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**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**  
FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE, 1157th  
MEETING

Thursday, 20 April 1961,  
at 10.30 a.m.

New York



**C O N T E N T S**

Agenda item 90:

Complaint by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba regarding the various plans of aggression and acts of intervention being executed by the Government of the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba, constituting a manifest violation of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and a clear threat to international peace and security (*continued*) .....

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**Chairman:** Mr. Karel KURKA (Czechoslovakia).

**AGENDA ITEM 90**

**Complaint by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba regarding the various plans of aggression and acts of intervention being executed by the Government of the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba, constituting a manifest violation of its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and a clear threat to international peace and security (A/4537, A/4543, A/4581, A/4631, A/4701, A/4708, A/4710, A/4716, A/4725, A/C.1/839, A/C.1/840, A/C.1/841, A/C.1/L.274, A/C.1/L.275, A/C.1/L.276, A/C.1/L.277) (*continued*)**

1. Mr. SUBASINGHE (Ceylon) said that the fears of many that action might be organized to prevent the consolidation of the revolution in Cuba had been proved justified by events. The fact that such action had come from outside Cuba raised basic issues of vital importance to the whole world and to the United Nations as a world Organization. Although his delegation understood the sensitivity of the countries of the Western hemisphere to the social revolution which had taken place in Cuba, and for its own part had not taken sides with respect to the Cuban complaint, it believed that the process of change in Cuba could not long be thwarted, and that Member States could facilitate the liberalization of such revolutions by refraining from attempts to strangle them.

2. The question under discussion was not one between the two major power groups alone, it was of direct concern to the many Member States which were small and weak and had just emerged as independent nations. The Governments of those States were endeavouring to catch up with the rest of the world so that their peoples might enjoy at least some of the elementary necessities of a civilized life. In some, the process of change was following a relatively peaceful course; in Cuba, for historical reasons, it had assumed a revolutionary character. Ceylon believed, however, that Cuba—like all nations, for that matter—had the right to decide what type of economic, social and political structure would enable it to achieve its objectives. While everyone was entitled to his opinions on the system Cuba had adopted, it must necessarily arouse deep

forebodings when a Government officially condemned the Government of Cuba and said that it wished the latter to be overthrown, even by military action. What had happened in Cuba could happen elsewhere; Ceylon could not accept such a situation, and, in its opinion, neither could the United Nations.

3. Cuba was in the throes of revolutionary change, and its people should be allowed to work out their own institutions in keeping with their historical and cultural background and in accordance with their economic, social and national interests. Processes and institutions which had been developed in another country over a period of decades could not be transplanted to Cuba at a time when its revolution had not yet even been consolidated. Moreover, Cuba had the right to establish relations with other countries regardless of their political and social systems, if it deemed such relations to be in its national interest; and conversely, other countries had the right to trade, to enter into economic co-operation agreements or to establish friendly relations with Cuba.

4. It was to be regretted that the Cuban question was being approached as a mere by-product of the cold war and not as the natural outcome of the economic, social and political conditions which had prevailed in Cuba. Ceylon appealed to all States, and in particular to the great Powers, to take an objective attitude on the social forces which were at present asserting themselves not only in Cuba but in all under-developed countries, for only then would they be able to formulate correct policies towards those countries. The United Nations, for its part, should take decisive action to prevent the situation from deteriorating and to put an end to armed conflict and civil strife in Cuba; and all Member States should refrain from taking any action which might promote such strife. Ceylon hoped that invasion attempts would not be repeated. If it adopted the policy he had outlined, the United Nations would be safeguarding the fundamental rights of Cuba as a nation and establishing the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

5. Mr. SHUKAIRY (Saudi Arabia) said that the situation in Cuba was extremely serious and might touch off a world conflagration. The main concern of the United Nations must be to maintain peace. The problem should not be viewed in terms of the division of the world into Eastern and Western blocs or of support or opposition to the Castro régime. His country, having a policy of positive neutrality, approached the question with an independent mind. It was not committed to support either of the United States or of the Soviet Union. The primary duty of all Member States was to observe the principle of non-intervention laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. Cuba was a fully sovereign State, and no one had the right to interfere in its affairs, whether militarily, politically, economically or ideologically. It was entitled to choose

drawn into a wider conflagration through the direct clash of great-Power interests. The United Nations had been able to provide assistance in similar circumstances in the past, and it should be able to do so in the present case. Action must immediately be taken to prevent the situation from endangering international peace and security. In that connexion, there was cause for satisfaction in the availability, not only of the resources of the United Nations, but also of those of the OAS. The statements made by the delegations of States members of that organization had stressed the mediatory role which the Governments of the American peoples had played in situations not dissimilar to the present case. One unique aspect, however, greatly aggravated the present situation: the intrusion of the influence and power of countries outside the Americas. The effects of that factor had been all too evident throughout the debate.

