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Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

AGENDA ITEM 80

Question of Algeria (A/4842 and Add.1) (continued)

1. Mr. SHUKAIRY (Saudi Arabia) began by recalling some of the memorable dates in Algerian history: 5 July 1830, when Algeria had capitulated to France after the heroic battle of the great Algerian leader, Abd-el-Kader; May 1945, when 50,000 Algerians had been killed by the French forces during the victory celebrations; 1 November 1954, when Algeria had resumed the war for independence; and 19 December 1960, when the General Assembly had adopted resolution 1573 (XV).

2. The first attempt to put that resolution into effect had been made some two weeks after its adoption, by the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, which had announced its willingness to enter into negotiations with the French Government on the basis of self-determination. In fact, the plea for negotiations had always been advanced by Algeria and rejected by France. Algeria had resorted to war solely because France had refused to negotiate a peaceful settlement. A French Minister had once angrily observed that negotiations meant war, and the very concept of Algerian independence, which had been endorsed by the General Assembly, had been considered by France as a symptom of insanity.

3. None the less, the Algerians had omitted no occasion to seek negotiations, even when they had been dealing the heaviest blows against the French Army; they had made four attempts to start negotiations in 1956, two in 1957, two in 1958 and four in 1959. Even the Melun meeting of June 1960, held to prepare the ground for negotiations, had taken place at the initiative of the Algerian leaders. In their contacts with delegations to the United Nations, Ministers of the Provisional Government had always urged that General Assembly resolutions should contain a specific call for negotiation.

4. The responses of France had been varied and contradictory. At times, France had shied away; at other times, it had been reluctant to employ the term "negotiations". Finally, the word "pourparlers" had been found with a view to soothing French susceptibilities, and it was that term which the General Assembly had used in its resolutions.

5. The Algerians had demanded not only recourse to negotiation, but also the right to self-determination, as proclaimed by the President of the French Republic,

General de Gaulle, on 16 September 1959 and accepted by the Algerian Provisional Government on 28 September 1959; for that right constituted the platform of their national cause.

6. Moreover, when in January 1961 the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had formally announced its readiness to enter into negotiations in compliance with the General Assembly resolution, it was because it believed passionately in peace and in freedom realized in peace. Its initiative had led to the talks at Evian in May 1961. Despite the vague character of the communiqué issued by the French Government on 30 March 1961, stipulating that the negotiations would centre on self-determination and related problems, the Provisional Government had not wished to expose that ambiguity. On 19 May 1961, immediately before the opening of the Evian talks, the Head of the Provisional Government had issued a declaration from Tunis expressing his desire to see the meeting succeed in the interests of peace and freedom. He had restated the principles which should lead the talks to success, and had made clear the Provisional Government's attitude on all aspects of the Algerian question.

7. The Prime Minister of the Provisional Government had said:

"Negotiations between the French Government and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic will begin tomorrow at Evian.

"Our delegation will come to this meeting with the firm intention of arriving at a final solution of a problem which has existed for 130 years. It will come with the hope of putting an end to the war. If accompanied by the necessary guarantees, peace is possible . . .

"The object of the Evian meeting must be the real and total liberation of Algeria . . ."

8. With regard to the foreign policy of Algeria and its relations with France, the Prime Minister had stated:

"Externally, Algeria intends to maintain fruitful and untrammelled relations with all peoples and, of course, with the French people. Matured by seven years of war, it desires to make its contribution . . . to the consolidation of world peace.

"An independent Algeria will be ready to reach out its hand to France. It will be ready to respect those French interests that do not conflict with Algerian interests. It is in the nature of things that the Algerian people, once freed from colonial servitude, should enjoy the best of relations with the French people.

"Once the war is over and independence gained, equitable relations between the two peoples will be not only possible but desirable. Between our two

peoples there will be place for nothing but free co-operation."

