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CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 59: The question of Algeria (continued)	299

Chairman: Mr. Djalal ABDOH (Iran).

AGENDA ITEM 59

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

1. Mr. NUÑEZ PORTUONDO (Cuba) said that the United Nations was no panacea for all the world's ills; its Charter was the only guarantee it provided to Member States. Failure to observe the Charter would result in the adoption of resolutions which could not be implemented, would create disunity among Member States and destroy the prestige of the Organization as a whole. There could be no doubt regarding the meaning of Article 2, paragraph 7: it clearly applied to the Algerian question. France had entered the United Nations with Algeria as part of its national territory; at the time, no Member State and no representative of Algeria had any doubt about it. Had any such doubt been expressed, France would not have joined the Organization.

2. While the Cuban Government recognized the good faith of the representative of Tunisia and admired the position he had taken on other United Nations problems, it considered that Tunisia was an interested party in the Algerian issue and could not agree with its contention that Algeria was not a part of France, and that the Assembly was therefore competent to intervene. It was not competent to do so unless France should decide, by a constitutional reform on which the representatives of Algeria would have expressed their views, to revise the French Constitution.

3. Consequently, in the view of the Cuban delegation, the United Nations could not issue directives to France on how to settle the Algerian problem, and Cuba could only vote in favour of a draft resolution acceptable to France. The Cuban delegation deplored the heated charges made that France was illegally occupying Algeria; the Members were well aware that there were many States which had once been sovereign and free and were now being occupied by foreign armies. Moreover, while some Governments earnestly believed that the Algerian problem could be solved if the prohibition contained in Article 2, paragraph 7, were disregarded, others were bent on destroying France because it to them represented an obstacle to their desire to replace democratic institutions by a totalitarianism which would deny the most elementary human rights and to spread a form of colonialism more ruthless than history had ever known.

4. Cuba would not contribute to any initiative which

would weaken or undermine France as a great Power. A strong France, economically and militarily, would discourage those who sought to enslave defenceless peoples. Those who demanded that France should give up Algeria should set an example by giving up the advantages which they had recently acquired by force.

5. Mr. FAWZI (Egypt) said that the Algerian question was pre-eminently an international problem. Egypt recognized the right of the Algerian people to self-determination, a right established in the Charter of the United Nations which could not be written off by France by means of a legal fiction. The war which France was waging against Algeria was contrary to the Charter and to international law. For moral, political and economic reasons, it was imperative to put an end to the bloodshed and to arrive at a just solution.

6. Although the resolution on Algeria adopted unanimously at the eleventh session (1012 (XI)) had been moderate and conciliatory, it had not been implemented and the situation in Algeria had since deteriorated so gravely as to make the prospects for a settlement even more remote. The *loi-cadre* (basic law) did not represent a solution: it was to be imposed without consultation of the Algerian people; it maintained that Algeria was part of France; and it provided for partition of the country. Moreover, it had been rejected by the Algerians. The time had come to recognize a basic reality: the Algerian people had already, by their actions, written their declaration of independence. That reality was proved by the presence of more than 500,000 French troops fighting in Algeria. It could not be changed by the *loi-cadre* or any political juggling; it should be acknowledged with good grace. The French attempt to codify Algeria's destiny had failed; it had not shaken the determination of the Algerians to be free. To save itself from moral and material bankruptcy, France should abandon that attempt.

7. Egypt wanted France to live, not as a destroyer of United Nations principles or as an enemy to itself, but as an honoured member of a truly free community of nations working co-operatively for a better world. Egypt wanted the Moslems and non-Moslems in Algeria to enjoy full rights and complete security; Egypt wanted a free Algeria as a good neighbour to a France which honoured freedom and once again accepted the principles of the Charter.

8. Mr. AVEROFF-TOSSIZZA (Greece) said that the presence of the French in North Africa should be viewed less as an instrument of political domination than as one of civilization and progress. For over a century the French and the Arabs had co-operated to develop the culture of the area and had fought together in the defence of French and Arab soil. Especially in Algeria, where the bonds between French and Arabs were very close, it was natural for France to resent a break-down in co-operation. Greece deplored the situation in Algeria, for it was a fratricidal struggle

resulting from misunderstanding, confusion and delay. It could be resolved only by a recognition of realities, although it was of course too late to compensate for the loss of human life on both sides. At all costs, the bloodshed in Algeria must be ended.

