

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE, 1155th MEETING

Wednesday, 19 April 1961,
at 10.30 a.m.

New York

CONTENTS

	Page
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)	79

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/L.274, A/C.1/L.275, A/C.1/L.276, A/C.1/L.277) (continued)

1. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that the Iraqi people had welcomed the victory of the Cuban revolution, and sympathized with the people of Cuba, whose problems and aspirations were strikingly similar to their own. He did not wish to discuss matters which were the exclusive concern of the Cuban people; it was for Cubans alone to determine the form of government and the social and economic system under which they wished to live. However, foreign intervention on a massive scale had taken place in Cuba, and the military invasion of Cuban territory, with its grave consequences for international peace and security, was a matter which must be dealt with by the United Nations. For nearly ten months the Cuban Government had warned the United Nations of the danger of invasion. Now that invasion had come, and the United Nations could not reject Cuba's appeal to it without endangering the very foundations of the Organization.

2. The fact that the two countries involved in the dispute were members of a regional organization in no way absolved the United Nations of its responsibility or reduced its authority under the Charter. His delegation therefore fully supported the Mexican representative's unanswerable argument in favour of effective action by the United Nations to deal with the Cuban crisis.

3. The main point was that a military invasion had taken place in Cuba. The invading force must obviously have come from somewhere, have been supplied with means of transportation and vast financial resources,

and have been trained and supplied with arms and equipment. In view of those facts, no one could pretend that what was taking place was a purely Cuban affair, and it would be far more honest for those who were now saying that they hoped the rebels would win but had taken no part in financing, transporting, equipping or training them to say frankly that they had decided to get rid of Castro.

4. The basic differences between the Governments of Cuba and the United States certainly did not arise out of the alleged betrayal by Castro of the objectives of the Cuban revolution. That was hardly a concern of the United States, which, like every other great Power, was not out to reform the world or make it safe for democracy but to safeguard its own interests. It had been said that the United States could not allow Cuba to become an outpost of international communism or a military base for the Soviet Union in the Western hemisphere. But there was only one foreign military base in Cuba, and that was a United States base, while if communism spread in the Western hemisphere it would be not because of countries like Cuba but because of the poverty and misery tolerated and abetted for too long in too many parts of the world.

5. It must be concluded that the root cause of the quarrel between the United States and Cuba was the Cuban Government's efforts to carry out its far-reaching programmes of social and economic development, which clashed with vested United States economic interests. Those differences could have been settled amicably—but they had not been. It was a sad commentary on modern times that small countries could not pursue their peaceful and legitimate ends without having to contend with giant foreign forces. The power struggle going on in the world had all but paralysed the smaller countries, and robbed them of the freedom of action they needed to pursue their peaceful aims.

6. The great misfortune was that those who had power or were obsessed with it seemed blind to the real meaning of the revolution of modern times. Without a solid foundation of economic and social justice, democratic institutions were not only meaningless but even dangerous, because they were often used to delude the people and consolidate the power of the ruling classes. What distinguished a true revolution from a mere *coup d'état* was that its aim was not merely to transfer power from one group to another but to deal with the basic economic and social problems facing the people. The revolution led by Castro had been of that kind, and the United States representative had himself extolled its aims. Surely, then, he would agree that the dispute between Cuba and the United States had been caused not by the way in which Castro was allegedly treating other Cubans but by the differences arising out of the expropriation of land holdings, oil refineries and other property belonging to United States citizens.

7. For the reasons he had just stated, his delegation found itself in full agreement with the views expressed by the Mexican representative at the 1154th meeting, and particularly with the latter's statement of the three principles which should be applied in dealing with the present crisis: non-intervention in the affairs of Cuba, the preservation of Cuba's independence and territorial integrity, and respect for international treaties and the promotion of a pacific settlement of the dispute. The Iraqi delegation would accordingly vote in favour of the Mexican draft resolution (A/C.1/L.275), and reserved its position on the other draft resolutions before the Committee.

