

Third Session

THIRD COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE 2

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING

Held at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris,
on Wednesday, 3 November 1948, at 10.45 a.m.

CONTENTS:

Palestine refugees: third part of the Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator for Palestine: aid to refugees (A/648, A/689, A/689/Add.1, A/689/Corr.1, A/C.3/315, A/C.3/316, A/C.3/317, A/C.3/318, A/C.3/SC.2/W.1)

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. de BEAUMONT	France
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. G. PEREZ CASNEROS	Cuba

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PALESTINE REFUGEES: THIRD PART OF THE PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS MEDIATOR FOR PALESTINE: AID TO REFUGEES (A/648, A/689, A/689/Add.1, A/689/Corr.1, A/C.3/315, A/C.3/316, A/C.3/317, A/C.3/318, A/C.3/SC.2/W.1)

Mr. GRUMBACH (France) asked when the Sub-Committee could hope to hear the opinion of the Fifth Committee on articles 2 and 9 of the draft resolution submitted jointly by Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (A/C.3/315).

Mr. HILL (Secretariat) explained that all questions addressed to the Fifth Committee by another Committee were conveyed through the President of the General Assembly. Mr. Hill thought that in all probability, the letter of the Chairman of the Third Committee was still in the hands of the President of the General Assembly, who should communicate it to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee before the afternoon meeting.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the necessary steps would be taken to make sure that the Fifth Committee had that letter before it before the afternoon meeting.

Mr. GRUMBACH (France) remarked that he simply wished to avoid a misunderstanding in order to gain time. He was, in fact, afraid that the Fifth Committee would postpone the examination of these articles until the Sub-Committee had finished its work, while the Sub-Committee was waiting to hear the opinion of the Fifth Committee before continuing its debates.

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba) said that exactly what his delegation had feared was about to happen, namely, that that urgent problem was held up by procedural questions. He asked that the Secretary-General should intervene without delay in order that the Fifth Committee might study that urgent question. He also asked that the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, together with the Chairman of the Third Committee, should make a semi-official visit to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee in order to avoid any further delay.

The CHAIRMAN replied that the remarks made by the Cuban representative would be taken into consideration.

/Mrs. MENON (India)

Mrs. MENON (India) said that her delegation had understood when the Sub-Committee had been set up, that the latter was to examine the various draft resolutions submitted to the Third Committee as quickly as possible, in order to amalgamate them into one document, and to allow the General Assembly to make an appeal for aid to Palestine refugees. The Sub-Committee, however, had wasted its time in fruitless discussion on the previous day, and had not arrived at any conclusion. Also, the Indian delegation which had been disposed to vote in favour of the creation of an ad hoc committee the preceding morning, by the evening felt completely hostile to its creation, because of the delicate questions which had been raised during the discussion. Also, it appeared from the report of the Mediator that there was already an organization which, in collaboration with other specialized agencies, dealt with refugees, and whose headquarters were at Beirut.

The Indian delegation therefore considered that it would be enough to appoint a United Nations director, who would be responsible to the Secretary-General.

Concerning the other proposals, the Indian delegation reserved the right to state its point of view later.

The CHAIRMAN considered that the time had come to give the floor to the representative of the Secretary-General on that subject. He would thus have the opportunity to reply to the many questions which had been asked by representatives, while on the other hand the others, who had intended to speak, would have the opportunity of completing their statements.

Mr. ANZE-MATIENZO (Bolivia) deeply regretted that his draft resolution had provoked a futile discussion at the two preceding meetings. He realized that there had been a sudden change of atmosphere the preceding evening, and that there would be no point in continuing the discussion, because all the representatives had received instructions from their Governments and had already made up their minds. He therefore withdrew his draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Bolivian representative had no reason to regret that he had submitted his draft resolution. The discussion arising from that resolution had not been useless; on the contrary, it had allowed a very profitable exchange of opinion, which would, in any case, have taken place, since the Sub-Committee must await

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the constructive plan of the Secretariat and the opinion of the Fifth Committee on the financial aspect of the problem before making a decision.

