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Chairman: Mr. Djalal ABDOH (Iran).

AGENDA ITEM 59

The question of Algeria (A/3617 and Add.1) (*continued*)

1. Mr. ZEINEDDINE (Syria) pointed out that the Syrian delegation had always bent all its efforts to attaining one goal, the settlement of the Algerian question, which, in its opinion, could be achieved by negotiations between the two sides. Syria sincerely wished that the Arab and French peoples should be united by a genuine and fruitful friendship, which would be a guarantee of stability in the Middle East, and that colonial domination should be replaced by free co-operation.

2. The settlement of the question must be based on concrete realities, and only an objective examination of the facts could help France and Algeria out of their present difficulties, which affected the whole Arab world and the general international situation.

3. The struggle of the Algerian people was not unique in history. Many countries had attained their independence by fighting for it. The great difference between other revolutionary upheavals and the war in Algeria, however, was that the latter had broken out in a world which had proclaimed the United Nations Charter. The Charter intended that the peoples should effect their evolution towards freedom without recourse to violence, which had previously been the only possible method. The Charter provided means which were much more appropriate than the unilateral action of France, and the General Assembly had rightly adhered to that view when it had adopted resolution 1012 (XI) on 15 February 1957. If France continued to deny the competence of the United Nations and refused to negotiate, a solution would be reached only by force of arms and by war, which should be earnestly avoided.

4. Unfortunately, France did not seem to have changed its attitude. The statements made by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pineau, scarcely differed in substance from those made in 1954 by Mr. François Mitterrand, then Minister of the Interior. Yet the war in Algeria was continuing and the General Assembly's recommendations remained a dead letter. France had not even kept the very moderate promises it had made to the First Committee at the eleventh session and the *loi-cadre* (basic law) had introduced nothing new.

5. Since 1954, France had constantly proclaimed that it had the situation well in hand, implying that it was in a position to give the Algerian problem the solution it had chosen. But if those affirmations, intended to reassure the French people, were confronted with the realities of war, then the whole affair took on a sinister appearance. The Syrian delegation considered that all Member States should help to bring the facts into full light. For its own part, it intended to examine successively the real situation in Algeria, its repercussions on France, its international implications and, finally, a possible settlement.

6. The Algerian forces now under arms were at least three times as numerous as they had been a year previously and about thirty times as numerous as they had been at the beginning of the insurrection in 1954. They were far better equipped and trained, since many Algerian recruits and officers who had been trained in the French army had crossed, complete with equipment and baggage, to the ranks of the Algerian Liberation Army. The equipment of this army had been taken from French troops.

7. The Algerian Army was composed only of volunteers, who were far more numerous than the 100,000 men whom the Algerian authorities had been able to arm and put into the field. It was a democratic army of soldiers fully conscious that they formed part of a nation. They were not terrorists and cut-throats, but fighters with a mystical faith in the righteousness of their cause, for which they were prepared to sacrifice themselves.

8. The French Regular Army, on the other hand, was 750,000 strong. The reinforcements which Mr. Robert Lacoste, Minister for Algeria, was constantly seeking would be difficult to obtain, unless France mobilized or completely withdrew its forces from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); neither seemed probable. There were also the forces recruited among the colonial residents, particularly among the police and the *gendarmerie*. They could hardly be regarded as dependent on the French Government, since in fact they often obeyed the directives of the organizations of the French residents. Their action was so repressive and vindictive that its main effect was to swell the ranks of the National Liberation Army.

9. Thus, the French Government had the situation in hand only in the limited area where French forces were concentrated. Even less than in the past could the problem be solved through "pacification", which was, in effect, war. Only negotiations and the establishment of contractual relations between the two parties would make a settlement possible. There could be neither a moral nor a juridical defence of war and, further, it was not even practical.

10. The Algerian revolt was a movement in which a whole people had arisen to put an end to a foreign yoke

and limit the privileges of an exploiting minority, to stop the process of cultural assimilation into France and to open up the path of development and progress for an Algeria freed from the backwardness caused by the colonial régime. The social, economic, cultural and political conditions resulting from French domination had given the Algerian people but one choice: to be or not to be. Such was the result of 127 years of colonization. It was regrettable that after so many years France had nothing new to offer the Algerians.