8. Mr. KISELEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said it was clear from the course of events and from the Cuban representative's statements that the United States Government had directly involved itself in an attempt to overthrow the people's régime in Cuba. Abundant evidence that the United States had organized the present invasion was to be found in the United States Press. *The New York Times*, for example, had recently reported that many Government officials in Washington had favoured a "Guatemalan" solution of the Cuban problem. The *New York Post* had stated in January 1961 that the Central Intelligence Agency was providing the anti-Castro *émigré* organization with a monthly subsidy of \$500,000, and that United States instructors were giving military training to anti-Castro forces in Florida and Guatemala. In February, *The Wall Street Journal* had stated that the United States was arming and equipping anti-Castro forces in central Cuba, and it had also been reported in the Press that aircraft had been using Guatemalan bases for raids on Cuba. The territory of other nearby countries also had been used for aggressive activities against Cuba.

9. In the period of somewhat more than two years that had elapsed since the overthrow of the Batista régime, the Cuban people had carried out revolutionary changes designed to ensure Cuba's full economic and political independence and to raise living standards. That was what had alarmed the monopolies, which were staging the present invasion in an effort to recover their lost position in Cuba. At the beginning of 1959, United States investments in Cuba had totalled approximately \$1,000 million. Before the advent of the Castro Government, United States corporations had controlled 40 per cent of Cuban sugar production, 80 per cent of all public utilities, and most of the mining industry, while a handful of United States corporations and Cuban plantation owners had held 75 per cent of all cultivated land and 90 per cent of all large grazing areas, Cuba had had one of the highest illiteracy rates in the Western hemisphere, more than one million Cubans had been without medical care of any kind, there had been 100,000 landless peasants, and 19 per cent of the labour force had been unemployed. The Castro régime, however, had given land to the peasants and jobs to the workers, and had resolutely opposed United States attempts to interfere in Cuba's internal affairs.

10. The special pamphlet on Cuba issued by the United States State Department on 3 April, and circulated on 6 April in document A/4725, which had openly called for the overthrow of the Castro Government, constituted further proof that the United States was guilty of aggression in Cuba. Moreover, by stating in the pamphlet that the present situation in Cuba represented a serious challenge to the Western hemisphere, the United

States Government had taken it upon itself to speak on behalf of all other American States.

11. No one would be deceived by the assertion that Cuba was carrying on subversive activity in other Latin American countries. As the United States Press had made perfectly clear, the opposite was true: the United States had for some time past made its territory available to those who were carrying on subversive activity against Cuba. The United States had conducted official negotiations with the head of the so-called Cuban Government set up in its territory and had organized the invasion that was now under way. What the United States actually feared was that the ability of the Cuban people to achieve economic and social progress without dependence on foreign monopolies would inspire the rest of Latin America to cast off the system of monopoly domination.

12. The sympathies of all peace-loving nations lay with the Cuban people in its present struggle; the countries of Latin America, in particular, condemned the United States intervention in Cuba. He recalled that the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had warned the President of the United States in his message of 18 April (A/C.1/839), to halt the aggression against Cuba while there was still time to prevent it from setting off a world-wide chain reaction. He appealed to the delegations of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to support the Cuban people in the defence of its right to choose its own way of life.

13. The United Nations must take immediate action to halt the armed intervention against Cuba; if it took the same stand with regard to Cuba that it had in the Congo, it would very soon meet with the fate of the League of Nations. His delegation fully supported the Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.277) and the Romanian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.274). The peoples of the world looked to the United Nations to take effective action to compel those who were attacking the independence and sovereignty of Cuba to respect the principles of international law and of the United Nations Charter.

14. Mr. ROA (Cuba), speaking on a point of order, announced that a United States plane had been shot down that morning in Cuba after bombing civilian and military targets. The plane had come from a United States base and the pilot, who had been killed, had been identified as a United States citizen. That incident was further proof of the participation of the United States in the aggression against Cuba.

