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Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

AGENDA ITEM 80

Question of Algeria (A/4842 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.308 and
Add.1-2) (*continued*)

1. Mr. ADEEL (Sudan) recalled the terms of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which declared that all repressive measures directed against dependent peoples should cease. France had not opposed the adoption of that resolution; it was therefore with deep regret that the Sudanese delegation noted the continuance of the bitter war in Algeria. In another resolution adopted at its fifteenth session (resolution 1573 (XV)), the General Assembly had recognized that the United Nations had a specific responsibility to contribute to the achievement of a peaceful solution in Algeria. Both parties having recognized the principle of self-determination as the basis for a solution, all that remained was to settle by negotiation the ways and means of applying that principle. When the two parties had met at Evian, therefore, great expectations had been raised, and the suspension of their talks, and, subsequently, of the talks at Lugrin, had been a serious disappointment. It would be recalled that the leaders of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had consistently taken the position that the Algerian question should be settled by direct negotiations on the basis of self-determination.

2. Unfortunately, the French Government appeared to attach a meaning to self-determination which was at variance with the concept as contemplated in the Charter of the United Nations, as defined in Assembly resolutions and as applied to the former colonial territories now represented in the United Nations. France's contradictory attitude had become manifest when the French Government had demanded certain commitments concerning the future of Algeria from an entity which it had until then refused to regard as representative of the Algerian people. Moreover, it had indicated that it meant to exclude the Sahara—four-fifths of Algeria—from the application of the referendum. The Algerian Provisional Government could not be expected to acquiesce in that plan; and its position had been unanimously endorsed by the Algerian people in the national strike of 5 July 1961 against the policy of partition or "regroupement". It was gratifying to note that on 5 September 1961 the President of the French Republic, General de Gaulle, had declared that the Sahara must be an integral part of Algeria. Sudan had full confidence in President de Gaulle's ability to

vindicate the honour of France, whatever the odds against him.

3. The question of the future of the European minority in Algeria was not as problematic as it might appear. The Provisional Government had declared that all Frenchmen desiring to remain in Algeria would have the right to opt for Algerian nationality, in which case they would have all the rights and responsibilities of Algerian citizens, or to retain their French nationality, in which case they would be accorded all the guarantees necessary to enable them to live in peace in Algeria. That was a most generous position; never before had such an option been granted by a colonized people to its former colonizers. The fact that hundreds of thousands of Europeans had not suffered by living on in other newly independent countries of North Africa, such as Morocco, Tunisia and Libya, should allay any fears concerning the fate of the Europeans in Algeria. Nor should the question of future co-operation between France and an independent Algeria cause difficulties in the negotiations. While the Provisional Government could not be expected to commit the people of Algeria in advance with regard to details, there was bound to be close economic and cultural co-operation similar to that which characterized relations between the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa and their former rulers.

4. The Sudanese delegation was convinced that a just and lasting solution of the Algerian question could be found, enabling the people of Algeria freely to decide their future on the basis of their inalienable right to independence and the territorial integrity of their country. The negotiations should be resumed in a spirit of good will and reason; Sudan had accordingly joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.308 and Add.1-2.

5. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) said that in adopting resolution 1573 (XV), the General Assembly had given concrete application to the principle of the complete abolition of colonialism laid down in its resolution 1514 (XV). For the first time, moreover, it had unequivocally recognized the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and independence on the basis of respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Algeria. That right of self-determination had also been recognized by the French Government. In the circumstances, there appeared to be favourable prospects for successful negotiations between the parties. However, the talks at Evian and Lugrin had had to be suspended because France had sought to impose conditions unacceptable to the Algerian people; France had demanded the surrender of four-fifths of the territory of Algeria to the economic interests of the French settlers, the establishment of military bases in the Sahara and special guarantees for the European population. No self-respecting, sovereign, independent Government could accept those conditions, which, moreover,

were contrary to General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1573 (XV).

