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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris,
on Friday, 5 November 1948, at 3 p.m.

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A/C.3/SC.2/2, A/C.3/SC.2/3, A/C.3/323). (discussion continued)

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Chairman:

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS

Cuba

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POLISH AMENDMENT TO THE JOINT BELGIAN, NETHERLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.3/315) (continuation)

Mr. CHA (China) stated that for the same reasons as those given by the United Kingdom representative, he would vote against the Polish amendment (A/C.3/SC.2/3).

Mr. DEHOUSSE (Belgium) agreed with the remarks made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Egypt. He saw no reason to prolong the discussion on whether or not a political link existed between the question of assistance to Palestine refugees and the Palestine dispute. Obviously there were political implications to the question of Palestine refugees. If the refugee problem were solved, a settlement of the whole Palestine problem would be more easily achieved. It was also true, however, that the dispute in Palestine could not be settled by the rendering of material aid and assistance to homeless people. He concluded, therefore, that the relation between the political and the humanitarian aspects of the question should not be exaggerated. In his opinion, the problem was essentially humanitarian. There were thousands of human beings suffering from hunger and cold and lack of medical attention, and in view of those facts he did not see how the debate could be prolonged indefinitely.

The world was living through an age in which the human element weighed less than political considerations. The existing conditions of intolerance and sectarianism rivalled those prevailing in the worst period of the religious wars of the sixteenth century. People were being persecuted for their political convictions, often without having been asked what those convictions were. The Belgian delegation considered that such an attitude was inadmissible. A human being in need should be rendered aid and assistance regardless of political considerations.

Mr. GRUMBACH (France) would vote against the Polish amendment for the reasons he had given at a previous meeting. While it was quite true that certain aspects of the problem were of a political nature, it was not the Sub-Committee's duty to settle the political implications of the problem. That rather fell within the province of the First Committee and the Security Council. While it was also true that the main aspect of the refugee problem was closely related to the entire question of Palestine, he did not consider that such a reference should be included in the joint resolution (A/C.3/315).

/He

He agreed with the statements which had been made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Belgium. He emphasized, however, that his refusal to vote in favour of the Polish amendment was not a denial of the facts stated therein, but an affirmation that the Sub-Committee was not competent in the matter.

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) agreed with the substance of the Polish amendment. In the preamble of document A/C.3/315 however, there was a reference to the responsibility of the United Nations in the Palestine question. He questioned whether the substance of the matter should be considered either by the Sub-Committee or the Main Committee. In his delegation's opinion, the matter more properly fell within the terms of reference of the First Committee. Since the substance of the matter was essentially true, the New Zealand delegation could not oppose the motion, but would abstain from voting.

Mr. WARREN (United States of America) stated that for the reasons which had been fully explained by other members of the Sub-Committee, the United States delegation would vote against the Polish amendment.

Mr. ALTMAN (Poland) considered that the position of his delegation was just and well-founded as had been proved by the discussion in the Sub-Committee. If some delegations were opposed to his amendment, it was because the whole problem was not being viewed objectively.

The amendment had merely been designed to prevent further disaster, since it was obvious that the refugee problem could only be solved when a final solution to the entire Palestine question had been reached. For that reason, he did not consider that the Polish amendment infringed upon the rights of the First Committee. The Committee would not be taking political action in adopting an amendment which had been drawn up in an effort to promote the solution of the immediate problems confronting the unfortunate victims of the Palestine dispute.

Mr. LUNDE (Norway) suggested that the Polish amendment should be voted on in two parts.

Mrs. MENON (India) explained that at the previous meeting, the Indian delegation had supported the Polish amendment. That position had not been intended to convey any approval of delay in the refugee relief programme until a political settlement had been reached. India was extremely conscious of the humanitarian aspects of the question. It

/should

should be borne in mind, however, that a permanent settlement of the refugee problem had to be found and that it could only be found in relation to the point raised by the Polish delegation.

