

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Public Information
Office of Press & Publications
Lake Success, Nassau County, New York

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) SUMMARY
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE HEARS 15 SPEAKERS
ON SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question continued general debate this afternoon on the reports of its two Sub-Committees, one on partition and the other on a unitary, independent Palestine.

The Committee heard 15 speakers, representing the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Denmark, Iraq, Yemen, China, Syria, Poland, Pakistan, El Salvador, France, the Jewish Agency, New Zealand and Bolivia.

The Committee will meet again at 8:00 p.m.

(A chronological account of this meeting follows in Takes #1 through #8.)

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #1
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE (PM) TAKE #1

Reconvening this afternoon, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question first heard Sir Carl Berendsen (New Zealand) declare that his country was for the partition of Palestine. He added that responsibility would have to be assumed not only for elaborating such a solution, but also for carrying it out.

Sir Carl said that he had submitted the plan of partition prepared by Subcommittee I to his Government, which had instructed him to support it but only on condition that the United Nations also assumed responsibility for the implementation of this Plan.

Sir Carl asked that all necessary time be devoted to a thorough examination of all aspects of the Plan, and he suggested to this end the General Assembly prolong its present session, or the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question set itself up as the General Assembly.

Lester B. Pearson (Canada) said he wanted to address some questions to Subcommittee II (on a unitary, independent Palestine), so that the members could have adequate information on which to decide this difficult problem.

His first question was if the Subcommittee thought its recommendations would bring about a peaceful and orderly transfer of power from the Mandatory Power, Great Britain, to the people of Palestine.

His second question was what legal basis existed in the Charter for the establishment of a unitary, independent Palestine by the General Assembly.

(End of Take #1)

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #2
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE (PM) TAKE #2

DR. HECTOR DAVID CASTRO (El Salvador) said that while the majority and minority plans of the UNSCOP Report differed in many respects, they both agreed in recommending the termination of the Mandate. He added that Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter provided a basis for United Nations action on the question of Palestine, as they laid down that the aims of the United Nations were ^{to} maintain peace, and to develop friendly relations between its members.

Only a solution acceptable to the majority of the population of Palestine could ensure peace, Dr. Castro said, adding that the people of Palestine had not really been consulted by the United Nations when considering a solution.

He regretted that representatives of the Arab Higher Committee and of the Jewish Agency had not been brought together as he had proposed with the purpose of finding a common basis for the future of Palestine.

Dr. Castro remarked that although he had offered to serve on a conciliation subcommittee together with a few other delegates, the task of conciliation had finally been assumed by the Chairman of the Committee alone. Dr. Castro also remarked that the Minority Plan for a single federal Palestinian State had not been given enough attention.

For these reasons, Dr. Castro said, he would abstain from voting on the Palestinian question, except in the case of the protection of Holy Places.

(End of Take #2)

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27TH Meeting

(PM) TAKE #3
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE (PM) TAKE #3

The Chairman, Dr. Herbert V. Evatt (Australia), replying to the Representative of El Salvador said that conciliation of the views of Arabs and Jews appeared to be impossible at present. The question had been studied thoroughly, he said.

Moshe Shertok, head of the political department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, then made a brief statement.

He said the Jewish Agency would be willing, in order to meet objections, to agree to exclude from the proposed Jewish national home the town of Beersheba and an area to the north and northeast of the town, amounting to 300,000 dunams; also a portion of the South Negeb, along the Egyptian frontier, amounting to 2,000,000 dunams.

These would be direct continuations of the Arab state, and not enclaves.

Mr. Shertok said the Jewish Agency did not consider itself obligated to make those concessions, and felt, rather, that the whole of Palestine should be open to Jewish immigration.

Palestine had already been partitioned once, in 1922, when Transjordan was cut away, he said, and now the Jewish national home would be even smaller.

The Chairman said that the Committee could deal with suggestions like this only in the form of amendments.

Herschel Johnson (US) said his delegation would support and vote for the partition plan recommended by Subcommittee I, and he thought the Assembly could best discharge its responsibility in this case by approving that plan, with economic union.

He recognized that unanimity could not be achieved, but he hoped that the plan would be approved by as large a majority as possible, and given loyal cooperation by all concerned, he continued.

MORE

Mr. Johnson said the U.S. considered the partition plan legal under the Charter, and regarded such legal objections as had been raised as formal in character.

He did not think there would be a gap in which there would be no effective governmental authority. That gap, he said, would be avoided by immediate resumption of authority by provisional machinery as soon as the tasks were given up by the Mandatory Power.