11. The French Government seemed to be neither willing nor able to deal effectively with the Algerian situation as it existed at present. The Algerian authorities were actually administering a large part of the country; independence in those areas was not only a matter of right, but a matter of fact. In the remainder of the country, administration was mainly in the hands of the colons, who often acted on their own initiative and had a great influence on policy in Paris. Indeed in his declaration of 9 January 1957 Mr. Guy Mollet, then Prime Minister of France, had gone so far as to propose that the French Government should act as an arbiter between the colons and the Algerians. Finally, there were many localities which were not administered by the French or by the Algerians, but alternately by both.

12. Events in Algeria were increasingly affecting Tunisia and Morocco, and that in a way tended to give the situation a North African character. The number of refugees was constantly growing.

13. Turning to the repercussions of the Algerian situation on France, he pointed out that the war in Algeria was a terrible financial drain on that country. The Algerian colonial enterprise was not profitable; it benefited only a few individuals and represented a very heavy burden for the country as a whole. It was regrettable that successive French governments and the parliamentary majorities which formed only to dissolve had not changed their policy.

14. Two conclusions might be drawn from an objective consideration of the situation. In the first place, it was impossible to arrive at any solution through unilateral French action; secondly, the United Nations should use its influence to prevail upon both parties to negotiate.

15. One aspect of the situation, the moral revolt against the policy of repression, did great honour to the French people. Many Frenchmen coming from France had been shocked by the abuses to which the Algerians were subjected. The experiences of officers, soldiers and others had been collected and published. He cited extracts from a pamphlet published in Paris by the Comité de résistance spirituelle, describing torture and other repressive measures used by French troops in Algeria and the system of concentration camps that had been set up.

16. Those facts had shocked French public opinion, and many individuals and organizations had issued protests and had publicly denounced the atrocities which had been committed. Not only the moral feelings, but the French understanding of juridical equity had been outraged by such wanton repression. He cited some passages from a declaration published by members of the Paris Bar on 31 October 1957 in which it was stated in particular that torture was a daily occurrence in Algeria, that freedom of the Press and of opinion had long been defunct, that individual liberty was at the mercy of administrative decisions

and that there were constant violations of the right of defence.

17. That repression was not only morally revolting, it was a great political mistake, for its only effect was to convince the Algerians that the only way to avoid repression was to put an end to French rule. The indignation which those methods had aroused in a large sector of French public opinion might have very important results.

18. The Algerian situation had been of great international importance for a long time. It had been on the agenda of many international conferences and had been the subject of several joint communiqués. It was anachronistic to assert that Algeria fell solely within the national competence of France. Furthermore, the Algerian question was tending to become a North African question.

19. It had been alleged that the liberation of Algeria would create a vacuum, which would be filled by communism or Arab imperialism, as Mr. Félix Gaillard, the present French Prime Minister had recently stated. The sole purpose of that theory was to safeguard Western preponderance in Algeria. If France were to lose its sovereignty over that territory, Algeria would be integrated into a kind of Western organization which would give France a pre-eminent position in North Africa.

20. Fresh impetus had been given to that Eurafrikan policy by the discovery of oil and other sub-soil riches in southern Algeria. In line with the Eurafrikan theme, special economic and financial measures had been taken for the exploitation of that oil with extensive Western participation. Instead of independence for the African territories, interdependence on the model of the French Union was being advocated.

21. In reality, the only vacuum created was the one produced in Europe by the withdrawal of 750,000 French troops serving in the NATO forces, who were in Algeria, not for the purpose of helping to bring about a peaceful, just and democratic solution, as recommended by the General Assembly, but to forestall by force a solution of the problem. A continuation of that conduct could result in turning the Algerians—and with them, the whole of the Arab nation—against co-operation in policies which some Western countries found it expedient to follow at the present time.

22. Algerian independence would produce not a vacuum, but an Algerian State established on firm foundations. If the Algerians were capable of carrying on a struggle for more than three years against a great Power, they would be even more capable of filling a hypothetical vacuum. There would be nothing to hinder an independent Algeria from entering into contractual relations with France and other countries.

23. It was quite erroneous to suppose that a communist Power would take the place of the occupying Power, France. There were no grounds for such an assumption: the Arabs had been struggling for their liberation for decades and had no intention of exchanging one master for another.

24. The alleged Arab imperialism did not exist. There was such a thing as "Arabism", but that was the natural expression of Arab culture and history proceeding from the existence of a single Arab nation.