Mr. ALTMAN (Poland) agreed that the vote on his delegation's amendment should be taken in two parts. He pointed out that only paragraph 1 of the amendment affected the preamble of the joint resolution. He suggested that the second part of the Polish amendment should be considered in relation to the operative part of the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN considered that the amendment formed a whole and could, therefore, be voted upon at once.

Part I of the Polish amendment to the Joint Draft Resolution on Palestine Refugees (A/C.3/315) contained in document A/C.3/SC.2/3 was put to the vote.

Part I of the Polish amendment was rejected by 9 votes to 4, with 1 abstention.

Part II of the Polish amendment to the Joint Draft Resolution on Palestine Refugees (A/C.3/315) contained in document A/C.3/SC.2/3 was put to the vote.

Part II of the Polish amendment was rejected by 10 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

Mr. LUNDE (Norway) agreed with the point of view expressed by the representative of New Zealand. It was not the duty of the Sub-Committee to assume the functions of the First Committee. The Norwegian delegation considered, however, that the political aspect of the question should have been mentioned, because all aspects of the refugee problem were closely inter-related. For that reason the Norwegian delegation had considered that the resolution should have included some reference to political events in Palestine and had voted in favour of Part I of the Polish amendment. Part II on the other hand had had nothing to do with the terms of reference or the work of the Third Committee and for that reason the Norwegian delegation had voted against it.

ANDRAUS BEY (Egypt) wished a note to be made of the fact that his delegation had been one of the first to see that the United Nations programme of assistance to Palestine refugees should be concerned with more than the preliminary stages of assistance and should not exclude the possibility of repatriating those refugees. The Sub-Committee had not been asked however to consider the political aspects of the question. In the hope of arriving at a quick solution to the problem of assistance to refugees in Palestine, the Egyptian delegation had abandoned all other considerations and could have wished that other delegations would have done the same. He wished to make it clear however that his delegation strongly supported the eventual repatriation of those refugees.

Mr. DEHOUSSE (Belgium) wished to have it recorded that his delegation agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Egypt.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/C.3/323)

The SECRETARY read the report of the Fifth Committee on the financial implications of the Joint Belgian, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States draft resolution.

JOINT BELGIAN, NETHERLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.3/315)

Paragraph 1

The CHAIRMAN opened the discussion on paragraph 1 of the joint draft resolution on Palestine submitted by Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/C.3/315).

Mr. GRUMBACH (France) proposed that the words "commends the Governments" should be altered to "expresses its thanks to the Governments".

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) thought "commends" struck too patronizing a note and agreed with the proposed French alteration. He proposed, on grammatical grounds, that "individuals which" should be replaced by "individual persons who".

After a number of other suggestions for the wording of the first part of article I, including the Egyptian representative's proposal for the substitution of the phrase "appreciates the attitude of", the CHAIRMAN put the French representative's proposal to the vote.

It was adopted by 5 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.

As the four authors of the joint draft resolution had no objections, the English text was redrafted in accordance with the New Zealand suggestion.

The full text of paragraph 1 was approved unanimously.

JOINT FRENCH AND NEW ZEALAND DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.3/SC.2/2)

Paragraph 2

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) asked that the Committee might next discuss paragraph 2 of the draft resolution submitted by New Zealand and France (A/C.3/SC.2/2). As the Chairman had promised that the New Zealand and French resolution would be discussed pari passu with the Four-Power draft resolution, paragraph 2 of the former should come up for consideration before paragraph 2 of the latter.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN replied that, before a ruling on that point could be given, the Committee must decide in what light the New Zealand and French draft resolution was to be regarded: if it were regarded as a series of amendments to the Four-Power draft, it must be considered pari passu with that draft; if, on the other hand, it were regarded as a separate proposal, then it would be considered after the Four-Power draft.

The Chairman put the matter to the vote.

