



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 55:	
Question of Cyprus (<i>continued</i>):	
(a) Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the Island of Cyprus;	
(b) Complaint by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of support from Greece for terrorism in Cyprus.....	243

Chairman: Mr. Víctor A. BELAUNDE (Peru).

AGENDA ITEM 55

Question of Cyprus (A/3120 and Add.1, A/3204 and Add.1, A/C.1/788, A/C.1/789, A/C.1/L.168 to A/C.1/L.170) (*continued*):

- (a) **Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the Island of Cyprus;**
- (b) **Complaint by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of support from Greece for terrorism in Cyprus**

1. Mr. WADSWORTH (United States of America) noted with regret how little progress had been made towards a solution since the question of Cyprus had first been discussed by the United Nations at the ninth session of the General Assembly.

2. During the past year the United States had tried on every possible occasion to facilitate negotiations between the parties — unfortunately, without success. It nevertheless persisted in the belief that a satisfactory solution depended upon the willingness of the parties to reach a settlement by means of negotiation.

3. The United Nations Charter explicitly prescribed the settlement of disputes by direct negotiation. The United States believed that in the case of Cyprus, as in that of Suez, the parties should continue to seek a solution outside the United Nations, for they had not yet considered all the possible solutions. In the circumstances, it would hardly serve any useful purpose to recommend one solution rather than another.

4. As the problem of Cyprus was complex, its solution would not be a simple task. Hence, the primary objective should be to encourage a spirit of co-operation on both sides. The United States hoped that the parties would show the restraint and patience that the situation required. Also, if anything was to be accomplished, it was essential to avoid violence and foreign intervention.

5. As President Eisenhower and Sir Winston Churchill had said in 1954, any solution of the Cyprus question would have to win the support of the entire population of the island.

6. In making any proposal, the United Nations should take care not to aggravate the situation, thereby making a solution more difficult. The United States was prepared to help the Governments and the peoples concerned, to whom it was bound by ties of friendship, to find a constructive solution.

7. The United States did not believe that any of the three draft resolutions—the two presented by Greece (A/C.1/L.168 and A/C.1/L.170) or that of the United Kingdom (A/C.1/L.169)—could contribute to a solution. Whatever their merits, those draft resolutions, if adopted, could only aggravate the situation, and his delegation therefore hoped that their sponsors would not insist on their being put to the vote.

8. Mr. JOJA (Romania) said that the question of Cyprus was a matter of concern not only to the inhabitants of Cyprus and the United Kingdom, but to the world at large. It was a problem which involved a violation of the United Nations Charter by a great Power and the right of peoples to self-determination. Romania attached particular importance to the problem not only because of its friendly relations with Greece, but because of its interest in everything connected with the Mediterranean. The Cyprus question represented a threat to international peace and security and a solution in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter should therefore be found without delay.

9. The island of Cyprus had had a turbulent history. In 1571, the Ottoman Empire had driven out the Venetians and established its rule there. In 1878, Turkey had provisionally ceded Cyprus to England. However, England had unilaterally abrogated the Convention of 1878¹ and had annexed Cyprus to its empire. In 1925, Cyprus had been officially proclaimed a British Crown Colony. It would therefore appear that the British were in Cyprus primarily for colonial reasons.

10. The Cypriot people had repeatedly demonstrated their desire for independence and for union with Greece. In 1950, a plebiscite had been organized by the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Ninety-five per cent of the votes had been cast in favour of union with Greece. Since that time, negotiations had taken place between Archbishop Makarios and the Governor of the island. However, as the United Kingdom Government had been unable to impose its will upon the Cypriots, it had deported the Archbishop.

11. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had stated in July 1956 that his Government could take no definite action without the prior consent of the Turkish Government. Despite its friendship for the Turkish people, however, Romania could consider the question of Cyprus only from the standpoint of justice and the general interest. In his statement at the 848th meeting, the Turkish representative had argued that Cyprus had

¹ Convention of Defensive Alliance between Great Britain and Turkey, signed at Constantinople on 4 June 1878. See *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 69 (1877-1878), pp. 744 ff.

been under Turkish rule for 300 years, and that it had never been under Greek rule. It was hardly necessary to point out that Greece and many other countries had long been under Turkish rule, but that Turkey did not deny their sovereignty today. The Turkish representative had also claimed that the proximity of Cyprus to the Turkish coast would constitute a threat to Turkey if the island belonged to Greece. Yet Mytilene, Chios Samos and Rhodes were also near Turkey, but were not the subject of irredentist claims by that country. Lastly, the Turkish representative had alleged that the inhabitants of Cyprus were not Greeks but Levantines; that question of ethnic affiliation obviously could not be settled by Turkey, but only by the Cypriots themselves.