The aims of that Arabism were clear: liberation of the entire Arab homeland, including Algeria, Muscat and Oman and other British protectorates of the Arabian peninsula; formation of the Arab States into a collectivity able to function in international life; the realization of progress and necessary reforms in Arab society; co-operation in freedom with other nations in every respect. That was the meaning of Arab nationalism.

25. The Algerian people were entitled to exercise their sovereignty and to determine their future as they saw fit. No Arab country contested its right to do so and no other country was entitled to contest that right either. It was ridiculous to speak of Arab imperialism against an Arab country.

26. The Arab countries suggested a policy of co-operation between nations based on mutual respect and not upon a hypothetical vacuum to be filled by outside Powers.

27. The Eurafrican policy of interdependence, to which reference had been made, implied the binding of African countries to certain Western European countries, practically in the same manner as in the French Union. It was an arrangement imposed upon African countries with a view to continuing old conditions under superficial changes of form.

28. Many Arab countries, including Algeria, were rich in oil and other resources of which they consumed only a small amount. Their principal market was in Europe and America. The Western need for oil was increasing and would surely increase for the next twenty years, despite the discovery of new sources of energy and the increase in production from all other sources. In the case of products other than oil, the Arab countries were sometimes consumers rather than producers. Accordingly, there was a common advantage in developing commercial relations between the countries of the two groups. Economic exchange should not be conceived in such a manner, however, as to chain the future of nations and their liberty to the machinery of other countries' policies. The mutual need for economic exchange should not become a pretext for a policy of control and intervention, resulting in threats and coercive actions, such as those being imposed upon Algeria at the present time and those to which Egypt had been subjected in 1956.

29. Turning to the relationship between Algeria and NATO, he recalled that on 15 November 1957, Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak, the Secretary-General of NATO, had said that the position of NATO on the Algerian question was the position of France. One might add that the position of France on Algeria was the position of NATO, since NATO policy often influenced the policy of France with respect to Algeria and other matters.

30. He would not refer to NATO as a regional arrangement. How could the North Atlantic area include Algeria and extend as far as the Toros mountains north of Syria? In any event, NATO had never been described as a measure against the liberation of dominated peoples, yet that was what it had become.

31. If Algeria was French in the eyes of NATO, the members of NATO were not obliged to defend France and the organization could not be used as a means for upholding oppression. In the present circumstances, NATO served as a means of ensuring the security of France in Europe by enabling it to use its

forces in the struggle against Algeria. Without that team work, France would have found it very difficult to throw the bulk of its military forces into Africa and by means of war to continue opposing the right of Algerians to liberty.

32. On the other hand, the countries members of NATO were attempting to make use of French policy in Algeria. On 24 May 1957, the heads of the missions in Washington of the eleven Arab States, in a collective *démarche*, informed the Government of the United States that, while wishing to avoid impairment of the friendly relations existing between the United States and France, they were compelled to draw attention to the following facts which had a particular bearing on relations between the United States and the Arab States: The United States had freely extended to France, whether directly or indirectly, aid and assistance of a financial, military and political nature, which France had diverted for carrying on its colonialist policy. American help thus enabled France to carry out its designs against the Arab people in Algeria and to endanger peace in the whole of the Arab area. The continuation of American help to France did not serve the real interests of peace and liberty in the area, nor did it accord with well-known American principles and declarations concerning the exercise by peoples on their right to self-determination, nor did it serve the purpose of American-Arab co-operation.

33. On the whole, the reaction of the United States was unsatisfactory. Once again, the so-called solidarity of the members of NATO had hindered any useful efforts towards a peaceful solution, and those members persisted in their readiness to help one another, even to the detriment of the liberation of Algeria and of peaceful development of conditions in the Arab world.

34. The Syrian delegation, for reasons both legitimate and practical, renewed the appeal made by the heads of mission of the eleven Arab States to the United States. It was unwilling that United States aid to France should exert any effect on the present debate. The war over the Algerian question must be stopped and a peaceful settlement must be found. That would be feasible only with the aid of the United States and with a nearly unanimous stand by the States Members of the United Nations.

35. He quoted an article in *The New York Times* of 30 November 1957 containing a remark to the effect that the statements of some Arab delegations did not necessarily represent official Algerian views. His own delegation had never said to the Press that it was speaking on behalf of the Algerians, but all the Arab delegations held the same view on the Algerian question and were in constant consultation with the Algerians. One of the members of the Syrian delegation, Mr. Mohammed Yazid, was an Algerian.

