Complaint by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba regarding the various plans of aggression and acts of intervention being executed by the Government of the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba, constituting a manifest violation of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and a clear threat to international peace and security (continued) 69

Chairman: Mr. Karel Kurka (Czechoslovakia).

AGENDA ITEM 90

Complaint by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba regarding the various plans of aggression and acts of intervention being executed by the Government of the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba, constituting a manifest violation of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and a clear threat to international peace and security (A/4537, A/4543, A/4581, A/4631, A/4701, A/4708, A/4710, A/4716, A/4725, A/C.1/L.274)

1. Mr. Zorin (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) read out to the Committee the message dated 18 April 1961 from Mr. N. S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to Mr. J. F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, and the statement by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning the armed invasion of Cuba (A/C.1/839).

2. Mr. Stevenson (United States of America) referring to the documents just read out by the Soviet representative, said that while it was true that the United States was not endangered by Cuba, many Cubans considered themselves endangered by the Castro regime. He was glad to hear that the Soviet Government believed that no people had the right to impose its way of life on another; the United States Government fully supported that principle.

3. Mr. Pavicevic (Yugoslavia) said that the invasion of Cuba was a flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter, particularly the provisions of Chapter VII relating to threats to the peace and breaches of the peace. He called attention to the statement made that very day at Alexandria by Mr. Josip Broz Tito, president of Yugoslavia, that the attack on Cuba constituted a threat to peace which must be severely condemned and that the United Nations would forfeit its remaining prestige unless it took effective action to halt the aggression.

4. His Government had always supported the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and of peaceful coexistence between States regardless of differences in their social and economic systems. That policy was in conformity with the provisions of the Charter, which referred in its Preamble to the need for peoples to "live together in peace with one another as good neighbours" and which stated in Article 1, paragraph 2, that one of the purposes of the United Nations was "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". The causes of the present difficulties with regard to Cuba lay not in any threat posed by Cuba to the United States and the Western hemisphere, but in the refusal of the United States to accept the changes which had taken place in Cuba. The Cuban problem must be approached on the basis of respect for national sovereignty and should be settled by means of negotiation rather than by methods which threatened the peace and conflicted with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations Charter. He had therefore been gratified to hear the Cuban representative's statement that Cuba was prepared at all times to resolve problems by means of negotiations based on the principles of the equality of rights of States.

5. Article 15 of the charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) forbade any State or group of States to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. Cuba was an independent, sovereign State recognized by the international community, and the legitimacy of its revolutionary Government had been challenged by no one. The Cuban people clearly supported the present Government; the revolutionary changes carried out in Cuba were the concern of the Cuban people alone and, in his delegation's view, were an expression of the objective historical trends of our times. Any outside attempt to prevent the Cuban people from determining their own course of development must inevitably have the gravest consequences for the entire world.

6. A solution of the present dispute must be sought through direct negotiation between the parties concerned, with the participation and assistance, if necessary, of the United Nations. The General Assembly must demand the immediate cessation of the armed intervention in Cuba and call upon all the countries concerned to refrain from assisting in any manner, direct or indirect, the aggression now under way. Governments which had permitted their territory to be used for the invasion of Cuba would bear full responsibility before the world for the consequences.

7. Mr. Benites Vinueza (Ecuador) expressed his country's profound sympathy with the Cuban people, and deplored the bloodshed resulting from the civil war now being fought in Cuba. He appealed to the members of the Committee to deal with the problem objectively and not to allow it to become the pretext for propaganda exchanges.

8. The Government of Ecuador reaffirmed its adherence to the principle of the self-determination of peoples. That was a principle proclaimed both in the charter of the Organization of American States and in the United Nations Charter, and its logical corollaries were non-intervention in the internal affairs of nations and respect for their political independence. No State had the right to set itself up as judge of the political conduct of another State.

9. Civil wars, by their very nature, were internal affairs of States. However, the war in Cuba had been transported to that country by air and sea from outside, and that fact gave the so-called Cuban counter-revolution an international character and brought it within the scope of the United Nations Charter. Nevertheless, it was premature to assess responsibility for the situation; the information available was insufficient; and final judgment would have to await the assembly of all the facts by means of an impartial investigation or some similar procedure. He called upon the leaders of the Western hemisphere to refrain from any course which might increase tension or cause further bloodshed.

10. Ecuador had been greatly encouraged by the categorical statement of the President of the United States that he would not permit United States military intervention in Cuba and would do everything in his power to prevent the use of United States territory for purposes of invasion. The statement of the Head of State of a great country carried a moral weight which gave it the force of a national pledge; and President Kennedy's words should help to dispel the fears aroused in many Latin American countries by recent United States press reports.