6. The war in Algeria was being waged by France solely in the interests of the French settlers and the international trusts which had a stranglehold on the economy and natural wealth of that African country, and could only end in defeat for France. The financial and material assistance it was receiving from its NATO allies, however ample, could not help France to reverse the tide of history. The continuance of the war would bring greater suffering to the French and Algerian peoples, and would jeopardize peace not only in Africa but in the world. The only possible solution lay in a resumption of negotiations on the basis of equality between the parties and in accordance with the General Assembly's resolutions.

7. It had been argued that States which did not recognize the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic could not support the draft resolution. But the Provisional Government had been recognized not only by the States present at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Belgrade in September 1961, and by the sponsors of the draft resolution, but, in effect, by France itself. For it was against the Algerian army commanded by that Government that the French Army was engaged in Algeria, and it was with the representatives of that Government that talks had been held. Moreover, by its devotion to peace, by the moderation and good will it had shown at critical periods of the Algerian struggle, and by the undisputed support it enjoyed among the Algerian people, the Provisional Government had proved that it was the sole true spokesman of the whole Algerian people. The draft resolution represented the minimum that the United Nations must do to promote a peaceful solution in Algeria, and Bulgaria would vote for it.

8. Mr. ZOPPI (Italy) said that the debate had shown that a favourable solution of the Algerian question was closer than at previous sessions. The Italian delegation had always believed that a solution satisfactory to all could be worked out; the restraint and dignity of the present debate was another step towards peace in Algeria, and proved that the Italian delegation had been right to advise moderation.

9. The present relaxation of tension was the result not only of struggle but of a far-sighted decision of France. Even before the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), President de Gaulle had transformed the French empire into a community of nations and had gradually fostered the principle of Algerian independence, so that the only point now at issue was the way in which independence and self-determination could be achieved for the Algerian people.

10. It seemed generally agreed that the situation called for caution; the United Nations should now avoid doing anything to hinder negotiations between France and the Algerian leaders. The two parties were overcoming great difficulties in order to reach common ground, and it was time for a sober appraisal of the situation, such as might help the parties to achieve a solution. It should be remembered that a negotiated solution implied concessions on both sides. President de Gaulle had made great efforts to persuade French public opinion to accept Algerian independence, and it was natural that in negotiations which would affect his country as well as the Algerian people he should seek certain assurances.

11. In the circumstances, the United Nations could help both sides by creating a moral climate of expectation rather than by giving them a prescription which was already becoming out of date. His delegation had reservations about certain provisions of the draft resolution, on which it would comment at a later stage.

12. Mr. KOIRALA (Nepal) said that Nepal's continued concern over the tragic situation in Algeria had led it to join in sponsoring both the request for the inclusion of the item in the agenda (A/4842 and Add.1) and the draft resolution now before the Committee. The Algerian war had started as a movement for independence by a group of Algerian nationalists, and had originally been a problem for the French and Algerians along; but it had now grown into a crusade for justice and had become a major issue in which all nations had a direct interest. The French "war of pacification" had led to enormous suffering and unnecessary loss of life, and his Government had hoped that the French Government would recognize its futility. Yet, although the United Nations had proved that it was fully competent to consider the question, the French delegation still refused to attend debates on the subject.

13. Negotiations between the French and the Algerians had been unilaterally suspended by France in June 1961. They had been resumed in July, but had again been suspended because France refused to recognize the unity of the Algerian people or the territorial integrity of Algeria. But any solution of the problem must apply to Algeria as a single unit and must be based on the principle that the Algerian people was indivisible. The partition of Algeria would be illogical, unacceptable and disastrous.

14. The King of Nepal had said at the Belgrade Conference that colonialism in any form was a social and political evil involving totally unacceptable relationships among men, and that Nepal would always support the anti-colonial revolution. If the French record in Algeria belied France's liberal tradition, the Algerian record was inspiring; the people of Nepal had unbounded admiration and respect for the courage of the Algerian people.

15. His delegation had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.308 and Add.1-2 because it believed in the unity and territorial integrity of Algeria, because the United Nations had recognized the Algerian people's right to self-determination long ago and because the Algerians' sacrifices had proved that they were determined to gain their freedom.

