

this Assembly, for it to request Britain, as the Administering Power, to impose various constitutional changes on the Government of Southern Rhodesia, when Britain has no power to do so. The British Government can only exert influence on the Southern Rhodesian Government by persuasion and negotiation. It has no military forces stationed in the territory. Even if it had, can it seriously be imagined that military action could or would be taken against the Southern Rhodesian Government? And if it were, would the chaos, confusion and suffering resulting from such action really be in the interest of the people of Southern Rhodesia?

We believe that the transition to fully-representative government must be achieved peacefully. Any attempt to bring it about suddenly without the consent of the present government could only be made by force. Given the existing situation it would inevitably fail and would delay the transition for many more years.

Notwithstanding the situation in law and in fact, the majority of the Special Committee in its report, and the sponsors of the draft resolution in Document A/L.386 have implied that the United Kingdom Government is somehow capable of taking immediate steps to alter completely the constitution of Southern Rhodesia. This, of course, is untrue. Nor does the General Assembly by itself have the power to order the Southern Rhodesian Government to alter its constitution.

In these circumstances it is the view of my Delegation that the Assembly, in considering any proposed resolution on Southern Rhodesia, should be guided by two criteria:

1. Will the action called for by the terms of the resolution improve the situation of all the peoples of Southern Rhodesia?
2. Can the action proposed in the resolution be put into effect?

I am sure it is evident from what I have said that in our opinion the resolution in Document A/L.386 does not fulfil either of these requirements.

What, then, can we do? We think that the most useful action that this Assembly might take at this time would be to support the present efforts of the British Government to bring about a solution to the political problems of the constituent territories of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which are closely inter-related.

The British Government, with the overwhelming support of the British people, has played an honourable and constructive role in bringing to full independence over 600 million people in the past fifteen years. The governments of all her former dependencies maintain close and friendly relations with her. With its fine record and experience in resolving difficult colonial problems the British Government merits the confidence of the Assembly in solving those which remain.

The United Kingdom is still responsible for 42 of the 56-odd non-self-governing territories in which the United Nations is interested, and its full cooperation is needed if this Assembly is to play a constructive part in their advance to independence. It would be most unfortunate if, by passing a resolution making impossible demands on the United Kingdom, the Assembly should jeopardize the basis of this cooperation.