

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Public Information
Press Division

Lake Success, Nassau County, New York

Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine
11th Meeting

(AM) SUMMARY

Press Release 3A/PAL/12
11 October 1947

PALESTINE COMMITTEE HEARS U.S. STATE
ITS POSITION - INDIA, CHINA, SYRIA, IRAN ALSO SPEAK

India, the United States, China, Syria and Iran today presented their views on Palestine to the 11th meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question.

The United States went on record as favoring the majority report of the UNSCOP with reservations. The U.S. Representative, Mr. Herschel V. Johnson, declared the General Assembly did not undertake to assume responsibility for the administration of Palestine during the process of transition to independence, pointing out that at present, responsibility for the Government of Palestine rests with the Mandatory Power. To assist in the establishment of workable political settlement in Palestine, Mr. Johnson pledged U.S. aid to meet economic and financial problems as well as the problem of internal law and order during the transition period. In regard to the latter point, he suggested the possible establishment of a special police force recruited by the U.N. on a volunteer basis. Mr. Johnson added this did not refer to the possibility of violations by any Member of its obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force in its international relations, assuming he said, that the Charter would be observed.

Mrs. Vijaya Lakashmi Pandit of India presented her country's objection to the partition plan, offering in its place the immediate formation of an "independent Arab state in which the Jews, in areas where they are a majority, will enjoy wide powers of autonomy." Mrs. Pandit also declared that her country regards the problem of displaced Jews in Europe as the immediate problem of the General Assembly, rather than of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The third speaker today was Dr. T. F. Tsiang of China, who urged that the differences of the Arab and Jews in Palestine must first be narrowed down before the Committee undertakes to enforce any scheme now under discussion for the solution of the Palestine question. Referring to a statement by the Representative of the Arab Higher Committee that any partition of Palestine would be resisted by force, Dr.

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Tsiang declared that any course taken now, which would lead to further violence would be a deviation from the primary objective of the United Nations, namely, the maintenance of peace among nations.

Mr. Faris el-Khoury of Syria, presented the Arab view, and announced that he would submit a proposal for the consideration of the legality of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration by the International Court of Justice. Mr. el-Khoury devoted the last part of his speech to a criticism of the proposals by the United States representative, in particular condemning the U.S. suggestion that a force of volunteers armed by the United Nations, be charged with keeping order in Palestine.

The Fifth and last speaker was Mr. Mostafa Adl of Iran. He said his country could not agree with the majority report of UNSCOP because it felt such a solution did not conform to the United Nations principles of justice, equality and respect for the right of all peoples to self-determination without outside interference.

He explained that while Iran, as one of the Members of UNSCOP, had finally assented to the Federal State proposal recommended in the Minority Report, the Iranian Representative on UNSCOP had reserved the right of his Government to take any subsequent stand it might think fit.

In accordance with this, the Iranian Government proposes that Palestine be granted its independence and that the inhabitants of Palestine, alone, be left to decide whether they wish a Federal State, two states, or any other workable solution.

The meeting adjourned shortly before 1:00 p.m. and will reconvene Monday at 3:00 p.m.

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(A chronological account of this meeting is given in Takes #1 through #5, which follow this Summary.)

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PRESS DIVISION
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Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine
11th Meeting.

(AM) Take #1
Press Release GA/PAL/12
11 October, 1947

(AM) Take #1
Palestine

The 11th meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine was opened by its Chairman, Dr. H.V. Evatt (Australia) shortly after 11 this morning.

The first speaker was Mrs. Vijaya Lakashmi Pandit, head of the India delegation. Mrs. Pandit explained at the start that her country regards the problem of displaced Jews in Europe as the concern of the General Assembly as a whole, rather than of the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine.

The displaced Jews of Europe, Mrs. Pandit said, constitute a problem which should be "tackled" at the earliest opportunity by the General Assembly. She added, it is the attempts which are being made to view the Palestine question mainly as one of finding a home for a large number of displaced Jews that is causing much of the present unrest among the Arabs of Palestine.

On the question of the political future of Palestine, Mrs. Pandit declared that India believed the solution to be the formation immediately of an "independent Arab state in which the Jews, in areas where they are in a majority, will enjoy wide powers of autonomy."

Any other solution, she said, would only lead to conflict, the result of which "might well be the re-enactment in Palestine of the Greek tragedy on a vaster scale."

Speaking for India, she added, "out of our bitter experience... the price one pays for the delay in the settlement of a problem can be terrible."

In conclusion, Mrs. Pandit declared: "A solution has to and must be found, without the need for enforcement. The peace of the entire Middle East is at stake."

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(AM) Take # 2
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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (AM) TAKE # 2

The second speaker was Herschel V. Johnson (United States) who announced that the United States Delegation supported the "basic principles of the unanimous recommendations" and the Majority Plan which provides for partition and immigration

Mr. Johnson said, however, that his delegation would suggest certain amendments and modifications in the Majority Plan in order more accurately to give effect to the principles on which that plan is based. As an example, he cited the belief that Jaffa should be included in the Arab State, because it is predominantly an Arab city. The United States, he said, having contributed its blood and resources to the winning of World War I, felt it could not divest itself of a certain responsibility for the manner in which freed territories in the Near East were disposed of or for the fate of peoples liberated at that time. It took the position, he said, that these peoples should be prepared for self-government and also that a national home for the Jews should be established in Palestine.