15. Mr. SOSA RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela) said that his country felt deep sympathy for the people of Cuba and great concern at the civil war being waged there. The peoples of the Americas were linked by their common history. They had all known colonial rule and economic exploitation, wars of independence and civil wars, dictatorship and democracy. They shared a love of freedom and a determination to shape their own destinies. From their common experience had evolved the basic principles of American law, namely, non-intervention, self-determination, representative democracy and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Those principles were embodied in the charter of the Organization of American States (OAS).¹ If applied to the case of Cuba, they led to the following conclusions. Firstly, no foreign Power had the right to intervene

¹United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 119 (1952), No. 1609.

in the domestic affairs of Cuba in order to impose upon it, directly or indirectly, a particular type of government or political ideology. Secondly, the Cuban people had an inalienable right freely to decide what kind of government and institutions they wished to live under. Thirdly, in order to exercise that right, they must enjoy the political freedoms and guarantees of individual liberty that were the basis of democracy.

16. It was not his intention to pass judgement on the present régime in Cuba or to discuss whether it enjoyed the support of the majority of the people. Nor would he seek to judge those who were fighting against the régime. Only the Cubans themselves could settle their own differences. If they did so by force rather than by democratic methods, that was regrettable, but all that other countries could do was to try to prevent foreign intervention from aggravating the conflict. His delegation was therefore categorically opposed to any outside interference in the domestic affairs of Cuba. It would not express an opinion on the Cuban complaints against the United States, since it had not sufficient evidence to do so; but it would certainly take into account, in studying the facts of the situation, the statements made by the President of the United States.

17. The present problem was one affecting the American continent, and such problems were usually settled within the OAS. But that was no reason why it should not also be dealt with by the United Nations. The two bodies were not mutually exclusive, but complementary. The essential thing was that the countries concerned should unite to bring about a peaceful solution and that all countries should refrain from action which might aggravate the situation.

18. With those aims in mind, his delegation, together with those of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay, had submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.276).

19. Mr. AMADEO (Argentina) recalled that when the Government of Cuba had first laid its complaint against the United States Government before the Security Council, the Argentine delegation had expressed the hope that harmony in the American continent would be quickly restored.² Unfortunately, those hopes had not been realized, and the situation had so deteriorated as to cause grave anxiety not only to the parties directly concerned but to other countries in the region.

20. Nevertheless, the Argentine Government still hoped that the conflict could be resolved by the peaceful means laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and the charter of the Organization of American States. However great the difficulties, there was no American problem that could not be settled by those means, and in accordance with universally accepted juridical principles, the most important of which was the principle of non-intervention which had taken such deep root in the conscience of the American peoples since its proclamation in 1933 at Montevideo.³

21. Since any solution of the problem must be based on due respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the Argentine delegation had been gratified to hear the assurances given on 12 April by

the President of the United States, and later confirmed by the United States representative in the United Nations, that United States armed forces would not intervene in Cuba. There was no reason to doubt the sincerity of that undertaking, to which the United States had formally committed itself. For its part, Argentina accepted it as evidence of United States adherence to the principle of non-intervention. It should be made clear that Argentina considered that the right of a people to self-determination implied its freedom to choose its own political and social way of life and to decide whether or not to maintain diplomatic relations with other States. It was particularly important to uphold that right at a time when the nations of Latin America were living through a period of radical social and economic change, which must not be impeded by outside interference. Any such attempt would be useless as well as unjust for, if the forces of change were not allowed to find a constructive outlet, they would only engender strife and disorder. The country in which the Drago Doctrine had been formulated would be the last to side with the financial monopolies against the Cuban people, if that were the only alternative. Thus, whatever its views concerning the policies of the Cuban Government, Argentina would continue to respect the inalienable right of every people to manage its affairs without foreign interference, and to uphold the view that no State was entitled to resort to force to exact reparation even when its material interests had suffered unjustifiable damage.

