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

AGENDA ITEM 63

**Question of West Irian (West New Guinea)
(A/3200 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.173) (*continued*)**

1. Mr. SUDJARWO (Indonesia) expressed his delegation's appreciation for the friendly attitude shown by all speakers towards Indonesia. His country's prime desire was to live on amicable terms with all countries. Given good will, the dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands could be easily solved.
2. In a previous statement (857th meeting), he had quoted the opinions of many authoritative Dutch circles, calling for improved relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia. The Australian representative had said (858th meeting) that all those opinions were not arguments. Mr. Sudjarwo wondered how it could be maintained that the opinions of the Netherlands Government were not arguments.
3. West Irian was part of Indonesia, just as it had been part and parcel of the Netherlands Indies before the transfer of sovereignty. Its inhabitants were Indonesians, just as were the Sumatrans, the Javanese and the peoples of other parts of Indonesia. That was a truth which could not be denied by means of legal or racial arguments.
4. In his statement (857th meeting), the Netherlands representative, referring to the speech delivered by President Sukarno on 23 August 1945, had attempted to prove that West Irian was not part of Indonesia. However, his quotation had been incorrect. Moreover, the President of the Republic of Indonesia had spoken of the boundaries of Indonesia without specifying its constituent parts.
5. The Netherlands representative had also alluded to the Declaration of Independence of the Indonesian people of 17 August 1945, in which West Irian was not mentioned. That argument was not convincing, for the Declaration referred to Indonesia as a whole, without defining its constituent provinces.
6. In any event, all the contentions of the Netherlands representative were refuted by the fact that the *Statistical Pocket Book of Indonesia*,¹ published in 1941 by the Netherlands Government, confirmed that the territories formerly called "Netherlands Indies" were part of Indonesia, and that the latter was divided into eight provinces, among them the Province of the Great East, comprising the Moluccas, Celebes, and West Irian. Complete sovereignty over Indonesia, covering the area of those eight provinces, had been transferred to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, now the Republic of Indonesia, and had been recognized on 27 December 1949 in conformity with article 1 of the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty (S/1417/Add. 1, appendix VII). It was thus clear that the legal arguments advanced by the Netherlands were without foundation.
7. The Netherlands and Australian representatives had also invoked the 1949 Round Table Conference agreements in an attempt to show that the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia had excluded West Irian. But it was not correct that the transfer of sovereignty had specifically excluded West Irian, as the Australian representative had claimed, or that the exercise of sovereignty over the territory of West Irian had been settled by article 2 of the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty. While article 1 of that instrument provided for the unconditional and irrevocable transfer of sovereignty over Indonesia to the Republic of Indonesia, article 2 stated that, with regard to the Residency of New Guinea, it had not been possible to reconcile the views of the parties and that the question of its political status should be determined through later negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands.
8. It was therefore difficult to understand how the representatives of Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands could cast doubt upon the need for such negotiations. Furthermore, there were many precedents which argued in favour of peaceful negotiations. Real progress in settling the problem of Indonesian independence had been gradually achieved by means of negotiations undertaken on the initiative of the United Nations. The Indonesian delegation agreed with the Costa Rican and Japanese representatives (859th meeting), who had said that the United Nations should make fresh efforts to facilitate negotiations, in order to put an end to a dispute which was a threat to peace and security.
9. A number of representatives had asserted that the peoples of West Irian were backward and had argued in favour of their right of self-determination. It was worthy of note in that connexion that the very delegations which usually opposed the application of the right of self-determination invoked that principle when, in their opinion, the peoples concerned were not yet ready to exercise the right in question.
10. The Australian representative had spoken more frankly: he had said (858th meeting) that West New Guinea was the key to Australia's defence. Obviously, considerations of that kind had nothing to do with the right of self-determination and the social advancement of peoples. On the contrary, it was usually because of strategic and military interests that people were considered so-called cattle rather than human beings. The history of colonialism was one of disregard for humanity. But the right to self-determination of primitive

¹ Department of Economic Affairs, Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Pocket Book of Indonesia* (Batavia, G. Kolff and Co., 1941).

people was not a matter of words or slogans; it was a matter of deeds and heart.

11. The Netherlands representative had stressed the backward character of the West Irian population (860th meeting); yet he had said that a telegram testifying to an advanced state of civilization had been sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the people of West Irian. It was clear that the telegram had been sent as a result of pressure exercised by the Netherlands authorities. It was equally clear that it constituted a denial of the allegation that the people of West Irian were backward. The Netherlands authorities in West Irian were exercising partial control over only one-third of the whole population of the territory. Many West Irianese had been jailed by the Dutch, including the people of an entire village, as a Dutch journalist who had visited the island in 1955 had reported in the newspaper *Het Vrije Volk* (The Free People). Mr. Sudjarwo wondered whether that was the way to take care of the welfare of the people of West Irian, to educate them or introduce them to some idea of what the modern world was like.