The Chairman called upon the representative of the Secretary-General to reply to the various questions which had been raised by representatives. The speakers on his list would be given the floor afterwards.

Mr. SUTCH (New Zealand), speaking on a point of order, said that he wished before all, to thank the Bolivian representative for having submitted his draft resolution and for having subsequently shown great understanding in withdrawing it. He also wished to point out that several representatives had approved the idea of an advisory committee, that no-one had condemned it and that only one speaker had expressed some doubts concerning it.

He wished to draw the attention of the Sub-Committee to document A/C.3/SC.2/W.1 which, on page 1, mentioned a "small policy committee". There would therefore have been a discussion on that subject in any case.

MR. PAVLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), who spoke in Russian, wished to state his delegation's attitude to the Bolivian proposal. The most important part of that proposal was paragraph 3, which suggested the establishment of an ad hoc board. That paragraph should be studied at the same time as paragraph 7 of the draft resolution submitted by the Four Powers. The USSR representative thought that the question of the appointment of a United Nations director for Palestine refugee relief deserved careful study. It was in fact the aim of the United Nations to supply direct assistance to Arab and Jewish refugees without creating an entirely new organization. The appointment of a United Nations director, assisted by an advisory committee of representatives of the specialized agencies, had the advantage that only the director would be appointed by the United Nations, while the greater part of the expenses would fall on the different specialized agencies.

In order to ensure the collection of the funds, their distribution and their use on the spot, what the United Nations needed was, not a full administrative machinery, but a technical organ charged with the co-ordination of the activities of the Red Cross, the International Refugee Organization, the Children's Emergency Fund and the other bodies concerned. Mr. Pavlov stressed the fact that that organ of co-ordination should have a centralizing character, which was not envisaged either in paragraph 3 of the Bolivian resolution or in paragraph 7 of the draft resolution of the Four Powers.

/As regards

As regards paragraph 1 of the Bolivian draft resolution, the USSR representative thought that it was for each country to make a decision on the date of the "Palestine refugees day" and on the methods of collection to be used.

With regard to the second paragraph of the Bolivian draft resolution, Mr. Pavlov considered that, except for the dates there mentioned, it appeared acceptable.

With regard to the Secretary-General's memorandum, he considered that it would be desirable that, in that memorandum, the Secretary-General should make his observations in the form of an amendment to the draft resolution of the Four Powers, and that he should state his attitude to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the draft resolution, particularly to the creation of a special fund, to the administration of that fund, to the establishment of an administrative organ and an advisory committee, to the appointment of a United Nations director and to the functions of the central organ of co-ordination. Since he had not yet had time to study the memorandum, the USSR representative said that he would like to hear the observations of the Assistant Secretary-General on that point.

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba) said that he had understood that the Chairman had given the floor to the USSR representative on a point of order. Mr. Pavlov, however, had spoken on the substance of the question; Mr. Perez Cisneros asked that the interpretation of Mr. Pavlov's speech should be made only when the other speakers on the Chairman's list had spoken.

Mr. PAVLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that he had not asked to speak on a point of order but that he had simply wished to make some observations on the Bolivian draft resolution and on the Secretary-General's memorandum, concerning both substance and procedure. The USSR representative said that he did not know, when he had taken the floor, that there were others who wished to speak, and he thought that he had been the only representative who had not broached the question. He considered that the postponement of the interpretation of his speech would be a lack of courtesy towards him.

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba), Rapporteur, asked for the strict application of the rules of procedure, and recalled that the USSR delegation had been represented in the Sub-Committee at its preceding meeting and that it should therefore be acquainted with the manner in which debates were carried out; it would therefore have been courteous to speak in the

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order of priority laid down by the rules of procedure.

