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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

REPORT OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

Rapporteur: Mr. H. de KAUFFMANN (Denmark)

At its seventieth plenary meeting on 1 May 1947, the General Assembly referred the following question to the First Committee for its consideration: "Constituting and instructing a Special Committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of Palestine at the second regular session" (A/C.1/136).

The First Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Pearson (Canada), devoted twelve meetings to the consideration of this question.

A. Hearing of representatives of non-governmental organizations

In order to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly, the First Committee was anxious to have information regarding the opinion of non-governmental organizations. The following decision, taken by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth plenary meeting, had been transmitted to the Committee for its decision with regard to the communications which had been received from these non-governmental organizations: (1) that the First Committee grant a hearing to the Jewish Agency for Palestine on the question before the Committee; (2) to send to that same Committee for its decision those other communications of a similar character from the Palestinian population ... (A/C.1/144).

In the course of the discussion which took place on this subject, the Committee gave its attention to the matter of deciding the measures to be taken to define the scope of the hearing to be granted to non-governmental organizations and to determine under what conditions a hearing should be granted. Several delegations pointed out that the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine

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was not explicitly mentioned in the above-quoted Resolution (A/C.1/144). At its forty-seventh meeting on 6 May, the Committee decided to grant a hearing to the Jewish Agency for Palestine and to the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, and to establish a Sub-Committee of five members, consisting of representatives of Colombia, Poland, Iran, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, to advise the Committee whether any other organization represented a considerable element of the population of Palestine. The Committee specified at the same time that the statements of these organizations should concern the constituting and instructing of the Special Committee which might be set up by the Assembly (A/C.1/151).

Upon the suggestion of the representative of India, the Committee decided to propose to the President of the General Assembly that a plenary meeting be called at once to consider the following resolution: "That the First Committee grant a hearing to the Arab Higher Committee on the question before the Committee." The General Assembly at its seventy-sixth meeting on 7 May passed a Resolution affirming that the decision of the First Committee to grant a hearing to the Arab Higher Committee gave a correct interpretation to the Assembly's intention" (A/C.1/155).

Carrying out its decision of 6 May (A/C.1/151), the Committee granted a hearing to Dr. Silver, representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, at its fiftieth meeting on 8 May, and heard the statement of Mr. Cattani, representative of the Arab Higher Committee, at its fifty-second meeting on 9 May. Questions were put to these two representatives by several delegations; spokesmen for the two organizations later replied to the questions during the meetings held on 12 May and expressed their opinion with regard to the terms of reference of the Special Committee.

With regard to the other organizations, pursuant to the same Resolution (A/C.1/151), Sub-Committee 5 met under the chairmanship of Mr. Hagglof (Sweden) and held two meetings, 7 and 9 May. It examined the requests for a hearing received from the following organizations: Agudas Israel World Organization; Political Action Committee for Palestine; Progressive Zionist District 95 of New York, Zionist Organization of America; Hebrew Committee of National

Liberation; Committee for Freedom of North Africa; Palestine Communist Party Central Committee; Institute of Arab American Affairs; Young Egypt Party; League for Peace with Justice in Palestine; Union for the Protection of the Human Person; United Israel World Union, Inc.; Church of God, Faith of David, Inc.; Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

Having found that some of the requests originated with organizations established outside Palestine and that the other requests emanated from organizations which, although established in Palestine, did not, in the opinion of the Sub-Committee, represent a sufficiently considerable element of the population of that country, the Sub-Committee "decided unanimously to advise the First Committee not to grant a hearing to the organizations which had lodged applications, it being well understood, however, that this decision did not exclude the possibility of all these organizations being heard by the committee of investigation once it had been established" (A/C.1/164). This recommendation of Sub-Committee 5 was adopted by the First Committee at its fifty-second meeting.

B. Consideration of the Terms of Reference, the Composition and the Administrative Organization of the Special Committee

At its forty-eighth meeting the First Committee commenced a general discussion of the task which had been entrusted to it by the Resolution of the General Assembly of 1 May (A/C.1/136), on the basis of two draft resolutions submitted by the Delegations of Argentina (A/C.1/149) and the United States (A/C.1/150). In the course of the debate, it was decided to consider successively the following aspects of the question: first, the terms of reference, then the composition and finally the administrative organization of the Special Committee.