36. Because all the Arab countries were solidly on Algeria's side, efforts were made abroad to disrupt their unity and to divert their attention from the situation which had resulted from Zionist-colonialist policies to purely hypothetical difficulties. The Algerian problem was behind all those efforts to disrupt Arab unity; it had certainly been behind the attack on Egypt in 1956 and the continuing pressures on Syria in 1957.

37. In answer to those efforts, he would merely say

that two Arab countries, like any two other countries in the world, could hold different opinions, but that in every instance of direct concern to the Arab countries, opinions ended by being unified. Algeria would not be estranged from the other Arab countries any more than would Syria, Iraq or Egypt. There had been some talk of the pro-westernism or anti-westernism of the Arabs, but what really mattered was their pro-Arabism.

38. It could not be denied that the situation in Algeria was not altogether under the control of the French Government. A policy founded upon the continuation of the war was from the military point of view neither desirable nor expedient nor practical. As an affair of international politics the Algerian situation was not one that France was able to deal with single-handedly. Eurafrika would not save the situation, but merely aggravate it.

39. In France itself, there were special financial and political features to the Algerian situation which had caused a moral revolt against repression. The French Government was apparently so perplexed that it found it difficult to decide upon a suitable policy; it could find nothing better to do than to follow its previous course, with no fundamental change.

40. A peaceful settlement could be achieved only through negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. If for any reason the United Nations was unable to discharge the task effectively, the solution would be dictated by the *de facto* situation. The Algerian people had never lost or ceded their national sovereignty. Independence had been and remained their inalienable right. They had tried to persuade France to recognize that right as a basis for negotiations, but France had refused. The situation now was different. Independence had become not only a matter of right, but also a matter of fact, for the French rule to which they had acquiesced out of fear had been repudiated by the Algerians. They had never really accepted French rule. They had been capable of patience, but not of final submission. They did not need a plebiscite to make their will known by their votes, having already made it known by their deeds. In fact they were already free. The Algerian territory was partly in their hands and they administered it. To that extent French physical occupation was ended.

41. It had been held at one time, in France and other countries, that without Algeria France would be finished. There had never been any truth in that idea. France would remain France and would, with peace, find again its greatness and creativeness. Algeria was now a liability to France; it was certainly not an asset any longer and could never become one again.

42. It had also been held that Algeria without France could not reasonably exist. That was a gross error. Algeria, with its Arab culture, was a country with a great past and also with a great present; it was being reborn and had all the attributes necessary for a viable State. Algeria could not exist without independence. For Algeria, independence was a vital issue, and that made the Algerian revolt a real revolution of a people determined to change the political, social, cultural and economic conditions resulting from French rule and to live and develop. France, on the other hand, was not being called upon to give way on a vital matter. French interests in Algeria could be safeguarded if Algeria became independent. The relations

between the two countries would be regulated by a contractual undertaking. His delegation sincerely hoped that France and Algeria would in the future maintain very close relations, freely entered into, and that a sincere and satisfactory co-operation would be established between those two independent countries.

43. To that end, direct negotiations on the basis of Algerian independence were essential. It had been asked with whom France was to negotiate; he was convinced that France knew the answer—which incidentally had been supplied by the Tunisian representative at the 914th meeting. France could properly start negotiations with those responsible Algerians who were organized in a council of fifty-four members and an executive committee of nine, who were already administering the country, commanding the army and holding authority in Algeria, and who were able to speak for it. They were able to decide for Algeria and to carry out their decisions. The Algerians were ready and willing to negotiate a settlement.

44. In his view, when France claimed that it could find no one with whom to negotiate a settlement, it was merely seeking to evade negotiations. That attitude was not unprecedented. At one time, Syria had faced a similar situation. France had refused to negotiate with the Syrians to end French rule and to establish contractual relations with Syria, and had explained its refusal to negotiate by claiming that it could find no valid spokesman. It had maintained that claim for some years, but at last, when circumstances in Syria had become such as to convince it that a purely French solution to the Syrian problem was not feasible and that only a negotiated settlement between the two parties was practical, the French Government changed its opinion, recognized the existence of a valid spokesman, and negotiated. The result had been the Draft Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between France and Syria, signed at Damascus on 22 December 1936, which Syria had ratified, but which France had later refused to ratify. The Treaty had therefore never come into effect. Later, in 1946, French rule in Syria had been ended and French troops had been evacuated, with no treaty intervening. Thus it appeared that the French Government had found it easier to evacuate Syria altogether and to end its former relations with that country than to sign a treaty based on compromise. Syria had not regretted the French Government's choice. France should have learned from that experience.

