.

2. It was undeniably true that in any community the will of the majority must prevail. However, the majority must also guarantee the rights of minorities, and, so long as the Turkish minority continued to be subjected to Greek Cypriot excesses, it found it difficult to believe that its rights would be guaranteed. The use of a United Nations police force to guarantee those rights would, of course, present difficult problems. The Greek Cypriots must therefore recognize that, so long as the situation on the island remained tense, it would not be possible for them to obtain independence. Independence could not be granted to them until the present strife had ended and the Cypriots had learned to regard themselves no longer as Greeks or Turks, but as Cypriots. Partition was surely no solution, since even if it should prove feasible—which was unlikely—open hostility between the two communities would result.

3. His delegation would be guided by the foregoing considerations when the various draft resolutions were put to the vote. While he would not hesitate to support any draft resolution calling for the self-determination and independence of a colonial people, he felt that, in the case of Cyprus, immediate self-determination might well add to the difficulties of the island's population. It was most gratifying that the Greek Government no longer insisted on immediate self-determination for the Cypriots and that, at the same time, the United Kingdom delegation did not rule out the possibility of granting it to them at a later date if they desired it.

4. Mr. DE LEQUERICA (Spain), after briefly reviewing the major events in the history of Cyprus, said that Turkey was taking an extreme position in arguing that the two Cypriot communities must play separate parts in determining the island's future. The Committee should give careful study to the thesis advanced by the United Kingdom, which had stated that it did not favour partition and deemed it more advisable to accustom the Cypriot people to a common existence by establishing temporary institutions which could be modified at any time.

5. He also found most interesting the statement by the United Kingdom representative that his country would not make the retention of its present sovereignty over Cyprus an obstacle to an eventual settlement (926th meeting). The efforts to find a solution to the problem were worth continuing. If the attempt was to succeed, however, confidence must be restored. In his delegation's opinion, the apprehensions expressed concerning enosis (Union with Greece) were exaggerated. On the other hand, if the Cypriot question was to be settled, it was essential to guarantee the rights of the Turkish minority—an objective which was furthered by the presence on the island of a third party. Moreover, Turkey's concern over the geographical proximity of Cyprus would become less acute once all parties concerned agreed to the maintenance of the United Kingdom military bases on the island for the common defence. At the same time, while it condemned the terrorism on Cyprus, his delegation felt that the suppression of terrorism should not be made a precondition for negotiation and agreement.

6. He thought that considerable progress had been made, if not towards a solution of the Cyprus question, then at least towards clarifying it. That was evident from the draft resolutions submitted by the three parties concerned (A/C.1/L.221-223), and particularly from the special importance which had been given, by comparison with the previous year, to the principle of self-determination. In that connexion, his delegation agreed with the view expressed by Mr. Drago, the Argentine representative at the twelfth session (921st meeting) regarding the interpretation of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations; none of the Charter provisions could be construed as inciting the non-self-governing peoples to rebellion. On the other hand, the first three draft resolutions, although they had some excellent passages, were incomplete and did not seem truly calculated to produce effective results. They served to divert the United Nations from the essence of the problem. The Colombian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.225) contained some very useful paragraphs, however, although his delegation was not very
favourably disposed to the idea of setting up a good offices committee. He had also been impressed by the proposal submitted at the previous meeting by the Iranian representative, which he had not yet had time to study, and hoped that the appropriate terms would be found to define the role which the United Nations should play in the matter under discussion.

7. The various proposals provided sufficient common ground for drafting a single resolution in more specific and precise terms, which would draw attention to the progress already achieved and would point out, in statesmanlike fashion, the objectives to be attained.

8. Mr. KURKA (Czechoslovakia) said that the United Nations responsibilities in the Cyprus question had increased as a result of the failure of all attempts to resolve the problem outside the United Nations.

9. Far from meeting the aspirations of the Cypriot people, the United Kingdom Government was trying to impose solutions on the Cypriots which completely disregarded their wishes; an example was the Macmillan plan, which could only lead to partition of the island and continued United Kingdom rule.

