

UNITED NATIONS

Department of Public Information
Press Division
Lake Success, Nassau County, New York.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINIAN QUESTION
23rd Meeting

(AM) SUMMARY

Press Release GA/PAL/75
20 November, 1947.

PALESTINE COMMITTEE DISCUSSES PARTITION REPORT.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question this morning heard Mr. LESTER PEARSON (Canada), Mr. KENNETH PRUSZYNSKI (Poland) and Prof. HENRIQUE RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) explain the reasons for which the Partition Plan of Sub-Committee I differed on certain points from that of the UNSCOP Report. They also replied to a number of requests by delegates for clarification.

The Chairman HERBERT V. EVATT (Australia) stressed the need for the Committee to end the debate and take a vote before the beginning of next week.

(.. Chronological account of this meeting is given in Takes # 1 through # 3, which follow.)

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
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(AM) TAKE # 1
Press Release G./PAIL/75
- 20 November, 1947.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (AM) TAKE # 1

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian question this morning began discussion of the reports of its two Sub-Committees, one on partition and the other on an independent, unitary state.

The Chairman, Dr. HERBERT V. EVATT (Australia), asked members of the Sub-Committees to outline and explain the differences between their reports and the report which the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine made earlier this year.

LESTER B. PEARSON (Canada) was designated to report on Sub-Committee I's views on the way partition could be carried out.

Mr. Pearson said the Sub-Committee considered implementation a "vital phase" of the problem, and had produced a scheme which it regarded as workable, on paper at least, if the principle of partition was decided on.

He then outlined some of the points in the Sub-Committee's report as follows:

First, implementation would be entrusted to a United Nations Commission, appointed by the General Assembly. The Commission would operate under the guidance of the Security Council, but the Council would not interfere in its day-to-day operations.

Second, a timetable would be established, providing for progressive withdrawal of the forces of the Mandatory Power (Britain) and for progressive transfer of authority.

The Sub-Committee had learned that Britain planned to withdraw its forces by 1 August of next year, and so it favored an independence date of 1 October, to give the two new states -- one Jewish, one Arab -- time to hold elections and form provisional governments.

Mr. Pearson pointed also to another important provision in Sub-Committee I's report, giving the provisional councils of the two states, acting under the UN Commission, "full authority in the areas under their control, including authority over matters of immigration and land regulation."

It was hoped, he said, that by 1 February of next year, there would be sufficient territory under control of the new Jewish state to allow for the admission of immigrants.

Mr. KORNERY PRUSZENSKI (Poland), Chairman of Sub-Committee I said that in the matter of boundaries his Sub-Committee had not made many important changes in the UNSCOP Report. One of the preoccupations of the Sub-Committee, he said, had been to reduce the size of the Arab minority in the Jewish State, and as a consequence the town of Jaffa with its 70,000 Arab population, had been taken out of the Jewish State and placed in the Arab State. The other minor modifications, that had been made to the boundaries proposed in the UNSCOP Partition Plan, he said, had been dictated by military and economic considerations.

(END OF TAKE # 1.)

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
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(AM) TIME # 2
Press Release G./P.L./75
20 November, 1947.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (AM) TIME # 2.

That completed the explanations, and the Committee turned to detailed discussion.

SIR MOHAMED ZAFRULLAH KHAN (Pakistan) asked the following questions about the partition plan -- not in criticism, he said, but for clarification:

How much scope would be left to each of the two states for economic development?

What would be the population in each of the states, and in each sub-district?

Had the Bedouin Arabs been taken into account in determining population figures?

What would be the proportion of land owned by Arabs and Jews in the Jewish state?

Was there not a danger that a United Nations Commission, composed of states favoring partition, would have a one-sided view point?

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What about expropriation/uncultivated land, as provided in the report, and what protection was there for Arab owners?

(On this point, Sir Zafrullah spoke of suspicion that this was merely a device to render landless the Arabs in the Jewish state)

Why did financial figures in this report differ so greatly from the UNSCOP report?

And finally, what legal basis was there in the Charter for any of this action by the UN Commission, the General Assembly or the Security Council?

Replying to some of the questions of Sir Zafrullah Khan, Mr. KOSMERY PRUSZYNSKI (Poland), stated that the territory of Galilee would provide ample field for Arab development. Furthermore he said, the Arabs will have access to the resources of the Dead Sea. Mr. Pruszyński also pointed to the possibilities of irrigation by which agricultural production of the Arab State could be greatly increased.