By 7 votes to 5, with 3 abstentions, it was decided to regard the New Zealand and French draft as a series of amendments to the Four-Power draft.

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) read paragraph 2 of document A/C.3/SC.2/2 as follows:

"2. Requests the Governments of the countries providing refuge to continue and to extend the assistance measures which they have until now so generously taken;"

He said that it was known that certain Governments had been giving valuable assistance of various kinds to the Palestine refugees; details of that assistance were available, and there was no reason why it should not be specifically acknowledged by the United Nations. However, acknowledgement for assistance given could not be separated from the provisions of paragraph 2 of the French-New Zealand text, urging those Member States to continue their aid to the refugees.

It would inevitably be some time before the United Nations large scale relief for Palestine refugees became effective; in the meantime, there were urgent needs to be met, and the only way in which that could be done was to ask those countries which, albeit with small resources, had already provided asylum and aid for the refugees, to continue to do so.

Paragraph 2 of the New Zealand and French draft resolution took account of that situation, and was therefore necessary.

ANDRAUS BEY (Egypt) was surprised to detect a note of condescension in the New Zealand draft, though it was New Zealand which had objected to the use of the word "commends" in paragraph I of the Four-Power draft.

The New Zealand and French resolution requested Governments to take certain steps to assist the Palestine refugees: but Egypt and other countries had already given refuge to large numbers of Arabs fleeing from

/Zionist

Zionist expansionism without waiting to be asked. Would New Zealand be prepared to act likewise? Was her quota for displaced persons as generous as that of Egypt?

Although it was the most over-populated country in the world, poor, and with no petroleum concerns anywhere, Egypt was prepared to continue to provide asylum for the Palestine refugees. Without waiting to be invited, it intended, in a spirit of broad human solidarity, to continue to provide refuge. As a provisional matter, it accepted the presence of the refugees. That could not be regarded as a permanent solution, however, and simply to ask Governments to continue to provide aid for the refugees, as the New Zealand and French draft did, without any suggestion that those refugees were eventually to be repatriated, was unconstructive.

The Egyptian delegation would therefore vote against the New Zealand and French draft resolution.

Mr. ANZE-MATIENZO (Bolivia) expressed appreciation of the constructive effort which had inspired the New Zealand and French draft resolution.

Though it was obvious that certain countries, that was, the Arab countries, were more directly interested in the problem of the Arab refugees from Palestine than others, the Bolivian delegation did not consider it desirable for the resolution to make any allusion to that fact. Since a debate on paragraph 2 of the New Zealand and French draft resolution was to be avoided and since paragraph I referred also to the Arab States, the Bolivian delegation would vote against the proposed amendment.

Mr. DAVIES (United Kingdom) was opposed to the New Zealand and French amendment for the same reasons as those put forward by the two previous speakers.

He was aware of the assistance the Arabs had given to the Palestinian refugees, but it remained true that conditions in the Arab countries were such that they could do no more than touch on the fringe of the problem. It would be ungracious for countries not directly affected to ask the Arab countries to extend and continue the aid they had been giving and, in any case, the Arab States could not continue to give that aid indefinitely, owing to their low standard of living and their lack of resources.

As the representative of Egypt had pointed out, acceptance of the New Zealand and French amendment might be taken to imply that the refugees were to remain permanently in the countries to which they had fled and, for that reason, the United Kingdom delegation was opposed to the New Zealand and French amendment.

Mr. WARREN (United States of America) said that most of the observations he would have made in opposition to paragraph 2 of the New Zealand and French text had already been put forward. The United States delegation had been satisfied by the assurances made in the Third Committee that the countries already providing refuge would continue, to the limit of their ability, to provide refuge for the refugees. Whether that help was given in the form of money, food or shelter, the countries concerned were bearing a heavy burden and should not be singled out as the subject of an appeal from the General Assembly. They had voluntarily consented to continue the help already given, and, as Members of the United Nations, they would be included in the general appeal to all Member States.