10. The strife between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots was a problem that had been artificially created in order to conceal the real cause of the tension, which was of a military and strategic character. Cyprus was the United Kingdom's principal Mediterranean base and was used to carry out a foreign policy which was governed primarily by the interests of the oil monopolies. In 1956 and 1958, it had served as a jumping-off point for aggression against the Arab peoples. It was useless for the United Kingdom representative to argue that his Government's partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Baghdad Pact had given their consent to the establishment of the Cyprus base, for the consent of its allies did not justify the United Kingdom's occupation of the island. The only consideration should be the wishes of the people, and the Cypriots had clearly shown that they were opposed to transforming their territory into a military base. The presence of the United Kingdom troops on Cyprus was a threat to international peace and security.

11. The attitude displayed by the United Kingdom authorities and the repressive measures to which they had resorted could only enlist the sympathy of all the world's peace-loving peoples for the Cypriot people. Repression could not solve the problem. The only possible solution was to give the Cypriots the opportunity to determine their own future. If all the parties concerned made an honest attempt to resolve the dispute, a peaceful solution would surely be found.

12. The General Assembly must draw the proper conclusions from the experience of past years and from the course of events since the twelfth session and must take a clear stand in favour of permitting the Cypriots to exercise its right to self-determination.

13. Mr. ORTIZ MARTIN (Costa Rica) recalled that, in addition to the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey, there was a fourth party involved in the Cyprus question: the Cypriot people. The solution of the problem should be a political and not a territorial one. There-


fore, the Colombian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.225) was the most appropriate one for the situation.

14. However, in operative paragraph 2 of the text, the word "Suggests" should be substituted for the word "Decides", as the United Kingdom exercised sovereignty over the island and it alone could authorize an observation group to go there.

15. Mr. MEZINCESCU (Romania) referred to the statement made by his Government on 11 October 1958, in which it had expressed its profound sympathy for the people of Cyprus, the last European people to be subjected to a colonial régime and to be denied the exercise of its legitimate right to live in accordance with its aspirations and interests.

16. The steps recently taken by the United Kingdom Government tended to postpone a solution of the problem and to create conditions which would make such a solution even more difficult in the future. Like all the other solutions proposed by the United Kingdom, they aimed at preventing the only just and equitable solution of the problem and the one that would be in accord with the fundamental principles of the United Nations: granting the people of Cyprus the freedom to determine its own destiny.

17. Like the other plans, the Macmillan plan had been rejected by the people of Cyprus, but the British Government had now decided to put it into effect. The United Kingdom representative had stated that the partition of the island would be a misfortune for Cyprus. However, such a misfortune would be the end-result of the plan, which also unilaterally violated the Treaty of Lausanne, and was based on the principle that the United Kingdom had the right to determine the fate of the Cypriot people, whose aspirations had never been taken into account when treaties or agreements concerning them had been signed.

18. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had stated in the House of Commons on 19 June 1958 that any solution of the Cyprus problem must safeguard the British bases and military installations on the island, which were necessary to enable the United Kingdom to carry out its international obligations. Cyprus was an important base for the policy of colonialist aggression in the Middle East and for the aggressive policy of NATO against the peoples of Eastern Europe.

19. Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, former Governor of Cyprus, in stressing the role to be played by air forces in helping the allies, had stated that modern aircraft operating from bases in Cyprus could strike deep into the heart of the Soviet Union. They could even more easily strike at Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade, Cairo, Baghdad or Amman.

20. The people of Cyprus would obviously never be free in their own country as long as the island remained a foreign military base. It was because they were aware of the inability to maintain their base in the midst of a population which they had oppressed for many years that the British authorities had done everything possible to create disension on the island, hoping thereby to continue their colonial domination in one form or another. According to Archbishop Makarios, the United Kingdom had formerly asserted

that it needed Cyprus to keep Suez; at the present
time, it claimed that it needed Cyprus because it had
lost Suez.

21. Some delegations did not wish the United Nations
to take steps to solve the problem. As a matter of
fact there was no justification for postponing a solution,
which lay in granting the people of Cyprus the neces-
sary attributes of sovereignty. The General Assembly
should adopt a resolution along those lines.

22. His delegation would be able to support the draft
resolution submitted by Greece (A/C.1/L.222) or any
other draft resolution acceptable to the Cypriot people,
who had gone as far as possible in making concessions.

