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SUB-COMMITTEE I HEARS VIEWS OF CHINA AND SOVIET UNION
ON SITUATION IN SEYCHELLES AND ST. HELENA

Sub-Committee I* of the Special Committee of 24 on decolonization, which is concerned with the activities of foreign economic and other interests impeding the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization in territories under colonial control, took up consideration of the situation in the territories of the Seychelles and St. Helena.

It heard statements this morning on the subject by the representatives of China and the Soviet Union.

The Sub-Committee took up this question, on the suggestion of the Chairman, in view of the fact that the working papers were not ready on the two other items of greater priority allotted to it -- the activities of foreign economic and other interests impeding the implementation of the Declaration in southern Africa; and military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in the Territories under their domination.

The Sub-Committee also heard a statement by the Chairman regarding participation by the United Kingdom.

The Sub-Committee will meet again at a date to be announced.

Statement by Chairman

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee, KAMEL E. BELKHIRIA (Tunisia), noted at the outset of the meeting, that the items allotted to it this year included the following:

1. Activities of foreign economic and other interests which were impeding the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization in Southern Rhodesia, Namibia and Territories under Portuguese domination and in all other Territories under colonial domination, and the efforts to eliminate colonialism;

2. Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration which might be impeding the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization; and

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* Members of the Sub-Committee are China, Mali, Sierra Leone, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, USSR, United Republic of Tanzania and Yugoslavia.

3. The situation in the Territories of Seychelles and St. Helena.

He noted that the first two items were of greater priority, but, in view of the fact that the working papers on these two items were not yet ready, he would suggest that the Sub-Committee take up the question of Seychelles and St. Helena, the working papers on which had already been distributed.

He went on to say that discussion of the first item could begin in June, by which time working papers should be ready on the following: Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bermuda, Namibia, Southern Rhodesia, Territories under Portuguese administration and New Guinea. The Sub-Committee could begin consideration of the second item subsequently.

The Chairman then called attention to the statement by the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24 regarding the 9 March letter from the United Kingdom stating, inter alia, that the United Kingdom did not feel able to take part in the meetings of the Special Committee on decolonization. As regards the meeting of the Sub-Committee, he recalled, the United Kingdom had referred to an earlier note which stated:

"As regards the meetings of the Special Committee's Sub-Committees on Territories under United Kingdom administration, it is the view of the United Kingdom Government that very adequate information is already available about these Territories in the form, for instance, of the working papers prepared by the Secretariat. The Acting Permanent Representative does not feel, therefore, that the United Kingdom Mission could make any useful contribution, at the present stage of the progress of decolonization by taking part in such meetings of the Sub-Committee".

The Chairman said that, in connexion with the consideration of the Territories concerned, members would no doubt wish to take due note of this regrettable decision by the United Kingdom Government.

Statements in Debate

VALERY SAVCHENKO (Soviet Union) said that the item regarding the situation in Seychelles and St. Helena was not a new one; many conclusions and recommendations had already been adopted on it with the aim of granting independence to these two Territories.

He felt that the United Kingdom was putting pressure on the legislature of the Seychelles with the aim of continuing its hold on the islands. He noted that the United People's Party, which was for immediate independence, had obtained 44 per cent of the vote in the elections to the legislature, indicating that there was strong resistance to United Kingdom rule in the Territory.

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He went on to say that foreign economic interests, particularly South African companies, were reaping huge profits at the expense of the local people of Seychelles. This fact, he observed, was not adequately brought out in the working paper on the subject (document A/AC.109/L.790).

He observed that the interests of the administering Power were opposed not only to those of the local population, but also to the interests of the neighbouring countries.

In St. Helena also, he went on, the economy was dominated by South African companies and other imperialist monopolies. These interests impeded the development of local enterprises, he declared.

The working paper on the Seychelles, he added, showed that the hotel industry in the Territory was dominated by United Kingdom interests.

The working paper, he went on, did not provide a clear picture regarding trade, public finance and social conditions in the Seychelles; particularly since the figures given kept changing back and forth from rupees to pounds sterling. Because of this lack of specific data, he added, it was difficult to make a proper economic analysis of the situation in the two Territories.

CHANG YUNG-KUAN (China) observed that Seychelles had been under British colonial rule for a long period, in spite of the fact that the people had the common desire to strive for national independence.

"Any arrangement aimed at justifying the British authorities' oppression and exploitation, while distorting the national aspirations of the people of these islands, was contrary to the facts and therefore untenable", he declared.

He said that the Chinese Government and people had consistently given firm support to the just struggle of the people of various countries to oppose imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and to win and safeguard national independence; it had always held that the oppressed nations under colonial rule should attain genuine national independence free from any foreign interference.

He went on to say that the United States and other Governments had established military installations on Seychelles for the purpose of aggression and expansion. This, he said, was not only a serious act against the desire of the local people, but also posed "a direct menace" to the peace and security of the Indian Ocean.

Such acts of aggression must be exposed and condemned, he declared.

Similarly, he concluded, the white racist regime in South Africa was intensifying its economic expansion in St. Helena, which must also be condemned.