The United States Delegation, he continued, wished to make certain observations on the carrying out of such recommendations as the General Assembly may make regarding the future government of Palestine.

"The General Assembly did not," he declared, "by admitting this item to its agenda, undertake to assume responsibility for the administration of Palestine during the process of transition to independence. Responsibility for the Government of Palestine, he said, now rests with the Mandatory Power. However, he added, the General Assembly would not fully discharge its obligation if it did not take carefully into account the problem of implementation.

The United States, he said, was willing to participate in a United Nations program to assist the parties involved in the establishment of a workable political settlement in Palestine. The assistance mentioned, he explained, would be given through the United Nations, to meet economic and financial problems as well as the problem of internal law and order during the transition period.

The problem of internal law and order during this period, he defined as the possible establishment of a special constabulary or police force recruited on a volunteer basis by the United Nations. He pointed out that he was not "referring

to the possibility of violations by any Member of its obligations to refrain from the threat or use of force in its international relations" This was based, he added, on the assumption that the Charter would be observed.

Summing up the situation, he said that in the final analysis the problem of making any solution work rests with the people of Palestine. If new political institutions were to endure, he said, they must provide for early assumption by the people themselves of the responsibility for their own domestic order. Certain elements, he said, have resorted to force and terror to obtain their own particular aims. This violence, he continued, obviously must cease if independence is to be more than an empty phrase in the Holy Land.

In conclusion, Mr. Johnson said that if the Committee favored the principles of the Majority Plan, a sub-committee should be established to work out the details of a program which could be recommended to the General Assembly.

(END OF TAKE # 2.)

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
11th MEETING

(AM) TAKE #3
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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE - (AM) TAKE #3

The third speaker was Dr. T.F. Tsiang of China. Dr. Tsiang stated that his Delegation feels the Committee must consider the possibility of a bloody conflict, if it tries to enforce any of the schemes under discussion for the solution of the Palestine question, without first trying to narrow the gap of difference between the Jews and the Arabs. He added that he regretted that the Representative of the Arab Higher Committee was so positive when ^{he} declared that Partition of Palestine would be resisted by force. However, he said, he could not shut his eyes to the fact that blood has been shed in the past and that even today Palestine is suffering from physical violence. Any course taken now, he said, which would lead to further violence would be a deviation from the primary objective of the United Nations, namely, to maintain peace among nations. For this reason, the Chinese Representative said his delegation considers it imperative to persist in negotiation and reconciliation.

Dr. Tsiang recalled that for some six or seven centuries China had had a Jewish Community in Honan Province, but that China had never been conscious of their being different from any other Chinese. In more recent years, he said, Jewish people had come from all over the world, but that they had always been taken as Englishmen, Americans, Frenchmen, Italians or whatever their nationality. As a result of the Hitler regime, he said, ^{many Jews had come to Shanghai, and had received,} ^{he said,} somewhat better treatment than China's own destitute. There was, he said, a foreign refugee problem in Shanghai, but no Jewish problem.

Dr. Tsiang asked that immediate attention be given to the problem of the 250,000 distressed European Jews now in Assembly centers. But, he stated, it was unfair and perhaps physically impossible to send this entire number to Palestine, and that, therefore, whatever solution was found for the Palestinian problem, something must be done for the Jewish refugees apart from and in addition to Palestine.

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He suggested that other nations, in many respects more fortunate than Palestine, should set an example in generosity. "If the Assembly," he said, "should fail to establish the principle of proportionate sacrifice among the nations, what we may have to say to our Arab friends would be without moral cogency."

Dr. Tsiang explained that he had heard historical, legal and humanitarian reasons advanced in support of an independent Jewish state in Palestine. On the other hand, he said, learned reasons based on history, law and equity have been put forth in support of the Arab claim. These latter reasons, he said, are as good as that of any other people to the land which they occupy and possess today. He added that while he could not accept all the Arab arguments, he felt that they had considerable force.

Dr. Tsiang declared that the time to request the Arabs to cooperate with the United Nations and with the Jewish Agency in fostering a National Home for Jews in Palestine would be "after we have decided to make our proportionate contribution to the solution of the Jewish refugee problem and after we have given consideration to the special position of the Arabs in Palestine".

(End of Take #3)

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
11th meeting

(AM) TAKE #4
Press Release GA/PAL/12
11 October 1947

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE--TAKE #4

The fourth speaker this morning was Mr. Faris el-Khoury (Syria). Mr. El-Khoury, after presenting a panoramic history of early Palestine and the Jews, declared the Arabs of Palestine cannot subscribe to what he termed "Zionist vagaries" and "will not give up their homeland to aliens from the four corners of the world on the strength of fantastic racial theories and a dogmatic interpretation of history peculiar to themselves and repudiated by many Jewish authorities."