12. The United Kingdom did not deny the Greek origin of the great majority of Cypriots or the right of self-determination of the inhabitants of Cyprus. However, it imposed unacceptable conditions on the implementation of that right. It refused to grant Cyprus the essential attributes of sovereignty, such as the conduct of foreign relations and the maintenance of public order. The essentially colonialist arguments advanced by the United Kingdom were incompatible with the United Nations Charter and had no foundation in international law.

13. The so-called strategic interests of the United Kingdom in the Middle and Near East were obviously incompatible with the principles of the Charter. It was obvious that the United Kingdom was not defending any real strategic interests, because it was not threatened in that region. Recent events in Egypt had proved that, on the contrary, Cyprus was an offensive base not only for the United Kingdom, but for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a whole. The strategic value of Cyprus explained but did not justify the United Kingdom Government's stubborn insistence on retaining possession of the island. Manifestly, a nation's independence could not be sacrificed to considerations of offensive strategy or to the prestige of a great Power.

14. It had to be admitted that, as the Greek Government had said, the United Kingdom Government had not recognized the right of peoples to self-determination in the case of Cyprus. It was hard to understand why the United Kingdom Government should have so little regard for the fundamental freedoms of the inhabitants of an island which had produced great thinkers who were the pride of European civilization.

15. The United Kingdom's refusal to meet the legitimate demands of the Cypriots was clearly a violation of the Charter—more particularly, of the second paragraph of the preamble and Article 1 paragraph 2, Article 2, paragraph 3 and Article 73 b. The objection that the question was within the domestic jurisdiction of a State was easily refuted because the Cypriots were not a minority forming part of a British territory but represented a country which had been annexed by a unilateral act and was proclaimed a British Crown Colony in 1925, while British rule in Cyprus was the result of a provisional international agreement. Moreover, the Cypriot people had proved its political maturity and its ethnic affiliation by acts which left no doubt of its determination to attain independence.

16. Whatever legal arguments the United Kingdom advanced to justify its domination in Cyprus, those arguments could not legitimately prevent the Cypriot people from exercising their right of self-determination. That was the inalienable and indefeasible right of a

people, irrespective of the historic circumstances in which it had lost its freedom. No better illustration of that moral and legal truth could be found than the example of the former British colonies which had become the United States of America, or Greece, which had long been under Turkish rule.

17. In the present instance, the question of the right of peoples to self-determination was closely linked with the question of the maintenance of international peace and security and, as such, was of concern to the United Nations.

18. Proposals had been made in certain quarters for dividing the island on a linguistic basis. Such proposals seemed to be unsatisfactory, because the distribution of the Turkish population throughout the island was an obstacle to such a division.

19. Today, the people of Cyprus, like other peoples in Asia and Africa, personified the struggle for liberty and independence. The United Nations could not afford to disappoint them; if it did, it would not only be acting contrary to justice, but was likely to disappoint millions of people who were placing their hopes in it. The Cypriots were defending their freedom with the same courage that their ancestors had fought Xerxes, Alexander and Scipio. Whereas Alexander and Scipio might be regarded as symbolizing the relentless march of history, the same could not be said of Sir John Harding and the cause he represented. The United Nations could not fail to come out on the side of reason, justice and history.

20. Sir Leslie MUNRO (New Zealand) said that the question of Cyprus was of interest to New Zealand because of its membership in the Commonwealth, because of New Zealand's friendly relations with Greece and its respect for the interests of Turkey, and also because of the alliance of which the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey were members.

21. In 1941 New Zealand troops had fought side by side with Greek troops against the Nazi invaders. At the time, the United States and the Soviet Union had not yet entered the struggle, and it was only the Commonwealth forces which had come to the aid of Greece, thanks to the existence of a British base in Egypt which had since ceased to exist. Had the Second World War taken place under existing circumstances, Cyprus would unquestionably have played an important part as a British military base. New Zealand was therefore motivated not only by its membership in the Commonwealth, but also by a legitimate concern for the security of the free world.

22. It was obvious that discussion in the United Nations of a dispute between three members of NATO could only be harmful to the security of the free world. There had been deterioration in relations between Greece and Turkey, and the United Kingdom had felt obliged to call the attention of the General Assembly to the support from Greece for terrorism in Cyprus (A/3204 and Add.1). The Greek Government must, unfortunately, be held responsible for that situation. Regardless of what certain representatives had said on the subject, the United Kingdom representative's remarks were not recriminatory, but constituted a statement of facts which the Committee could not ignore.