11. Ecuador also attached great importance to President Kennedy's statement that the issue was not one between the United States and Cuba, but between the Cubans themselves. Clearly, the question of the political, economic and social structure of Cuba was one for Cubans themselves to decide, by whatever means they chose, even including armed insurrection. It was to be hoped that wherever its sympathies might lie, the United States would give effect to its President's statement by pursuing a policy of strict neutrality. Outside assistance to any faction of Cubans must immediately make the problem a matter of international jurisdiction.

12. It would be unrealistic to think that all that was involved was an armed struggle among Cubans for the purpose of establishing a particular political system. Unfortunately, the problem was a wider one; it was another reflection of the prevailing international tension, and it was from that angle that the matter had been drawn to the attention of the Security Council and of the OAS. In the view of the Ecuadorian delegation, the international dispute revolving around Cuba should be resolved within the framework of the United Nations in accordance with the various means of pacific settlement set forth in the Charter. It was regrettable that the draft resolution to that effect submitted in the Security Council on 4 January 1961 by Chile and Ecuador had failed to obtain the required majority and had had to be withdrawn at the very moment when the United States had broken off diplomatic relations with Cuba.

13. Ecuador deplored the war of words which had characterized the debate on the Cuban complaint; it could only aggravate tensions and exacerbate fear and distrust. Perhaps one of the most important causes of the present situation had been the fear that the recent developments in Cuba might have repercussions in the continent of Latin America which could be exploited by totalitarian ideologies. For its part, the Government of Ecuador — like all the genuinely democratic Governments of Latin America — was not interested in importing revolutions from any part of the world; it had to do so would be to deny the capacity of its own people to solve their own problems. And to attempt to export revolution, as history had shown, was a megalomaniac dream which could only end in disaster for those who entertained it. Revolutions came about and grew only when there existed the sociological conditions which made them possible.

14. In an increasingly interdependent world, it was impossible to erect barriers against ideas, and the aspirations of peoples for justice would be satisfied only by justice, and not by threats. Political democracy could not survive unless it was founded on social and economic democracy. Unless the gramophone of feudalism still to be found in the social and economic structures of many countries were rooted out, with the poverty they brought in their train, revolutions would be inevitable; they would not need to be imported. Ecuador, however, preferred the peaceful process of evolution and the system of representative democracy which was the basis of Western political thought.

15. The Government of Ecuador considered that the Cuban problem did not, for the time being, constitute a multilateral problem of the Western hemisphere. That did not mean that it could not be settled by the procedures laid down in the charter of the Organization of American States, to which Ecuador wished to reaffirm its adherence. However, the jurisdiction of the OAS was not exclusive; nor did it rule out that of the United Nations.

16. Although he had no concrete proposals to make, it might be that the first necessary step was to find a method acceptable to the parties for investigating the origin of the present situation, and, in particular, for determining by some impartial means that the invasion forces had not come from United States territory. That was no mere suggestion; but humanity dictated that ways should be found to stop the Cuban conflict or, at least, to prevent it from spreading.

17. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) said that the act of aggression committed against Cuba had created a serious threat to international peace and security; and the United Nations must take immediate measures to stop it. Everyone knew that it had been organized by the United States, which would not reconcile itself to the fact that the Cuban people wanted their country to be independent and free from the domination of United States monopolies. The attack had been in preparation for a long time. In its efforts to overthrow the Cuban Government, the United States had first tried to drive Cuba into political and diplomatic isolation by arbitrarily breaking off diplomatic relations and trying to persuade other Latin American countries to do the same. That showed that the United States did not want to settle its dispute with Cuba by peaceful means. An important part had been played in the preparations for the attack by economic aggression. The United States had broken a whole series of contractual obligations and had imposed an almost complete embargo on exports and imports to and from Cuba. Those measures, which had been intended to bring Cuba back...
under the control of the United States monopolies, had been defeated by the determination of the Cuban people, just as the attempts at diplomatic isolation had collapsed in the face of Latin American solidarity. Czechoslovakia was proud of the support, including economic assistance, which it had given to Cuba in its hour of need. The United States, on the other hand, had shown that its promises of aid to the under-developed countries were contingent on their acceptance of political and economic subordination.

18. When its efforts in the diplomatic and economic fields had proved unsuccessful, the United States had begun to prepare for overt armed intervention. It had organized, equipped, trained and financed groups of counter-revolutionaries, both in its own territory and in certain Central American countries, particularly Guatemala. It had provided them with modern weapons, aircraft and ships. Those facts were openly recognized by the United States Press—for example, in an article in The New York Times of 7 April 1961.