45. He recalled that in the case of Tunisia and Morocco the French had also said at first that there was no valid spokesman. The claim had been as unfounded as in the case of Syria.

46. The Algerian constitution and future relations between Algeria and France should take into account the situation of the French settlers in Algeria, as had already been done in Tunisia and Morocco. Such a settlement would be acceptable to the Algerians, as they had indicated in their programme. Provision should be made to the following effect: the French settlers should be entitled to opt freely for French or Algerian citizenship, as each desired, but they should not have a dual nationality and be French and Algerians at the same time; those among them who opted for Algerian citizenship should naturally become Algerians enjoying full political and individual rights, like other Algerians, without any discrimination. That

would be of great benefit both to themselves and to Algeria. Some French settlers were already co-operating closely with the Algerian liberation movement, and their number was steadily increasing. The settlers who opted for French citizenship could also continue to reside in Algeria if they so chose and to enjoy all their individual rights, but they should neither keep their present privileges nor exercise in the Algerian State the political rights resulting from Algerian citizenship against which they would have opted. Lastly, the rights of French settlers to opt for the citizenship of their choice and the consequences resulting from that option should be safeguarded by an international instrument—a Franco-Algerian understanding and agreements binding upon both countries.

47. It was said that there were more French settlers in Algeria (some 1.2 million out of about 11.5 inhabitants) than there had been in Tunisia or Morocco. It should, however, be remembered that they had not all come from France. Many of them were Algerians by origin who had been given the privileged status of French settlers; others had come from Spain, Italy and other countries, and had become French by virtue of French legislation. Nevertheless, even if all the settlers of European (non-Algerian) origin were taken into account, the situation would be substantially what it had been in Tunisia, where the proportion of settlers to the total population had been virtually the same.

48. It had been said that the settlers regarded Algeria as their country. That was excellent, to the extent that it was true. Such settlers would be loyal to Algeria and would make use of their right to opt for Algerian nationality or to remain French and continue to reside in Algeria with all the safeguards he had mentioned.

49. With the opening of negotiations, the war should come to an end and all war prisoners should be freed. Political prisoners should be freed immediately. The Algerian legislature, once elected, would ratify any agreement at which Algeria and France might have arrived through direct negotiations.

50. What could the United Nations do in the present circumstances to help France and Algeria and set their feet on the path of peace and co-operation? The United Nations might take the view that the present situation was liable to create international friction, recommend that both parties should start direct negotiations and indicate the basis for them. There were many ways in which the Organization could usefully and justifiably intervene.

51. On the other hand, there were things which the United Nations could not do. It could not, for example, cease to concern itself with the problem or refrain from taking any real action permitted by the Charter. Neither could it admit that it was convened merely to be informed by France and other countries about the Algerian problem and to discuss it as though the General Assembly were nothing more than an academic debating society.

52. When a people's freedom was at stake, the General Assembly could not abandon principle for expediency. If action by the United Nations were not followed by results, Member States would be more at liberty to evaluate the facts and recognize the independence of Algeria for themselves.

53. At some future session, the United Nations might

be asked to admit Algeria as a Member State, so that it could carry out its international responsibilities, as other countries of Asia and Africa had recently been doing.

54. He recalled that, at the eleventh session, Mr. Pineau had quoted Jaurès' saying that peace was respect for the rights of others. It was encouraging that French Socialist statesmen still remembered the immortal words of Jaurès. It was to be hoped that French policy might yet be based on some of his doctrines. Indeed, respect for the rights of the Algerians meant peace for embattled Algeria and for tormented France. To achieve that peace, the French Government might have to take statesmen-like action that was bolder, and certainly more salutary than war. The Syrian delegation appealed to France in all sincerity and with an ardent wish to see the development of Franco-Arab co-operation.

55. Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom) said that the Committee would be aware of the United Kingdom Government's views regarding the application of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter to United Nations discussions. Those views were obviously relevant to the present debate. His delegation's intervention should not be taken as prejudicing the United Kingdom Government's attitude with regard to domestic jurisdiction.