1. Terms of Reference of the Special Committee

To arrive at a definition of the terms of reference of the Special Committee, the First Committee decided to appoint a Sub-Committee 6 whose task would be to combine into one text the above-mentioned proposals of

/Argentina

Argentina and the United States, as well as a third proposal which had been presented by the Delegation of El Salvador (A/C.1/156). Sub-Committee 6, composed of representatives of Argentina, China, Australia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, El Salvador, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, met under the chairmanship of Mr. Pearson (Canada) and held two meetings, 8 and 9 May. The working paper (A/C.1/165) which resulted from its discussion was then debated in the First Committee. New proposals and amendments were submitted by the following delegations: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.1/166), India (A/C.1/167), Philippines (A/C.1/168), Iraq (A/C.1/169), Poland (A/C.1/170). A certain number of oral suggestions were made by other delegations.

Sub-Committee 6, enlarged to include representatives of Iraq, the Philippines, India, Colombia, was charged by the First Committee with trying to draft, if possible, a unanimous text on the terms of reference of the Special Committee or, if agreement should prove impossible, to propose alternative texts.

This Sub-Committee, at its third meeting on 10 May, drafted a text which was submitted as a report to the First Committee (A/C.1/171). This document brought out a certain number of points on which unanimity had been attained: the preamble, powers of the Special Committee (paragraph 2), procedure (paragraph 3), investigations in Palestine (paragraph 4), deadline for the submission of the report of the Special Committee (paragraph 8). The Sub-Committee reported four alternative texts on the future of Palestine (paragraph 5 A, B, C, D), and two alternative texts on the interests of the inhabitants of Palestine and the religious interests in Palestine of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity (paragraph 6 A and B). The representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and India proposed the inclusion, among the proposals to be submitted by the Special Committee (as described in paragraph 7) of "a proposal on the question of establishing without delay the independent democratic state of Palestine."

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The new report of Sub-Committee 6 was submitted to the First Committee at its fifty-fourth meeting. An amendment of the Delegation of Chile (A/C.1/175) to the preamble was adopted by 36 votes in favour, 10 against, with 6 abstentions. The preamble as amended was read by the Chairman, and there were no objections.

The amendment to paragraph 2 presented by the representative of Poland (A/C.1/170) was not adopted, receiving 10 votes in favour, 33 against, with 6 abstentions. Paragraph 2 of the report of the Sub-Committee was adopted by 42 votes in favour, 4 against, with 2 abstentions.

Paragraph 3 of the report was adopted unanimously.

An amendment to paragraph 4 of the report to add "wherever it may deem useful" after the words "the Special Committee shall conduct its investigation in Palestine" was adopted by 36 votes in favour 8 against, with 4 abstentions. Paragraph 4 as amended was then adopted by 43 votes in favour, 8 against, with 1 abstention.

The representative of the United States presented a fifth variant to paragraph 5 (A/C.1/173). The representative of France proposed that this paragraph be omitted entirely. The Committee adopted the French proposal by a vote of 29 in favour, 10 against, with 14 abstentions.

A proposal submitted by the representative of Australia to delete paragraph 6 received 19 votes in favour, 25 against, with 7 abstentions, and was not carried. Paragraph 6 B of the Sub-Committee's report was adopted by 27 votes in favour, 9 against, with 16 abstentions.

The addition to paragraph 7 proposed by the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and India received 15 votes in favour, 26 against, with 12 abstentions, and was not carried. The Polish amendment received 10 votes in favour, 25 against, with 18 abstentions, and was not carried. Paragraph 7 as proposed by the majority of Sub-Committee 6 was adopted by 44 votes in favour, 7 against.

/After slight

After slight amendment, paragraph 8 was adopted by a vote of 45 in favour, with 6 abstentions.

2. Composition of the Special Committee.

The discussion on the composition of the Special Committee was resumed at the fifty-sixth meeting on the basis of the draft resolutions presented previously by the representatives of Argentina (A/C.1/149) and the United States (A/C.1/150). The representative of Argentina withdrew his draft resolution, and new proposals were submitted by the representatives of Poland (A/C.1/176), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.1/177), Australia (A/C.1/178) and Venezuela (A/C.1/179). An amendment to the United States draft resolution was submitted by the representative of Chile (A/C.1/180).