23. It was also obvious that the Greek Government had inflated the movement for *enosis* (union with Greece) from a vague aspiration to an immediate political objective. The United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C.1/L.169) was fully justified, because the United

Kingdom, Greece and Turkey would be unable to find a peaceful solution to their dispute over the island of Cyprus until the Greek Government set its face against terrorism.

24. The Greek delegation had invoked the principles of the Charter in one of its draft resolutions (A/C.1/L.168). At the eighth session of the General Assembly, during a debate on the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of *apartheid* of the Government of the Union of South Africa, the Greek representative had said that any breach of the principle set out in Article 2, paragraph 7, would undermine the foundations of the United Nations. He had asserted that the Assembly could not make recommendations concerning a matter essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a State without interfering in the internal affairs of that State and that Member States remained the sole judges of the time and methods to be adopted for attaining the objectives of the Charter in their domestic affairs. The Greek representative had also said that the United Nations could only secure full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms if it respected the principle of the national sovereignty of States.² Since Greece admitted British sovereignty in Cyprus, it might well be asked whether Greece's point of view on Article 2, paragraph 7, had changed since the question of Cyprus had been included in the agenda.

25. It would undoubtedly be contended that the question at issue was the Cypriot people's "right of self-determination" and that that was not within the domestic jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. It should again be pointed out in that connexion that the United Nations Charter made no mention of such a right. One of the purposes of the United Nations was to develop friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. New Zealand of course subscribed to that principle, but wished to make it clear that it must be applied to Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the provisions of Article 73 b of the Charter. In other words, the development of their free political institutions had to be progressive and take account of the particular circumstances of each territory. Those circumstances were dependent on a number of geographical, political, historical, legal and other considerations.

26. Contrary to the assertion of the Greek representative (847th meeting), the policy of the United Kingdom was completely in keeping with the provisions of Article 73 b of the Charter. On 19 December 1956, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies had informed the House of Commons, *inter alia*, that his Government had already recognized the principle of self-determination and that, when international conditions permitted, it was prepared to consider the question of giving effect to the principle so that the Turkish and Greek communities would be able freely to determine their own future.

27. On the other hand, the Greek Government was attempting to deprive the United Kingdom of sovereignty over part of its territory, for the purpose of annexing the territory itself. To say the least, such a policy was hardly calculated to encourage friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

28. The Greek Government had recently attempted to conceal its goal of annexation by claiming that it sought

only independence for the people of Cyprus, but that goal had not changed. Greece hoped to make Greek citizens of the entire population of the island, without regard for the Turkish minority's viewpoint.

29. The United Kingdom as the representative of Ceylon had pointed out (849th meeting), had given proof of its readiness to grant self-government in many parts of the world. Lord Radcliffe's mission was further evidence of the United Kingdom's sincere desire to promote self-government in Cyprus.

30. On the other hand, the problem was undeniably one of peculiar difficulty. Terrorist activities, the size of the island, its geographic and economic position, and the composition of its population made any solution an extremely complex matter. There was nevertheless no reason to doubt that, once peace had been restored, considerable progress would be achieved under the United Kingdom's guidance. The cessation of violence was a prerequisite to any settlement of the issue.

31. The General Assembly might therefore adopt a resolution prescribing the restoration of peace and the cessation of violence as essential conditions of a negotiated settlement satisfactory to the island's two communities and to the Governments of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

32. Mr. DE LEQUERICA (Spain) said that the facts of the Cyprus problem were clear. The population of Cyprus was largely Greek in composition and had throughout its history been associated with the development of Greek civilization, which had left an ineradicable mark on the world. During the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish domination had created a *de facto* situation. Turkish rule had been liberal, and it was clear today that it had not prevented the Greek majority from developing its own personality. The geographical position of Cyprus, which was only forty miles from the Turkish coast, and the existence of a relatively large Turkish minority justified Turkey's interest in a settlement of the island's status. Lastly, the British, whose vigilance had so often contributed to the defence of the free world, considered the territory to be an essential base.

33. Where the legal aspect of the question was concerned, a treaty did exist but, even though legal provisions had to be scrupulously complied with, it remained a fact that any treaty was open to revision—that was perhaps particularly true of the Treaty of Lausanne³, which was a product of the aftermath of the war. The trend of opinion in favour of revising that agreement could not be disregarded. Moreover, the Treaty of Lausanne, while recognizing the United Kingdom's authority over the island, provided that the future of the territory should be discussed with the parties concerned. Thus, the door was still open for changes in the legal situation.