56. He had been impressed with the frankness and sincerity with which the French Minister of Foreign Affairs at the 913th meeting, for the second time in nine months, had put before the Committee the problems, intentions and endeavours of the French Government in regard to Algeria, and found his statement carried great conviction.

57. The problems of a multiracial community like Algeria were extremely complex. Indeed, the problems were only made more difficult by those who tried to over-simplify them. He paid a tribute to the moderation with which the representative of Tunisia had presented a case which was very close to his heart. He saw a difference between the Tunisian representative's approach to the problem and that of some of those who claimed to speak for the Algerian people. He was sorry, in particular, that the spokesmen of the National Liberation Front (FLN)—about whose claim to represent the Algerian people the French Foreign Minister had made some very pertinent remarks—had adopted a position of intransigence which could only make it more difficult to find a solution in accord with the interests and future of France, the Algerians and the free world. In a broadcast at the beginning of November 1957, the President of Tunisia himself had stated that the intransigence of the FLN was a retrograde step, and a sign of confusion in its leaders which deceived their friends and helped no one.

58. For all those reasons, the United Kingdom Government sympathized with the view of the French Government that it would be a dangerous over-simplification to equate the demands of the FLN with the true interests of the inhabitants of Algeria. In the view of the United Kingdom delegation, terrorism was a sign of weakness, not strength. There was therefore great force in the contention of the French Government that the first requirement for progress in Algeria was a cease-fire, to create conditions for free elections to ascertain who was really entitled to speak for the inhabitants of Algeria. If, as they

maintained, the FLN leaders were really representative of the Algerian peoples as a whole, they had nothing to fear if they accepted that view. Their acceptance would bring nothing but joy to the thousands of ordinary inhabitants of Algeria who were now living in fear and deprivation.

59. The United Kingdom Government felt that there was considerable virtue in the approach to the problem set forth by Mr. Pineau in the three-point programme. It was surely right that definitive institutions should not be established for Algeria until aspirations of the various communities of that multiracial territory could be taken into account through genuine and free elections held when terrorism and intimidation had ceased, following a cease-fire.

60. In the understanding of the United Kingdom delegation, that was the basis and intention of the loi-cadre and the electoral law approved by the French Assembly on 29 November 1957. It was easy to say that those laws left many questions unanswered, and contained phrases which came as a disappointment to those who wanted to go faster and further; but as Mr. Pineau had frankly stated, the loi-cadre was, as far as the French Government was concerned, only a first step; it provided the machinery for the evolution of Algerian institutions and permitted the adaptation, in accordance with experience, of the powers devolving upon the different legislative and executive organs.

61. In the view of the United Kingdom delegation, that was a courageous first step. He drew particular attention to the provision of a single electoral roll. That was a major step in providing the machinery for the evolution of Algerian institutions, and was no mean progress in nine months.

62. He understood those who felt impatience that all the problems of Algeria could not be solved with a stroke of the pen, but he also understood and agreed with the thought underlying French policy, which had led to the formulation of the loi-cadre: namely, that institutions of a complex community such as Algeria could not be handed down from above. They could be evolved only through the discussions and experience of the freely-elected representatives of the community as a whole. The outcome of such discussion and experience could not and should not be laid down in advance. He doubted that the outcome could be hastened by attempting to introduce ideas for Algeria from New York.

63. The General Assembly spent much of its time considering problems which had reached a stalemate and so remained from year to year; but the subject under discussion was not one of them. The affairs of Algeria were moving forward and the French Government, within whose sovereignty the matter lay, was supporting the forward movement. He felt certain that the vast majority of the Governments represented in the Committee had the same respect as the United Kingdom Government had for the traditions of democracy and culture which had made France justly famous.

64. Many delegations had a friendly interest in the future of Algeria. He urged them to show that interest by avoiding any action which might hamper the attainment of the goals to which the French Government was as deeply dedicated as anyone.

65. Mr. PINEAU (France) said that the French delegation reserved the right to reply to a certain number of statements, including the important speech which the representative of Tunisia had delivered at the 914th meeting. He would like to offer a correction immediately as regards at least one part of the statement which the representative of Syria had just made.

