

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

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
26th Meeting

(AM) SUMMARY
Press Release GA/PAL/80
22 November 1947

27

PALESTINE COMMITTEE HEARS EXPLANATION OF
PARTITION PLAN REVISION

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question this morning heard Ksawery Pruszyński (Poland), the Chairman of its Sub-Committee on partition, outline and explain the Sub-Committee's revisions in its earlier report, resulting from the statement by the Mandatory Power, Great Britain. (Document A/AC.14/34/Add.2).

Mr. Pruszyński also replied to a series of questions that had been submitted by the Delegations of Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq and the Netherlands.

Discussion of the report began, and will continue at 2:30 p.m. today.

(A chronological account of this meeting is given in Takes #1 through #3.)

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(AM) TAKE #1
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PALESTINE COMMITTEE - (AM) TAKE #1

KSAWERY PRUSZYNSKI (POLAND), the chairman of Sub-Committee I (on Partition), presented the Sub-Committee's report (Document A/AC.14/34/Add.2) when the full Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question met this morning.

The Sub-Committee had made a number of revisions in its earlier report in the light of Thursday's statement by Sir Alexander Cadogan (UK), representing the Mandatory Power for Palestine.

Mr. Pruszyński said the Sub-Committee had had to make "substantial changes" in its report because of Sir Alexander's statement, which had reaffirmed, in detail, Britain's intention not to take any part in carrying out a plan which was not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews.

The Representative of Poland and the chairman, Dr. Herbert V. Evatt (Australia), outlined and explained these changes in the earlier report.

Mr. Pruszyński then gave the Sub-Committee's replies to a series of questions which had been submitted by the delegations of Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq and the Netherlands.

The first three questions asked the legal basis for the authority which the General Assembly, the Security Council and the proposed United Nations Commission would exercise under the Partition Plan.

Mr. Pruszyński reviewed the history of the Palestine case, and the need for providing an orderly transfer of power from the Mandatory Power to the new administration.

The proposed Commission would not, he said, be the government of Palestine, but instead, an organ of counsel for the provisional councils of the two new states, one Arab, one Jewish.

Mr. Pruszyński said the General Assembly was given at the San Francisco Conference broad powers of discussion and recommendation in "the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin," affecting the maintenance of peace and

(MORE)

security.

The Assembly got power to make recommendations for the future government of Palestine, he said, from Articles 10 and 14 and the Trusteeship Provisions of the Charter. This, he said, was his own view.

The next question concerned the validity of the Palestine Mandate itself. This, said Mr. Pruszyński, had been gone into thoroughly many times in the past and the Sub-Committee had not been concerned with it.

As to the relief and rehabilitation of Jewish refugees and displaced persons, the Representative of Poland said this question was part of the general refugee problem. He noted that the Sub-Committee hoped the new Jewish state would have control of a sufficiently large area by 1 February to permit immigration.

The Sub-Committee had proceeded on an impartial basis in drawing up boundaries, Mr. Pruszyński declared, and regarded the two new states as "twins."

He commented, however, that the problem was a very difficult one, and naturally, the Sub-Committee might have made some mistakes. But it had proved necessary in a few cases, he said, to cut off villages from their lands, for topographical and technical reasons. This occurred in other countries, also.

Population figures were in the report, Mr. Pruszyński continued. The nomadic population had been taken into account. Europe had a similar nomadic population, he said, in the displaced persons camps.

The Representative of Poland said it was not contemplated that the Jewish militia would be used to keep order in the Arab state. If it proved impossible to set up a provisional council in the Arab State, because of Arab non-cooperation or other reasons, the matter would be referred back to the Security Council.

To the question of what was meant by "militia," he replied that it was something between an army and a police force, drawn from the people.

Mr. Pruszyński said he did not anticipate any deadlock between the Security Council and the Assembly over the working of the United Nations Commission.

He emphasized that these replies were his own, and not those of the Sub-Committee.

(End of Take #1)

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(AM) TAKE #2.
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(Palestine Committee (AM) Take #2)

DR. MOHAMED FADHIL JAMALI (Iraq) said he still could not see any legal basis for the proposed action. This was not a plan for "peaceful adjustment of a situation," he argued, but an "imposition" on the Arab people, in spite of their wishes and their rights. The Subcommittee's optimism, he thought, was something of an "ostrich attitude."

Dr. Jamali said it was proposed to divide the Arab population into two parts, and put one part under the subjugation of a Jewish state. Naturally, he declared, the Arabs would react, like any living organism. And the Arabs were certainly politically mature, he added.

The Representative of Iraq called this "an act of conquest by the United Nations. If the Subcommittee considered this legally, morally or humanly justifiable, he said, then it should prepare for an army to back it up, for the Arabs would be bound to fight against such an act of conquest.

Without a plan for enforcement, he added, the partition report was meaningless.

Camille Chamoun (Lebanon) also brought up the legal issues.

Sir Mohamed Zafrullah Khan (Pakistan) asked if the replies of the Subcommittee Chairman could be put in writing, adding that he was not proposing a delay in debate.

The Representative of Pakistan asked for clarification of several points in the Subcommittee report, dealing with progressive transfer of authority to the United Nations Commission and the evacuation of a seaport for immigration. If these were to take place before termination of the mandate, it seemed to him to conflict with the statement made by Sir Alexander Cadogan, he said.

Sir Zafrullah also thought the partition plan did give the Subcommittee some legislative and administrative power.

MORE

There were a number of provisions in the report, he said, which he regarded as conflicting with the British intention not to help in implementing partition, if they referred to the transition period between termination of the mandate and the final withdrawal of British troops from Palestine.

Sir Zafrullah wanted to know who would be responsible for maintaining administrative authority during the transition period in areas which had been evacuated by British troops.

The Chairman pointed out that all this was conditional on the approval of the Subcommittee's report.

(End of Take #2)

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(AM) TAKE #3
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Palestine Committee (AM) Take #3

Mr. FARIS EL KHOURY (Syria) declared that as the basis of the Report of Subcommittee I was the partition of Palestine and his delegation was opposed to this solution, he would abstain from participating in the discussion of this plan.

Mr. El Khoury then cited Article 6 of the Mandate which lays down that the rights and position of non-Jewish elements in the population of Palestine shall be safeguarded, and he asked whether these rights would really be safeguarded by placing about half a million Arabs under Jewish sovereignty.

Mr. El Khoury asked whether the first error of the League of Nations of giving the Jews a "National Home" would be followed by a second and greater error on the part of the United Nations of giving the Jews a "state".

Mr. El Khoury declared that the peoples of the Middle East and of Asia rejected such a solution which, in his opinion, would endanger peace and security.

On the legal aspect of the problem, Mr. El Khoury stated he would speak later.

The Chairman made it clear that the Reports of Subcommittees I and II were open for discussion simultaneously, and not necessarily one after the other. Both related to the same problems, he said.

The Committee rose at 12:45 p.m. and will reconvene at 2:30 p.m. today.

(End of Take #3 and of Press Release GA/PAL/80).