12. The Netherlands and Australian representatives had referred to a statement made by the former Vice-President of Indonesia, Mr. Mohammad Hatta, in support of their contention that the people of West Irian were backward. Admittedly, they were primitive; but to use that as an excuse for denying them their freedom was a serious mistake. Furthermore, Mr. Mohammad Hatta had also stated that West Irian had been colonized simultaneously with Indonesia and the two peoples would like to be free together.

13. At the 859th meeting, the Burmese representative had rightly stated, with regard to the liberation of his own country, that the United Kingdom had shown wisdom in creating no problems about the peoples of the Shan states, whose status had not been clear. In the case of West Irian, which was part of Indonesia, there would clearly have been even more reason to adopt a similar attitude.

14. The Belgian representative's statement on the situation of the people of certain Latin American countries was unfortunate. It had, in any event, been utterly refuted by the Bolivian representative.

15. It was not correct to say that the people of West Irian were a distinct and primitive racial group. Some of them had contacts with the other peoples of Indonesia. It was only with the Netherlands that they had little contact. Indeed, the Netherlands administration controlled only one-third of the territory and maintained no relations with the people of the interior. In addition, the number of primitive people was diminishing, and the Dyaks, for example, as several Western writers had mentioned, were eager for education. Indonesia was prepared to grant citizenship, not only *de jure* but *de facto*, to all the inhabitants of West Irian. The only obstacle to that step was the present occupation by the Netherlands. The essence of the problem of West Irian, if one were to keep the paramount interests of the people uppermost in mind, was freedom versus colonialism.

16. It had been maintained by some speakers that if West Irian actually came under Indonesian sovereignty, there would in fact be a transfer of sovereignty from one colonial Power to another. That argument did not hold water. At present about 2,000 West Irianese were being educated in Indonesian establishments. Moreover, the Irianese, whatever the Netherlands representative might say, had taken part in the independence

movement, under the direction of the Irian Party for the Independence of Indonesia.

17. The problem of West Irian was not a legal problem; it was primarily a matter of mentality. Whereas Indonesia considered that the question should be solved by a peaceful settlement through the good offices of the United Nations, the Netherlands did not accept the principles of liberty and independence for the whole of Indonesia and was adducing all kinds of spacious arguments in an attempt to hold on to a territory which had been part of its colonial empire. The United States, the United Kingdom and even France had shown much more wisdom when confronted with similar situations in the Philippines, the Indian subcontinent, Morocco and Tunisia. But the Netherlands had chosen to start its new relationship with Indonesia with a dispute by wanting to retain colonial rule over a territory of Indonesia. It was against that background that the United Nations should view the problem of West Irian.

18. Relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia had deteriorated after the Round Table Conference, to such a point that the Union between the two countries had been dissolved. The absence of a solution was a permanent cause of conflict between them. But the question was not insoluble, and although it presented some difficulties, given time and good will a solution might well be found. It was in the light of those considerations that the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.173) should be examined.

19. The Indonesian delegation was grateful to the sponsors of the draft resolution, who had shown understanding and initiative and whose efforts might well bear fruit. If the Netherlands sincerely desired better relations with Indonesia, it could not oppose the draft resolution. Without the good offices of the United Nations, the question would remain unsolved. The Indonesian delegation therefore hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted.

20. Both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands, support had been expressed for finding a solution by recourse to good offices. There were therefore grounds for hope that a speedy settlement would be reached, enabling good economic and cultural relations to be maintained between Indonesia and the Netherlands. The possibilities for better and more fruitful co-operation between Indonesia and the Netherlands in the interests of both peoples should not be overlooked. As Mr. Drees, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, had stated at the opening of the Round Table Conference at The Hague in 1949, the new relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands should bring about a realization of the great aims of peace, freedom and co-operation, for which numerous young Indonesians residing in the Netherlands, together with the men and women of the Dutch Resistance, had risked their freedom and their lives in fighting against the Nazi régime. If there was a return to those lofty aims, for which Indonesians and Netherlanders had fought and died together in the Netherlands, the Indonesian delegation was convinced that no problem between the two countries would be insoluble, and that included the problem of West Irian. The United Nations must be able to render the necessary assistance to the parties.