M M Mr. DAVIES (United Kingdom) thought that in order not to hold up the discussion, the Committee should proceed to the immediate interpretation of the USSR representative's speech. He asked the representative of Cuba to cede his right to speak for the moment, while he himself reserved the right to speak later.

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba) said that he accepted the proposal of the United Kingdom representative. He asked, however, that in future, when a speaker made a speech in a language which the chairman did not know, the latter should obtain the aid of the Secretariat in order to avoid the speaker making a long statement on the substance of the question under the pretext of a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN said that the incident was now closed. He pointed out to the Sub-Committee that the letter from the President of the General Assembly had not yet reached the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, but that it was understood that, as soon as it received it, the Fifth Committee would discuss the points submitted by the Sub-Committee for consideration.

ANDRAOS Bey (Egypt) declared that, although the Bolivian delegation had just withdrawn its amendment, a number of the ideas it contained had apparently been taken up by the representatives of New Zealand and the USSR on their own account. He therefore wished to clarify the position once and for all.

The Bolivian proposal contained two main ideas. The first of those, which was purely philanthropic, was the holding of a "refugees day" for the purpose of collecting funds for refugees from Palestine. While not opposed to that idea in principle, the representative of Egypt shared the opinion of the representative of the USSR that the matter should be left to the initiative of individual States. Furthermore, "refugees day" had been fixed in principle for 31 January and would obviously not produce immediate results; prompt action was, however, essential. Finally, the impossibility of predicting the results of such collections precluded any advance estimate of the funds available for future use. That proposal must, therefore, be regarded as a subsidiary measure and as a source of additional funds.

The second idea contained in the Bolivian proposal envisaged the setting up of an ad hoc committee. The Egyptian representative regarded that proposal as unconstructive. In the course of the previous meeting, several representatives had inquired what the functions of such a committee would be, -- whether its opinions would be advisory or binding and whether its headquarters would be in Jerusalem, Geneva or Lake Success. They had also wondered whether the composition of the committee would conform to the principle of geographical distribution and whether the countries providing the most substantial contributions would take part or those which would receive and distribute relief supplies. The representative of Egypt thought that discussion of all those questions could be avoided by rejecting the proposal to set up an ad hoc committee.

Andraos Bey added that the Secretariat had indicated its willingness to assume certain responsibilities in that sphere, to act as an organ of centralization and co-ordination with a view to assembling the funds required and to allocate those funds, leaving it to the specialized agencies to take the necessary steps to distribute aid on the spot.

He emphasized that there was a moral consideration to be borne in mind in considering the situation in Palestine. That situation was the indirect and unpremeditated result of the decision in favour of partition taken by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947. At that time it was perhaps difficult to foresee that the exodus of 500,000 Arabs would be the indirect result of that decision. It was nevertheless necessary to assume the responsibilities devolving from that decision. The Secretariat appeared to be the appropriate organ to assume a responsibility incumbent upon the United Nations and to co-ordinate the steps to be taken in that sphere.

The representative of Egypt wished to put forward three constructive proposals.

In the first place, the draft four-Power resolution should be drafted more precisely in order to indicate the policy the Secretariat should follow, particularly with regard to the proportional distribution of funds. There were approximately half a million Arab refugees; the number of Jewish refugees was small and was estimated at 7,000. There was no doubt that the Jews must be aided as well as the Arabs, but officials dealing with the problem at a distance of some thousands of kilometres might, on the basis of certain precedents, consider it desirable to divide the funds into two equal parts. The Secretariat must therefore be instructed that relief was to be distributed on a per capita basis and that only the

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numerical importance of ethnical groups in need of assistance was to be taken into account.