9. On the question of the European minority, the Prime Minister had declared:

"We hope that the Europeans of Algeria understand, once and for all, that a new era is dawning and that they have nothing to gain by throwing in their lot with colonialism. In Algeria, there will be room for all Algerians. A future of peace and progress will open before us."

And desiring to forget the painful past, in exchange for a future bright with promise, the Prime Minister had concluded his statement with the following moving appeal:

"If France is ready to close the gloomy chapter of colonialism, loyally and permanently, we are prepared to bind up our wounds and overcome our bitterness."

10. It was in that spirit that the Algerian delegation, headed by Mr. Belkacem Krim, Vice-Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and composed of representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Economic Development and Information and representatives of the Algerian Army of National Liberation, had gone to Evian. It had been a full delegation, empowered to discuss all problems—political, economic and military—and ready to enter upon negotiations, without prior conditions other than that which the General Assembly had formulated in its resolution 1573 (XV): self-determination on the basis of respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Algeria.

11. Since the United Nations had not been informed by the French Government as to the results of the negotiations, he felt that he should relate what had taken place at Evian.

12. The Chairman of the Algerian delegation at Evian had stated the Algerian case in the simplest and most objective manner, declaring that the problem at issue was that of total decolonization; as the Algerian question was essentially one of colonialism, its solution could be found only through total decolonization. He had further stated that self-determination must be freely exercised, unaccompanied by unrealistic clauses likely to void decolonization of its substance. In the same spirit, he had stressed that the unity of the Algerian people and the territorial integrity of Algeria should in any event be respected. That position was entirely in keeping with the General Assembly resolution.

13. Mr. Belkacem Krim had not confined himself to summing up Algeria's national aspirations. In an attempt to allay France's apprehensions, he had made it quite clear that Algeria's desire for independence reflected no xenophobia and should cause no resentment. In his own words, independence should be conceived of within the framework of fruitful relations between two free peoples—relations which could be developed for the benefit both of the French and of the Algerian peoples.

14. The Algerian delegation had put all its cards on the table, with no bluff, since it had nothing to hide and did not need to resort to manoeuvres or stratagems. Algeria sought independence in order to attain the highest aim—the building of a democratic welfare State for all Algerians without distinction as to language, origin or religion. For Algeria, independ-

ence implied none of the unfortunate aftermaths of an independence movement.

15. In contrast to the frank and sincere approach to the Algerian delegation, the French delegation had, from the outset, resorted to devious strategies. France had come to Evian, not to apply the General Assembly resolution or to negotiate, but in order to gamble. On 20 May 1961, when the French delegation was making its first statement, the French Government had declared a truce in Algeria. On the surface, that step had been well-meant and praiseworthy, but the world was soon to find out that it was a unilateral French measure of which the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had not even been informed—not a truce, which should be a negotiated act. Those tactics had betrayed France's insincerity, as soon as the world had come to know of the special instructions issued to the French Delegate General regarding the enforcement of that "truce". According to those instructions, the French Army would retain full freedom of action, even to the extent of engaging in offensive operations when required.

16. The Provisional Government had not been deceived by that "truce". In a communiqué issued from Tunis on 21 May 1961, it had exposed it as a mere manoeuvre designed to mislead world opinion.

17. On 9 June 1961, the French delegation had presented its "decolonization plan". But in reality the plan was designed to perpetuate imperialism. It provided, for instance, that the European minority should exercise rights guaranteed under the Constitution and be represented in the Algerian Parliament. The Sahara was considered to be an integral part of French territory, even though the myth of a French Algeria had collapsed. France wished to reserve for itself certain areas of Algeria, over which it would exercise full sovereignty, for military purposes. For the Algerians, acceptance of such a plan would mean the fragmentation of its people and the end of the country's territorial integrity. Nevertheless, the Algerian delegation continued to negotiate patiently; but the French delegation had refused to conform to the Charter of the United Nations or the General Assembly resolutions. Indeed, it had, on its own initiative, decided to suspend the talks; that, no less than the "truce" declared at the beginning of the negotiations, was simply a unilateral move. France had then launched a campaign of psychological warfare, trying to shift the blame for the situation onto the Algerian Provisional Government.

