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Chairman: Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon).

AGENDA ITEM 71

Question of Algeria (A/4418 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.265 and
Add.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. RIFAI'U (Jordan) recalled that at the fourteenth
session of the General Assembly a number of delega-
tions had opposed the adoption of a resolution, feeling
that in so doing they would facilitate the implementa-
tion of the policy of self-determination. It was to be
hoped that such mistakes would not be repeated and
that the Assembly would take a decision which would
help put an end to the bloodshed in Algeria.

2. The apprehensions aroused by the declaration
made by the President of the French Republic, General
de Gaulle, on 16 September 1959, had been justified.
The rebellion of some French factions in Algeria, the
opposition of some of General de Gaulle's supporters,
the subsequent declarations and speeches of some
responsible French officials, the attitude of the French
representatives at Melun, the address of President
de Gaulle on 4 November 1959, the plan of 16 Novem-
ber and the present move of the French settlers
against the Moslem population were all valid reasons
for demanding absolute guarantees for the conduct of
impartial and genuinely free elections in Algeria.
A national liberation movement of such magnitude
could not be expected to lay down arms at the whim
of one leader, however honourable he might be. At the
present stage, when the war in Algeria had reached
a more dangerous point than ever before, it would be
wrong to look backward and to regret the record of
inaction and delay which did so little credit to the
United Nations; it was necessary to look forward and
take heed of the great responsibility which must be
borne before mankind and before God.

3. The situation in Algeria had deteriorated since the
previous session. The international dimensions of the
problem had continued to widen. France had betrayed
the sacred principle of self-determination by the
official statements which had followed the proclama-
tion of 16 September 1959, by the administrative
plans it had drawn up for Algeria and by the more
and more numerous acts of hostility it was committing
against the Algerians.

4. In his declaration of 4 March 1960, General de
Gaulle had said that the condition for the settlement
of the Algerian problem was the definitive victory of
the French army and that, although the Algerians
might freely decide their fate, France must remain
in Algeria. The communiqué issued by the French
Ministry of Information on 7 March 1960 had stated
that in the event of secession it would be necessary
to undertake a vast regrouping of the population. On
4 November 1960 President de Gaulle had observed
that, in the event of a break with France, the latter
would take the necessary steps to safeguard those
of the Algerians who would like to remain French, as
also French interests. Moreover, he had not con-
cealed his preference for an Algeria which would
choose to be united with France in economic, technical,
educational and defence matters. It was surely not
possible, in such circumstances, to speak of self-
determination. What was General de Gaulle doing to
meet the aspirations of the Algerian people, who were
endeavouring to become an independent, united,
sovereign State? His conceptions ran counter to the
national interests of the Algeria of tomorrow, for if
the Europeans of Algeria were Algerians—and they
were—they should share the fate of the other in-
habitants of their country, and if they were not to
be considered Europeans no rule of equity and justice
could permit the partition of the country for the sake
of a foreign minority. Otherwise, the world would
witness a new Palestine in North Africa.

5. It would be wise to start from the assumption that
the Algerians were determined to be free and inde-
pendent. The New York Times had stated, on 10 De-
cember 1960, that according to the assistant Mayor
of Ain-Temouchent the "ultras" had paid some
Moslems to shout "Algérie française"*, but that all the
Moslems were in fact for independence. The article
had gone on to say that one of the Moslem depart-
mental councillors had stated that he was for General
de Gaulle but that in his opinion the General must
negotiate with the National Liberation Front (FLN).
The loyalty of the Algerian people to the FLN had
been expressed when, according to The New York
Times of 12 December, some demonstrators in Algiers
had shouted "Ferhat Abbas to power*" and had waved
the forbidden flag of the Algerian nationalists.