34. There was clearly a popular movement in favour of independence, to which the United Nations could not remain indifferent. The future of the Turkish minority could be made the subject of formal guarantees.

35. Confronted with such a situation, the United Nations had a definite duty to perform. While it was not automatically called upon to intervene, it was nevertheless required to express some concern over a dangerous situation. At present, there was a tendency to call on the

³ Treaty of Peace between the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Roumania and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State, and Turkey, signed at Lausanne on 24 July 1923. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XXVIII, 1924, pp. 11 ff.

² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee*, 33rd meeting.

United Nations to settle every kind of problem and even to anticipate the course of the self-determination movement. If such a tendency were acted upon, the world was likely to be reduced to chaos. Spanish history showed that Spain had always endeavoured to settle thorny situations through bilateral negotiations and thus to avoid inflaming passions. In the present case, as in that of Algeria, the Spanish delegation felt that it was necessary to place a restricted interpretation on the right of peoples to self-determination, in order to prevent a deterioration of the situation which would be to the advantage of none of the parties. A similar view had been taken by President Lincoln of the United States when he had felt obliged to take action against the southern States in order to save the American nation.

36. If the parties concerned really desired it, a solution could be found to the problem of Cyprus, provided account was taken of all the factors involved. To be sure, the acts of terrorism which had been described could not be too strongly decried. On the other hand, the General Assembly could not afford to take a stand on those actions on the basis of a unilateral statement by one of the parties. And even if investigation confirmed the facts, it would be necessary to relate them to their context and to bear in mind that clashes between peoples had occurred in every country of the world and had given rise to regrettable excesses, but that such events had nevertheless not been decisive. In that connexion, it was regrettable that the chief of the British Information Service had described the liberation movement on Cyprus as a manifestation of widespread juvenile delinquency. Such movements had always been carried on largely by the young.

37. The United Kingdom's anxiety was, of course, very understandable, and although the Spanish delegation could not accept an unrestricted application of the principle of self-determination, neither could it support a system of international policing as applied by the great Powers during the nineteenth century.

38. The Cyprus dispute involved three allied Powers. In seeking a solution of the problem now dividing them, the General Assembly should keep in mind that they would certainly be reconciled at some time. The Greek interests were obvious; so were the Turkish. Recently, the representative of the Soviet Union had attacked the principle of United States bases in Spain and had protested against such establishments (589th plenary meeting). For its part, Spain welcomed the bases, which protected the free world, and in the same way fully appreciated the strategic importance of Cyprus. As the United Kingdom experts seemed to consider the island much more important for the members of NATO as a whole than for the United Kingdom alone, that consideration, among others, might facilitate the solution of the problem.

39. Only negotiations, and not reprisals, would lead to a settlement of such an explosive situation. Provided that everyone co-operated, there was every ground for believing that a solution might be found, without violence, without any attempt to crush a minority and with due consideration of the interests of the parties involved.

40. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) said that, although his country had no vital interests in Cyprus or the Mediterranean area, conditions in one part of the world did have repercussions elsewhere. That was why Liberia felt impelled to express its anxiety concerning the present situation. It was sad to see the United Kingdom,

Greece and Turkey, who were united in a single alliance, making serious accusations against each other, and there could be no denying that such accusations merely complicated the problem.

41. The United Kingdom delegation had raised the question of intervention by the Greek Government in the affairs of Cyprus, which it regarded as a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. It was difficult to contest the point. Nevertheless, he wondered to what extent a charge of that kind could prevent the United Nations from dealing with the question of Cyprus. It would seem that, as relations between two friendly States had become extremely strained, the Assembly, whose duty it was to reduce the tension, was justified in taking action, in default of which it might have to cope with something worse. In the circumstances, it was the Assembly's duty, therefore, to appeal to the Governments concerned to cease all hostile acts and seek a solution of the Cyprus problem through peaceful negotiation. The Liberian delegation would vote in favour of any draft resolution on those lines.

42. Turning to the draft resolution proposed by Greece (A/C.1/L.168), he said that, although Liberia was a loyal supporter of the principle of self-determination, it wondered whether that principle could be peacefully applied in Cyprus under the existing conditions. The interests of three States were involved, and the problem was complicated by ethnic, geographical and strategic factors. Turkey was supporting a Turkish minority on an island that had formerly been one of its possessions and was now of strategic importance to it. Turkey felt that, in view of the strategic position of Cyprus, the preferable course was for it to remain under United Kingdom control rather than to come under Greek control.