23. Mr. SCHURMANN (Netherlands) stated that his
delegation was reluctant to vote in favour of any one
of the three draft resolutions submitted by the parties
for two reasons. First, extraneous support for any one
of the positions would do more harm than good. There
was too often a tendency in the United Nations to take
a stand on a priori grounds without paying sufficient
attention to the possibilities of implementing the
proposals under discussion. Secondly, the United Nations
was not always the best place to settle a dispute.

eight methods of settlement that did not involve the
United Nations. Until all those methods had been tried
out, the United Nations should not intervene unless
all the parties concerned requested it to do so. In the
circumstances, the United Nations should refrain from
expressing its preference for one kind of solution or
another, in order not to lessen the chances for
understanding which might still exist. Progress had
already been made and negotiations were still the
best way of settling the dispute.

25. The United Nations should appeal to the inhabitants
of Cyprus to refrain from acts of violence and bear
in mind the necessity for an atmosphere of peace if a
solution acceptable to all was to be found.

26. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) be-
lieved that, if the question of Cyprus was to be solved
without the development of new difficulties between the
countries concerned, the internal jurisdictional aspects,
over which the United Kingdom exercised sovereignty,
should be reconciled with the various international
factors in that complex problem.

27. The task was a difficult one because of the geo-
ographical situation of the island, because of the politi-
cal considerations affecting interests and passions
and because the principle of self-determination was
involved. That principle, which was dear to the
Dominican Republic and to all Latin-American
countries, should be put into effect progressively, in
accordance with the United Nations Charter. The appeal
made by the United States delegation at the 1000th
meeting seemed therefore very pertinent.

28. In his delegation's opinion, the views of the
parties concerned were not irreconcilable. The Com-
mittee should therefore try to work out recommenda-
tions which would be acceptable to the parties primarily
concerned and conducive to a final and just settlement
of the question. He was sure that both communities
in Cyprus would be able to live together and, in the
words of the Peruvian representative (1002nd meeting),
share a "unity of destiny".

29. Mr. BRATUS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Repub-
lic) said that the Cyprus problem was a result of the
colonial policy of the United Kingdom, which refused
to accept the fact that the colonial era had ended. In
order to justify themselves before public opinion and
to divert the attention of the Cypriots from their
struggle for self-determination, certain Governments
had created artificial problems, like that of the
disputes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

30. The accusations of gangsterism levelled at the
patriots of Cyprus by the United Kingdom represent-
ative (996th meeting) were unfounded. Neither in their
goals nor in their methods could those patriots be
compared with bandits.

31. In response to the wholly justified appeals of the
Cypriots that they be allowed to exercise their right
to self-determination, the United Kingdom had resorted
to various stratagems intended to reinforce its colonial
domination. Thus, it had adopted the widely publicized
Macmillan plan.

32. All the negotiations between the three parties
principally concerned had come to nothing because the
United Kingdom was unwilling to solve the problem
and wished to by-pass it by taking temporary measures. Everything—the island and its population—must be subordinated to the British Government's military interests. The strategic importance of the island and the part it had played during the aggression by the United Kingdom, France and Israel against Egypt in 1956 were well known. Thus the Cyprus problem was closely linked with that of international security in the Near East. There was no doubt that the aggressive designs of the two military blocs, NATO and the Baghdad Pact, constituted one of the main reasons for the denial to the Cypriots of their legitimate desire to exercise their right to self-determination.

35. Since the British Government had decided to implement its plan of 19 June 1958 for the settlement of the problem, an unprecedented wave of repression had swept over the island. Tension had reached a hitherto unknown pitch. In the light of those circumstances, the United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C. 1/L.221) was surprising, to say the least: it congratulated the United Kingdom on its policy and invited it to continue in the same direction. Such a text could not contribute to the solution of the problem.

36. His delegation considered that there was only one just solution to the problem: to put an end to the colonial régime and allow the people of Cyprus to exercise their right to self-determination.

37. Mr. THORS (Iceland) noted that the efforts made by the United Nations since 1954 to settle the Cyprus question had been in vain. What was even more serious, all attempts at negotiation between the parties concerned had failed.

38. Cyprus was today a British Crown Colony and Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations recognized the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories were paramount. In conformity with Article 1 of the Charter, his delegation had always supported the right of the people of Cyprus to decide their own fate, for it was firmly convinced that the people themselves must decide what economic and cultural ties they wished to maintain and should be free to establish whatever form of government they desired.