18. Contrary to what had been stated at the time by the Chairman of the French delegation, the Algerian delegation had clearly expressed its views on all the issues under discussion. On 10 June 1961 it had submitted in writing a plan for decolonization and co-operation, taking into account all the realities and the human and emotional factors. It had opted in favour of an Algerian Sahara whose wealth would be exploited for the benefit of all States concerned, including France. With regard to the European minority, it had proposed the granting of Algerian citizenship to all who desired it; as a result of that democratic solution, all Algerians without distinction would exercise the same rights and have the same obligations, and would take part in the political life of the nation. As for the question of military bases, the Algerian delegation had rightly stated that the maintenance in Algerian territory of enclaves under French sove-

reignty would compromise Algeria's territorial integrity.

19. The Algerian position had also been made amply clear to the African-Asian group at the United Nations by the representative of the FLN, Mr. Chanderli. He had said that the future Algerian State would guarantee the rights of all its citizens—regardless of origin—but would, of course, refuse to grant special privileges to a particular ethnic group. The Provisional Government, he had added, made a distinction between the question of sovereignty over the Sahara and that of the exploitation of its mineral wealth. That did not debar any country from the right to exploit such wealth, so long as Algerian sovereignty over the territory of the Sahara was respected. As for the military enclaves demanded by France, Mr. Chanderli had shown that they would conflict absolutely with the notion of territorial integrity and with the principle of self-determination.

20. Since the suspension of the Evian negotiations, France had not confined itself to distorting the facts; it had also struck out on three fronts, but in each case it had met with defeat. First, resorting to the old tactic of "divide and rule", it had sought to convince Algeria's neighbour States that the Provisional Government's demands in respect of the Sahara left no room for the claims of those States. Ministers of the Provisional Government had then visited all the countries concerned in order to explain the position of their Government, and the African States had declared that any claims with regard to the Sahara would be solved amicably after Algeria had become independent. Secondly, France had attempted to set up, in Algeria itself, a temporary executive authority made up of Algerian personalities, but had encountered general refusal. Thirdly, President de Gaulle had threatened to undertake a "regroupement" in Algeria—in other words, to partition the country—in the event of the Provisional Government rejecting his plan for an association between France and Algeria. It was no secret that a plan had been worked out whereby the Algerians would be given the desert, semi-desert and mountainous regions, while the French would be given the Oran region, Mostaganem, the Mitidja plain, the Algiers coast and the Bougie region, i.e. the richest land from the agricultural and industrial standpoints. But that plan could not frighten a people which had been fighting for its freedom for 130 years, and in answer to that threat the Provisional Government had designated 5 July 1961 as a national day of protest against the country's partitioning. Despite the measures of intimidation taken by the French military forces, the entire population of Algeria had publicly expressed its feelings and had shown that it regarded the Provisional Government as its lawful Government.

21. The negotiations had been resumed on 20 July 1961 at Lugrin. For the Lugrin meeting, an agenda which gave due weight to all the essential issues had been carefully worked out. To demonstrate its good will, the Algerian delegation had taken up an extremely liberal position on the question of the European minority; as the Algerians had pointed out, it was the first time that a country under colonial rule had taken the responsibility of offering citizenship to nationals of the colonial Power. The Algerian delegation had also indicated its willingness to reach agreement on the exploitation of the Sahara, provided that the latter formed part of Algeria. However, the

French delegation had not made a single conciliatory gesture. Moreover, it had contended that the Sahara was a separate problem; but the Sahara represented four-fifths of Algeria, and the latter's territorial integrity would have no meaning if four-fifths of its territory were treated as a separate issue at the conference table. In addition, all the mineral wealth of the Sahara must be used to further Algeria's economic well-being. If the country was deprived of its sovereignty over those resources, it would be a defeat for the entire United Nations. During the Lugrin negotiations, France had also proposed that the Sahara issue should be laid aside, but the Algerian delegation had refused to agree. As a result, the negotiations had failed, and the entire responsibility for the failure lay with France.