16. Mr. NGILERUMA (Nigeria) said Nigeria was dedicated to the sacred cause of its fellow Africans who were groaning under the yoke of foreign domination, and was disappointed that the Algerian problem continued to threaten world peace after seven years of warfare and despite the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions recognizing the Algerian people's right to self-determination and independence, with due respect for the unity and territorial integrity of their country. The United Nations could not stand aside while that right continued to be trampled upon.

17. His delegation had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.308 and Add.1-2, which, while adding little to the substance of previous resolutions on the subject, recalled the principles overwhelmingly endorsed by the United Nations and reaffirmed the Organization's dedication to the peaceful settlement of problems by negotiation, and its unshakable belief in the right of all nations to self-determination. The

Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had shown an admirable spirit of conciliation; but the political and economic factors which had prevented the French Government from offering the Algerians a reasonable and acceptable compromise were to be deplored. Particularly deplorable were the idea that Algeria, or indeed any part of African soil, might be regarded as an integral part of a metropolitan Power, and the idea of dual nationality, both of which were clearly at variance with the principle of territorial integrity. The French Government was trying, for economic reasons, to dismember Algeria, but the United Nations should condemn any surreptitious attempt to divide any State. The Sahara was part of Algeria, and to deny Algeria the right to dispose of the resources of the Sahara would endanger the whole Algerian economy.

18. The Algerian war had continued for seven years because the French Government had failed to recognize the irresistible trend towards independence and national sovereignty in Africa. He hoped that the French Government would not persist in its attempt to perpetuate the *status quo*, which meant only to postpone the inevitable. His delegation had not lost sight of the fact that the French Government and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had tried to work out an honourable compromise, and regretted that the peace talks had broken down because of the interaction of political and economic forces. It had therefore joined the sponsors of the draft resolution in requesting the Assembly to appeal to both Governments to resume negotiations with a view to implementing the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and independence, respecting the unity and the territorial integrity of Algeria; and it hoped that the intransigence of extremists trying to perpetuate the domination of a small minority would not prevent an early solution of the problem through peaceful negotiations.

19. The need to guarantee the position of the French minority should not be regarded as a major issue; the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had declared that it bore no malice and that the French settlers would be welcome, so long as they submitted to the democratic principle of majority rule. If the Provisional Government maintained its conciliatory attitude, there should be no great obstacle to a resumption of negotiations looking towards the recognition of Algerian sovereignty. That was the goal to which his delegation was irrevocably committed.

20. Mr. SOSA RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela) said that circumstances now seemed propitious to the solution of the problem of Algeria by means of negotiations—the only way to achieve a result that would be just, lasting and satisfactory to both parties. The negotiations held at Evian and Lugrin had shown that both sides sincerely wanted to bring about Algerian independence and to end a war which had separated two peoples whose history called for their close political and economic co-operation. Countries which were friendly both to Algeria and to France should help them to end the bloodshed and to overcome the obstacles to Algerian independence: they should not assist the enemies of freedom, who pretended to support the independence of peoples in order to achieve their own purposes.

21. The problem of Algeria arose because minority groups anxious to maintain outdated privileges were obstructing Algerian independence. Yet the majority of the French people had shown great understanding and a sincere desire to grant the Algerian people its

rights. On 16 September 1959, President de Gaulle had recognized the Algerian people's right to self-determination, and on 5 September 1961 he had said that all Algerians believed that the Sahara should be a part of Algeria. The progress achieved had been due to the heroic struggle carried on by the Algerian people for seven years; but President de Gaulle too had made tremendous efforts and had shown great ability and courage in overcoming the obstacles to the ending of the Algerian tragedy. The Assembly should recommend the resumption of negotiations between the Government of France and the Algerian representatives, but it should do so in uncontroversial terms, which would not wound susceptibilities or produce a negative reaction. His country had always supported the Algerian people's right to independence and territorial integrity, and it believed that the Algerians could now acquire both through negotiations with France. It therefore appealed to both parties to end the war and to agree on the early independence of the whole territory of Algeria, for the good of both parties.