21. Mr. SCHURMANN (Netherlands) said that, since the Indonesian representative had accused him of making a false quotation from a speech by President Sukarno on 23 August 1945, he would deposit with the Secretariat a photostatic copy of the speech in question,

so that it might be available to representatives who desired to consult it.

22. Mr. JAWAD (Iraq) said that the Committee had received from both sides sufficient evidence to enable it to formulate its opinion on the issue under discussion.

23. It seemed clear that while many small States saw in the United Nations the only means of achieving their deepest aspirations, there was a group of Powers which had not moved forward with the political developments which had taken place in the period between the two world wars and that which had followed the Second World War. Those Powers continued to consider present political problems in the light of anachronistic concepts. Yet it was precisely competition between the colonial Powers which had caused two world wars since the beginning of the century, not to mention the various colonial wars. Such colonial wars had been fought to maintain the exploitation of peoples who were without the means to resist the occupying Powers and had marked the struggle between rights and vested interests. The United Nations had been established to prevent such bloody suppression, which ran counter to the desire of the peoples for peace. The settlement of disputes by recourse to arms had at all costs to be avoided.

24. The refusal of an increasing number of States to continue in the status of inferiority imposed on them had led to the recent recognition of numerous sovereign States. Some of the colonial Powers had contributed to the development and establishment of those new sovereignties. In return, they had gained by the protection and extension of their commercial and cultural interests and the enhancement of their prestige in the eyes of the world. Others had preferred to engage in wars of destruction in an attempt to maintain their domination, in absolute denial of the rights of the peoples for whose administration they were responsible. Such behaviour could only increase the threat to peace in the areas concerned. In order to bolster their power, such States were trying to divide and rule, and indeed, as had recently occurred in Egypt, did not hesitate to resort to the use of armed force.

25. That was the angle from which the question of West Irian had to be considered. The statements of the Netherlands representative had shown Indonesia's case to be unassailable. The dream of maintaining Netherlands imperialism in Indonesia, however alluring to those who stood to profit by it, was none the less a thing of the past. In chanting clichés about the sacred mission of the administering Powers, the protection of certain regions against communism, or the raising of the material standards of the inhabitants, certain Powers were upholding colonialism, a system in which there could be no development of freedom for the people.

26. His delegation accordingly called upon all members of the Committee to vote for the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.173) and the pacific methods of settlement proposed in it.

27. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) said his country felt the greatest respect for the Dutch nation; but it could not for that reason close its eyes to the mistakes which the Netherlands, like all colonialist countries, had made. There was no denying that the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as the administering Power, had done good work in Indonesia. But there were certain major omissions in the record, not the least of which was the failure to

prepare the people for the responsibilities of citizenship. That was why Indonesia, since it had attained independence, had had to face a serious shortage of trained personnel. But it had to be admitted that profound changes had taken place in all fields and that in some years of independence Indonesia had been able to make more progress than in a century of colonialism.

28. Indonesia had been created as an entity by the Netherlands itself, which had forged after the conquest a single unit out of a large number of independent territories. There had been no exception to the unity thus created, as was shown by a report which the Netherlands had transmitted to the United Nations in 1949,² in which the Moluccas and "New Guinea west of 141 degrees E longitude" were listed among the territories composing Indonesia.

29. The fact that the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty (S/1417/Add.1, appendix VII) had not provided for the immediate transfer of sovereignty over West Irian was not a conclusive argument. Just as the Latin American States had proclaimed their independence without troubling to obtain a charter on the transfer of sovereignty, so in Indonesia such a charter had never been more than a confirmation, the historical recognition of an established fact. Indonesia had attained its independence; and that meant that the entire Indonesian people, as a single entity without any exceptions, had achieved independence.

30. It was perhaps not idle to point out that the attitude adopted by the representative of Australia seemed to suggest that that country was more closely concerned with the issue under discussion than the Netherlands itself.

31. It was quite clear that the time-limit of one year, during which the status of West Irian was to have been settled, was not a condition *sine qua non*, and furthermore that the agreement achieved on the principle of negotiations on the question was still valid. By putting a stop to the negotiations by a unilateral act, the Netherlands had denied the rights of Indonesia. That done, it had turned the entire problem upside down, and having annexed a part of Indonesian territory was now charging Indonesia with an attack on the integrity of Netherlands territory.

32. As had already been said, Indonesia possessed neither the culture nor the degree of the technical advancement of an old nation like the Netherlands, but it had something which that country did not possess: brotherly sentiments toward the people of West Irian. No one could take seriously the case, skilfully presented in excellent English by the leaders of a people alleged to be ignorant, against the granting by the United Nations of Indonesia's request.