43. The Greek Cypriots, supported by the Greek Government, were calling for the application of the right of peoples to self-determination. The United Kingdom and Turkey felt that Greece really wanted to annex Cyprus, but the Greek delegation had not so far indicated any such intention.

44. The United Kingdom, as the administering Power, had the responsibility of protecting the people of Cyprus and maintaining order. The past record of the United Kingdom was a guarantee of its intention to bring about the emancipation of that Territory just as it had done in the case of many other British colonies. Moreover, a draft constitution⁴ had already been drafted for Cyprus, but had been rejected by the Greek Cypriots and the Greek Government. It should also be pointed out that the United Kingdom could not withdraw from Cyprus at present without there being bloodshed immediately after its departure.

45. It had been suggested that the island should be divided between the Greek and Turkish populations, but as 42 per cent of the land was in the hands of the Turkish Cypriots, who numbered only one-fifth of the Greek Cypriot population, it was difficult to see on what basis the division could be made without prejudicing the interests of either party.

46. It was very difficult for the United Nations to envisage, at present, any action which would not make the situation worse. To support the Greek request would only aggravate the situation. It would apparently be necessary to censure both parties, as both had had recourse to violence. In reality, it did not seem that the

⁴ Lord Radcliffe, *Constitutional Proposals for Cyprus* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), Cmd. 42.

General Assembly could take any stand at the present time that would serve a useful purpose.

47. Mr. JAMALI (Iraq) regretted that harmony between Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, which was so essential at the present time, should be disturbed by the question of Cyprus. It would seem, however, that the problem could be solved with a little common sense and goodwill.

48. Some points should be emphasized. From the ethnic point of view, there was a Greek majority and a Turkish minority. Harmony and confidence between the different population groups was essential to any political advancement. From the geographical point of view, Cyprus was part of Asia Minor and not of Europe. In fact, one Syrian nationalist party claimed Cyprus as Syrian national territory. From the legal point of view, Cyprus had changed hands frequently, but its links had been far more with Asia Minor than with Europe. Before becoming a British colony, Cyprus had been Turkish; its legal status had been modified by the Treaty of Lausanne, of which Greece was also a signatory. From a strategic point of view, the island was extremely important to the security of the free world. Finally, Cyprus was more dependent economically on the United Kingdom and Asia Minor than on Greece.

49. For all those reasons, *enosis* did not seem likely to achieve any practical results. Although the Iraqi delegation fully respected the right of self-determination, *enosis*, which meant the union of Cyprus with Greece, did not seem to be desirable, as it would cause too much bitterness among countries which had been traditionally friendly. Turkey had advanced some very valid arguments against such a union.

50. Admitting the principle that *enosis* should be rejected as a practical solution, the following remarks appeared to be appropriate. According to their own statements, neither Greece nor Turkey wished to annex Cyprus, and the recent history of the British Empire showed that the United Kingdom obviously wished to give peoples their independence. The Cypriots should not remain under colonial domination. If colonial domination was to be ended, the interested parties

should get together to consider the procedure by which Cyprus was to achieve independence and to fix a date for it. Special consideration should be given to the status of the Turkish minority, which must be granted full constitutional rights and provided with international guarantees of those rights. It might be possible, for instance, to establish a bicameral legislature, the upper chamber of which would be composed of Greek and non-Greek Cypriots in equal numbers, so that no legislation contrary to the interests of the minority could be adopted. A system of Greek cantons and Turkish cantons, with a considerable measure of local autonomy, might also be envisaged. Those were, of course, merely a few suggestions among others for guaranteeing the rights of the Turkish minority. The strategic problem should be given special attention in view of the importance of Cyprus to the defence of the free world. Cyprus might become a party to an agreement with NATO and the Bagdad Pact signatories. It appeared that the strategic position of Cyprus was regarded by the United Kingdom as fundamental and that the settlement of that question could lead to a peaceful agreement. When, moreover, Cyprus became independent, it should be able to count on financial assistance from the United Kingdom, the United States and the United Nations.

51. In that way, Cyprus might become independent and joint the other Member States in the United Nations. That would be the best international guarantee against possible annexation by Greece.

52. First and foremost, it was necessary to establish understanding between the parties, to promote a willingness to co-operate, and to stop the bloodshed. Once a willingness to co-operate had been evinced, the sponsors of the draft resolutions before the Committee should withdraw them or, at least, agree not to press them to a vote. In that case, the delegation of Iraq would be only too happy to co-sponsor a draft resolution inviting the parties to negotiate for a peaceful settlement in harmony with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.