The Committee associated itself with the views expressed by the representative of Venezuela that the states, members of the Special Committee, should appoint persons of high moral character and of recognized competence in international affairs, and that those appointed would act impartially and conscientiously, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The representative of Venezuela therefore withdrew his proposal.

The Committee voted on the proposals as follows: The proposal of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and alternate proposal each received 6 votes in favour, 26 against, with 21 abstentions and were not carried. The Polish proposal received 7 votes in favour, 26 against, with 20 abstentions, and was not carried. The Australian proposal received 13 votes in favour, 11 against, with 29 abstentions and was accepted, providing that the Special Committee should consist of eleven members, not including the permanent members of the Security Council. The Committee then elected as members of the Special Committee the nine states proposed in the United States draft resolution and the Chilean amendment.

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The Committee decided that the two remaining members should be chosen on a geographical basis; Australia was elected from the South Pacific and India from Asia. The composition of the Special Committee as a whole, consisting of representatives of Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia, was approved by 39 votes in favour, 3 against, with 10 abstentions.

3. Administrative Organization of the Special Committee.

After having decided the composition and terms of reference of the Special Committee, the First Committee considered the administrative organization of the Special Committee as proposed in the last three paragraphs of the United States draft resolution (A/C.1/150). The last paragraph was withdrawn and the Committee adopted the other two paragraphs without objection.

C. Reservations

The representative of the Lebanon requested that the following statement be inserted in the Report:

"I have to say a word in explanation of my voting. I shall abstain from voting because I do not want to commit myself in any way regarding this document. This non-committal and abstention, far from meaning unconcern, actually signifies the deepest concern. The ground of this concern is the fact that not only has any mention of independence for Palestine been severely suppressed from the terms of reference, but also the basis on which this extraordinary session of the General Assembly was convened in the first place has insensibly shifted, during the last two weeks, from preparing for advising the United Kingdom Government on the future government of Palestine to preparing for the consideration of the so-called problem of Palestine in general, a phrase which by its very generality may mean anything and, therefore, is really unacceptable.

/"If for

"If for no other reason that this essential, and I might also add dangerous, indefiniteness which permeates this entire document, I for my part am wholly unable to subscribe to it one way or the other. Therefore, I respectfully reserve the position of my Government regarding every future occasion."

The Representative of Syria made a statement reserving the position of his Government and declared his intention of voting against the resolution as adopted by the Committee.

The Representative of Iraq associated himself with the statement of the Representative of Syria.

The Representative of Egypt associated himself with the statement of the Representative of the Lebanon.

The Representative of Saudi Arabia endorsed the statements of the Representatives of the Lebanon and Syria.

D. Recommendation

The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS the General Assembly of the United Nations has been called into special session for the purpose of constituting and instructing a Special Committee to prepare for the consideration at the next regular session of the Assembly a report on the question of Palestine,

The General Assembly

RESOLVES that:

1. A Special Committee be created for the above-mentioned purpose consisting of the representatives of Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia;
2. The Special Committee shall have the widest powers to ascertain and record facts, and to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine;

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3. The Special Committee shall determine its own procedure;
4. The Special Committee shall conduct investigations in Palestine and wherever it may deem useful, receive and examine written or oral testimony, whichever it may consider appropriate in each case, from the mandatory Power, from representatives of the population of Palestine, from Governments and from such organizations and individuals as it may deem necessary;
5. The Special Committee shall give most careful consideration to the religious interests in Palestine of Islam, Judaism and Christianity;
6. The Special Committee shall prepare a report to the General Assembly and shall submit such proposals as it may consider appropriate for the solution of the problem of Palestine;
7. The Special Committee's report shall be communicated to the Secretary-General not later than 1 September 1947, in order that it may be circulated to the Members of the United Nations in time for consideration by the Second Regular Session of the General Assembly;
The General Assembly
8. REQUESTS the Secretary-General to enter into suitable arrangements with the proper authorities of any state in whose territory the Special Committee Commission may wish to sit or to travel, to provide necessary facilities, and to assign appropriate staff to the Commission;
9. AUTHORIZES the Secretary-General to reimburse travel and subsistence expenses of a representative and an alternate representative from each government represented on the Special Committee Commission on such basis and in such form as he may determine most appropriate in the circumstances.