22. President de Gaulle himself had not hesitated to make public the negative position adopted by France during the secret conversations at Evian and Lugrin. The Algerian problem was an extremely difficult one—he had stated on 12 July 1961—because from 1830 to 1958 nothing had been done to solve it. That statement was a confession of guilt rather than a defence of the French position. The logical conclusion to be drawn from it was that it was high time for France to end its interference and leave Algeria to the Algerian people. President de Gaulle had gone on to say that there were more than a million persons of European origin in Algeria who could not be left at the mercy of the rest of the population. That was a flagrant distortion of the actual outlook for the future, since the Algerian Provisional Government was prepared to grant Algerian citizenship to the European inhabitants if they wished to become Algerians, and full rights of residence if they did not. The Provisional Government, which was willing to forget the long years during which the 10 million Algerians had been at the mercy of a handful of Europeans, was offering equality, without discrimination of any kind.

23. Once again envisaging the possibility of partition, President de Gaulle had stated that, if a relationship based on association was not achieved, France would have to regroup in some part of Algeria those inhabitants who refused to belong to a State that was doomed to chaos. But independent Algeria was destined for progress, not chaos; those who were unwilling to be part of Algeria had the choice of leaving. In reality, however, the problem of the European minority was another French myth. Almost all the Europeans in Algeria wished to live there in peace. There was adequate assurance in the fact that Algeria was willing to forget the tragic years when those Europeans had settled in the country in order to subjugate its population, monopolize its wealth and exploit its resources, and that, turning its gaze to the future, Algeria was determined to become a democracy in which the European minority would be able to live and prosper. The celebrated secret organization of the Europeans in Algeria was the creation not of the European community but of retired generals who were seeking power and adventure. Mr. Joxe, Chairman of the French delegation at Evian and Lugrin, had himself revealed France's real attitude during the negotiations. In referring to the European minority, he had used the significant words "our fellow-countrymen". If that was France's attitude, the French authorities should repatriate their "fellow-countrymen" and assume responsibility for them, since, if they remained in Algeria, they would have to become Algerians.

24. In the same statement, Mr. Joxe had noted that the representatives of the FLN had indicated their willingness to discuss any subject, to seek formulae for agreement, and to try to remove the existing difficulties. However—he had added—as soon as the Sahara issue had been raised they had refused to continue the talks unless their sovereignty over the Sahara was recognized forthwith. That was the Algerian position at the negotiations, as described by the Chairman of the French delegation. The Algerian delegation had been prepared to discuss all aspects of the Algerian question; it had insisted only that Algerian sovereignty over the Sahara should be recognized. France had rejected that legitimate demand and, after thus wrecking the negotiations at the very outset, had deplored their failure. In an attempt to justify its position, the French delegation had contended that the future of the Sahara should be decided by the peoples which lived there, and had proposed that there should be ties linking the Sahara, France and Algeria. In support of that position, President de Gaulle had stated on 5 September 1961 that "the Saharan populations" should be consulted with regard to their future under conditions which reflected their dispersion and their diversity. That statement demonstrated the confusion reigning at the Elysée Palace. There were, in fact, no "populations" in the Sahara. The inhabitants of the Sahara were Algerians; together with the rest of the Algerian people, they had been conquered by France in 1830 and had then fought for their freedom and independence. Acceptance of President de Gaulle's terms would mean agreeing to a double partition: the dismemberment of the Algerian people, and the fragmentation of its territory. The projected plebiscite must not be an election "à l'algérienne"; it must embrace the entire population and the entire country, including the Sahara.