39. His delegation regretted that the dispute between Greece and Turkey, two allied countries with which Iceland maintained friendly relations, had become so intense. Because of the tension prevailing on the island, a final solution hardly seemed possible or even advisable at present. It must be hoped that in time the two communities would come to realize that it was in their own interest to live in harmony on the island, which belonged to them alone.

40. It was wrong to say, as some representatives had, that the Committee was acting as a real-estate agent and evaluating a piece of land in order to sell it or allocate it to one country or another. Nor was the Committee a group of military strategists discussing the usefulness of the bases established on the island or their importance to one or another alliance. Those considerations were entirely extraneous to the question, which was that of the right of peoples to self-determination. It was the application of that principle which had enabled the Federation of Malaya to obtain its independence through the union of the three races which made up its population. The people of Cyprus might take guidance from that example.

41. His delegation would support any draft resolution that could promote continued negotiations between the parties concerned and lead to self-determination, so that the people of Cyprus could attain self-government in the near future and, eventually, independence.

42. Mr. PAZHWA (Afghanistan) said that his country maintained friendly relations with Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, and that over the centuries close cultural and historic relations had united it with the Greeks and Turks everywhere in the world. Afghanistan's interest in a peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem stemmed from its deep concern over the present regrettable situation of the population of Cyprus and the bloodshed which was disturbing the peace of the island and constituted a threat to peace in that important part of the world. The interest of Greece and Turkey in the Cyprus problem was easy to understand: no nation could remain indifferent to a situation in which the fate and the future of its kinsmen were at stake.

43. However, the problem of Cyprus was basically that of the inhabitants of a Non-Self-Governing Territory, and a peaceful solution to it should be found by the United Nations. Such a solution should be based on the consent of the inhabitants of Cyprus, whether Greek or Turkish in origin, whose political aspirations should be fulfilled in accordance with the United Nations Charter and respect for fundamental human rights.

44. A constructive solution would hardly be possible if extreme positions were maintained. It was essential to achieve a reconciliation of the views of the three countries concerned, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, with the consent of the people of Cyprus.

45. His delegation therefore hoped that a joint proposal by Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, or a proposal acceptable to those three countries and the people of Cyprus, would be submitted to the Committee. In that hope, it would refrain from discussing the draft resolutions so far submitted.

46. However, if it proved impossible to reach an agreement, his delegation would be guided by the principles it had just stated, for its earnest desire was to ensure the happiness of the inhabitants of Cyprus and the creation of peaceful conditions and good-neighbourly relations in that part of the world.

47. Mr. GARIN (Portugal) felt that repeated examination of the question of Cyprus might make it more difficult to find a solution, since friendly negotiations between the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey could alone be successful. Violence of deeds could never be cured by asperity of words.

48. Unfortunately, a few delegations, far from encouraging the parties to find agreement, had seized the opportunity to inject their propaganda into the discussion. They might do well to ponder the fact that those three countries, which were members of the same defence organization, felt sufficiently free to disagree with one another on the question in point.

49. His delegation doubted the propriety of a debate on the question of Cyprus. Its doubts were confirmed by the fact that the debate was not providing any constructive solution to the problem, and the only
conclusion which could be drawn from it was that the United Kingdom had the necessary moral authority to be trusted in the role it was playing.

50. That role was extremely difficult because of certain factors of major importance, such as the need to safeguard peace and security, the conflicting interests of the two Cypriot communities, the divergent viewpoints of the other two Governments concerned, and the absence of Cypriot nationalism. If a settlement was to come about, the three Governments must be left to continue their negotiations with the certainty that their common ideals and the interests uniting them were stronger than their differences on the question of Cyprus. There had been some improvement since the previous year and it could be hoped that the situation would return to normal provided that nothing was done to widen the disagreements.

51. Mr. Sosa Rodriguez (Venezuela) said that the question of Cyprus had first been brought before the General Assembly five years ago and that each year thereafter the situation had become more tragic and more difficult to solve. The basic reason for that was the failure to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of a people struggling for recognition of its right freely to decide its future in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Regrettably, events had undoubtedly occurred on Cyprus, but it could not be denied that the Cypriots had resorted to guerrilla warfare because they had become exasperated by the slow course of the negotiations and the confusion of proposals and counter-proposals which did not fulfill their aspirations.

52. His country was not directly concerned with the question, but his people, for whom the principle of self-determination was sacred, could not remain indifferent to the fate of the people of Cyprus.