6. On 16 November 1960 France had decided to take
certain administrative measures in Algeria. The new
public powers which General de Gaulle had decided
to organize were, however, intended to break up the
national unity of the Algerians and the country's
territorial integrity. Those plans were to be sub-
mitted to a referendum on 8 January 1961. Everyone
knew what value to attach to a consultation of that
kind, particularly since the referendum of 1958. On
2 October 1958, The Christian Science Monitor had
said that the outcome of the referendum had been
known in advance and that no one had doubted that
Algeria could vote anything but "yes".
7. In its atrocious and increasingly bitter fight against the Algerian nationalists the French Army had violated every rule of war and every standard of civilization. Eleven Algerians had been executed in the month of July 1960 alone—the month of the Melun talks—and four on 1 August. Since 1956, more than 300 Algerian combatants had been condemned by French tribunals and executed. In a statement made on 31 July 1960 the Provisional Government of Algeria had declared that the situation created by the French Government would prevent the humanization of the conflict. The acts committed by the French against the indigenous inhabitants of Algeria hardly indicated any willingness on the part of France to seek a peaceful solution to the Algerian problem.

8. In his statement on 4 November 1960, President de Gaulle had asked whether in the end the blood which had been shed in Algeria might not have advanced the cause of reason and justice in the hearts and minds of men. It might well be asked whether it had advanced the cause of justice in the hearts and minds of the leaders and people of France. The blood spilled in Algeria had in any event advanced the spirit of rebellion over a vast part of Africa and the Middle East. The recruitment of volunteers had been organized in many capitals in that region and elsewhere to enable all men of honour to go to Algeria and fight side by side with their brothers there. All free peoples felt called upon to give help to the Algerian victims of cruelty and oppression and the hearts of men were filled with hatred for the deeds of the colonialists. If blood continued to flow in Algeria it would undoubtedly cause a radical change in the political attitude of those who had thought, for a time, that Western democracies could not tolerate such grave injustices and violations of the legitimate rights of peoples.

9. Of course, France was not alone responsible for the continuation of the war in Algeria. Those who assisted France, by their actions or their inaction, militarily, financially, politically or internationally, must bear their share of responsibility.

10. The Algerian problem had become so grave that the brother peoples of the Algerians could not remain indifferent. Thus the Conference of Independent African States, meeting at Addis Ababa on 14 June 1960, had adopted a resolution recommending that the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should urge France to stop using in Algeria arms supplied by that organization for defensive purposes and that France should withdraw all the African troops it was using in Algeria. The Council of the League of Arab States, had adopted a resolution on 24 August 1960 providing for the enlistment in the Algerian National Liberation Army of citizens from all countries, Arab and non-Arab, and the establishment of a decisive plan which would be given special study by the Arab Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

11. The NATO Powers considered that Algeria formed part of the zone covered by that Treaty. The result was that Algeria had become a field of intense military operations. If that situation continued it would assuredly induce an equal reaction from all the countries in the region to which Algeria really belonged.

Mr. Kurka (Czechoslovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

12. Mr. Rifa'i said that in the six years during which the General Assembly had been discussing it the Algerian problem had become a truly international concern which was undoubtedly the responsibility of the United Nations. President de Gaulle had, moreover, admitted, in the statement he had made in Algeria on 10 December 1960, that it was idle to pretend that Algeria constituted a French province; Algeria was Algerian and would by force of circumstances become more so day by day. How, then, could France continue to claim responsibility for shaping the future of Algeria? In fact, under existing conditions France could not apply the principle of self-determination. The mistrust between Algerians and French, the basic difference between the two parties in their interpretation of the right of peoples to self-determination, the clear intention of France to partition Algeria and to guarantee French interests there, the determination of France to crush the national liberation revolution by force before fulfilling its promise of self-determination, the destruction of all democratic institutions by French colonialism in six years of war and the fact that nearly a quarter of a million Algerian refugees were dispersed and more than one-fifth of the Algerian people were in prison or in internment, placement, regroupment, transient or concentration camps—all that demanded the immediate and effective intervention of the United Nations. It was essential that the United Nations should organize and supervise the Algerian referendum. No one could contest that role of the United Nations nor could anyone claim that United Nations intervention might prejudice the outcome of the referendum.

13. The Jordanian delegation had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.265 and Add.1), which embodied practical steps for the peaceful settlement of that serious international problem. The draft resolution met the realities of the situation and reflected the collective responsibility of the United Nations towards the problem.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.