22. Mr. KAMATE (Mali) said that France had done nothing to carry out General Assembly resolution 1573 (XV), adopted one year ago. Although a permanent member of the Security Council, it had disregarded all United Nations recommendations on the Algerian question. Meanwhile, the war continued to rage in Algeria and threatened to spread to the rest of the Maghrib, as was shown by the recent Bizerta crisis and the bombardment of the Moroccan frontier. Mali was an immediate neighbour of Algeria and had always maintained close relations with the Algerian people; it regarded their struggle as its own and considered that the General Assembly must take decisive steps towards a settlement at the current session. The Casablanca Conference held in January 1961 had stressed the United Nations responsibility for the implementation of resolution 1573 (XV) and had expressed its support for the Algerian people. At the Belgrade Conference, in September 1961, an appeal had been addressed to France to end the war, and the non-aligned countries had been urged to give the Algerians all possible assistance. At that Conference, several more Governments had given the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic *de jure* recognition, as Mali had done as soon as it became independent. The prestige and authority of the Provisional Government were growing throughout the world.

23. World public opinion had welcomed the negotiations held at Evian and Lugrin between France and the Provisional Government. But the French had sought to impose unacceptable conditions on the Algerians, and the negotiations had broken down. The main stumbling-blocks had been the Sahara, military bases, economic relations and the status of European minorities. The war was being continued in the name of the so-called "French Sahara", the real purpose being to maintain French control over the area's oil resources. But no people could be expected to renounce sovereignty over four-fifths of its territory. The Algerian leaders were quite prepared to co-operate in the exploitation of the Sahara; in a publication concerning the Saharan region of Algeria issued by the Arab Information Centre in Geneva, they had recognized that the Sahara's resources far exceeded Africa's present needs and that, provided that foreign companies respected Algerian sovereignty, there could be full co-operation safeguarding the interests of both sides. In insisting on the division of the country, France was disregarding its own laws, including those of 24 December 1902,

20 September 1947, 10 January 1957 establishing an "Organisation commune des régions sahariennes", and 5 February 1958. The *res nullius* argument was without foundation, since there were about a million people living in the Algerian Sahara. But President de Gaulle himself, in his press conference, of 5 September 1961, had at last recognized Algerian sovereignty over the Sahara, so that it was possible to contemplate a resumption of negotiations with some optimism.

24. As far as the status of the European minorities was concerned, the Algerian Government was prepared to grant them full citizenship or full residence rights, as they wished. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government had acknowledged that France could not withdraw 800,000 people at a moment's notice. Thus if the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and independence was recognized, a peaceful settlement should be possible.

25. Nevertheless, there were certain disquieting factors. For some time, international and French monopolies had been waging a campaign to prevent Algeria from achieving true independence. In addition, an extremist organization of colonialists, the Secret Army Organization, had been formed in Algeria and was committing every sort of atrocity in order to create anarchy. But the existence of such factors was no justification for abandoning the search for a solution, a search which was the responsibility above all of the African countries, who owed their freedom in large part to the struggle of the Algerian people. France must be told, in all frankness, that nothing constructive would be possible in France itself until the war was ended. Too much time had been spent in discussing the mistakes made in Algeria and the various possible solutions; the time had come for action. Draft resolution A/C.1/L.308 and Add.1-2, of which his delegation was a sponsor, represented the minimum concrete action which should be taken at the present time, and should be adopted unanimously.

26. Mr. YOST (United States of America) noted with satisfaction that many of the obstacles to agreement on the Algerian question appeared to have been removed and that a peaceful solution was a last in sight. Despite the remaining difficulties to be negotiated, the United States was confident that peace could be restored in Algeria and that the Algerian people would be able freely to determine their future. The United Nations debate on the Algerian question had for the most part been marked by enthusiastic recognition and support of President de Gaulle's courageous persistence in seeking a negotiated settlement. Needless to say, it was only because his efforts were being met with moderation and understanding on the Algerian side that the prospect of success appeared so promising.