53. When the time came to vote on the various draft resolutions before the Committee, his delegation would be guided by the following general considerations: first, the legitimacy of the Cypriot people’s aspirations to self-determination and self-government; secondly, the need to guarantee that the legitimate rights of the Turkish minority on the island would not be infringed and that that minority would be able gradually to integrate itself with the remainder of the Cypriots without discrimination between Greeks and Turks (in other words, a situation would gradually emerge similar to that existing, for example, in Canada, where there were no longer either British or French, but only Canadians); thirdly, the need to guarantee peace in that region in the interests of the Cypriots themselves. Those requirements could only be met by means of negotiations between the parties concerned, and the Cypriot people must be convinced that the recommended negotiations were not a political expedient aimed at preserving the status quo.

54. While giving the people of Cyprus the assurances to which they were entitled, the General Assembly should recommend the resumption of negotiations, urge that acts of violence should cease forthwith, and recognize the need for a transitional period during which the United Kingdom could gradually transfer its responsibilities on Cyprus to local authorities without disturbing the peace of the island.

55. The CHAIRMAN announced that a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.228) had just been submitted by the delegations of Ceylon, Haiti, Iceland, India, Ireland, Nepal, Panama, Sudan and the United Arab Republic (A/C.1/L.228).

56. Mr. Noble (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had one major obstacle to make with regard to the nine-POWER draft resolution (A/C.1/L.228) which had just been circulated.

57. During his opening speech (906th meeting), he had explained that his Government was not in favour of partition and that it had been at pains to provide in its partnership plan for institutions which would help to preserve the island’s integrity. But he had also emphasized that it was important that the General Assembly should do nothing at the present time to point the way to any final settlement. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece had himself said at the 1001st meeting, it was essential not to prejudice the future. Whatever the individual views of the members of the Committee on the future integrity of the island, reference could not be made to that integrity in a resolution without prejudicing the future to some extent.

58. It was the essence of the interim arrangements proposed by the United Kingdom that none of the parties should at present be required to abandon their long-term aspirations in the delicate state of inter-communal feeling in Cyprus today. It would be as dangerous to require the Turkish community to abandon their hopes of partition as it would be to require the Greek Cypriots to abandon their hopes of preserving the island’s integrity.

59. It was vital that for the time being all final solutions of the Cyprus problem should remain, at least theoretically, possible. The wording of the nine-POWER draft resolution did not permit that because of its insistence on preserving the island’s integrity at all costs. He asked those who agreed with his delegation that that integrity was desirable to weigh the danger that insistence on it now might provoke its opponents into civil war or an even wider conflict.

60. Contrary to what was stated in the seventh paragraph of the preamble of the draft resolution, he had not said that his Government did not consider partition to be a possible solution. He had only said that his Government did not favour it. Partition was a solution at present desired by one of the Governments and one of the communities concerned. Their desire was the result of the fear and the lack of confidence which the terrorist tactics of EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) had evoked, and, as he had already said at the 906th meeting, the present aim must be to remove that fear. In the interval as it was, that fear would only grow sharper if the General Assembly adopted the nine-POWER draft resolution.

61. His delegation did not consider, however, that the present debate was very far from a satisfactory outcome. The course of the debate so far had indicated general agreement on the need for an interim settlement and on the desirability of negotiations between the parties concerned. His Government remained willing to resume negotiations and to do everything possible to ensure their real success.

62. Mr. Thors (Iceland) pointed out, as a sponsor of the draft resolution which had just been submitted, that it was unusual for a draft resolution to be discussed and so vehemently opposed before the sponsors had had
a chance to submit it formally. The draft resolution in question would be introduced at the following meeting.

63. Mr. ZORLU (Turkey) noted that the United Kingdom representative had drawn the Committee's attention to certain errors in the text of the draft resolution with regard to the statement made by the United Kingdom delegation at the commencement of the debate (996th meeting). Those errors should be corrected so that the draft resolution might be submitted in good and due form.

64. The CHAIRMAN said that it was in fact usual for the sponsors of a draft resolution, or some of them, to submit their draft formally to the Committee, but that did not mean that a delegation which observed an error in the wording of the document concerning one of its previous statements could not point out that error. The draft resolution would naturally be examined in detail in due course.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.