38. For those reasons, his delegation considered that the draft resolution submitted by seven Latin American countries (A/C.1/L.276) offered the best approach. It would, therefore, support that draft resolution, and would not be able to vote for any of the other draft resolutions that had been presented.

39. Sir Patrick DEAN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation deplored the present conflict in Cuba and was conscious of the gravity of the debate. It was somewhat bewildered, however, by the contradictions between the various accounts of the situation. On the one hand, the Cuban representative presented detailed accounts of events, but said that he was relying largely on the United States Press, which he asserted was biased against his Government. According to the Cuban representative, those reports showed that the Governments of the Western hemisphere, and particularly the United States, had organized aggression against his Government.

40. The United States representative had answered in convincing terms the charges preferred by the Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had refuted in detail some of the allegations laid against his country. Also, the President of the United States had made a forthright declaration that the United States intended no military intervention in Cuba. It had been the experience of the United Kingdom Government that it could rely upon the word of the United States. Under the circumstances, rather more weight must be given to the official assurances offered by the representative of the United States than to certain extreme allegations advanced in the Committee.

41. Unfortunately, some members of the Committee seemed to accept unquestioningly the statements made on one side and to reject unquestioningly the statements put forward on the other. However, he had been impressed by the extremely thoughtful speeches of the representatives of Venezuela, Argentina and Uruguay. Surely the representatives of Latin American countries had a better title to speak on the question than those whose countries were further removed from Cuba. The representative of Ecuador had made a moving appeal for a cessation of the slander which had characterized the debate, and had added that there was not sufficient evidence to judge the accuracy of the allegations that had been made.

42. His delegation was not prepared to vote for a draft resolution which was based on the proposition that those allegations had been proved. The record to

the contrary was too strong. It would support any resolution that would leave the way open for a solution of the question by way of negotiation or other peaceful means.

43. It seemed appropriate and useful that such negotiations should be undertaken by the States of the American continent. The bond of sympathy between the various Republics of the Western hemisphere had always been especially strong. Consequently, it was particularly sad to see so tragic a deterioration, during recent months, in the relations of Cuba with so many of its neighbours, despite the efforts made by the Governments of neighbouring States to restore friendly co-operation with the Cuban Government and to solve differences of opinion. One might ask whether an effort by Cuba to engage in direct talks with the United States and other Governments, particularly after the Security Council had recommended that course of action in July 1960, might not have prevented their relations from deteriorating.

44. Whether or not the OAS offered the only means for settling present difficulties between Cuba and its neighbours, the Governments of the Latin American countries were in the best position to contribute to a settlement. Therefore, it might be better for the representatives of other countries not to offer their opinions too insistently. For instance, the language used by the representative of the Soviet Union suggested no respect for the traditional feelings in the Western hemisphere. Such information as was available led his delegation to agree with most of the representatives of Latin America that the hostilities in Cuba were rather in the nature of a struggle between Cubans than of intervention by one Government in the affairs of another. Whatever the cause, his delegation hoped for the early restoration of peace and tranquillity to Cuba.

45. As to the four draft resolutions before the Committee, the United Kingdom could not accept the condemnation of the United States contained in the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/L.277). The Romanian draft (A/C.1/L.274) seemed to make a judgement which, on the present evidence available to the Committee, was certainly unjustified. The Mexican draft resolution (A/C.1/L.275) apparently failed to recognize that the struggle now engaged principally concerned the Cuban people itself. Nor did it mention the OAS, although the members of that body were deeply interested in the problem. On the other hand, the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.276) represented a wide consensus of opinion in the Latin American countries and held out the best possibility of dealing with that difficult problem satisfactorily. For those reasons his delegation would vote in favour of that draft resolution.

46. Mr. ROA (Cuba) read an official *communiqué* from his Government, which stated that United States participation in the aggression committed against Cuba had been proved that morning. The Cuban Government's anti-aircraft batteries had brought down a United States military aircraft, piloted by a United States flyer named Leo Francis Berliiss. Among the papers found on him were his pilot's licence, social security card and driver's licence, and documents relating to his aggressive mission. Since the beginning of the attack against the Zapata Peninsula, Cuban Government forces had brought down nine aircraft.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.