25. After causing the negotiations to fail, France had refused to offer any explanation to the United Nations. Moreover, the French delegation in the First Committee had decided, as in the past, not to attend the debate on the Algerian question, whereas the Algerian representatives, although they were present, could not take the place that was rightly theirs. In the meantime, human suffering continued to mount in Algeria as a result of France's negative attitude. The Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, which was now recognized by thirty States representing two-thirds of the world's population, had gone far along the path of conciliation, patience and tolerance. However, patience had its limits; on 15 September 1961, Mr. Ben Khedda, the new Prime Minister, had expressed the view that it was useless to retard Algeria's inevitable attainment of independence and that further delay would only endanger international peace and the future relations between the Algerian and French peoples. He had added that a just and realistic solution was possible, but that it was essential to abandon the negative policy which had led to the suspension of the Evian and Lugrin negotiations. Mr. Ben Khedda had concluded by saying that the Algerians were fighting for a just cause and that their victory was certain. At a time when those peoples which were still dependent were preparing to attain independence—he had stated—it was unthinkable that the Algerian people, which had paid the heaviest tribute to freedom, could remain under colonial rule.

26. The Provisional Government had done everything in its power to make the negotiations succeed. It had displayed great wisdom and moderation. In an inter-

view granted to the weekly publication *Afrique Action* and appearing in the issue of 1-6 November 1961, the Minister for Foreign Affairs had made the following statement, which summed up the policy of the Provisional Government:

"We are intransigent on the question of Algerian sovereignty, both domestically and in foreign affairs... If there is a transitional period, I do not anticipate that all French forces will leave during that period. Nor do I anticipate that France... will find itself deprived overnight of any means of protecting its interests or the interests of the French minority. During that period, the French in Algeria will have to adjust themselves to a purely Algerian governmental authority, and the Algerians will have to adjust themselves to the continued presence of Frenchmen and French interests in their country. Everyone must adapt himself to that situation. There must be co-operation in the Sahara and in Northern Algeria; there will be cultural co-operation and co-operation in matters of transport... and it is essential that such co-operation should be with France... You will witness the gradual establishment of an Algerian police force; its task will be to protect the oil and gas... most of which will be marketed in France and Western Europe, since we are not yet, in Africa, at a stage of development where we can consume large quantities of oil and gas..."

In reply to another question, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government had said:

"The problem of the French minority must be solved... What we ask is that they should no longer regard themselves as something more than ordinary citizens. We are determined to grant them all the rights which will enable them to prosper in Algeria, even if they do not wish to be Algerians."

The Europeans could not ask for more than that without demanding a "French Algeria", a demand which had precipitated the longest struggle for liberation in the entire history of colonialism. As to the Sahara, that region could not be regarded as *res nullius*; it was divided among the countries to which it extended, one of which was Algeria. In 1902, France had itself enacted a law, which had remained in effect for half a century, recognizing the Sahara as an integral part of Algeria.

27. It was the duty of the United Nations to assist in the struggle for freedom and peace. It must appeal to France and Algeria to resume negotiations on the basis of recognition that the principle of self-determination must apply to the entire Algerian people, which was indivisible. The territorial integrity of the Algerian homeland, which was also indivisible, must be respected; there must be neither partition nor fragmentation. There must be a single Algerian State—not a European State, a military State, and an oil State in the Sahara. Algeria was prepared to co-operate with France and to recognize its legitimate interests. The cease-fire must come about by mutual agreement as part of a general political settlement. In order to create an atmosphere favourable to the success of the negotiations, the Algerian leaders who had been abducted in 1956 and were being held captive must be released so that they could rejoin the Provisional Government and share in the effort of peace-making. Algerian prisoners must be accorded the treatment due to them as prisoners of

war and the United Nations should ask the Red Cross to report on the conditions in which they were held.

28. That was, in his opinion, the road to peace in Algeria. It was for France to make the choice between peace and war. If it chose a United Nations peace,

Algeria would accept that decision. If it chose war, however, Algeria would fight until its final liberation was achieved.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.