9. The French were beginning to understand the realities of the Algerian situation; they were on the right road. They were beginning to realize that it was no longer possible to maintain political domination by force; force could have no effect on the growing political consciousness of the Algerians; the national aspirations of the Algerian people would be fulfilled in the long run. It was because France realized those truths that it was proposing free elections and negotiations. If those negotiations were indeed free of political preconditions, if they were to be held between France and the elected representatives of Algeria, and if they were to bear on all the points in dispute, the prospects of a settlement were good. It was understandable that the absence of mutual trust should give rise to reservations on both sides, and the offer of mediation made by the Governments of Tunisia and Morocco could be useful in effecting a rapprochement.

10. The loi-cadre need not be an obstacle to negotiations. It was a unilateral attempt to make progress, but it was also subject to negotiation, for only a bilateral agreement would be effective. Moreover, the loi-cadre recognized a principle vital to the future of Algeria: by providing for a single electoral college, it recognized the unity of the Algerian people and territory. On the other hand, no unitary State was without its minority groups, and provision had to be made to secure their rights; that did not necessarily mean partition of the country.

11. France should show the same good will in Algeria as it had shown in other parts of the world where it had lost colonies, but gained friends. It was imperative to do so because the destiny of the Algerian people would inevitably be shaped by the Algerians and its desire for freedom and independence was supported by all the North African nations. The basic principle of self-determination must be applied.

12. No preconditions to the negotiations were envisaged, and if the Algerian demand for independence was not excluded from negotiation, the French proposal was reasonable and should be accepted. The Greek delegation was hopeful of a solution which would be in the interests of both the French and the Algerians, for such a solution would also satisfy the concern of the Mediterranean peoples, among them, Greece. North Africa bore the imprint of French culture and had traditionally been oriented towards France; there were immense potentialities for constructive relations between France and all the nations of the area. France was concerned not to lose the Algerian people; Algeria was concerned not to lose France and yet to win Algeria; the United Nations should be concerned to help the two parties.

13. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) pointed out that France had shown respect for the United Nations by agreeing to inclusion of the Algerian question in the agenda and its discussion in the Committee. The position of France had been determined by its national tradition of more than a century of political, administrative, economic and cultural activity in Algeria, by its international position, by the interests of more than one million Frenchmen living in Algeria, by its economic ties to

the country, and by its conviction that its civilizing mission there had not been completed. The Algerian position was that of a country swept by Arab nationalism, and obsessed with the magic words "freedom" and "independence" to the point where it was prepared to make supreme sacrifices. The two positions were bound to clash and tragedy was inevitable. However, it was possible to reconcile the two positions because there was an essential harmony between the real interests of France and Algeria, a harmony built on the political institutions inspired by French democracy, on economic relations established by French capital investment and technical skills, and on the educational and cultural influence which France had exerted in Algeria for nearly 130 years. It was in that real harmony that a basis should be sought for a solution of the Algerian question.

14. The role of the United Nations was necessarily limited. It was limited in the first place by the legal prohibitions of the Charter. Those prohibitions were not mere technicalities; they were standards of conduct, standards of law and of prudence. The United Nations could not legally revise the constitutional structure of France. France, like all other States which had signed the Charter, could not countenance any interference in its internal structure, and the Organization had neither the right nor the authority to interfere in it. Yet, it had been stated that the Algerian issue could not be settled unless there was such a constitutional reform. That would have to be a unilateral and individual act of France, although the structure of States could also be changed by acts beyond the scope of juridical norms, to which the rules of belligerency might apply. The United Nations could not, in a recommendation, implicitly or explicitly advise or recognize changes in the constitutional structure of France.

15. Nevertheless, the United Nations could properly be concerned to end the bloodshed in Algeria, even though it recognized that there must be a voluntary and spontaneous acceptance of a cease-fire by both sides. Without prejudging the negotiations which France was offering, the United Nations, in exercise of its moral competence, could urge a cease-fire. In that connexion, he paid a tribute to the disinterested offer of mediation made by Tunisia and Morocco.