66. He regretted that Mr. Zeineddine had not referred to the trustworthy international reports on the situation as it really was with respect to acts of repression in Algeria. In particular, he could have quoted two reports of the International Red Cross and one especially important report by the International Commission against Concentration Camp Practices. In its report, that Commission stated that its delegation had not found any concentration camp practices in Algeria in the proper sense of the term. It had found that the judicial authorities were genuinely concerned about respect for individual freedoms and the rights of human beings. It had gained the assurance that everything was being done to put an end to such practices as torture and kidnapping, which the delegation was convinced were not widespread. The concern shown by the French authorities to provide the delegation with the greatest possible freedom of investigation was a guarantee that, wherever there had been failures to observe the principle of liberty, such failures would not take the form of regular repression.

67. With respect to the publications of certain committees to which the representative of Syria had referred, he noted that the authors of those publications had sometimes reported the facts incorrectly, and the investigation had revealed that a large number of the charges which had been made in that way, even by Frenchmen, were not in accordance with the facts. Nevertheless, whenever the French Government had found, after due inquiry, that the facts as reported to it were correct, it had taken steps to put an end to the abuses which had been committed and to punish those responsible for them. Actually, what the statement of the representative of Syria showed was that France was still one of the countries in the world whose policy was most strictly controlled by public opinion.

68. Lastly, the representative of Syria had confused two entirely different ideas: the heartfelt desire of democratic French public opinion to see human rights respected and France's fundamental views concerning the Algerian problem. Since Mr. Zeineddine had mentioned the young Frenchmen who had gone to Algeria in the uniform of the French Army, it should be pointed out that most of the time they had not been fighting in that country, but had taken part in the life of the Algerian people, had guarded threatened areas, had watched the roads, had sometimes taught in the schools and taken care of children; they had then returned to France profoundly convinced that it was perfectly possible for the two communities to live together and that there was nothing in the Moslem mind which was opposed to the idea of France remaining in Algeria.

69. He noted that Mr. Zeineddine had been guilty of a minor error in quoting Jaurés. The man to whom he (Mr. Pineau) had referred at the eleventh session was Mr. Benito Juárez, one of the most outstanding men of Latin America.

70. Referring to the fears which he had voiced—and he had done so with due discretion—regarding the threat of communism in Algeria, the representative of Syria had said that a country which escaped from one foreign master would be careful not to fall victim to another. He had noticed, by the way, that the representative of Syria had refrained from mentioning his own country as proof of his statement.

71. Mr. ZEINEDDINE (Syria) recalled that certain members of the Commission engaged in the investigation of which the representative of France had just spoken had had to resign because they found themselves unable to carry out their mission in the proper way.

72. He felt grave doubts about the steps taken to punish those responsible for acts of repression, for the information which he had received, by 31 October 1957, indicated that the policy of repression was being continued on an even larger scale than before.

73. He did not want to dwell on that aspect of the Algerian problem, but it seemed to him very important to recognize the existence of a moral revolt in France, which contradicted the opinion of the representative of France that the French people approved of the war in Algeria.

74. As for the communist threat, the representative of France was very much mistaken if he thought that Syria was dominated or influenced by communism. There were some communists in Syria, but they were only a feeble minority. In France, on the other hand, the Communists represented more than one-fourth of the population and even the Socialists generally held political beliefs similar to the communist ideology, if not in their methods, at least in their objectives. He did not believe that countries like France, the

United Kingdom and the United States, which had been allies of the Soviet Union during the war against fascism, were under the influence of any particular ideology except their own. Nor did he believe that countries which at one time had been able to collaborate with the Soviet Union, such as Turkey during its liberation movement and other countries in the Middle East, had adopted any ideology except their own.

75. In any case, the United Nations was not considering the question of ideology. All people were free to think as they chose. The important thing was to maintain international relations in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

76. Mr. PINEAU (France) wished for the sake of accuracy to point out that the representative of Syria had confused the International Commission against Concentration Camp Practices with a purely French commission which had been set up by the Government. The International Commission was composed of members from different countries, none of whom had ever resigned.

77. He recalled that whenever regrettable occurrences in Algeria had been drawn to the attention of the French Government, it had always given orders to put a stop to them and had always looked for the guilty persons. He asked whether there was any representative in the First Committee who could supply proof that the FLN had shown the same attitude.

78. Mr. ZEINEDDINE (Syria) explained that he had not meant the International Commission against Concentration Camp Practices, but the Commission de sauvegarde des droits et des libertés individuels, which had been set up in France.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.