

UNITED NATIONS

Department of Public Information
Press and Publications Bureau
Lake Success, New York

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
24th Meeting

(PM) SUMMARY
Press Release GA/PAL/76
20 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE HEARS U.K. STAND AND ADJOURNS;

SUB-COMMITTEES MEET

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question this afternoon heard a statement by Sir Alexander Cadogan (UK) on the position of his Government, which is the mandatory power, toward the reports of the two sub-committees, one on partition and the other on a unitary, independent state in Palestine.

After Sir Alexander had spoken the Committee adjourned to give members time to consult with each other and with their governments. The two sub-committees were directed to meet later this afternoon, and the Ad Hoc Committee will meet again tomorrow morning.

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(A chronological account of this meeting is given in Takes #1
and #2, which follow.)

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(PM) TAKE #1
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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE - (PM) TAKE #1

When the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question met this afternoon, the Chairman, DR. HERBERT V. EVATT (Australia) gave the floor to SIR ALEXANDER CALDOGAN (UK).

Sir Alexander began by expressing his regret that Dr. Evatt, yesterday, was compelled to report that no progress had been possible in the direction of conciliation between the two peoples most directly concerned with the future of Palestine. Sir Alexander added that it can hardly be imagined that the proposals made by subcommittee I would command the acquiescence of the Arab population, or that the proposals of subcommittee II would be accepted by the Jewish population of Palestine.

Sir Alexander then explained that the limits within which his Government are prepared to participate in giving effect to any settlement which fails to win approval of both Arabs and Jews in Palestine were clearly defined by the Colonial Secretary in the statement which he made to this Committee on 26 September. The United Kingdom Government, said Sir Alexander, have not since deviated, and cannot deviate, from the position which had been announced at that early stage in the Committee's discussions, and his task today was simply to apply the general principles contained in the Colonial Secretary's statement to the specific proposals which are now before the Committee. He then recalled that those principles were:

- (1) that His Majesty's Government could not play a major part in the implementation of a scheme that was not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews;
- (2) that they would, however, not wish to impede the implementation of a recommendation approved by the General Assembly.

Sir Alexander declared that he felt bound lest there be any misunderstanding, to make clear the extent to which the role assigned to his Government by Subcommittee I is compatible, and beyond which it is not compatible, with the declared intentions of his Government.

Sir Alexander then pointed out that the Subcommittee I have defined the period of transition as the period between the adoption of recommendations by the General Assembly and the establishment of independent Arab and Jewish States. It follows, said Sir Alexander, that at the outset the United Kingdom Government will still hold the mandate for Palestine, and will still be responsible for discharging the obligations laid upon them by the mandate. Yet, he added, the Subcommittee propose that "the administration of Palestine during the transitional period shall be entrusted to the Commission."

Sir Alexander underlined the dangers arising from confusion of authority and stated that so long as the United Kingdom Government continue to hold the mandate for Palestine, they must insist upon their individual control of that country.

Continuing, Sir Alexander declared there is no reasonable basis for the suggestion that the United Kingdom Government must await the approval of the Security Council before exercising their right to lay down a mandate which has proved to be unworkable and of which they desire to divest themselves as rapidly as possible. He added that in determining this date, they will certainly give proper consideration to such arrangements as may have been made by the United Nations for the establishment of a provisional regime to succeed the mandate.

Sir Alexander then explained that the transfer of authority by the Palestine Government directly to ^u councils of government or any other local representatives under a scheme of partition would in practice amount to the implementation of this scheme by the United Kingdom Government, which, failing Arab-Jewish agreement his Government are not prepared to undertake. If a scheme of partition, he said, were approved and a United Nations Commission set up as proposed in the Subcommittee's report, it would be to this Commission that the Palestine Government would, when the time came, hand over its authority. The Commission could then transfer authority to whatever local bodies they chose.

Sir Alexander stated that after authority has been handed over to the United Nations Commission there would still be zones in which British troops would remain pending final withdrawal, and that in these zones they would not be able to permit activity of a nature calculated to provoke disorder and so to delay British withdrawal. In no circumstances would these British forces be used for

any other purpose; He added that he saw no reason to await the approval of the Security Council on the withdrawal of these forces as is suggested in Subcommittee I Report.