19. The United States Secretary of State had said on 17 April that his country had not intervened in Cuba and did not intend to do so in the future. That statement had been nothing more than a futile attempt to deceive public opinion. The United States representative had, by his failure to answer the charges made by the Cuban representative, in effect confirmed that the United States was responsible for the act of aggression committed against Cuba. He had asserted that the reports in United States journals on the preparations being made for aggression merely showed that there was freedom of the Press in the United States. But in fact those reports had been part of a deliberate campaign to prepare public opinion in the United States and the rest of the world for aggression against Cuba. There had been a series of slanderous and distorted statements by United States officials intended to stir up hatred for Cuba throughout the American continent. The State Department document circulated on 6 April 1961 (A/4725) had been a direct appeal for the overthrow of the legal Government of Cuba, and had thus violated the principle of international law which forbade interference in the domestic affairs of other States.

20. It was the duty of the United States to refrain from such interference and to stop supporting subversive activity directed against the Cuban Government. All peace-loving nations must combine to denounce its imperialist policies, for the present crisis did not only affect Cuba. The fate of all nations which wished to remain free from colonial or semi-colonial dependence was in the balance. The United Nations could not remain passive in the face of United States attempts to dominate the weaker countries, but must take immediate steps to prevent aggression. For those reasons, his delegation would support the Romanian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.274). Czechoslovakia would continue to give all possible assistance to the Cuban people in their struggle and was convinced that since they had the support of all peace-loving nations, their cause would triumph.

21. Mr. LOUTFI (United Arab Republic) said it was regrettable that since the United States had broken off diplomatic relations with Cuba, relations between the two countries had become increasingly strained. It was in the interest of the Western hemisphere and of the world that they should be restored to normal.

22. His Government strongly supported the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the right of peoples to adopt whatever political systems they considered suitable to their needs. It had from the beginning followed the progress of the Cuban revolution with sympathy. Any economic or social reforms which the Cuban people wished to institute must be a matter for their decision alone.

23. He would have preferred not to have been compelled to deal on their merits with the charges exchanged between the two parties, for in his view the problem could be settled only in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. However, the fact was that despite the United States representative's denial that the counter-revolutionaries had embarked for Cuba from points in his country and the Guatemalan representative's denial that any attack had been launched from Guatemalan territory, it was known that air attacks had been made on Cuba and that an armed invasion force coming from some neighbouring territory had effected landings. Indeed, the whole undertaking had been announced in advance by the United States Press. Moreover, the fact that the counter-revolutionaries had been able in a short space of time to secure arms and transport which must have required considerable funds clearly indicated that assistance had been given to the enemies of the Cuban revolution.

24. His Government considered that all outside intervention in Cuba should be stopped and that a constructive solution should be sought in conformity with the Charter. The United Nations bore a serious responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and could not, without jeopardizing its existence, remain indifferent when a Member State became the object of an armed attack from a neighbouring territory. Once all military operations had been halted, the Governments of Cuba and the United States should work out a formula for settling their differences by peaceful means.

25. In conclusion, he read out a statement made by Mr. Abdul Kader Haten, Minister of State of the United Arab Republic, explaining his Government's condemnation of the aggression being prepared against the Cuban people and its support for the Cuban nation's struggle for the preservation of independence and dignity.

26. Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Poland) said that the Government and people of Poland strongly condemned the act of armed aggression committed against Cuba, which constituted a threat to international peace and security. Its purpose was to overthrow the Cuban Government by force and to destroy the achievements of the Cuban revolution. The counter-revolutionary forces had been trained and supplied with modern equipment and transport by the United States, at bases in Florida, Louisiana and Guatemala. That was clear from the reports published in the United States Press, which had not been refuted by the United States representative. The United States was allowing its territory to be used as a base for an attack against another State, thus violating a recognized principle of international law proclaimed in article 4 of the draft Declaration on Rights and Duties of States (General Assembly) resolution 375 (IV), annex, prepared by the International Law Commission, and in article 1 of the Convention concerning the Duties and Rights of States in the Event of Civil Strife, signed at Havana in 1928. It was doing so in
support of counter-revolutionaries pledged to return expropriated lands and businesses to their former United States and Cuban owners, who for many years had extracted huge profits from the labour of the Cuban people. That was the real reason for the attack, not the alleged spread of communism or the threat which Cuba, a small island, was supposed to represent for the whole Western hemisphere.

27. The Cuban revolution had not been directed against the United States. Its only goal had been to give the people the benefits of political, social and economic progress and to make up for the backward policies of former reactionary régimes. The United States Government might not like the changes in Cuba, but it was bound by the Charter of the United Nations, by numerous international agreements and by United Nations decisions such as General Assembly resolution 626 (VII) not to interfere with social and economic processes in other countries. No State could decide what was best for other States. The fact that there might be opposition within a particular country to the Government's policy did not entitle other countries to support rebellious groups, especially since to do so could well lead to open military conflict. The United Nations must do everything in its power to stop the military aggression against Cuba. All assistance to the aggressors must cease. Whatever disputes there were between the United States and Cuba must be settled by peaceful negotiation, not by force of arms. He therefore urged the Committee to adopt the Romanian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.274).

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.