Mr. Johnson said the partition plan was not perfect, but was a "humanly just and workable" solution to one of the thorniest problems in the world today. He hoped all member states would give the plan their full cooperation, if it were approved, and not attempt to defy it. This, said Mr. Johnson, was "the greatest test ever presented of the integrity of the United Nations as a whole."

One of the Subcommittee's greatest difficulties, Mr. Johnson said, had been the declarations of the Mandatory Power (The UK) that it would take no part in carrying out a plan not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews.

Taken literally, he said, this condition was impossible to fulfill, for no plan could possibly meet that requirement.

Mr. Johnson disagreed with the inference of the Representative of New Zealand that the Mandatory Power had been given sole responsibility for carrying out the plan. He said the Subcommittee had tried to avoid such a situation, and in his view had succeeded.

Mr. Johnson agreed that this plan, like any other, contained the possibility of failure, but he said it had to assume the cooperation of the Mandatory Power -- which had agreed not to hinder or try to prevent implementation -- and of the Member States.

This situation had not been contemplated in the Charter, Mr. Johnson continued. The responsibility had fallen on to the United Nations because of the unilateral decision of Britain to give up the mandate, without suggesting any future government to take its place in Palestine.

Mr. Johnson said he welcomed the declaration of Mr. Shortok regarding Beersheva and the Negeb, and would present an amendment to cover these suggested boundary changes.

(End of Tape #3)

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Public Information
Office of Press & Publications
Lake Success, Nassau County, New York

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #4
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE - (PM) TAKE #4

Mr. J. M. Martin (United Kingdom) said that it was difficult for the British Government to indicate in advance every detail of the time-table for the withdrawal from Palestine. Nevertheless, he said, on main principles the British Government was clear in its own mind.

On implementation, he said, they had made five statements, none of which deviated from the others.

Mr. Martin asserted that in the transitional period there was a gap, and that clearly a risk was being taken. As long as the Mandate is in force, Mr. Martin declared, the Mandatory insists on retaining undivided control throughout Palestine.

Mr. Martin added that if partition is approved by the Assembly and a U.N. Commission goes to Palestine, the Mandatory would hand over to the Commission "when the time came." He explained that this expression meant "when and as the territory of Palestine is evacuated."

Progressive transfer, he said, would begin after termination of the Mandate.

Referring to the passage in the Partition Plan concerning the early evacuation of a sea port with its hinterland in the Jewish State, Mr. Martin said that evacuation plans had not yet been worked out but that his Government was taking note of this passage.

With regard to the assistance the Mandatory was expected by the Partition Plan to give to the United Nations Commission, Mr. Martin repeated that his Government insisted on undivided control. Assistance, he said, would be subject to the overriding considerations of preserving law and order. If fighting occurs in Palestine said Mr. Martin, it is the lives of British that will be lost.

(End of Take #4.)

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #5
Press Release GA/PAL/8
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE (PM) TAKE #5

The Chairman said the list of speakers still included the Representatives of Denmark, Iraq, Yemen, China, Sweden, Netherlands, Poland, Lebanon, Syria, Canada, Egypt, Chile, Pakistan, Dominican Republic, U.S., Yugoslavia, Uruguay, Union of South Africa, USSR, France, Argentina, Colombia, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and Belgium.

That closed the list at least temporarily, he said.

In reply to a question from Finn T.B. Friis (Denmark), the Chairman said that any proposal to continue this Committee past the end of the General Assembly session would have to be made formally, and decided by the Assembly.

Dr. Mohamed Fadhil Jamali (Iraq) contended that the General Assembly was going beyond the authority given to it under the Charter in this matter.

The very idea of partition was contrary to the principles of the Charter, he argued. He asked by what legal authority was the Assembly planning to put people who had been in one place for more than 1400 years under the rule of foreigners? This, he said, could only be called "aggression, invasion and imperialism."

Dr. Jamali said the Arab states had respect for the United Nations but had to appeal against such an "unjust and unworkable" plan as that presented by the Subcommittee.

Britain, he noted, had regarded partition as impracticable in a White Paper 10 years ago. Wasn't this even more true now? he asked.

Dr. Jamali said that anything going beyond the League of Nations mandate was "an imposition" and that "we would wish to go to court about that."

Recalling that the U.S. Representative, Mr. Johnson, had said that nobody wanted to think the United Nations would be unable to find a solution to the Palestine problem, Dr. Jamali said the solution was simple -- apply the principles of democracy and self-determination. He urged the Committee to take time, and not adopt a plan which would result in immediate bloodshed and racial hatred and which could not be carried out without force.

MORE

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #6
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE (PM) TAKE #6

DR. V.K. WELLINGTON KOO (China) said that if his delegation had all along abstained from supporting any of the concrete solutions, put forward for the Palestinian problem this abstention was due to its belief that an ultimate solution of the Palestine problem depended on a conciliatory spirit on the part of both parties involved.