16. Basically, the Algerian question was one of respecting the expressed will of the Algerian people. That will could be expressed only by free elections; it could not be negotiated. The single electoral college provided in the loi-cadre was an affirmation of the unity of Algeria, and the provisions for respect of minority rights, the administration of justice and local self-government for the various Algerian communities were the very foundation of political freedom. The Peruvian delegation was confident that France would carry out genuinely free elections in Algeria.

17. Thus, the role of the United Nations was limited to an expression of concern for a cease-fire, and an expression of confidence that France would carry out free elections. The Peruvian delegation was convinced that France had the moral fibre, the intellectual flexibility and the human resourcefulness to cope with all subsequent contingencies in Algeria by just and humane measures.

18. Mr. AHMED (Pakistan) noted that the hope for a peaceful, democratic and just solution to the Algerian

question expressed by the General Assembly at its eleventh session (resolution 1012 (XI)) had not been realized. Since that time the suffering and loss of life in Algeria had continued, the area of hostilities had not decreased, the conflict had had direct repercussions in Morocco and Tunisia, while its disquieting by-products were having an effect on African nationalism, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was being stripped of its strength.

19. The issue of the competence of the United Nations to discuss the question of Algeria had been fully examined during the tenth and eleventh sessions of the General Assembly. As his delegation had always maintained, the question did not fall within the domestic jurisdiction of France, but was a cause for international concern.

20. Shocking as the charges and counter-charges of terrorism which had been made in the Committee were, they should not be allowed to distort its judgement. Repression in Algeria had engendered terrorism which, in turn, was being met by counter-terrorism. Violent methods, though they were always to be deplored, could not invalidate the legitimate aspirations of the Algerian people.

21. That the people of Algeria should be struggling for their political rights was not surprising at the present moment in history. Over a score of new nations had achieved freedom from colonial rule since the Second World War and the world could not afford to ignore the strength of the current of self-realization those nations represented. It was within the framework of that inexorable reality that the future of Algeria must be considered by all who respected the principle of self-determination and who believed in strengthening world peace.

22. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pineau, had put forward (913th meeting) his Government's proposals for the settlement of the problem namely, a cease-fire, elections and finally negotiations, and he had stated that the *loi-cadre* would provide the machinery for the evolution of Algerian institutions and permit adaptation of the powers devolving upon the different legislative and executive organs envisaged in it. It had been argued, however, that the *loi-cadre* would provide a very limited framework for the development of Algerian institutions and would not permit the Algerian people to exercise freely and fully their right to decide their own future. The solution put forward by France had been compared unfavourably with the statement of the French representative at the eleventh session (843rd meeting) that his Government desired a negotiated and not an imposed solution. His delegation shared the apprehensions expressed by the critics of the *loi-cadre*, first, because it was a unilateral measure which lacked the fundamental element of consent and was therefore incompatible with democratic principles; secondly, because it contained the seeds of a permanent division of Algeria into several parts, with little prospect of their emergence into a federated unit; thirdly, because it transferred only limited power to the people; fourthly, because, far from more fully articulating the personality of Algeria, it endangered the integrity and existence of that personality; and fifthly, because it ruled out, apparently indefinitely, what had been called Algeria's vocation for independence and the constitution of an Algerian State. For those reasons, his delegation considered that the

loi-cadre was in many respects less liberal than the Statute of Algeria of 1947, which had, however, never been implemented.

23. His delegation was aware of the difficulties facing the French Government and Parliament in attempting to solve the problem and sympathized with their efforts to overcome them. The most important of those obstacles was the existence of the French colons in Algeria. It was understandable that France should be concerned about their future, but that minority could hardly expect to prevent for all time the attainment by the majority of the population of their rights, or to perpetuate the privileges acquired as the result of an accident of history. Satisfactory solutions to similar problems had been found elsewhere, and there was no reason why such a solution could not be found in Algeria. Moreover, so long as the problem remained unsettled, the rights and safety of the French minority would remain in jeopardy. Only a generous understanding with the majority of the Algerian people could provide a durable guaranty of its rights and interests.