22. However, another aspect of the question could not be overlooked. Certain foreign ideologies were seeking to exploit the situation in Cuba in an attempt to undermine political stability in the American continent and radically alter its chosen way of life. American institutions, both written and unwritten, were being endangered, and Argentina, in common with the majority of Latin American countries, was prepared to defend them with all its might. Moreover, it failed to see the logic of certain speakers who, while proclaiming the principle of non-intervention in respect of Cuba, implicitly denied it in the case of other countries which were continually subjected to interference. Some speakers had described the Cuban case as one of armed aggression. While Argentina did not countenance official military assistance from abroad to revolutionary forces which were attempting to overthrow their duly constituted Government, it nevertheless considered such assistance an entirely different matter from direct military intervention. It was particularly necessary to make that distinction in a situation such as the present one, in which world peace was endangered.

23. The problem of relations between the United States and Latin America had been drawn into the debate. For its part, Argentina was convinced that despite the mistakes that had been committed in the past, sincere and friendly co-operation between the United States and the Latin American countries, on a basis of equality and mutual respect, was not only possible but essential. It was true that there were many important differences between the United States and the countries of Latin America; however, the things they had in common were equally important. Moreover, the nations of North and South America would in the future have many tasks to carry out by combined effort. First and foremost, co-operation would be needed to remedy the backwardness which was the source of so many of the ills afflicting a large portion of the

² See *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifteenth Year*, 874th meeting.

³ Convention on Rights and Duties of States adopted by the Seventh International Conference of American States, signed at Montevideo on 26 December 1933 (League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. CLXV (1936), No. 3802).

continent—ills which were not entirely extraneous to the problem now under consideration. Neither the United States nor any Latin American country could afford to envisage future relations based on continuing hostility. For that reason the present dispute must be considered an unnatural state of affairs that should be remedied as soon as possible, since it could benefit no one.

24. Although Argentina's position in the ideological conflict between East and West was perfectly clear, it had always understood its duty to be to alleviate and not to aggravate tensions. It was in that spirit that it had joined with six other Latin American countries in sponsoring the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.276. The reference in the draft resolution to the OAS was particularly important—not that the sponsors wished to claim any exclusive competence for that organization, but they believed that it was the most appropriate forum for considering and resolving the present issue. As a regional instrument it had a long history, and it was well equipped to fulfil the purposes of Article 52, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter. The present situation had already existed, although it had been much less acute, when the Foreign Ministers of the American States, at their Seventh Meeting of Consultation held at San José, Costa Rica, in August 1960, had established conciliation machinery to resolve conflicts within the American continent. The six countries forming the *Ad Hoc* Good Offices Committee set up as part of that machinery could not be suspected of being anything other than strictly objective and anxious to promote harmony between the American nations on a basis of justice. It was greatly to be regretted that the Committee had been prevented from acting, for the reasons apparent from the annexes to the letter dated 7 November 1960 addressed by the Secretary General of the OAS to the

Secretary-General of the United Nations,⁴ and that the Government of Cuba had not been able to agree to settle the dispute by the means thus provided, which might perhaps have prevented the serious deterioration of the situation which had since occurred. Hope had not, however, been lost that the Good Offices Committee might yet be able to fulfil its mission. That did not, of course, mean that other methods of settling the dispute were excluded; but while they did not deny the competence of the United Nations, the sponsors of the draft resolution believed that even at the present critical juncture the parties concerned should endeavour to find a means within the regional framework for restoring peace and harmony to the American continent.

25. The declaration of the Soviet Union contained serious threats to the peace of the world; it also implied the denial of the right of the American countries to solve their intra-continental problems for themselves. The Argentine Government categorically rejected such interference, which, far from helping to alleviate the present crisis, could only serve to aggravate it and indeed risked inflating the conflict to dimensions horrifying to contemplate. However serious the events taking place in Cuba were—and his delegation would be the last to minimize their gravity—it was absurd that they should be allowed to put the world in peril of total annihilation. It was to be hoped therefore that good sense would prevail and that the present conflict would not become a new Danzig or a new Sarajevo leading to the outbreak of the third and last world war. It must be terminated as soon as possible, without detriment to the rights of anyone and without any foreign intervention in the American continent.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

⁴ *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifteenth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1960, document S/4559.*