33. Indonesia had certainly had serious grounds for its refusal to lay the question before the International Court of Justice. Confronted by two States as influential as the Netherlands and Australia, Indonesia might well fear that it might not obtain full respect for its rights.

34. The draft resolution (A/C.1/L.173) dealt with a problem whose existence could not be denied. The Ecuadorian delegation was anxious that a constructive solution should be found to that problem. Accordingly, it appealed to other delegations to support the draft resolution.

² See *Non-Self-Governing Territories: Summaries and analyses of information transmitted to the Secretary-General during 1949*. United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1950.VI.B.1, Vol. II.

35. Mr. PETRZELKA (Czechoslovakia) said that the question of West Irian had been on the General Assembly's agenda on more than one occasion. A dispute of such a kind had adverse effects not only on relations between the two States concerned, but on international relations generally, especially throughout the Asian area. There was no question as to the legitimacy of the Indonesian claim. The question of West Irian had never been separable from the Indonesian question; and the same was still true. There was no reason why the people of West Irian should develop separately from their Indonesian brothers. Furthermore, there was no justification for the continued presence of the Netherlands in the territory. Such a thing would be against the interests of the Papuan people. The example of the peoples who had gained their independence was ample proof of the progress which could be attained by free peoples.

36. Indonesia, for its part, had indicated its willingness to negotiate. It was the duty of the United Nations to recommend a peaceful settlement, which could only be arrived at through negotiation.

37. For that reason, the Czechoslovak delegation would support the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.173), which represented a constructive effort in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

38. Mr. CHANG (China) said that the Committee had before it a dispute characterized by passion. The record of the negotiations which had led to the independence of Indonesia seemed to indicate that, in the eyes of the Netherlands, West New Guinea had a special status, and that at the time the Indonesians had acquiesced in that view. In the years that had followed, the negotiations had broken down because there had been no common ground for agreement between the two parties.

39. The legal arguments which had been advanced were undoubtedly worthy of study, and that aspect of the question, in the opinion of the Chinese delegation, should be submitted to the International Court of Justice.

40. Indonesia based its political case on anti-colonialism. There was no denying that Netherlands rule over West New Guinea (West Irian) was a form of colonialism; but the representative of the Netherlands had assured the Committee (857th meeting) that the people of West New Guinea would be given the opportunity to decide their own destiny.

41. In line with its tradition, China had always championed the oppressed peoples. However, the situation under discussion was somewhat different from that of a people wishing to free itself from the yoke of an oppressor. The inhabitants of West New Guinea were not parties to the dispute. It was a dispute between two sovereign States with respect to a territory whose people had not expressed their wishes. Now a Netherlands colony, West New Guinea would in fact become an Indonesian colony if sovereignty over it

were transferred to Indonesia. It was not the business of the United Nations to award colonies or to transfer them from one State to another without consulting the people concerned.

42. It was difficult to see on what basis the negotiations called for by several speakers could be undertaken. It seemed clear that the dispute between the two parties had not yet reached a point at which negotiations could possibly be successful.

43. Any political settlement must take into account the welfare of the inhabitants, whose future was at stake.

44. The thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.173) did not take account of those considerations, and the Chinese delegation would therefore be unable to vote for it.

45. Mr. GEORGES-PICOT (France) said that his delegation still stood by the position it had always held on the question, which was the position dictated by the United Nations Charter. The question of West New Guinea should never have been placed on the General Assembly's agenda.

46. The representative of Indonesia was in reality asking the Committee to give a ruling on the interpretation of a treaty, in the present instance the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty (S/1417/Add.1, appendix VII). In the view of the French delegation, the Assembly could in no way claim competence in that matter.

47. Some delegations had invoked Article 35 of the United Nations Charter. But that was to brush aside Article 2, paragraph 7, which continued to be applicable despite Article 35, and consequently, despite Articles 10 and 14, to which reference had also been made.

48. Moreover, it should be pointed out, as the head of the Australian delegation had clearly explained (858th meeting), that the matter under discussion was not a dispute envisaged by the Charter; it was a crude attempt by a Member State to annex a territory belonging to another Member State. In the circumstances, it was somewhat arbitrary to speak of a colonial problem, because nobody questioned the lack of maturity of the West New Guinea people. The administering Power had complied with its obligations under Article 73 of the United Nations Charter. It had even gone farther, in that it had formally pledged itself to prepare the inhabitants to decide their status for themselves, when the proper time came.

49. The Indonesian attitude was strangely reminiscent of the definition of colonialism given at the African-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955.

50. Accordingly, any recommendation which the Committee might make would be contrary both to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and to the interests of the Papuan people.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p. m.