Mr. el-Khoury asserted that despite the fact that Judaism is only a religion, the Zionists stress the aspiration of Judaism for a sovereign state. Adherents of one faith have no reason to aspire to a state on the basis of their religion, he said.

The Syrian Delegate next turned to the international agreements entered into in connection with Palestine, and commented that from the start, the Arabs had objected to the fact that the political aspects of the Palestine question were given precedence over the legal aspects.

Mr. El-Khoury explained that the Arabs wished to contest the legality of the Mandate on Palestine, particularly in regard to its terms concerning the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home. "On the legal aspect", he stated, "we shall submit a proposal for its discussion and request the International Court of Justice for a legal opinion on the subject".

Mr. el-Khoury devoted the rest of his talk to a criticism of the United States statement, presented earlier today.

Referring to a statement by Mr. Johnson concerning contributions in blood and resources to the winning of World War I; and to the liberation of the Arab provinces, Mr. el-Khoury said: "We are led to conclude that the United States made these sacrifices in lives and wealth in order to present Palestine to the Jews".

The creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, isolated in the midst of hostile countries, he declared, would be naturally violable without strong foreign support. This support, he said, would come from the "Jews of America, and especially the wealthy Jewish capitalists of New York". He added that it was with the

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help of United States money that the Jewish immigrants into Palestine had been able to achieve the symptoms of prosperity which are praised by visitors.

He then asked what the behavior of the United States could be in this concern, other than political and economic ambition -- to acquire a foothold at the gate of the Middle East?

The American speaker, he said, stressed the United States responsibility for the "fate of the peoples liberated" after the first world war. Who, he asked, are the peoples liberated? Are they not the inhabitants of Palestine? And he added:

"Is this the justice to which the Charter refers--to decide the fate of these people by expelling them from their homes and robbing them of their independence, in order to make room for foreign intruders composed of all the races and nationalities of the world?"

Was it a principle of the Charter, or of President Wilson's 14 points, or of the Covenant of the League of Nations to deprive the people of any territory of their right to self-determination?, he asked.

Claiming that the Palestine problem had arisen out of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, Mr. el-Khoury reiterated that his proposal that the matter of the legality of these documents be referred to the International Court of Justice for a legal opinion under Article 96 of the Charter. Such a body, he said, could decide whether the terms of the Mandate regarding the introduction of hordes of immigrants by force into Palestine to form themselves a national home is or is not consistent with the provisions of the Covenant of the League, and with the fundamental rights of peoples.

If he said, the United States considers itself bound by the Charter, the U.S. must think of the scope allowed the General Assembly in making recommendations and finding out if this Assembly is competent to partition Palestine, imposing what he termed political, economic and social orders and decisions incompatible with the essential rights of a people to determine the sort of administration they desire.

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He criticised, particularly sharply, the suggestion by the United States of organizing a force of volunteers to be armed by the United Nations and charged with keeping order in Palestine. It does not require much ingenuity, he said, to guess who the volunteers would be, or to surmise with whom this plan was formulated.

In the end, he said, the Arabs are not likely to capitulate to any scheme which tends to make foreign intruders dominant in any part of Palestine. Nor are the Arabs ready, he said, to evacuate, in favour of outsiders, the soil which they have watered during centuries by their blood.

(END OF TAKE #4)

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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE
11th Meeting

(AM) TAKE #5
Press Release GA/PAL/12
11 October 1947

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE--(AM) TAKE #5

Mr. Mostafa Adl of Iran then told the Committee that Iran had been unable to agree with the Majority Report of UNSCOP as they considered that the solution recommended in that Report did not conform to the principles which ought to guide the United Nations--namely justice, equality and respect for the right of all peoples to self-determination without outside interference.

In the absence of a workable and practicable permanent solution, he said, it had been necessary for Iran as one of the Members of UNSCOP to have recourse to a temporary compromise solution which was the creation of a Federal State in Palestine as recommended in the Minority Report. The Iranian Representative on UNSCOP, he added, ^{had} at that time, however, reserved the right of his Government to take whatever subsequent stand on the Palestinian Question it might think fit.

Now, he said, it appeared that the solution recommended by the Minority had not been favorably received in the Committee and Iran therefore wished to suggest a solution which it believed to be the only one truly compatible with the Charter.

He proposed that Palestine be granted its independence and that the inhabitants of Palestine, ^{and the inhabitants of Palestine} alone, be left to decide whether they wished to form two states or one Federal State or find any other workable solution. The United Nations, he said, should give independence to the "Palestinians" and not concern itself with whether those Palestinians were Moslems, Christians or Jews.

If that were done, he said, then Iran would support whatever ultimate solution the Palestinians worked out for themselves.

In the course of his speech Mr. Mostafa Adl said his Government was seeking a solution in the spirit of the Charter and wished to make it clear that it was not being swayed either by its sympathy for the Jews or its close ties with the Arab States.

The meeting then adjourned. The next meeting will take place on Monday, October 13, 3 P.M.

(END OF TAKE #5 and PRESS RELEASE GA/PAL/12)