24. The enactment of the *loi-cadre* would not enhance the prospects of a cease-fire in Algeria or bring the day of a permanent settlement any closer. As the Tunisian representative had said (914th meeting), the conditions for negotiations laid down by France during the last session had been more realistic and more promising than the present offer to negotiate within the framework of that law. It was therefore not surprising that the Algerian nationalist leaders had rejected the offer. His delegation could not believe that the *loi-cadre* was France's last word.

25. Mr. Pineau had spoken of his country's hope of associating the North African countries with itself in a great economic community for the development of the area. But such a community could not become a reality so long as the heart of the region to be developed was in the throes of an armed revolt, nor would the lure of economic gain induce a people to renounce its political aspirations. Only a negotiated settlement of the Algerian problem could bring that project into existence. It was significant that all three North African components of the future community, including Algeria, had expressed themselves in favour of a North African federation linked with France by close ties. The disparity between the political status of Algeria and that of Tunisia and Morocco was perhaps the greatest obstacle to such a federation, for a federation made up of unequal members, some of whom were sovereign and others subordinate, was impossible.

26. The situation in Algeria had reached a complete deadlock. The question before the United Nations was therefore whether it should allow the parties to destroy every possibility of an amicable settlement and to fight the issue out to the bitter end. Such a course would be contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and would be an abdication of its responsibility for the adjustment of situations threatening international peace and security. It would further widen the gulf between France and the people of Algeria, while the Asian and African peoples would be confirmed in their identification of the West with all the evils of colonialism. Such an identification would be deplorable at a moment in history when the struggle for competitive coexistence had entered perhaps its most critical phase.

27. The present situation called for a further exploration of other solutions on a basis agreed to by the parties. The offer of good offices made by the King of Morocco and the President of Tunisia was constructive; his delegation still hoped that France would find it possible to accept that offer. All available means of peaceful adjustment in accordance with the principles of the Charter should be fully utilized by the parties concerned. The quick achievement of a just solution to the tragic problem of Algeria was the earnest desire of all friends of France.

28. Mr. MURAYATI (Yemen) said it was his delegation's conviction that Algeria, like many other nations which had freed themselves from colonialism, must one day achieve its independence and that it was the solemn duty of the United Nations to assist it in that endeavour. Consequently, the continuance of the present state of affairs in Algeria would not only be detrimental to the general welfare of its people and to friendly relations among nations but would impair the very aims and principles of the United Nations.

29. France, in its futile efforts to strip the Algerian people of its identity, its culture and its nationality was practising the most brutal and most obsolete kind of colonialism. No one could seriously reproach the Algerians for their struggle to gain their freedom and independence; thus, France alone must be condemned for the bloodshed going on there. An enlightened French policy must be founded on the recognition of a sovereign Algerian entity with equal rights and duties in the family of nations.

30. His delegation viewed with deep concern the failure of the efforts made to promote a peaceful settlement of the dispute by the parties directly concerned, and the intensification by France—in open defiance of the conscience of mankind—of its war of extermination against a nation determined to live in freedom and independence. In those circumstances, it was the General Assembly's duty to take further measures to support and encourage the national movement in Algeria. In so doing, it would uphold its own dignity, save present and future generations from hatred and bitterness, and rescue France from an untenable position.

31. A unilateral French declaration on Algeria had been invoked to support the argument that the Algerian tragedy was no concern of the United Nations. But such a question could be decided only by the United Nations, not by France alone. The question of Algeria was an international dispute which represented a serious threat to peace and security. Moreover, the United Nations had already dealt with the question of Algeria more than once. It could not therefore be considered a domestic issue.

32. Much had been said about the status of the European residents of Algeria. In his delegation's view, no problem of minorities could exist in an independent Algeria, for international law and other international undertakings would guarantee them the full enjoyment of their rights. It was the duty of the General Assembly both to reaffirm that the French Government must cease its useless efforts to deprive Algeria of its identity and to employ all the power at its command to bring about a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

33. Mr. MICHALOWSKI (Poland) said it was his delegation's view that the Algerian problem could be solved

only on the basis of the right of self-determination. The Algerian people could not be denied what other Asian and African peoples had achieved in recent years, and what had recently been gained by the people of Morocco and Tunisia, who shared the same race, religion, historical background, customs and language, and had reached the same level of cultural development and political maturity.