Sir Alexander declared that it was his Government's intentions, in due course, to announce a date upon which the British civil administration will be considered at an end. After that date, he said, apart from those British authorities who will be exercising strictly limited functions in certain areas, there will be no regularly constituted authority unless the United Nations can fill the gap. If that problem is solved, he added, there should be no great difficulty in making arrangements consequent upon the subsequent stages of British military retirement from the country.

Turning to the Report of Subcommittee II, Sir Alexander observed that in this case also, the policy of the United Kingdom Government would equally preclude them from playing the part assigned to them in the plan for a unitary Palestine

The reason, said Sir Alexander, was that a provisional government of Palestine would be installed before the withdrawal of British forces and services began, and that the powers and functions of the present administration of Palestine would thereupon be vested in the provisional government. Subcommittee II, he added, have not proposed the formation of a United Nations Commission to supervise the implementation of their plan. If, he explained, the Assembly decided to establish a Commission for this purpose, the attitude of the United Kingdom Government towards it would be identical with that which he had already outlined in relation to the Commission proposed by Subcommittee I. Without intervention of such a Commission, he added, the United Kingdom Government would inevitably be drawn as a major participant into the implementation of a plan, which, like that of Subcommittee I, would not command general consent in Palestine.

(END OF TAKE #1)

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(PM) TAKE # 2
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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (PM) TAKE # 2.

After Sir ALEXANDER had finished, Ksawery PRUSZYNSKI (Poland), the Chairman of Sub-Committee I (on partition), took the floor.

Mr. Pruszyński proposed that the meeting be adjourned so that members could consult with each other and with their governments, as a result of this statement, which had greatly "changed the aspect" of the whole situation.

The Polish Representative said the statement was of considerable importance and scope and would "unfortunately, not make the task easier" in carrying out the program.

LESTER B. PEARSON (Canada) asked questions about several paragraphs in the UK statement. He noted that in one place, the British had insisted on "undivided control" while they held the mandate, but in another place, had implied a division of control.

Sir Alexander said he did not regard these paragraphs as contradictory.

He said the UK might want to terminate the mandate at a very early stage of the withdrawal of troops, and possibly even before the withdrawal began.

Sir Alexander said that after that time there would be no British civil authority in Palestine, but only military authority in the areas under occupation.

HERSCHEL JOHNSON (US) suggested that the problem might be referred back to the two Sub-Committees for revision of their reports in the light of the UK statement.

DR. PEDRO ZULOAGA (Venezuela) said that since this matter concerned mainly the enforcement question, it might be more practical to have the working group on implementation meet instead of Sub-Committee I.

Mr. Pruszyński (Poland) said an adjournment of just a few hours would not be enough. He had to consult his Government and wanted more time.

The Chairman, Dr. Herbert V. Evatt (Australia), then proposed adjournment to tomorrow morning.

Sir Mohamed Zafrullah Khan (Pakistan) asked what would be done with the questions he and others had asked this morning and had submitted in writing, as suggested. The Chairman said those questions would be taken up later.

DR. JORGE GARCIA GRANADOS (Guatemala) asked if Sir Alexander Cadogan would give further information to the Sub-Committees, if needed. Sir Alexander said he would.

MORE.

Dr. JOSE RICE (Argentina) said that ordinarily he was against having private consultations among the Great Powers, but in this case, he thought it might be useful.

He asked that particular attention be paid to the legal questions that had been brought up.

Dr. HALVARD LANGE (Norway) said that his country had been suggested for membership in the proposed five-member Commission, but had not been consulted in advance.

Dr. Lange said that Norway was grateful for the honor, but wanted to reserve its position on this matter for the time being. He did, however, mention that the proposed composition of the Commission did not seem "entirely satisfactory."

SEMEN K. TSARAPKIN (USSR) supported the Polish proposal for a longer delay. The implications of the British statement, and the possible need for altering the report, made it necessary for him to consult his Government, also.

Mr. JOHNSON (US) felt that it would be useful for the Sub-Committee to hold a short meeting now, in any case.

The Chairman then asked the Sub-Committee to meet now briefly, and the full Committee to meet tomorrow morning.

He felt that the UK had said today in substance what had been said before, merely adding detail to the general principles.

The meeting ended at 3:55 p.m.

(END OF TAKE # 2.)