In the second place, the Egyptian representative thought the problem was essentially humanitarian and that political considerations should not be introduced. But he was also anxious that his proposals should not be interpreted to mean that the problem was limited to the provision of urgent relief and that, relief once given, the United Nations should lose interest in the repatriation of refugees. It was clear from the Mediator's report that, in drawing up estimates for a period of nine months, he envisaged an ultimate stage of repatriation, which, by restoring refugees to their homes, would at the same time restore their human dignity. While limiting the question to urgent aid, the draft resolution should, therefore, be so drafted that it did not preclude subsequent measures to enable refugees to return to their homes.

In the third place, the representative of Egypt asked why the Third Committee had not yet considered paragraphs 2 and 9 of the joint draft resolution. The Sub-Committee, for its part, appeared to be waiting for the advice of the Fifth Committee before taking a decision. He was of the opinion that the Sub-Committee should take decisions of principle as a preliminary and should only refer to the Fifth Committee the financial aspects involved in implementing the principles adopted.

Mr. ANZE-MATIENZO (Bolivia), speaking on a point of order, said that in the course of its work, the Sub-Committee should entirely ignore the political aspect of the problem and should concern itself solely with the humanitarian aspect. That had been the meaning of the Third Committee's decision on that point.

ANIRACS Bey (Egypt) emphasized that he had weighed his words carefully and he had not intended any reference to the political side of the question.

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba), speaking on a point of order, said that he had on several occasions requested the strict application of the rules of procedure with a view to preventing interruptions of the debate. The intervention of the last speakers arose from rule 104 of the rules of procedure. The right to reply was admissible, but only after all those on the list of speakers had taken their turn.

The CHAIRMAN held that, in replying to the representative of Bolivia, the representative of Egypt had not infringed the provisions of the rules of procedure. The Chairman might accord the right to reply after the list of speakers had been declared closed. He might do so with even greater justification before the list had been declared closed. After the representative of Cuba, there were still five speakers on the list. He asked whether the Sub-Committee wished to close the list of speakers, who desired to take part in the general debate.

Mr. PAVLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on a point of order, expressed the view that the debate on the Bolivian project and on that part of the great Powers' project which was related to it, might be closed after the five speakers on the list had been heard. The Sub-Committee could then discuss the four-Power draft and the Secretary-General's memorandum as a whole. The debate would still be of a general character.

Mr. DAVIES (United Kingdom) felt that it was important not to lose sight of the urgency of the problem or of the need to conclude the debate at the earliest possible date. He suggested that the Sub-Committee should hear the Assistant-Secretary-General at the next meeting, and then, without closing the list of speakers, should continue the general debate, discussing the Secretary-General's memorandum at the same time, on the understanding that speakers on the list would enjoy priority.

Miss KLOMPE (Netherlands) said she was prepared to waive her right to priority on the strength of inclusion on the list of speakers, but reserved the right to intervene in the discussion of the Secretary-General's memorandum and to make at that stage, the observations she had intended to make in the course of the general debate.

Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba) said it was undesirable to confuse questions of procedure with other questions. When a general discussion was held, speakers on the list had the right to reply and spoke in their turn without being granted any priority. Article 104 gave the right to a further reply after the discussion had been closed. That view was confirmed by the records of the Committee appointed in 1946 to modify the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, a Committee of which Mr. Perez Cisneros had been a member.

The Cuban representative shared the views of the United Kingdom and Netherlands representatives but wished to draw the Secretariat's attention to paragraph (e) of the Secretary-General's memorandum. That paragraph corresponded in principle to the ideas contained in the draft resolution of Bolivia. Mr. Perez Cisneros expressed his surprise that, after the discussion at the previous meeting, the Secretary-General should have drafted so brief a paragraph, which did not provide an answer to the questions raised by a number of delegations. The representative of Cuba requested the Assistant Secretary-General to elucidate the contents of paragraph (e) when making his statement on the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Mr. Perez Cisneros recalled that the Bolivian proposal had been withdrawn. There was therefore no need to refer to it again unless the representative of the USSR wished to take it up on his own account. The representative of Cuba reserved the right to speak again after the Assistant Secretary-General's statement at the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.