34. Legal quibbles to the effect that Algeria's status was different from that of Morocco and Tunisia could not change the fact that there was a mature Algerian people which was conscious of its national identity, that it demanded the right to determine its own destiny freely, and that it was fighting for the implementation of that right. Proposals which did not take those basic facts into account could not be implemented. For Poland, the right of every nation to self-determination was a basic and inviolable principle of international law, and its approach to the struggle of any colonial people for freedom and independence had always been characterized by sympathy and understanding. It looked on the struggle of the Algerian people in the same way, and was ready to contribute in the United Nations to the realization of that people's rights.

35. Other factors, however, must also be taken into consideration when decisions on the Algerian question were made. The most important of those factors, for Poland, was the fact that one of the parties involved in the conflict was France. The historical ties which bound the peoples of France and Poland together made it easy to understand why France's problems could not leave Poland indifferent. But stronger even than the ties of historical tradition was the voice of political realism. Europe needed a strong and independent France, and a France entangled in the hopeless, unjust and unnecessary war in Algeria could not fulfil its important historical role.

36. The tragedy of Algeria was no longer a question of Franco-Algerian relations alone; it had long ago become, and was at present, a source of international tension. The worsening of relations between France and the North African countries could lead only to a further deterioration of the situation in Africa and the Middle East. The stubborn and senseless prolongation of the war was daily increasing the difficulty of reaching an agreement and was gradually allowing the whole problem to become an object of international scheming and intrigues of third parties; it would, furthermore, make even more difficult any reasonable and mutually beneficial relationship between France and Algeria in the future. Every day of bloodshed decreased the possibility of such future relations, and worked against the best interests of both nations.

37. It depended primarily upon France itself whether a solution to the Algerian problem would be reached, as his delegation hoped, with its participation. It was not Poland's task to suggest a specific solution, and he did not wish to give the impression that he was lecturing France on its national interests or giving it advice on how to act in the matter. But his delegation considered that a bold solution to the Algerian problem, on the basis of a recognition of the right of the Algerian people to independence, would be proof, not of France's weakness, but of its strength. Political realism had always been one of the main characteristics of France's policy. His delegation hoped that that realism

would once again prevail and would assist the General Assembly to find a new approach to the problem.

38. In that hope, his delegation would support any proposal calling on both parties to engage, as soon as possible, in negotiations which would facilitate the reaching of a solution that would recognize the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and that would, at the same time, safeguard the interests of France in Algeria. Such negotiations would create the basis for the re-establishment of a lasting peace in that part of the world and for the peaceful coexistence of the France and Algerian peoples. They would also contribute to the strengthening of peace throughout the world.

39. Mr. CHAPMAN (Ghana) said that his country fully endorsed the hope expressed in General Assembly resolution 1012 (XI) that a peaceful, democratic and just solution of the Algerian question would be found. Ghana, in common with other African States, had recently won independence from colonial rule and it therefore had a particular interest in the Algerian question, but that interest was not narrow or chauvinistic.

40. His country maintained the most cordial relations with France and hoped that with French co-operation a just and democratic solution would be found to the problem which was embittering relations between France and the new Africa.

41. Some delegations had maintained that the question was one of domestic jurisdiction and thus outside the competence of the United Nations. It was significant that the delegations which had thus invoked Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter were all colonial Powers seeking to take refuge behind the letter of the law because conditions in some of the territories under their administration would not bear United Nations scrutiny. It was to the credit of France that its delegation was taking part in the debate.

42. At a time when thousands of Frenchmen and Algerians were engaged in a bitter struggle, it could not be maintained that the United Nations was not competent to do what it could to bring about a solution of the problem. The Algerian tragedy was the concern of the whole world because it represented the use of force to deny fundamental human rights to a people subject to foreign rule.