Dr. Wellington Koo stressed the unique character of the Palestine problem and the need to take into consideration the elements of this problem if a solution acceptable to both parties were to be found.

Nevertheless, he said, time is now short and a decision is imperative. If, he said, a 100% satisfactory solution cannot be found, then a solution should be adopted that is the least objectionable to the parties.

Dr. Wellington Kee declared that in his opinion, the partition plan as proposed by Subcommittee I represented the nearest approach to such a solution and he hoped that means would be found to improve this plan so as to further reduce the gap between the Arab and Jewish claims.

KSAWERY PRUSZYNSKI (Poland) said that Subcommittee I's work with the U.K. had been "a little difficult." After all, he said, the U.K. had brought the matter to the United Nations, and so should cooperate. But sometimes, he said, it seemed that the U.K. was operating "on the other side of the fence."

He found it "disagreeable" to speak about this matter, for the Subcommittee had done everything possible to bring the U.K. into its work, he said. But the U.K.'s attitude, in his view, was making the solution of this problem very much harder, with consequences that would be felt by the whole organization.

FARIS EL-KHOURY (SYRIA) called El Salvador's suggestion of a plebiscite in Palestine "a very sound idea." He said the U.S. should agree to this procedure, as well, for the U.S. had advocated it strongly in the case of Korea.

MORE

The U.S., he added, had not wanted partition in Korea or Greece. That there were Jews involved in this case did not seem to Mr. El-Khoury to be an obstacle. Judaism was only a religion, he said, and should not be favored over any other religion.

The Representative of Syria again stated his delegation's opposition to partition, and asked for a ruling from the International Court of Justice on the legal issues involved.

Mr. El-Khoury outlined the history of the Palestine situation, and contended that the Arabs had been treated unjustly throughout the years. It was the duty of the United Nations now to undo this wrong, not to add to it, he said.

There was no power in the Charter for the Assembly to partition a mandated territory, said Mr. El-Khoury, and to do this would be "a dangerous precedent," all the more so because partition would benefit only "foreign intruders."

He felt that the ruling of the Court on the legal issues should be obtained before any other decisions were taken.

Mr. El-Khoury said the Arabs were ready for conciliation at any time, provided that the Zionists would give up their idea of "dominating" and displacing other peoples.

(End of Take #6)

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Public Information
Office of Press & Publications
Lake Success, Nassau County, New York

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #7
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE - (PM) TAKE #7

Dr. Humberto Palza (Bolivia) declared that the U.N. Charter established the right for nations to determine their own future. It would be therefore desirable, he said, to find a solution for Palestine that would not diminish the rights of one or the other of the two parties involved.

The UNSCOP had been unable to surmount all the contradictions of the Palestine problem because these contradictions were inherent to the problem, he said.

The United Nations, Dr. Palza continued, is a political organization, and its solutions should also be of a political nature. The best political solution, he added, would be one that would maintain continuity with the first solution given to Palestine, namely the Balfour Declaration. This solution, he said would be partition, which is supported by the countries most directly interested in the problem.

Sir Mohamed Zafrullah Khan (Pakistan) replied to the questions asked earlier by the Representative of Canada.

The first question, whether Sub-Committee II thought its plan would provide for a peaceful and orderly transfer of power? was very difficult to answer, said Sir Zafrullah, and could be answered only in practice by the people of Palestine.

The second question was, what was the legal basis for Sub-Committee II's plan for a unitary, independent Palestine? Sir Zafrullah said it was his personal view that the terms of the original League of Nations Mandate gave this authority. The Sub-Committee's report did not provide for United Nations interference in setting up such a government. There would be some "practical difficulties," he said, but the Ad Hoc Committee was now engaged in appraising them.

(End of Take #7.)

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
27th Meeting

(PM) TAKE #8
Press Release GA/PAL/81
22 November 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE (PM) TAKE #8

Declaring that he wished to abstain from any political statement at this stage, Mr. Alexandre Parodi (France) submitted two amendments to the Report of Subcommittee I.

The first amendment would safeguard free access to the Holy Places, which involved freedom of transit.

The second amendment would strengthen the protection of foreign schools and charitable institutions.

Mr. Parodi expressed the opinion that the guard of the Holy Places should be entrusted to a specially recruited guard rather than to the police force provided for in the Report. He also hoped that the case of French would be given full consideration when the question of additional working languages in the City of Jerusalem came up.

The Committee adjourned at 6:15 p.m. to 8 p.m.

(End of Take #8 and of Press Release GA/PAL/81)