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) said that the Egyptian delegate was one of those that he respected most, and that assurances that had been given by that representative and the remarks of the United States representative to the effect that further assurances had been given by other countries of refuge in the Third Committee, were deeply appreciated. It had to be borne in mind that, should the New Zealand and French amendment be rejected, the United Nations emergency relief staff in Palestine would be placed in a very difficult position. Someone had to provide space -- standing room -- for the refugees and if the present countries of refuge were to refuse to continue to have them, it would be difficult to imagine where they could go.

The United Kingdom representative had argued that the New Zealand and French proposal implied that the present countries of refuge would be expected to keep the refugees permanently. Such had never been the intention of the authors of the proposal. Eventually, the refugees would have to be repatriated or resettled and it was only for the time being, that a kind of temporary permanence had to be envisaged for them.

He had no objection to the proposal being somewhat modified, but in the event of its being rejected, he insisted that the Sub-Committee should face all the implications of that rejection.

Mr. GRUMBACH (France) had not intended to speak on the New Zealand and French amendment, but after the remarks of the United Kingdom representative, felt that his silence might be misinterpreted. He could not understand how that representative could think that an appeal to the present countries of refuge to continue their aid implied opposition to the idea of repatriation. The object of the amendment was simply to ensure that the refugees would be assisted during the period before effective machinery for solving the problem was set up by the United Nations. It was an expression of thanks for the assistance that had been given and a request that that assistance should be continued. In that regard, he drew attention to the second recital of the preamble, that had been adopted at the previous meeting and which was directed to all Member States. He wished it to be clearly understood that in voting for the amendment, he would not in any sense be suggesting that the refugees should remain permanently in the countries of refuge.

ANDRAUS BEY (Egypt) explained that his vote against the New Zealand amendment in no way signified any intention at any time to discontinue hospitality to these refugees, nor did it imply that the existence of refugees outside their country could be permanently acceptable. He added, amid considerable approval from other Sub-Committee members, that acceptance of this amendment would have indicated distrust in countries that had already provided this help without being requested.

The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on paragraph 2 of the New Zealand and French text.

It was rejected by 9 votes to 5.

ANDRAUS BEY (Egypt) wished it to be recorded that his negative vote did not in any way signify that Egypt intended to discontinue its

/hospitality

hospitality to the refugees. He did not wish, however, to imply, even though indirectly, that assistance to refugees outside their mother country could be considered as a final solution to the problem.

Mr. PLAZA (Venezuela) said he had voted against the amendment because, in his opinion, the resolution should only contain an expression of thanks for the assistance that had been given and a statement to that effect had already been included in paragraph 1.

Mr. ALTMAN (Poland) said he had voted for the amendment because he felt that such an appeal formed part of a policy of immediate aid and would not, in any way, be in contradiction to the Polish delegation's traditional attitude in regard to a final solution to the refugee problem.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE DEBATE

A long discussion ensued, in which the representatives of France, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom, Egypt, United States and the Chairman participated. It was argued on the one hand, that the terms of paragraph 2 of the Joint Belgian, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States resolution would first have to be determined and, on the other, that the Sub-Committee should give preliminary consideration to the Secretary-General's Memorandum regarding organizational arrangements, so that the Fifth Committee would be able to take a decision on the financial implications of paragraph 2.

A motion by the USSR representative to adjourn the meeting was rejected by 9 votes to 6.

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand) explained that paragraph 3 of the French and New Zealand proposal should read as follows:

"3. Decides that all Members of the United Nations will make a supplementary contribution to....."

It was proposed that the paragraph should be inserted after the words "will be required" in paragraph 2 of the Joint Belgian, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States resolution and that the beginning of paragraph 2 should be redrafted to read as follows:

"2. Noting that upon the basis of the Acting Mediator's recommendation the sum of approximately \$29,500,000 will be required..."

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.