43. The pivot of the French case seemed to be that Algeria had always been regarded as a part of France and thus could not demand independence. Mr. Pineau had said that Franco-Algerian unity was absolute and unchangeable, yet he was on record as having stated before the French National Assembly at its second meeting on 28 July 1955 that it must be asked whether the myth of integration should be maintained since integration was valid only if it corresponded to reality. Another speaker in the same debate in the National Assembly had suggested that the policy of integration or assimilation of Algeria was out of date. The inference was that the people of France as a whole had never regarded Algeria as a part of France; yet the Committee was being asked to accept a "myth" as a basis for denying the right of self-determination to the Algerian people. The factors which made Algeria a part of France had never been defined. Algeria had been occupied after an unprovoked aggression; it had formerly been an independent and sovereign State with

diplomatic representation in the capital of the country which now claimed it as a province. It was difficult to understand how an African country could thus become a province of a European State.

44. It had also been maintained that the freedom fighters of Algeria were a small minority of terrorists, yet the fact remained that that small minority was tying down 500,000 men of the French army in a battle for a lost cause.

45. The tragedy of Algeria, if not checked, would destroy what little prestige was left to the colonial Powers, not only in the Middle East, where their influence had already waned in consequence of the Egyptian expedition, but all over Africa and the rest of the world as well. Refusal to face facts had already cost France prestige in Indo-China and the loss of economic interests which could have been preserved if a more enlightened policy had been followed. If the same mistake were made in Algeria, the French would certainly lose what they were trying to preserve.

46. Mr. ULLRICH (Czechoslovakia) said that the reappearance of the question of Algeria on the agenda was proof of the fact that the hopes expressed in General Assembly resolution 1012 (XI) had been frustrated and that the parties concerned had failed to achieve by negotiation a peaceful, democratic and just solution.

47. As many delegations had pointed out, the primary responsibility for the present situation in Algeria rested with those circles in France which were anxious to retain their present colonial position in Algeria. For many years the French colonialists had been waging a war of extermination against the people of Algeria struggling for freedom from the colonial yoke. The French Government was using an army of more than half a million men armed with the most modern weapons and reinforced by armoured vehicles and aircraft. For the most part, the ground forces and aircraft used by the French had been made available through NATO. Only the military aid from the United States and the participation of France in the aggressive North Atlantic coalition enabled French colonialist circles to mobilize such a vast number of troops against the Algerian patriots.

48. The fighting in Algeria had already caused widespread suffering and sacrifices on both sides, and it was therefore imperative that all possible steps should be taken to settle the problem if further deterioration of the situation was to be prevented. Practically the whole of Algeria, with the exception of the colonists, was engaged in the struggle against French domination, and the continuation of military operations could only increase the sufferings of the Algerian people and harm the peace and security of the whole world.

49. World public opinion was indignant at the methods used by the French authorities, particularly in extorting confessions regarding participation in the national liberation movement. The International Commission against Concentration Camp Practices, which had been in Algeria with the consent of the French Government, had stated in its report that in many cases the hearings of detained persons had been accompanied by violence and torture. The Algerian population of both Moslem and European origin would be satisfied with proposals for some solution through reforms, but the people of Algeria had no confidence that such reforms would ever materialize because they had been made promises

which had either not been fulfilled or had turned out in practice to represent no genuine contribution to a settlement.

50. The events in Algeria were characteristic of the present time. The colonial and dependent nations were struggling to be free and the process could not be stopped. The people of Czechoslovakia fully sympathized with the struggle of those nations for national liberation.

51. The problem of Algeria could be solved by peaceful, democratic and just means, as resolution 1012 (XI) had demanded. A solution based on respect for the right of self-determination, equality of rights and independence, as well as the right to freedom, would establish

new relations between France and Algeria on a sound basis which would promote the development of the traditional bonds between both countries.

52. His delegation maintained its view that the United Nations could play a positive role in the solution of the Algerian problem and that its contribution to that end would enhance its authority as an organization devoted primarily to the maintenance of international peace and security. Both parties should settle their disputes in the spirit of the Charter and on the basis of the recognition of the right of the Algerian people to freedom and independence.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.