Of the other questions asked by Sir Zafrullah, he said, he would be glad to reply to them if they were put in writing.

CAMILLE CHAMOUN (Lebanon) also asked some questions, which were:

What legal basis was there in the Charter for a UN Commission with administrative and legislative power in Palestine?

(On this Mr. Chamoun noted that the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia had opposed the formation of bodies with much less power, like the Balkan Investigating Commission and the General Assembly's Interim Committee.)

Was there not a discrepancy between the UK statement and the Sub-Committee report regarding the maintenance of order during the transitional period?

(The British, he pointed out, merely planned to keep order in the territory under their occupation, while this report assumed more active British cooperation on implementation.)

Did the General Assembly and the Security Council not have conflicting jurisdiction?

Mr. PHIL JELLI (I.C.) said that the clauses on implementation in the Partition Plan assumed that a national militia and administration would be set up in the Arab as well as in the Jewish State. What would happen, he asked, if the Arab population refused to cooperate?

(END OF TAKE # 2.)

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
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(AM) TAKE #3

Press Release GA/PAL/75
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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (AM) TAKE #3

DR. E. M. J. SASSEN (Netherlands) asked what the Sub-committee meant by the word "militia" in its report.

MR. PEARSON (Canada), giving a partial reply to one of the questions, said membership of the proposed Commission to go to Palestine on behalf of the General Assembly, could be decided on later. He said the Sub-committee considered that there was legal authority for its plan.

MR. PRUSZYNSKI (Poland) again asked that all questions be submitted in writing, as other questions were still pending on Jerusalem and economic matters.

DR. ALBERTO GONZALEZ FERNANDEZ (Colombia) supported this request.

PROFESSOR ENRIQUE RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) Rapporteur of Sub-committee I remarked that of the questions put to the members of Sub-committee I some related to matters of fact and others to matters of interpretation. He associated himself with Mr. Pruszyński and Mr. Gonzalez in asking that all such questions be put in writing.

Mr. Fabregat said that the region of Galilee and the increased use of irrigation methods provided the Arab State with ample possibilities of economic development. He also stressed the allocation by the Sub-committee of the town of Jaffa to the Arab State and the resulting reduction of the Arab minority in the Jewish State.

Mr. Fabregat declared that the boundaries proposed by Sub-committee I represented a distinct improvement on those suggested by the UNSCOP Partition Plan.

Mr. Fabregat said that since the establishment of the Mandate, the Arab population had mainly increased in relation to Jewish colonization, and he inferred that this fact imparted special significance to the system of Economic

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Union recommended for the proposed Arab and Jewish States:

Referring to earlier mention of the contradiction between the implementation clauses of the Partition Plan and statements of the United Kingdom Government, Mr. Fabregat expressed the hope that the United Kingdom Delegate would elaborate on the matter.

The Chairman said the questions could be answered in the course of debate, without interrupting the Committee's work.

He mentioned that the President of the Assembly had suggested that the Committee vote today on the proposals before it. That now seemed impossible, he said, but he hoped the Committee would set a time for voting, preferably tomorrow (Friday).

SIR ALEXANDER CADOGAN (U.K.) said he had received instructions from his government and would make a statement this afternoon.

MR. CHAMOUN (Lebanon) suggested that debate might continue until Saturday.

MR. PRUSZYNSKI (Poland) thought the Committee should wait until it heard the important statement from the mandatory power before deciding on closure of debate.

MAHMOUD BEY FAWZI (Egypt) urged the Committee to give "ample" time -- and he repeated the word -- to consideration and discussion of the material before it. He strongly opposed fixing a time now for closing the debate.

MR. FAWZI said many members of the Committee were tired from the long hours of work. Some, he said, had read without sleep; others had perhaps slept without reading.

SIR ZAFRULAH KHAN (Pakistan) added another category: "those who had read and having read, couldn't sleep." He also wanted the Committee not to act hastily.

DR. MOHAMED FADHIL JAMALI (Iraq) made a brief statement in reply to press reports that the Arab states were planning a filibuster. That, he declared, was "very far from the truth."

The Chairman expressed gratitude for that assurance.

The meeting ended at 1.10 p.m. The Committee will meet again at 3.00 p.m.

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(END OF TAKE #3 AND OF PRESS RELEASE GA/PAL/75)