27. The position of the United States with respect to the draft resolution was based on its belief that the United Nations had a responsibility to encourage, but certainly not to complicate or jeopardize, the early resumption and successful conclusion of negotiations. The draft resolution was on the whole moderate in tone and constructive in intent, and its sponsors had shown considerable restraint; but in certain respects it went beyond what the United States regarded as the useful and properly restricted role of the United Nations in present circumstances. For example, by referring specifically to the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, a Government which was not recognized by the majority of Member States, the draft resolution introduced a contentious and unnecessarily

complicating factor, particularly since there could be no doubt concerning the identity of the "two parties" referred to elsewhere in the text. Moreover, while the United States did not question the goals laid down in the operative paragraph, it felt that to specify them in a United Nations resolution at the present time might impinge on the prerogatives and responsibilities of the negotiators on both sides. The United States would therefore abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

28. Mr. BA (Mauritania) said that his delegation did not wish to make a lengthy statement at the present stage, not because it had no arguments to put forward in support of the Algerians, but because it did not wish to diminish in any way the chance of a resumption of negotiations. Mauritania's views were in any case well known. On 28 November 1961, the Head of the Government had stated that the achievement of independence by Algeria was inevitable, and had called for negotiations in which Algerian sovereignty over the Sahara would be recognized. The matter must be settled as quickly as possible, in the interests of both France and Algeria. The President of France had recognized the Algerians' right to self-determination. He had separated Algeria from France by proclaiming Algeria to be Algerian, a fact which the French people had accepted in a referendum. He had recognized Algerian sovereignty over the Sahara. The Provisional Government, for its part, had stated that the French in Algeria could either become citizens or remain as alien residents with all the rights due to them as such. It was those favourable developments which had led Mauritania to join in sponsoring the draft resolution, which laid down the essential conditions for a durable peace in Algeria. Any solutions involving partition or "regroupement" would be unacceptable.

29. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said his delegation had hoped that the Algerian problem would be settled before the sixteenth session of the General Assembly. Certain basic differences between the two sides, which for a long time had prevented progress, had disappeared. Over the previous two years, France had altered its position to a considerable extent to meet the demands of the Algerians; that was a result, on the one hand, of the determination of the Algerian people and, on the other, of the political wisdom of the French President. It was unfortunate that for several years the United Nations had failed to adopt any constructive resolution which would have brought the two sides together earlier and thus saved lives and money. Even in 1959, after President de Gaulle had recognized Algeria's right to self-determination, the United Nations had been unable to make any contribution to a solution. At the fifteenth session, a constructive resolution on the subject had finally been adopted (General Assembly resolution 1573 (XV)). Since then the French Government had acknowledged the Provisional Government as the true representative of the Algerian people and recognized the conviction of all Algerians that any agreement must be based on the unity of their territory, including the Sahara. Two matters remained to be negotiated: sovereignty over the Sahara, including the use of its resources, and the status of the French minority.

30. As far as the first point was concerned, sovereignty must be vested in Algeria, since the Sahara had always been part of Algeria. The use of the resources of the Algerian Sahara could be the subject of a negotiated agreement, which would have to take account of the interests of both sides. Mr. Ferhat Abbas, at the time he was Head of the Provisional Government, had declared the willingness of his people

to co-operate with France for their common benefit. The present leader, Mr. Ben Khedda, had reaffirmed that position on 24 October 1961.

31. So far as concerned the second point, the members of the French community in Algeria would have to be granted rights of full and equal citizenship, or rights of residence if they wished to retain French nationality. Perhaps they should be given separate and proportional representation, so that they would have a say in the administration of the country. But any idea that they should have special privileges was an anachronism and would merely create trouble in the future. It was in the interest of both sides that the French and Moslem communities in Algeria should co-operate on equal terms in developing their country. Partition,

which had been proposed as a solution, would lead to endless discord, as previous cases of such artificial division had shown.

32. A settlement was possible, given mutual understanding and co-operation. In view of President de Gaulle's determination to arrive at a just solution, Cyprus awaited with confidence the outcome of future negotiations, despite the opposition of extremist groups in France and Algeria. His delegation had therefore joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.308 and Add.1-2, which was consistent with the existing basis of agreement between the two sides and with General Assembly resolution 1573 (XV).

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.